ART OF INNER TRANSFORMATION

Keys to Temporary and Ultimate Happiness

Eighth Garchen Rinpoche
Konchog Gyaltsen

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Art of Inner Transformation – Keys to Temporary and Ultimate Happiness

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Book Cover Photo: The current 8th Garchen Rinpoche in his youth, following his release from the labor camp and prison. Garchen Rinpoche selected this photo for the front cover of this book.

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Drikung Dharma Surya Center

FOREWORD & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book offers the heart-to-heart transmission of oral instructions on inner transformation, the keys to temporary and ultimate happiness, from Garchen Rinpoche via ZOOM (Online) for Drikung Dharma Surya Center and the international sangha in August of 2021. The current 8th Garchen Rinpoche is a Tibetan lama, a realized yogi, a skillful teacher, and the beloved Guru of many of us. Garchen Rinpoche is the incarnation of a 12th century realized yogi named Gar Chodingpa, one of the heart disciples of the famed Jigten Sumgön, Kyobpa Rinpoche – the founder of the Drikung Kagyu lineage, that can be traced back to the great translator Marpa Lotsawa, and the greatest yogi of Tibet, Milarepa.

The book places emphasis on how to transform the inner mind through the holy Dharma with methods and practices, i.e., to generate the causes of happiness and to transform sufferings into happiness, which ultimately pinpoint specific keys and guidance to genuine happiness that each and every one of us strives to obtain as the purpose of life. It also distills the heart essence of the Buddha's teachings and Garchen Rinpoche's experiential guidance on the entire BuddhaDharma path - the relative truth infallible law of karma, the altruistic mind bodhicitta with the four immeasurables and the six paramitas, the nature of the mind and the ultimate truth emptiness seeing the nature of afflictive emotions - as the basis of all Dharma practices.

This book, a treasury of precious pith instructions, is not a traditional standard narrative, but rather a compilation of genuine oral teachings from Garchen Rinpoche where the core tenets are often intentionally repeated again and again to help anchor and integrate the established truths, guiding principles, and key practices into your mind with resilience as if they "become second nature".

Garchen Rinpoche reiterated, *"I have said many things but there are two main points. First, you have to see all beings as your beloved. This has an immense benefit, like a wish fulfilling jewel. This is the practice of relative bodhicitta. The second point is absolute bodhicitta. You have to be aware of the nature of mind, no matter how many thoughts arise. You should not be distracted by*

thoughts, but be mindful. Mindful awareness is the single sufficient remedy that transforms difficulties inside and out. If you have loving kindness, you have understood the essence of the Dharma. It gives you the joy of liberation and lasts throughout your future lives until you are able to achieve enlightenment. When we have developed loving kindness, we have achieved the priceless. If you develop it in your mind-stream, you are the richest person. If you have developed it in your heart, it gives you a lot of happiness. This is how I survived in prison. Loving kindness is the most precious thing." Notably, the intense suffering experience in the forced labor camp helped Garchen Rinpoche develop genuine, irreversible bodhicitta as his greatest enemy became his greatest teacher, allowing him to practice true love and compassion and to gain the realization of the essence of the Buddha teachings.

This book would not be possible without unconditional support from Ina Bieler for the oral English translation, from my children for transcribing the August 2021 main teachings, as well as from many Dharma teachers, brothers, sisters, and centers around the world for graciously sharing other transcribed teachings of Garchen Rinpoche in the past 25+ years that are added to the August 2021 main teachings to enrich Rinpoche's spoken guidance available to everyone to study and contemplate. Our gratitude also goes to Sue Sue (Tâm Bảo Đàn) for sharing her work on the Garchen Rinpoche's Biography Book Two: The Lama of Many Lifetimes: Touching the Living Heart of Garchen Rinpoche, Perfection of Liberation (1958-1980), particularly those personal life transformation experience of Garchen Rinpoche in the prison.

Our deepest gratitude goes to Garchen Rinpoche for all of the profound teachings, instructions and advices, especially the examples and experience of his life, that he has been sharing with all of us in many years.

May I never be separated from the precious bodhicitta. May I always follow in the footsteps of the Precious One, Garchen Rinpoche, to benefit all beings and to help eliminate the sufferings for as long as space endures and for as long as living beings remain.

With Prayers and Love,

Quang

Drikung Dharma Surya Center

Fairfax, Virginia, U.S.A.

September 2026

The current 8th Garchen Rinpoche with his humble disciple, Quang, at Drikung Dharma Surya Center in Fairfax, Virginia, U.S.A.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

We are going to speak about how we can transform the inner mind through the holy Dharma. When we seek temporary benefit and ultimate happiness, we mainly accomplish that with the mind. The mind is like a key to a house with many treasures and objects inside it.

2.0 THE MIND

The Buddha showed us the causes of happiness and the causes of suffering. What is the purpose of showing that to us? First, we need to analyze our mind on the basis of the Buddhist teachings. What did the Buddha essentially say? The Buddha said all beings are actually Buddhas; they are only obscured by adventitious stains. When these stains are removed, these are real Buddhas. The Buddha is saying that the very nature of your mind - your mind itself - is the Buddha. There is no Buddha separate from your own mind, so what we call a Buddha is really the nature of your own mind. The term Buddha in Tibetan is “Sangye”. “Sang” means to have cleared a way or to separate yourself from all grasping at a concrete reality and all concepts in your mind. It is the mind that is free, that has cleared away all extremes or limitations of eternalism and nihilism. The second syllable of “Sangye” is “Gye”. “Gye” means vast, so the mind has become vast like space. It is said that when you realize that, when you see that, then you are a Buddha.

We thus need to realize our true nature. When you realize the true nature of your mind and see the true reality of yourself, that is Mahamudra. That links to what the Buddha said: all beings are actually Buddhas.

The nature of the mind is clarity actually. Clarity means there is awareness, conscious awareness that recognizes whatever arises in the mind, whatever thought and so on that arises in the mind. What is the nature of this clarity then? When you look at the nature of this clarity that recognizes it, then all thoughts of the past might stop and the future thoughts have not yet arisen. Within that, between the thoughts, it all becomes like space. Mind becomes like space. When you look at the nature of this clear consciousness, it becomes like space. When you investigate space, when you look at the space-like nature, what is the nature of that, how can we draw a line within space? There is no two, no duality in space. When you understand that there is no two in space, no duality within space, then all dualistic grasping, all unmindfulness, this dark fog of unmindfulness will be cleared away. The clinging thought of duality will be cleared away. Then, you understand that because the mind is like space, there cannot be a duality within space.

For example, it is like one tree, it seems that there is duality in the tree because it has one root but many branches, but for example, when you are introduced to Mahamudra, it says: when you cut the root of the tree, the entire tree withers, it dries out because it is actually one with many branches. Likewise, in this way, you should look at your mind. On the outer level, you see forms, bodies, different beings, but they actually are compounded, and because they are compounded, they are impermanent, and in the end, they will become dust, a heap of ashes. Therefore, whatever appears, it only appears momentarily like an illusion or like a TV show. In the end,

after we have died, this body turns into ashes. When you investigate yourself what is more important, the body or the mind? The mind is actually more important. In order to understand the mind of all beings, you should look at your own mind. When you look at your own mind, you cannot say that there is something that is really there, that exists, because it is empty. But also, it is clear, the nature of clarity is empty. The nature of emptiness is clear. That is the space-like union of clarity and emptiness. That is when you understand that there is no duality within the mind. That is the actual nature of the mind. This intrinsic awareness is the nature of your innate awareness; your natural awareness is this space-like nature that is empty and clear.

2.1 The Single Ground

The single Ground (basis) can be understood from the outer, inner and secret aspects. Regarding the outer aspect of the single basis, first, all the appearances and existence including the infinite universes and sentient beings have a single basis, that is, it consists of the five elements – earth, water, fire, wind and space. Within space, other elements arise and the universe appears. No matter what appears in the universe, it all consists of these five elements.

For example, a person's body consists of the five elements (flesh and bone are the earth elements, blood is the water element, breath is the wind element, warmth/heat is the fire element and the mind is the space element). So, the outer five elements and the inner five elements of a person's body and the afflictions of the person's mind are all related to each other. The essence of all beings is the same even though the outer bodies appear in different ways, e.g., a person, an animal or a living creature all possess a body that consists of the five elements. The inner aspect of the single basis is that within the mind, all sentient beings even animals possess the five afflictions. They all share the same wish to experience happiness and not experience suffering.

One might think that there is a single basis of mind but there is a duality in bodies, for example, in forms, there are two or more bodies. When we talked about the single basis of all, on the outer level too, then we have actually resolved that there are not even two bodies and there is no duality in visible forms either. So, that is because our body consists of the five elements and wherever you go in the material world, everything consists of that; earth, water, fire, wind and space. There is nothing in the material world that does not consist of these five elements. So, they all consist of the same matter. Therefore, there is also no duality in the physical form in the body. We actually are not separated in body either, the single basis of the body. For this reason, it is only temporarily different names that we label different shapes of the same thing, different heaps of earth and so on, giving it different names, but in reality, there is no real distinction in material form either. It has a single basis. Then, we have also resolved that within the mind that there is no duality because the mind is like space. When you look at the mind, the first thing that you should understand is that there is no division within space, there can be no duality within space. Then, when you understand that, within that state of non-duality, you should recognize the clear awareness that this nature is. When you recognize that, all doubts, ignorance, unawareness will be cleared away. When you ultimately attain the state of enlightenment, all dualistic

perception is completely cleared away and non-dual primordial wisdom expands like the sky. Within the sky, there is no duality. The nature is always the same. When you attain enlightenment, it has not gotten any better. Right now, when you only glimpse it for one moment, it is still the same. It is not any worse, it is exactly the same. Therefore, we call it Vajradhara; it has an unchanging nature. That is the characteristic or the special quality of our own mind, the Buddha nature.

2.2 The Awareness or Unawareness

The awareness or unawareness means knowing or not knowing the single Ground, the paths and the working of karma. One path is to transform suffering into happiness; the other one is to transform happiness into suffering. In samsara, first, we may find some happiness, e.g., we get rich, we get married and we get very happy. Then, it gets worse and worse, we fight all the time, and both are miserable, so happiness turns into suffering. So, we have transformed happiness into suffering. It is a different way of thinking.

Our state of mind is the key to determine whether or not we transform happiness into suffering or suffering into happiness. So, how should we think in order to transform suffering into happiness? In any Buddhist tradition, in the beginning of the prayer, "May all mother sentient beings, boundless as the sky, have happiness and the causes of happiness." So, what is your happiness? Why are you happy? Happiness is something for which you created the causes yourself in your past lives. In your past lives, you have done something through your body and speech that came with the motivation of love in your mind. That is why you now experience such happiness. If you understand that you will think, "If I want to experience some small happiness later on, I must cultivate more love in my mind". The prayer continues, "May they be free from suffering and the causes of suffering." So, what is your suffering or your difficulties? Who did that? You created it yourself. How? In the past, you did that with the mind of anger and jealousy. How did that come about? It came from self-grasping. In the 37 Bodhisattva Practices, it says "All sufferings come from wishing for one's own happiness and the perfect Buddha arises from the altruistic mind." The cause of happiness of the three realms is just that, it is the single mind of altruism, love. This is what the Buddha has shown us.

The Buddha said, "This is the cause of happiness and you should practice it. These are the causes of suffering and you should give them up." If you understand all that, you will open your eyes to karma, you will be aware and know what to do and what not to do. For example, when I was in prison, at that time, I recognized that it was my own karma for which I had created the causes in the past. Not everyone ended up in prison, e.g., His Holiness the Dalai Lama was able to successfully escape to India. Some other people like me were not able to do that. I realized that I myself had created that cause. Where is the cause right now? The cause is within my own mind. My own actual real enemy is my own anger, my own jealousy. If I would get angry at anyone at all, it would not be at that regime but it would be at my own affliction within my own mind. Also, by this experience, I recognized that I paid off my karmic debt. By experiencing suffering, I purified some negative karma. So, I find it very beneficial. It is very useful just like doing a

surgery, that is painful but it is good for you. It is a useful suffering. You see it in a positive way although it is temporarily painful. This is just a different way of viewing it and thinking about it. The reason why I did not experience suffering was because I understood karma. If you understand karma, you can abandon the causes of suffering and create the causes of happiness.

Scientists nowadays spend lots of time and money to try to figure out in the world the behavior of animals, what they are doing, eating, how they are behaving themselves, etc. They are driven by the same desire as human beings. The body and mind of a human being and of an animal are exactly the same regarding the basis. The outer basis is the same and consists of the five elements. The inner basis is the same that we all share the same wish to experience happiness and not to suffer. In that case, the outer and inner forms are the same, but why do they still appear in so many different forms? That is due to the diversity of karma. The secret single basis is what the Buddha explained as the basic nature of the mind itself. That mind is the basis of all samsara and nirvana. It is like light energy. This secret single basis is shared commonly by all beings. Our body has five elements and on the single basis of the mind itself is the space element. Actually, space element is also a part of the other five elements. The mind which is like space is the basis of samsara and nirvana. Buddha has realized that within that single basis (the mind), the Buddha and sentient beings are one. They do not exist separately. The Buddha has realized that although everything that appears and exists in samsara and nirvana is limitless and vast as space, it has a single basis, yet two paths and two fruitions.

The Buddha has attained three qualities – all knowing wisdom, loving compassion and power to protect others. Through the all-knowing wisdom, the Buddha has realized that although there is a single basis, the extent of suffering of sentient beings is endless. With great love and compassion, the Buddha tried to find a way to liberate sentient beings from suffering. Through Buddha's power to protect beings, he found that although this universe's suffering is endless, it comes down to a single cause which is self-grasping. Self-grasping cannot be easily destroyed even if you attack it with an atomic bomb. The Buddha has realized that if you only give rise to a wish to benefit others – the altruistic mind – at that moment, there is no self-grasping. The path of accomplishing other's benefits that leads to the fruition of happiness and the path of self-cherishing that leads to the fruition of suffering. Two paths here do not refer to the physical paths that we walk on, rather they refer to different ways of thinking in our mind depending on knowing and not knowing the working of karma (karma and its fruition). There are two fruitions. This can be seen by looking at the difference between happiness and suffering that human beings and animals experience or the difference between the happiness experiences of the bodhisattvas of the bhumis and the sufferings of those human beings that grasp at the self. Within that, among beings, there are different degrees of suffering. What is most important to understand here is that it is not the outer appearances or the outer conditions of happiness that matter, but rather the experience of the mind is most important.

To illustrate this point, I refer to my own personal experience at the time of imprisonment. Many people were imprisoned at that time, so the outer circumstances were the same for all the people.

We were in the same prison and we wore the same clothes and ate the same food and so on. Still, there was a great variety of different experiences. In general, there were two sections in the prison: one section held all the lamas and the monks and the other section held the rest of the people. The lamas and monks were kept separately since they were considered to have committed greater faults and thus got greater sentences than the others. But apart from that, everything was the same. Every Sunday, lamas and monks would get together and have a good time. Together, we would laugh and enjoy ourselves. Sometimes, the prison guard would come and say, “Do you know that this is a prison? Why are you enjoying so much? Don’t you know that you had a sentence to sit here? This is not a place where you should enjoy yourself in the prison.” This is important to mention because at the same time, there were other prisoners who committed suicide all the time. I was really amazed by the difference between knowing and not knowing the working of karma and thus how the mind views things. This is what determines our happiness and suffering. We can see a big contrast in experiences between humans and animals, but even among humans, you can see great varieties of happiness and suffering. This is due to a great variety of different karma that people have previously created. Therefore, there are different fruitions. This example shows that it is really not the outer circumstances that make the difference, but really the inner mind, the way the mind views things.

3.0 TEMPORARY ADVENTITIOUS STAINS

Jigten Sumgön said that, in the Gongchig, the Buddha only showed the fundamental nature of all phenomena. The Buddha showed us the nature of all phenomena of samsara and nirvana - the fundamental, the true reality of things - and that is that your own mind is actually Buddha. But then, how come there is so much unbearable suffering in the six realms of samsara - how do the six realms even come about if we all are Buddhas? We come back to the Buddha's quote: “however, they are obscured by adventitious stains”. The adventitious stain is the grasping at an eye, at a self that does not actually exist. This grasping, this thing that we are holding on to, when we look into it, there is really nothing there in reality. We are holding on to the existence of something that does not actually exist. We are clinging to the reality of a self and a mean that does not actually exist. To introduce beings to that fundamental nature is really the essence of all the 84,000 teachings that the Buddha gave. The Buddha of this time and age, of this eon, is the Buddha Shakyamuni. Upon his enlightenment, he describes the nature of the mind: it is profoundly peaceful, it is vast and free from any elaborations and it is free from all extremes. That basically describes the nature of Mahamudra. Mahamudra is nothing else than just that. When the Buddha first taught the Dharma, the first thing he said was to tame your own mind.

We say one's own mind is actually Buddha, so if my own mind is Buddha, then what is to be tamed? Even though your own mind is Buddha, we have become obscured. There are four obscurations. The first is not seeing the mind as it is. As a result, afflictive emotions arise, then as a result of afflictive emotions, karmic actions arise. And these give rise to karmic imprints. These imprints give rise to our temporary body, which ceases when the karma is exhausted. So, these are the four obscurations. Like said in a sadhana when we supplicate to the deity, you and I have

been inseparable since the beginning. Our mind is not separate from the mind of the Buddha, the guru, the yidam, or the Three Jewels. We actually are the same in the beginning. My mind is the same as Chenrezig's mind. But then in the middle, I have become obscured by ignorance. That means I have not seen the true nature of my mind, and this is where all confusion comes from.

Beings are obscured by adventitious stains. What is the adventitious stain? It is a temporary stain, the perception of a "me" and "I". There are many thoughts and attachment and aversion that are triggered by words. Also, many imprints of ignorance are placed into our mind that come from neutral words that we hear. In this way, we continuously place imprints into our mind which defiles the mind. It is because the mind grasps at the existence of a concrete reality and the various conceptual structures in the mind. That is what you should look at over and over again when we speak about looking at the nature of your mind. Look at this "me" that you suppose exists. When you look at it, it becomes just like space, and you see the space like nature of the mind. For example, when you are sitting there and think of having some tea, you think "This is my cup of tea for me to drink", and when you drink it, you experience a physical sensation. Another example is if a mosquito stings or bites you; you immediately have a reaction to that: "It stung me, it bit me". It is actually the body - what makes up our so-called self is those five aggregates of which the body is one. Even though we think that the body is the "me" itself, we cannot really find a self within the body. It does not exist there. That is the fundamental ignorance from which arises these six afflictive emotions that multiply into the 84,000 afflictive emotions. This is where they all arise from - from this momentary thought of an "I", the "I" that just arises in this moment ("this is my tea" for example). From that, all the other afflictions proliferate. When we speak about analyzing or looking at the nature of your mind, that is what we are looking at. It is this thought of "I" that arises in the mind.

Looking at the nature of the mind is related to the meditation of shamatha and vipassana. When we think about transforming the mind or finding happiness on a temporary and ultimate level, it all comes down to the mind. It is created through the mind. The Buddha's teachings show you the true nature of the mind. There is nothing else. That is why it is said that the Buddha's teachings are the only source of benefit and happiness. You have a mind, and that very mind is what we call Buddha. There is no Buddha over there and you over here - there is no separate Buddha from your mind. Realizing the nature of your mind is what we call realizing Mahamudra. In order to realize the true nature of mind – the blissful dharmakaya of boundless love – you must realize that the way things appear, pleasant or unpleasant, is your own mind.

As said previously, in the Ganges Mahamudra, there is this example of a big tree. When you cut through the root of a tree, the multitudes of foliage, leaves, and branches will all wither. Therefore, if you cut through the root of the mind, the multitude of thoughts will diminish. The root comes down to the nature of the mind. The 37 Bodhisattva Practices say that the way things appear is your own mind, meaning that we have to resolve that all appearances are one's own mind. Whatever we perceive is perceived just through that mind. In the context of being in samsara, the one who perceives is the consciousness. The consciousness perceives everything,

and so it is the consciousness that we need to analyze. Consciousness is always here, and it is that consciousness that creates all your happiness and suffering. What is the cause of such creation? It is the grasping at a concrete reality and the reality of the thoughts in our mind that ultimately comes down to the dualistic grasping to self and other. For example, if you place two vases filled with ocean water in front of you, you think they are different, that one is mine and one is his. This is how we think if we have not realized that the nature of our mind is actually one and the same. We have not realized that this is due to temporary habitual imprints in the mind, which arise from the dualistic grasping to self and other. It all comes down to the dualistic perception through which we begin to cling to the concrete reality of appearances and the reality of the thoughts in our mind. It is said that as long as there is grasping in the mind, you do not actually hold the ultimate view. The moment there is any kind of grasping or thought in the mind, you are grasping at the reality of your thoughts; you think "This is how it is, it is real". That is this temporary adventitious imprint.

3.1 Karmic Imprints of Self-Grasping

A karmic imprint is something that is accumulated with the mind, which keeps habituating to it. As a result, the various karmic perceptions habitual patterns proliferate and manifest as our experience, as our perception of reality. It all comes down to believing in the reality of the universe and the sentient beings as being dual, separate from one another. That is actually related to the dream state as well. We have a perception when we dream at night and when we are awake during the daytime. Day time perceptions are just like a movie or a TV show being projected and you are watching it. Whatever appears is illusory by nature and later when we die, it will be just like that. All these karmic imprints in our mind will manifest just like the day time experiences. The Buddha had said that we are grasping at a self that does not actually exist. You are not your body and you are not your speech. So, you might think that you are your mind, but when you analyze this, your body is just like an empty guesthouse. It will be left behind so actually there is just the mind that follows various tendencies that wishes to experience feelings of happiness and suffering. It is because the mind grasps at the existence of a concrete reality and the various conceptual structures in the mind. When you reflect in this way, you understand that every experience really is the projection of your own karmic imprints within your own mind. The mind itself is like a camera where the whole film (which are the imprints) is stored. Then, your experiences are projected as the movie. You cannot see the mind but it places the imprints of ignorance, attachment and aversion into the film roll. These manifest as the various coarse and subtle tendencies in the forms of dreams that you have at night.

Milarepa said that when you realize that the daytime waking perceptions and the dream perceptions are the same, you have mastered meditation. When we think about all activities that we engage in the daytime, all of our experiences in the daytime are just the karmic imprints that we have accumulated in previous lives now manifesting before us. There is not the slightest difference between those perceptions and our dream perceptions. We think that we are living long lives, but the body is just like a water bubble that can burst in any moment, so it will not be

long until we go on beyond this life. Just like in a dream state, we continue experiencing due to our karmic imprints in the mind.

The root of those karmic imprints is the dualistic grasping at self and other. It is because we perceive a dualistic existence that we believe in the concrete reality of appearances and the thoughts in our mind. Due to that, various feelings arise in the mind, such as feelings of attachment and aversion. This thinking of forms creates the karmic imprints, the habitual tendencies. They proliferate in the mind because of ignorance - because we have not realized the true nature of the mind, thoughts of attachment and aversion arise. Attachment and aversion are very coarse emotions; their subtle counterparts are hope and fear with subtle thoughts. For example, “I need to sleep in a nice, comfortable bed. If it is not comfortable, that makes me angry”. This feeling arises because of the body, but the body is a compounded phenomenon and therefore impermanent. The mind, however, is unobstructed like space. Reflect upon these karmic imprints in terms of the dream state - think about your dream state, and by reflecting in this way, you will come to a conclusion understanding the root of the mind.

In the 37 Bodhisattva Practices, Chenrezig realizes that phenomena neither come nor go because the mind is like space. But still, he strives single pointedly for the sake of sentient beings. Because we are in samsara experiencing the six realms of samsara due to our karmic imprints, we perceive things as a reality. We think that everything really exists. This is how samsara is created. You ascertain the nature of samsara and nirvana by just looking at your mind. Even though there is much to be said about that in the scriptures and teachings, it comes down to confusion. Samsara arises out of a confused, deluded state of mind that does not recognize its own true nature. All the teachings are just for the sake of destroying this confusion. The 84,000 different teachings of the Buddha are just for that.

There are many different teachings because there are all sorts of different sentient beings, and there is an antidote that destroys the confusion of each and every sentient being. For each kind of delusion in the mind, there is a certain antidote. When we speak from the relative level of karma cause and effect, then it becomes endless - there is no end. It is all for the sake of realizing the ultimate reality. On the relative level, karma is really infallible, that is, for example, anger arises and we act out on the anger, it will come back to us in this life but also in future lifetimes, it will ripen. But if you recognize the nature of this anger, then it is actually not really there, then it dissolves like a wave in the water, then it is gone. When you look at it, where actually is it? There is actually no separate anger that exists from your own mind, it just dissolves back into your own mind, it is just nowhere.

3.2 Dualistic Mind Creates Doubt and Confusion

When we do not recognize non-duality or own intrinsic awareness, dualistic mind creates doubts. Of the seven forms of ignorance, doubt is the principal one, the ultimate form of ignorance. In the context of not looking at the nature of our mind, sometimes a doubtful mind can be of some help but what the doubtful mind does, it divides between good and bad. It investigates and then it

labels anything as good and bad. This discriminating consciousness that discriminates the different aspects of objects. This is what a dualistic mind does, it creates doubts. It comes from a very subtle clinging, a clinging thought that creates the doubt. For example, you want to drink a cup of tea, then the doubtful mind in the subtle form of clinging, it labels that as either delicious or not tasting very good, not delicious; and it does the same thing for any of the five sense pleasures. It divides between good and bad - it labels. As mentioned, the subtle form of attachment or clinging is hope. The subtle form of aggression or hatred is fear. These develop into coarse attachment, then aversion. Not recognizing the fault in these afflictions is ignorance.

We keep habituating to these thoughts, cling to these thoughts of attachment and aversion, self and others, and then we are attached to ourselves. Actually, there is no being, that is not attached to themselves. Animals, for example, cherish their own lives the most because they have a perception of self, and therefore, they are afraid. In order to understand how from the subtle attachment of this dualistic mind, dualistic tendencies become stronger and thicker, we investigate that by looking at an easy example. For example, thinking about food, we can understand how we label and divide between good tasting and bad tasting or we divide our perception of friends or companion out of people, we call them good or bad and so on. So, that is what the doubtful mind does, if we do not look at our mind directly, the doubtful mind is dualistic and divides, investigates people in this dualistic, divisive way.

We are attached to something, an object that we find pleasing, that we like. We think that we actually need those things because we think that when we have those things, they will bring us pleasure, they will make us happy. But the Buddha said that everything that is contaminated [or compounded, which means being created by the coming together of causes and conditions] has the nature of suffering. This samsaric happiness and pleasure appear to be pleasurable now, but in the end, it turns into suffering and that is why we call it a worldly delusion. We should investigate the faults that happen when we become attached and pursue these objects of our desire. For example, when we pursue objects like food or alcohol, smoke, or take drugs and so on, people say that "I like to do that, I like to drink, I like to smoke. It is my choice. I have the freedom to do whatever I wish. I need that freedom to smoke if I wish." So, people say that but then they do not really investigate that with some intelligence. So, what actually happens then when we smoke for example: of the six realms of samsara, we become the most severely ignorant, that is because we are spoiling, wasting away our precious human body that possesses those eighteen freedoms and fortunes. We might look like a human but we really act like an animal. So, you think that it will bring you pleasure or happiness, but actually it is the cause of suffering, and therefore, it is a worldly delusion. If it would actually bring you happiness, real joy, real happiness, then nobody would call that a worldly delusion.

The Buddha does not call a delusion what is actually happiness. If it really brings you happiness, there is nothing wrong with it. But it does not really bring you happiness; it is a temporary small pleasure that actually leads to great suffering later on. That is why the Buddha calls that a worldly delusion. So, the same is true for the other five sense pleasures, for example, food,

clothing and so on. For example, clothing, one might be very attached to a nice dress and one really wants that. One thinks that it is really special. Then, one is very careful with this dress and one does not want to give it to anyone. One is very stingy with that dress. That actually creates a lot of suffering. It binds the mind. It keeps the mind in fetters, in bondage. That is what is harming you. Later when you die, some people, they still die with an attachment to their special precious object, so they die with the mind being bound by these objects. Then, the bardo consciousness is still bound by the attachment to this object. Although the object is not here anymore, their consciousness strives towards these objects in this and future lives. It is the same for all the five sense pleasures. They bind the mind of samsaric sentient beings and as a result they are deluded, confused. Confusion here means that they have lost their freedom. They are controlled by their worldly delusions.

3.3 Dualistic Mind Creates Endless Activities of Grasping

We really have to investigate the faults and qualities of all these sense objects, for example, food, clothing, alcohol, smoking and so on. Is it actually of any benefit or is it harmful? The Buddha also said, “You should not fall into both extremes.” Of course, we need food, we need to eat food to sustain our body and we also need clothes; but that is why, for example, the monks are told not to wear many precious objects and clothing and so on because it actually does not help or benefit them really; it causes great harm. If it would actually benefit, if it would really bring lasting happiness, then there would be nothing wrong with it. The Buddha, with his wisdom, recognized the attachment to those sense pleasures as the worldly delusions. The activities of grasping and clinging to these five sense objects are endless. The Buddha taught mindfulness of feelings. Mindfulness of feelings: based on the five sense objects, attachment arises toward the pleasant, aversion toward the unpleasant. If you follow all of that and chase after feelings, tobacco and all sweet things seem pleasant, but they are a great basis of illness. They are all causes of suffering. Medicine and such seem unpleasant, but the unpleasant is a delusion, and the pleasant is delusion too. Even everything unpleasant is beneficial in one way. The body is delusion. It seems so important to us, but if we reflect on it, this body is conditioned - it is not independent.

For example, it is like a phone. If the phone's battery dies, we cannot do anything with it at all. The body is like that. The mind is like space; the body is impermanent. Once you understand it is like a guesthouse, when feelings arise based on the five sense objects such as thinking, "I need more and more nice clothes," you will notice those feelings right away. You will realize that there is no need for more than three sets of clothes - one to wear, one to wash, and one o change into. Based on the five sense objects such as food and clothing, the afflicted thoughts of attachment and aversion arise within the mind. Whatever arises in this way, they are all causes of suffering for the mind, and causes of obscured wisdom. Feelings arise based on the body. Chasing after feelings, you go astray: "I absolutely need this one!" Strong attachment arises for what you want, strong aversion for what you don't. Once you see all these faults, that is the mindfulness of feelings the Buddha taught.

Milarepa said, "The root of the lower realm is anger. Cultivate patience even at the cost of your life." There are many types of anger: the anger from attachment, the anger from jealousy, and so forth. Anger can be combined with any of the five afflictive emotions, so it is very important to cultivate patience, even at the cost of your life. Even if someone tries to kill you, you should be more afraid of getting angry than of death. From one affliction, all the other five afflictions arise. They mix with one another. When one has strong desire to possess certain thing, one will have jealousy towards those who possess more than one and pride towards those who possess less that one. Moreover, one hates those who prevent one from obtaining it. They are all supported by ignorance. Ignorance thinks that it is fine to have afflictions; it is good to have these afflictions because we think that we must defeat our enemies and we must protect our friends!

3.3.1 Fruition of Ignorance and Unawareness

There are two forms of ignorance: the innate unawareness and the imputing unawareness. First, innate unawareness means unmindfulness and distraction. It is when you do not know how to properly look at your mind or see the nature of your mind. For example, some people say that when you meditate, you might go crazy, so maybe it is better not to meditate. But that is just the fault of not knowing how to actually look at the nature of the mind, how to meditate. That is mainly due to self-grasping. So, for this reason, the preliminary of what we actually need to cultivate before we begin to meditate is bodhicitta and that is what all our lamas, our teachers in any center really tell us. The preliminaries are very important. When we look at the preliminaries, people are often overwhelmed and they think about all these numbers that they have to accumulate - 100,000 prostrations, the Hundred Syllable Mantra and so on – and thinking about that, they get tired. They think that it is so difficult to practice the preliminaries.

But what is the actual preliminary that have to precede all of that before we engage in any practice? It is the wish to benefit others. That is most important. So, bodhicitta is the preliminary to all different Dharma practices. Then, on the basis of that, first we cultivate bodhicitta where it has not arisen. We have a wish to benefit others and we contemplate the Four Thoughts that Turn the Mind. We understand what suffering is. We must understand the suffering nature of all sentient beings. It is not just now in our case, our own suffering, but the suffering of all beings. It is necessary to recognize that first because if we do not recognize suffering, we do not understand what suffering is, we will never find a proper method to eliminate suffering. That is why the Buddha first taught that first we must recognize and understand suffering. Then, we must abandon the origins of suffering.

For example, you need to recognize that you have an illness. If you do not recognize that, you also do not know what kind of medicine, what kind of method you need. Only when you know what illness you have do you know what kind of medicine you should take. Otherwise, if you do not understand that, very quickly we grow tired of all the study, practice and the accumulation. You need to identify suffering and what causes suffering. For that, we need to recognize that it all originate from within the mind, that is, the afflictions and thoughts that arise in our mind are those causes that we need to eliminate. With our body and our speech, we engage in actions that

come from motivation within the mind. For example, when we are in a negative state of mind, we say harsh words to someone or we gossip, so on. All the non-virtuous actions that we engage in actually come from this negative state of mind. That ultimately comes from self-grasping.

Therefore, the actual, ultimate preliminary that we must first cultivate is an altruistic mind, the bodhicitta. In that sense, the preliminaries are indeed very important. But if we do not see that point, we may grow tired from and being overwhelmed by so many accumulations of the preliminaries. The actual preliminary in brief is the altruistic mind. If you feel that I do have a wish to benefit others; for example, I want that this country turns out well. I want the people here experience well-being and so on. That is an altruistic mind. An altruistic mind is the mind of wisdom. When there is an altruistic mind, self-grasping diminishes. So, in whatever practice we do, we need to develop the preliminary of bodhicitta. Again, innate unawareness means unmindfulness and distraction. That is, we are unable to properly look at our mind. We are unmindful of our true nature. For example, if you cultivate an altruistic mind, you should investigate that mind, look at that mind, recognize it, what kind of mind is that.

For example, if you have a friend that you love or you have a cat or a dog, a pet and so on, then just naturally, the nature of that is happiness. They want to be around you, stay next to you because this mind of altruism is a vast mind. Otherwise, if we do not cultivate such a mind, if we are always angry and frustrated, then our mind solidifies more and more like a block of ice, ice of self-grasping. Then, we cannot recognize anything. We are unmindful of everything. Then everything is about us. Then, everyone appears as an enemy, a threat, even one's own family and friends, parents and children; we think that they do not like me because we cling to a self, we are selfish. Then, we do not want to look at the nature of that because we are solidified by self-grasping. That is really the nature of the first kind of ignorance, the innate unawareness. We are unmindful because we do not actually look at our mind.

The second ignorance, it says, imputing unawareness means dualistic thoughts towards self and others. Since we do not look at our mind, do not properly investigate and examine the actual nature of our mind, then that unawareness leads to the imputing unawareness which means we are labelling. For example, we are saying: this is how it is or this is not how it is; or it exists or it does not exist; or this is me and this is him; this is what it really is or this is what it really not is. When we look at the outer universe, we see this world and we think that it is always there, it has been there for millions of years. It is there. So, the outer universe and the sentient beings are all there. So, the imputing unawareness or ignorance is that dualistic perception of self and other. We perceive countless sentient beings on the outer level and outer universe. We see everything as duality separate from us. There is, on the outer level, the universe, on the inner level, you see self and other. Whatever we perceive, we think this is how it is, it is true. So, we hold something to be true that actually is not true. Actually, everything is compounded and therefore impermanent. But if we do not really investigate and look at it clearly, then it seems to be real.

So, imputing unawareness means dualistic thoughts towards self and others. When did these two forms of ignorance arise? They always arise and have arisen since beginningless time in samsara.

Both kinds of unawareness are the basis for the delusion of all beings. So, the basis for the delusion of all beings is holding true something that is not true, does not exist in that way. This grasping to reality becomes more and more solidified just like water freezing into ice. Actually, the nature of all sentient beings' mind is Buddha nature which is like a vast ocean. Due to the two types of ignorance, the mind of sentient beings has become like ice, so ice blocks floating in the ocean that occasionally bump into each other and that create conflict. Although they are ice, and ice has the nature of water, they appear just like a stone, a rock. Although it is water, if you hit somebody on the head with an ice block, they will also bleed. Beings think that it is a rock even though it actually is ice, but they call it a rock. So, that is ignorance because it does perform the function of a rock when you hit somebody on the head with ice, they also will bleed. Therefore, they think it is a rock. That is the ignorant view.

When we are distracted and unmindful, whether we engage in worldly or Dharma activity, we do not want to do anything, we get lazy. Those who are unmindful, do not cultivate mindfulness and are unconscious, within those people, all the forms of ignorance are exhaustive. It manifests in whatever we do in should do today, we put it off for tomorrow. We do not feel like doing it now, now we feel like we want to relax, sleep, drink alcohol and so on. All of that is ignorance, the result of ignorance is to be born as an animal. Of the six afflictions, the worse is ignorance. Ultimately, ignorance is the self-grasping mind that perceives duality. The ultimate fault of ignorance is the ignorance of the working of karma cause and effect, that is, even though we want to be happy, we do not know what causes to create to achieve happiness. Although we do not want to suffer, we do not know what causes to abandon to avoid suffering. So, we are ignorant of karma and that is really the actual, the ultimate form of ignorance. Even though we may know how to accomplish something in this life, still because we do not understand karma, we are ultimately ignorant. What is our protection when we take, for example, the refuge vow? What will ultimately protect us is our own wisdom and compassion. But if we do not recognize our own wisdom and if we are not mindful, our mind becomes the self and then we can never become protected from suffering. So, the ultimate ignorance is the self and if we accumulate actions with a self, as a result of that, we are born as an animal because that is the ignorance.

3.3.2 Fruition of Attachment

Actually, not to mention being born as a hungry ghost, even in this life, attachment already creates a lot of suffering. For human beings, what is the greatest difficulty or problem that they have? It is the interpersonal problem between the companions, especially loving relations are the greatest torment of humans. In general, this love is a good quality, but then what happens is that this love is also mixed with selfishness, so it becomes a great fault. When love is mixed with selfishness, the self-grasping mind turns it into jealousy. Love is too strong, attachment is too strong, so we become jealous. In the end, we separate from our companions. First, there is love, but then, that turns into jealousy and jealousy turns into resentment and then the other partner/ companion does not want to stay with you and people separate. That happens anywhere between partners, friends or between disciples and lamas, for example, we say "This is my friend. This is

my lama. This is my sponsor and so on." We try to own/possess them. We become jealous when somebody else talks to one that we consider as ours. So, jealousy arises and the nature of this jealousy is actually resentment.

One considers oneself to be most important, one's own happiness is most important and if that is in your mind and you are resentful and jealous, even if you do not say anything, but keep that in your mind, the other person will feel that and naturally will not want to stay next to you, so the love then turns into anger and people separate. So ultimately, that is the fault of self-grasping. It is actual love but it is defiled with selfishness. So, how does a pure love then look like? For example, if you have a loving friend, lama and so on, any kind of companion, then you would think: "I love this other person and I want him to be happy, to be well; for as long as he is well, it is fine." If you think in this way, your mind will be relaxed. Then, you do not worry about what he is doing. He does whatever he wants or whatever makes him happy. That will also make the other person's mind feel relaxed. Such people can spend their entire life together.

When there is true altruism - I wish to benefit the other, people can really stay together for the rest of their lives. Even in the worldly sense, people hold this commitment and stay together until they die. Actually, that is the love we talk about in the Dharma. That is actually Dharma. Through this bodhicitta, they will become companion and friend in future lives. Even if somebody who does not understand the quality of bodhicitta, only the quality of love itself would already lead to a better rebirth. For example, there are birds that do not hurt others, that are kind to one another. That is the quality of even the slightest love. If that is not present, then we encounter difficulty already in this life. People separate from each other. They cling and after they pass away from this life, they are born as a hungry ghost. So, the more we cling, the narrower and smaller mind becomes and it gradually evolves. First, there is love and we are attached, it turns into jealousy, stinginess, ownership, then it turns into resentment. This leads to the birth of a hungry ghost. Talking about hungry ghosts, people might wonder if they really exist. Actually, we can see them right here how they exist. For example, if you put a little food here, then very small insects like flies will come. You can hardly see them; they are tiny and they will circle around the food. Why? Because they are hungry, but they cannot really get the food. They circle around the food but they cannot really get it. Then, after one day, again they die. So, it is like hell realm or hungry ghost realm. Some people do not really believe in those hungry ghost or hell realms; but if you really look close and carefully, you can actually see them around us too. What can we do for that not to happen, to be born as a hungry ghost?

We must cultivate pure love that is undefiled by selfishness. It will already create happiness in this life and also plants the seed of liberation for future lives. Otherwise, in this life, we become jealous, out of jealousy and attachment, we engage in various negative actions, for example, we steal from others, we engage in sexual misconduct, various actions of body and speech. We separate from our friends in this life. We end up having no money, no house and so on, so karma already begins to ripen now. In the different explanations, there are different ways for karma to ripen. It can already ripen right now. It is important to recognize the subtle form of clinging

attachment arises. When the subtle thought of clinging attachment arises, you should recognize that here is this attachment, clinging arising: "I have to be careful. If I do not let it go now, it will turn into greater attachment." For example, it begins with very small attachment. You like to eat sweet things, but then when that develops and you give way to it, it can turn into diabetes. You want to eat it because it tastes nice, but you also possess wisdom, you let it be and you do not eat it. Those without wisdom will just eat it. So, it is very important for our Dharma practice to often clearly discriminate between the qualities and the faults of those things that we are doing.

3.3.3 Fruition of Anger

The subtle consciousness of fear slowly turns into powerful anger. It begins in a very subtle way, a subtle consciousness, for example, you see a mosquito flying around, it is very small but the moment you see it, you are afraid. You think that it will bite you, cause itching and will even hurt you. So, you follow it and see where it goes. You have an aversion to it. That is the subtle form of resentment and it arises anywhere. For example, you do not like particular kind of food and that becomes stronger and stronger. From this fear, this habit of anger becomes stronger and stronger. Then it leads to conflicts, fighting, between people, between religions, between countries. All conflicts actually come from this subtle consciousness of fear and that comes from an attachment to oneself and an aversion towards others. One only cares for one's own well-being and has little concern about others. This imprint becomes stronger and stronger. It all starts out from a subtle consciousness and turns into a strong habit of anger. It is really important then to recognize these thoughts arise in their subtle form, for example, a very subtle anger/aggression arises in the mind. It is because if you do not recognize it, it grows stronger and stronger.

Recognizing it, then you should think about its results that it leads to. If resentment/anger stays in your mind, how does this karma ripen? What is the nature of it? For example, when we get angry, nothing agrees with us. We think, "It does not agree with me." "They are not nice to me…" So, it all comes from the 'I'. Actually, there is no affliction which does not arise from the 'I'. For example, the relationship between parents and their children. Parents and children should have love for one another and see each other with love. However, due to self-grasping, they lose this perception of love for one another. For example, the parent thinks, "I have cared so much for this child but the child does not listen." Actually, the child also has his/her own karma. We cannot actually have much control over that. Then, the child thinks, "I am their child. I have the right that they care for me. They must take care of me, but they are not properly taking care of me." So, the child gets angry. They fight, do not get along, and are angry with each other. When the parents get angry, the children do not want to stay close to them and they do not want to look at their faces. Then, the parent thinks, "The child does not love me." Then, all the care that the parent has given to the child is all spoiled. All their love has transformed into anger. That is the nature of hatred. The nature of hatred itself is hellish. Nobody has created hell, but hatred or resentment naturally is a seed for the hell realm.

Milarepa said, "The root of the lower realms is hatred, therefore, practice patience even at the cost of your life." That goes for any relation, for example between partners and friends. Their

love turns into jealousy, then because of jealousy, you think that he/she does not love me, he/she does not like me. Then, we should think about what happens if we let anger and jealousy to go on. Even if we are rich, have many possessions, all that will not give us any happiness; for example, there are very rich families that actually suffer much inwardly, even though they are very rich, because they are not harmonious with each other, often they even commit suicide. All of that is the fault of jealousy and anger. That is why we called the afflictions or poisons. So, it is important to understand that.

We mentioned that each karma ripens in four different ways. For example, in the context of hatred and anger, the first way that karma ripens is the result of full maturation. As the nature of hatred, of aggressive mind is hell, it naturally creates the hell realm. What is the nature of hell? The nature of hell is that everything appears as a threat, an enemy. That is basically the perception that we bring from this life to the next. In this life, if we perceive even our children, husband/wife, our family as an enemy, so if everything appears as an enemy, a threat to us in this life; then after we die, everything will continue to appear as an enemy or a threat also beyond this life. It is this kind of perception that creates the hell realm. The full maturation of hatred is to be born in the hell realm. Then secondly, when that comes to an end and if we have some slight virtue left, we might be born into human realm again. The second result that comes into effect is called the dominating result. That means that we are born in a certain environment in this world without having any control over it. As a result of hatred, the dominating result will be to be born in a war zone, a war country in this world for example. Sometimes, even if some people are not born in a war country, they enter a war country driven by the force of their karma. Without being born in a war country, some people nowadays, for example, join terrorist groups and then they go there and they are killed there. In a way, they are really killing themselves. They are driven by the force of their karma to go to a certain place. So, in a way without much control, they end up there. So, that is also the dominating result.

The third result is the result similar to the cause which means that once we are born in the war zone, again we will engage in similar actions. Again, we will kill others, hurt others, that is, the activities similar to the cause. And then, there is the experience similar to the cause. Again, when we kill others, again we will be killed. It goes in circles like a wheel. The fourth result is called the proliferating result which means that as we continue to kill and be killed, it creates an endless proliferation of karma. So, one karma multiplies more and more, just like from one flower, countless seeds emerge. It becomes more and more. When we look at a war-torn country in this world, what is the karma of that? We feel great compassion for them. They are so poor in that country. What is the cause of that? It comes down to hatred and jealousy and that comes from self-grasping. Even in the human world, we are born in such a place as a result of self-grasping. Now, when we look inside our own mind, even though I am not born in such a place, but if I have these tendencies of hatred, anger and aggression in my own mind, for sure, 100% sure, I will also be born in such a place in the future. It is because the nature of aggression is the seed for hellish abodes. Knowing that you will be able to let go of these negative thoughts.

It is really important therefore to understand the suffering of the three lower realms that we learned from the Four Thoughts that Turn the Mind. Therefore, Buddha taught that it is important to think about the suffering of the lower realms in order to be able to recognize the causes that lead to such a birth. So, the Four Thoughts, the Preliminaries are indeed very important. We must recognize the danger of our own afflictions. The worst of the 84,000 different afflictions is hatred or aggression, which is the greatest fault especially according to the bodhisattva and the Vajrayana vehicle. We can see that this is what causes the greatest suffering in this world. In general, the suffering of poverty, hunger and thirst is caused by greed, stinginess and desire, whereas the suffering of fighting and killing, really hurtful suffering is all caused by jealousy and hatred. It is very important to recognize that and then to look into your own mind to see whether or not these tendencies are present in my own mind and to eliminate them.

3.3.4 Fruition of Pride

Pride, literally means a sense of full of self, an inflated view of self. For example, we are wealthy, then we think that we are so rich and we take pride in that or if you are highly educated and you think that you are a great scholar and we take pride in our good qualities. We all have that, even animals do that. Actually, pride is based on underlying ignorance. Because there is ignorance, pride is always naturally present in our mind. For as long as there is the sense of the existence of an 'I', self, naturally the nature of the 'I' is prideful. It is egocentric, it is just its nature. Sakya Pandita had said, "If your qualities are small, your pride is great. If your pride is small, you will respect others. A wise person shows respect to others." This is really true. The lesser are our qualities, the greater is our pride. A sign of having greater qualities is actually a lack of pride, a sense of respect towards others. Any being has pride, even if it is a just a thumb-sized tiny little creature. When a person walks along a road and meets this little creature, the creature builds itself up, very prideful, very magnificent; even though it is very tiny, has no power at all, it does not even have the power to protect itself. Actually, we do not have any power to protect ourselves, and have no trust in karma, just like this little animal. We are prideful because we do not look for another refuge for protection. We think that we are all powerful ourselves. That is why the nature of pride is ignorance.

When there is pride, since we take pride in our qualities, naturally when we meet someone with similar or higher qualities, we become competitive with them. Actually, even a very subtle form of pride is always present, we are somehow always prideful in our mind. For example, young people take pride in their youth and Dharma practitioners take pride in their practice. Siblings of the same parent are competitive with each other and so on. It happens between friends and companions and that is very harmful, for example, if it happens between two partners who live together. One thinks that "I am the one who is doing all the work," and takes pride in that and criticizes the other one, "he/she is not doing anything." When we keep thinking about this pride, eventually, this pride turns into resentment. As a result, we are harsh, and we say unkind things to the other person. We grow disharmonious.

Therefore, it is important to recognize when subtle pride arises. What is the antidote to that when it arises? Dzogchen Patrul Rinpoche said, "Do not look at the fault of your companions and do not look at your own good qualities." This is because if you look at the faults of others, pride arises, and when you look at your own qualities, pride arises. It is necessary to recognize the subtle form of pride as it comes up. For example, we do a good thing, actually it is a small thing, but we think that we did that great thing, we take pride in our virtuous action, actually that may lead us to lose our virtue. This is one of the four causes that lead us to lose our virtue. Actually, we may not be really losing the virtue when we take pride in it, but the merit is significantly reduced, so this is a great fault.

When we look at the qualities of others, there is no room for pride, no pride can arise in that state of mind. For example, we think about how I actually love this person, how this person works really hard, he/she does everything to help me and how this person really loves me. If you look at their qualities, love for them arises and this is to your own advantage. This applies anywhere. For example, people often do not look at all the good qualities of the lamas and the teachers, but they criticize them and look at their faults. If you have this critical mind that always looks at the faults of others, all you will see is just a heap of faults. That is the nature of this critical mind.

From a bodhisattva's perspective, we must see all beings as our parents, thus, there is no room for pride to arise since everyone becomes an object of respect and patience. According to the Vajrayana, we see all, self and others, as deities. The five elements are deities and seeing everything pure in this way, makes your mind become very vast. The vaster your mind, the more powerful your mind will be. According to the view of the Vajrayana, everything that exists, the universe and the beings are completely pure, there is nothing that is actually impure. What determines the size of the vehicle, greater or lower vehicle, depends on the degree of mind generation, how great of a mind we can develop. For example, we say that when someone follows the Hinayana, the lower vehicle, this is somebody with a lower intention, thinking: "I practice virtue because I want to be liberated. This is a lower, inferior motivation." The Great Liberation Sutra says: "The Mahayana intention (of attaining enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings) is like water in the vast ocean, whereas the intention of the lower, lesser vehicle is like the pool of water gathered in a cow footprint." A cow leaves a footprint on the earth and a little bit of water accumulated there; it is very little water compared to the vast ocean water. That is the difference between the higher and lower vehicles.

Therefore, it is not a matter of what we call ourselves, only calling ourselves a Mahayana practitioner or follower does not make us one, whether or not we are one we can only see for ourselves by looking at our own mind, our own intention. Often people when they have the slightest qualities, they take great pride in that. It is something to consider and to see for yourself. If it is just pride on its own, the result of the ripening of karma is lighter. Some pride is always present in our mind. As a result of pride, we are temporarily born in the God realms where we experience happiness only for the time being. However, one experiences the suffering of change and falling into the lower realms. Happiness in the God realms, the pleasures there are

temporary, and suffering does not disappear since it is not beyond the six realms of samsara; again, there will be change and falling into the lower realms. Pride on its own has a bit lighter consequence. But often pride develops into different afflictions, because of pride, we also get jealous, get angry and so on and that accumulate karma and based on that we engage in actions, then again it has negative consequences.

My dharma friends this is something I really ask you to look into in all your daily activities. Observe how that constant grasping at a sense of "I" and 'me' arises within your own mind. It is very important to remember this because it will be of great benefit if you do. Because this is where ultimate practice comes in and with regards to anyone whether it is your family member, your friends or your vajra brothers or siblings. Wherever you are when pride arises, that is a sign of inferior qualities. Let go of that, so qualities can arise. That which destroys all of your good qualities is this sense of 'me' and this pride. Because if this pride arises, then also other afflictions like jealousy will arise and it is not so small or insignificant any longer. The antidote to pride is to first look at the good qualities of others, then according to the bodhisattva vehicle, to see all beings as our parents and according to the Vajrayana vehicle to see everything including the five elements as completely pure. Ultimately, everything is completely pure, self and others do not exist. So, the ultimate method is to recognize the non-dual primordial wisdom. To attain that recognition, we must cultivate the mind of love and compassion.

3.3.5 Fruition of Jealousy

The essence of jealousy is to find joy in the sufferings and misfortune of others. Jealousy is the most powerful destroyer of merit. Jealousy is a very subtle emotion as it is always somehow there. The afflictive emotion of jealousy is the friend of anger and attachment, and is actually very powerful but also not always apparent in our mind. When your mind is filled with pride and when there is pride, jealousy arises. The six afflictive emotions will arise. Pride is by nature ignorance and jealousy ultimately is anger or hatred. Pride leads to birth as a God and jealousy leads to birth as a demi-God. Jealousy and pride sometimes manifest as a subtle feeling of dislike. For instance, when someone tells you how great you are, you feel good about it. But then the person continues, "You are great, but he is still better." Then, a feeling of discomfort arises. When others are praised, we do not like to hear about it. When these subtle thoughts of jealousy and pride remain unrecognized, they grow into overwhelming emotions that cling to one's own happiness and to hostility toward others. The root of all this is the grasping at a self. Because we strongly believe in this self, we feel alarmed by everything that threatens it. So, these are the seeds that will bind you to samsara without liberation.

This is explained in the commentary on the Prayer of Excellent Conduct, 'The King of Aspiration Prayers". It says that it is a very subtle affliction but it leads to very major downfalls and destruction because it destroys all of our merits. Sakya Pandita had said it is an evil intention that exhausts or destroys all your roots of merit. And this evil intention is jealousy which is always naturally present in our minds in a subtle way, so we never really recognize it. This is extremely difficult to recognize, but if you really recognize it, it will go away instantly.

It arises when there is a person that you do not like and you will naturally say things to make them look bad or humiliate them. You will speak about their faults or criticize them and so on. But it will be different if it is someone whom you like very much. In fact, when others blame you, they cannot add a fault to you that you do not possess; it is his own fault. You must not point out their faults in return. In fact, if they point out your faults and you speak about their good qualities, then even from a worldly perspective, this is truly astounding. When others praise you, you are not becoming a greater person because of that. Whatever others say about you does not affect your faults and qualities. Only you can see whether you have this fault or not. If you do not have the fault for which you have been accused, there is no need to be upset, since criticism does not make you have the fault. If you do have that fault for which you have been accused, then the person pointing it out to you becomes your kind teacher helping you to improve. This is how you should look at it, and make it your practice to think about it again and again. So, we have to point out the good qualities of that person.

Especially amongst us disciples, this should become our main practice, because ordinary people have such a strong fixation on the words that others speak. We must not grasp at words in any way. Someone who is very happy only talks about good things, but if something small happens that he does not like, he says all sorts of negative things about it. We must see this as the fault of afflictive emotions, and remember that everyone is endowed with Buddha nature. Jealousy in particular is behind a lot of talking, so you should then think, "Oh, it is just the fault of jealousy," and not grasp at it. Non-grasping is the samaya of the absolute truth. On a relative level, we must evaluate our own faults and qualities and be a good person. You must be straightforward with yourself. When you die, it is you who is going, and you have to depart with a clean mind. Other people's accusations and criticisms do not go, and if you can stay, they cannot harm you. The samaya of the absolute truth is non-clinging, appearance-emptiness, and sound-emptiness. As for sound-emptiness, it is to recognize talk to be empty, and thus it can cause no harm. Dzogchen Patrül Rinpoche said, "Never look at your own qualities, but never look at others' faults. Always look at your own faults, but never look at others' faults."

Milarepa's song begins with "Lord Marpa the translator who is so kind, please be a refuge to all sentient beings of the polluted age. Grant your blessings that dharma may pacify jealousy." In these degenerate times, wisdom and compassion have become very small; but self-grasping has increased which is the opposite of wisdom. Therefore now, even though one is a dharma practitioner, a lot of jealousy arises. Because there is self-grasping, beings develop pride which leads to jealousy. For example, in the case of Milarepa, even though he had so many great qualities, many people still saw his faults. Sentient beings will increasingly degenerate in their self-grasping and afflictive emotions. So, the six afflictive emotions are complete within the degenerate mind of self-grasping. There are different kinds of degenerations. There is the degeneration of the view, of individuals, of the Dharma and so forth. So how has it degenerated? Nowadays, science is improving on the external level, but due to these developments, our inner attachment and our greed are increasing. And we are feeling a sense of covetousness of wanting the happiness of others. So, we cultivate desire which leads to jealousy and that leads to conflict

between countries, people and friends. It is because the afflictive emotions are so strong and coarse. It is like a poisonous vapor coming out from one's mouth. So, sentient beings experience this intense suffering and the Buddhas of the past had spoken about this over and over again.

What we do in this samsaric world is to increase the habit of dualistic grasping in whatever we do. This is not only what worldly beings do, but also happens when we practice the Dharma. A lot of dualistic grasping and biased thinking occur when you practice the Dharma. For example, many questions arise around the way in which the teachers teach the Dharma and the way in which the disciples receive the Dharma. Conflicts around that often arise. The Dharma consists of two teachings - the teachings of the scriptures and the teachings of realization. The teachings of the scriptures are like the support to the teachings of realization. There are much debate and disagreement, which is necessary for those scholars in order to refine, train and enhance their own understanding. It is like a mutual polishing of their own understanding of the Dharma. It is like two friends helping each other to clean each other's face. Two people are debating and pointing out each other's faults in order to bring it all up to the surface and then through the debate to clear it away. There are many tools used for that in a debate. Something that is actually good, they would say that it is bad and vice versa. That is all just to train one's mind and one's own understanding of the matter in order to really understand and uphold the Buddha's teachings. If we hear that as a practitioner and we misunderstand this debate as some quarrel happening between different lineages, and if we then tell a practitioner who has no idea about these things, that debate may actually turn into pride in the mind of that practitioner. They would think, for example: we are Gelugpa practitioners and clearly, we can see based on this debate that we are much better than the other; we are really the upholders of the teachings through the Vinaya whereas the other really do not know it that well and they are really nothing. Those who debate, who uphold the different lineages, the tenant systems, must debate those things because they want to refine their own understanding and not really point out each other's faults. But if we take this debate into our sphere of practitioners, it is actually very harmful to us because when normal practitioners hear that, they may misunderstand that. For example, they may think all the Nyingmapas and Kagyupas are like demons, they are really evil. When you meet somebody and you ask your friend who they are; when your friend says they are from the Nyingmapas, you will feel scared of them right away.

That goes of course with other religions too. There is a lot of fear. For example, we do not even know where a person is actually from but already when we see somebody different, somebody else, and the other person just approaches us, laughing and just want to shake our hand, immediately you feel afraid because you think that that person is this other and therefore cannot be so good. Thinking in this way is really harmful to ourselves, therefore, it is necessary to recognize this feeling of grasping when that arises because that gets thicker and thicker and solidifies. First, one thing is bad, then second one, and the third one, then in the end only oneself is good and this pride develops into many other afflictions, seeing everything else as bad and we only see faults. Within that state of seeing faults, many other afflictions arise; we develop resentment, we become prideful, jealous and so on.

For us practitioners, how should we approach that? Especially, when we think from the perspective of Mahayana, we must develop a vast intention of bodhicitta, that means, we should see all sentient beings without exception as our parents, like our real family. If you see everyone as a family, where can there be a difference between enemies and friends if everyone is your parent or your family, each person that you meet? Often, disciples do not really hear that and they come and say: "I would really like to come to your teaching today but there is this one other disciple that I do not like and he does not like me, that is why I cannot come. If he comes, I would not come." Then they ask, "is it okay to listen to your teaching on the internet and not come?" Many people actually say things like that. Only because there is a temporary thought of dislike; they grasp at that and hold on to that for a long time. Actually, it is just a momentary thought, not always like that for the entire life. But this grasping becomes stronger and stronger and this increases the harm and causes the mind to become narrower and narrower and uptight.

Actually, as a Mahayana practitioner, we should have a vast mind. If our mind is so narrow, there is no need to mention that we are distancing ourselves from Mahayana. We see everything as a fault, so we are not really practicing Mahayana. When we see the fault in everything, naturally the nature of that is aversion, resentment, competitiveness, dislike of others. Then, when we see the person that we dislike experiencing some misfortune, problem, we rejoice in that. That is a subtle form of jealousy. And if it is somebody who experiences success and happiness, you get jealous about that. Basically, whatever you rejoice in you will get it yourself in the future. So, by being jealous and competitive, your virtue and merit declines. As an antidote to that state of jealousy and competitiveness, you should rejoice every time you see others experiencing happiness. In that way, you will receive the same happiness that they experience. This subtle form of jealousy remains for the most part unrecognized. It is necessary to realize that they are there and take notice of it. Otherwise, if you do not engage in practice, this jealousy develops into other afflictions - our afflictions develop from pride into jealousy and then to hatred and it only gets worse and worse.

What should we do as Buddhist practitioners? We should think that although I am a Buddhist practitioner, actually all the religions, let alone lineages, all religions in the world are good and all are necessary and that all the religious practitioners are Sangha. I personally see all religions as good because all religions have some qualities, for example, morality, discipline, etc. They all have a way of helping sentient beings, for example, practicing generosity. Basically, once you have a religion, a spiritual path, you know where you are at and where you are going to. If you do not have a religion or path at all, you are like being in a wasteland, not knowing where to go just like an animal. Actually, we should think that all religions are necessary, and they are all the Sangha and then we practice our own religion without any conflict, thinking that all religions are good. Whenever you see a temple from a different religion, you think that they are good, for example, a Christian church or a Muslim temple. Religion is always good; of course, there are different types of practitioners of that religion, but the religion itself is always good. If you see in this way, your mind will become much more open and you will see everyone as your parent. This is the way to practice in this context. This is the way we should direct our mind.

4.0 THE WISDOMS

The karmic actions are a delusion, like a dream. The six karmic actions refer to the karmic actions performed in the six realms. Viewed from the eyes of a bodhisattva for instance, all these actions are like a dream. Milarepa said, "I am a yogi who has realized this life, the future lives and bardo to be one." That means that you always (wherever you go), you follow the path of your own karma. Therefore, if you wish to experience happiness, you should walk that path of bodhicitta. Wherever you go, whether you are in this life, in the bardo or next life, it is the same. If you do not cultivate bodhicitta, wherever you are in this life, in the bardo or in the next life, you will only encounter difficulties. Karmic actions are like a dream. One may think that if everything is like a dream, it is not so bad because dreams are not real. You think that this life is reality, the dreams are unreal. If it is just like a dream, it is better. But this is actually not true because later, after this life, when we die, we go on just like in a dream, just like leaving behind this dreamlike life.

This entire past life appears just like a fading dream and it becomes just like a dream. Now, for as long as we have the karma and imprint of this body, we are in this life, but whenever it comes to an end, when we die, we will move on and leave this life behind just like a dream. We will bring with us our karma. Knowing that you should see that this is the karma that I will bring with me after this life. This life and a dream are actually identical. In both a dream and in this lifetime, we experience some actual experiences of suffering.

All beings of the three realms are actually identical to Buddhas, the Ground of all. It is because there is no duality of self and other, so, on that ultimate level, Buddhas and sentient beings are actually equal. This is where the real understanding of the view begins. Because the mind is unclear, we are unmindful, we do not recognize our own true nature and due to that, we become deluded, confused by dualistic grasping. We are distracted by only the perceptions of this very life and we continue to accumulate afflictions. First, it begins with not seeing one's own nature, therefore, we perceive the duality of self and others. As a result of that, we have ordinary afflictions. With these afflictions, we engage in actions and accumulate karma and these actions are acted without aim, they are aimless or meaningless actions. Meaningless because day and night, like an ever-turning wheel, we work hard but only for the purposes of this life. We combine our body, speech and mind to work very hard to accomplish our purposes of this life, but actually what happens in this life follows the karma that we have accumulated in previous lives. Whether or not we will be successful in our activities is determined by our karma.

Because we do not understand karma and, therefore, we do not understand the actual causes to create happiness; so, we spend our entire life working very hard, then all become meaningless because when we die, all of our actions have been done for nothing. When we die, we may have earned millions of dollars, a house, our body, our friends, all that we have, we will have to leave behind keeping nothing with us. Just as it says in the 37 Bodhisattva Practices that after we have died, all is gone and becomes meaningless. Whatever action we engage in, whether it is Dharma or worldly activity, what actually makes an activity meaningful or meaningless? It really comes

down to whether or not we know or understand karma. This is what really determines the meaning of our activity. For example, if you do know karma, you know that the actual cause of happiness is the precious bodhicitta. Thus, you cultivate love and patience. If you do that, even if you engage in worldly activity, it becomes actual virtue. On the other hand, if you do not trust in karma and do not trust in bodhicitta as a cause of happiness, even if you practice virtue on the outer level, it only becomes half virtue, the other half is non-virtue. It is because knowing the karma is like having opened eyes. The outer actions of body and speech are not principal, more important is to understand karma - cause and effect. If we do understand it, all samsaric activities actually become a practice of the six paramitas. What gives action meaning is whether or not we understand the working of karma.

Temporarily, six different realms of samsara appear because based on Buddha nature, self-grasping arises and the temporary condition of the six afflictions leads to the manifestation of the six realms of samsara naturally. Nobody actually creates those six realms, they arise naturally from the six afflictions, a natural expression of these six afflictions. Not understanding the ultimate truth, therefore temporarily, beings experience a real experience of suffering - a physical pain and mental sufferings and so on. That is because they hold all the appearances as real, and do not understand how things really are, therefore they have a real experience of suffering. But someone who realizes the actual way things are, will see all of the six realms of samsara like a dream, like an illusion. They understand the causes that lead to that.

You recognize on the ultimate level, in a state of ease, awareness holding its own - mindfulness holding itself with stability and recognizing when afflictions arise. When you recognize it, it will dissolve just like a wave in the water. We have to find the awareness that sees all thoughts. First, Buddha nature is the same, a single basis, from that basis, when bodhicitta arises, the natural expression of bodhicitta temporarily is the happiness of the three higher realms and ultimately the attainment of enlightenment. From that, the manifestation of the countless pure lands will appear, with dharmakaya like space and the sambhogakaya like a rainbow in space, as they lack any true inherent substantial existence.

4.1 Wisdom of Discernment

If there is mindfulness / recognition, one does not have to reject the sense objects, one can enjoy them. But one must clearly see whether or not clinging attachment arises and one must investigate and think about the benefit and the fault of enjoying this sense object. If somebody with wisdom recognizes that there could be harm, for example, if one eats sweets which can cause illness, then with a wisdom mind, one would refrain from eating that for example. So, on the relative level, one gives up clinging attachment by investigating the faults and the qualities of enjoying a given sense object. From the ultimate perspective, when one has recognized the nature of mind, intrinsic awareness, the moment clinging attachment arises, one recognizes it. There are mindfulness and awareness. From that perspective, it is okay to enjoy any of the five sense pleasures. But from that perspective also, there is no attachment at all. If the object is

present, it is fine; if it is not present, it is also just as fine. So, whatever appears, whatever is there, that is sufficient, nothing else is needed.

When Milarepa taught the view, meditation and conduct, that is the conduct that needs to be applied. Whatever is there is sufficient and if things are not there, it is also just as fine. So, whatever is there will not harm one, affect one in any way. That is the ultimate conduct of the Vajrayana. Also, the omniscient Longchen Rabjam said, "When thoughts settle into the natural state, there is no need to abandon samsara. When thoughts have dissolved, there is no harm in partaking of or enjoying any of the sense pleasures because there is no clinging to them". Milarepa said that if there is no clinging, eating food, for example, becomes feast offering of ganachakra. The point is that there is no attachment, then there is no need to reject.

The perfect discernment is to investigate, to not allow the mind to become attached. Ideally, from the highest perspective, one does not become attached only through the view of sustaining mindfulness. Or else, one investigates with discerning awareness, their benefits and the faults caused by enjoying a given sense object. For example, many people who possess wisdom do not eat meat and they are very careful in their activities. So, if we possess wisdom, we also have the ability to apply some discernment in all our activities and be heedful in whatever we do. In that way, we eliminate clinging attachment.

Even in this life, in a worldly sense, for example, if one does not eat meat because it harms one's physical health. It is wisdom because we know that it harms our body and our health and that is why we do not do it. Even if we are only careful for health reason, it is still beneficial, at least we will obtain the quality of birth in the higher realms in future lifetimes. But then if we do it for all sentient beings, for example, if we take a vow/samaya that we do not eat meat for the benefit of all sentient beings, then the merit is incredible. This is the wisdom of perfect discernment.

This wisdom of perfect discernment is also often called the individual discriminating wisdom that has the nature of purified attachment. That is when you abide within the actual nature of intrinsic awareness, all the afflictions become liberated as wisdom. So, clinging attachment becomes liberated into discriminating wisdom - the wisdom of perfect discernment. This wisdom of perfect discernment can discriminate clearly and accurately between faults and qualities. It knows the very subtle working of karma cause and effect. It is the wisdom that knows what to do and what not to do. The 84,000 afflictions are destroyed only by this one awareness. It is just like an apocalyptic fire that incinerates everything that appears and exists. It can overcome anything. This awareness has the power to destroy all afflictions and turns them into primordial wisdom.

4.2 Wisdom of Clarity

When strong anger arises, neither reject nor accept it, instead relax in the natural state. You rest within a state of self-knowing, nondual awareness. Milarepa said, "Actually, the afflictions and wisdoms are co-emergent, they arise together." How does that happen? For a practitioner, for example, when anger arises, the moment it arises, there is recognition, you recognize that anger is arising. So, co-emergent with the anger, there is also a clear knowing awareness that

recognizes it. They are not separate from each other. For those who do not practice, for them this wisdom becomes self-grasping. The self-grasping is so strong that the moment anger arises, there is no awareness at all because the "I" is most important, and they become controlled by the anger and then many faults come from that. When we engage in practice, when anger arises, you recognize the fault in anger. We recognize it with mindfulness. If you hold this mindfulness, the moment it arises, it will dissipate just like a wave on water the moment it arises. That is the innately clear, the self-knowing awareness. That is the wisdom of clarity.

Where is the anger when you directly look at its nature? It is actually nowhere; there is actually no anger. Then, anger becomes empty, then there is also no karma ripening; therefore, ultimately karma is also empty. But often people do not know how to understand that right, they do not listen properly and do not really understand the meaning of that, so many doubts arise. They see a contradiction: they say on one hand, you say that karma is infallible and on the other hand, you say that karma does not exist and it is empty. It seems to be some kind of deceptive talk that does not make any sense at all. For those who really practice, the practitioners really understand what it means. When anger dissolves, the mind remains particularly clear and your meditation has even more clarity and you find that the anger actually enhances and benefits your meditation.

In the Kagyu lineage, it is also said that, "Let the afflictions arise, the more the better." In Drukpa Kagyu, Song of Realization says, "When you recognize the nature of afflictions, all sufferings become an ocean of nectar." That means that all poisons have transformed into medicine. For example, like the Tibetan medicine pills called the precious pills, actually the ingredients are poisons, consists of all kinds of heavy metals and mercury and so on. Actually, even though it is made of poisons, it is a supreme medicine. It is powerful like a diamond. It is said that it can even turn away black magic, spells and so on and nothing can affect it.

From the ultimate perspective, the inner Samantabhadra is an example of such a diamond or a precious medicine. It is a diamond because it can destroy, can overcome anything, but nothing can destroy it. Nothing can affect its diamond-like nature. It destroys whatever afflictions and thoughts that arise, it is like an apocalyptic fire that burns away anything. Especially here, this clarity of wisdom is related to anger; when anger dissolves or liberated in meditation, the mind remains very clear. Just like the nature of attachment is the discriminating wisdom or the union of bliss and emptiness, the nature of hatred or anger is the mirror-liked wisdom, the nature of clarity and emptiness, the mind is very clear. Again, the five afflictions co-emerge and they arise together with the five wisdoms. Those who have not recognized the view, they should practice the bodhisattva vehicle according to the 37 Bodhisattva Practices in order to eliminate anger in that way. It is because there are only a few who have truly recognized the view.

Here, first we need to recognize and understand the view, the nature of the mind, then we must habituate it and then we realize it. That is actually very difficult. There are not many who have realized the nature of the mind in this way. If you have not accomplished that, it is more difficult to eliminate anger only through the view. In that case, we should resolve it with the conventional development of relative bodhicitta. How do we do that? All those enemies who hate one,

obstructers who harm, human or non-human, evil spirits and so on, all of them without exception have been our parents. If you get angry at them, you are really only harming yourself, not them. They all have been our parents. In past lives, they had been someone who had been very kind to you, someone who had been helping you a lot, but you have not properly repaid their kindnesses, rather you have hurt them. For example, parents who have cared for the child, but the child only hurts the parents all the time. In that way, we have created a karmic debt. In that case, instead of getting angry at them, the antidote to anger is to practice patience. That would be an excellent practice to follow that path of the relative bodhicitta. Or if one really has realized the view, the view itself is sufficient. There is nothing else needed. The view itself is the single sufficient method to overcome the 84,000 different afflictions. But that is a bit difficult.

What is the greatest fault for cultivating anger or hatred? For example, when we take the refuge vow, we want to be protected by the Three Jewels. Out of the Three Jewels, the most precious one to us is the Sangha. From the Buddha appears the Dharma and from the Dharma appears the Sangha. Sangha is the one who shows us the path starting from the Four Thoughts That Turn The Mind, relative and ultimate bodhicitta, and so on. Sangha is also the one who has become liberated from suffering and therefore can show the path to liberation to others. The Sangha comes from having practiced the Dharma. The Dharma is the words of the Buddha, the teachings of the Buddha. There are many countless teachings, many scriptures. You can pile hundreds of scriptures up like a mountain. What is the benefit of all these? Ultimately, it is so that you to give rise to love and compassion.

If you give rise to love and compassion, temporarily, you will be born in the higher realms as a human being and so on; ultimately, you attain enlightenment. The ultimate protection that really protect and rescue you is love and compassion that the Sangha introduces us to. What destroys that? It is hatred and anger. When we get angry, we lose our love. It is said that “Hatred and anger cut through the life force or rope of liberation and as a result, you fall into the lower realms for many lifetimes without any chance for liberation. For example, it is like you have fallen into the ocean water and you are just held by a rope to be pulled out, but then the rope is cut and thus you drown in the ocean and cannot be rescued. When you get angry, anger or hatred cuts this rope of liberation. It is very important to again and again contemplate the faults of anger and hatred. However, through recognition, the poisons of hatred and anger can be transformed into medicine because then, our mind becomes very clear. In that sense, it becomes like medicine.

4.3 Wisdom of Equanimity

Recognize the pride before you act out on it, before engaging in action. We do that by looking into our mind constantly, am I prideful? Is there pride? Checking our own mind. If there is pride, we should be aware of it. Sustain mindfulness and thereby recognize if pride arises; that is also the discriminating wisdom that recognizes what always arises in the mind; for example, you recognize a subtle form of anger, a subtle form of pride or attachment and so on. If you recognize it, you achieve the wisdom of equanimity. Ideally, by sustaining mindfulness, awareness holding

its own. If you are not able to liberate the thought arising, then the thought of pride that arises must be liberated through relative bodhicitta. That is why we have to see how things really are.

Equanimity is also significant since everyone possesses both faults and qualities and there is no one who only possesses faults, even animals have some qualities, for example, they look nice or they have a good voice, etc. Certainly, all humans have some qualities and there is no one who does not have any quality at all and no one who only has qualities and no faults at all. If you look carefully because everyone has both faults and qualities, we are really all the same and there is no difference. Therefore, if you look at the qualities of others, that is only to your own benefit since your own qualities will increase because you will not cultivate anger and resentment against them if you think that everyone is the same, having both faults and qualities. Ideally, if you have awareness and if awareness holds its own, you are able to liberate all afflictions that arise, seeing them as illusions arising and they dissipate back into the mind like a wave in the ocean and transform into wisdom - the wisdom of equanimity. Earlier we mentioned the example of a mirror, the mirror-liked wisdom, and within the mirror, everything can be reflected. From mirror's perspective, the mirror has no preferences, it does not think "I like certain things to be reflected but not others". Everything is reflected in the same way in the mirror, anything can arise. This is another way to liberate pride.

4.4 Wisdom of Unobstructed Action

When jealousy and competitive thoughts arise, do not grasp them as enemies. Just relax in ease, then consciousness can hold its own natural state. You recognize on the ultimate level, in a state of ease, awareness holding its own - mindfulness holding itself with stability and recognizing when afflictions arise. When you recognize it, it will dissolve just like a wave in the water. The liberation of the thought of jealousy and competitiveness relates to one of the five wisdoms, the wisdom of unobstructed action.

It is important to recognize each and every subtle arising of jealousy and pride. This requires a great deal of diligence in mindfulness, as these emotions in particular are very difficult to identify. Whenever such a thought arises you must apply a method to abandon it. Ideally, you eliminate it through recognition. If you have trained your mind in mindful awareness, you will see the thought the moment it arises and recognize its empty nature. If you recognize this, this thought is rendered powerless. It will not affect you in one or the other way. If your mindfulness is not yet strong enough, you can apply the bodhisattva approach, considering that the other person is your mother, your best friend, your child, and therefore give rise to love and compassion for them. And if this is too difficult in a certain circumstance, you can apply the Pratimoksha approach, and that is to contemplate the faults of this emotion, understanding that as a result of acting on such an emotion you will fall into the lower realms. You should apply one of these three approaches according to your mental capacity in the moment of affliction. You have to practice according to your capacity, just like a child must wear children's clothes and an adult wears adult's clothes. A child in an adult's cloak would be troubled. In brief, Lord Buddha summarized, "Perfectly tame your own mind; this is the Buddha's teaching."

On the relative level, we say karma is infallible, that is when you do not recognize the afflictions that arise and you follow them, then temporarily, illusion-like or illusory karma will ripen into an illusory experience that seems to be real. Ultimately, the ultimate truth is emptiness, that is, when you do recognize the afflictions, then they are actually empty. When you realize their nature, they cannot do anything anymore. If we discriminate and look at the faults, we can really observe how one fault/affliction develops into another. So, it is necessary to recognize each of these subtle versions of afflictions; when they are all combined with each other, various afflictions arise in different combinations, jealousy, pride, hatred and so on, all arise in some kind of combination. Ideally, you recognize them with mindfulness without distraction, and then the afflictions naturally transform into wisdom, like according to this realization of Samantabhadra which is the single medicine that cures a hundred of illnesses. This is the ideal practice.

When you really think about this, the relative and the ultimate truth, the Buddhist view is quite amazing, we can really get a very deep understanding just from that - the relative truth is karma and the ultimate truth is emptiness. That is the most special quality of the Buddhist intent.

4.5 Wisdom Free from Thought

When you engage in a mundane activity, a very important activity, often our mind is very clear; we are very present in the moment when we are doing these things. In such a moment, even in the mundane context, we can know our own awareness. At the time when our mind is very clear, there is a mental presence, that is, this naturally clear self-knowing awareness. When you know that, you understand the nature of all of samsara and nirvana simultaneously, you understand the nature of karma and so on. This “wisdom free from thought” is that when thoughts arise, this wisdom recognizes that these thoughts do not actually inherently exist, so the mind does not at all grasp at these thoughts as having reality, true existence, rather see them just like an illusory play. “Free from thought” actually does not mean that there is no thought. Thoughts do arise; however, one sees them as empty, that is the union of appearance and emptiness - things do appear, but they are empty, which means there is no grasping and no belief that they really exist. Ultimately, all conceptualization comes down to one, the dualistic perception of self and others and all other thinking come from that. Therefore, when you realize the nature of your own mind, all dualistic grasping and perception will be cleared away at that moment. You see that everything ultimately is indivisible. Things appear in a dualistic way, but actually within the mind there is no duality. That is the first thing that we must understand.

5.0 THE ANTIDOTES AND THE KEYS

The Buddha said the ultimate reality is that everything is empty of self-nature. One way to realize that is through the Madhyamaka, or Middle Way view. It is a way to realize the empty nature of the mind of all phenomena - not just seeing it but gaining stability in it. Once one has gained stability in it, one is not only able to liberate oneself, but one is able to liberate others. For example, it is like having many ice blocks floating in the ocean, which can be melted with heat or hot water. If one's own water is hot, one is able to melt the ice blocks. The hotter the water is, the more ice blocks will melt. The antidote of ignorance is to request to turn the wheel of

dharma. Ignorance means that one does not fully trust in past and future lives, karma, cause and effect. As an antidote to that, we supplicate the masters to turn the wheel of dharma, so that wisdom and compassion may arise within our mind. Next, the antidote to doubt is to supplicate not to pass into nirvana. Doubt is a branch of ignorance; there are many things that we doubt. But mainly it is about doubting in the Buddha and some people doubt that he even exists. And other people think that even though he did exist in the past, he does not exist now. So, there is this believe that things can stop to exist, but actually that is not true as the Buddhas will never cease to be. And that is on the ultimate level, Buddha nature never ceases to be. On the relative level, bodhicitta never ceases to be.

When we take the refuge vow, we say "May all sentient beings have happiness". The cause of happiness is love. The more love you have, the more happiness you will have. All Buddhas possess great love, so their warmth is powerful and can melt the ice block of self-grasping of sentient beings. When all the ice is melted, the mind of all the sentient beings in the three realms of samsara and your own mind are not separate. The mind is one and the same, but it does not appear that way because there is a perception of the self that is mentioned in the Vajrayana. The secret mantra sadhana points out that the cause of suffering of sentient beings comes down to the origin of grasping at a self. When you look at that, it is empty of self-nature. Self and other are not separate. That is the meaning of emptiness.

5.1 Bodhicitta

In order to realize that, we need to cultivate the two kinds of bodhicitta. First, on the relative level, we have to cultivate the four immeasurables as an antidote to self-grasping. We have to put the four immeasurables into practice. These are most important when it comes to realizing the nature of the mind because even though you are looking at the nature of your mind, you still need the warmth of love and compassion in order to melt the ice block of self-grasping and the afflictive emotions. Otherwise, the mind is tossed between hot and cold emotions - for example the mind gets very hot when angry and cold when related to attachment desire. When extreme heat and cold come together, they are unified by underlying ignorance. This hot and cold is similar to water and earth. When you pour water in the earth, you have neither water nor earth - you have mud. The mind becomes muddy similar to that, soaked in a hot heat and a cold of attachment and aversion. When you understand this principle, you understand what is meant by having to tame your own mind. This wisdom is the key to inner transformation.

In this world, we have only two systems: the religious systems (Dharma) and the mundane systems of the humans. Possessing both systems is like possessing two open eyes. It is important to understand that the ultimate goal of both systems is the same, as they both wish to bring about the well-being and happiness of beings. The various religions develop their own tradition in order to bring about the inner peace and happiness of the mind. Thus, if everyone practices their own religion well, it will become the benefit of all. In the various religious systems, there are many different teachers who are all upholding their own different lineages and traditions. Because of that, criticism toward religions seemingly arises. However, this ongoing debate

between the traditions is actually not criticism - it is a mutual refining of each other's understanding of the Dharma; we are polishing our understanding after Dharma. Though it may seem it, it is not criticism because there is no grasping in those scholars' minds. Debate is meant to clear away all faults. Criticism is meant to clarify.

Sakya Pandita said that when we look at faults, we should look at the qualities of others, like when polishing gold. Do not analyze discrepancies and mistakes as that only leads to faults; instead, analyze the good quality of the Dharma. The intent of analysis is not to look at things in a critical way but to look at the good. In this way, we should also look at our own mind and at others. This is how an unbiased mind of pure perception arises. When that arises, you become free of all bias in terms of various Dharma traditions, pure and impure. All the fixation becomes cleared away. Some people in this world refuse all spirituality, they only believe in the improvement of science. This is slightly mistaken. We do need science but at the same time must not neglect our mind. And even within different belief systems, there is disagreement. To me, all religions are necessary and good. I also am very fond of science. I like to have two eyes wide open. A person who is only concerned with this lifetime is like someone roaming around aimlessly in a pathless desert not knowing where to go. A person who understands karma, cause and effect, is like someone walking on a road, knowing where to go and knowing where they are, but they still have to walk around mountains and face other difficulties. A person with bodhicitta is like someone going on a train. One goes straight through the mountain and is not obstructed by any obstacles on the way. One also reaches the destination faster. A person with love in their hearts can easily sever the flow of afflictions.

If one has bodhicitta, one becomes very powerful in accomplishing great activities that bring benefit to others. As love will destroy self-grasping, wisdom will naturally dawn and thus one will unmistakenly know what to adopt and what to discard. Going with the train is like cultivating relative bodhicitta. When self-grasping has diminished and one sees the nature of mind, one realized ultimate bodhicitta, emptiness. This is like going in an airplane. [When] the airplane moves above the cloud, the clouds are like thoughts and the space above is the expanse of dharmakaya. The airplane of clear knowing awareness moves through the dharmakaya space unobstructedly. It sees the entire world and also the clouds below, but as it overrides the clouds, it is not bothered by the clouds, the rain, and the storms.

Similarly, when one realizes the nature of mind, one is no longer affected in any way by the clouds of desire and hatred. Awareness is above these clouds. As the dharmakaya is like space, it is unchanging. Space does not come or go; space always is as it is. Realizing this there is no fear of death; space does not die nor is it born. The phenomena of samsara and nirvana are like clouds; they arise momentarily, but are, as they are, compounds. They are impermanent, subject to disintegration, coming and going. Moving above these clouds, one will not grasp at their substantial reality and thus will not cling to thoughts of desire or hatred. To see this nature even for just an instant is Mahamudra. You will never gain anything new. Awareness is like fire - in the beginning it is like a spark, in the end a blazing fire. But fire is always fire. You are not

creating a great mind that you do not yet possess. To see it for just a brief instant is still seeing it, but of course it must be habituated. Only when we preserve this nature continuously, will we achieve the state of great happiness and peace where there is no more suffering.

Because we say there are four moments or four conditions when we need bodhicitta. The first time is when we are happy, then we need bodhicitta. Because it is the result of [having] a kind bodhicitta mind in previous lives. When we have sufferings, in that case, we need to remember bodhicitta and try to cultivate it. We should understand why we are suffering particularly. Because I did negative actions in my past life or earlier in this life, so now I understand that the experience of suffering is not good. Now, I try to understand this suffering and cultivate bodhicitta and try to be kind and nice with other sentient beings. This is another important [moment]. Another moment is when we are sick. When we are sick, we also need bodhicitta. We need to understand why we are sick, what is the cause of this sickness. The cause of the sickness is that you must have done some certain negative actions. So, now you should sincerely apologize for that, you should think "I am sick now, that's good, because I have an opportunity to purify my negative karma, and meantime, also I am sick on behalf of all sentient beings, so that no one would need to go through what I suffer now." In this case, it is also important that you develop bodhicitta. Once you die, you also need to think "Ok, I change this life, I want to keep pursuing bodhicitta mind and loving kindness. Because I am changing my life like clothes, I am losing this life, but my consciousness is always with me. Once I have this good, compassionate, loving, bodhicitta mind, when I get to the next life, then I will have a better life, better health, better life circumstances and conditions. For that reason on behalf of all sentient beings in order to benefit all sentient beings, I want to pursue bodhicitta." So, you need to have bodhicitta when you have a happy time, and when we are unhappy, in the time of suffering, when we are sick, and even when we die. In all these conditions, we need to develop bodhicitta.

Jang Chub Sem in Tibetan means bodhicitta mind. "Jang" means dispel or reject. What we need to reject is all our attachment, hatred, jealousy, anger and so forth. Because our life is samsara. Samsara presents [itself] as frozen wood, something that is bound and frozen. Loving kindness is like sunshine. When the sunshine of loving kindness [is directed] on this frozen attachment, hatred, all these samsaric things, it melts all that is frozen, and every thing inside of that is liberated. Jang Chub Sem is like this. It is important to understand. For example, when you have suffering, if you look inside and think "Only I am suffering" and focus only on yourself, you feel you suffer the most in this world, but if you look outside, at other people, other places in the world, how they suffer, how long they suffer, which way they suffer, when you observe other sentient beings' sufferings, you will realize that your suffering cannot compare to the suffering of others because it is not so big. You will understand that your suffering in comparison to others is not the same. It also helps to diminish your own suffering; you will realize that your suffering is not so bad. So, it is also good in order to understand in which condition you are. Once upon a time, [there was] Jigten Sumgön, one of the Drikung Kagyu lineage masters. At his time, there was a big disease around, and he prayed to [become] sick and stop this disease, not transferring

[it] to other sentient beings. Through his kind and sincere compassion, the disease stopped. In the same way [as said previously], when we are sick, we should think "Ok, I am sick. It's good because I am able to purify my previous karma and at the same time, I want to be sick on behalf of all sentient beings, for that reason I am also gaining merit." This is also what Jang Chub means – to expel all the negative things and obtain all the good things.

In the suffering time, we have opportunity to practice patience, tolerance, keep our vows, be generous, and meditate. Based on that you can understand the importance of cause and effect and bodhicitta. It is very important. We can use all these things when we suffer at such times. During meditation, we should think and focus on compassion. Once we have infinite compassion or developed impartial compassion, through that we can arise impartial loving kindness. For that reason, first we need to meditate on infinitive or impartial loving, and through that we will arise impartial kindness and compassion. This is important, because once we developed well the compassion, through that we can purify all our negative karmas. Once we do Gom or Samten, meditation well, we will have less thoughts. Once we have less thoughts, or even we have thoughts, we are able to realize what are the thoughts, their origin, you will feel freed from all bondage. Then, you will feel like you have no sickness, you will feel healthy. All our diseases are connected to our thoughts.

For example, in my own experience I spent about twenty years in prison. But when I think about it, it is good, I am honored to have had this possibility. I did have [obtain] this kind of understanding, compassion and love inside of me, that it is a good opportunity to purify my negative karma and develop kindness and compassion. Some people committed suicide in prison for example, [because] they do not know how to use negative things in a positive way, so many people take their own lives. Patrul Rinpoche said, "Enjoyment is not good, suffering is good." You should understand what you learn from your great teachers, masters, gurus and use teachings in your daily life. We need to face reality and it is important to have loving kindness and compassion. It is important to think "All sentient beings suffer and I wish to benefit all them, or "I am sick I want to be sick on behalf of all of them." Such attitude is very important. Someone who has bodhicitta will exchange his own happiness for the suffering of others. There are some people who naturally have great compassion within their minds; this is because they accumulated merit in past lifetimes. When loving kindness and compassion arise within the mind, there is nothing more meritorious. Thus, what we call "merit" is really love. If we look at the teaching of the great master Shantideva, who gave such a great teaching as, The Way of Bodhisattva, it is very important to read, study and recite his teachings on loving kindness and compassion. What we need is compassion. When we look what is bodhisattva, it means someone who has loving kindness within [themselves]. People who have bodhicitta, or compassion, in their body and mind, are bodhisattvas. This is nothing to do with religion Islam, Buddhism, or Christianity. So, bodhisattvas are not only Buddhists.

Another important thing that we need to remember is to pray to all the gurus whom you trust, whom you believe in, from whom you received most teachings. Your teacher, no matter who it is,

is the root of all enlightened beings and the root of all the teachings. Your teacher's body, mind and speech represent all Dharma phenomena, so we should pray to our guru and you should believe, you should think that your mind is integrating into your teacher's heart. Your teacher's body, mind and speech and your own body, mind and speech are inseparable, integrated. So, you need to think like this and pray for that. It is one of the most important things. Through that you can develop compassion. Buddha Shakyamuni said that even if he taught many teachings but there is one single essence, the true nature. Once you developed the true nature, what is untrue will decline. Once you developed loving kindness, or compassion, it leads you to become bodhisattvas. This is the reason why it is very important to pray to your teacher.

For example, if there is a war somewhere and we see pictures of it on TV, then naturally we will feel compassion; the suffering will come to our mind and we will feel a very strong sense of uneasiness and sorrow. At that time, suffering will actually have arisen within us. Then compassion arises from it. Why? Because we love. If we did not love, compassion would not arise. Then, we would just think about making war and being victorious, and think of the fighting as being like a game. Someone who has love will understand what is happening, and know that the root of this suffering has arisen from the actions committed in previous lifetimes because of self-grasping and the afflictive emotions. Due to karma, all of those people gather in one place and fight. These battles are the results of hatred, attachment, ignorance, and jealousy. What we are attached to is mainly the self; attachment is primarily the thought "I" want. If we do not get what we want we get angry. When anger arises, jealousy arises. Then, because of these three, we engage in action, and later, as a karmic result, we come together in one place and kill each other. The root of all this is self-grasping. What do those people need? They need love. They need loving kindness and compassion. They need compassion. Through compassion their karma can be weakened; once you have given rise to compassion, you will be alright.

Even if a country is engaged in warfare, if all of its citizens would give rise to love in their mind-streams, then the negative karma of hatred would be purified and their self-grasping will collapse. Of course, this would not happen instantly, but it will gradually diminish. Like snow with sun shining on it, it will gradually melt away; you will not see it decrease from moment to moment, but only in the long term. When you understand the pain that arises from self-grasping, you will be able to transform everything within your mind. You will also engage in the practice of the six paramitas with physical and verbal actions, and in the actual practice of exchanging self with other, sending out compassion and taking in the suffering of others. When you have compassion, you will naturally wish to exchange your own happiness for the suffering of others. and when you then witness how naturally this exchange arises, you will develop strong trust in the power of love. Once you give rise to bodhicitta, you engage in the actual practices.

Buddha had said that you must recognize suffering; for example, when you think about the suffering of the lower realms. But even the suffering of what we can see, humans and the animals who co-exist. You just think about the suffering of animals and immediately you will recognize that our suffering as humans is nothing in comparison to that. That will truly be of great benefit

and think that we as human beings still experience much less suffering than animals. Then, your own suffering is so much lighter. Think in this way especially these days when you experience difficulties. Think about the suffering of others and then think of the antidote to this suffering. That is really the antidote to your own suffering which is to look at others and think about their suffering. For example, when you think about the suffering of someone whom you love very much like your family or your friends. What kind of feeling arises in you?

This is how the Buddha feels for all beings that exists. So, the suffering comes to you and you feel the suffering of others. At that time, when you become aware of the suffering of others, then your own suffering will somewhat diminish when love and compassion arise. So, look at the feeling of love that arises and recognize that through this feeling, the karma of your own suffering becomes purified. If we do not purify our negative karmas, they will still remain even if a hundred of eons pass. They will have to ripen and become purified. When suffering arises, think about the suffering of others. This is where the practice of Tonglen comes in.

Bodhicitta is like a piece of gold; it is undefiled and steadfast. Just like protecting a piece of gold you should protect your bodhicitta. For example, if you have some gold, you would lock it up in a nice box, so nobody can steal it. And you do not want to lose it, so you want to take care of it very well. This is how you have to protect your love. Recognize the importance and think that "This is what I need to sustain by all means necessary. I must not lose it, therefore, I must practice patience". That is the aspiration bodhicitta. Here, you understand the quality of bodhicitta and the necessity of sustaining it and protecting it. The Buddha realized that the cause of well-being and happiness of all beings is love and compassion, and he called it the precious bodhicitta. Bodhicitta is the state of mind that is totally free from selfishness, and that only and at all times cares for the happiness of others. If we do not prevent the causes of suffering from arising, there is no way we can create happiness.

If instead of practicing compassion, you have anger, it will lead you to hell. When you are angry, you will never be happy. It will even influence your dreams and you will have nightmares. If you have anger in the bardo, you will also have bad experiences. When I was young, I was very short tempered and I had horrible dreams. But my root teacher taught me compassion and I no longer had bad dreams. If you practice detachment, it will be easier to keep it in the intermediate state. If you are mindful and do not follow your attachments now, when you are in the bardo and see your future parents, you will not be attached to them and not be reborn in this world. The mind is like a flowing stream. It will not stay in a cup but will go where it will go. If you do not practice well, your mind will flow away. When the glass of your body is broken, it will go where it will, just as water would land where it spills.

I have said many things but there are two main points. First, you have to see all beings as your beloved. This has an immense benefit, like a wish fulfilling jewel. This is the practice of relative bodhicitta. The second point is absolute bodhicitta. You have to be aware of the nature of mind, no matter how many thoughts arise. You should not be distracted by thoughts, but be mindful.

5.1.1 Relative Bodhicitta

The Seven Verses of Supplication to Tara say when the Dharma is not born in a being's heart and they follow conventional words and meaning, they have not really understood the essence of the Dharma. In the beginning, we have to tame our mind through the relative bodhicitta. Only when we tame the self-grasping, we can realize the ultimate reality of non-dual primordial wisdom. The root comes down to the altruistic mind, and no matter what Dharma we practice, having such a mind is the basis of being free of all biased thoughts of attachment and aversion. It is the mind of a Bodhisattva, only caring about others is bodhicitta. This mind is the essence of all deities. If you practice any deity with this mind, you will be very close to the deity and receive blessings. What we call blessings is actually nothing but love. The mind that is free of selfishness and only cares about others is a bodhisattva's mind, such limitless love is relative bodhicitta.

Relative bodhicitta is based on the understanding of cause and effect and karma. Until you have realized absolute bodhicitta, you must believe in cause, effect, and karma. Until then, you should practice virtuous actions. Until now, our life has been like watching a movie which increases our obscurations. Chenrezig's practice is like watching a movie which decreases them. When they are gone, there will be enlightenment. Until now, we have not practiced mindfulness. That is the basis of our obscurations and how our perceptions have become deluded. Now is the time to be mindful of our thoughts and how they arise so that our afflictive emotions will lessen. In that way, mindfulness is like a strong fire. Even though you have received this method, through past habitual tendencies, you cannot dispel your emotions. To do so, you should put more effort into your practice. But in the practice of absolute bodhicitta, you cannot make an effort, except by strengthening your devotion. When looking at the mind, the mind must remain natural. You cannot apply effort. But, when practicing relative bodhicitta, you can apply effort by generating compassion. You must make a decision that the nature of your own mind is enlightenment. In order for this nature to appear, you must apply effort in practicing relative bodhicitta. It is like an antidote for your obscurations, like warmth melts the ice of your obscurations.

The idea of cultivating bodhicitta is that even if we are not able to put others before ourselves, at least we should equalize ourselves with others. And see others like a mother sees her child. Even if you engage in mundane activities, you will be liked by others. For example, there are certain leaders of countries who really want the best for their countries; freedom and so on. Everyone likes people like that and they would want to be close to them and listen to what someone who possesses bodhicitta have to say. It is just the nature of it. We all have that to some extent and we can find it anywhere in this world. It just arises in different degrees, but however much bodhicitta there is, the quality that comes from it are really incredible. This is what we call the "precious jewel" which is really love and compassion. As we have mentioned, we find that in every religion in any circumstance in this world. If you understand that then there is no more basis in saying that you are a Buddhist or he is not a Buddhist and so on. It all really becomes the same. Even if someone were to say that he does not need any religion or any Dharma is just like saying that he does not need any love. Love is our actual ultimate source of refuge or protection.

It is our only cause of happiness in the world and also in the Dharma. In the Dharma, all the different religions in the world have one goal and responsibility. And that is to bring about peace and happiness in the minds of sentient beings. To create peace and happiness, we need to create the right causes.

Everyone speaks only about freedom and independence in countries but no one really has that kind of freedom. If we do not create the causes, we will not reap the results of freedom. And the one who understood that was the Buddha himself and that is why we first and foremost take refuge in the Buddha. This is one thing that all religions agree upon and that is the mind of bodhicitta. When we cultivate bodhicitta, first we speak about the aspiration bodhicitta. The great scholars and masters can explain that very extensively and it has many different qualities. But then people like myself do not have much learning, so how can I explain the aspiration bodhicitta. What I have understood is the quality of bodhicitta and to understand that you have to think about even the slightest happiness that you experience. Where does it come from? It is very important to really think about that carefully. If you think that you do not have a lot of problems, you have a lot of possessions and you are very wealthy. Then, that is because in the previous life, you have practiced generosity. Or what distinguishes you as a human being from an animal is that you have practiced ethical discipline and abandoned sexual misconduct in previous lives. Or for example, if you have a beautiful face and long life, and harmonious companions. All of these qualities come from having practiced patience. All the qualities of the higher realms come from generosity, ethical discipline and patience.

When we look at our own mind, how much of that do we actually practice? We do not practice it so much, but on the other hand, it is also said that if you only take the vow of Nyungne with a single mind, you have already created the cause for birth as a human being. In this way, we have to reflect upon the causes because we want to experience happiness. You think that "I always want to be happy and ultimately I want to attain enlightenment." So, if you want that, then you need to understand the causes for attaining such a freedom. For example, who has attained such a freedom in this world now? There are some people who have lived through the first and second world wars and they are still alive. They were somehow not negatively affected by all of that and have lived to 80 or 100 years old.

We want to experience happiness, so therefore, we have to reflect upon the causes of happiness which is love. That is what needs to be sustained. There is one example that I forgot to mention before (in terms of karma) and that is the manifestation of bodhicitta. For example, even in the animal realm, it arises as an animal that is very peaceful, joyful and very pleasing to others. Then, there are other animals which are manifestations of hatred and jealousy like a poisonous snake or a scorpion. When you encounter such an animal, we do not really want to kill them, but you often have no choice but to recite the six-syllable mantra (Om Mani Padme Hung) and then kill them. But who really kills them? It is themselves due to the force of their karma. When we look at this human world, this is where you observe a lot of harm, conflict and killings. All of that is really a manifestation of hatred and jealousy. When you see that, you look into your own

mind and see where are those afflictions. So, when you see the afflictions, the suffering of others also helps us to recognize our own afflictions. Then, it is important to see that your own afflictions and the afflictions of all beings in the six realms of samsara are one and the same.

So, first we understand that the basis of our minds and our afflictions are one and the same. And for this reason, if you eliminate one affliction, you have made the burden of the affliction of all sentient beings somewhat lighter. It is just like they are all buried under this heavy mountain of affliction and if you take a little piece off, it becomes lighter. So, with that understanding, develop deep trust in karma, and from this trust, the vast activities of bodhicitta arise. For example, someone sits there to meditate on bodhicitta and it looks like he is not doing anything. But such a person has understood that the afflictive emotions of others and oneself are one and the same. And on the ultimate level, our minds are inseparable. Such a person has understood the essence of the Vajrayana and the method to overcome the afflictions. So, it really begins with recognizing those causes and to recognize that how they are responsible for all of our suffering. That is the meaning when we say "May beings be free from suffering and the causes of suffering". For example, you might think that there is this person who caused a lot of harm and took all of your money and never paid it back. First, you get very angry at that person, but then when you think about the cause, then recognize that it is only because you must have taken something from him in the previous lives. Right now, he is taking your wealth and you are really paying back your karmic debts. And why do we steal others wealth and engage in these activities? It is because of greed, stinginess, jealousy and desire.

When an affliction arises, then that affliction causes us to do something wrong. And now the result of that is ripening. It all comes from this same root of self-clinging and all the afflictions arise from that. So, recognize your own afflictions when there is a difficult arising in your life. When an affliction arises, instantly recognize it and when you observe the affliction in others, recognize that very affliction within your own mind. Recognize that this affliction is your true and only enemy. So, think about this really well and think about what is the cause of happiness. There is nothing higher or greater than love. People often think that if they make a lot of money, they will be happy so they just work very hard to get really rich. They think that they can have everything in this life and that is what they need. But then they die and have to leave everything behind. It will cause more harm than benefit because they die with this deep attachment to wealth. If you really want to experience wealth which comes effortlessly, cultivate love and a good heart that wish to benefit others. This is how you provide for the future.

Actually, it occurs in other religions like in Christianity where I once saw a quote: "Whatever I give to others is actually mine, I put my wealth into the treasure house of the heavens". What they really speak about here is the practice of generosity. All religions recognize that quality of love and kindness. That is the cause that leads to the desired result. So, when you die, that is the one thing that you must not leave this life without. Do not lose your love, that is the one thing that will stay with you. So, if you die with love, thinking "may everyone in this world be happy". Then just naturally after death, the purelands will manifest to you. Everything that appears will

appear as a friend and that will happen with a hundred percent certainty. This is how myself have understood the truth of the purelands. The purelands are nothing else but a manifestation of bodhicitta. All those who possess love and bodhicitta will go to those purelands. Everything will appear as a pureland and already now everything becomes just like a pureland. So, this is something that you have to decide upon and this is how I have also decided upon myself. This is one thing that all religions agree upon and that is the mind of bodhicitta.

5.1.2 Love – The Only Cause of Happiness

Imagine if every thought, every word, every action was for the benefit of all beings. It does not matter whether one calls oneself - a Buddhist or not a Buddhist. The Dharma is love. When you see how your love touches others, it will become your happiness to give your happiness away. Love is the only cause of happiness. Its nature is all-pervasive like space. Love is the sunlight of the mind. Generally, as we previously said, love and compassion are like the warmth that melts the ice block of self-grasping. In brief, if you want to be happy, you need to cultivate love and compassion. In a moment where you feel very loving, you feel extremely happy in that moment. If you come close to a person that is very loving and loves you very much, you immediately feel very happy. Whereas if there is a person that you do not like, if there is mutual dislike, then not a single word needs to be spoken. You will immediately feel exactly how the other person feels about you, and they will feel how you feel about them. There is a mutual knowing of how the other person feels without having said a single word. That is actually a sign that our minds are really one. For example, if there is a person you do not like, then you naturally have this thought in your mind. When you think this way, you have already created karma. You have already accumulated karma. Our minds really are the same, and that is why he will feel what I am feeling, and I feel what he is feeling. It is just that we do not recognize that, and the Buddha has recognized that through this feeling, our minds are actually one. Having recognized that, the Buddha has purified his own mind. For that, love in the beginning is most important, and this is really where we begin with the path of the Four Thoughts that Turn the Minds.

Now, the Buddha first taught the Four Thoughts so that we let go of our clinging attachment to this life. That is why we learn about how difficult it is to find a precious human body. Some people do not understand that. They think that “my life is worthless, I am so poor, I have nothing, there is nothing worse than me”, and they even want to kill themselves. But if you really think about it - how hard it is to find a precious human body in six realms - you will see that no matter what circumstance you are in, you still have a precious human body. We reflect on the difficulty of finding a human body in terms of its causes, illustrations, and number. Of these three, especially when you think about the number and the causes, you really will understand how hard it is to find a precious human body. If you only understand that, you will think that “even though I am poor and have nothing and have to ask for alms, I still have a precious human body”.

Then, why is it that “I am so poor”? It is because of the karma of greed or stinginess. Where is that greed now? It is still present in “my mind”. There are some people that are naturally

successful in whatever they do. They get what they want. Then, there are others who no matter how much they try, they never get anything. Why is that? It is because of merit. It is said in the Sagas's words of advice: the accomplishment of one's wishes without merit are effortful, and they are fleeting like a flame - a butter lamp flame in the wind. Whereas the accomplishment of someone who possesses merit is like the sun shining. It just happens effortlessly and naturally. If you have merit, then things naturally fall into place. Therefore, we need to accumulate merit, and what is it again? Through merit, we benefit ourselves, and it leads to the happiness of others. The root of merit is only love. That is what we need to accumulate. That is the cause of merit that we need to accumulate. For example, there are some people who have a lot of merit. They are very wealthy, and they are able to even help whole countries. There are other people in the Dharma who are able to turn the wheel of Dharma to limitless sentient beings and open the eyes to the Dharma for limitless sentient beings. There are many beings who are able to bring about limitless benefit and happiness of others whether in the world or in the Dharma. The reason they are capable of doing that is because they have accumulated merit.

Therefore, if you find yourself in a place of impoverishment, do not think that "I am so poor, I have nothing I can do, and there is nobody worse off than me". Do not think that way, because you still have a precious human body that you can use to practice virtue, to practice Dharma, and to eliminate self-grasping. Therefore, when it comes to accumulating merit, it is not about your outer abilities or what you can do in the outer world. It is not about your activities of body and speech as much as it is your mind. In the prayer of Sukhavati, it says that it is a greater benefit to pray to the Buddha Amitabha and Dewachen with faith and join your palms than it is to offer the billion-fold universe filled with precious jewels to all the Buddhas three times. It is of greater benefit to have faith. For example, if, from the bottom of your heart, you join your palms in faith to Buddha Amitabha and to the pure land, then that is merit. That faith that you feel for the Buddha is actually a mind of love. If you have faith and devotion, you pray with your speech, and you prostrate or join your palms with your body, then that is merit.

When your love is directed towards the higher beings, it becomes faith or devotion, and that is how you accumulate merit. It is like electricity, like light. When the light of love is sent to the higher beings, it becomes devotion, and when it is sent to the sentient beings, then it becomes compassion when it reaches the beings of the six realms. It is through love that you recognize the suffering of others. You become aware of sentient being's suffering. When you really love them, their suffering comes to you, and you feel the suffering. For example, you think how it would be if "I had to suffer this on my body. What if it were my own parents?" The Buddha said we begin with our parents because most people love their parents. We reflect that there is not a single being who has not been our parents. There are countless sentient beings, but you do not have to focus too much on the number because you might think there are too many sentient beings. Do not think about how many sentient beings there are. Ultimately, the basis of our mind is one and the same. Self and other are inseparable, so we are really one. In all these lifetimes, we have taken birth in every kind of existence in the six realms of samsara. At that time, you had parents

who really loved you. Then, you think everyone has been such a parent. You start with your parents or your friends, and then you expand that.

Jigten Sumgön said that most people love their parents, but there are some people who do not love their parents. There is no one who would not love their boyfriend or girlfriend. So, think of them, the partner that you love very much. The point is that you first have to recognize love. This is love - this feeling of love. Then reflect that the mind of all beings in the six realms of animals and humans and so on are one and the same. Then you really begin to understand karma. For example, when a loved one or a friend has died, you know that they go on driven by karma, due to various karmas that they have created. Think in this way. Think about their suffering so that a real feeling arises in your mind. This is how love actually arises, and from this love develops real compassion. We speak about the limitless sentient beings in the three realms of samsara, but it all really comes down to a single mind. When you think about their suffering, the suffering should come to your mind. That is why the Buddha said in the beginning, you have to recognize suffering, so that a real feeling arises in your mind.

Then what is the benefit of that? You might feel that how can I help them even if I feel all their suffering. I cannot help all the ants and all the different sentient beings. But again, it is not about the body – it is the mind that is most important. So why do they suffer? They suffer because of self-grasping and their karma created driven afflictive emotions. Since the root is self-grasping, what do they need? They need love. If I cultivate immeasurable love, that will help them diminish self-grasping. The stronger my love, the more it will diminish their self-grasping. For example, the more love you have, the hotter your water, and if you pour it over the ice block, it will melt. Even if it is just a little bit of hot water, the ice will somewhat melt. It will get warmer.

Therefore, karma is really related to the ultimate truth, and if you trust in that, when you really begin to trust in that, you begin to see the quality of love. When you really love others - for example, seeing an animal that suffers, you are first of all aware of their suffering. You see how they suffer and think I want to help or protect them. From that love arises compassion. Because you love them and care for them, you recognize what makes them feel well and in pain. With wisdom, you know what is good for them, what benefits them, or what harms them. It is just like a mother who is caring for her child. Because she loves the child, she also possesses wisdom knowing what she needs to do to benefit and not harm the child. First, love arises, and love is really what transforms your mind. Second, from this love arises compassion, and then from this compassion which is infused by love arises wisdom. With wisdom, you know what to do to help others. For example, a mother knows how to take care of her child, how to treat the child when they are ill, and so forth. Therefore, from compassion arises wisdom.

With compassion, you become aware of the situation of others and what they go through. That is not the ordinary compassion; that is the compassion that is imbued with love that comes from a real love - loving care. Otherwise, if it is just ordinary compassion that does not arise from love, it is just related to attachment. It arises because you are attached to somebody's beautiful body,

beautiful voice, and so on like an animal. Or in a worldly sense for example in samsara, that is why people often get married. If you both understand this point of possessing compassion that is imbued with love that comes from love, then this love will be so strong that you will be able to spend the rest of your lives together. You will not separate. That is when compassion arises out of love. Then naturally, you will be able to stay together. Otherwise, if it is just compassion that is not coming from kindness or a feeling of love, then it just becomes ordinary attachment. There are many people who get married based on ordinary desire, and then they get married maybe many times in their lives. They always experience difficulty, and then they separate. The fault of that is that they do not have a compassion that is imbued with love. So, think about love.

I had one disciple who once said to me that it is not just even people that he loves - he even feels affectionate towards inanimate objects. Now, there is this feeling of wanting to be gentle with them - even objects. Just seeing an object, he feels love towards the object. So, leave alone having love for sentient beings with or without a body, he felt great love for an object and treated the object with great gentleness and kindness. Normally, that is not how we treat objects. We treat them completely mindlessly, and we just slam doors and so forth. That is also related to mindful awareness, so hold on to mindful awareness in your activities.

Anyway, this is the first key. My first key is the key of love, and I am speaking from just my own experience. From love arises compassion, so the first key is the key of love. All temporary happiness comes from love. Everything is included within love. From love, for example, comes generosity, ethical discipline, patience, diligence, shamatha, and meditation; everything is included in love. The ultimate happiness comes from abiding within the view. If you understand the view - the nature of the mind, you become free of doubts. When you rest within the state of the view - the nature of the mind, the mind becomes free of dualistic thought, and that is the view we call the view of vipassanā that we often speak about. If you are just able to rest within that view for a single moment, the benefits are inconceivable. The Buddha said in the great liberation sutra, it is of greater benefit to rest in a single session of meditation than it is to save the lives of all sentient beings in the three realms of samsara. For example, when the bardo sentient beings see the nature of the mind, that is said to be the supreme power. It is because they recognize buddha nature. This is how we attain enlightenment. We must attain enlightenment through our own recognition.

I am adding on to the quote by Milarepa: “You cannot find the Buddha elsewhere aside from your own mind”. If you want to find the Buddha, look at the nature or characteristics of your own mind. So, that is the key of the ultimate reality. When you realize the nature of your mind, you will experience unchanging and lasting bliss. There is one line that follows that: “When you cultivate faith in the higher beings, compassion arises”. That is really significant. That is when a pure view and faith arise for higher beings, compassion actually arises. This means that the greater your pure view, the greater your compassion for beings. In other words, if you cannot give rise to faith and a pure view toward higher beings, you will not be able to cultivate real compassion for sentient beings. Therefore, faith is extremely precious, and having faith means

that you remember the qualities of the Buddha. What is the quality of the Buddha? There is no one but the Buddha who knows how to liberate sentient beings from the ocean of samsaric suffering of the three realms. No one but the Buddha knows that. And how many Buddhas are there? There are limitless Buddhas in the three times. When you really understand that and think of the Buddha, it brings tears to your eyes, and when that happens, it is a sign that you trust. Faith is extremely important. It is actually the most important of everything. If you have faith and a pure view, from that only real compassion will arise; that is why it is most important. Again, faith and pure view means that you always remember the qualities of the Buddha.

So, many of us, for example, read the hundred thousand songs of Milarepa, and you come across a quote or teaching that really touches your heart. Then, you take that out, compile it, and then organize a discussion group or session on that. You discuss it with the other disciples; that would be really excellent. For example, these quotes that we mentioned provide an excellent topic for discussion groups. Through them, you understand what is the temporary benefit and the ultimate happiness. One important thing that I forgot but want to mention is how we cultivate love. The best way to cultivate love is to cultivate love for the one that you dislike the most first - the one that you feel very angry with. That is the one that you must cultivate love for. This is what I have done, and now in this world, I cannot find a single enemy. There is not a single enemy even if I wanted to find them. This way, you cannot find an adversary anymore. You have to bring to mind the person that really makes you angry who you really do not like. Then think that this person is actually most kind to you. The kindest person is the person that really triggers your anger.

5.1.3 Absolute Bodhicitta

When you practice absolute bodhicitta, you meditate on the nature of your own mind. Milarepa said that this nature is our ordinary mind. Tilopa says when you look at the mind there is nothing to be seen. This may be a familiar teaching to you, but those new to the Dharma may not have heard it. For beginners, when you meditate you should not chase after your thoughts, just recognize them. Through practicing in this way, experience develops and you get a glimpse of the nature of mind. From that experience, we might think - now I have seen it, now I really have it, I have no doubt, no hesitation whatsoever in this glimpse of Mahamudra. Now, there is a great room for error when we have this kind of thought. When we have the notion that “MY” view is the supreme view, then this is the place from which we can fall down, a place from which we can make a mistake. We must guard against clinging to this view.

Particularly, when we have an insight into the nature of mind, when we have glimpsed the meaning of Mahamudra, we should not hold on to the merit of that meditation for ourselves. Rather we should dedicate that completely for the sake of all sentient beings by wishing that they too should have this glimpse of the nature of their own minds. For example, it is like you have two vases filled with empty space and you think that this vase is “him” and that vase is “me”. And when the vase is broken, the inside emptiness becomes one and the same. So, the mind is one and the same, and the person who understands the view understands the mind just like that.

Self and other actually is indivisible. Milarepa also explained that this is how dualistic consciousness becomes primordial wisdom. One might then wonder does one become like a different person? It seems like that from the perspective of not having realized the nature of the mind. But when you really understand the nature of the mind, you realize that the very nature of this dualistic consciousness is primordial wisdom. That then becomes ultimate bodhicitta and what do we really mean when we speak about realizing emptiness? Actually, it means to cultivate bodhicitta and realize that a self does not exist. There is no benefit in just intellectually understanding that the self does not exist. We can understand that a self does not exist but that in itself is of not much use because we have habituated to this sense of "me" for a very long time; since beginningless time. So, if you have intelligence, you understand that the mind is just like space. When you want to look at the sun and the clouds vanish, you see the sun within space.

This sense of emptiness, what really needs to be empty is the sense of a "me" or "I". And that becomes empty only if you develop this light sun of bodhicitta. Otherwise even if you intellectually understand that there is no "I", we still continue to reinforce this sense of 'me' day and night due to habit. It is like a constant snowstorm. You always think about "me" that "I am going to drink this" or "I need to buy a house" and so on. For example, once you have bought a house, you identify with the house. If someone comes along to throw a rock at your house, you get very angry with them and you suffer. This is something that we need to see; this feeling of "I" and this sense of "me". It is always there pervading our entire life and our mind. This is what leads the mind to remain in this ice-block solidified state. This is the source of all faults and suffering; and that must be cleared away. We cannot clear it away only by understanding it.

Nowadays, scientists can understand that the universe is empty and does not really exist. But what we really need to understand in terms of emptiness is the empty nature of the self that can only truly be experienced if you cultivate an altruistic mind. That is why it is said that the perfect Buddhas arise from an altruistic mind. Therefore, in order to bring about your own greatest benefit, you have to separate from this self-cherishing mind by cultivating an altruistic mind. And that will be the greatest benefit of others. Whenever you cultivate an altruistic mind, the ice block is somewhat melting and connecting more and more to the ocean water. Whenever the ice block is melting, even to some extent, qualities inherent within your own Buddha nature becomes apparent and revealing themselves. This is really the essence of bodhicitta or "Jang Chub Sem". So, what is purified is self-grasping and what is mastered is the altruistic mind; and it really happens simultaneously. By cultivating an altruistic mind, one naturally purifies self-grasping. For that, first identify love and then hold on to it from now onwards until it becomes immeasurable love. It is something that you have to develop and cultivate by reflecting over and over again. For example, the Buddha says "Do you love your mother and you say "of course I love my mother". Buddha with his skillful means then says "can you understand how many mothers you have had since beginningless times in samsara". And then you contemplate that you have actually taken birth in so many different bodies since beginningless times. Of course, I had so many mothers and of course everyone, every animal, every living being has been my mother.

So, in this way, love arises and becomes vaster and vaster. And whenever you meet someone, then you will feel a sense of love and affection towards them. A real feeling for them arises. For example, you are sitting here in this room filled with people then you would feel that everyone in this room is just like family. As explained in the 'Prayer for Excellent Conduct' where it speaks about the power of love being the all-pervasive power. When there is love, wisdom arises, and that is because if you love others naturally, you become aware of other people's suffering. That is extremely important for the engaging bodhicitta. It has to be cultivated until it becomes boundless love. Then, once you have cultivated bodhicitta, it is said that any samsaric fault can be transformed into a great quality through bodhicitta. Likewise, if you lack bodhicitta, any good quality is transformed into a fault. For example, love and compassion which are good qualities become attachment. Generally, love is a great quality; we love our companions, our cats, dogs, and so on. But often, this love is related to attachment. If someone really understands the quality of bodhicitta, the kind of compassion they cultivate is a compassion that is infused with immeasurable loving kindness. So, you recognize that everyone has been your parent or your friend just like you love your present friends. Everyone has been just like that. For example, if you have a cat, you recognize that this cat has also been my parent or my friend and now it comes back to my family. So, you remember the kindness of others and you want to repay that kindness. Now, there is no need to mention of course our present parents but even our enemies. When we talk about cultivating immeasurable love and compassion, we need some kind of measure whereby we can measure whether we have cultivated it or not.

The best measure was actually taught by Lord Jigten Sumgön where he said "let's not think about all mother sentient beings now but think about our enemies. There is someone who caused a few harms right now. If you are able to cultivate true compassion for them, then you can say you have cultivated true compassion and that is the ideal measure of immeasurable compassion". And you have to be honest with yourself because when you die, it does not matter what anyone else have ever taught. You have to die with your own trust in your mind and your own bodhicitta. That is very important because that is what really leads to liberation from samsara. We need to have trust in your own compassion and now you should ask "do I really feel compassion for someone who causes a lot of harm or not". First, we need to understand why this person appears as a harmed one. It is because in the previous life you were someone who was extremely loving and kind. The Buddhas speak about crucial individuals and our parents are some of those crucial individuals. Also, our lamas and our Dharma companions. That is because they love us very much and if we do something to upset them or make them angry, then that kind of anger that comes first from great love is very powerful. And there is nothing we can do about it; it is very powerful form of anger. But it is said that virtue accumulated in many eons is destroyed by a moment of anger.

For example, how many years have you been married or love your mother? Today something happens, someone takes your money or your house (or something else happens) and both you and your parents get angry. That anger and hatred cuts through that bond of love and then you do

unspeakable things like hurting or even killing each other. If you are somebody who understands the quality of bodhicitta, you will by all means not allow their love to become spoiled. They will just think that whatever they have done wrong, let it go. Do not think about what they have done wrong just think of their good qualities. Such a person who understands bodhicitta will not be able to say one negative word about anyone. They will be able to practice patience and everything becomes an expression of bodhicitta even in a samsaric worldly sense. Therefore, such a person with bodhicitta naturally develops wisdom. In this way, recognize this quality of bodhicitta and that everyone had been our parent in previous lives. And if you have this sense of gratitude for anyone, that will always bear a two-fold result. A temporary birth in the higher realms and the ultimate attainment of enlightenment. If you are able to do that, then whatever other fleeting thoughts of anger and jealousy arise, you will be able to overcome them. This is how you practice the engaging bodhicitta. You must have a firm resolution that you are going to hold on to love no matter what.

In the 37 Bodhisattva Practices, it says in verse 13 "even if others cut off one's head when one is utterly blameless, taking upon oneself all their negative deeds by the power of compassion is the bodhisattva's practice". You would recognize that it is all your karma; if you have the karma to be hurt or killed, then this is what is going to happen. And if I do not have the karma, no one can hurt me. There is no point in getting angry. I must not get angry even at the cost of my life. And when I die, I will die with faith in karma and the Three Jewels. So, this is to really practice bodhicitta and is something that has to be applied in your daily life. In whatever you do or say, you have to hold on to it. Even at the cost of your life think that no matter what, you will hold on to love and compassion in all your activities. You have to habituate to it over and over again. The cultivation of immeasurable love is really most important and this has been the focus of my life. Because I am actually a very sinful person, I really have only been concerned about cultivating this boundless mind of love. Because when that arises, this sense of "me" naturally disappears. You will just always think about others and then eventually you realize that others do not inherently exist. They are nowhere separate from you and from that understanding, that naturally leads into recognizing the nature of the mind. We call it the true seeing or insight or the wisdom that recognizes the nature of the mind. Without immeasurable love and compassion in your mind, even when you look at the mind's nature, past karma and merit let you glimpse a little - then it clouds over again. When thick clouds fill the sky, the sun shows a little, then is hidden again - hidden again and again. It is like that. When love becomes immeasurable, and non-referential compassion joined with emptiness enters your mind, then naturally this nature of the mind is free of every single cloud - it becomes like a sky free of clouds. You see at once that the two are not separate things - emptiness and compassion are not different; they are inseparable.

So, it is when immeasurable love first arises, self-grasping naturally dissipates just like an ice-block melting into water; becoming one with the ocean. At this point, there is no more distinction between you and others. And so, this is how you finally realize emptiness (the ultimate truth). So, first when we take refuge we say, "I take refuge from now on until I attain enlightenment."

One might wonder when once one has attained enlightenment, do we still need to take refuge and so on? But actually, at that point of having attained enlightenment, there is no more duality between someone to be protected and someone who grants protection any longer. It is just like water granting protection and refuge to water. Once you have gained such an understanding, you have somewhat gained an understanding of Mahamudra.

Absolute bodhicitta is based on seeing the nature of afflictive emotions. When you see their nature is emptiness, that is absolute bodhicitta. Then, you are beyond these concepts. Cause, effect and karma do not affect absolute bodhicitta because absolute bodhicitta is beyond concept. As said, until you have realized absolute bodhicitta, you must believe in cause, effect, and karma. Until then, you should practice virtuous actions. The unity of absolute and relative bodhicitta will happen when you understand emptiness as the nature of the mind. At this time, you will develop great compassion for those who have not seen it. So, at that point, relative and absolute bodhicitta unite.

If you have trust in your teacher, when you look at the nature of your own mind, you can also think of him or her, or remember the kindness of Milarepa. Then [that] devotion and the practice of recognizing the mind can work together. Especially in Kagyu, devotion is emphasized. Having devotion to the guru, you will gain enlightenment in this life. There are two teachers, the outer teacher and recognizing the mind. The combination of these two teachers is the best teacher. Even though you have received this method, through past habitual tendencies, you cannot dispel your emotions. To do so, you should put more effort into your practice. But in the practice of absolute bodhicitta, you cannot make an effort, except by strengthening your devotion. When looking at the mind, the mind must remain natural. You cannot apply effort. But, when practicing relative bodhicitta, you can apply effort by generating compassion. From now on, you must make a decision that the nature of your own mind is enlightenment. In order for this nature to appear, you must apply effort in practicing relative bodhicitta. It is like an antidote for your obscurations. It is like warmth which melts the ice of your obscurations.

The great Jigten Sumgön, who is like the Buddha, said the only way to understand absolute bodhicitta is to practice relative bodhicitta. You start with the person who you love the most and then expand that love to your friends, those you feel indifferent to, then to your enemies and finally all sentient beings. If you practice relative bodhicitta, it will liberate you from the suffering of the bardo, because when you practice relative bodhicitta all beings become like your mother and there is no way you will gather afflictive emotions. In that way, you will not fear the bardo state. You will see all beings in the bardo as your mother!

5.2 The Nature of the Mind

In the old days, there was a lot of criticism about one of the lines in Jamgon-Kongtrul's "Calling the Guru from Afar". He says, "I have never realized that my own mind is the Buddha; I have not realized that thoughts are dharmakaya". Some scholars have refuted the statement that thoughts are dharmakaya, stating this is contradicting and deceptive. How can we understand that

thoughts are dharmakaya? We cannot outrightly say that thoughts are or are not dharmakaya because it depends on one's own state of mind and whether one recognizes thoughts as dharmakaya or not. When we speak about ordinary unrestrained thoughts or afflictions, we cannot really say that these are dharmakaya. Here, we are speaking about complete mindlessness (the opposite of mindfulness) - we are not aware of the thoughts at all. We do not have any recognition, and there are complete unrestrained thoughts.

The thoughts are the cause of wandering in the ocean of samsara. For example, the thought of hatred then becomes the cause of birth as a hungry spirit in hell or greed. The six afflictive emotions are the seeds of the six realms of samsara for someone who has no awareness or knowledge of these thoughts or emotions at all. But to someone who does understand their nature, a thought that arises is not separate from the mind. The mind itself is the dharmakaya, and when one recognizes that, the five afflictive emotions mature into the five wisdoms. If one does not recognize that, then they lead to birth in the six realms of samsara. Thus, one cannot just refute the statement that thoughts are dharmakaya - one cannot just say “This is not how it is” - because it depends on one's own perception, one's own state of mind. Because of these kinds of words, people develop misconceptions of the actual view. For example, some non-Buddhist people may say Buddhists are bad, and if you go for refuge in Buddhism, then you will go to hell. Conversely, some Buddhists may say that the other ones are bad, and if you go there, then you will take birth in the three lower realms. It is these fixations, biases, and states of mind that really pollute the mind. From that perspective, a religion or tradition really does not benefit much and instead causes a lot of harm. That happens a lot in the world.

Gampopa said if you do not practice the Dharma according to the Dharma, then the Dharma itself will become a cause for falling into the three lower realms. This is because people have grasping in their mind. When the Dharma involves partiality towards tenets and the like, attachment and aversion arise based on tenets. Based on that, all kinds of feelings and thoughts arise toward lamas and spiritual friends, and all kinds of feelings and thoughts arise toward all the Dharma they teach. If these bring grasping and aversion, there is no point. Understand the Dharma's root: It is a method to purify the mind. And what purifies the mind? Grasping at things and signs - all grasping at things and signs obscures the mind, and because of that, phenomena are ruled by karma, cause and effect - they have no independence. Knowing that all joy and pain come from past karma - that is the mindfulness of Dharma that the Buddha taught. The fault lies in not understanding the true nature of the Dharma - the fault does not lie in the Dharma or in the religion itself. It is just a misconception or a misinterpretation of the teachings. The root of all of that knowing or not knowing comes down to the mind. The mind must not fall into a biased side which is an extreme of either this or that, attachment or aversion. It must abide in a state of great equanimity as is said in our prayer. When the mind is a state of great, immeasurable equanimity, thoughts that arise are not unrestrained and do not cause any harm. It depends on what you do with these thoughts. Will they lead to a biased view in your mind? Will you fall into one extreme or not? It is not that thoughts are not dharmakaya. You cannot really say that. If you are able to

not fall into an extreme when thoughts arise, then you can say that the thoughts are dharmakaya because the thoughts do not exist separately from the mind; they are actually the mind. This recognition really is something that you have to personally experience. A hundred scholars and a thousand yogis can say all they want to say about the nature of mind. But all can be summed up by this teaching of Jigme Lingpa. The mind should never be separated from loving kindness and compassion. Loving kindness and compassion should never be separated from emptiness. And mindful awareness should never be separated from emptiness. These are the key teachings.

5.2.1 Perfection of Wisdom

The perfection of wisdom is inexpressible and inconceivable, or it is beyond words and thoughts. That is the meaning of Mahamudra, it cannot be expressed in words or thoughts and we always mention that. It is the actual nature of the mind - the unborn perfection of wisdom, the unborn unobstructed, essence of the space realm of self-aware primordial wisdom, which means that when you see the nature of your own mind really as it is, then you will understand the nature of all of samsara and nirvana. So, whenever you realize the nature of your mind, then you have attained the perfection of wisdom. If you do not realize the nature of the mind, then for the time being, the mind is just like water that has frozen into ice, so you wander in samsara but still the same mind is the basis of both samsara and nirvana. The Buddha himself had said all sentient beings are actually Buddhas. Also, Milarepa said that when you realize the nature of the mind, you realize that all beings are actually Buddhas. That is when the ordinary consciousness becomes primordial wisdom and until we know that, if we do not really understand that, we will have doubts about this, about this fact of that all sentient beings are Buddhas. They will not be able to immediately understand that. So, you only really understand that when you realize the nature of your own mind. It is said that within the vastness of primordial awareness is the boundless palace of the three realms, and in the centre of this boundless palace dwells the Buddha essence, the Buddha nature. So, that is an introduction to one's true nature. All sentient beings possess a mind, and therefore, within them in the depths of their being, there is Buddha essence, Buddha nature. That is why when you understand that, you can understand, you can trust that all sentient beings really are Buddhas.

So, what is the realm of self-aware primordial awareness? For example, America we all see this as our country, and then within that you have your own environment, your surroundings, your own house, your worldly affairs and so on. That is, one's own sphere of existence or one's own realm. So, what about the realm of primordial awareness? How does that arise and appear? It is when you realize the nature of the mind. In the 37 Bodhisattva Practices, it says appearances are one's own mind. Also, it is said, first you must resolve that appearances are mind and then that mind itself is emptiness. When you realize that and you understand the nature of your mind, then the Sambhogakaya pure lands and the pure forms will begin to manifest. So, when your perception becomes pure, then your surroundings arise as a pure land and pure forms, pure beings. As long as our perception is impure, due to dualistic grasping, the mind is in an immature or unripe state, so that is the only difference.

For example, it is just like a piece of fruit that is ripe or unripe. If it is unripe, then you cannot eat it, you also cannot sell it, it is basically a waste. Or it is just like the seed of a flower when the seed of a flower ripens, then all the perfect qualities of the flower will mature and become manifest. So, when we first take refuge in the 3 Jewels and then enter the path of skillful means, then we attain enlightenment, which is just like the seed of a flower ripening into a flower, then all the perfect qualities of enlightenment will manifest. For as long as the seed does not ripen, if it remains in an unripe state, it is like a spoiled seed. However, the only difference is ripe or unripe, that is the only difference between Buddha and sentient beings.

So, when the mind matures, then the various pure lands, the surroundings will manifest as a pure land. When you understand Buddha nature, wherever you go is a boundless palace, whomever you meet is a yidam deity, whatever is done is done within the sphere of Dharmata. This is how you will then see perceive everything when you see the nature of the mind when the mind has matured. When the mind is still in an immature, unripened state, then temporarily due to being confused, the six realms of samsara will manifest. However, when the Buddha said all beings are actually Buddhas, he also said beings are obscured by adventitious stains. So, there are obscurations and these obscurations are the five main afflictive emotions. These make us perceive the five aggregates in a confused way and that leads to the manifestation of these six realms of samsara. This is similar to water having frozen into ice temporarily. As long as we have an impure samsaric perception, all we can perceive is just suffering and misery. As long as the ice has not melted, all we can experience is suffering. That is the realm of self-grasping, which are the six realms of samsara. Then, there is the space realm of primordial wisdom and that is experienced when the mind has matured. You experience the realm of primordial wisdom.

For example, Miling Trichen had said just the moment before he passed into nirvana, that all appearances are the deity, all sound is the mantra and all rising thoughts are the play of primordial awareness of Dharmata. All appearances, or forms arise as the form of primordial awareness. Then he passed away and this is how these great sacred beings and masters are seeing things. All forms as the deity, all sounds as the mantra and all thoughts as primordial wisdom. It is just like you have a crystal ball and all the qualities are included within it, but as long as it is covered up you cannot really see its brilliance. However, once it is it is uncovered and opened up, you can see the sky and everything reflected within it and that is when you recognize the nature of your own mind. That is called the perfection of wisdom. Then, all the qualities already inherent in your mind will reveal themselves. So, the only difference is ripened or unripened.

5.2.2 Empty Nature of The Five Aggregates

In the Chakrasamvara practice, for example, it is said that on the outer level there are the five aggregates, on the inner level are the five afflictive emotions, and when the afflictive emotions become liberated, they ripen into the five kinds of wisdom or mature into the five Buddha families. For as long as one is unripe, one is like this unripe piece of fruit that we mentioned before. Regarding the five aggregates, those ignorant beings who have not realized the nature of

their mind, immature sentient beings grasp at their body. They hold on to their body and perceive it as that is “me and my body”. So, this self-grasping is like a magnet that pulls all the different parts together that then creates this perception of a “me”, an existing “I”. So that there seems to be this some solidly existing entity that is an “I”, so we call ourselves this “me” and there is this sound, that is this verb says, “this is me”. That is a sign of self-grasping. Again, self-grasping is like this magnet that attracts and pulls together the different aggregates and actually none of them inherently exist. It is just like a pile of sand for example, it is here today it seems to be really there, but tomorrow it is already gone.

An aggregate is something that consists of many parts and although it seems like it is this one solid entity, this one solid being, actually that cannot be found. We come back to the mind, we cannot find the self in our body and then when we look at the mind, the mind is also non-dual primordial awareness. Actually, the more we try to find the “I”, there is nothing to be found, nothing to be attained. Realizing that is the perfection of wisdom. Now, we think that all these sense perceptions are real and each sense door has its own kind of perception or sensation it experiences, but ultimately it all is one mind. So, it is the consciousness that is moving around through the different sense doors in the body, like a monkey and exiting through the different doors, perceiving different things but it is one consciousness. However, it is not perceived that way as long as the mind is like a piece of ice.

Then, sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, we think that these really exist and so yet they do not actually exist. But when we say all of these do not exist, you might think that is kind of a stupid thing to say because “I do have eyes, I do have ears, I do have a mouth, how can you say it does not exist?” For example, if I am ringing this bell, you think that “yes, there is the sound”. So, this feeling arises but now a moment later where has the sound gone? You cannot get the sound, you cannot find the sound. So, that is the empty nature of all sense perceptions. What this is saying is that we should neither think it exists or is there, nor should we think that it is not there. It is something that cannot be labelled in any way or identified, so do not grasp it as being either existing or non-existing. The moment we grasp at the existence of things we begin to attach to pleasant things and have an aversion against unpleasant things.

So, do not become attached and have no aversion, just stay in the pure state of your mind, no matter what sense perception arises. The moment you become attached, you are placing an imprint in the mind, when aversion arises you are placing an imprint into the mind, and the subtle counterpart to attachment and aversion are hope and fear. These all place imprints into the mind and as it is said in the Samantabhadra prayer, gradually those imprints grow stronger and thicker, so we keep placing imprints in to our mind and then like a rainbow they will reflect, they will project as our experience.

When saying that these things are empty, it means that they do not inherently exist and so all the sounds and the sights and so on that you perceive you think are really there, like a shape, a body is really there, but where is the body really? Later, after we have died, the body will be just

discarded, or it will be burned, then where is the body? You should investigate yourself in this way until you cannot find an “I”, a self. Thinking, "It [the body] is conditioned by nature and not independent," when deluded thoughts about the body arise, whether about the body or the things of this life, search for their root and see they bring no benefit at all. The body is a passing illusion - a guesthouse, and the mind its guest. If you recall again and again that the body is like a guesthouse, many streams of your delusion will be cut off. Thinking again and again the body is a guesthouse cuts the root of grasping - that is very important for mindfulness of the body. Then finally, you are left with nothing but the mind. Then you think that is what you are, you are the mind and so this perception of “me” all comes down to this self-grasping. This belief in the existence of an “I” is the perception of ordinary consciousness. Milarepa said, “the body has to perish but the mind will never cease to be”. And you know that when you look at your own mind. The mind will continue to pervade the 5 elements and that is because there is no duality between self and other. You know that when you understand the nature of the mind. Therefore, when the mind pervades in an instant, it is everywhere. Pervading the 5 elements on the outer level and on the inner level we first have the 5 afflictive emotions. But secretly, they are the 5 wisdoms. So, everything comes down to your consciousness and that is the final thing to look at then, when you look at the essence of your consciousness, it becomes just like space. Within space, it neither exists, nor does it not exist and the way it is resolved according to the scriptures, for example, is through the view of the Middle Way Madhyamaka.

In the Vajrakilaya practice, it says “may the demon of the lord of death be overcome through realizing the immortality of the mind.” It is just the body that is bound to birth and death, but the mind never dies and is never born. Therefore, Lord Jigten Sumgön also says that what wanders in the ocean of samsara is the body. Thus, it is the body that wanders in the ocean of samsara and it is because we have accumulated karmic imprints that we create this physical form temporarily. So, it is just like having frozen into ice and we have created karmic imprints and so these lead to the existence of a body. The more we separate ourselves from the dualistic grasping of self and other, the more we are purifying these karmic imprints. So, the more we purify karmic imprints, the more we liberate ourselves. On the other hand, the more we grasp to the dualistic existence of self and other, the more imprints we are accumulating. Again, these imprints are just like taking a film, like filming something with a camera or with a phone, for example. So, what you are filming is all the various things that you do and think of, it is like creating this film. Then all of what you do and think of then leaves this imprint. Then, the film is stored on the camera, or on your phone and then it can be replayed and it is projected as your experience. So, whatever has been filmed, whatever picture you have taken, that is what will manifest.

So, the six afflictive emotions create the perception of the six realms of samsara. These imprints continue to manifest the more we accumulate them. When we realize the nature of the mind, then these imprints become purified. Therefore, we need to understand how we place imprints in the mind, the imprints are placed into the mind through self-grasping because there is this perception of “me” and this is ultimately what creates all these imprints in the mind. Therefore, the antidote

to that is mainly the altruistic mind. As said previously, in the 37 Bodhisattva Practices, it says "all suffering without exception comes from wishing for one's own happiness. The perfect Buddhas arise from the altruistic mind". When you cultivate an altruistic mind, that becomes like a washing machine that cleanses the mind of all these imprints and all these impurities.

In six realms of samsara, we experience only suffering and these sufferings are like the stains in our mind that need to be washed away through practice and the altruistic mind. In fact, the three lower realms we can see them just like a hospital, a necessary purification. When you are ill with the afflictive emotions, they must be healed, they have to be purified. When you understand however that these imprints in your mind, these afflictions, they do not inherently exist then you will no longer accumulate karma with attachment and aversion. If you do not accumulate karma, you will not place any imprints into your mind. If there are no more imprints in your mind, then you become a Buddha and you will have perfected the view. The perfection of the ultimate view is to be in an ongoing state of meditation, which is called non-meditation. There is no deliberate meditation day and night. That is gained by cultivating mindfulness that recognizes all the subtle afflictions and thoughts in the mind and purifies all these feelings that arise.

5.2.3 Mindful Awareness

The Mahasiddha Naropa said to the wisdom dakini Niguma that, these words are very important, "that you have to nurture the little spark of mindfulness again and again until it becomes a vast fire of awareness." When we do not recognize that, when there is no mindfulness, then we will accumulate karma. If one accumulates karma, one experiences suffering as a result, it will ripen. There is a path to purify our obscurations. This practice is staying in the moment where past thoughts have ceased and future thoughts have not yet arisen. This state is a complete, vast openness. The one who knows thoughts is our own awareness. There is no grasping to thoughts as they arise. Even as they do arise, they cannot do any harm, as they then just cease. If we follow thoughts along, then our mind is obscured and becomes contrived or fabricated. So, we should remain in a state of mindful awareness and immediately recognize thoughts as they arise and not grasp at them. Since the cause is uncontrived, so will be the result, and our mind will be purified. This is the uncontrived state of Mahamudra. In that state of non-distraction, there is no reference point. The view is without hope and fear. There is no fear of suffering, as all phenomena are seen as empty. The only wish is that all beings may attain Buddhahood. When you understand the nature of one person, you will understand the nature of all beings.

Lord Jigten Sumgön had said that this is the interdependence of things, which is unfailing and will ripen corresponding to what was accumulated. So, temporarily because we do not sustain mindfulness, we do not recognize how things really are, we experience all sorts of things, all sorts of emotions of happiness and sadness and then driven by these we accumulate much karma. Who is actually the one who accumulates karma? It is your consciousness, so you can practice by recognizing that consciousness. When an afflictive emotion arises, whether it is strong or a very subtle emotion, even if it is just a very subtle emotion, recognize it with

mindfulness and the afflictive emotion the feeling of that emotion will diminish. If you sustain a state of clear awareness, then you will gain an actual experience of how the entire feeling, this experience of the afflictive emotion completely disappears. That is when you believe, when you will feel "now I have understood". You have gained an experiential understanding and that is an ongoing process. You have to experience this in an ongoing way.

The small spark of fire must be nurtured again and again until it becomes a vast wisdom fire. Then in the end, what happens is explained in the Samantabhadra prayer where it says even if the three realms were to be destroyed, there is no fear there is no attachment to the five desirables of the senses. If you have realized that even if the whole world comes to an end, you will think each person has just this one life in this world. Then when we die, there is no more world, so if it comes to an end, it comes to an end, but the mind will never come to an end. The mind transcends birth and death and when you have realized that you have realized the perfection of wisdom. Jigten Sumgön said in the Gongchig "what is thought is nothing but the fundamental nature of all phenomena which is the mind". We have to understand our own mind. All the sentient beings in the three realms of samsara and myself have the same mind. Also, the omniscient Longchen Rabjam said in the treasury of pith instructions that "when you realize the nature of your mind, there is no higher learning than that." So, even if you were to study your entire life, that alone will not lead to realization of the mind. But if you realize the nature of the mind, there is nothing more to learn; then you know everything. This is what we call the all-knowing omniscient mind; the mind that has realized its own nature. Why is it that we have not realized it? It is difficult to realize the nature of the mind. For example, the knife can cut everything else but not itself. We can see everything else but we cannot see ourselves. We project outward and we analyze what others do, but we never look at our own mind. We do not understand what happens in our own mind. Thus, Buddha had said that we have to understand our own mind. It is through these six perceptions and physical sensations, we develop thoughts of subject and object. By following these sense perceptions, we reinforce our habitual tendencies.

In the Samantabhadra prayer, it says "karmic tendencies grow stronger and thicker." We have accumulated many of these karmic tendencies. But even though we might have an understanding of the nature of the mind, our habitual tendencies come back and obscure our mind. From our perspective, we see a duality of self and other. From the ultimate perspective of Mahamudra, it says "without a single thought, look at your true nature decisively." Without a single thought, think about nothing whatsoever and just look at your mind. There is clear awareness then when you see this, you recognize the nature of the mind. This recognition occurs when all thinking comes to an end and the mind becomes like space momentarily. And all that remains is clear awareness that knows this is it. This awareness is what you need to hold on to, then all the various thoughts arising in the mind will dissolve through awareness; just like ice dissolving in hot water. When you give way to thinking, then the mind becomes like an ice block again. The reason why we have not realized the nature of the mind is because of self. We cling to the true existence of self and other. On that level of the path where we see a duality of self and others,

what is most important is the altruistic mind, the mind of bodhicitta. Bodhicitta is a method for the mind not to become obscured.

For example, a thought arises and all of a sudden, we get really angry at someone. If you know how to look at your mind, you will not project on the other person, but you will immediately look at your own anger. And know that what we really need to see is our own mind. So, we have to look inward and what we will see in that state of anger is actually a very clear mind. And when you see it, then the anger will naturally go away. Then along with that, the habitual tendencies will also go away. This is how we take the afflictive emotions as the path; we practice with the afflictive emotions in our day-to-day activities. For example, by practicing the six paramitas and so on. Again, the main reason why we have not realized the mind is because of a self and that is why we need an altruistic mind. If you develop a vast altruistic mind, then the self will naturally diminish. And along with that, the six afflictive emotions will also diminish. In order to realize the nature of the mind, it is very important for us to cultivate immeasurable love.

Also, this is what we refer to as the vajra-like body. One attains a vajra-like body when the consciousness transforms into primordial awareness. So, it is something that again you have to experience on an ongoing basis, it will not happen at once, but it happens gradually on an ongoing basis. The moment an afflictive emotion or just a thought arises in your mind, instantly recognize it with mindfulness and gain the actual, the direct experience of how clear awareness will eliminate the feeling that was created by this thought or emotion. Then, the mind remains in a clear state and that is what we call transforming the afflictive emotions into primordial awareness. Once you have understood that the afflictive emotions even if they arise will no longer harm you in any way, in fact they become an enhancement to your practice, they increase the power of your awareness. So, this is how someone practices who really understands the secret mantra. So, we need to understand how imprints are placed in the mind and if we continue to allow imprints to be placed into our mind, then awareness has lost to these afflictive emotions and the afflictive emotions have gained victory. There are many people of you who engage in practice, some practice Mahamudra, some practice Dzogchen, but it is all the same meaning. In the view of the perfection of wisdom and essentially it is mindfulness, there is no greater perfection of wisdom than mindfulness.

Now, when mindfulness encounters the afflictive emotions, then the falsity of the afflictive emotions will be exposed and that means that you will directly see that the afflictive emotion is empty, it does not inherently exist and if you can see that, then these emotions will not leave a feeling in your mind. As you will know these afflictions are not real, none of these thoughts and afflictions are real. When you realize that, then they become wisdom. For example, anger or hatred becomes the mirror-like wisdom. Attachment becomes the individually-discriminating wisdom and so on. The five afflictive emotions become the five wisdoms and so you will gain certainty on the basis of your own personal experience. That is really the essence of knowing the perfection of wisdom and it can be applied to anything that you experience. So, the key point is that you experience it. Many people know how to explain the perfection of wisdom, but even if

you know how to explain it well, it does not necessarily mean that you are liberated from suffering. Explanation is one thing, but Milarepa said that meditation or practice must be infused by actual experience, you have to experience it. These words are very important. Milarepa said when teaching the ten paramitas: “At the understanding of one’s hidden afflictions, there is nothing other than primordial awareness”. Milarepa also said “when you realize that afflictive emotions and primordial awareness are no different you have mastered, what is to be realized”. Meditation means to first recognize and then habituate to the nature of mind. First, you must understand the basic nature of mind. This mind is a single Ground within which we are one. Once you have recognized the nature of mind, you must always sustain it, uphold it, without falling into distraction. To habituate this present awareness is meditation. No matter what external condition may arise, happiness or suffering, you should never stray from this clear awareness that recognizes everything that arises.

You should practice mindful awareness in all your activities; this is the perfect conduct. The view, the meditation, and the conduct are all mind, the single Ground. There are many thoughts that always arise, but thoughts are impermanent; they come and go. The mind from which they arise, however, abides like space; it never comes and goes. It is always there, it has always been there, and it will always be there. It is like space, or a vast ocean, or a mirror. It never goes anywhere, just like space. Therefore, do not cling to the temporary thoughts. No matter how much you cling to them, you cannot actually hold on to them, as they are impermanent by nature. Rather, observe that which never goes away, the clear knowing awareness that recognizes all the thoughts arising. This awareness is the Buddha within you; it is your true nature.

Whatever thoughts arise, negative thoughts, sadness, afflictive emotions, do not follow them but continue to observe with mindfulness. When this mindfulness is sustained, arising thoughts will naturally dissipate without the need to abandon them. This awareness must be upheld, not only in meditation sessions, but also during all your activities. No matter what you experience, happiness or suffering, it does not affect your awareness; it always is as it is. This nature is Buddha nature, and every being has it. In addition, you should read "The Ganges Mahamudra" by Tilopa every day; this will support your meditation. You should read "The 37 Bodhisattva Practices" every day; this will support your conduct. What is most important is to cultivate bodhicitta, love and compassion, in all your activities. Without compassion, you will never understand the nature of mind. Without compassion, the mind is like dirty water. The water is cloudy; you are unable to see its true clear nature. If you give rise to compassion, you will understand the nature of mind.

You must train the mind like a muscle. If you want to train your body, you must practice exercise regularly. Likewise, if you want to train your mind, you must practice meditation on a day-to-day basis. You will not be able to carry a heavy load with weak muscles. Training is a gradual process. You must persistently and constantly train your mind on a day-to-day basis if you wish to overcome difficulties and become stronger. Every time you recognize a thought, your mindfulness has become that much stronger. Slowly, you will gain in inner strength. In the beginning, it is not easy to overcome very powerful emotions. If the emotions are too

overwhelming and you are unable to overcome them with mindfulness, you must apply a different method. You should then think of a deity, like Tara, immediately without allowing yourself to indulge in the bad feeling. In the beginning, you do recognize the emotions but they still will not go away. That is because your mindfulness is not strong enough. Therefore, you must train the mind in all circumstances, not only when you encounter problems. You should train the mind first by recognizing the less intense thoughts. And if you train consistently with diligence, then eventually you will be able to overcome even more powerful thoughts. And later, no thought or emotion can trouble you anymore. Everything becomes the same. Then, even though the body is in samsara, the mind is liberated. You have to make an effort to liberate your mind rather than your body.

Your body is not real. It is a compounded phenomenon, a creation of your own imprints/habitual patterns, so it is created by the mind. Our clinging to physical comfort and aversion toward physical discomfort is a delusion of the mind. After we have died, there is no body, yet we experience more intense suffering in the bardo. If we are able to let go of our thoughts of attachment and aversion, we will not experience such painful delusions in the bardo. Therefore, we must contemplate that this life is like a dream again and again. If, in this life, we are able to recognize the empty nature of the afflictive emotions and we will also be able to recognize the empty nature of the bardo. However, if we give way to the afflictive emotions and accumulate negative karma which leave an imprint in the mind, the frightening appearances of the bardo will seem to be real. This is the point of meditation.

In the 37 Bodhisattva Practices, it says, "Consciousness the guest, will cast aside the guesthouse of the body." When your mental grasping diminishes, you will see how everything is so fleeting and does not truly exist. This life is like a dream. Nothing ever stays, suffering and happiness come and go. You must be able to let go of your fixation to the things that cannot last. Thoughts of desire and attachment are the delusion of a confused mind. Best is if you need nothing. In order to meditate properly - that is, in a manner that actually produces the state of complete awakening we call enlightenment - the one indispensable ingredient required that you cannot do away with is bodhicitta, which is the mind of awakening, the altruistic aspiration to liberate all sentient beings in enlightenment, the mindset of the awakened warriors, the bodhisattvas. In fact, that is what you need your mind stream to be permeated with most desperately; that is your most desperate need, especially in terms of practice and proper meditation. Bodhicitta, the precious mind of awakening, the mindset of the enlightened warriors, is the root teaching of the 84,000 sets of teachings and practices that comprise the BuddhaDharma. Without bodhicitta, whatever practice you engage in is grounded in ego-grasping, self-cherishing, and is a fabrication of the ego mind. That is why bodhicitta is absolutely indispensable, and that is why meditation is not just awareness, or knowledge, or the knowingness that cognizes emptiness. It is also passionately loving and compassionate toward all sentient beings.

When we want to begin the practice of Mahamudra, first it is necessary to start with the practice of tranquil abiding. We can meditate on tranquil abiding in two ways - with a support to our

meditation and without a support. For people who are just beginning the practice of tranquil abiding, it is very helpful to meditate with a support, such as the form of a particular deity. If we have a picture of a deity and we look at it very carefully, we study its ornaments and attributes and so forth, habituate the mind to it, then we close our eyes and see the deity in our mind's eye. The mind will not rest on this object; in fact, it will waiver. In the beginning, it will go all over the place, and it will be very difficult to stabilize this meditation with support. Many people when having this kind of experience will easily become discouraged when seeing just how many thought forms are arising, one after the next like an unbroken chain in their mind-stream. People become discouraged and tired doing their meditation practice. At that time, we should realize that we are not suddenly thinking more thoughts, but having started to meditate, we are simply recognizing the state of our mind. Not having cultivated this kind of awareness in the past, we have let our thoughts run unchecked. We have been unaware of the state of our minds.

In prison, Khenpo Münsel Rinpoche taught me this: "The extent of your realization will be known when you encounter difficult circumstances. You will not know the extent of your realization when things go well." When you find yourself in a troublesome situation, when you are in great pain, when an intense emotion arises, only then will you know where you are at with practice. He added: "Adverse circumstances will reveal your hidden faults." If you are able to hold awareness unwaveringly during such a time, and thus if you are not carried away by the force of the emotion, it is a sign that you have gained experience in practice. If you were to practice mindful awareness with great diligence for just a month, if you were to recognize even the slightest thought and not allow your mind to wander off into delusion for that time, even in such a short time you would witness great changes. Fierce afflictions would not faze you so much anymore, because you would have gained personal experience in observing the illusory play. There is in fact just one remedy necessary - mindful awareness. It is the single sufficient remedy that transforms difficulties inside and out.

Through the practice of meditation, we are becoming aware of our thought forms. For example, there are many dust particles in a room. If the room is dark, we are not aware of them, but if a ray of sunlight shines in the window, then we see the countless particles of dust. It is not that those particles exist because suddenly we see them, they were there all along. So, it is with thought forms. They were present all along, and through the illuminating power of calm abiding, we become aware of them. It is like if you go for a walk and your face is dirty, but you do not know it. When you go home and look in a mirror, you recognize - oh, I have this dirt all over my face. This is a matter of direct experience. So, it is with meditation practice. We should not get discouraged when we finally become aware, we should just wash our face. When you feel tired, you should not force yourself to meditate upon something. When you meditate, you should just rest in the natural state. The nature of mind is the conscious awareness that recognizes all mental arisings. This conscious mind is like pure water. The mental arisings are like earth. If your awareness is weak the water mixes with the earth and becomes muddy. Your awareness must

prevail with clarity, then you will not cling to the mental arisings. If you just leave them be, they are like a pebble in water, if you cling to them, they are like earth making your mind cloudy.

Thus, do not cling to your thoughts, do not grasp at their reality. This life is like a dream. Do not believe in its reality. Preserve the conscious knowing awareness and let go of thoughts, then they will not affect you. Habituate the natural state. At times, pray to Tara and recite her mantra. Tara should appear in your mind, then ordinary fixations will subside. If the thoughts do not mix with your mind, they are not harmful even if they arise. If you do not grasp at them, they are rendered powerless. If you grasp at them, they will wear you out. The actual mind cannot be tired, the fixation to thoughts make you weary.

6.0 HOW TO CREATE TEMPORARY BENEFIT AND THE ULTIMATE HAPPINESS

When we take refuge in the Buddha, we say “I take refuge in the Buddha”. What you need to understand here is that your wisdom mind is actually Buddha. When you say “I take refuge in the Dharma”, you should think all religions in the world are beneficial. They are all like signs on the road that tell you where to go. For example, the Pratimoksa path is like traveling by car, the Bodhisattva path is like traveling by train, and the Vajrayana path is like traveling by airplane. Everything guides you in the same direction; it is just there are different levels to realization. Milarepa also said that the progression along the bhumis and the paths is nothing but an increasing clarity in one's realization of emptiness. In brief, just think about the good qualities of others and do not think about their faults at all. Cultivate a pure, unbiased view toward all - have faith and devotion to all the higher beings, and have immeasurable love and compassion for all the sentient beings. This is what leads to the temporary happiness.

Where does this temporary benefit come from? It comes from having immeasurable love and compassion for sentient beings. In all future lifetimes, from lifetime to lifetime, you will take birth in the higher realms through the practices of generosity, discipline, and patience, and you will experience the happiness of the human realms. As a result of having practiced generosity, you will acquire wealth. As a result of having practiced ethical discipline, you will obtain a precious human body. As a result of having practiced patience, you will find good harmonious companions, a long lifespan, and a beautiful appearance. All the causes of happiness and all the happiness of the higher realms come from these, and ultimately this leads to attaining enlightenment. Shamatha and vipassana lead to the state of enlightenment. This is the temporary benefit and the ultimate happiness. Everything comes from your own mind.

How do we create the temporary benefit and the ultimate happiness? Look at this world for example. This human world is a nirmanakaya pureland, but it is also a crossroads between going up and down. In this world, we actually are very close to Buddhahood, but we can also create very heavy causes that will drag us down to the three lower realms. The fact that we have found the precious human body is the result of great merit. Merit is what leads to the temporary benefit and the ultimate happiness. There's one Tibetan saying “When I'm happy, I recognize it as the kindness of the Three Jewels”. If things are going well - for example, if it is a sunny day or you

are getting some nice food to eat - nothing is without a cause at all. Any happiness is the kindness of the Three Jewels. Who are the Three Jewels? The Three Jewels are love and compassion. It is because you love that you practice generosity.

6.1 Take Refuge in The Three-Jewels

When we take refuge, it is like a purifying and restoring ceremony. We purify our transgressions, broken commitments, negative emotions, and we restore our bodhicitta. Therefore, it is good to receive the refuge vow. Some people take refuge because they understand with their wisdom that samsara has the nature of suffering, and they want to become free from that suffering. They know they can only become free if they rely on the Three Jewels. There are others who take refuge in the Three jewels because they want to help other sentient beings. They know that alone they are not strong and they must, therefore, rely on the Three Jewels. So, we take refuge in the Three Jewels with such a mind of wisdom and compassion. To have those is a great merit.

When we take refuge, we seek a protection from the vast ocean of suffering. Everyone wishes to be happy and no one wants to suffer. That, we all share in common. There are various systems in this world to protect us from suffering. The mundane systems only concern this life. Sometimes they can protect and sometimes they cannot. For this reason, many religions have appeared in this world. This is also the intention of the Buddha's teachings. The word "Jewel" (Tibetan: Kon Chog) means "rare and supreme". The most supreme source of protection is the Three Jewels. The Three Jewels are rare because, unless we possess great merit and wisdom, we will not even have the wish to take refuge. You have the wish to receive refuge. That is a great merit and a sign that you have already connected with the Three Jewels in a past lifetime. There are not many who have this kind of merit and wisdom. Actually, all sentient beings possess Buddha nature.

Once we have taken refuge, we should also understand the inner sources of refuge. The Three Jewels are not somewhere far away, separate from us. They are actually contained within our own mind. We must understand the connection between the Three Jewels and ourselves. This means the cause of the Three Jewels is actually present in our own mind. For example, the mind of the Buddhas is like a flower, and the mind of sentient beings is like the seed of that flower. The Buddha shows us the way to actualize this potential, but the cause we already possess. It is Buddha nature, our own awareness. Then, if we cultivate love and compassion, the Dharma is within us. And if we have these, we are Sangha. The Three Jewels within our own mind are our true protection, our real refuge.

"I take Refuge in Transcendent Awareness, the heart essence of Buddha." Our awareness is the heart essence of Buddha. The inner Buddha is our own mindfulness. That is what we take refuge in. It is our cause of enlightenment. It is the mind that recognizes "This is an affliction" "This is love", "This is compassion." It is our own discriminating awareness. In the beginning, there is a wish, "I want to take refuge." In the middle, there is an awareness that thinks, "Now I have received refuge." In the end, there is an awareness that thinks, "Now, I must observe the precepts." This awareness in the beginning, middle and end is one continuum. It is our

mindfulness. This mindfulness is our inner Buddha. If we observe refuge precepts, we observe them through mindfulness and heedfulness. This is our discriminating wisdom. It discerns between what is virtue and what is non-virtue, what is the cause of happiness and what is the cause of suffering, what to do and what not to do. The Buddha is the one who has perfected this wisdom. We also possess this, but we need to purify our mind stream.

All sentient beings and all the Buddhas have the same mind. Our mind is the Buddha. This mind has the nature of water. When the water is completely pure, it is like enlightenment. If the mind is temporarily defiled by different afflictive emotions and thoughts, then temporarily the water is dirty and one is a sentient being that suffers. But still, it has the nature of water. When we purify the mind of negative emotions and self-grasping through wisdom and compassion, the pure mind itself is the perfection of wisdom. That is the mind of Buddha. That mind is our own mind. That mind itself is the non-conceptual wisdom that transcends the Three Spheres (Duality of Subject, Action, Object). This also is the meaning of the word Buddha in Tibetan: Sang Gye. “Sang” means to clear away. This refers to clear away grasping. “Gye” means to expand, vast. This refers to freedom that transcends the Three Spheres. “I take Refuge in Compassion, the heart essence of Dharma.”

If our mind already is the Buddha, then why is it that sentient beings are not enlightened? What is the difference between sentient beings and Buddhas? If the seed does not meet with conditions, it will not sprout. This is just like sentient beings not meeting with the Dharma and wandering endlessly in the six realms of samsara. Again, in the 37 Bodhisattva Practices, it says, “all suffering without exception comes from wishing for one’s own happiness. The perfect Buddhas arise from the altruistic mind.” It is because we give rise to a mind of self-grasping as we fall under the power of negative emotions. This leads us to wander in the six realms of samsara. The Buddha said: “Within all sentient beings is the Buddha. Sentient beings are only obscured by adventitious stains.” These stains are the stains of self-grasping. To separate from the self-grasping mind, we must cultivate the altruistic mind.

When we take refuge, we must recognize the preciousness of love and compassion, and then habituate to it continuously. If love and compassion remain in our mind, we will become free of self-grasping. Throughout day and night, we must always remember sentient beings. That is the Dharma. The outer Dharma consists of 84,000 teachings. They are included in loving kindness and compassion. The inner Dharma is love and compassion. The real Dharma that we take refuge in is our own love and compassion. This is the supreme protection. The mind's only friends are love and compassion. If we do not give rise to love and compassion, even if we take refuge, we will not really be protected. We will not become true practitioners. When with wisdom we apply the method to abandon the causes of suffering, this becomes the path. Gampopa said: “Bless me that my mind becomes the Dharma. Bless me that Dharma becomes the Path.” For the mind to become Dharma is rather easy. What is more difficult is the second. The Dharma only becomes the path if we give rise to altruistic mind. Only then we will become free of self-grasping. To practice Dharma means to let go of self-grasping. Otherwise, we cannot go beyond samsara.

“I take refuge in Spiritual Friends, the heart essence of Companions.” The Dharma is shown to us by Sangha, the guides on our path. If we cultivate love and compassion, then we become a Sangha. In general, Sangha has many qualities. But in brief, the qualities are love and patience. That is what makes Sangha “noble” or “superior”. Ordinary sentient beings have self-grasping. When someone hurts them, they revenge. But as Sangha, we cultivate the altruistic mind. Even if somebody hurts us, we practice patience. We protect over love. The essence of Sangha is virtuous conduct. A superior Sangha remains inseparable from an altruistic, beneficial intent towards sentient beings. You should think, “I am noble Sangha. When someone mistreats me, I will practice patience. I will protect love.” Then, you are true Sangha. Then you will be able to protect yourself and others.

“Companions” or “Spiritual Friends” refers to any teachers in this world. They can be mundane, worldly teachers, or they can be Dharma teachers who are very precious. If we give rise to faith and respect for all our teachers, the qualities of these teachers will enter our own mind. As Gampopa said in The Jewel Ornament of Liberation: “The contributory cause is the spiritual master. The method is the spiritual master’s instruction.” The spiritual master actually is even more precious than our own body. In The 37 Bodhisattva Practices, it says: “Holding sublime spiritual friends even more dear than one’s own body is the bodhisattva’s practice.” The reason for this is that whatever we learn from our teachers remains like a seed in our mind. The wisdom of what we have learned remains in our mind. We can see this sometimes in little children. For example, some children are interested in learning things and also it comes easy to them. This is a sign that they have already learned in the past. And then there are other children, even though they might have the same parents, they have no interest in learning, and also it is harder for them to learn anything. This is because in many past lives they have not learned, not studied. This is in a worldly sense. But Dharma teachers especially teach us karma, and with this they give us the freedom to accomplish happiness in the higher realms, temporarily, and ultimately to attain enlightenment. When we are introduced to the causes of happiness and suffering, we receive the freedom to create our own happiness. Thus, we should remember both kinds of teachers again and again, the worldly teachers and the spiritual teachers, and think of them with love.

We should see the spiritual master who gives us refuge as the embodiment of the Three Jewels. If you practice Lama Chopa, you understand how the Lama is the embodiment of the Three Jewels. The guru’s body is the Sangha. The guru’s speech is the Dharma, because it explains the words of the Buddha. The guru’s mind is the actual Buddha. Actually, everyone’s mind is the Buddha because we all have Buddha nature. The Buddhas and sentient beings are like the mala beads on one mala string. The string is Buddha nature. It is the union of emptiness and compassion. The enlightened mind of the Buddhas and the mind of sentient beings have a single Ground. The Buddhas have perfected altruism while sentient beings grasp at a self and are afflicted, that is the only difference. Still, their nature is the same. All the Buddhas are included within the guru. Even within one Sangha, the Three Jewels are contained. In this way, I am representing the Three Jewels. My body is Sangha, my speech is Dharma, and the mind is the Buddha. If you have this

view, then qualities will arise in your mind. Even if my body perishes, my mind will always remain. What is my mind? It is love, it is mindfulness. Love is my mind. This is the quality I have. I truly possess a boundless mind of love for all, without any bias between enemies and friends. This love that I have is the one thing that I fully believe in. And from this love, arises natural compassion, joy and equanimity.

The happiness you experience is the kindness of the Three Jewels. Everything arises from your state of mind: the cause of happiness as well as the cause of suffering. Nothing, including your experience of happiness and suffering, depends on your outer circumstance or environment. It only depends on your state of mind. For this reason, we have to tame our own minds first. We have to cultivate a pure view that is completely free of any bias. The teachings are a method to accomplish that. They are also a method to cultivate immeasurable love. It is really a pure view that creates all the purelands. It is immeasurable love that creates all the happiness in the higher realms temporarily. When you reflect in this way, you come to the conclusion that you need to cultivate love. In this human world, people experience all kinds of things. There is a lot of happiness and also a lot of suffering. When you see that, you can recognize the karma of attachment, greed, anger, jealousy, and so on. For each circumstance, you can recognize a corresponding afflictive emotion.

When we talk about conduct, there are two [aspects]: daily, or common, conduct and holy conduct. If someone does not know what the holy conduct means, soon they will have something like negative feelings, or problems will arise that they cannot stand and they will not have good tolerance for. The reason for that is that this person has a strong attachment to their own body or their self and they do not understand the reality of life. Even you have very small problems, you feel very bad. And if you have some positive, good things, you can hardly enjoy. The reason for this is that you do not really know the reality. For this reason, it is very important to understand what the holy conduct or life style is. For that reason, in Buddhism, we speak about refuge.

Why do we want refuge? [We want refuge] from the suffering. Buddha said that we need to acknowledge and understand that there is suffering. Once you acknowledge and understand the suffering, then you determine to search for the cause of sufferings. It is important to understand what is the cause of suffering. The cause of the suffering is self-centeredness and self-importance. Because of that we have a lot of suffering. Also, we have a Tibetan proverb saying "All suffering comes through self-centeredness, or self-importance". All suffering originates from self-importance, so for that reason, once we know the cause, everybody wants to have happiness, peace and enjoyment, but they do not find how to pursue that. Therefore, we do not know what is the origin of the suffering. And the origin of the suffering is self-centeredness. Because we should understand why we have a lot of suffering. It is because we are missing loving kindness and bodhicitta mind. And when someone is happy and enjoy, why they do they have that? [Because] they already developed loving kind ness and bodhicitta in their body and self. For that reason, we should understand that we need to develop bodhicitta. When we are looking at the people who are sick, we can see the number one result are those who are not sick,

the number two result are those who even though they are sick but they easily recover. Why does this happen? Because they have compassion, they have developed well compassion, loving kindness and especially they have taken refuge.

People who have refuge and who committed to keep their promise and practice well, they may not become sick, but people who got sick, maybe they have refuge but there was something wrong and they could not keep it in the promised way, but then they reagreed, apologized and restored having taken the refuge again and continue trying to keep their promise. This kind of promise is to be kind, loving towards the humanity, or sentient beings. Maybe for that reason someone is sick but is able to get help though government, organizations or doctors and able to recover. But someone, even though the government and others support them, they may not able to recover. The reason that lies behind this may be their own karma. Some people die, and once you die, may be you also think "Why I am dying?" and suffer. You also do not need to be that way, because if you are losing this life, it may be also connected to your karma. Dying means you change your body, but your consciousness is still the same, it remains. For that reason, it is important that you try to accumulate bodhicitta.

In brief, the essence of inner refuge is to cultivate love. When we die, our wealth and possessions will not help us. We have no power to carry them with us. But if we have cultivated love and compassion, it is like a seed in our mind that we will bring forth with us. It is this precious bodhicitta (love and compassion) that will be the cause of happiness in all future lives. In the Mahayana sutra, it talks about how beings like Chenrezig have given even just a spoonful of food to an animal. There is a result for even the smallest virtue, the slightest action that you commit. As a result of these actions, you first temporarily experience the happiness of the three higher realms. The happiness of the three higher realms depends on generosity, ethical discipline, and patience. It is the Buddha who showed us the path of the Dharma and the four immeasurables. Through the Buddhist path, we can find ultimate happiness, which is the state of enlightenment. The state of enlightenment is a state of lasting bliss, of happiness that is completely free of all suffering because it is like space which does not have any suffering. We call this ultimate stage the blissful dharmakaya that is free of suffering, the lasting state of bliss.

6.2 Understand and Trust the Karma Cause and Effect

It is really strange because on one hand you have people who are very concerned about their health but they die first. We do not have so much control over it as it is all determined by karma. So, first develop a good trust in karma and that is the way to really attain freedom. Freedom is something you have to create for yourself by understanding the quality of love. Jigten Sumgön had said that if you really understand the workings of karma, then that is what makes you a true Dharma practitioner. Then, you understand the Dharma. For example, I myself do not have any learning or any great qualities but I really thought about karma well and have developed great trust in karma. And although I do not have much learning, I understood that it is enough to just have a very good heart. If you want to be happy, you have to understand the causes of happiness.

Jigten Sumgön said that karma cause and effect is the natural manifestation of one's moment-to-moment thoughts. Recognizing that is an antidote to suffering. For example, since we coexist with animals, it is very helpful for us as humans to think, “Here's me, I have a precious human body and there is an ant that has an ant body. When I look at what the ant is doing, it is doing the exact same things that I am doing. We look different because there is a difference in merit. I have greater merit so I have a precious human body”. That is why it is so important for us to accumulate, to create merit. What is merit? Merit is love. If you have love, then whatever you do with body, speech, and mind will become beneficial for sentient beings, and the result is you obtaining happiness. Whoever possesses that will achieve happiness. So, when we say that happiness was given to us by the Three Jewels, it is really not somebody else giving something to you - it all arises from your own mind. When you recognize that, then you realize you have to be careful when it comes to karma.

Caring for others is an example of the way karma works. When you care for others, it is just like you are caring for your own hand. If you take good care of your hand, then your hand will be well. When you take good care of others, then you will be well. On the other hand, if you bite into your flesh and try to eat your hand, you will get sick later on. Likewise, others are like your hand. They are part of you, so if you hurt them, then in future lifetimes, you will get hurt. For example, we can see animals when they take birth in animal realms. They prey on each other and eat one another. Sakya Pandita said that a person who possesses merit, things are accomplished effortlessly. He is like the sun all illuminated. For those who do not possess merit, they are like a flame of a butter lamp in the wind. For as long as you have the oil and the lamp, you have a light. But once the oil is finished, you have no more light. That is referring to those individuals who lack merit and who try to accomplish happiness only through their own efforts. Often no matter how hard we try, if we do not have the merit, nothing will be accomplished.

Everything depends on the merit we have accumulated and the merit arises from within the mind. There is nothing good that can be achieved without merit. And merit again is nothing but love. Because we love, we practice generosity, ethical discipline and so on. Even if you do not seal it with real bodhicitta and have not heard about Buddhism before, there are many people in this world who love others and therefore practice the six paramitas like generosity, ethical discipline and so on. The Buddha had explained that if you cultivate bodhicitta, and on the basis of bodhicitta practice, even a slight small merit the result of that will be great (and multiplied through the force of bodhicitta). It is a method for us to accumulate merit. Therefore, we first need to understand the significance and the preciousness of bodhicitta. And if you have bodhicitta, whatever you do (even the smallest virtue) turns into a vast source of merit.

If we do not understand karma, then we will transform all happiness into suffering in the end. If we practice this understanding (happiness and suffering is karma) again and again, we really have received an extraordinary instruction that allows us to transform suffering into happiness. Finally, we realize that what can be achieved is a state of bliss that is devoid of all suffering entirely. And we realize that these experiences of happiness and suffering really depend on the

state of our mind - our way of perceiving and thinking about things. Ultimately, one realizes that these experiences of happiness and suffering are just like a dream. And we realize that the mind actually transcends birth and death. These are extraordinary instructions that are very hard to find and when you find them and practice them, this is the result that can be attained.

Because we do not understand karma, and therefore, we do not understand the actual causes to create happiness; so, we spend our entire life working very hard, then all become meaningless because when we die, all of our actions have been done for nothing. When we die, we may have earned millions of dollars, a house, our body, our friends, all that we have, we will have to leave behind keeping nothing with us. After we have died, all is gone and becomes meaningless.

We have to think about the state of this world and the differences that we can observe over and over again. We can see that some people in this world who experience more happiness and wealth than others. And some suffer more than others. Broadly speaking, there are two kinds of karma: one is the collective karma and the other is the personal individual karma. Collective karma for instance is that some are born in an independent free country but some are not. And then the personal individual karma is that wherever you are born or country you live in, even if you are in a prison, you have your own karma. That distinguishes you from others' karma and often there is nothing we can do about it. If you are karmically meant to experience happiness, it will happen naturally and the same is true for suffering. If you think about karma, there is also a very good teaching given by Sakya Pandita in the Treasury of Good Advice. He speaks about what merit really is and how merit is accumulated. First, we recognize merit to be nothing else but love. In previous lives, if a person has done something with a loving mind, then they are born wealthy. If that person has a good heart, and want to do good things and feed everyone in the world. Then, this is how they accumulate the merit for more happiness in the future. There are others who do not have that and they cannot even take care of themselves; they take drugs and have to beg for food and so on. What is the difference? Ultimately, it is only a difference in love; how much love has been cultivated. Because when there is love, you naturally also develop wisdom. And the ice-block of self-grasping melts into water; the water-like state is a state of wisdom. Even though all sentient beings possess Buddha nature, they do not recognize that and their mind is like an ice-block. And that ice-block cannot perform any meaningful activities. So, the only difference between Buddhas and sentient beings is like that between ice and water. So, in this world, happiness and suffering and all the good things in this world arises from karma.

For example, when we get angry at someone, we remember that interaction, and the next time we see them we remember it again, and each time we see them, we reinforce the habit of that anger. But, when from the very start, we recognize mind's nature on the arising of that anger, the negative emotion itself dissipates. Everything follows the law of karma naturally. If your family members treat you bad in this life, it is the result or karmic creditor of your own past actions. We are all responsible for our own karma, we ourselves have created the causes for all our experiences. Enemies, obstructers, mischievous relatives, etc., are only conditions but not the cause. Moreover, the past is gone, it does not exist any longer, we cannot change the past, we

have to let it go, so do not think about this. What is more important is that which is actually in your hands, the future. If you think about others' faults, you will only get angry and resentful. Think about their [good] qualities and stop thinking about their faults, then love will arise. If you cannot stop the thoughts, think of Tara and recite her mantra. If we understand that we owe these beings a karmic debt, then instead of having aversion towards them, we can recognize them as being even more kind than our own parents [because they give us the opportunity to purify our negative karma and to practice patience]. The Buddha himself taught that the real enemy is anger itself, which is conquered through practicing patience. We generate patience and eventually loving-kindness and bodhicitta towards them. When you are angry, you will never be happy. It will even influence your dreams and you will have nightmares. As your patience increases, you can take a vow: "No matter how much they provoke me, I shall not get angry."

This one quote from Jigten Sumgön in the Gongchig is also one that I encourage you to remember and bear in mind. He said that cause and effect is the natural manifestation of one's moment to moment thoughts. When you understand or really reflect on that, you think, for example, now in this world, we have animals and humans living together. We look different, but our mind is the same. Our karma is different. So, why do they look like that? Who is responsible for it? They did it with their own karma. It is mainly the karma of ignorance that leads to birth as an animal, but there are different kinds of animal within that. There are some animals who are more aggressive, and then there are other animals that are much gentler and more loving. There are also some animals who have it even better than human beings. There are all kinds of different animals. All of this variety is due to karma, and karma arises from within the mind. When you reflect in this way, you develop a mindfulness, and a mindfulness recognizes your own afflictive motion the moment it arises. Next, it recognizes the fault in that affliction, and it recognizes the quality of love. Love then remains the basis of all your actions.

Whatever action we engage in, whether it is Dharma or worldly activity, what actually makes an activity meaningful or meaningless? It really comes down to whether or not we know or understand karma. This is what really determines the meaning of our activity. For example, if you do know karma, you know that the actual cause of happiness is the precious bodhicitta. Thus, you cultivate love and patience. If you do that, even if you engage in worldly activity, it becomes actual virtue. On the other hand, if you do not trust in karma, do not trust in bodhicitta as a cause of happiness, even if you practice virtue on the outer level, it only becomes half virtue, the other half is non-virtue. It is because knowing the karma is like having opened eyes. The outer actions of body and speech are not principal, more important is to understand karma - cause and effect. If we do understand it, all samsaric activities actually become a practice of the six paramitas. What gives action meaning is whether or not we understand the working of karma. That is because ultimately our minds are not separate and that is why our karma ripens in this way. It is because of our fixation in the mind, the way we think about things, that we suffer.

When you think about animals over and over again, that is extremely beneficial. When you look at animals, you can understand the infallible nature of karma cause and effect. You can

understand what the Buddha said. You understand this is really karma. Wherever you go, you see it happening. This is the meaning of the Tibetan quote, “When I'm happy, I recognize it as the kindness of the Three Iewels. When I suffer, I recognize it as my own karma - I have done it to myself”. It is important to understand your suffering has its root in your own mind, so the temporary benefit is to find the happiness of the higher realms. That is in your own hands. You can create the causes for your own happiness. The ultimate happiness also depends on your own mind - when your own mind has become completely pure, then that is your own happiness. That is the Buddha, and there is no other separate Buddha from that. Reflecting in this way is how you gain certainty. You should reflect until you completely trust in yourself, in your own understanding of it, and how you tame your own mind. There is no need for anyone else to tell you otherwise because you have experienced it yourself. When you come to this conclusion, you have gained some understanding of the Buddhist teachings.

All of our experiences of happiness and suffering arise from our own actions. Therefore, it is very important to reflect on the workings of karma really well. All happiness has a single root and that is love. And where is this love? You bring to mind anyone that you love very much and that is the love that we need to develop. Once you have recognized that, you know that this is the only thing which you need to sustain and to develop.

In order to do so, the Buddha taught many different methods. First, the method to cultivate love where it has not yet arisen and by applying this method, we become free from the sufferings of the six realms of samsara. Secondly, the Buddha taught the method to not allow it to decline where it has arisen and that is the practice of the six paramitas. Thirdly is the method to further increase love and that refers to the Vajrayana teachings especially meant for those with sharp intellect. Who understands that primordially the universe and its beings are inherently pure.

6.3 Cultivate the Four Immeasurables

I am speaking just from my own experience. The four immeasurables are really most important, and within the four immeasurables, which one is most important? It is immeasurable love. There were several disciples who asked about that, and one specifically asked me to give them one thing to practice continuously. I said the best thing is to cultivate immeasurable love. That is the key that you need to hold in your hand. It is the four immeasurables, and within that, it is immeasurable love. It is the key of love. What is the quality of love? Even the slightest happiness in samsara comes from love, and from love arises real compassion - real authentic compassion. It is a compassion that is imbued with love, and there are different forms of compassion. There is also just ordinary compassion. For example, you care for one specific thing like one nice flower, one nice animal, or one nice person you are attached to. This affection that you feel for this object is because of self-grasping. It is attachment. This kind of compassion is related to attachment. That is characteristic of us human beings. The cause of birth in the human realm is desire or this kind of attachment, which arises from the ordinary compassion. What is the Dharma? The Dharma is something that transforms our minds. That is why the Buddha said

completely tame your own mind. What is it that needs to be tamed? In the beginning, there is nothing to be tamed. It starts with really believing in a grasping of an "I" - a "me" that does not really exist. Then, from that arises all the thoughts of attachment, aversion, ignorance, and so on. So, that is what needs to be tamed. For that, we need a key, and there are two keys: the keys to the temporary benefit and the ultimate happiness. You cannot have too many because if you have too many treasures, houses, and so many different keys, there are all these things you do not know what to find or where, and it gets complicated. So, there are just two keys that we need. Now, I will just speak from my own experience. I do not have much learning or studying of the teachings – I am just speaking on my experience, but what I can give you are the two keys.

There is a text by Gampopa that speaks about the quality of the holy Dharma. He says love really is the essence of Dharma. When that arises anywhere in the six realms of samsara, you experience even just the slightest happiness. For example, even if you are born as an animal, if there is some love in your heart, then you will be a beautiful animal. An animal that does not cause harm towards others, with a beautiful voice and a beautiful body. And others will treat the animal well. If you cultivate love, you will naturally become a source of joy and respect for others. On the other hand, what happens when there is self-clinging? The six afflictions will arise and naturally there will be a cause of harm towards others just in order to protect ourselves. The essence of the Buddha's teachings is a principle of non-violence. The Buddha said "Do not commit any wrong, strive to practice virtue." What is a wrong? It is to get angry at others or to hurt and harm others. And why is that wrong? It is because now we do not understand it but everything that we do (big or small) leads to a result. It will all come back to us and we just do not see it right now. But once the time is right, like when a crop is ready to grow it will emerge.

Jigten Sumgön said that if you have not gained complete certainty in karma (cause and effect), then any talk about profound emptiness is but a lie - our karma being emptiness is but a lie. We need to gain certainty in karma first. There are 84,000 different afflictive emotions, and in fact, they can each be combined with each other. There are limitless forms of afflictions just as there are limitless sentient beings having appeared in limitless eons. There are just too many if we were to count how many sentient beings there are and how many affiliations and negative thoughts there are. But in brief, it all comes down to two in the teachings (the vehicles, the different jhanas). It says there is first the vehicle of karma and then ultimately there is the vehicle of emptiness. Even though there are so many, there is really no Dharma teaching that is not included within just the two-fold truth. The temporary benefits depend on karma which is the relative truth. On the temporary relative level, we perceive a duality of self and other due to self-grasping, and until this has become purified, altruism is most important.

It is important to gain personal experience in order to really understand the Dharma. It is important to ask: What is true happiness? Is it external or internal? Even if one is very rich and has everything one could wish for, if there is hatred in one's family, one experiences hell-like suffering. If one is poor but shares love and kindness with one's family, one experiences a pure land. Happiness can only arise from within the mind; happiness is not at all related to the

external world. When the mind is disturbed, one finds suffering anywhere, even in a positive circumstance. If the mind is at peace and filled with love, one finds happiness even while surrounded by a seemingly difficult outer circumstance. You must first understand the suffering nature of samsara. Everything in samsara has the nature of suffering, only when one realizes the nature of mind, attains enlightenment, one will be free from suffering. If you want to be free from suffering, you must be free from self-grasping, as all suffering comes from wishing for one's own happiness. The only way to be free from self-grasping is to cultivate compassion. This is the root of all happiness.

It is most important that you develop love for all beings. If you have cultivated love, you will have the power to overcome suffering. Even if you experience some temporary suffering circumstance, you will understand that this is the result of your own actions of self-grasping and you are now purifying this negative karma. If you now cultivate bodhicitta, you will not suffer again in the future. So, if you experience some suffering now, you must understand that this is the result of your own actions, and is not caused by anyone else. If you understand this, you will accept your suffering and avoid negative actions to avoid future suffering. That is why we begin with the 37 Bodhisattva Practices, and actually all the teachings are included in the 37 Bodhisattva Practices. Speaking from an experiential perspective, what we really need to put into practice is just the 37 Bodhisattva Practices. There is nothing not included in that, and even within that, in one verse, everything is included. Again, that verse says “all suffering without exception comes from wishing for one’s own happiness. The perfect Buddhas arise from the altruistic mind”. These two sentences are like the two keys have been placed in our hands. If we want to become free of suffering, we need to free ourselves of self-grasping and we do that through the altruistic mind - the four immeasurables.

A clarity, a clear understanding, arises when you actually experience it and put it into practice. This is how the mind becomes tamed or trained. Meditation practice of the Dharma must be imbued with an experience. You must put it into practice, and as a result of that, you will achieve ultimate bliss, ultimate happiness. Temporarily, you will also follow karma precisely and experience happiness. This is how you recognize and accumulate merit. Therefore, do not downplay even the slightest meritorious action. You accumulate even the most subtle and slightest form of merit that you practice. That is the key which you have in your own hands; no one else is giving it to you. You have the key.

All the Buddhas of the past, present, and future arise from bodhicitta. In the beginning, the Buddha Shakyamuni was an ordinary being like us. Having given rise to bodhicitta, the Buddha then accumulated merit throughout three endless eons, and finally attained complete enlightenment. What we call merit is nothing else than love and compassion for sentient beings. If we practice virtue with compassion for all beings, it is called merit. If we practice virtue without compassion, it is not called merit. If we truly love others, we will easily exchange our own happiness for their suffering. Some people are naturally very compassionate; this is due to the merit they have accumulated in the past. We are compassionate because we love others. If we

would not love them, we would not care about them. But if you love others and see that they experience endless suffering, an unbearable feeling will overcome you. You cannot bear to see them suffer, and you want to do anything to free them from suffering. This is compassion. The root of all the endless suffering is self-clinging. The only thing that destroys self-clinging is love. Thus, what those beings need is love and compassion. If love permeates their mind, their negative karma and suffering will melt away. For example, if all the people in a war-zone would give rise to love all of a sudden, their suffering would end. Their hatred and jealousy will disappear right there. Thus, their negative karma would become purified.

Bodhicitta is the most powerful way to purify negative karma and dispel suffering. When negative karma and obscurations become purified, they melt away like snow melting in the sun. If the snow mountain is very large, you will not notice that some snow has melted, nevertheless, change happens moment by moment. If you really understand the pain that is created by self-clinging, if you trust that striving for your own happiness is the cause of suffering and has never brought you happiness since beginningless time in samsara, you will be able to generate the inner strength to transform your mind. If you really understand the extent of the wealth of merit gained from bodhicitta, it will be easy and joyful to benefit others. For example, we believe that we are tired because we work too much. We are resentful because our payment is not good enough. Imagine if someone were to tell you: "I will offer you 10 million dollars if you work for me today." Would you be too tired to do it? Most likely you would be at your best behavior that day. The merit gained from giving rise to bodhicitta is a far greater wealth than 10 million dollars.

We get angry at people for all kinds of different reasons or all kinds of conditions that lead to disagreement even though we may love the other person a lot. We still get angry at them all the time. When we keep repeating that over and over again, eventually this love will be cut or severed. This bond of love will be destroyed. People might even kill themselves or just go their separate ways. That is because they have become controlled by the afflictive emotions. In that moment, when the affliction arises, what is most important is that you recognize it, and next that you see the fault in your own afflictive emotion. How do you know that? You know that because of wisdom. You possess awareness. This wisdom or clear awareness is something you need to sustain in all your activities continuously. Where does it arise from? Wisdom arises from compassion. As we said, compassion arises from love. Therefore, wisdom arises from love. First of all, you love others, and then that leads to wisdom, which then believes in a trusting karma. It all depends on love actually.

Each of the six afflictive emotions creates its own form of samsara - an attachment creates the experience as a human being. But each of the six afflictive motions can also be combined with each other, so there are many afflictive emotions. For example, if one’s main afflictive emotion is anger, then that mainly leads to birth in the hell realm. If it is mainly greed, one takes birth as a hungry spirit. If it is mainly jealousy, one takes birth as a demi-God. The afflictive emotions must be recognized within your own mind - the causes that lead to those states of existence. When you recognize that, then the moment these afflictive emotions arise, you will instantly

recognize them. It is because these afflictive emotions arise and ordinary people believe in the truth or reality of that thought (and if that thought remains within their minds) that karmic imprint is created. This is how we form karmic imprints - by allowing our thoughts of believing something to be true to remain within the mind. How can we purify them? It is also through the mind. The mind has to clear them away. If you find these seeds inside your mind, you must work hard to eliminate them each and every day through sustaining mindfulness. You must recognize the emotions upon arising and see its fault. Then, you must sustain mindfulness and not fall under the power of the emotion, not act out on it. Then gradually, the negative emotions will disappear. Always remember this. This is the root of all practices.

6.4 Practice the Six Paramitas

All the qualities of Buddhas arise from the six paramitas and these arise from the relative bodhicitta, meaning love and compassion. If you possess love and compassion, all your actions will naturally become the six paramitas. The Buddha taught the path of the six paramitas - each of which is an antidote to one afflictive emotion. For example, the antidote to anger or hatred is love. The antidote to clinging attachment or self-grasping is generosity. The antidote to desire is ethical discipline. The route of purifying the mind is within the six paramitas, and they are each an antidote to one afflictive emotion. They need to be applied the moment these emotions arise.

In the 37 Bodhisattva Practices, it says the six paramitas (generosity, moral ethics, patience, diligence, concentration and wisdom) are the antidotes to the six afflictions. If you cultivate lots of compassion even in this life, you will be able to stay in the state of great equanimity, without bias between enemies and friends, and be happy this life. You experience temporary happiness in the higher realms continuously. Ultimately, you will attain the state of enlightenment. The inner abode of Dharmadhatu is to abide in the state of love and compassion continuously. The secret abode of Dharmadhatu is the Buddha nature, the ultimate truth of the union of emptiness and compassion that creates countless purelands and Buddha manifestations. The order of moving through the three aspects is to begin with the inner aspect by first cultivating love and compassion continuously without diminishing, like ice melting. Then, when it melts, it becomes one with the vast ocean water, then you attain the secret abode of Dharmadhatu which then creates the outer forms of the Dharmadhatu, palaces, purelands and Buddha manifestations.

Now we continuously, day and night, make great effort just for the purpose of this life. You should ponder how hard you work, onlv for this life, even though after you die, only bodhicitta and love will be of any benefit. Do you have them or not? If you find that you do not have them, you should resolve to give rise to bodhicitta and practice patience. You must adhere to and keep bodhicitta and love. Thus, diligent effort is the bodhisattvas' practice. Diligence means your inner diligence to guard and increase bodhicitta. You guard it through the practice of patience, and you increase it with compassion. That is it. Because if you cultivate love and compassion in your mind, then as a result you will achieve the happiness of birth in the higher realms temporarily. As a result of having practiced generosity, ethical discipline and patience, you will achieve all the

qualities of the higher realms such as a good body, possessions, good companions and so on. And having practiced meditation and wisdom you attain the state of ultimate enlightenment. All of these need to be accompanied by diligence. You have to be diligent in all the trainings. The enemy of diligence is laziness. Laziness harms us even in this life. If we do not practice today, what will we do tomorrow when we die? So whatever practice you engage in, if you find that you are lazy, you must lift up your mind and make yourself practice with diligence. Without diligent practice, even if we were to memorize all the Buddha's teachings, they would be of no benefit. It is important to engage in practice. Then, you will achieve temporary benefit and ultimate happiness.

In the 37 Bodhisattva Practices, it says when one is armed with the weapon of antidotes, when the soldier of mindfulness is armed with the weapon of antidotes, it will slay or cut the emotions the moment they arise. You have to eliminate them the moment they arise through mindfulness. That is really what pollutes the mind - when we allow these emotions to remain within the mind. That is also mentioned in the smoke offering. What is cleared away though the smoke offering is the various obscurations that arise from transgressions, harm doers, enemies, and so forth. What clears it all away is great love.

How can we tame those six afflictive emotions? It is through the practice of the six paramitas and this is how we become liberated. Of these six paramitas, through the perfection of wisdom in particular, the Buddha realized that self and other are non-dual. Each of these paramitas is an antidote to an afflictive emotion. The six paramitas are the essence of a pure undegenerated mind which are wisdom, compassion and the altruistic mind. Milarepa said that for someone who has understood karma and given rise to bodhicitta, the ten virtuous actions arise naturally. If you have this altruistic intention, then just naturally whatever you do with body, speech and mind will become virtuous dharma practice. So, when one gives rise to the altruistic mind, one naturally practices the six paramitas. Now, we are in times of degeneration and during the degenerate age, the non-virtuous states of mind is increasing and the virtuous state of mind is decreasing. That is because of self-grasping and most people have a very strong sense of self-clinging. Because of that, they are also extremely afflicted by the five poisons or the afflictive emotions. As a result of that, their care for others and the altruistic mind gets weaker. The six paramitas only arise from the altruistic mind and are the quality of bodhicitta. All the qualities of the Buddha are manifested in the form of the six paramitas which arise from bodhicitta naturally just like sun rays emanating from the sun. The different appearances of the deity are a quality of that. The quality from the ultimate perspective are the five wisdoms which are the manifestation or the radiance of ultimate bodhicitta and the six paramitas of the relative bodhicitta.

The practice of the six perfections is really the foundation of the Mahayana. The first is generosity, which is a supreme method for clearing away self-clinging. If we possess something that is very precious, then we tend to think "I own this thing, this is mine," and we think this again and again. This reinforces the concept, and as time goes on, we really become attached. In fact, we become so attached that we would not be willing to give it away to anyone else. Because

of grasping at the notion of self, we to cling to that object. We find that we are bound by these objects. If we have 100 dollars, we want 1000 dollars. The tighter we hold, the more it binds us.

When we offer the mandala, we make an offering to all enlightened beings, and this mental offering becomes an antidote to the thought, "this is mine, I own this." Slowly, it begins to free our minds from the bondage of self-clinging. We have this tendency as well to cling to our own bodies, thinking that this form is mine. If we make effort to think that the body is like another being's home, somebody else's house, then there is no reason whatsoever for us to be attached to it. This is another method for training the mind in order to purify self-grasping. There is no need to assemble all the prescribed offering substances. You should assemble whatever you can such as flowers, water bowls, a statue or picture, and so forth, and the rest you can visualize. It is important to understand the meaning behind making these offerings. The point is to overcome ego-clinging. When we practice making offerings, we are practicing to give away what is precious to us, thus we release attachment. Ordinarily, we are attached to the sense pleasures, for this reason we offer them. The deity actually has no need or desire for these sense pleasures, but offering them releases our own attachment and we accumulate great merit. As a result, we will experience the result that is similar to the cause in future lifetimes, for example, a beautiful complexion, or a long-life span, and finally it serves as the cause for attaining awakening.

When you meditate, you must observe your mind. Do not focus so much on the movement of the body, but focus on the mind. When all kinds of thoughts arise - attachment, anger, or virtuous and non-virtuous thoughts - there is an awareness that precedes these thoughts, and that awareness you must recognize. The thoughts do not yet disappear, but there is an awareness that recognizes these thoughts. That you must recognize. That is what you must develop. Meditative concentration means that this is the time where you need to practice meditation. Ideally, you cultivate the four immeasurables and you meditate in a state of Mahamudra. Wherein you recognize that self and other are all illusory. The mind does not experience any suffering whatsoever; it remains unaffected by any suffering. It abides just like space. So, thinking in this way and resting in a mind of Mahamudra benefits yourself and also others. That is the perfection of the paramita of wisdom. This is what we mean by "I will apply my body, speech and mind to virtue". So, meditate, study, learn and practice. Do not waste this opportunity.

During meditation, we should think and focus on compassion. First, we need to meditate on infinitive or impartial loving, and through that, we can arise impartial kindness and compassion. This is directly relevant to the four immeasurables: equanimity, love, compassion, and joy. This is important, because once we developed well the compassion, through that we can purify all our negative karmas. Again, once we do Gom or Samten, meditation well, we will have less thoughts. Once we have less thoughts, or even we have thoughts, we are able to realize what are the thoughts, their origin, you will feel freed from all bondage. As for the thoughts - you have to just let them go, throw them away like garbage. You must develop stable awareness that recognizes all mental arisings. Then, when that becomes stable - all those thoughts, afflictive emotions, and suffering - you will be able to overcome, eliminate, though this awareness. If the

awareness is not very powerful, you will still cling to the happiness that you want, but your mindfulness will not be able to overcome the suffering that you do not want. So, you must habituate this mindfulness that recognizes, that sees all the thoughts that appear, and eventually through sustaining mindfulness, you will be able to overcome all conceptuality and suffering.

My own guru, Lama Chime Dorjee had given me these teachings on the 37 Bodhisattva Practices. This is one thing that I have memorized as a daily prayer which I constantly recite and practice. In there, again, it says, "All suffering without exception comes from wishing for one's own happiness. The perfect Buddhas arise from the altruistic mind." All suffering without exception comes from the afflictive emotions and there is no other suffering that that. Even the slightest moment of joy and happiness comes from love. Where do these enlightened qualities of Buddha come from? It really only comes from bodhicitta. When there is bodhicitta, then one will engage in the activities of the six paramitas. And as a result of practicing the six paramitas, all enlightened qualities arise.

So, who has created the idea of the six paramitas? The liberated beings did not think about it, it just happens naturally. If you love, then the six paramitas arise naturally. Even if you are engaged in mundane samsaric activities, we practice the six paramitas. But often we do not practice the paramita of wisdom which is to realize the indivisible nature of self and other. But, however, samsaric beings like a mother thinks that this is her child and because of this attachment she lacks the paramita of wisdom. But she still practices all the other five paramitas. The other five paramitas (generosity, patience, ethical discipline, diligence and meditation) are complete. Because a mother loves her child, she will not spare any expense and would never be stingy - this is generosity. She also does not want to hurt her child, which is ethical conduct. Even if the child is difficult, she will be patient. Never forgetting about her child and sustaining mindfulness and love for her child is meditative concentration. If she knows how things really are, she knows that all sentient beings have actually been her children, and that self and others, ultimately, are indivisible - this is wisdom. Thus, she will have compassion for all sentient beings with great equanimity, without discriminating between friends and enemies. These arise naturally as the self-light of love just like the sun rays emerging from the sun and all qualities arise from that. There is nothing more important than this. We all possess love to some extent but mostly it is very limited and very small. We love our friends and companions but this kind of love is also tainted by self-grasping. In this way, it becomes attachment and that is what happens in samsara. A good quality of love is transformed into the fault of desire and attachment.

We do have love but mostly our love is not completely pure. We love but mainly for our own sake. For example, you are generous and make a gift to someone. You have some hopes that in the future this person is going to do something for you. Maybe there is something in for you if you do this. Or you practice ethical discipline; whichever of the six paramitas that you do. If you practice virtue in this way, then only half of it is virtuous and the other half is non-virtuous. This is how merit becomes ruined. If you practice generosity with a selfish intention to get rich in the future, you will get rich for a few lifetimes. But once that merit comes to an end, everything is

lost again. For example, some businessmen in this world who are very rich but one day everything collapses and they lose everything. That is when their merit comes to an end.

And what is the essence of all merits? It is love and love is the basis of the six paramitas which are the source of all good qualities to arise. Therefore, if on the basis of love you cultivate merit, the benefits are limitless. For example, Sakya Pandita said that a wise person knows how to accumulate merit because whatever you do in the world or in the Dharma, if you have merit, you will not require any effort in whatever you do. Everything is just accomplished naturally. Then, there are others who no matter how hard they try they never accomplish their own purpose. They cannot even survive in this world on their own. The difference between those two individuals is the merit that they have accumulated. Sakya Pandita said that for someone who possesses merit their activities are effortless like the sun. But those who lack merit their efforts are like the oil in a butter lamp which will become exhausted.

Just like that if you possess merit then just naturally in all lifetimes, you will enjoy perfect wealth and happiness and ultimately attain enlightenment. So, there will be a two-fold result but if you do not have such merit, then this two-fold result will not be attained. You will not have such merit if your love is impure; impure love spoils your merit. So, you need to have pure sincere love which is the root of all happiness. That is the way to accumulate huge amount of merit by practicing even the slightest virtue. It is a pure altruistic mind and if it is not pure whatever six paramitas you practice, you will never obtain true lasting merit. It will all be ruined by this demon of self-grasping. The fault of that mainly is due to not having developed immeasurable love and if this does not arise then immeasurable compassion cannot arise. On one hand when we meditate, we feel that we know how to meditate, but we are unmindful in our daily activities. Our afflictions and emotions remain hidden just like a poisonous snake within us. These six afflictions are naturally present in the mind of self-grasping. Likewise, in the mind of love, the six paramitas are naturally complete. So, self-grasping is like this poisonous snake as I have mentioned before and the afflictions naturally arise from it. These afflictions are hidden but we all have them and we will all have them until we attain enlightenment.

If you do a worldly activity in a factory or a company with bodhicitta, it becomes a perfect practice of the six paramitas. If you have the karma to stop your job and do your own retreat then that is one thing. Why do we do worldly activities? Through your activities, you can perfectly practice the six paramitas. Then you do the best in your job and you will be honest and not deceive others. Practicing the Dharma also means practicing while you engage in mundane activities. So, how can we make everything that we do become Dharma? It is when altruism has arisen in your mind then everything you do naturally becomes the six paramitas. The holy Dharma that is of benefit is love and compassion arising within your mind. And when that is present within your mind then all your activities of body, speech and mind will naturally become the six paramitas. It is not necessary to say that you will shave your head and going to a retreat. Of course, if you can do that then it is ideal but that is difficult to do. What really is the essence of the Dharma is to ultimately seal all your activities with love and compassion.

For example, there are some couples who get married and they are able to stay together until they die. That is because they have sustained love and patience for one another. As a result of that in future lives, they will achieve the happiness of the God realms and so forth. Even if you are not able to practice any Dharma at least to that extent, you will experience happiness. Look at what your happiness is and then find the corresponding cause that is founded on love and compassion. Or you have found a precious human body as a result of having practiced ethical discipline. So, all the qualities of the higher realms are really the kindness of the six paramitas, in particular patience. It is due to the merit you have accumulated and if you remember that you will again want to accumulate such merit. Now, you have obtained it and you will want to create more causes for it to arise in the future.

The transformation that occurs when the afflictive emotions are subdued with sharp discriminating awareness is the arising of the wrathful deities. The actual nature of the afflictive emotions is primordial wisdom; thus, the five poisons are the five wisdoms. Through the power of awareness, the afflictive emotions collapse and this collapsing is revealing of their true nature, primordial wisdom. We must separate the inner mind from the outer conduct. The inner mind realizes that all phenomena of samsara and nirvana lack inherent existence. The outer universe and inner sentient beings lack inherent existence, as they are compounds. If we grasp at the truth of whatever arises within the mind - pleasure, suffering, thoughts and afflictive emotions - we will accumulate karma. If we recognize afflictive emotions and unwholesome thoughts as they arise, this mindful-awareness is the Buddha. All Buddhas abide within the mind streams of sentient beings. The thoughts are delusions and lack inherent existence - they come and go - yet innate awareness always remains unchangingly.

Thus, do not pay attention to the thoughts, but see the awareness that recognizes them. When awareness holds its own with stability, afflictive emotions, pleasure, and suffering will disappear, and your mind will become very clear. If you grasp at the truth of thoughts, your mind will be obscured. Obscurations come from grasping at the truth of thoughts. While understanding that things lack inherent existence and are like a dream, in your activities you should accomplish the benefit of others entirely and abandon harm toward others entirely. Be in harmony with everyone, accomplish the causes of benefit and happiness for all sentient beings, and try to make them joyful and happy.

6.5 Meditate on Immeasurable Love

What is loving kindness? When one has dualistic grasping toward one's close ones – one's children and spouse, they love you, and you love them. When you love them, you will remember them when you face just a bit of difficulty. Similarly, there is no one who has not been our parents or children. We should consider our most beloved one as an example to understand that there is no one who has not been like them over our countless past lives. When we think like that, then based on the understanding at that point, a bit of loving kindness will arise for these beings. Then, when we think about the number of sentient beings – we can see that they are

countless and immeasurable, like the dust particles in a sunray. When such loving kindness arises within, then upon seeing or hearing whatever problems that occur, we will think, “Oh, how terrible!” We will feel as if the whole world is our own family. Then, immeasurable loving kindness will arise. Immeasurable loving kindness means to have loving kindness for the whole world. Then, this must be habituated again and again.

Initially, one has to foster small measures of loving kindness. One should meditate on love for one’s very kind mother: “If I did not have a mother, I would not have a human body.” And teachers: “Since I have teachers, I gained knowledge; and if I did not have a teacher, I would be ignorant. If I did not have a teacher, I would not have any knowledge.” Then, loving kindness arises toward all teachers. When one think that all teachers are good, this is loving kindness. In the same way, think, “What if there were no country?” There are good and bad countries, countries with freedom and without, there are many different kinds of countries. But if people do not have a country, they would not be able to fend for themselves. Water, electricity, roads come from the country. The electricity comes from the country, the water comes from the country, schools come from the country, the shops come from the country. All our activities are reliant on the country. Because of the countries, we can get medical treatment and make our living all over the world. If you feel that the country is very problematic, think instead that the country is very good. When one thinks that it is good, this is loving kindness.

When one has trained in such manner, one can see how this loving kindness is and who has it – that all animals, such as ants have been born like that due to the karma of ego-grasping and a lack of loving kindness. When one lacks loving kindness, the mind becomes very small. When one has loving kindness, the mind becomes big. The body of a human or a God comes from loving kindness. Merit comes from loving kindness; what we call “merit” is actually loving kindness. One should understand this and cultivate loving kindness again and again in one’s mind. Especially when one is driving on a road, one should ask oneself whose kindness it is? It is from the kindness of the country. The car is from the kindness of the country. One should cultivate loving kindness by contemplating like this.

When one does this continuously, what feeling arises? Loving kindness toward everyone, a feeling as if they were one’s family arises. One will not think that that person is a stranger, that is my friend, that is my enemy, but one will have natural loving kindness for everyone, be gently toward all things, and will have gentle conduct. This means that immeasurable loving kindness has arisen. At that time, one can see others’ suffering, and that is immeasurable compassion. When one thinks of anyone who experiences suffering, compassion arises. Then immeasurable compassion arises. With immeasurable loving kindness, one will have immeasurable compassion, and based on immeasurable compassion, immeasurable empathetic joy and impartiality will naturally arise. That is how one should meditate. Milarepa said “All meditation must begin with arousing deep compassion. Whatever one does must emerge from an attitude of love and benefitting others”. If you give rise to immeasurable loving kindness before meditation, then you will be able to meditate easily. If immeasurable loving kindness has not

arisen, it will not be easy to meditate. When you meditate, you should look at the mind. When you look at the mind, then no matter how many different thoughts arise, any harm they inflict is temporary, and what must be recognized is the cognizer that is aware of the thoughts. That is superior insight (vipassana). That is the awareness that knows the nature of thoughts. And this awareness must not fall under the power of attachment and not fall under the power of aversion. Whatever thoughts that arise regarding the past or future, do not fall under the power of attachment and aversion, hope and fear. Think that your mind must become pure, and if you can cultivate patience with all the thoughts, no matter how many appear, they cannot harm you at all. For example, if you meditate when you are suffering, the suffering will fade away. When you feel happy, the happiness will fade away. Similarly, all suffering is impermanent, it is illusory, and it disappears. What is real is the awareness that knows the mind. It always arises, and when a person dies in the end, this awareness does not die.

At times when there are no thoughts at all, one can see the actual nature, and this mind, this awareness is like space, free from any thoughts. Sometimes this happens, and one becomes very happy. When there are no thoughts at all, there is only the awareness, and that is what is called "meditation." When one clings to thoughts with attachment and aversion during meditation, the mind becomes polluted and unclear. Then, the consciousness becomes unclear. No matter how many thoughts arise, one must not get overpowered by them. Especially when strong mental afflictions arise, one must sustain the awareness. The awareness should look at the mental affliction itself. For example, if we are angry at someone, do not look at the person, but at the anger itself. So, when anger itself is examined, at the moment of anger, there is no thought at all, and it completely overwhelms us. Then, meditate only on the anger, then the mind becomes very clear. Then the anger disappears, and the nature of the anger itself changes into wisdom, the mirror-like wisdom. The mind becomes clear like a mirror. Then one thinks, "Oh, it seems like I should give rise to anger, because the anger benefits me, it interrupts the thoughts." When this feeling and experience arises, the mental afflictions are transformed into wisdom.

Then, by using each mental affliction as a helpful support in this way, one can get to the awareness. With the awareness, one can destroy all the small thoughts and eliminate the feelings. So, when thoughts and feelings arise, if one immediately sustains the awareness, then the feelings will fade away. When the feelings fade away in this way, then the thoughts will collapse and become purified. When feelings arise, they obscure the thoughts, and the mind becomes like an ice block. When one can break down the feelings, then we should always break down the feelings. In brief, there should be no difference between happiness and suffering. We should break down the happiness, and we should break down the suffering. When we have broken down both the happiness and the suffering, there will be no difference between happiness and suffering, and the meditation will have become the best. This is what Milarepa said. We must give up happiness. We also must give up the suffering. When we can give up happiness, we can also give up suffering, right? If one cannot give up happiness, one cannot give up suffering. It is based on happiness that suffering occurs.

Jigme Lingpa said the enemy that obstructs you is actually an enhancement or a stepping stone in your practice. All blame and abuse are actually an encouragement to practice virtue. When there is an enemy, you first have to think that in a previous life, this enemy has been a very dear loved person like your parents or a friend with whom you have broken samaya. As a result, they now appear as an enemy. But the afflictive emotions in your own mind - the five afflictions - are like a disease in the mind. Milarepa said there is no greater negativity than anger in your mind because anger is the seed of the hell realm. You need to get rid of the anger, and the way to get rid of it is by letting it come up to the surface. The enemy that brings up the anger is actually your doctor who performs a surgery on you and takes it out. Otherwise, it stays there inside of your belly, and you cannot take it out. No one can take it out but your enemy. All those who trigger your anger, you will say thank you to them. You feel sincerely grateful towards them because you see them like a doctor who heals you. When you see them in that way, then you will be able to practice patience. That is extremely important. That is why in our opening prayer in the very beginning, we put Jigten Sumgön's aspiration where he puts the enemy in the very beginning, so we cultivate compassion for the enemy first. That is extremely meaningful. That is also why His Holiness Karmapa took that prayer and put it into the general prayer book also in the beginning because it is so meaningful. So, that is the one thing I wanted to mention.

6.6 Practice to Gain Direct Experience

Milarepa said meditation must be imbued with an actual experience [as said previously]. This is the essence of all the different teachings. Milarepa said "I do not see consciousness; I only see primordial wisdom". This is what it comes down to. One needs to cultivate this state of non-duality. When there is grasping in the mind, the mind will become biased, so it all comes down to the mind. All faults also arise from the mind, and when you recognize that it all depends on the mind, then you will see that essentially all religions are actually good. All religions are beneficial and necessary and have good qualities. Even though they may have some faults, it is not the religion – it is what people do with that religion. The fixation in people's minds is what creates the faults, but it is not the religion itself. When you understand this, all you really need is a genuine love for others. You need to have the relative bodhicitta and a mind that is free from all bias of attachment and aversion. This is how you can tame your mind - this is how you can melt the ice block of self-grasping. You can attain freedom by realizing the nature of your mind. When there is no more thought and no more grasping at "me" and others, then there is also no thought of pure and impure, good and bad, within the mind. You are then able to let go of all these thoughts and fixations and see everything in a completely pure way. With a pure view, you see only the good qualities. This is what we call immeasurable equanimity.

To realize all phenomena as empty is difficult. This is difficult to understand for beginners. When you say a person is empty of self-nature, they will say you are stupid. When you ask if someone is a person, they will say yes. But when you ask if a corpse is a person, they will say no, the mind is the person. But when you investigate the mind, what is it? Milarepa said that when you meditate on mind as space, clouds will arise. But they will just vanish back into the

sky. When you meditate on mind as mountain, do not grasp at the bushes. When the mind is like a mountain, it will not be shaken by concepts. When you meditate the mind as ocean, the wave seems powerful, but they have the same nature as the ocean and disappear back into it. Similarly, when an emotion arises, recognize its nature and it will disappear back into the mind. Guard your mind like guarding a jewel from a thief. To have no doubts / questions that the mind is like this or that, just as space has no qualities. Sometimes emotions or feelings of bliss arise and they are very strong. Just recognize it and slowly, it will get smaller. One day, you will be able to liberate afflictive emotions as they arise.

Milarepa said that aside from realizing the natural state of the mind there is no other perfection of wisdom than that. So, we are only speaking about the nature of mind when we speak about the perfection of wisdom and we should understand it to be the nature of Mahamudra. When the mind becomes completely pure, then you are a Buddha. When you realize non-duality and you will no longer have developed realistic thoughts and the mind becomes pure and that is when you realize that all appearances are nothing but your own mind. All perceptions are nothing but your own mind. So, you realize that self and other are one. My mind is just like a crystal and everything is reflected within it. When you realize the nature of the mind and there is no more thought of existence or non-existence you have attained a perfection of wisdom and you understand that everything arises from this nature of the mind, and everyone has this nature of the mind. This is the nature of the perfection of wisdom and these words are in accordance with the actual words of the Buddha and the scriptures.

If you investigate the nature of the mind - as taught in the Middle Way view, and in Mahamudra, Dzogchen, and so on - until you see the true nature of the mind, the ultimate truth, you need the relative truth: immeasurable love born in your mind. Then, examining the mind's nature, you will understand it right away. The mind becomes vast - it becomes like space, like an ocean. Through immeasurable love, all this can be understood a little. But without immeasurable love and compassion in your mind, even when you look at the mind's nature, past karma and merit let you glimpse a little - then it clouds over again. When thick clouds fill the sky, the sun shows a little, then is hidden again - hidden again and again. It is like that. But when love becomes immeasurable, and non-referential compassion joined with emptiness enters your mind, then naturally this nature of the mind is free of every single cloud - it becomes like a sky free of clouds. You see at once that the two are not separate things - emptiness and compassion are not different; they are inseparable. All the qualities of the three kayas are complete in the mind. The empty essence, like space, is the wisdom of emptiness - like space, free of dualistic grasping. The clear nature is the wisdom of clarity. Its essence can be seen vividly, directly. And compassion pervades all beings.

It is something that cannot be verbally expressed but it is something that can that can be understood through experience. I can say these words because I have gained an understanding of the nature of the mind and we can gain an understanding of the nature of the mind. It is just more difficult to really gain stability in sustaining this realization of the nature of mind. For that,

we need to get experience, we need to practice. Our practice must be infused with an actual experience. So, we can understand that this is the nature of things and there is no self and other and so on. We also need to actually experience that our ourselves each and every day in order to gain this stability. You have to gain a direct experience in seeing the nature of your mind. It is just like for example when wood meets with fire, then you know with 100 percentage certainty that the wood will turn into fire. So, fire really is inherent within the wood, there is no wood that does not turn into fire when met with fire. So, similarly when met with awareness, the afflictive emotion becomes just that and you have to gain certainty in that fact. When you gain certainty in that, there is no other afflictive emotion and no other awareness than the afflictive emotion. They are one just like fire and wood. You have ultimately mastered the final realization. This is what we should gain a personal experience in, and this is what I myself have experienced.

Milarepa said fire that meets with wood turns into a fire, and likewise when wisdom awareness meets with the thoughts, the afflictions, they turn into awareness themselves. However, this is something to train in and so you need to use these afflictions and these thoughts to enhance the power of your awareness, to train your awareness and this is also how it is termed in focusing teachings and thoughts to train in the power of our own awareness. Thus, thoughts enhance the power of one's own awareness, it is just like the more wood there is, the greater the fire will become. It is something that you have to personally experience. You really trust in your own personal experience because later on, after you have died and go into the bardo, you have to go on alone in the bardo. If one has gained confidence in this view, if one has resolved this, then as it was said in the Samantabhadra prayer that even if the three realms were to be destroyed there is no fear, even if the world comes to an end, it will be nothing to your mind.

So, each and every day, you should recognize all the thoughts and the emotions, the feelings arising in your mind, have mindfulness and heedfulness. In the 37 Bodhisattva Practices, it also says: "at all times no matter what, look at the state of your mind and do not allow the mind to become polluted'. So, if you find that a negative polluting thought has arisen in your mind, you must purify this thought through the water of altruism and an understanding of emptiness. Emptiness means to understand that self and other do not exist separately. So, the emptiness of the universe and also sentient beings is to understand that everything compounded is impermanent by nature and does not inherently exist. That is something you need to actually experience. So, we might know all of that, we might know that the universe and all beings are empty and there is no self and there is no other and so on, but in our own personal mind if we still cannot let go of dualistic grasping then all of this is of not much benefit. Ultimately, your own consciousness has to transform into primordial awareness. This primordial awareness is like space, it has always been there since primordial time, it will always be there in the future and it is there now. It is that within the space expanse of primordial wisdom that all the Buddhas are one.

So, when you realize the perfection of wisdom, then you have actualized primordial awareness, or the dualistic consciousness has become primordial wisdom. So, consciousness again is the mind that perceives duality and it is your mind that sees self and other. It sees the outer various

objects, it experiences happiness and suffering, it is aware of whatever happens and that is your ordinary consciousness. When you realize its true essence, then it becomes primordial awareness, and primordial awareness is the ultimate view that realizes that self and other do not exist. According to the path of experience and practice, this view is resolved through the practices of Mahamudra or Dzogchen so on, it is given different names, but all it is about is just the nature of your mind. In Mahamudra, the mind is emptiness - nothing at all to identify. And therefore, your own mind is vast, like space. In Dzogchen, all of samsara and nirvana is in the mind's Ground. What does the Great Middle Way come to? Non-grasping - grasp nothing at all. Grasping at nothing, resting upon the mind itself, it naturally abides just so - that is the Great Middle Way. When you understand the nature of your mind, you see its space-like nature. This is to realize just that and that is the space-like nature of the mind. So, you should let it all be and let be these thoughts of a true existence of things, but also let be these thoughts of things do not really exist. Do not attach and have no aversion just let the mind be natural and you will see the nature of the mind. The moment you begin to develop thoughts of something exists or you think that that is how it is or that is not how it is, attachment and aversion arise. You are already placing an imprint into the mind. This is a method not to place an imprint into your mind.

If you say that “I have attained bodhicitta”, you have attained nothing, a bodhisattva has attained nothing, there is no attainment. Basically, that bodhisattva has lost self-clinging, has lost the “I”, so there is no attainment. However, it is not that there is no attainment either by having lost the “I”, they have attained emptiness or selflessness, so there is in fact great attainment. Although there is nothing whatsoever that is gained, or attained. So, I do not gain anything, but what is gained is the space-like nature of the mind; that is gained when you realize the true nature of the mind. As said before, you must resolve first that appearances are the mind and then that mind itself is emptiness, but then when you realize mind is emptiness, there is no need to think that it is empty or to think that it is not. Be free without any thought, without any grasping in your mind, so this is the way according to the practice lineage of blessings. In this way, you attain that which is unattainable; when you realize Mahamudra, everything is in fact attained. So, these words are important. For Bodhisattvas, there is no attainment and there is no non-attainment and that is because they have attained the perfection of wisdom.

If you just engage in a little bit of practice. you can understand the meaning of primordial awareness. What is it? It is just your ordinary, bare mind, your consciousness that is all it is. You have to find the awareness that sees all thoughts. Milarepa, when he gave a teaching on the ten paramitas, regarding the paramita of primordial awareness, he said that “aside from identifying or kind of exposing the falsehood of afflictive emotions, there is no other perfection of primordial awareness than that”. So, to expose the falsity of afflictive emotions through mindfulness, through clear awareness, when you look at the afflictive emotion with awareness, then you will render these afflictions powerless. That is how gradually the dualistic consciousness transforms into primordial awareness. It is not that one day you suddenly have this experience of “now my consciousness has transformed into primordial awareness”, but it is an

ongoing process of consciousness becoming primordial awareness. It does not happen all of a sudden one day, it grows. In order to realize the true nature of the mind, the blissful dharmakaya of boundless love, you must realize that the way things appear, pleasant or unpleasant, is your own mind. Habituate to this, and practice it again and again. Again, that is why Milarepa said meditation practice must be imbued with an actual experience.

Milarepa spoke of the knowing of ordinary awareness. As Gampopa told it, for many years he strove on until the realization of the eighth bhumi dawned. Then, through Milarepa, he understood the practice where ordinary awareness suffices. Ordinary awareness is the present consciousness - your own vivid knowing of this present moment, the knowing that does the work. Once you know how to look at it directly, its nature is like space, without self and other. That is the key point of the practice where ordinary awareness suffices. When ordinary awareness turns outward, there is dualistic grasping - self and other. If you look again and again at awareness's own nature, self and other become non-dual, and the mind becomes like space. In that, the Middle Way view is naturally present. But if you grasp at it, grasping enters, and there is no view at all. The ultimate goal of the four applications of mindfulness is mindfulness of mind. That is the fruition. There is no thought at all when you know the mind vividly. Then, rest in that state – "without a single thought, decisively" - that is how you gain certainty about the four applications of mindfulness.

Again, the cause of our suffering is the afflictive emotions. What really are afflictive emotions? When you look at them, they are nowhere to be found - they are empty and ultimately do not actually exist. For example, if you have wisdom and you get angry, then immediately you will recognize the anger is bad. Where is the anger? There is actually no anger. You cannot find it. Realizing that the affliction is empty, recalling that the afflictive emotion transforms into primordial wisdom, thoughts becoming dharmakaya - these are different words with the same meaning. This is how you should train your mind.

Sentient beings believe in a subject-object duality, as they think that they themselves are separate from the others out there. When you directly experience the natural state, all these ideas and fixations fall apart. When the thinking of self and others falls apart, when one does not cling to the habitual discursive thoughts, one realizes that the nature of mind is actually like space. There is no separation or duality. Separation is only a mental construct. When these mental fabrications collapse, one will know the endless space-like nature of mind. There is a sense of ease and peace. Knowing that sentient beings have not realized this reality, one maintains unconditioned compassion. Abiding in the natural state of mind is a most peaceful and joyous state. But sentient beings have not seen their own true nature, with confused minds the endlessly suffer in illusory samsara. This is a great pity, thus the compassion of those who know reality naturally prevails.

If one realizes all phenomena are impermanent, one will have no grasping or fear. When one does not grasp at phenomena, the mind will remain clear and unstained. One's mind just remains as it is, abiding like space. So, Milarepa taught that there is no difference between happiness and

suffering. One recognizes the mind to be the mind of the Buddha and one is beyond thoughts of practicing or not practicing.

One more thing - if you really love the Buddha, you can use one of those alms, those begging bowls, to drink. Every time you see it, you remember the love of the Buddha. Jigten Sumgön said it is not like certain people are allowed and other people are not allowed to drink from this bowl. If you have devotion or faith in the Buddha, then you are allowed to drink that bowl. Because through this bowl, you recollect the BuddhaDharma and the Sangha. When you see this bowl, you remember the Buddha and the Buddha's great love. When you see the bowl, you also remember the Dharma, which means I have to cultivate love. Then when you see this bowl, you also remember the Sangha. That is when you cultivate love through the Dharma, then whatever you do with body, speech, and mind will naturally become virtues. You become a Sangha. Through this alms bowl, you recollect the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Personally, it has really benefited me a lot. It is a way to accumulate to great merit by recollecting the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Therefore, anyone is allowed to drink from an alms bowl like this if you have faith in the Buddha. Other than that, there is no rule that some are allowed or some are not allowed to drink from it. If you use it this way, it is a great way to accumulate merit.

Anyway, thank you so much for organizing this teaching on the topic of temporary and ultimate happiness. It is very beneficial to know because now we understand that the Buddhist teachings are really the only source of all benefit and happiness. So, Dharma friends, Tashi Delek.

7.0 THE LIFE TRANSFORMATION EXPERIENCE OF GARCHEN RINPOCHE

What I am sharing with you are not the words of a great scholar but the words of an old father with a lot of experience. I have experienced great external hardships, having spent twenty years confined in a labor camp. You could call this “a problem.” However, inside I truly did not experience suffering; moreover, I consider my time in prison as a very beneficial time. As a boy, before I was arrested, I had faith in the Dharma but lacking practical experience, my faith was somewhat depthless. In prison, I had the opportunity to actually practice, taking external hardships onto the path with patient forbearance. Not a single time did I hope to become free from prison, I lived day by day, free of hopes and fears, sending compassion to beings, relying on Tara, praying to her secretly. Having thus applied the Dharma and seen the results of practice, I gained confidence in the validity of the Dharma and my faith became deep and irreversible.

When I was young, I was very short tempered and I had horrible dreams. But my root teacher taught me compassion and I no longer have bad dreams. If you practice detachment, it will be easier to keep it in the intermediate state. If you are mindful and do not follow your attachments now, when you are in the bardo and see your future parents, you will not be attached to them and not be reborn in this world. The mind is like a flowing stream. It will not stay in a cup but will go where it will go. If you do not practice well, your mind will flow away. When the glass of your body is broken, it will go where it will, just as water would land where it spills.

The first encounter I had with my Lama in prison was as simple as that, but due to this great blessing, I was saved from my downfall. In the beginning, prison to me was the worst of hell. After I met Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche, the hard labor which I had thought as painful and fruitless ever so slowly became my daily Dharma practice. At the end, due to the unrepayable kindness and profundity of my master, prison became like a land of jewels, and the hatred and anger toward my enemies ended up being completely transformed. I did not return from the prison empty-handed.

Suffering, the source of pain, became the catalyst. I was able to develop genuine altruistic aspiration under the guidance of Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche, and through that, to fulfill the purpose of my human birth in this lifetime. I would not hesitate to say that the real Lama, the real teacher who gave me the most invaluable instructions was actually suffering. Suffering was my greatest teacher. Thus, my time in the prison turned out to be a treasure. I realized from the very core of my being that when you can practice love for your enemies, that is actually the greatest love, and it can turn into bodhicitta. Well, if you were to tell me now, "Let's go to prison, Rinpoche," I would happily go right now, without any regret. It is often through happiness that we mistakenly create suffering, and actually through suffering that we can find happiness.

Before I met Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche, the fire of anger and hatred that I carried within me was so intense that I was constantly being preoccupied with thoughts of revenge. I used to think "I would have no regret killing one Chinese officer, and then, to die myself in that process!" One day, I was telling everyone in the room how my group and I entered the battle, and how I actually fought the Chinese. Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche was there, and he was listening attentively. At that time, I confided to them, "some people told me that if you kill one Chinese soldier, you would gain the same merits as building one stupa." Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche was absolutely appalled when he heard those comments! He scolded me: "Don't repeat such thing! Whoever said that . . . those people are not Buddhists! They cannot possibly be Buddhists and speak like that!" "Yes, but I think it is true," the young warrior in me immediately jumped in to start an argument. "It is because the Chinese soldiers are enemies of the precious Dharma," I replied. "They destroyed the Dharma and brought us back to the dark age! Isn't it true that according to Vajrayana, if a person commits evil deeds that bring harm to others and if you can liberate that person through skillful means to save him from a heavier karma, then that is permissible? Isn't it true that the Buddha himself in one of his past lives had to kill the murderer in order to save the lives of five hundred Bodhisattvas-to-be?"

"Think about those Chinese soldiers who came to our land to fight. They were drafted. They were made to come. They had no choice." Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche further pointed out, his voice unruffled. "They have parents. They have children of their own. But they had to come to our land, and to follow the orders from above, and then, they were forced to enter the battlefield. They didn't even know who they were going to kill and whether they would come back alive to see their parents and family again." "If you truly believe in the law of cause and effect like you said you do," Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche urged, "then whatever is happening to us is the

consequence of our own karma and past negative actions. What the Chinese are doing to our country and our people is horrific, but it is not the Gong Chan Dang [Chinese Communist Party] alone who had crafted all of this suffering for us. We are actually the architects of our own suffering. Since countless lifetimes, you and I, and all of us, we have reaped the seeds of suffering because of our own spoiled harvest, and now, when the conditions ripen, every torment we can possibly think of begins to blossom! The Gong Chan Dang is only but one of the supporting conditions."

"So then, what were the causes for all of this suffering that we are bearing now?" Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche asked. "The causes are within our own mind!" he answered. "The causes are attachment, anger, ignorance, pride, jealousy and so forth. These are the causes of all our suffering. They are what make us suffer right now. As long as you keep these causes intact and alive in you, you are bound to endless suffering no matter where you are. If you truly understand the law of cause and effect, and truly understand how karma first and foremost takes place in your own mind, then this understanding is not just good for now. It is for the purpose of births after births and lifetimes after lifetimes. Understanding karma is not just for yourself! It is not just a matter of oneself. It is for self and others. If you truly understand karma, free yourself from hatred and will rise to the level of an altruistic mind, it will benefit all beings, including yourself and people whom you perceive as your enemies." Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche did not give me this kind of advice once or twice, but with great patience and empathy, he later repeated what I needed to hear most over and over again.

Now if all of you ask me what my biggest fear is, I would say that the fear of anger is my biggest fear! I really have no other fear, like the fear of dying, because I understood that the mind cannot die. I have come to a full realization that suffering is created by mental imprints, and imprints are created by karma. Again, if you ask me what I am afraid of, then you can hear my answer over again, that I am afraid of imprints of karma! Every slightest suffering is from karma. I am now only afraid of karma! Many times I told Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche about my distress, and my Lama talked to me time and time again about love and pure view. [1]

The most important thing I want to share with you from my being imprisoned is that I directly experienced karma. I clearly recognized suffering and the causes of suffering for myself and all other beings. Due to this direct experience, my trust in karma became resolutely firm. Ever since my kind root guru, Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche, saved me from my own downfall, I did everything in prison with the unshakable belief in karma. No matter what activity, no matter whom I met in prison, I recognized that the only true cause of happiness is love and patience. I tried to maintain patience with a clear mind. Love and patience – that was, and continues to be, my main practice. I tried to protect love with patience no matter what people did, no matter what people said. No matter how hard, I would not get angry, and I would not retaliate. This is my most important instruction to all of you. As I have often shared with all of you, we can never be too sure who is our friend and who is our true enemy. Someone whom we consider an enemy in this life time could very well be our dear mother or father or loved one in a past life. They might

have treated us with utmost kindness and taken care of us with patience and sincerity. In a way, it was us who abandoned them and who deceived them, and as hatred and anger swelled up in their heart, love and patience turned into the worst kinds of poisons for the mind. The wind of karma swirled them into our presence in this life as they sought to take back what they had given us in past lives. But then, once karma has not yet reached exhaustion, a favorable situation can turn for the worse in the blink of an eye.

For any aggressive person who always finds himself in an aggressive situation, the demon is there in his own mind. The demon is not only quietly residing in his mind, but it is expressing itself in the world around him. Thus, this hatred is a thousand times more fatal than a suicidal bomb. The bomb could take away the lives of many, including himself, but the hatred will go on living forever, even after this life ends. It will continue to inflict pain and destruction to himself and countless others life after life. I was just like any of them. My mind was an explosion of hatred. The enemies would not make me fall into hell. My anger would make me fall into hell. I knew that there would be so much suffering awaiting me in the hell realms and so forth, but my hatred grew so extreme that I thought I would do anything to cause harm to the Gong Chan Dang. This is typical of the kind of thoughts that is imbedded in the mind of extremists. It does not matter what the consequences would be, the extremists still want to do whatever it takes to achieve their goals. However, through Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche's supreme guidance and patience, I later realized that it was not the Gong Chan Dang or the Chinese officers alone who were responsible for all of my suffering, but it was, again and again, the explosive outburst of anger in my mind. "You would never be able to destroy anger with anger. You can only overcome it with compassion! Of all the antidotes to anger," Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche asserted, "immeasurable love is the most important." [2]

Loving kindness decreases our self-grasping and the mind becomes naturally expansive. If you have loving kindness, you have understood the essence of the Dharma. It gives you the joy of liberation and lasts throughout your future lives until you are able to achieve enlightenment. When we have developed loving kindness, we have achieved the priceless. If you develop it in your mind-stream, you are the richest person. Money and wealth are not reliable because it can collapse at any moment. If you have developed it in your heart, it gives you a lot of happiness. This is how I survived in prison. Loving kindness is the most precious thing.

When I left the hospital and went back to the working prison where I met Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche who gave me the pith instructions on bringing anger onto the path. "He had already heard about what happened in hospital. "I heard you punched that official. You have learned how to take suffering as the path". Then, Rinpoche introduced me to the abandoning, transforming and knowing, the three levels of the path of practice. He said, "you know the 37 Bodhisattva Practices, you really are a Dzogchen yogi. You have already abandoned and transformed, but now you have to know. Knowing means, from the Vajrayana perspective, you have to see the essence of your anger and hatred. The reason why you got angry with that official was not because of self-grasping though. Out of concern for others, you gave up even the thought of your

own life and that if they kill you that is alright, there was no self-grasping. No thought of "what will happen to me?" In that moment of anger, instead of looking at that person or what made you angry. Look at the anger itself. Meditate. You know the nature of the mind, you know how to meditate on that. So, when anger arises, realize that self and other do not exist and are not separate. This dualistic perception of self and other is delusion. In that way, through anger, Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche introduced me to the teachings of Dzogchen. That was really beneficial and was an instruction to take the afflictions as the path.

Before I got those teachings, I saw practice and the work I had to do as separate. I was angry with that official and punched him, and he had great compassion and love for me and that was what caused my mind to feel more relaxed. That is why we say in the Bodhisattva path, we transform the affliction through love and compassion. So, I was angry at him, but my anger was transformed through his love and compassion. That was how my mind calmed down. That is what I learned from Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche. He said there is nothing else necessary to practice, there is no separate practice from the work you do. Putting those teachings into practice, I learned how to take anger as the path. Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche said to me that in the Dzogchen path, where one particularly takes anger as the path, "You are the perfect candidate for such practice. Now, you did that well and you know how to take anger as the path".

I did not tell Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche, however, that when I was young, I also had so much anger. I would take my wooden bowls and break them. I would also smash things! Sometimes when I was too angry at my father, my face became like bloodshots! "My practice is one thing; my hatred is a different thing," I tried to explain. "My practice of Mahamudra is in its own place. My hatred is in its own place." "That is not true!" Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche immediately objected. "Your meditation and practice of Dharma should become the antidote to your hatred and afflictions. If your meditation can dispel your afflictions, then you are doing the right practice. If your meditation and your afflictions stay in two different places, then your practice is going wrong!" "The sign of true meditation," Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche emphasized, "is having less and less afflictive emotions." Don't look for the wrong enemies to eliminate!" Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche again scolded me. "Even if you get rid of each and every single one of those Chinese soldiers, hell will not end for you." I thought about it, and my anger abated a little. Later, Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche kept saying it again and again. One day, out of his utmost kindness, Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche simply told me, "Milarepa has taught us that the root of hell is hatred. There has never been a single person who attained liberation through hatred!"

Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche told me that it is not enough to learn to remember, and to be able to recite the special qualities of this human life, or the torments in different hot and cold hell realms, but that we must come to feel them from the core of our beings, and must act accordingly to prevent us from falling. It was thus my Lama who saved me from wasting away this precious human life as well as all of my future lives. "It is true that Gong Chan Dang may be there, or it may not be there," I finally thought, "but as long as there is still hatred in my mind, then suffering is inescapable!" Therefore, not through intellectual learning but through my own

painful experiences and my resolute resignation to suffering, that I realized with all humility that in order to be free from all torments, I would have to purify my own mind and to free this very mind from all hatred. I began to work hard on dispelling this hatred in my mind. I kept repeating over and over, "anger leads to your own ruin, and it burns others," like repeating a mantra.

Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche taught me about how to develop love and to have pure view toward everything that I had to do in the prison. "Carrying earth and stone as you have done these many days bring great results. Your carrying the earth contributes to the making of bricks. With these bricks, buildings will be made. Those buildings will house people. These people will have better living conditions, and will thus work. They will pay taxes, and with the taxes, roads will be built and electricity will be brought there and people will be happier - all because you were carrying the earth. "If you work with a mindset like that, it will benefit everyone and the country. So, try to benefit the people in whatever you do. Don't think of your work as wasteful. Everything is interrelated. Think of all of this work as beneficial activity. Once you understand all of it from this perspective, then you have to do whatever, and do it right. Furthermore, in the perspective of Tantrayana, we must see this world as a Buddhafield, and the sentient beings as enlightened beings. Thus, you should see all of your hard work for the benefits of others as offerings to Buddhas and Bodhisattvas! It was the best kind of teaching on interbeing and interdependence that anyone could have given me.

Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche further told me that he himself mentally visualized this enormous "prison factory"as a Buddhafield. Then, Rinpoche went on visualizing his cell room as a meditation hut, the daily newspaper the Chinese Communists made him read as his sadhana, and any hand tools he used as his ritual implements. "You have to work well," my Lama told me. "Do your work well, with a mind free of hatred, and then your karma will be cleansed." After this, I went back to work with a new attitude, and became more and more conscientious about my labor and the prison rules. Slowly, after many long months, if not years, my forced labor did not torment me as much. No longer did I find it difficult to carry the earth and the stone, as I thought of the earth as offerings of jade and amber and turquoise and diamond. I thought of myself circumambulating and carrying a huge amount of pure gold offerings on my back, and then one day, I found that however much I had to carry, I was quite happy doing it. Carrying earth and stone became my Dharma practice. Furthermore, as Lord Phagmodrupa said, "If you practice with no interruption, appearance will manifest as your teacher." All appearances became my teachers, because I knew then how to merge my higher meditation with everything that I did from moment to moment. Meditation and afflictive emotions no longer belonged to separate places. They became one and supported one another as far as my mind is concerned![3]

Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche gave me special oral instructions on Tong-Len that were not in the text. In Tong-Len, generally, we say that we are sending happiness out to others and taking others' suffering in. "If you see Tong-Len in the general context of taking in another person's suffering and giving him your happiness in return, then, there is still this strong sense of self and others. There is still you who is doing the giving and the taking. And then there is still the other

person whose suffering you are taking in and to whom you are giving your happiness. You do not need to practice Tong-Len in this way," Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche said. But for the actual meaning of Tong-Len, you have to understand the inseparability of self and other. The Ground of our minds (your mind and the mind of the other person) is the same. We understand this from the View. Tong-Len eventually became my main meditation practice in the prison. In this context, even if there are many different types of suffering, there is only one thing called "suffering". There is only one suffering, he taught. If there is really only one suffering, then at this time when you, yourself, have great suffering, you should think, "The minds of the sentient beings of the three realms and my mind have the same Ground." However, the essence of the suffering of the sentient beings of the three realms and the essence of our own suffering is the same. If you see them to be the same, if you see them as being non-dual, and then meditate on that suffering, in the mind's natural state, that suffering goes away. At that moment, you have been able to lessen the suffering of all sentient beings of the three realms, all at once.

The "Len" of Tong-Len means "taking." First, take in this way. "Tong" means "giving." If you understand your mind's nature, then you recognize the essence of whatever suffering and afflictive emotions there may be to be emptiness. When suffering does not harm you anymore, the mind has great bliss. If at that time, you meditate, making self and others inseparable, then that bliss can diminish the self-grasping of all sentient beings. It can lessen the self-grasping. The happiness that is being given is the bliss that comes from the practice of giving and taking. I have now realized after many years that if we always have the intention in mind, "May all beings in this world have happiness and causes of happiness," then it can benefit the entirety of humanity! If our aspiration is to bring about happiness and clear away the suffering of all beings, and if that wish is always present in our mind, it then becomes the actual practice of Tong-Len. This is how you should practice. This is very special. Others do not explain it this way.

Everything in samsara has the nature of suffering, only when one realizes the nature of mind, attains enlightenment, one will be free from suffering. If you want to be free from suffering, you must be free from self-grasping, as all suffering comes from wishing for one's own happiness. The only way to be free from self-grasping is to cultivate compassion. This is the root of all happiness. If you find these seeds for the six realms of samsara inside your mind, you must work hard to eliminate them each and every day through sustaining mindfulness. You must recognize the emotions upon arising and see its fault. Then, you must sustain mindfulness and not fall under the power of the emotion, not act out on it. You should moreover think that your own suffering is quite small compared to the suffering of so many other sentient beings. For example, I was kept in prison for twenty years, and you could call this a problem, but not one time did I think about when I would be released. I just practiced Tara day by day, and let alone not thinking of suicide, I was actually quite happy in my mind. If you want to become free of suffering, you must change your mind, not your body. Pray to Tara all the time and recite her mantra, so you never forget about her. Then, I can also help you, as I am always practicing Tara. Whenever you experience pain and difficulty, think of Tara single-pointedly.

"The main thing is your mind!" Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche told me many times over and over. "In the prison, as in the rest of samsara, there are all sorts of pleasant and unpleasant words that you hear. The Chinese like to accuse people, saying this person is good, that person is bad. Good or bad, they are mere words! The guards always yell at you or they curse you and are very abusive with words, but whatever they say to you, whether good or bad, don't pay too much attention. Have equanimity to all that you hear. Focus on doing your work, and with heedfulness and complete mindful-awareness, focus on watching the afflictions as they arise ... the moment they arise . . . in your mind." I slowly realized that my myriad concepts, negative emotions and emotional experiences were all momentary thoughts. Nothing but thoughts! And thoughts themselves are nothing but obstacles! In Tibetan, obstacle is called "barche." What this term literally means "interruption" in practice. Thus, for example, when we are trying to cultivate love and compassion, anger naturally is an obstacle – an interruption in the continuity of love. Yes, it was through the instructions and wisdom of Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche, my kind-hearted Lama, that I slowly and eventually came to the most crucial realization that the Chinese authorities were, after all, my benefactors with whom I could practice patience and equanimity. And yes, my enemies were, after all, the ones who helped me to recognize my own mind![4]

Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche is the kind of root guru I have met. He is really the greatest guru in all Tibet. His enlightened activities are really like it says in the Prayer of Excellent Conduct, and many lamas were like that. What is the benefit of hearing that? Guru Rinpoche said that when you hear the life stories, then clear inspiration arises in you, and due to that the mind can slowly open up and then grasping at a concrete reality and clinging thoughts diminishes. Then, Padmasambhava says by seeing the qualities faith arises and then when trust arises, the blessings enter one's mind. This is why the teachings of the Buddha's Three Jewels have become so widely renowned. Through hearing about these masters and getting their blessings, the Buddha nature that all sentient beings possess can awaken and open up. By cultivating trusting faith, blessings will enter one's mind, and when the mind is free of doubts, then one's wishes will be accomplished. As for this trusting faith, Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche said it means you must have devotion. It is said that if you have great devotion to an inferior or bad lama, you will become the best Dharma practitioner. If you have little devotion to a great lama, then no blessings will enter your mind still. It depends mainly on your own faith and devotion and pure perception. This is what Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche taught me, that guru devotion is very important. It has benefited me greatly and that is why I thought sharing these stories with you my friends will benefit you.

So, when you hear the stories of various gurus, faith and devotion increases. Personally, that is why I find it important and benefited myself. Generally, you can read the life story of any guru that you are devoted to yourself, like Guru Rinpoche and Milarepa. For example, I read Milarepa's life story again and again and it really benefited me. For Milarepa, his life really started with a lot of wrongdoings and he had a lot of anger. The Buddha had said "do not commit any wrong" and that is because if we harm others, then it will only fall back upon us. But he finally regretted that, laid all his wrongdoings aside, and purified all of that through confession

and deep remorse. And in the end having dedicated his life to practice, Milarepa attained enlightenment in a single lifetime. I saw how through reading those life-stories faith and trust really can arise in the mind. When they arise, the obscurations in the mind, such as doubt is eliminated. Then, one realizes that all the Buddhas are actually one. They all are an embodiment of the Three Jewels. Their body is the Sangha. their speech is the Dharma, and their mind is the Buddha. In this way, one can also recognize that their mind is also Buddha and your mind becomes free of doubts. As Jigten Sumgön said, "your own mind, the guru's mind and the Buddha's mind are one. The Buddha is like space or an ocean."

I have met many lamas from that time until now and no matter how many lamas I have met, there is always an obvious, special feeling that arises. It is just like rain falling down, the more it rains the better, and so it has to rain all the time. It is just like that when we meet these real masters over and over again, because through their blessings they confer from their mind every time we meet them, it slowly opens up the Buddha nature. It awakens the Buddha nature that all beings possess. Whatever they speak of is not something new, it is not that you hear something new at all. What they speak of is the two-fold truth: the relative and the ultimate truths. When they teach on the relative truth, they speak of the infallibility of karma, cause and effect. Everything depends on causes. The ultimate truth is the truth of emptiness, or the union of clarity and emptiness. When one sees the truth of emptiness, and everything becomes empty, but if one does not see the truth of emptiness, then the relative becomes more important. What is the relative? It is bodhicitta, which is really the four immeasurables, and of the four immeasurables, immeasurable love is most important. I am just speaking from my own experience, all Dharma teachings are included within love and compassion, and that is included within love. Or it is the compassion that is imbued with love. So, all the teachings are the same, they are not separate, but every time you receive them, or you meet a guru, a special feeling can arise, over and over again just like it is raining again and again.

In Tibetan, devotion toward your Lama is Mogu. Tepa is actually love - loving your lama, liking your lama, and trusting your lama, etc. This is the experience of Tepa. Mogu is when you see the wonderful qualities of your lama and generate a great deal of respect for him or her to such an extent that you will never forget anything the lama teaches you. When you have so much trust, love and devotion to the lama, you will always remember his or her words. Tepa and Mogu may seem to be similar, yet they are different. First, we have Tepa, and out of this, we are able to generate Mogu. We have Tepa - faith, trust, and respect - for all lamas. Mogu, however, we have for just a few. Tepa basically means liking someone, but it is much more than that. You like someone because that person is not ordinary. That person is full of blessings; there is something holy and sacred about that person. When you are struck with this kind of feeling toward a sublime being to the extent that even the bodily hairs stand on end, when you have that kind of Tepa. There is a mind-to-mind connection with your root lama and the previously arisen Tepa is now transformed into Mogu. Tears come to your eyes. This is not like the Tepa in the earlier days, but rather there is mind merging with mind.

When you really see the qualities of a guru, then really from the bottom of my heart, whenever I see each and every of one of them, I felt that there is no one higher, there is no other Buddha than that. These gurus really are the Buddha and this is what I really made my mind up about, I really decided upon that. A Buddha is someone who has cleared away afflictions and ignorance. Buddha means Sangye and Sang means to have cleared away self-grasping. How is it cleared away? It is through the altruistic mind. Without love and compassion, self-grasping will not disappear. The mind of sentient beings and the mind of self-grasping is like frozen snow, and love and compassion are like rain water. In the end, snow is actually water by nature, so if one understands the ultimate truth, then everything becomes transformed into bodhicitta and self-grasping diminishes, one realizes emptiness and thus one becomes just like clear rain water. It is the essence of the 84,000 teachings of Buddha, bodhicitta. It is the essence of all practice – it is all for the sake of destroying and subduing self-grasping. Now, please keep this in mind.

When we think with devotion of a past great teacher who has great wisdom and compassion, his/her qualities will be transmitted to our minds through the power of the unbroken lineage. That is because although the bodies of the old masters have died, their minds have never died. Their minds continue to remain pervasive as space. Thus, whoever thinks of their great qualities with devotion will access their minds. Our lineage is called the "practice lineage of blessings." This is something that scientists have not discovered. It is the meaning of "Secret Mantra" or "Vajrayana Buddhism", which teaches that depending on devotion one can receive the blessings and qualities of the guru. It is not called "Secret Mantra" because it is something that one tries to keep from others, but it is called "Secret" because it is difficult to realize. If one does not engage in its practice, it cannot be realized. As said, if you have trust in your teacher, when you look at the nature of your own mind, you can also think of him or her, or remember the kindness of Milarepa. Then [that] devotion and the practice of recognizing the mind can work together.

The practice of recognizing the mind will weaken your afflictive emotions, strengthen your compassion and [your] devotion to your teachers and lead you to see the nature of your own mind. Progress in your practice depends on devotion. With great devotion, there will be great progress. If you see your teacher as enlightened, you will receive the blessings of an enlightened being. If you see him or her as an ordinary being, you will get the blessing of an ordinary being. If your teacher does a negative action and you only see him or her as enlightened, you can only receive blessings. The mind of the teacher and the mind of enlightened beings are connected, even if the teacher is not fully enlightened. It is like electricity and a wire. When the connection is made, there is light. The teacher and the student are also connected like that. So, it is important to practice with devotion to the teacher. It is also important to make practice a habit. You should practice at all times by working with emotions. You should graduate from observing the smaller emotions when you are relaxed, to observing stronger emotions. When you have succeeded in doing this, your ability to see the nature of mind will be like a raging fire and emotion will be like grass which only feeds it. Naropa said that once you are well trained, you will not grasp after appearances. Good or bad things will happen but they will pass you by.

As I cultivated fervent devotion to Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche, I meditated on my anger and looked at the destructive thought itself as it arose. And when I did this, the next moment, the urge would dissipate. I recognized this angry thought as a thought, until not even a trace of it remained. It is similar to what the masters said about the thief entering an empty house. The house has nothing to lose, and thief has nothing to gain. When afflictions arise, and we recognize them and do not fall under their sway, they cannot take anything from us, or harm us in any way. The wisdom which arose from my meditation really stemmed from my devotion to my guru, and it was actually Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche who gave me this very special commentary. When I thought about the kindness and the qualities of Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche, a very powerful feeling spontaneously arose in my heart, so strong that it felt as though my heart was exploding. I was thus able to clarify many difficult questions and remove self-doubts just by meditating. I also reminded myself over and over again what my other root guru, Lama Gar Chime Dorje, used to tell me. You must maintain mindful-awareness to never forget the practice of loving-kindness and compassion. Mindfulness is like the sun, and compassion the moon. The sun refers to the view of emptiness and the moon compassion. If you maintain mindfulness, then you will be conscious of any thoughts as they arise. You must be very diligent in this training, and if you can recognize them the moment they arise, then these delusions will be transformed into wisdom, like wood becoming fire! Day by day, the anger in me became less and less intense.

Personally, I realized that since I was not able to overcome negative emotions all at once, I must strive to deal with them one at a time. Yes, we must learn to deal with every instance and every moment of negative emotions as it arises. When we keep our negative emotions buried in our own heart, they would not just go away even if we no longer lived in the prison. Then, one day, when we met some new, unfortunate circumstances, all those negative emotions that we have been kept inside us would all burst out again. So, if we are in a situation where we feel a moment of aggression and hatred, then we must deal with that sensation right then and there. If it is a small amount of aggression, we deal with it in a small way. If it is a great burst of aggression, we deal with in a radical way, and free ourself from it. As Lord Gampopa taught, "One moment at a time, one circumstance at a time." We cannot just say in general, let's get rid of hatred, but we must deal with each emotion, each moment of negativity, and each of our own aggression, as it arises in our life and in our relationship to the world. Thus, after I met and received bits and pieces of teachings from Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche, I began to develop a new kind of "moment-to-moment" practice. [5]

From the perspective of practice, the essence of this mindfulness is emptiness and its nature is clarity, but if you look for it, you cannot find it. This mindfulness is the same nature as the mindfulness of the guru, and if you have an unchanging faith and devotion to your root guru, then the form of the root guru will appear in your mind, and you will remember the guru's instructions. It is just like ordinarily when you love a person, you cannot forget about them, they will always appear in your mind. In the same way, the guru will appear in your mind, and each time the guru appears, you will remember the guru's instructions. This is an easier way of

practice for beginning practitioners - to recognize that this mindfulness is the mindfulness of the guru, or in Dzogchen terms, it is said that it is mindful presence remembering the guru. So, this mindful presence or mindfulness represents the guru.

When you realize that your own mind and the mind of the guru are one, then you have uncontrived devotion. First, we give rise to devotion by thinking of the guru's qualities, even to the point where tears come to our eyes. However, we do not grasp at this thought, but instead rest in the natural state. Within Mahamudra, our mind, the mind of the guru, and the mind of the Buddha are one. Before we have gained realization, in order to gain realization, we must first and foremost cultivate devotion to the guru - uncontrived devotion - realizing that the mindfulness of the guru and my own mindfulness are an inseparable union. Only through realizing that our own mind and the mind of the guru are a union will the blessings of the guru enter our mind. Some recognize this mindfulness, some do not recognize this mindfulness, but when we think of devotion to our own root guru, then through this devotion itself, we will recognize that our own mindfulness and the guru's mindfulness actually are a union. So most important is the meditation of devotion.

Each and every day, you can take a commitment to remember the guru; for example, "today I am going to remember the guru ten times," then the next day fifteen times, and then twenty times. You increase your commitment to remember the guru, and eventually through that your mind will truly become inseparable from the guru. If you lack mindfulness, then also the guru will not arise within your mind - that is a unique instruction.

At the ultimate level, the guru's mind is the non-dual awareness of wisdom, and with the bond of love, you can merge with the non-dual awareness of your guru's mind. Your mind and your guru's mind can merge in union inseparably. Ultimately, your guru's mind and your mind are already one, but temporarily, you grasp at self and others. Since Khenpo Munsel Rinpoche gave rise to great love, and he loved me very much that my own afflictions disappeared. And that's how I merged my mind with the mind of my guru. That inseparability is the quality of the guru's great love. And if you, too, really love me and trust me, then always hold on to my mind.

Even after I have died, continue to hold on to my mind and not my form. Actually, I cannot die because my mind will always remain, and it will continue to be there to benefit beings. The mind of immeasurable love cannot die. Love cannot die. Buddha's mind is never born or dies; thus, dharmakaya abides like space, sambhogakaya arises like rainbows, and nirmakaya emanations are like raindrops pouring down in the six realms in their individual various forms. All Buddhas appear without being distinct or separated in their ultimate nature. That is the real quality of the guru that we need to hold on to – the immeasurable, boundless love.

Any authentic guru would have that nature, and that nature is not one, but at the same time, neither is it multiplicity. Still, their mind has a single basis, a single Ground. In the state of the wholeness of dharmakaya, sambhogakaya and your guru in nirmakaya form appear. So,

whenever you think of your guru, he will be there, and whenever you call on to your guru, your guru will be there.

Yes, if you trust me, then keep these words to heart! [6]

Garchen Rinpoche offers his immeasurable love to the worldwide sangha during his 90th birthday in April 2026 at Garchen Buddhist Institute in Arizona, U.S.A.

[1- 6] All *Italicized* statements are Excerpted from Garchen Rinpoche's Biography Book Two – The Lama of Many Lifetimes: Touching The Living Heart of Garchen Rinpoche, Perfection of Liberation (1958-1980), authored by Sue-Sue (Tâm Bảo Đàn).

Some Snippets of "Thank You" Messages on the Art of Inner Transformation Teachings bestowed by Garchen Rinpoche in August 2021

Khenpo Samdup: All your kindness, compassion, through the wisdom, and very special teachings for your generosity. On behalf of our Sangha, thank you very much Rinpoche. Long life and stay healthy. Just stay longer and benefit other beings. Appreciate always your teaching.

Quang Bui: On behalf of Drikung Dharma Surya, we would like to express our most sincere gratitude for the love and compassion and the teachings that you, Rinpoche, have bestowed today for all of us. All sentient beings, all the six realms, everybody wants to have happiness, but not many really know the true meaning of happiness, and how to find happiness. We end up causing endless suffering and endless, endless suffering. Every time we think about that, my heart is very, very heavy. Today, all of us are very fortunate to have an opportunity to receive the precious teachings from Garchen Rinpoche. So, I wish all of us can contemplate and practice. Then we can experience and realize happiness. Then we can continue to share our experience or learning with others. Then hopefully the world will be happier and happier. Everybody and all sentient beings will be happier and happier, and no more suffering.

Garchen Rinpoche: Thank you everyone. Now we only think about this life, but if we think about both this lifetime and future lifetimes, then both temporary happiness and ultimate happiness can be benefited, and we are able to change our mind. If we know it is not just one lifetime, but there are past lifetimes and future lifetimes, then we are able to change our mind. You have a very good teaching topic for your event because the center director meditates well and really doing practice. The center who has for a long time until today, you have worked so hard and created so much merit. It is really incredible. Also, all the other centers who have done the same - Thank you.

The Excellent Stream of the Elixir of Immortality:

A Prayer for the Long Life of Glorious Garchen

OṀ SWASTI. Unchanging great bliss, Dharmakāya; unceasing manifold creativity, Sambhogakāya; dance of compassion without object, Nirmanakāya—protector, in nature the indivisible three kāyas, protect us!

White as the autumn moon replete with its sixteen parts, the protectress from the eight fears — mother of the three times' victors — sits in the center of a white lotus holding an utpala. Wish-granting Cakra, bestow immortal life!

The one known in the Holy Land as Āryadeva emanated into the Gar clan of Eastern Tibet as Chödingpa, the heart son of Jigten Sumgön. May the life of glorious Garchen remain steadfast for a hundred eons!

The full moon, ornament of the three jewels' teaching, is exalted above the crevasses of the eastern mountains; yet its cool rays nurture the white lilies of the lower slopes. May Garchen, the moon that benefits others, live long!

Casting to the wind all concern for food, clothing and fame, he is girded with the armor of wisdom, morality and a good heart. As firm in the three samadhis as the ocean is deep — may Garchen, lamp flame of definitive meaning, live long!

In this age of strife when the Victor's teaching faces hardship, through his powerful, vajra-like conduct, he takes on himself the heavy responsibility of the unbiased teaching. May Garchen, the sun of the teaching, live long!

There is no chance for demonic obstacles to affect the three secrets of the lama who possesses blessings; yet, in accord with the principle of auspicious interdependence, this wish-granting supplication is wonderful!

Through the compassionate truth and power of the three jewels and three roots, and through the might of Mahākala and Chökyi Drölma, may these words of benediction made with pure heart be accordingly and spontaneously accomplished without hindrance!

At the request of the monks Karma Drodül and Drukseng of Lho Lungkar Monastery and others, this was composed on the 29th day of the 12th month of the water-monkey year in the 17th cycle in accord with all aspirations by Könchog Tenzin Künzang Trinle Lhündrub, the one blessed with the name of the Victorious Drigungpa. May it bring virtue. This prayer was translated from the Tibetan by Jakob Leschly in 1998.

Long Life Prayer for His Eminence Garchen Rinpoche

composed by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama

Crown of the Shakyas -

Kind unknown friend to all beings,

Seventeen Great Pandits, Tilopa, and Naropa, Marpa, Milarepa, Gampopa, Jigten Sumgön, and their lineage heirs:

Please bestow good fortune and auspiciousness.

Transcendent Lord Protector Amitayus

Who grants supreme life - everlasting, stable, and unchanging -

And who diverts from untimely death

One who merely hears your name or thinks of you:

Please bestow good fortune and auspiciousness.

With discipline, living in the higher training of morality,

With great compassion that appears as the glory of those to be tamed,

And without ever parting, devoid of all grasping, from Mahamudra's natural state,

Ngedön Tenpé Nyima, Sun of the Teachings,

May your life remain firm!

In accordance with the request of various communities of the Upper Kham Nangchen region, and in particular the following of the Drikung Kagyü lineage at [Gar] Monastery and its nearby communities, the Buddhist monk and expounder of the Dharma Tenzin Gyatso, Dalai Lama, composed these words of prayer for the long life of the 8th Garchen Rinpoche, Könchog Ngedön Tenpé Nyima, on the 6th day of the 9th month in the Fire Monkey Year in the Tibetan 17th Rabjung Cycle, or November 5, 2016.

This translation from Tibetan into English was completed by Ina Trinley Wangmo and edited by Kay Candler in December 2016.

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KAGYU
DRIKUNG DHARMA SURYA CENTER