

Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje

Mahamudra – Ocean of True Meaning

Explanations given over Seven Years, in Greece

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Year Two, 2014

First Evening Session 30th June 2014

Although not everyone has arrived yet, we will nevertheless start, but we will start with a meditation. And before doing anything like a formal taking of refuge, we will use a moment to be quiet and to remember why we are here. I will guide the meditation. I invite all of you to sit comfortably, and for those of you sitting on the couch, please put a cushion behind your back so that you are sitting straight up and not slouching forward. So the idea is always to have a straight back, because the circulation of energy is much easier with a straight back. And if one's knee is up, it's best to put a cushion under it, like Andreas, so that it is supported. There should be no tension here—no force needed to keep your leg up. And for flexible people like Francesca, you can kneel on your knees and pull the cushion from behind while sitting on your knees.

So, let's feel our body. You are familiar with the body scan, which means to move through the body to feel all parts of your body. I will let you do this by yourself. [Pause.] From the soles of the feet, all the way up to the knees and the hips; and then from the hips up the back to the neck. And up the belly to the chest and the throat. And the same thing from the fingertips up to the shoulders. And then the front part of the face, the back part of the head and the front of the head. [Pause.] Feeling one's whole body as a unit, with everything belonging together, just a whole-body feeling. [Longer pause.] And when feeling the body, just have a look at how it is, how it feels to be here. [Pause.] Then we open the other senses: the hearing and the seeing — smelling and tasting. And we become aware of how we feel inside: our thoughts, images, feelings. [Pause.] We are wide awake, we notice everything going on, but we are relaxed inside. [Pause.] We feel the body, but we don't have to think about it. [Pause.] We hear the noises of the evening, but we don't have to think about them. No comments, just being aware of what is going on. [Much longer pause.]

And then we allow some thinking, to contemplate: Why did I come here? What made me come here? [Pause.] What are my deeper wishes that led me here? [Longer pause.] And also, what is it that I hope to experience here? What is my

deepest aspiration, my wish for these ten days? [Pause.] What is the quality? Then we let the mind be free again without contemplating any more. And we simply sit in that quality that is most important to us now. [Longer pause; gong rings.] Thank you for this short, first meditation.

This is our starting evening, and we will take it easy tonight. What is most important is that we begin to experience each other as a group. We are going to be on a journey together for ten days; and during these ten days we will go through ups and downs. And it is good to be attentive to each other. If we feel that someone needs a hug or a nice smile or whatever other form of support, although we are in silence, we should offer that. Well, I don't know; maybe there won't be any downs, only ups. Then we can still offer a smile and a hug to each other. But what I would wish now is that we quickly form a kind of circle, and that we quickly say our name and where we come from and a little bit about what we wish for, this quality, that we wish to develop during these ten days, so that we can begin to see each other as a group.

[People introduce themselves. Some of the qualities that they mention they want to develop are: peace and stillness, openness, freedom from suffering, deep relaxation, love and heart qualities, concentration, ability to interact with others, understanding how mind functions, deep and stable meditation, naturalness and effortless cultivation, to be nobody and have no wishes, and to rest in peace and beauty.]

Lama Tilmann: My wish is to be very natural with you, to be truly myself which is, of course, no-one. And of course I want to pass on to you the continuity of this Mahamudra tradition, which is the basic motivation for coming here together and which is all about natural being—about the naturalness of mind, the freshness, how to be authentic—without pushing ourselves to fulfil certain roles. I am also aware that we have the experience of trying to be natural while in communication with lots of other people, talking and sharing, and when there is a lot of work to do, and a lot of tension to master. And when we come here, although our wish is to be natural, first of all like many of you expressed we just want to rest, calm down, and feel ourselves stabilise. And that's why I decided to pass on these Mahamudra teachings in the framework of silent living together.

But there is also the other side: the possibility to exchange and to communicate. This happens outside the hotel. All, everything that takes place in our rooms, this is silent. You know, maybe on other kinds of courses where we teach silence, we look downwards and stay within ourselves. It's like the antenna of your heart is shutting down, closing down. This is different, we are not doing that. We are learning to notice each other without talking, and to show each other our love and compassion in non-verbal ways. And if we wish to talk and share, we make a time together, asking "Would you like to go for a walk?" And then we can talk as much as we like. You are free to share, to go to the beach, and have a swim as much as you like. But on the beach, be aware also that some of us want to stay in silence when we go to the beach. So we do something very simple: the right side is for those who want to stay in silence, and the left side is for those who want to talk. So I think like this we can have a really happy time.

I myself, I will probably talk a lot, because I will teach all the time, and because I want to meet with each one of you personally — not only once, but if possible, twice. Now for this you have to keep to your practice. I don't want to be a counsellor for your personal life, your relationship life, and work life — all that won't be possible, just meditation and Dharma practice. I will establish times when you may come, and there will be a piece of paper where you write your name. And next to your name, put the number of minutes you want to come for: five or ten minutes. [Someone says "30".] Or 30 minutes, if you need that, I accept. And then the next person adds that time to the starting time, so that each person knows when to come for the interview. I've done this in different countries on different retreats and it is amazing. In four days I can do 60 interviews, because in time you will notice that the teaching covers most of your questions, most of what you want to develop. And so you concentrate on what is really important to you on that day for you to continue with your practice, and also what you want to clarify before going home. And you can put your name down again the next day if you want. If you are quick there is always time. With a quick change, in one hour I can see ten people sometimes. Sometimes I'll do my interviews at the swimming pool in one corner; sometimes I'll do them on the beach; sometimes on the terrace; I will tell you where.

So, for this retreat what's important for the whole group is to work on wisdom and compassion. Wisdom means to understand how we are, to understand our mind. To understand that if I cultivate *this* attitude, then *this* will happen. And if I change *this* attitude, then *this* will, because of the connection between our attitude and its effect on our mind. And compassion means to always open up ourselves, our feelings, and continue to allow for some sense of connectedness or contact with others without separating ourselves. Compassion is like two drums, one here and the other over there. If you sound this drum, the other will begin to vibrate. If you want to stop this drum vibrating, you have to put a finger on it. Now, I invite you to take away the finger and allow yourself to feel so many different things. Others will be vibrating with their energy, and, yes, this we can hear and sense. We will learn to open our mind, to become fluid, so that we can be aware of these feelings, so that we become aware of them, but then let them move on. And this is Mahamudra.

What I have explained to you is nothing very special, but it has the name of Mahamudra, because the best way to let feelings flow on is to see their true nature, the true nature of not being substantial. I'm sad, I'm angry, I'm tired — it has no substance. It's not solid. This is the non-solidity, the fluid nature of everything that happens in the mind because of emptiness. Emptiness — you know, the old one, the good old emptiness! And Mahamudra is knowing the empty, fluid nature of mind. And I was quite certain when listening to your various wishes — to be loving, to be natural, to be relaxed, to be authentic, to be nobody, and so on — that all of this could be enhanced, will be enhanced, by knowing the true nature of what we experience. And so, that is what we will talk about.

For the transmission, I will reserve blocks of two periods, each 3½ hours, and the rest of the day—the early morning, the evening, and the big lunch break — you practice the way you want to practice yourself.

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DAY ONE - July 1st

So to start with our first morning meditation, I will remind you of a few elements that we trained in last year. First we settle down and feel ourselves, we come into the situation. And then as a preparation we think over this very precious opportunity that we have just now. This is called remembering the precious human existence. But it starts with just now; we can be thankful that we woke up this morning with a clear enough mind to sit down and try to meditate. We develop thankfulness for the wonderful conditions that we find. And we purposely direct our mind to identify all the causes for gratitude. I'll let you find at least 10 reasons to be thankful just now.

And with our gratefulness we can go back all the way to the times of the Buddha and the generations of practitioners who have helped to pass the teaching on until nowadays. And now as I'm in this fortunate situation I take the decision to make good use of it. It's sure that it will change and that it will not last and of course that there will be a limit to my human life. And considering all this I reflect: how can I make the best use of today, of these 10 days, and of my life? So I invite you to reflect silently on how to make best use of today.

We stimulate our awareness to go towards what is most important, to go towards the true sources of happiness. And with this understanding in mind we turn towards the refuge, which in this tradition is visualised as a Buddha – the primordial Buddha Vajradhara in front of us, who embodies all the qualities of Awakening. He is dark blue, like the depths of the sea, or the dark sky when you look away from the sun on a sunny day, completely clear. And this is a symbol of our own mind, which is vast as the sky and profound as the ocean. And this is what we take refuge in, the nature of our own mind.

Those who know the chant can sing along with me. I will sing the Tibetan refuge chant; starting with the refuge, then the four limitless qualities and the prayer to the lama.

CHANT

And with these last words we let the Buddha dissolve into us. And we imagine that we become ourselves a Buddha of light. And with this we begin our meditation, we let the Buddha meditate. Imagine that you sit and you do not need to search for meditation; it happens by itself. Stay in the confidence that mind knows by itself how to be present.

As a Buddha we are completely relaxed. We notice what is going on we are wide awake but we do not have to interfere.

As you stay relaxed, relax also the body, especially the belly, the shoulders, the face...

And whenever thought chains want to form, we remember the true nature of the thinking process, of the feelings, that there is no need to cling. And we let the mind become as vast as space.

Whenever you notice that some tension is starting, remember to be as natural as possible.

When one has difficulties meditating sitting because one feels too tired then it's so easy to meditate standing – meditate like a standing Buddha. It's so much easier. It makes the energies flow in a way that makes it easier to stay awake.

Eyes and ears wide open, all the body senses wide open. The body is straight and no need to search for meditation.

This was just a little starter. I remind you of the essential points of what we did; you can take notes if you weren't there last year.

It's very simple: we sit down, we feel our presence, we arrive on our seat. That's the first thing. And then we use a series of contemplations to turn our mind towards the practice. This was the contemplation on how grateful we can be for this opportunity right now, and how quickly it will change, and what is really important in this situation, and where we will truly find happiness. These are the 4 contemplations: on precious human existence, impermanence, karma (cause and effect), and the shortcomings of samsara. With this clear motivation, remembering what is important for me, I direct myself towards the refuge. And we make the refuge as vast as possible but at the same time personal. I have to feel it. I have to feel the qualities towards which I want to go.

There are many possibilities to visualise the refuge. It can be a female Buddha or a male Buddha. It can also just be a lotus flower. It can be open space.

Important is then after this taking of refuge we can bring the refuge home – that we can let it dissolve into ourselves and be the refuge.

Last year we were doing several meditations like meditating like a Buddha under the Bodhi tree or meditating like Tara, allowing our awakened mind to take over. And this is basically what we do all along the meditation; we remember to let the Buddha in us meditate. And with this whenever we see clinging when we see tension we come back into natural being. Because inside we know, we know how it feels. So that was a little summary, let's dedicate together.

LESSON 23: ESSENTIAL POINTS FOR THE MIND

Namo Buddha, Namó Dharma, Namó Sangha.

Let's start with the transmission. Let's continue rather, because the real reason is that we want to learn more about meditation. We start in the meditation section on page 124. It is on the top of the page: **And again Kyeme Shang**. The chapter is this long chapter, lesson 23; we are in the middle of the chapter. We are in a section that explains the general points of Mahamudra practice good for all our life. They don't change; these are the essential instructions. In that section we are instructed in what is most important to always keep in mind no matter what method we are using. Methods can be meditating with breathing, can be visualisation practice, can be practice of compassion. And we always keep these basic points.

Sit on a comfortable seat – I hope you have found one – **in the vajra posture** – which is the most comfortable of all postures. 'Vajra' means what you usually call Lotus Posture, with the right leg on top of the left one. **Or another posture** in which you feel comfortable and can sit straight.

Do not meditate on Mahamudra. In the same way, do not meditate deliberately on the unborn, on simplicity, on that which is beyond the conceptual mind, on that which is without characteristics, on that which is without reference point, or on some reference point, or on characteristics.

Actually Kyeme Shang is pointing out some basic errors in our meditation: that we want to meditate is our basic error. When there is wanting and an idea of how it should be then it's this idea that will infiltrate itself into our ways of practising. A meditation that leads to Awakening has to be free of wanting, of preconceived ideas. Now we all came here in order to learn Mahamudra meditation, so we are in the wrong place. There is no such thing that we could create as a Mahamudra meditation. It appears as we let go of all the ideas and 'wantings', personal preferences and so on. We could also have other ideas: that we meditate on the unborn – that nature of mind that is said to have never had a beginning, which will never die, the unborn, so I will meditate on that! It's a synonym of emptiness. When people say they meditate on emptiness, it's the same thing. We automatically construct a duality: the meditator and the perceived emptiness or unborn nature.

Also if we meditate on simplicity it's not being simple, because we are afraid of complexity. We want to get away from something somewhere else, and we think Awakening is here and not there. Awakening is in the experience of now, and not of another one which will be simpler, or more Mahamudra, or more empty; it's already here. Quiet mind is not emptier than an active mind. Quiet mind is not simpler than an active mind. Quiet mind is not more Mahamudra than an empty mind. Knowing the nature of just what is, this is Mahamudra, this is the simplicity, this is actually where awakening IS.

So then Kyeme Shang says **But how should I practise then?** He takes our question and says "But what the heck should I do?" Ok, so listen carefully: **Do not move your body, do not close your eyes, With your thoughts do not pursue the past, do not anticipate the future. The essential point is to**

recognise immediately the instant present thought, in this very instant, when you look directly at the present thought, there is the dharmata, the nature of phenomena, where cause and effect are simultaneous and characteristics are self-liberating.

So, let us just recapitulate what is being said here. Do not move the body – do not react to impulses of wanting to scratch a little bit, to move a little bit here and there. Just be stable; sit and let the body be stable. Eyes open; wide open, like my eyes are open. Just sit down and you let your eyes open without fixing on anything. The experience is one of looking into the distance, into space, and you see your whole visual field, all of it. You can see it but you don't focus on colours, forms, people and so on.

And we are so relaxed that when thoughts about the past come they just move through. We don't follow, thinking Did I do right? Did I do wrong? How did I behave? What can I learn from the past? All of this for now is not relevant. This includes, I remind you, the last moment just before "Oh what did I think?" – No need.

Not anticipating the future means not to invite the next moment. While meditating we don't have to think about what we will do at lunch or what will come next, we don't need this. And the present moment we also don't think about the present hour 'now it's nice, now it's beautiful'... Recognise what IS; means 'Oh...' 'You cannot grasp what you feel, your mind opens, you live through it fully but there's no comment'. Then also this observing attitude we relax more and more and it becomes so natural that you are just in the flow of living. And we look at the present thought we look at the present experience. This word of 'looking at' you know, you hear a certain dualistic attitude, to look at something; you have someone looking at something else but this is only when we feel a thought is arising and I become aware of it I am my thought, we are talking about this relationship.

So there is this open sitting and a thought arises where I begin to identify and at that moment looking at the thought means dissolving onto the thought relaxing into the thought. And like this the present moment doesn't become an object of observation. And there is the nature of phenomena; this is what is called dharmata, where cause and effect are simultaneous. This is a philosophical expression, normally cause and effect are thought to be separate because the cause gives the effect, the effect comes after the cause, normally we think like this.

And now in our experience we feel 'because I think that, then that thought is arising'. But in the immediate experience of just now, this differentiation between cause and effect cannot be found. This idea of cause and effect comes later, when the observer observes what is happening from a distance. The famous example in the teachings is the mother and her child. The mother gives birth to her child and then there is the cause and there is the effect. But before there is a child there is not a mother, and without a mother there is no child, you cannot separate them actually. Of course, we *can* separate them, but when you look at the way one thought leads to the next, one emotion leads to the next, you cannot separate moments of experience where this

moment of experience will be the cause of the next moment of experience. What we call instantaneous presence actually has no instants. We cannot find the beginning of an instant and the end of an instant. If we cannot find the limit in time because experience is so fluid and ungraspable, we cannot say 'oh this is the end of one moment and this is the beginning of the next'.

A question: Things are going too fast and you are talking about circularity...?

LT: No not at all. We are talking about what happens in the present. In the present I will explain – the whole 10 days will be about this. You cannot grasp this with the intellect, again I have to tell this to you, I am using the intellect to show you that it's true. In my present experience of just now, where is just one moment? Where is one moment now?

One moment... where is the moment? If I had a clear moment I could have a cause in the past, a result in the future. If I cannot separate past, present and future, how can I have cause and effect? We can see, we can experience how things are developing, but somehow in what is now the future is already there, the past is also there. The past is in the present, the future is in it. The so-called cause is the effect of what was before. but cannot be separated. It becomes the seeming cause of the next, but it can also not be separated, and this is what we call the simultaneity of cause and effect.

Let's do this right now, it's very practical. It sounds so theoretical and philosophical but it's absolutely practical. How many moments are there in the sound of a singing bowl?

[Rings bowl...]

So what is your idea?

A: Twelve. [Laughter.]

LT: Excellent, and actually what do you feel?

A: It was a joke.

LT: Of course it was a joke! Good joke! Try again, what do you actually feel about this story of moments – how many sounds did you hear?

B: Incredible amount, a lot.

C: There is a flow of sound and no moments.

LT: There's a flow of sound we can even say there is a flow of hearing and within the hearing...

D: Timeless.

LT: Listen to the bell again, how many sounds you hear; listen to the higher, the lower and the middle ones. Become very sensitive to the experience of hearing. How is it to be hearing?

[Bell...]

LT: OK, I will describe what we all just experienced – there is sound which is louder and becomes less loud until it disappears, I mean I can still hear it now, but it is getting out of the hearing range. We call it one sound but it's not one sound; the sound in the beginning is not the same as in the middle and at the end. Within this sound there are higher tones, medium ones, lower ones, and in between. There is a whole spectrum of different experiences of hearing. As the sound continues it becomes less strong. We can hear a phenomenon like this - we can hear the waves in the sound. What our mind does, our intellect does, it identifies the waves and says: 'Oh, this is similar to this and is similar to this, so this is one moment of hearing'. The entity that is a similar experience is structured: 'Oh, one moment one moment...' But actually it's just because something similar comes up again, and can be identified as something different from what was in between.

So we have; mmmmmmmmmmm.... We feel these are the moments of hearing.

But actually when we are in the bottom part of the wave and moving up again, at no moment is there ever a stop in the hearing and a beginning again. There is a continuous experience of varying intensities of sound on different levels. It's a completely continuous experience.

So what we do in our meditation is we let go of these interpretations of moments: past, present, future. We go into this continuous timeless experience of hearing, seeing, tasting, smelling, thinking and so on.

Q: I can experience the continuity and the seamlessness but I'm not sure why that makes it simultaneous?

LT: Well you go deeper into that and you will see that just as you cannot separate moments you also cannot separate cause and effects. It's the same phenomena.

Q: But not separating them doesn't mean they are happening at the same time.

LT: Oh, if you hear 'simultaneity of cause and effect', seemingly what you hear is that cause and effect are maintained as an idea; but no, they dissolve in that. Because it becomes a contradiction itself, if cause and effect are simultaneous the words become absurd.

Q: So it's meant to be a contradiction?

LT: It's meant to show you that you cannot talk in this immediate way of experiencing cause and effect. This is an imputation which the intellectual mind does.

So let's go back another time, one last time, to the experience of hearing. Just enter the experience of hearing. If it's possible to enter the hearing, let go of all concepts about hearing, just hearing.

[Bell...]

There is another interesting phenomenon to be observed: as hearing this sound becomes impossible, hearing still continues. And we cannot say at which point the hearing of the sound of this singing bowl sound stopped and the hearing of the rest started.

The hearing of the singing bowl depends on a capacity of mind to filter out that sound in comparison to all other sounds. And this filtering is an activity of our mind and when you cannot hear the sound and you still try to filter out, you hear all the rest but you notice how you don't want to hear the rest. You want to hear that sound and you are aware of how you want a certain perception to occur.

Our world made up of sounds, of moments, of visual objects, is a creation of a wish to identify objects of experience. And in order to do that we use what are called 'characteristics'. There are characteristics of this [Bell] sound which make it different from the refrigerator sound, from the snoring sound, from the belly sounds, from the street sounds. Characteristics make one thing different from another thing. And because we zoom in on characteristics we create an object of experience that is said to be different from the rest of experience. The same happens in the visual field, I see Thanasis; and now I don't see Thanasis, I think Thanasis. There are white reflections on my retina, other colours, against a background that 3-dimensionally I identify as being behind and before, and inwardly I begin to construct a shape that is different from the surroundings.

In the continuity of seeing arises the comparing with shapes, forms, with colours, that I have seen before, I compare and I say "It must be him even if he has cut his hair. It must be him".

Q: All this is happening automatically...

LT: Yes, it's happening automatically because we are trained in this and it is very helpful. Because of training you identify the words that Natasha and I speak, and you make sense out of them which someone coming from a Chinese background would not be able to do. So this is using one part of our capacity, the capacity to identify and to make sense.

However, within that capacity is a mechanism of zooming in on details. These details we call characteristics, these characteristics of colour specifics, sound specifics, they make us identify objects. Because of identifying, identifying,

identifying, identifying, identifying, we are in a world where one object of perception follows another object of perception. And we think each of the objects exists of itself. And it has an importance, an emotional importance and contextual importance. We are always into identifying objects and their importance in the situation.

What we lose on the way is the freedom of just hearing, just seeing, just feeling, just being the continuity of that endless simplicity that is lost in this zoom – identifying – reaction. What we need is to find this fluidity of perception again while keeping the capacity to zoom in and identify and connect and to make sense.

If the clinging to characteristics imprisons us, we cannot be happy when a refrigerator or air-conditioning is running when we want silence. We cannot fall asleep at night because certain thoughts that come to mind always create a reaction. Our prison is not the capacity to think! This is wonderful. It's the incapacity not to think. It's when we see one thing to be able to let go and flow on, when we hear one thing to be able to let go and flow on. So, in meditation we train in the lost capacities of being in the flow. And while in the flow we learn to identify objects and to relate with objects of experience without holding on so much. This is called not grasping to characteristics.

And this becomes possible; I go back to the text... by understanding that characteristics are self-liberating. We can influence a situation to a certain degree. We have stopped all the refrigerators in this room but the big ice-cream refrigerator in the basement we cannot stop; the ice cream will go bad. This is the limit to what we can influence and now we have to let the sound of that ice-cream box be self-liberating. We can go in a nice shady place, like here, close the curtains but for the rest of the heat experience, temperature experience we better tune in to self-liberation. We can think about our family problems, our partnership problem, our professional problems, and our very personal problems, we can think about them but at a certain point it's good to let them be self-liberating. That's what is meant: to see that everything liberates by itself, it all flows on. Everything flows on if we allow it to be that way.

Then let's continue with the quote:

By looking again and again at all arising thoughts, eventually the thoughts will be immediately recognised, and in the same instant they will be liberated.

Basically, what we are doing is 'do I want to hang on to that thought or not?' If I don't give importance to it, it will dissolve in the very same moment. A thought which receives no attention, a feeling which receives no attention disappears as it arises. Because it no receives no attention whatsoever it does not even leave a trace of memory. The more attention the emotional attention something receives the stronger the memory trace will be. So, this is important if we want more freedom in our life, it doesn't mean to stop thinking, it doesn't mean to stop feeling it means to be more in the flow with thinking, feeling, hearing, and seeing. When thinking happens and there is the intimate

knowing that there is no need to react that there is nothing substantial happening that's fine, then there is no clinging and it flows on. "This instant of immediately recognising a thought is called 'understanding Mahamudra'". We are in the understanding of the ungraspable nature of experience. Mind is so vast like space and whatever appears in there is just part of the cinema happening in space; it's like rainbows or clouds or waves in the ocean. "And this is called an experience of concentration" here the text says actually it's an experience of Samadhi, you know this Sanskrit term. In Samadhi there is no clinging; things can happen in front of your eyes and there is no clinging. This is not a Samadhi of clinging or fixing but a Samadhi of openness. Samadhi is a kind of meditative absorption, you can say deep presence.

Question: This is confusing me again, I think that I don't get the point, it means that in the end we should only like breathe and exhale and observe and not take anything or feel some thoughts or some analysing, just observing, observing, passing away, passing away.

LT: Exactly, it means you learn also this capacity, also

Q: ...This is the lost capacity...

LT: This is the lost capacity, yes.

And this fluidity of being actually will also change your way of identifying, thinking, you know, it will also become different it will become much lighter, there's a lightness in your relation to the various contents of experience.

Q: I'm getting lost again, but for example this related to this exercise of listening to the bowl, so when I am listening to this I am listening to other things, refrigerator and... So this should be only, or the best way would be just to observe to be aware but not to get into the feeling of Oh this is nice, or this is, not to get active in this, just ah... this is happening this is happening... arising and...

LT: This is exactly what we train in, yes we train in experiencing without reacting to it, just feeling it but not conceptualising about it, not connecting it with other experiencing, just being in a very simple, living experience.

Q: But this feeling is allowed for... I mean...

LT: You feel everything there is if there is emotion arising you feel it, you feel it. There is complete experience but you don't need to do anything with it.

Q: No need to push away...?

LT: No rejection, no cultivation...

In the quote it says "This is what is called born of meditation, the experience, born of meditation" It is the wisdom the awareness that arises due to non-judging awareness. Yeah, not judging, not evaluating good and bad, I like, I don't like; everything that stimulates our reactions. What will happen then is there will be someone shouting inside; "But this is me but I want, I want, I

don't like, I want to think, I, am I still allowed to do? This big 'I' is shouting because we get lost if we don't react, if we don't grasp, who are we!?

"The very instant a thought is recognised all the unwholesome actions accumulated since beginningless Samsara are overcome and purified". This means that ... this doesn't mean that one moment of awareness purifies all of that... it means that in the open moment of experience karma is inactive, it's not active.

Karma is active in our evaluation, in our feeling tones; the way we experience things, it's active in our reaction *towards* what is. When there is no duality Karma cannot manifest. For the consequences of our ego centred thoughts and feeling and so on to manifest there needs to be an egocentric attitude. It means that all the imprints of our dualistic attitudes will manifest within duality and not in a moment when there is non-dual experience. This is the explanation why there is freedom, why there is liberation; the answer is that; the experience of liberation is possible the very instant there is no more identification and no more reaction patterns operating. As long there is identification, as long as there are emotional reactions and so on, we are in the world where Karma is active. So Mahamudra is to enter that immediacy of being which is non-dual, which is not subject/object. Let's do that again and meditate before we have a break.

Namo Buddha, Namó Dharma, Namó Sangha.

When the mind is left like this it will settle. Maybe you notice the beginning of that, of course you arrive today a bit tired, it's the first morning but by relaxing the mind again and again you might feel that you are beginning to feel a little bit more calm inside. This means that the mind stays calm since there is only awareness left or there are no movements in the mind. Well I guess you are not yet at the point where there are no movements left maybe sometimes for a short time, for a short moment, it's like there is nothing happening whatsoever you are just kind of just without mind movements. On a simple level what is meant by being without movement is first of all to be without conceptual thinking. Look when we breathe out like this... at the end of the out breath we don't fix on anything then we can experience immediately a short while without conceptual thoughts. We breathe out with the symbolic connection of letting go and as long as we let go no conceptual thinking is forming. Try that for a moment; just to be sure is it really like this...?

Breathing out and letting the mind be as open as space. And then as we breathe in we also let the mind be as open as space.

Breathing out, letting go into space, breathing in letting go into space.

Breathing out, allowing everything to be simple, breathing in, allowing everything to be simple.

And the last one; breathing out, allowing for the flow and breathing in allowing for the flow.

As allow for the flow there is just awareness of the flowing nature of experience. The Buddha called this awareness of impermanence. Nothing

stable, everything changes. When we deeply connect with that we enter the flow.

Kyeme Shang writes: **Experiencing this, you will recognise that you have got hold of the mind and will think, “In the past I was only involved in thoughts.”** And now it's so easy to be without thinking.

Do you touch this experience? How easy it is to be without much conceptual involvement? It's surprisingly easy at times something comes which catches our interest and then it's not so easy. It's still easy to let go of the thoughts but it's not easy to let go of our interest which wants to hold to the thought. How not to give importance to the cinema – the best way is to say 'I will think about it later'. If it is important I'm sure it will come back later in the break when I can think about it. If it's not important, I'm sure I can just forget it. If you feel it's really something important and you definitely don't want to forget it, write it down on a piece of paper on your memory sheet: 'This is what I need to think about later'. Not now, now I relax.

It's like you tell your family listen now I'm doing a siesta, please don't knock on the door, everything can wait. Or you say to everyone, now I do a short vacation I'm on vacation, these things are important before and after but not during. I'm trying to tell you is you don't have to make a judgement on the importance of a thought or the contents of a thought forever, you just say right now; irrelevant, right now of no importance, meaningless, no use to think about it. You just stop your mobile phone, no calls coming in. Later on yes I'm available again. That's the power of decision, the power of having a clear direction. If we don't have a clear direction in mind when we sit down and 'meditate', in inverted commas, then we hesitate, shall I think shall I not, shall I get involved or shall I not get involved. This hesitation kills our meditation. So before sitting down to do a practice decide how much time can I safely take without giving importance to anything whatsoever? Can I allow myself 15 minutes of true vacation? You will notice this now in the lunch break, I wish that you continue with this practise in the lunch break, you might go down to the beach. How much time 15 minutes? Is it possible just to be on the beach without giving importance to what the others are doing? Is it possible? Is it possible from time to time to give yourself these 15 minutes, not thinking about being at home, before retreat, after retreat, just being, only being? And the best thing is after these 15 minutes of doing nothing then you go back to the beach if you were swimming; you say 'now think!' And take your time to think about everything you didn't think about before, whatever is important.

Question: These 15 minutes that we allow ourselves to meditate, where are they taking us, where is this meditation leading us?

LT: It's taking us into a very flowing experience where we touch the simplicity of being.

We are developing a natural way of being that we lost before; we are just balancing our way of being in this world. A brain expert might say 'you are all the time in the thinking mode, planning mode you are always using the left side of your brain, start using the right side of your brain as well'. At first this

feels like Ok, now I am in the structured mode and now I'm in the unstructured mode the flowing mode it looks like two different worlds, it feels like two different worlds. And then we begin to experience that within the structured thinking, planning, talking, you know conversational social mode we can have the flowing quality there at the same time. And in this flowing timeless experience we begin to notice we don't have to be afraid of structure, of experiences, of moments of thinking, they don't disturb the flowing experience. And then we search (?) you see that left and right hemisphere are both activated together, not just one dominating so much. And in decision making processes you notice that not only those parts of the brain immediately involved in the decision are functioning and very strongly but other parts of the brain remain active, remain present; there is a more global experience of the situation.

And this is what Kyeme Shang is writing in the 13th century he is not writing about the brain but about the coming together of the two worlds, listen: **Practise this abiding mind** – this means this resting, relaxed mind **at first for short but frequent sessions...** This would be 5 to 15 minutes of this kind of relaxation, maybe 20 minutes if you are used to it go longer but don't try to extend it very long, keep it what you call short. ...**then prolong them for longer and longer periods. Later, when you have become accustomed to it, the mind will stay where it is, and it will be the same also during the four daily activities.** The four daily activities are sitting, lying, standing and walking. Actually, it means all the activities of the day. It will be the same even while talking. You will have the experience that the mind remains relaxed in this flowing mode while you're conversing with others. Even while you're solving problems, it can remain relaxed like this.

That's what we are going to practise. This is the practice for the lunch break. The practice for the lunch break is to enjoy and to enter activities and then to make a pause, a short pause, where you do what we did now. The four activities were actually four positions: lying, standing sitting and walking. In the Vajrayana they go a little further: they include communicating, having sex and so on. They go a little further and include more specific activities into the daily activities. Actually it means whatever you think is a problem, it can be a part of your practice. Wherever usually we get most lost bring the practice into that activity. So the way to do that is within the activity which captures us or in which we are caught make a little pause. For example, you sit at the lunch table; let the others talk and make your pause. The others don't even notice. Let the situation just continue while you catch back your practice. Or if anyhow you stay in silence; do some activity, relax again in your chair, lying down, standing... do some activity, relax again and alternate like this. Alternation is... alternating is the way to find your way back quickly from one into the other and slowly they will begin to blend.

Let's dedicate together.

Namo Buddha, Namó Dharma, Namó Sangha.

Since you're so relaxed then you are ready for some conceptual work – right!? As you know we are going through this book and there are some passages which are little bit more demanding conceptually and some which are more on meditation.

You know where we are going? No? Straight into the Karma Chapter.

Lesson 4, exercise 4, page 34.

This is an explanation of the so-called preliminary to Mahamudra. We mentioned this morning in the meditation reflecting on the precious human existence and impermanence as the first two preliminary contemplations and this is the third one. It is important to understand to what extent we are conditioned. That's the point of understanding cause and effect.

The 9th Karmapa writes: **Next you must reflect on Karma, cause and effects of actions** Which is, you know, cause and effects of actions is the translation of Karma in Tibetan. **Generally speaking all happiness and suffering arises as a result of actions.** That's why it's so important, the teaching on karma tries to give us an answer to the question 'where does happiness come from, where does suffering come from?' Why are some people continuously happy seemingly and other people experience so many difficulties and are so often unhappy?' In the *Karmasataka Sutra*:

The diversity of actions has created the diversity of living beings.

It is saying that each one of us is different because of past actions. In the *Mahakarunapundarika Sutra* it says:

The world has been created by actions, it is a manifestation of actions. The living beings have been created by actions, actions are the cause of their arising, and on account of their actions they are different from each other.

And the *Abhidharmakosa* says the same thing:

From actions the manifold worlds have arisen.

Now we want to know what 'actions' are. So:

Actions are of two kinds: The actions of intending, and the action of doing the intended.

Or to put it differently; intention is the primary movement in mind, it's the thinking process and process of intending which then has results in further thoughts, in speech and in physical actions. As the Karmapa writes: **They are again included** (actually can be subdivided) **in actions of body speech and**

mind. Or we can say **the intention and its implementation**, working out the intention. Intention is the same as motivation, the will, the wish, the motivation, the intention... And intention can also be an emotional impulse; it doesn't mean that it's a free intention. Before we talk there is the wish to express a certain thing. This is the intention that makes us talk. When I reach out with my hand to the glass of water then there is an intention of reaching out. Maybe I want to drink, maybe I just want to show you what makes my hand move. There is an intention. It doesn't move by itself; it doesn't just go and do something on its own – no.

Intentions can be conscious and unconscious. So:

“Intending is a mental action, from this develop the actions of body and speech.”

But we have to be more precise, intention also precedes other mental action. For example, if you have the intention to study, the whole process of studying or analysing something is all in the realm of mental action and this is nourished by the intention. The Buddhist teaching since the Buddha up to now is always saying the world we experience is due to our intentions, due to our motivations. Karma is the science of motivation, of how to develop motivations, if you master the... if your understanding of Karma becomes profound you know it all depends on motivation and my motivation will shape my further thinking and feeling which will shape my speaking and it will shape my physical action and this is how my world shapes – by the motivation which is behind it.

A person that has a loving intention in the heart will think and feel in a loving way will, talk in a loving way, will act in a loving way as good as he or she can. The world of a loving person is completely different from an angry person, if I am angry I see the world through my anger, I think with anger, I feel with anger, I speak with anger and I act with anger. What a different world! Huh? We know what we are talking about; sometimes when we are angry we are in one kind of world and when we are not angry any more we are loving again we can't believe that we were feeling like this before, just before not long ago! Now what makes us see the world through the glasses of love or the glasses of anger? What is it, how does it come, so it's sometimes like this sometimes like that...? Why for some people the glass is half full while for the others it is half empty? Habit! These are patterns; these are predispositions that we have been cultivating and they have a very strong effect that's what we mean by karma; the effect of the way we looked at the world in the past and how it generates a similar way of looking at the world right now.

That's why the Karmapa writes here: **The experiences of happiness of this present life** (now of just now) **are the effect of wholesome and unwholesome actions accomplished in previous lives.** Now, from now on whenever you read the word action you have to translate inwardly; thinking, feeling, speaking and physical action, it's always body speech and mind, always the three. Action means all the forms of acting and dominantly we are acting with our mind, speech and body just follow. So I translate the same

sentence a little bit differently: 'The happiness and suffering I experience now are due to the way I thought, felt and how I was motivated in the past.'

For these masters present life, past life... it's just continuity. They don't think that death is really death. It's just a continuity of a mind stream a stream of experience that continues taking on different bodies but there are forces going through from one life into the next.

Now we don't know about this, we have no way to verify, we can believe it, not believe it; we don't know ourselves. But we don't need to understand or know about past lives in order to understand Karma. Actually the mechanisms of Karma are very well known in our society only they are limited to what we can observe directly. Psychology, psychotherapy is the science of Karma. Sociology, politics are Karma study. All these social sciences are actually a study of cause and effect relationships within one human being, and within a family context, within a social context, political context. Cause and effect the way one thinks, the way one feels, the way one speaks, the way one acts then the effects on this how they continue and even history, you know, history is the study of how it continues through centuries.

Nothing we think and feel and none of our motivations go without creating an effect. Or to say it the other way around; every tiny thought, motivation, feeling creates an effect. When you become wide in meditation and the thought goes through your mind you feel the effect on the body. When my motivation changes my whole presence in the situation changes. And of course if I say something back physically this is quite strong and the expression of a lot which is behind it, it has an effect. Everything has an impact. Some are very small, very tiny and some are very strong impacts, depending on the emotional charge and the repetition and so on... there are many factors which make a Karma strong, which make an action strong.

So this is said so strongly that to be able to take our lives into our hand and say 'yes hmmm, I am not so happy in my world right now, there is a little bit too much suffering in my world'. I want to more happy. I want to be free, what can I do? The answer is clear; work on your mind, have a look, work on your motivation. Change your motivation to the better. Give a chance to motivation of love and compassion and respect and so on, gratitude... to let them guide your thinking speaking and physical action.

And then Karmapa writes **Every action** (of body, speech and mind you should think) **you accomplish in this present life will lead to complete ripening** (not only 'ripened effect' the translation should be) **in future lives**. The term 'complete ripening' is a technical term which refers to actions that are responsible for creating the next place of rebirth.

Now you should remember that this teaching was given in Asia in a context where everyone was completely convinced of past lives and future lives.

[The recording breaks here. This is what Vessantara's notes say about what is missing:

If you're unsure about rebirth, then leave open the question of how far these past and future relationships reach.

This teaching is on a simple level of explanation, taking birth and death as real. Elsewhere, the 9th Karmapa will deny their existence. We need a bridge between the two levels (relative and ultimate). The easiest way to understand this is to understand the word 'world'. We needn't see this in a literal way; we can be more subtle. When we're happy, it's as if we're in a god realm. But if our mind enters a way of perceiving where we aren't loved, etc. then we feel we're in a hell realm.

We all live in our own worlds. We don't know what others' worlds are like. We guess.

The stronger our karmic differences, the more different our worlds are.

Expressions of suffering create more suffering. Now comes a list of the 10 unwholesome acts. The effects are always similar to the cause.

'abused' = defamation.

page 36: Psychologically you can usually see the results of these 10 unwholesome actions within a short time.

You can reverse all of these: Preserving life leads to a long life. Helping leads to being helped. Generosity leads to wealth. Fidelity leads to friendship. Speaking the truth leads to being appreciated. Harmonious speech leads to being united with friends. Gentle speech leads to making friends. Meaningful speech leads to receiving respect. Generosity leads to having your hopes fulfilled. Benevolence leads to fearlessness. Correct views lead to beneficial beliefs.

'Dominant effects' – karmic factors that create the circumstances of a life. (Concomitant factors.) For example, human life is a 'good rebirth', but you could be born in a war, or starving. Classically, the 10 unwholesome factors lead to 'the environment is very unpleasant'. This is outer factors, but then take two people who receive the same opportunity – e.g. coming on retreat. Simply entering the same room we have different experiences. These concomitant factors play a very big role all the time.

'These are the effects...' We might want to blame others, but we can't change them. So karma is about taking responsibility for ourselves.

'One will be born as a hell being...' This sentence should begin a new paragraph. There are more or less intensive forms of negative action, and they don't have the same effects. Also repetition makes a big difference.

There's no judge. If you rob people, you are disrespecting them. When you understand karma, you always look at the effect on the person, the degree of disrespect.

Also, harming a parent, or a sick person, shows a lack of compassion. So this leaves very strong traces in our stream of mind. In the explanations on karma, this is called 'the strength of the object'.

Another part of karma teaching is that the same act has different consequences when motivated by craving, anger or ignorance. For instance, killing a fish out of malevolence, for profit, or as an offering to the gods (or children taking fish and putting them in a small jar and then finding them dead).

So this teaching on karma is a very basic Buddhist psychology. Basically it's saying that no two acts are the same. You have to know many factors to be able to say what the effects of an action will be.

'Accomplishing small wholesome...' Again, this should be the start of a new paragraph.

This is the end of the notes on the missing part of the recording. Now back to the transcription.]

Q: Miranda has this question concerning the analysis of the cause and effect relationship, according to scientific approaches and what we know, Miranda believes that this is a more complex, it's more complex and it has to do with human relationships with experiences, with the way each one of us is experiencing cause and effect and she has this feeling that this analysis so far has been on a linear level while she believes it's more complex.

LT: You understand properly. This was giving the instructions on karma on the simplest level in a kind of linear relationship exactly like you perceive. Now what makes karma so complex as you rightly perceive is that one has to look at it in the whole net of interdependence of everyone with everyone around and everything around and it becomes very subtle and actually very difficult to be sure of anything.

So the nice thing about this instruction is that is so simple but it isn't over simplification. You can if you misunderstand it and you only hear this then you will be misunderstanding karma.

Here for example we have not talked about the influence of others on our acts, like following orders or following an example or even an unspoken felt orders or instigation to an action and so on there is many aspects to this. And then there are cultural influences and so on, it is so... Let's keep that open to our own investigation to see all the interdependent relationships. But it's nice to be able to see this so simple; to just be able to say yes generosity, you know sharing leads to a happier life. Yes, you can say it's as simple as that but then if you are very generous and you are not happy then you have to look at the other factors in the game.

Q: I'm just thinking it is very complex karma but does this complexity change the intention. Once I've put an intention to an action the surrounding can be as complex as it wants but the intention is what is driving or is it...?

LT: This is... you are bringing us back to the simplicity this is actually exactly the point where karma becomes simple again, if I focus on intention all the time. Intention; Bodhicitta is the one intention always, the intention to support each other towards awakening. This basic motivation, if this is there karma becomes simple. That's the one thing that we have to take care of.

Q: On the first level...?

LT: Yeah on this personal level, that's the one I can influence the other ones are out of...

If I want to be happy then the best is to always have the intention that everyone be happy – it's as simple as that. And that simplicity is a message that changes one's life if we can open up to that. In so many situations we are there with 'What shall I do? What can I do?' Keep a good intention, if we can do that that's half the game already. There might still be difficulties but this intention is like a force that keeps the steering wheel and the boat stays with a good direction with this intention.

Any other questions?

Q: OK in reference to what we were talking about in the morning, she is asking if there is Karma in a mind which is not a Samsaric mind, not a dualistic mind.

LT: No... OK... Are you ok with that answer or do you want to know more...!? OK. This ripening of previous thoughts intentions acts happens in the realm of experience, of sensory experience. The non-dual mind is free of the normal patterns of evaluating experience; happy unhappy, agreeable disagreeable. So the ripening of Karma is not relevant in that dimension of experience. For the ripening of Karma it needs to be able to feel agreeable/disagreeable, all these sensations and if that's not happening then there is no ripening of Karma. But since we are very rarely in this non-dual mind then all the rest there is ripening. For me as well as for everyone else, only those times, those moments when the mind is completely free of all identification, clinging, then it's not.

I give you an easy answer that comes from Gendun Rinpoche, from our teacher; working on one's karma is like changing a bad dream into a good dream. Awakening is getting out of the dream all together. You realize the dream to be a dream. And it's very difficult to realize the dream to be a dream when it's a bad dream – it's very difficult. Because the mind is under such tension that it is not flexible enough not open enough to really know to be aware in such a deep way. That was a better answer than the first one!!

Q: When you are talking about wholesome actions... I don't understand this as in the whole picture... but can I be sure if this is wholesome or not, for example; I steal something, I would give that person the chance to practice forgiveness.

LT: Take it all give them a chance, you'll be a great Bodhisattva.

Q: You never know what the effect will be on the other person.

LT: Karma doesn't depend on the effect on the other person it depends on what you have here.

We might indeed benefit people without knowing it. Just because we are difficult for them we might benefit them a lot but it's no reason to be difficult!

S: Sometimes I'm really grateful when some people do some harm to me' Afterwards, you know, I could work on it.

LT: Dedicate your joy to them.

Especially in a couple relationship when people live together, there are mutually a lot of difficulties which we give to the other; let's call it challenges, but sometimes real difficulty. We know that if the other one takes it positively then the other one will grow and we will perhaps grow together. This is in the best of cases, we grow together. But never be difficult on purpose, because very soon the other person will lose the wish to work with that difficulty.

Q: I think the question before Simon's may have touched on or perhaps even answers my question but I'll ask it because I think it's a big concern in the west. And that's whether or not the Karmapa's teaching has some way of presenting karma that's not deterministic or fatalistic. Completely determined?

LT: Yes definitely there is no determination there. Later on in the book in the section on Vajrasattva, but perhaps even in this karma chapter, the Karmapa explains but it's general part also of the teaching in the lineage of how the ripening of Karma must not come about. What you all of what you can do to change the course of karmic ripening. We'll probably touch on this later but I can give a short summary of the important factors.

There are forces that, even after an action, reinforce or diminish the force of that act, the karmic force. I think Saramati knows all about it, but I'll repeat it for the others. Rejoicing in the act is a great reinforcement. Regretting an act diminishes its power. Regretting, and then we talk about the 'four forces of purifying negativity', which includes the commitment not to act like this again. First regretting, then commitment not to act like this again... Then what is called the 'force of the support' which means reconnecting to a pure motivation like refuge and Bodhicitta. And then the force of the remedy. Antidote, remedy, which means for example that in that area where one has done a harmful act one develops again and again a corresponding positive wholesome attitude and way of acting, which over time becomes an antidote to those patterns that led to the harmful act. And this goes on up until realizing

emptiness and practicing the antidote to clinging to a self, so it goes all the way to the deepest level. But all of this together will make it so that for example an act doesn't have to ripen at all. There is no obligation for it to ripen if these attitudes are practiced.

It also goes for wholesome actions: if one regrets an act of generosity it will also not have its positive effect – so it goes in the same way for wholesome and un-wholesome acts. So just to be precise on the answer these are the very standard teachings when going through this practice.

Anyone else, one last question before we go into meditation?

Q: Shouldn't we add on to those four forces the non-dualistic mind, for example if I do something?

LT: Yes, this is part of the 4th one. Did you translate this part about realizing emptiness, to antidote? This is what we are talking about.

So this will come I think the same as before, in this ten days. We will also have the teaching on Vajrasattva practice this year, so this will come again with the 4 forces.

A super last short question, Lily?

Q: How do we define wholesome and unwholesome, is it that everyone defines it for himself?

LT: The simplest answer: 'wholesome' is what leads to happiness and liberation. 'Unwholesome' is what leads to suffering and bondage. Now we tend to think that this is talking about the effect in the outside world, but the meaning is very much also the effect for the person acting – that this creates suffering and bondage or it leads to happiness and freedom. In the Buddhist perspective, we always take in the whole situation. For an act to be wholesome it has to be wholesome for everyone concerned. And then there is a long-term perspective also. It should not just be a short-term benefit or happiness that results but in the long run.

Now, for ourselves, we have to also find criteria before we act or when we act whether it's wholesome or not. This is a little different. When we think about doing or not doing something, and we feel into the different options, we should try to find out how our organism reacts to the different options. Usually in the depths of our being we feel a relief, an opening, a relaxation and a widening of our heart/mind when we are going in a wholesome direction. Sometimes a wholesome action doesn't create this relaxation immediately, because we have to overcome an inner obstacle to act in that way, and we feel the challenge to acting like this together with the *truth* that we should act like this. Sometimes a wholesome action is a challenge to do, and then we will feel this challenge. I remember when I was a student and beginning to study the Dharma, there was a part of the daily actions that were clearly unwholesome and it was very clear it was like black and it was very clear there were some

which were white but for many, I remember very clearly I didn't know 'Is it wholesome, is it unwholesome my way of behaving?' You know, we were trying out all kinds of wild behaviour in those times, and I wasn't clear: 'How can I feel inside?'

But, by observing and continuing to be interested, now this grey zone has really reduced to a small part where I'm not so clear, but the rest has become... it's very easy to feel now, one has to train in it, one can feel it inside. It's as if the practice of the Dharma sheds some light onto our life, on the path of our life, and things become very clear and obvious. And probably the most important thing is not to cheat oneself, to be honest with oneself, then one will know. Sometimes I am cheating myself I like more, I like to cheat a little bit because I'm attached to this way of thinking and acting and so on, but then it doesn't feel right, and you come back to a straight way.

OK let's meditate a little bit.

I suggest we start standing.

This changes when you are at a different angle. We feel our body, all the various sensations. How does it feel in the body, but how does it feel inside as well, this change of perspective? How does it feel to be standing with a group of people? Knees, hips; don't lock your joints. And now we relax. Let mind become as vast as space. And also no need to stand, if you feel uncomfortable standing, you can sit down any time.

Complete presence, aware without clinging.

Being fluid, being in the flow.

And for the last quarter hour – follow your own impulses of what is most beneficial to you; maybe small movements, maybe sitting, all in silence with the same awareness as just now.

Let's continue the practice until we go to bed, each one in their own way. In general, I think it's good to keep a lot of silence, not to be dispersed in your energy. Keep it together tonight and go deeper in a very relaxed way.

Day 2

Meditation

May all beings be happy and have the causes of happiness.
May we all be free from suffering and the causes of suffering.
May all beings find true joy, free from all suffering and the causes of suffering.
May they dwell in all situations in equanimity,
Completely liberated from all attachment and aversion.

And we let the Buddha meditate.

Imagine in your heart you have a little Buddha meditating, or a sphere of light that symbolises awakened awareness, just the size that fills the centre of the body. It's as if we can see the Buddha and we breathe along with the Buddha, breathing in and breathing out, connecting with these four wishes we have just recited.

To remind you of these four wishes, in short, may all living beings, including yourself, be happy. Just breathe with this wish in your heart; it is feeling love, love is what gives happiness to everyone. Imagine you can feel the love of the Awakened One in your heart. Softly as you breathe in, you feel your whole body filling with this love. As you breathe out, let it radiate outside of the body. If the feeling of love is a little difficult to contact, imagine a time when you were loved or felt love. It might be the love your mother had for you and you had for her, but it might be the love you had for an animal you had in your household, or anyone else.

Continue breathing, connecting to this love. Feel it yourself and let it radiate outwards. You might feel it simply as a soft heart. We can connect with it more by saying "May you be happy" to ourselves and to others. Let your breath flow in and out like the waves of the ocean, flowing with this quality of benevolence, love.

If people are delivering goods outside as they are now, or speaking, just include them in love. Whoever comes to mind, we simply include in this well-wishing attitude. Breathing in and breathing out, softly connecting with this quality.

May all beings be happy, may all be free. May we all be joyful and rest in deep equanimity. Feeling for ourselves these qualities and letting them radiate out. Breathing in and breathing out...

.....

We will continue where we left off yesterday on page 125.

We are here in the middle of the page in the same quotation. I will remind you of what we went through yesterday; it was all about leaving the mind completely relaxed and not caring, like a fool; letting the mind be as open as

the sky, unobstructed. Practically this means that we allow all the movements of mind to happen but there is no one interested in them, no-one following them. The big change that is happening is that we stop fighting, we don't want a calm mind in preference to a busy one, no, we are just open. Instead of fighting, we just withdraw the interest. It's like someone is dancing in front of us saying 'Come on! Come on!' We just relax and open. We notice what is going on, but we don't get involved. If you are in that attitude the mind will just naturally calm down, and we can experience a deeply calm mind without having done anything.

It's because we didn't do anything, it became calm, the trick is just not to get involved. That's the important point of meditation. What happens then is shamatha, calm mind that is not based on effort. This is different to the experience of calm which is based on effort. In a calm mind that is based on effort there are still subtle signs of tension. A calm mind feels so free of tension that you say 'I was never so relaxed'. As you continue with the practice, you will notice as you continue relaxing, that there is still a little bit of tension that you didn't notice before when you felt so relaxed.

The Mahamudra master describes here the signs of the abiding mind, the mind that stays like that.

The signs of the abiding mind: When experiences arise and you direct your attention to them, they immediately subside.

Here the experiences which we talk about are often emotional content, when feelings and thought arises and you direct your attention towards it and when you are looking, becoming aware of it, it's already finished. I will give you an easy example: we sit here in meditation and you think about one of your friends. You become aware of that thought, but as you become aware of the thought it has gone, it doesn't continue. This is due to the fact that this is a relaxed awareness, becoming aware of the thinking process without getting involved.

If you turn to this thought with the mind in it's usual, stressful functioning you will then think "Oh I haven't phoned him for ages, I must call him immediately I have time ..." and you will have a thought chain, because the way you notice the thought is full of identification and involvement; you get involved. Here what happens instead, even if a moment of emotion arises, a moment of fear or irritation, even there, becoming aware of it with an open mind it dissolves, as if you had a capacity like dissolving clouds into the sky. This is a sign of natural shamatha, natural calm abiding.

You feel completely at ease, you do not feel like doing anything, you feel like meditating again and again, or you do not feel like it.

All of these are steps in the shamatha. First when we do it like this, we do not feel like doing anything: 'Oh, finally I don't have to do anything'. You just want to hang out by the swimming pool, not even to swim, just to lie on one of the pool beds. Then when you become familiar with this relaxation, you notice that awareness is constantly there, and you are aware of what is going on and you say to yourself "Oh I'm meditating, even while lying by the swimming pool. Oh,

this is such a relaxed meditation I want to meditate like this all the time!” You really enjoy this, so even after dinner, when the sessions have finished, you want to just continue this. It’s so wonderful, so precious, meditating in such a relaxed way.

Then as you continue you become aware that in your enthusiasm there is still a tension. So then you say: ‘Relax, stop meditating, just trust, it’s all there’. You have the wish to not meditate anymore. You are entering a kind of state where you are saying ‘Just don’t meditate, leave it as it is’. You are entering a completely natural shamatha kind of experience which feels like not meditating. It is not yet the non-meditating experience of Mahamudra which is a non-dual experience, but it is a most relaxed way of being, with a slight observing attitude. It is also a deeply feeling experience. You feel nurtured and in every cell of your body you feel a joyful, nurturing energy filling your being. Then the text says:

The mind is very limpid and again and again there comes joy.

‘Limpid’ means clear or luminous. This is the sign of a relaxed mind; a relaxed mind always becomes limpid, fresh, clear, and transparent. You maybe think that maybe if you relax you will fall asleep, but relax more until you have had enough sleep, continue relaxing when you wake up. Then you will experience a clarity that is the natural clarity of a relaxed and fresh mind. Do this during this retreat. Don’t spend your evenings with agitation: relax, relax, relax all evening into sleep and when you wake up in the middle of the night or in the morning, continue relaxing not imposing any work on yourself.

Gendun Rinpoche always asked us to make the time from when we had finished dinner and entered the meditation again around 7 or 8, those three hours before going to sleep and then the three hours before breakfast into one long session, and it gives the best results. I am keeping that time free on this retreat as this is time for individual practice. You know for yourself how to relax best. If I make a program for you, for some of you that will not be relaxing. Also, in the morning if you rush from bed straight into a programme, again it might disturb your relaxation.

So usually what a Mahamudra practitioner will do as the day finishes and they come to sleep, is to relax against the wall and keep sitting, completely relaxed, not meditating, enjoying the calm mind. And meditation is going on by itself, there is no-one doing anything. You are not involved. You just notice that the senses are open, but there is no involvement with what you see or hear or the thoughts coming up, everything can liberate itself all the time. You don’t have any idea in your mind of when you need to sleep; you just wait until you feel heavy enough to lie down and go to sleep.

When you wake up in the night or in the morning, you just sit up, you don’t do anything, you just enjoy the clarity of the mind waking up. Eyes open or closed, it is just what you find helpful. But in the morning, it is good to open your eyes. When you want to fall asleep then it is ok to close them.

So this is an effortless period that goes on from the end of your activities in the day, all through the night, until your morning activities start and you really have to get up. You could do this anytime in your normal life, for almost 12 hours of continuous practice through the night. So, this was the important advice about how to join evening practice and morning practice to become one session.

You feel like staying alone in solitary places.

You should know that this is a normal sign of practice. You feel like climbing on a rock at the side of the beach and just being on your own. Or even if you can't go to a solitary place, you feel like sitting on the terrace and just being by yourself. In the past being alone might have felt a little uncomfortable. We often don't want to be alone, we want to be in contact and communication with our friends. But much of our wish for communication is based on tension, is based on fears and needs, desires. These hopes and fears have now calmed down and we feel satisfied from within; being with ourselves in our natural way becomes deeply satisfying. From this very satisfying, joyful way of being, then we can enter into communication, and it will be based in a sincere wish to share and be in a loving contact which is not based on a need – I can't be without others ... The shamatha practice relieves us of the tensions that normally go along with feeling lonely.

What happens next is **certainty about the instructions is born**. You feel this, you experience this, and you say 'That's exactly how they describe it, I'm living it, it is there' and this gives certainty about the instructions you receive. It is very simple. You will know for sure that a relaxed mind is a happy mind and simple things like this will become so obvious! You will also be certain about the instruction to open your mind like the sky and all the activity of the mind will calm down. You will reflect how initially when the teacher said 'Let the Buddha meditate within you', you thought this was a little bit far out, but now you have this intuition that yeah, there is some natural presence there and it becomes really easy when you abandon yourself to this being, some kind of Buddha within ourselves.

Then as a result of that, **devotion to the teachers arises again and again**. The word we translate as 'devotion' means that you feel inspired, that you have respect and you feel gratitude and even love because you receive this present of the Dharma. This is due to the experience of healing from within. What you are doing feels so beneficial that the feeling turns towards the doctor, so to speak.

The next sign is **disgust for samsara is born**. This means that you are so fed up with all these complications because now you know how simple life can be. You are fed up with all your usual complications, like wanting and fighting, and this is called samsara. You no longer want a bit of complication, a little love affair, a little bit of hope and fear! You see through all that because you are so relaxed and can see how easy it can be, and you only want to go for what is natural, easy, authentic and open.

You think, “I must meditate, nothing else will be of any benefit when I die.

This is the natural reaction when you touch on something which is beneficial; you only want to do that. This is good because it means that all the energy goes in one direction. At this point the teacher has to watch that you remain balanced, that you don't become sectarian or closed minded, that you order yourself an ice-cream in the middle of a Mahamudra retreat! Nothing else will be of value when I die is true, to be relaxed, natural, confident in this trust in oneself, trust in one's mind is what is needed when we die. When I die it is not important how many friends I have had, how much wealth I have accumulated, how many ice creams I have eaten, just whether I am relaxed and at peace with myself. This is all very true, but don't become one-sided in your approach because we have friends and although this is not important when we are dying, we can receive the support of our friends and support them which is part of our human nature. In friendship we can live the same loving attitude as in our meditation. Of course sense pleasures are not a help when we are dying as then we have to leave the world of sense pleasures and go beyond, but during our life, life is made of sense pleasures and we might as well enjoy them with the same attitude of not becoming attached, not fighting for them or against them. This man Gendun Rinpoche was a friend of everyone. When he came to teach us in our strict Mahamudra retreats he would ask us then to sing, dance, and play with each other like little lion cubs. So entering contact, but with this lightness, playfulness, joyfulness. It works! It protects our practice from becoming serious, not too serious, it protects it from becoming serious, it's not a serious affair! It's joyful and it should be joyful from A-Z.

Then of course you have the feeling **I am so glad that I had enough merit to meet such a teaching. These and similar signs will keep coming without end.** Three kinds of experiences will arise all the time in different combinations – joy, clarity and non-thought. Joy means all experiences of physical and mental wellbeing, sometimes translated as bliss or happiness.

The second group of experiences is clarity; this is the freshness, the precision of mind, the sharp perception, the clear faculty of perceiving or visualising – all of that belongs to clarity. The third one is called non-thought which means that single thoughts can arise but they don't form into thought chains. These are connected with all the experiences of vastness, openness, ungraspable nature including fluidity, this flowing experience. Sometimes non-thought is experienced as no conceptual activity what so ever, the mind is calm like a flat ocean without waves, other times non-thought is experienced like a firework where you don't get involved; lots is happening in the mind but like the eye of the storm, you feel completely calm inside and the whole dynamics are moving around. So many experiences of this kind will arise that if you meditate in a relaxed way like this you hardly have a meditation without these experiences, it's almost continuous. Why do so many experiences arise? Because this relaxation of body and mind is touching our blockages, our clinging and as our relaxation touches our blockages then experiences form in our mind, and as the blockages get resolved there is a discharge of energies and an openness and a deeper relaxation comes. This will not last for long

because the next blockage is already waiting! So if you continue relaxing you won't need the next experience, something special will arise, some you are not familiar with, and again dissolve. This process continues when you have the time to let it continue, it might continue for some years and during this time you have many different meditation experiences, but then they become less, because your blockages have resolved you won't see lights anymore, you won't have experiences of bliss and so on, all of this will disappear and you will enter a far more natural way of being. This joy, clarity and non-thought just becomes a stable quality of your life. Whenever you meditate it is there but nothing very special happens. We are still looking at shamatha, we are not yet into insight meditation, but you can see how beneficial this is already; this is extremely beneficial!

This is called control through calm abiding, or the concentrated mind. This is also called the abiding mind or the mind not moving towards objects.

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Meditation – 30 mins

From the end of the prayer, we let our breath be the prayer. Breathing in and breathing out we can consider to be a natural prayer..... Breathing in becomes our prayer for opening; breathing out becomes our prayer for being with the flow..... Opening and flowing.... Accepting and sharing.... As we open up and breathe in, we connect with all living beings and connect together with them. To start we can imagine opening up to everyone here in this room.... As we are breathing out we let go into the flow together with all sentient beings and especially those who are here with us.....We can use the natural function of breathing to be our natural prayer.....Breathing in becomes a prayer of compassion, of feeling, of opening upBreathing out becomes a prayer of sharing, of love, of supportWe connect like this with love and compassion in a very natural way, without forcing ourselvesOpening up and letting everything flow onBreathing with every cell of our being.....As we breathe in and breathe out with our whole body, the whole body is like a breathing body of love and compassion. Opening out and accepting and caring and supporting.....Not doing anything, not going anywhere, just open and in the flow.....Let your inner Buddha, your inner Tara, your inner awakened being remind yourself of how you wish to meditate. From time to time give yourself a little reminder.....And from time to time have a look to see if there is any unnecessary tension in your body that you could still release.....

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If you get too tense in the attempt to settle the mind, hoping to achieve thereby a really calm, exceedingly clear and very easy going state of mind, and being afraid of mental activity, this will cause an unsettled mind. This is why it is important to remain loose, without hope and fear.

We are touching on the question of will, wanting, and subtle intention for our mind. It's an important question: how much intention we give our mind that is helpful to the mind and what is too much. We need to give an impulse, give a direction to where we settle our mind, what we open up to. You agree that when I say breathing in means opening up and breathing out means entering the flow, and this is also a way of giving direction for our mind. It is a very open and relaxed way of giving a direction to the mind, but nevertheless over and over we give the direction to open and not fight, so we remind ourselves to remember these important points. When we remind ourselves during meditation, "Come on Tilmann, there is nothing to do, let everything liberate itself", this reminder is directing the mind to a certain truth, to a quality of being.

This is the famous faculty of sati, or reminding ourselves to be attentive to what is most important. This is how you could define sati – it is attention to what is most important. Sati is our good friend from last year, who reminds us to take the medicine when we forget. Sati is the friend who reminds us gently 'take your medicine'. My or your sati is an individual thing; it is our good friend. It's a quality of wisdom and love that is present in us and this wisdom and love knows what is good for us, knows what our medicine is. Sometimes sati says 'Come on relax. Remember it is not a drama; look through, it's just a film. Look you are still breathing, you are not dead, nothing really difficult has happened. Since you are still breathing, my friend, you can use your breath as a survival prayer. Breathe in, open up, relax, there is still enough air. Breathe out and trust, yes, trust the flow.' Sati is this good friend of ours who knows what kind of remedy we need, what kind of support we need.

I forgot to introduce you to sati; sati is your good friend, sometimes called guru or lama. Sati is always with us, it is this wisdom in us, this loving wisdom that knows what is actually helpful for you. Sati reminds us very nicely, always on the spot. If we get lost in some drama some film maybe we should just turn to sati and say 'And now what?'. There will immediately be an answer, as sati knows. Maybe the first answer is 'Don't take it so seriously' and the second 'Look! Here you are, you are back, everything is fine'.

Sati is our friend who always de-dramatizes, gets us out of the drama and helps us to look through, to see the nature of what is happening, the nature of mind, the nature of mental phenomena. Sati is our guide to enlightenment, to awakening, and on the way to awakening sati gets lost, because sati becomes awakening. Sati is the awakening; sati is in the deepest sense Mahamudra, the way we are; if you want you can say our 'true self'.

At the beginning it manifests as another voice, the voice of wisdom, the voice of reminding ourselves of what is important, like a second voice in our system.

In therapy we call it the inner pilot, this is sati. It is the benevolent observer who knows. It's a certain kind of observer, the loving kind one, not the judging observer. All the time when sati has brought us back into an authentic way of being, sati disappears. It's the inner guru that dissolves into authentic being and only reappears again when we are not authentic anymore. When we are in an authentic, relaxed state of being there is no need for sati. If we become unsure and ask 'Is this all, just being natural, authentic, open, can that be all!?' then our friend sati appears and says 'Yes, yes, relax more. Trust, dissolve, become one with the experience'.

So, this is a friend who is very attentive to our deepest need and the deepest need is to become completely free. You have to listen very carefully as it is a fine voice, not as loud as the others. When you listen attentively, this voice will become your best friend and you will always know what to do and how to do it. The Buddha said about sati in the *Satipatthana Sutta*, in the introduction to that teaching, that sati is the one and only way to awakening. The term he uses in that context is ekayana – one vehicle, one way. The one way of following sati, the reminder of the truth, the reminder of what is beneficial, this is the one way.

The definition of sati is the mindfulness, the awareness that stays with what is wholesome. When the Mahamudra teachers explain sati to us (in Tibetan the term is drenpa which also means to recollect, to remember), at first it is the capacity to stay with what you are doing, to stay, for example, focused on breathing. A very simple capacity to stay with something which is good for us; this is the basic capacity of sati. As sati develops it becomes more and more deep. For example, at a certain stage in our practice we will notice that meditating on love and compassion is so beneficial, so sati brings us back to love, to bodhicitta, all the time, continually reminding us to keep a soft heart. Sati goes as far as to remind us to simply be, to be in awareness without labelling. It becomes reminding us of the nature of our experience, reminding us to look and to see. Whenever we fall out of Mahamudra, whenever we lose that authentic being, it is the force that reminds us and brings us back, so it is what reminds us of our true self.

The teachings we receive are to nourish that capacity of sati. The capacity to come back to a helpful motivation and the capacity to come back to a helpful view of things and to remember in all activities what is really the point, what is most important in communicating, in doing physical activity, our work, all of that. In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition they used to visualise sati as the guru who is always riding on the right shoulder when you are walking, or sitting on the top of your head, so the voice of loving wisdom is always with us here, or there or anywhere. The link is in remembering the Buddha actually is the voice of sati, so in remembering him we remember what is most important, most helpful to us, which is the same as stimulating sati.

In the practice of Mahamudra there will be no realization through any fabrication, or concentration on an object, or craving, or effort.

It is said: "If there are desire and effort, there will be no Buddhahood", and: "If you do not alter the mind, it is clear. If you do not stir up the

water, it is transparent” and: “This mind is tied up with business. It will be untied, if you relax, no doubt.”

So, we know about busyness and two thousand years ago people also needed a teaching about busyness – they always had to go and work the land, get food, look after their houses etc. Especially they were always thinking about the past, the future and the present and this last quote comes from Saraha 1800 years ago. He said to his students ‘Come on! Your mind is tied up with busyness, relax!’ Seemingly his students didn’t want to believe it so he had to repeat it: ‘Your mind will be released if you relax, no doubt!’

This is exactly what I was told by my teacher too, the same words all the time. At the beginning I didn’t want to believe it, I thought, ‘I have to make an effort, come on, I want to become awakened. I have no time to lose. I have 10 days and I want to become Enlightened. I made effort after effort, always trying to be cleverer. I made a very clever effort which you couldn’t see from the outside, but I was convinced that I had to always make an effort towards awakening – and I didn’t get there! He came back again and again and said ‘Relax’. First he taught us the 7-point posture, the breathing techniques, and then said, ‘Ok, meditate like this (slumped and relaxed), this is how you should meditate.

So we relax the body; we relax speech, which means being silent; and we relax the mind. Body is rangbab, speech is rangbab, mind is rangbab. Rangbab means ‘run by itself, falling by itself’. The image is like a sheaf of straw or wheat and you cut the string that is holding it together and the wheat just falls open. Now rangbab is always a good solution for your meditation. Sometimes you need to come back to a little bit of concentration, just coming back gently to a more focused, concentrated way of being and then relaxing again; a little bit of concentration and a lot of relaxation. In both states you are not distracted. When I say concentrated I mean straightening a little bit your energy, because if you are too slumped like this, your mind will go all over the place, so you need to straighten just a little bit until you find out how this rangbab really works, that when you use this rangbab approach, your mind actually stays calm, bright, clear, undistracted.

This is what it means when it says in the next paragraph: **Abandon all efforts of the body and mind and remain without doing anything deliberately. Remain uncontrived, be without aim, stay relaxed, stay loose, stay without projecting or gathering of thought, stay without imagining anything, stay without reference point, be natural, let it be as it is, do not hanker after anything. An utterly non-conceptual experience which cannot be achieved by effort will arise.**

In Mahamudra meditation there is no object to focus on. Without hankering for something, relax the mind completely, without any purpose. If you can relax like that, you will experience clarity without concepts, which is like pure space. Do not consider it to be a quality if it lasts for a long time or a fault if it lasts a short time. This means if it happens don’t try and grasp it to try and prolong it. No, keep it simple and

even get up before it has finished. **Carrying on your practice. From moment to moment, you will at some point recognise the nature of thought. Having experienced the thoughts as luminosity once, there is no doubt that you will experience them as such again and again. At the same time you have arrived at the genuine Buddha mind.**

To experience thoughts as luminosity is an attempt to describe that one knows thoughts to be of the same luminous nature as basic awareness itself. Thoughts in that dimension deepen our awareness rather than taking us away; feelings, emotions, deepen our awareness rather than veiling our experience. The feeling of aliveness increases more and more. The more we have emotions, the more we feel alive and it becomes more and more clear they are just a manifestation of mind and we begin to say yes to whatever experiences arise. And the more alive we feel, the more joy there is and we lose all fear of what might happen – sensory experience, emotions or whatever – because there is no danger anymore, because we see through, know the nature of thoughts to be identical to the nature of calm mind.

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Meditation 25mins

Relax: relax the shoulders: relax your belly: relax the mind, which means to give up all ideas of how it should beWhen we say 'relax', it is an invitation to become more and more natural, more and more fluidWe relax into a most simple way of being Have a look, is your friend sati wishing to tell you anything? Being tied up with busyness, relaxation is very helpfulRelax, no need to worry: no need to control Relaxing, remaining aware and undistracted Aware and undistracted

Afternoon Session

Within the in-breath after the prayer, immediately the meditation starts. Stay inside with your attention; find yourself again if you got lost on the way. If your mind was all over the place, come back first to feeling your body and take a posture that feels comfortable and the energy is flowing. A straight back this time, because during the afternoon it is easy to go to sleep. Feel the connection going through the centre of your body, there in the central column which we call the central channel, feel the connection with the sky and the earth. As my grandfather used to say, imagine you are bound to the sky with a golden thread which makes you all straight. See if you can feel that just by imagining that connection up and down, your spine becomes straight and your mind becomes clear. Then stay with that thought, breathing in and breathing out with full awareness.....

Try to breathe down to the depth of your belly

If ever you are having difficulties with staying awake, say to yourself 'I wish to experience this very moment, this unique moment which will never come again.' How is it to be alive just now? There is the unique experience of being just now with this body, the unique experience of hearing, just now; the unique experience of seeing, just now; smelling and perhaps tasting and being aware of all the feelings inside, perhaps something that is in process

The unique flow of experience

Do not fight with being tired

And if you feel drowsy, straighten up. Feel the straight connection of energy flow through your central column. Open your eyes and it will help you not to feel drowsy. If you are still drowsy, straighten up more and imagine that you are a body of light like the sun shining, very bright
and then relax.

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Some practitioners really love these teachings on relaxation but they are confounded by drowsiness, a hazy mind where everything becomes dim and there is a great lack of clarity. This is not relaxation; it has nothing to do with relaxation; this is clinging. It's called 'clinging to ignorance' and in Tibetan it is called 'sheep shamatha', 'black shamatha'. Don't install yourself in a so-called relaxed state but which is full of clinging to drowsiness. If you are drowsy and sleepy just call it sleep and lie down and sleep. The resistance to standing up or to really straightening your spine shows the degree of clinging that you have to your sleep. There is a resistance to awareness and in the traditional teaching this is called 'clinging to ignorance'.

This is one of the main undercurrents, and we underestimate how much we cling to ignorance, how much we prefer lack of awareness to awareness. Then when we hear the rangbab explanations of the previous session, we think this is an invitation to dwell in ignorance. But no, not at all! Rangbab is to clarify, to clear our mind, because we relax the wanting that is in our meditation. It is not to reinforce our clinging to sleep and laziness. In order to make that clear, we talk about alternating the states of complete presence, which is very concentrated, with this relaxation which is still completely present.

Could someone get a glass and fill it right to the brim with water? I want to show you what it means to be fully present when we say: 'to experience the unique moment of existence now'.

In the tradition to show this we are told to imagine you are a slave and are asked to carry a pot with precious sesame oil through a market place with lots of people – there are people juggling on one side, beautiful women on the other, people talking and people fighting. You have to pass through this without spilling any, and since you don't care at all about the oil, there is someone behind you who will cut off your head if you spill a drop!

He demonstrates with the glass. If I start to tense, my hand starts to tremble, so I have to stay relaxed. Other people give it a try and Tilmann walks right behind them, while the rest of us act out the thoughts that come in meditation and try to de-stabilise the person but without touching them.

OK, now we will meditate like this..... Use the image of this and find the corresponding attitude of it in your meditation be as present as if you are crossing a wobbly bridge carrying a glass of oil enjoy the feeling of this presence that you haveand then with that level of relaxation, see if you can relax more and stay just as clear How much can you relax without thought chains happening and without becoming drowsy? Thank you.

So, if you are not sure about what is the right way to meditate, you alternate between this complete presence, alertness, and complete relaxation and you try and find the appropriate midpoint for you, what feels right. You can alternate between the complete precision of knowing every little movement of breathing, and then relaxing a little as that still feels OK. In this way we find the right way to meditate. Mostly in our daily life the majority of us are too tense, we turn the screw too much and we have to loosen it a little. And then, because we are too tense in most situations, when we relax we go into sleepiness as we don't know how to relax and stay clear.

In the exercise all the people in the marketplace are our thoughts and things in meditation, and the person behind us is our worry about doing something wrong – if I do something wrong it will be terrible. We have to be completely present and then forget ourselves in it. If we are afraid of having our head cut off we will start to tremble. If we are too caught up in wanting to succeed, we will get too tense. The best way to do it is like a game in the way we were playing with the exercise: like a dance with our own energies. And when we see that the energies are a bit heavy because of digestion or the heat, then we dance a little livelier. If we are naturally very lively, very fiery, then we relax our dance.

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Page 36, bottom. Karma continued.

The way we go through this is a little bit of study and also a little bit of a history class, how they described things, because here the way it's presented is like talking to a very uneducated public. The students listening to a teaching were usually illiterate, so the major thrust of giving them teachings on karma was to stop them committing a crime, this was the first thing that had to be clear. We have this idea of Tibet being a very holy country, which was cultivated by the Tibetans themselves, but actually they were warrior people, they were constantly fighting and thanks to the presence of Dharma, they were fighting much less, but they never really stopped. So you will find a lot of

insistence on not killing, not stealing – all these gross actions as that was really daily business.

Desire, hatred and stupidity and actions produced out of them are unwholesome actions. So, this answers one of your questions about how to know what is wholesome or not, because you can be aware of the emotion that leads to the action, thought or word.

Another criterion is **unwholesome actions lead to suffering and all the lower realms of existence.** This is by looking at the long term effect of unwholesome actions.

And then the opposite is wholesome action which is performed with **Absence of desire, hatred and stupidity and actions produced out of them are wholesome actions.** This is a typical way Buddhists talk. Instead of saying wholesome acts are produced from love, generosity and wisdom, they say with the absence of desire, absence of hatred, absence of stupidity because the absence of those main mental poisons or confusions is more important than the vague definitions of what is love, what is compassion, what is wisdom – they wouldn't know. How do we know that an act of love is wholesome or unwholesome? When within that love there is no clinging or desire, or aversion or ignorance; that's what makes the love pure – the absence of desire, hatred and ignorance as these are the factors that veil our love and our wisdom. **Wholesome actions lead to the happy forms of existence, and to happiness in all existences.**

The next quote answers the question “where will I go after this life?” Imagine that you have these Tibetan or Indian lamas and the students ask how they will know where they go after death. The next quote on the top of [page 37](#) should be read like this – if desire dominates, you will become a hungry ghost. If hatred dominates, you will be flung into the hells. If stupidity dominates, it will lead you to an animal existence. However as the **Smrtyupasthana** says:

Through wholesome actions you will obtain happiness. From unwholesome actions suffering will come. In this way the effect of wholesome and unwholesome action is clearly shown.

These are very simple answers – if you want to know where you will go, look at how you act. This is the good old teaching of the Buddha. If you want to know where you come from, who you have been in the past, look at what you are experiencing now as it is a mirror of how you have been thinking, speaking and acting in the past. If you want to know the future, look at the forces you are creating now as they will influence the future. It's very simple: You want to be happy, then think, speak and act in a wholesome way. If you want to suffer then think, speak and act in an unwholesome way. It works; it's as simple as that! The way we think, especially, is the way we experience the world – speech and physical action just follow from that and you can see if you live with a person who is constantly in a negative mood, thinking about herself or others in this way and suffering follows this person like a shadow. The opposite is true, if someone has a very positive way of thinking or relating

to things then automatically for this person, because of love, compassion, joy, they will speak in this way and act in this way and happiness follows that person wherever they go. We know for ourselves how happiness can come back just by changing the way we are thinking and perceiving the world. In the same way we lose that happy, joyful experience the moment we begin to think differently and on top of that, speak and act in that way and we find everything gets worse and worse.

So it sounds like everything is very simple and easy but we are not so free to choose how we think and perceive the world so this is where we do the day to day work in our meditation, becoming aware, relaxing and so on and this is where the work actually starts. The path of liberation is the daily work of releasing, relaxing our automatic patterns, our compulsive reactions. This is the path of liberation, this is where we get a foot in the door before the compulsive reactions start, we bring in a little bit more openness, a little bit more love, a little bit more understanding, acceptance of ourselves, and that gives us more space to breathe and see the world. This is where we get into these seemingly automatic karmic processes. This is the mind training; you come in at the right moment before your impulses take over. We train with the small things happening in meditation, we learn not to react impulsively – it is as simple as that; something itches here and you want to scratch; it's automatic, there is no decision to scratch, you just scratch. Instead you just relax and decide whether you really need to scratch or not. If you want to, do it mindfully. If you don't want to it will pass by itself.

Ratnavali:

Through the limitless concentrations of the formless states you will attain the bliss of Brahma.

This is referring to meditative absorptions, samadhis, which last for a very long time. You will not go into those formless absorptions if you just meditate for a short time as we have been doing, it has to be a great part of your life to be absorbed in those samadhis. If this is the dominant force in your life, then indeed the fruit will ripen as a 'rebirth' in the realm of Brahma. This is just showing the range of possibility of cause and effect which can open the way into hell realms and also open the way to god realms and in-between these, the full range of possibilities. For us this is probably not as relevant we are not engaged in such deep meditation. What is very important to us is if we now make good use of our life and we really engage in the dharma we will create we will create a strong force going in the direction of inner development and dharma practice. This is a karmic force; it will work in the future. This interest for the path of liberation will also carry over into the next life, just as it carries over from one day to the next it will carry over from one life to the next. If we make good use of this life and strengthen this force we can be confident that it will carry forward into the next. However if we waste the opportunities that we have they may not present themselves another time. If we want to make good use of the opportunities of this human life, the basic rule comes in the next paragraph:

All unwholesome actions, the three of the body, the four of speech and the three of mind, you have to give up, and strive to practice their opposite, the ten wholesome acts.

This is like the golden rule which can be found in all cultures - behave towards others the same way as you would like them to behave towards you. Do what is wholesome and you will be sure to have the ethical grounding for the rest of your practice. We have sila, the ethical dimension of practice, Samadhi, the meditative aspect and prajna the wisdom arising from that. The basis is the ethical behaviour and from that comes the ease in meditation and from that comes wisdom. These are called the three trainings of a Buddhist practitioner.

OK, so now we have to go to school a little bit more as it says in the **Karmasataka Sutra**:

The karma of embodied beings can never be lost even in a hundred kalpas. At the time when the conditions come together it will ripen into effects.

Karmapa explains: **Whatever wholesome or unwholesome actions have been committed will leave a seed in the mind, which will inevitably ripen to its corresponding fruit of happiness or suffering, whenever circumstances unite to activate it.**

We talked yesterday about if the seeds, these forces in our minds, are not worked upon and are left to themselves, then they will definitely ripen. There are lots of theories about how something that happened long ago, perhaps in a past life can produce a fruit now. It's a little difficult to explain and there are different models to explain it. The best approach seems to me, to be to first understand that something which will produce an effect in the long term has to produce an effect in the short term: it can't just be a cause and reserve its effect for later, that's just not possible. If something happens to me today, like if something heavy happens and I get a shock and I react with a strong moment of fear, and perhaps with the fear I have a moment of anger but I control myself and don't show it and my life continues as if nothing had happened. Much later in my life something similar happens to what I have experienced today; something similar but not as strong as what happened today but it creates in me a very strong reaction. How come? How is it that a person had initially a reaction and then experiences it again from time to time in similar situations? It seems to be that now, when I experience it today, it leaves me unchanged, nothing changes in my being. The change goes into my unconscious and I am not aware of it, but I become sensitive on a level where I had not been before and later when circumstances come that are similar this change or force will come to the surface. Sometimes for this to come to the surface it is enough to relax, and so remove the control keeping the traces suppressed, or there is an experience in my life that causes me again to feel the fear and anger.

How these seeds or imprints are stored is difficult to explain but seemingly it goes for a very long time and these imprints can carry into the next life, and it seems that one will make the same mistakes over and over until we have learnt the lesson. Basically Dhamma teaching is about not being in accord with reality and karma is created whenever we are not in accord with reality or not in our true being, the awakened state. In the dualistic state we are not really in touch with the way things are. This is the same for both positive and negative karma. With positive karma we are out of touch but in a better way. When we are in a dualistic state of consciousness we don't see that the sense of self, of separation from others, does not accord with reality and we are erroneously trying, from an imagined self, to influence an imagined other and all karma results from that!

When we are not in accord with reality, we make the same errors over and over again and we kind of magically attract situations that will provoke repeating the error or the learning that needs to happen not to produce the same error and fall into that trap again. When one awakens one thinks and behaves without this clinging and in this way the karmic influences are not nourished and exhaust themselves.

So you can turn the teaching on karma around and say that the person who is not generous will be poor – if you have a greedy state of mind always trying to keep things for yourself, this will lead to poverty. You can also say that you are going to be poor for as long as you have not learnt to be generous and to share. So you can see karma both ways; one is cause and effect and one is taking the effect as a cause to learn something. We often complain about our lives – that we don't have good friends that people criticise us for no good reason and this is our karmic situation. We can say, well yes I will experience this for as long as I have not learnt to speak in a manner that brings people together and is respectful, sure situations will come that mirror what I have not learnt. Be careful not to think that someone is sending us those situation, it's incredible that because of the way we function we just enter situations like this and we have a lot of karma and only a tiny proportion of it will manifest in this life. We all experience the same things in life but the way we deal with it is karmically very different – we may accept it easily, or complain. So the important thing is not what happens to me but how I experience it and then how I deal with it; how I experience being sick is much more important than the fact that I am sick; how I experience a lack of resources that other people call poverty, I might not even experience it as poverty and this shows how karma manifests; the way the sensations are experienced in our body – is it strongly disagreeable or not at all unpleasant? When I analyse the teach it becomes very simple, coming back to poverty, a person who feels a lack will try and keep the few thing they have to themselves. The result of that in this life and in future lives, is to experience that lack again and again as this is what we have cultivate in our mind. The feeling goes from a sensation of lack to a material sense of poverty, or behind the need to critics is an inner sense of insecurity which produces the need to criticise others and then from being criticised and ridiculed back by others, is produced the same sense of insecurity; lack of self-esteem arises again and again.

If apparently wholesome actions such as keeping an ethical discipline, listening, reflecting and meditating, are carried out with a defiled motivation, they are a feigned imitation of the Dharma, not the genuine Dharma, and they will not have the fruit of genuinely practicing the Dharma.

For example, I teach the Dharma which is seemingly a very good thing to do, but if I teach it with the wish to become famous, or to become rich, how good is that? It becomes an ego-centred activity which might look good but is poison inside and the result of that will not be awakening because it is turning in the mechanisms of desire, pride, anger and all that will follow. Karma is always the inner quality of our actions and thinking, not the outer manifestation; what the motivation is or emotional quality. If I teach with pride, what am I cultivating – I cultivate that in the future I will remain sensitive to my pride getting hurt and I will encounter situations where my pride will get hurt and that is certain! I have met so many people who have said to me that their spouse is meditating but becoming more and more self-centred and how can that happen? It is because the meditation is done with an ego-centric attitude, in a subtle way we are cultivating me – I want this, I want that. Meditation doesn't automatically dissolve these attitudes, it has to be done with the motivation and the inner openness, the flexibility to see one's own defects etc. in order to help us purify egocentricity. If meditation is done with Bodhicitta, a mind of love and wisdom it will lead to awakening but if it is not done in this way it can produce a rigid personality structure, it can enhance that. That is what is meant by actions being carried out with a defiled motivation which will lead to suffering. This is a big warning from the Karmapa about the spiritual path because spiritual practice being carried out for personal benefit was rampant in Tibet, and it is also here in Europe, it is everywhere and if you surf a bit on the internet you will find all sort of adverts for things that are not actually going to lead to Awakening.

Basically one will reap what one sows. What we sow is not necessarily what people can see from the outside, it is what happens in our secret inner selves; that is where the sowing happens. If you work on yourself in order to help others,

that will be the fruit of working on yourself. The example our teacher used to give was of planting a fruit tree; if you plant the tree with the motivation that I want to have the fruit for my own benefit then as the tree grows I will have to put a fence around it and when the fruit ripens I will get worried that others will steal it. Another attitude would be to plant the fruit tree for everyone, which will mean that you can eat the fruit but also anyone else who comes along and in this way there is no fear in connection with growing it, no need to build a fence. When to transfer this to spiritual practice and meditation, you will see that some meditate with fences around them being very keen to protect 'my practice and my results of practice' and others meditate with this attitude of including and sharing; even if they withdraw to a cave in the mountain, this cave is not closed to visitors, it is an open cave.

Another example our teacher gave, is like deciding to become a doctor and in doing so you learn about medicine and how to treat yourself because to become a good healer you have to know how to heal yourself, but the whole

motivation is to be able to share that with everyone. Especially as a psychotherapist, the work you do on yourself is intended to then be shared with others.

Q: Is it more important to meditate with the intention of meditating or go into the practice of helping others?

It depends on how stable you are, this will be the deciding factor, if you really know how to help others. If you want to help others to awaken, then it is premature to teach them until you know how to get there.

Q: What is the remedy for lack of self-esteem?

I didn't really talk about that, I mentioned self-esteem as a repeated experience. Finding your authentic being is the cure for lack of self-esteem, you can also call that vajra pride, finding your true, open being is the end of lack of self-esteem.

The effects of your actions you will exclusively experience yourself alone, they will not be shared collectively with others. Here we are talking about the inner karmic ripening; our actions always have effects on others, this is taken for granted. For example whatever attitude you cultivate if it is generosity, love or if it is pride it is not your partner who will reap the fruit of that, he will reap the consequences of his own way of thinking etc. My actions will always show in my surroundings but the karmic ripening will happen or follow me even if I go to another situation, because this is what I have cultivated in my mind. This sentence refers to various misunderstandings, for example you practice the dharma and wish that your parents will become enlightened, but that will not work, you will experience the fruits of your practice, not someone else.

Q: So why do we always make these wishes then, and dedications?

Dedication is making a helpful surrounding which helps the growth of others. If dedications could enlighten beings we would all be enlightened long ago! Our change can help others as we become less of a nuisance to others! When we practice we create a field in which it is much easier for others to let go, it's an invitation to others to open and let go, but if they don't want that, they won't go with it, they can resist until the end.

The seeds of your actions will never be lost, but will remain latent for countless kalpas, and infallibly bring forth their corresponding fruits, unless they are destroyed by the application of antidotes.

What is meant here is, don't think that there is some sort of magic that can make the effect of how we act, think or talk just disappear. There is no such magic which will suddenly make us free. Or you could say, if you want to become free quickly, go and face your karma and dissolve it quickly – let it come and learn to open up yourself. There is a secret wish that most of us have, I have done something wrong for example which I know is a mistake,

but I think if I don't mention it and no one knows, it will disappear! This is naïve because the trace is already in my consciousness because the effect, trace is planted the moment I committed the act, so it is no good pretending, it is already acting which is why I pretend not to notice, as it is already working on myself.

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Meditation

You can understand all Dharma as a remedy. In good dharma teaching in every sentence is a remedy for some lack of understanding. So now let's go into training with the karma of just mind. If you want to apply that now immediately to your meditation, you can ask yourself 'where is the challenge? What would be helpful for me to develop now? Meditation means to absorb our mind in what is helpful, what is beneficial, what is wholesome. So what will do me good now? For myself right now it would be to relax; if it was just about myself I would go into a non-conceptual relaxation. What does your inner pilot tell you? What way of practicing would be really good for you right now – try to get an answer, a clear feeling: Then do what your inner pilot tells you, even if it means that you leave the room and do something else, that completely ok.

We will meditate now for 20mins, each one of us following our inner pilot, your inner guidance, what is best for you right now.

If my mind is open and fresh and has regained some happiness at the end of this meditation, then what I have been doing was the right thing. If I feel more confused and dull now, then either I did not follow my inner pilot or what I did was actually not so helpful, and in this way we learn. The difference between an experienced meditator and a newcomer is that an experienced meditator makes fewer mistakes because that is exactly what experience is, trial and error and learning from that.

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A sutra states:

The actions of Devadatta will not ripen in the earth, in the water, or elsewhere, but they will ripen exclusively in his aggregates and the sense faculties that he will obtain. In whom else should they ripen?

Some of you might know Devadatta was one of the cousins of the Buddha and he became a member of the Order, but he then turned out to be continuing in the spirit of rivalry. He created a split in the Sangha for a short time and tried to kill the Buddha so there were a lot of heavy actions that he performed. The question is about karma in general and whether karma can be written anywhere else than in the mindstream of the person who has been thinking, feeling, acting in that way. So no, the consequences of the actions

will ripen in our own experience and not in the experience of someone else.

The *Abhidharmasamuccaya* explains this a little bit more:

What is the meaning of getting one's karmic share? It means that you will experience the consequences of the actions you have committed, because wholesome and unwholesome actions have their corresponding results.

We can connect that with the next sutra, the sutra requested by Surata:

From hot seeds, hot fruits will grow. From sweet seeds, sweet fruits will grow. From these examples the wise will understand, that the ripening of unwholesome actions is hot, and the ripening of wholesome actions is sweet.

So the meaning is that we ourselves experience the consequences of our actions and the second is that what we experience corresponds to the origins. So if in origin it was a seed or action or thought motivated by an egocentric attitude, then of course it will not be awakening that results but a tense state an experience of suffering that results. And then we read in the *Smṛtyupasthāna* (the Sanskrit version of the Sattipattana), that:

Fire can become cold, the wind can be caught with a net, the sun and the moon can fall on the flatlands, but the ripening of karma cannot fail.

So it's like saying the sky might fall on our head but karma will never waver. So don't believe that the effects of our thoughts will get lost. They will ripen, and we have to face up to that. So this is the section on lesson 4. The next part will follow next year.

Day 3

Meditation

Let's reflect on the basic thoughts that turn our mind to Dharma.

How precious this opportunity is. All of what we can be thankful for today, this morning, this very moment.

How quickly this precious opportunity might be gone, how quickly these good conditions might not be united.

And what is really important when I die?

And what is most important today?

Which direction do I want to take my thinking, speech and action in today?

Which are the traps into which I might fall, the traps that I want to avoid?

With these contemplations my direction becomes very clear and I let the refuge appear in front of me.

The Buddha can take many forms. Let the form appear that for you is most inspiring.

Inspiring means that I feel the wish "that's exactly how I want to become.'

Imagining ourselves to be in the presence of that refuge together with all living beings lets chant the prayers together.

{Prayers}

Imagine the refuge become all light, like a rainbow it dissolves into me and I feel the presence of these awakened qualities in my own being. Allow yourselves to feel them, to be them.

And then join your awareness with the breathing, breathing as an awakened being.

Allow the breath to flow through the whole body, and feel how it nourishes the whole body.

Our senses are wide open. Without fear, and without clinging.

There is no fighting what so ever. A very alive feeling of peace, very dynamic.

Notice the flowing experience in all sense fields and wherever you feel some holding on then with the next out-breath you can allow it to flow.

Breathing in we open, breathing out we let go.

Breathing in we feel with full sensitivity, breathing out we do not identify, letting everything flow on.

Continue to meditate like this for the next 15 minutes, use your own capacity of reminding yourself.

Remind yourself that you are perfect, that everything is already there. Do not search anywhere else for freedom or awakening, Awakening is right here when we know our mind.

End

Now again we carry the practice of mindfulness, awareness into the breakfast break, every step, every breath, every little bit of food we eat can be a practice of awareness. Our friend Sati is going to remind us sitting there, saying come on... enjoy it.

{Prayers}

Mid-Morning meditation

Real Dharma is the challenge of living as human beings together, protecting each other, respecting each other. With that in our heart let's continue with breathing from the heart.

Softly accepting ourselves, with all our limitations. With whatever inner troubles we experience. Breathing all of it into our hearts. In the heart there is a sphere of light or a Buddha with the great wisdom of not clinging. Breathing out we let love flow through our whole being.

Breathing in with compassion for ourselves, breathing in with love for ourselves.

Say thank you to yourselves for having kept the awareness.

Feeling the gratitude for the freedom we experience not to react and the freedom to direct our mind where it is beneficial.

Having deeply accepted ourselves and given loving support to ourselves, let us look from another perspective. Very often when we meditate like this is our adult being that is meditating, the wise understanding aspect of ourselves. But there might be another aspect which is not so easy to see which is more like a child. Maybe a little bit frightened, maybe needy. And the love and compassion in our hearts reaches those aspects of our being which are more like this child. The love reaches into those areas of our experience where we were wounded, maybe a long time ago, where we felt insecure, and it offers or gives protection.

If some images arise in connection with these words let them come and allow them to stabilise themselves so that you can feel this love and protection. And then ask yourself is there still any other aspect of my being that I have overlooked? Anything in need that I should take care of? Let the Buddha or the Tara in your heart take care of it.

And then perhaps as you open your eyes, allow yourself to feel the group support.

Receive the support and if you wish also offer support to others. In doing so acknowledge the interdependence of a human being.

When a human being is small, a baby, a small child, and when a human being grows old then this interdependence is felt more strikingly. When we are young adults and strong and healthy, we can nourish the illusion of independent existence, actually we depend on the kindness of others and we can offer the same kindness to them.

Let us do that. If you want a visualisation to help you, imagine light rays connecting all people in the room.

Allow yourself to open up to this truth of interconnectedness. And then imagine or realise how we are connected with all others, here in the house and in the village. How strongly we influence this village and how strongly the village influences us.

If you wish let some loving support flow into this network and receive the loving support which is there.

Then imagine how, from each point in the network, multiple light rays go out to all the other people we are connected with.

And imagine that the light-rays also connect to the Buddhas, the awakened ones and to our potential to be awakened ourselves. As if everyone has a Buddha or Tara in their hearts and another Buddha on top of their heads.

And now aware of this awakened network, let us breathe in Bodhichitta, the unity of compassion and wisdom.

Let the feeling of how it is to be breathing like this deeply enter your awareness and every cell of the body.

And relax.

End

And relax even more.

We will take 15 minutes in complete silence as a break before I start teaching again.

What to some people goes unnoticed, it's not a problem not a shock at all, can touch others in such a vulnerable spot that it is like a trauma, it is a real shock to the depths of one's being.

I experienced this once with a person who was very close to me when we were on a bus and were distributed a set of earphones to guide us through the historic monuments. When I put on the earphones, there was a really disagreeable noise, it gave me a shock because they were on full power and there was this electrical sound in the ears. Before I could warn my friend, she also put on the earphones and heard the same noise and was so profoundly shocked that she was crying for three hours afterwards. It went so deeply into her system. And the shock continued throughout the night until it was evacuated. And this was a teaching for me as to how different we are, and it was not the voluntary mind, the thinking mind, it goes on, on much deeper levels.

So I want to draw your attention to the fact that for some people the switching on of the light during meditation was not a problem, but for others it really was, this is not the conscious mind, it goes into deep layers of our being where we have been shocked before and then creates a reaction which is completely different. It's good to understand that and to feel it with one's whole heart.

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Let us go to page 138 now, to the visualisation of the Buddha.

Lesson 27. Focusing the Mind on a Pure Outer Object

Outer object here means something which we can see and it includes visualisation, something which is seemingly different from ourselves. Strictly it should be called 'inner object' because it is not something outside which we can see, but because the visualisation is experienced as being outside of our own body it is called 'outer object'. And it is called pure because it is connected to a pure meditation object.

It is said in the Samadhiraja Sutra "someone who places his mind on the support of the profoundly beautiful protector of the world, the colour of whose bodily form is like gold, is called a bodhisattva in meditation."

The Samadhiraja Sutra is a Mahayana sutra in which the Buddha talks to an assembly of 500 people and this is a historical moment because the one who invited him seemingly was reborn later as Gampopa in Tibet, one of the founders of the Kagyu lineage. At the end of this long sutra on the nature of mind, the future Gampopa gets up and says yes I will be reborn and teach this sutra later in the Land of Snow, Tibet.

In the Mahamudra tradition this sutra is said to be the origin of the Mahamudra teachings in the Mahayana and it is said that Gampopa in his life 1500 years later after the death of the Buddha. He tested whether he was really Chandraprabha Kumara, (youthful light of the moon) the doctor who has invited the Buddha to give the teaching. As a monk in Tibet he comes across this sutra and he feels so deeply touched and he had signs in his dreams to tell him that this was his task to spread this teaching. He says come on this cannot be true, I can't believe this should be me. He says if it is true then send me a sign. He takes the text in the middle of winter and wraps it around a fruit tree and says send me a sign. In the middle of winter the tree blossoms, so he says he has to accept. It's almost as good as your Greek stories isn't it?

So this is the legend of Gampopa receiving the full blessing of his previous commitment. Gampopa was a student of Milarepa's, the famous yogi, and the teacher of the first Karmapa, and actually he ordained roughly 52,000 monks into the Mahamudra tradition, something which had never happened in Tibet before. And he had many, many realised students, and among them 500 realised Siddhas realised master, and among them 5 fully awakened students. Of which one was only teaching invisible beings, but the other 4 also taught visible beings, human beings. He sent them all out into different directions of Tibet and they all started their own lineages, called the 4 main or primary Kagyu lineages. And from one of them came the 8 secondary Kagyu lineages, and it all started with the Samadhiraja Sutra. And this is the birth of the Mahamudra in the Mahayana sutra tradition.

I will now teach you the visualisation of the Buddha which is an integral part of the Mahamudra path, it really is a part of the core teaching. Our own teacher Gendun Rinpoche said there are two major methods for him to practice shamatha, calm abiding. One is meditating with breathing and the second is meditating on the Buddha.

So I wish to introduce you to this second most important meditation

Focusing your mind on the form of the Tathagata will increase your qualities immeasurably. Therefore, focus on him by visualising clearly in front of you on a lion throne, lotus, moon and sun seat

The 8 lions represent the Eight Great Bodhisattvas. This means that the Buddhas throne is carried by the Sangha. The Buddha teaches because of the respect and support of the Sangha and needs questions in order to teach, so the Buddha is always in relation to his disciples. These lions will continue the teaching they will take it into the world. The same is for now, my hope is that you carry the teaching wherever you go.

On top of the lion throne is a fully opened lotus flower. Here the colour you visualise is usually white with a pink tinge. On top of this open lotus flower, which symbolises Bodhicitta, is a flat completely white round moon disc. This symbolises skilful means, the skilful methods with which the teaching is given. On top of the moon disc is a sun disc, slightly smaller than the moon disc so

you can just see the moon disc from above and it is golden. And this symbolises wisdom, so we have Bodhicitta on which rests skilful means and wisdom. The unity of Compassion and wisdom. Skilful means compassion. When someone skilfully takes care of another person, the source of that skilful behaviour is compassion, and this compassion unites with wisdom.

Whatever a Buddha thinks, whatever he says or however he behaves it is this unity of skilful means and wisdom. On top of this

the true, perfect Buddha Shakyamuni with a complexion like refined gold.

When we say 'true', the word *dampa* in Tibetan translates as what we would today call authentic, noble and when we say 'perfect' it means that all veils, all blockages have been purified and all the qualities have appeared, it's a Buddha, an Awakened being who has gone to the limits of what is possible. . A completely awakened Buddha, not just partial. In Sanskrit *Samyak Sambuddha*. He looks like refined gold, polished refined gold, but transparent it is made of light, light has that colour. So what is wonderful is that we are not trying to visualise a human Buddha that tries to resemble how the guy was 2,500 years ago, that's not the point. We visualise the Buddha as the qualities, not as the human being. This golden being can take the expression that arises in our spontaneous visualisation, we don't have to adapt too much to some idea of how he should be. For the first 3 centuries after the Buddhas death there were no representations of the Buddha, the throne was always left empty because you cannot represent the Buddha. The first statues appeared in Magadha and in the Gandhara kingdom, probably with the arrival of Alexander the Great in the 4th and 3rd century BC. The Greeks said to the Buddhists why don't you have a statue to your god the Buddha, all our gods have statues?! So they tried out statues which looked like a warrior statues with beards, statues in meditation. Finally the one in meditation had the most success. But the way our wonderful Buddha statues look probably had nothing to do with how he really looked. As far as we know he walked around for the greater part of his life without hair, he was shaven, and on our statues there is lots of hair. All of this is to show certain qualities of awakening and the representations in our mind are to show those qualities of awakening and we should be aware of that. It is a creative process of connecting with awakened qualities that are actually within us. To make them easier to experience we project them outside and we discover them.

He has one face, (that's good not more!) ***His two hands are in the earth touching mudra and in the meditation gesture.*** (Illustration on p110). So what we are connecting to with this double mudra is the very important moment in the Buddhas life when he convinced his first 5 disciples that he was really Enlightened. It is called the mudra of calling the earth to witness. His companions asked him how can you prove to us that what you say to us is really true that you are Enlightened. And he said 'well let the earth be my witness and he touched the ground. And it is said that the ground trembled. The earth responded. So this is the right hand touching the ground and the left is in meditation, just lying open in the lap. This connects us with the most

important method that the Buddha taught, which is meditation. He attained Awakening through meditation, because that gives the perfect conditions to be in full awareness. Because his teaching is all about entering full awareness, he advised practitioners to calm down and practice meditation first in a sitting stable posture, before going into activity, so this was the main technique that he showed. Later on it was not important to continue to sit in meditation as a Buddha, meditation actually entered all aspects of activity. He continued to meditate when talking and walking and sleeping, meditation entered into all hours of his life. The Buddha's disciples became known as meditators. They were in this relaxed, completely open presence and from meditation they would enter activity.

The Buddha is adorned with the 32 excellent attributes and the 80 excellent signs,

These are the signs of an excellent human being. I won't go into detail, I have the list! This refers to Indian astrology and reading of signs at the time of birth of a child. When the Buddha was born, because he was born into a rich family, the wise men were called and they looked at the child and found specific marks that were very rare to find. The signs on the body indicated noble qualities; either this child would become a universal emperor or would become a fully awakened being.

We don't have to study all of them, (I studied all of them when visualising the Buddha from bottom up to the top and down again!) You might want to keep the long earlobes, the soft almond eyes with the soft lines. And you might want to visualise the smooth contours of his body, without any bones sticking out. You might not be so interested in the webbing between his finger and toes, he was not a long distance swimmer, but it is said that he had these marks. Take it with a smile, the list when we encounter it is quite outrageous. He had this topknot, and below that there was a protuberance, they always put a very exaggerated protuberance on the top of his head. The point is to make it inspiring for yourself. The Buddha should inspire us with trust and confidence and the wish to enter the same equanimity with love and compassion and that is the best way to visualise.

and beautified with the 3 Dharma robes, red like clouds at dawn {so actually they are more like orange.} He has the saffron coloured robes of the fully ordained monks. There is a bottom robe which ties with a belt, a small inner garment and a shawl outside. This shows that he was living the life of a renunciate, someone who had renounced worldly striving. A sign of his freedom, he didn't have to care about praise or blame, or profit, gain or loss and defeat. He didn't care, he was free. There was no game of seduction, no wish to find follows and no fear of not having followers, all of this he was beyond, and this is the meaning of visualising the robes. The robes in the colour of the clouds which the rising sun are shining on, and you know how soft how transparent how beautiful the clouds are at dawn. So it is not supposed to be the actual saffron colour of the robes but a symbol of the arising of awakening. It connects us with a lightness of being.

He is sitting in the Vajra posture, with the right leg on top, a sign of the Vajra samadhi, it's not just sitting in meditation, it's a symbol of entering the imperturbable absorption of the Buddha which cannot be disturbed by anything, Mara has no chance. It is so completely free and open there is not the least trace of clinging or identification, there is only love and wisdom and it knows whatever arises as a mirage, just an appearance in the mind...

He is radiating light and many light rays. And we receive this light with all sentient beings. He is in front of us and we are all bathed in light. There is such an intensity of light that we can just look and we are awakened.

In this supreme form he is teaching the Dharma to us with great delight.... This is the key point it is an alive visualisation, we can ask questions and we get answers, there is contact exchange and response. And from this comes all those visualisations where we say imagine you meet the Buddha under the Bodhi tree and you prostrate and sit down and he turns towards you. "and now my daughter what is your question today?", all of that it is really lively.

So the Buddha we visualise reminds us of the authentic Dharma, he reminds us of what is actually our practice. And it said that he teaches with great delight, with joy and benevolence, so happy to share the Dharma with others there is no hesitation no barrier.

The Karmapa continues ... ***"It is certain that whoever forms the mental image of the Buddha, has the actual Buddha sitting in front of him."***

So this refers to a deep understanding of the way perception works. Imagine under the sycamore tree up there in the village, a Buddha is sitting and you go there, who do you see? We can only see what we are ready to see with our heart. What our emotional set up what our karmic frame allows us to see.

Some people might see a jolly good fellow, others will be disturbed by the sight of a beggar, they might say 'what is this beggar doing here? Others might see just light; they might fall flat on their noses doing prostrations. Others will say 'wow, let's sit down, let's see what happens'. Even when we meet a real Buddha who we actually meet depends on our process of perception. It is unfortunately as simple as that. But because the Buddha is so open and relaxed and loving there is a tendency that the best of us is touched and that most of us will react very openly, very positively. So when we visualise the Buddha we should visualise in such a way that it really reaches our heart and that we are really opened up. So now the rest depends on you, are you willing to enter the process of visualising so fully as if you were encountering an outer being. That is up to you now are you allowing yourself to enter into the encounter so deeply as to be touched to tears and to feel 'yes! I am meeting the Buddha'? If you step on the brakes and say 'no stop this is all just imagination and I don't want to enter that', then you lose a precious opportunity and you don't really understand that even if you were to meet a real Buddha it would still be your imagination which meets the Buddha. We can only see what we allow ourselves to see and that's why the best way

to encounter the Buddha is with the feeling that we ourselves are also the Buddha. That is what opens our eyes the best. That's why in the usual elaborate versions of this practice one visualises oneself as one of the Bodhisattvas, Tara or Avalokiteshvara or the medicine Buddha with for example the medicine Buddha in front. One is in the confidence of one's own purity.

Q: Could you say 'how you perceive determines what you perceive'?

LT: Yes.

Q: Complete surrender and unification with the Buddha is what reveals the inner qualities.

LT: Bingo!

Therefore you should develop this conviction that the teacher himself is sitting in front of you, nurturing intense faith and devotion by thinking, "How fortunate I am to be looking at and to contemplate the form of the Victorious One." You should direct and concentrate the mind one-pointedly only on his form without your thoughts wandering off elsewhere.

If dullness, sluggishness and drowsiness manifest, focus your attention on the upper part of the Buddha, like the protuberance on his head, or on the hair between his eyebrows, or on his face.

The endless knot visualised in his heart has no beginning or no end. It is the sign of timeless or beginningless awareness which is in his heart.

If the mind does not stay on that then do a body scan of the Buddha. Go from the toes to the top of the head and back down (this is what is meant by **enumerate all the excellent attributes**) so actually it means to go through all the details of the body in both directions, from the top down and the bottom up. So in this way we constantly rest with the qualities of awakening. The most important is to be inspired by the presence and to use the stimulation to let the mind open up and become calm reveal its qualities and to understand the mind.

I will explain to Francesca in more simple words what I have been saying to the adults. So it's like we have a mirror in front of us, a big mirror and we look into the mirror, and you think you will see yourself but you see Buddha. Francesca, you look at this image in the mirror, wow, so happy, so beautiful, completely relaxed, completely at peace. And there is so much light coming from the mirror, you say 'wow!' And the Buddha talks to you and he says 'you should believe what you see; you are actually a complete Buddha'. Can you hear him say that? So this is what I have been saying to the adults with many words.

Meditation

Brief meditation on love and compassion followed by:

Look at movements in mind like waves on the ocean no need to reject or interfere they are just mind.

Allow the movements to arise and look at them

Purposefully think something and look at it.

How long does that thought stay?

Intuitive Insight (Lhagtong)

P 159 lesson 40

This is the beginning of a completely new chapter and it will make our meditation more intelligent. Meditation is not just about feeling nice and becoming calm, it is about developing wisdom, understanding. Only understanding will make us free. Calm mind will not make us free.

The way to develop this insight is from within, it is not a conceptual process, it comes as a direct knowing when mind becomes clear and relaxed then this knowing arises.

The chapter on Intuitive insight has three parts: (1) examining the nature of mind, as it is. (2) In-depth investigation, (3) gaining certainty about the unity of awareness and emptiness and pointing out the nature of mind.

Examining the Nature of Mind, As It Is

Lesson 40 exercise 33

Briefly carry out the preliminary practices without forgetting the exercises of calm abiding.

We just did that, we took as an entry into calm abiding the soft heart, the wish to be happy, to be free of suffering for ourselves and others, for all of us. It's a very good way to enter into inner calm. There is never enough of a soft heart, of the sensitivity of breathing in and the sharing of breathing out.

Remember this morning we did this in a different way, with this network of light between us and connected with the whole village, there are so many way that we can feel this connectedness. Please note all these exercises I do with you because that is what you can take home and that is what at home you will be able to use to enter meditation yourselves. Basically what I do with you is I take you by the hand a little and say look this is how it can happen, this is what I feel right now, basically I talk about my experience. If it speaks to you

and you feel touched by it note it down and try and take yourselves by the hand, let your friend sati take you by the hand and step by step go through.

So first relax the mind loosely in its natural state and let it rest in this manner: leave the mind clear and radiant like the sun free from clouds.

So how to do that, take yourselves by the hand and remind yourself how to do that, yes you can do that, but you have to train in it. This is something which will become very easy for you if you have done it many times. You can do it in one second. Even in less than a second, mind can become open and radiant, like the radiant sky. You have to work at it, it is something perhaps which we are not used to at all, but we can do it. It's very good to use images to help ourselves. Look outside we have a brilliant sky out there, we look at it and let our mind become one with it. I see in front, but you don't need to you don't need to. I feel it inwardly, you don't need to see the view in order to feel the view. Remember last year when we took off the ceiling, we let the walls drop away. We were on the inside of a room but here is the sky, we can feel it. Do it again and again, feel inwardly what it means. Sky means there is nowhere to fix there is no reference point. That's the meaning of sky, you can't hold on to anything in sky, it's just sky, it's just space, open space. And our mind is like that.

Then you have little swallows coming by and these are our thoughts, sometimes they come one, two then three, then twenty. And then they are gone, just sky. So what we usually do is we look at the swallows and we forget the sky. Know the swallows to be there and be aware of the sky at the same time. There is no obstruction in the sky, the swallows can fly wherever they want. If someone looks at the sky and notices the swallows without giving them importance the sky is undisturbed, it's just the same sky. There is a little difference in the example here because swallow don't exactly have the nature of the sky, it's a little different. They are animals flying through space, but it is a very good example because we can have it all the time, this zooming in and then forgetting all the rest. Imagine clouds, condensation forming and our mind is like the sun, the condensation dissolves back into the sky. Or the sea with waves, big waves, small waves, ripples, all kinds of waves. They are all water. The sea doesn't care about how many waves it has. The waves form and go back into the ocean again. Is it the same with thoughts? It is isn't it? They come out of mind and go back into mind. Can you find them anywhere? Where do they go? Are they separate from the rest of the water?

Leave it like water and waves, knowing all arising perceptions to be mind. Be like a child seeing paintings in a temple, clear perception without grasping.

Tibetan temples are full of paintings, paintings everywhere. The child comes in and has no concepts no labels, its beyond what a child can grasp. For us when we have the fireworks of our inner dynamics, displaying all its beauty, we can be like a child. No need to label, no need to run after, just watching

the fireworks of our mind. Can you be relaxed and not involved like that with your karmic fireworks? Is that possible?

Q: Sometimes.

LT: When is it difficult?

Q: When there are strong disturbing emotions going along with it or pain.

LT: It's like watching something on TV or not watching it. You come into a room and the TV is running. As long as the programme is not interesting, you discuss with your friend and everything is OK. But if it concerns me, as soon as football is coming on then I have difficulties listening to my friend, I will always be distracted. Why? Because I give importance to that. It's something of emotional importance to me. For you it would be something else. Then I learnt not to give importance to it. It's a real training, to be able to decide oneself, now, shall I give something importance or not. Shall I follow that or not?

Normally when thoughts arise we have the feeling 'I must think'. Because it arises in my mind it is by nature important. And we must think, we must follow the thought. But no, there are lots of useless thoughts. I often play this little game. What percentage of your thoughts are actually useless? During a day of being awake for maybe 17 or 18 hours, how much of that is really useful? In other words, the kind of thinking that you really want to have, or the sort where you would actually prefer to have an open quiet relaxed mind.

Q: 10% to 90% or more.

Q: If I am engaged in what I am doing, a good conversation or a piece of work, then it is less.

LT: Also I regard a thought to be useless if it is repeating itself, then I stop, no more.

Q: How do you stop?

LT: Go back into open space. Not interested, not nourished, then mind relaxed. So this movement how can I relax, this I will try to teach you. You are thinking and then you breathe out and at the end of the out breath you enter this clear radiant space, like last year.

Let's do it together.

You breathe in and you think as much as you like, and you breathe out.

Look at how the mind is at the end of the out breath. And again.

Breathing out into this dimension of not being interested in thinking any more, no interest.

Let's do it together one more time: breathing in and breathing out into open space. Does it work?

Some say yes OK, now because it is so nice we turn the whole thing round, now on breathing in. Breathing in we breathe in to open space, we breathe in to open space and we breathe out into open space. And now in between we never leave open space. We breathe into open space we stay in open space and breathe out. No interest on breathing in, no interest on breathing out.

For Francesca I have a children's version. I have a balloon here, can you see it? Then I take a needle and poof it's all gone.

It's a little bit limited but it is possible. We call this chasing out thoughts with emptiness. It is only necessary to relax and to not care, thoughts cannot develop if there is none identifying, no one caring. The 90% that we think too much is because we constantly care, we don't stop being interested, much more than necessary. It's one of the great capacities, to be able to relax at will. It's not necessary to think about it anymore so ... you relax, let go...

While in this state investigate minutely your calm mind. What is its essence?

Its essential nature (a better translation), how is it? How is the calm mind? Calm mind means the mind without thoughts?

Have another look with this breathing-out breathing-in technique, letting go completely. How is the mind without thoughts, in your own words?

Q: Present

LT: How do you know there is presence?

Q: Awareness.

LT: Yes there is still some awareness visual awareness is there, awareness is still going on.

Q: Emptiness, those are my own words!

LT: Is awareness still there? Who was feeling the emptiness? So there was still something being aware? If the whole being is empty there would be no-one knowing that it was empty. Do it again and look if there is awareness in the emptiness. We will all do it again.
How is your mind empty?

Q: Awareness....A felt sense of expansion.....For Titika there was an observer stepping back and then the observer had the experience of absence.

LT: What most people feel doing this exercise is that the mind is empty of thoughts, but this is because the gross level thinking is finished, is not there anymore, however there is the feeling of observing of being aware which continues. There are two basic ways, one where you can have a stream of sense experiences continuing, but they are not commented upon, they are just happening. The other way is where the awareness directs itself towards the mind expanding because of the lack of concrete thinking going on. There is no obstruction. Usually thoughts are like trucks they obstruct, but here since there are no thoughts, the mind suddenly feels like expanding, becoming vast. Or the awareness can be without gross level thinking but it can be drawn into the physical awareness and a sense of 'I' can be maintained, a feeling of identifying. Interesting! All of these are experiences of mental calm, but there is a lot going on.

Let's look again and again at what is going on, I will give you a little bit more time. Let's relax all the gross level thinking, everything that is going on....

Meditation

.....

How is the mind when not thinking?

.....

End

Are you thinking now? Really?And now?

Ok how would you describe that non thinking mind after seconding investigation?

Q: I am more aware of what is going on, all the different things going on.

LT: A heightened awareness in various sense fields. There is no overlay of conceptual thinking, there is more sensory perception. Can we just check out one important thing, when there is no thinking are we unconscious or conscious?

Q: How can you know if you are conscious or not when there are no thoughts?

LT: Is it only the thoughts that make us conscious have a look. Settle into meditation and then see, have a look, when thoughts arise are you more conscious? What kind of thoughts are needed to be conscious?

....What is your observation? Ok you are looking at me, you see me. To be conscious of seeing me what is necessary?

Q: Nothing.

LT: Yes in a way nothing. You know that just seeing is enough, there is no need for an additional thought. Seeing is conscious by itself because it is seeing. Hearing the same? So it seems that seeing hearing and perhaps the other senses do not need a comment which says I am conscious in order to be conscious.

However in order to answer the question 'were you conscious, something in us responded and said 'yes I was conscious' and that is a thought. Can you see that? There is ongoing awareness, and you can even see how consciousness changes from visual consciousness to auditory consciousness to body consciousness and then there is smelling tasting, of course not so strong, but there. And then the awareness of within, you know 'how is it to be?' The awareness even of the thinking process.

So let's do that together, let's become calm and then we will let the consciousness flow through the six senses.

Meditation exercise

Let your awareness flow through the six senses and observe how that happens, how that feels.

.....When you are seeing, know that you are seeing, when you are hearing know that you are hearing. When you are aware of a thought know that you are aware of a thought. Know that you are aware of thinking mind, and so on. Know where your awareness is.

During the break, sit or lie down somewhere and observe the play of the six senses and at the end of the break you can tell me whether it is the same mind in the six senses or not. Whether it is six consciousness. And how does it change from one to another. From the seeing to the hearing to being aware of a thought. This is the sixth sense, being aware of a mood or a thought. OK you have half an hour to solve it, that's enough! Enjoy it. If you have the answer after five minutes then is OK you are safe!

So let's start again. What did you observe how is the mind working? What do you observe when it changes from one sense perception to another, from one sense field to another?

Q: I was working with the different cognitions of sight and hearing. Initially I heard the crickets outside and I could focus on that very easily, and I found a spot on the ceiling and I could focus on that very easily. But when I went back and forth I found it difficult to focus on the spot and the particular sound simultaneously, but then I let go of the effort to focus and had a broader field of perception, and then it was different I wasn't picking out the particular sound or spot, but I had a much wider field of perception. But what has baffled me before about the Mahamudra teachings is that I never associate a colour with those kind of cognitions.

LT: While I ask Saramati a question or two, compare it with your own experience. In the beginning when you were either with the sound of the crickets or the spot on the ceiling and you alternated. Do I understand correctly that there was a volition, there was an intention directing sometimes to the sound and sometimes to the visual impression.

Q: Yes

LT: And later on did you still feel that there was volition, intention?

Q: When I had the broader perspective there was an initial volition to not focus on the sound or image. But then it was much more relaxed and open, so no ongoing volition.

LT: That's an interesting observation, that there was just an initial volition, or perhaps just a little volition in the second way of operating rather than the first.

Q: It was more like a volition to stop doing what I had been doing and then it seemed very natural to take the broader perspective.

LT: When you in this more relaxed wide awareness, did you also notice your body, did you notice thoughts?

Q: Yes, but not with the focus that I had had when I was doing just the sound or image.

LT: How was it for the others? What did you observe in these changing sense spheres perhaps also observations on volition?

Q: I just noticed that the move from one sense to the other seemed to happen on its own. So the question was: are they six minds or one?

LT: Yes, what would you say?

Q: I didn't feel that either of those options worked very well.

LT: Is there a third possibility, is there something that would be a better description?

Q: I didn't get that far, I don't know.

LT: Observe while we are discussing, maybe you will come up with something.

Q: It seemed to depend on how I was relating to experience. When I was relating to experience as an observer, there were distinct sense consciousnesses and that seemed to arise depending on the interest that was some part of the experience. So that certain things would draw attention. And then when I consciously stepped out of a sense of conceptualising my

experience into 'there is some seeing, there's some hearing etc..' it was equally distinct, the various sense impressions, but I suppose they weren't separate. It was like going from a two-dimensional thing to maybe an eight-dimensional thing or something like that. From a linear thing.

LT: This multidimensional consciousness you had later on, and the experience you had in the beginning, are they one mind? Are there different consciousnesses?

Q: No not in the second case. In the first it did feel separate, almost like being chopped up.

LT: Yes, and you said that as you let it flow then somehow interest was being drawn towards the perception, almost by itself?

Q: Yes

Q: At first I had different objects and awareness touched the different objects almost like a camera. Like when the birds were flying through the sky awareness went out to there and then to feeling or hearing. Then I gave myself a rest and there was deeper relaxation. I had thoughts and the thoughts were obscuring the clearness, the transparency and space. Later there was deeper spaciousness the going out of awareness to the object was not there. There was space and in the space different sensations.

LT: Why do you think the clarity got obscured by the thoughts, what was the reason?

Q: It was like an absorption of the clarity, so at the end there was all this happening together in space. But with the thoughts it was like all the clarity obscured. The thoughts were before the clarity. It's not easy to explain.

LT: You describe it very nicely.

Something common arises from your various contributions. When there is a stronger volition and intention, there is a sense of precision, but together with a separateness.

Actually in Saramati's experience, if you were to focus more and more you could come to just one sense perception to the exclusion of all the others, it's possible to just stay with one. And when you alternate between two fields and so on, then you still have this feeling of alternating between two separate experiences. And when you focus on thoughts they are big like trucks and they obscure our experience of the present. When we relax the mind there comes more fluidity, the change between the different sense fields becomes something happening almost by itself. And at the same time there is a feeling of more unification: that it is happening in one awareness that has many facets, many aspects, many sensory possibilities.

Q: The awareness of the senses switched quite randomly, but they were connected with the emotion, or feeling tone, with a subtle comment or judgement, 'Ah yes, ok'. It's interesting for me that it is always connected with this subtle comment.

LT: So you observed that the perceptions did not just happen on their own but they were accompanied by a comment, an emotional reaction, a feeling, depending on the strength, sometimes very subtle, but it was not pure seeing. It is subtle but it is so omnipresent that it is difficult to say if there can be something like just seeing, without a feeling or reaction connected to it.

Looking into the sky and the feeling of release or space that goes along with that, does that happen in a different mind or different consciousness? Are they happening in the same mind or a different one?

Q: Perhaps a different taste of the same mind.

LT: What a nice way of putting it.

Q: With the first question are there six minds, it seemed clear that there were not. With the second question I was asking myself is this one mind, awareness going from one sense experience to another and there was a hesitation inside, because if I was to say it is one mind that would be a thought, just one sense. What has been coming since then is that the awareness of that thought is the same awareness that has been moving. There is a difference between saying that it is one mind and that thought is just one sense out of the six, but then the awareness of that thought is the same awareness of that thought is the same awareness that could be seeing, hearing. Feeling.

LT: Very fine. Now I would like to contrast your experience with Simon and see if you have experienced the same of something different. With yours there is something active the six senses labelling the first sense seeing and so on, but there is the same taste of awareness going through all these experiences. And if I understand Simon properly you have the feeling that there is one awareness with different tastes.

Now I ask the others, did they have the same experience or a different one? Both of you can think but everyone can also look. Did they have the same experience or was it different?

Q: I had similar experience, I was also aware of relaxation and the soft thinking of how we make concepts and at that moment I felt oh who cares, it's not a big deal so I was just there and relaxing and listening but not separating any more.

LT: So was it one awareness having different tastes or different experiences having one taste? They were describing different experiences with different tastes. It's different to see than to feel, different to hear than to feel the body. That's different to knowing a thought, so sense experiences are different. This is what Simon meant by different tastes, to feel the body is different from

seeing. And on top of that to feel agreeable feels different from feeling disagreeable. By the way agreeable or disagreeable would be felt as an experience of the sixth sense or perhaps the body sense. Yet in all these various experiences there is a quality present that we could call one taste, of being conscious, of perceiving. How it feels to be conscious, how it feels to be aware. This takes us very far, into the feeling of how it is to be aware while the contents change, different sense fields and within the different fields different visual objects, different sounds different thoughts. The contents change but there is a quality of being aware which goes through.

Q: When you were talking about the agreeable and disagreeable how it could be felt in the body sense or the mind sense, that's interesting for me because those two senses can be the most difficult to distinguish, sometimes I feel something in my body and my experience of space changes at the same time.

LT: Wow yes OK, This would be two further tasks for your exploration of mind, the last one would be to explore whether one can see hear think something without it having an effect in the body, in the energetic field of the body. Do they always go together? How is it actually, the connection between experience and physical sensation? This is the exploration of the relationship between body and mind. You understand that point? Can mind experience without it having an effect on the body? And perhaps vice versa: is it possible to have something in the body without it having an effect on the mind? Then is it possible to perceive forms, sounds, thoughts, physical feelings, without a feeling tone attached to it? Without a subtle judgement, like dislike, don't care? Is it possible to have a so-called 'simple pure perception' – only perception without the slightest reaction in ourselves? If so, what would be needed, how would one have to be, in order to simply perceive and not have the slightest reaction?

Question number 1. What happens in the body when the mind experiences something?

Question number 2. What happens in the feelings when we perceive something?

Both go together. Feeling is a reaction in the mental sense; physical reaction is a reaction in the physical sense. Basically we are investigating how everything works together, reacts together or not, how much independence there is. These are very interesting questions, because that is where we might find freedom, or we might find bondage. These are very important questions.

To put it practically, can you look at the sky without feeling something? Can you look at the sky without the body reacting? Can you see a swallow without feeling something? Do you feel something in the body when you look at a swallow? Can you think of your mother without feeling something? What changes in the body when you think 'mother'? Then take something much more neutral, take a truck. Thinking 'truck' is there a feeling tone, agreeable disagreeable, don't care? Does it affect the body or not? Experiment with all

kind of things: does it create a reaction in the body? A reaction means that it doesn't just stop there, there is something more.

If you were sure about it all these things would be easy; you would say yes, yes, yes. Since you are not sure about it we are checking it out. In this part of the teaching I am asking you questions and all your lack of understanding appears, and you have to look more closely. That's part of it. I have to scratch a little bit. I have to ask questions that make you uncertain. So I ask you to accept the confusion.

For example, I said 'Does it have an effect when looking at the sky?' Well maybe you don't feel it so strongly, so change between sky, wall, sky, wall, see what effect it has. Work it out. And the exercise stimulated by Bodhidaka's observation means that we have to develop a very fine awareness of our body, in order to find out whether body sensations accompany the other sensation or not. Does the body-sense react along with seeing, or does the body-sense react along with what we think about what we see, or what we feel about what we see?

The approach of liberation is to go along with the experience and we will find out about how they are interconnected. Tomorrow I may give you more answers but now you have to search. I just want to stimulate your interest in how mind is, how it functions. And the best way to investigate is a casual look, relax back, a little bit of looking, a little bit interested, and then relax again like this. When you try too much it blocks everything, and you come out with a headache.

Do you notice what your mind is doing now? When we are waiting for the next word to come it is a beautiful moment to observe mind, awareness is very clear at those moments, you can feel the inner wish to think, but you don't dare to think because you will not catch the next word. And you perceive my open mouth which is not moving and you hear the silence. You don't hear the crickets, you hear the silence and then there are these inner thoughts, what did he want to say, what is he doing?

How is mind? Whether it has a colour or form, the next questions here we will clarify very quickly, but how mind actually is, is much more subtle. None of you has reported a colour so far...

If you can go with this one taste of being aware that goes through all the various sense experiences this is a very helpful path to take. We are very close to this example of the waves and the ocean but I shouldn't give you too many solutions.

Day 4

In the Tibetan tradition we fill the offering bowls right to the brim, full. It's a sign of giving a lot, not just a little.

9 cleansing breaths

We need to clear our noses: The simple one today.

This is an exercise to help us wake up. We can make good use of it to help us be fresher.

If you can, you do it sitting up very straight, like in the 7 point sitting posture.

We do what we can without stress.

(Demonstrates 9 breaths)

While breathing in we think that we breathe in rainbow light which is refreshing and clearing. Left first and then right nostril.

On each set of 3 breaths:

The first is long and strong. To get used to it.

The second one is short and strong. It is the strongest because it is short. Intense.

The third one is long and soft. Its like nectar, it is really doing us good, we do the last one softer.

The meaning, the point is to stretch every energy channel, stretching is extremely helpful, it opens the mind.

This is referred to in a few places in the book as cleansing breaths. It means we breathe out as deeply as possible to get the dead air out.

The text with the preliminary practices and the prayer in English is in preparation, it is well advanced.

(refuges)

Before meditating I will give you a little instruction from page 126 continuing our instructions on general Mahamudra. So this is still part of the long lesson no 23 which gives many instructions relevant for the whole of our life.

Siddha Orgyenpa:

It is said that the practice of Mahamudra is the main method for purifying the superficial impurities.

This is a technical term, referring to all our veils, everything which clouds our awareness, they are called temporary or superficial because they will be gone one day. They are not there all the time so indirectly this term is saying that they are only a surface covering of our true nature, our true nature itself is always there it is pure and then there are some impurities which cover that up and they are not able to last for ever. So in a way you could say that they are profound impurities, but not so profound that they could affect our deepest nature. Technically they are not quite *avarana* – in Tibetan the word is stain (*tib dripa*) not veil (*drima*), but the meaning is the same. So we could call them profound impurities, but not so profound that they cannot be removed; we can always remove them. And Mahamudra is called the method that removes those veils.

When the end of the path is reached, those so called impurities have been removed. At the request to grant instructions on this Mahamudra, I was told that I had to concentrate on putting into practice the six doctrines of Tilopa, that there were no better instructions besides that. At the request to grant instructions on how to put them into practice, I received the following instructions:

So the Karmapa is quoting Orgyenpa and Orgyenpa is quoting his teacher and they are all saying that the following teachings are the best for purifying the mind, so what comes next?

The 6 instructions are:

Do not ponder, do not think, do not reflect, do not meditate, do not analyse, leave the mind as it is.

These six will be explained in detail now. But what you have just written down needs to be learned by heart.

Do not think about the past. Do not project yourself into the future. No need to think about the present, do not analyse your meditation, just leave mind as it is, remain natural. Five things not to do and one thing to do.

Do not ponder, do not think about the past. Pursuing the past causes concepts of grasper and grasped to arise. But since the practice does not depend on the past, it is said, “do not pursue the past”.

Let's give this some careful thought now. We are in a meditation session; we are not talking about normal life; we are talking about sitting down and meditating. Now to open your mind, is the past important?

Is it really important? Whatever was in the past is not important now. If I can let go I can have a fresh start in this moment.

Q: Maybe sometimes it is important to think about what we did?

LT: Yes that's in normal life, we are talking about meditation here. In normal life it is important to reflect on the past and learn about how we do things for

the future. That's not called meditation, that's reflecting about the past, contemplation in the way we use it. We have to be clear about this, do I meditate now or do I reflect. If I sit down on my meditation cushion and I want to reflect on a mistake I have made in the past, that's fine I can do that, I can decide to do that. But this is not what we call meditation in our way of using the word. It is deeply reflecting on something that has happened. Which is also part of Dharma practice. It is a necessary practice to look at the past and to learn from it. It is absolutely part of Dharma but it is not what we are talking about now when we consider practicing Mahamudra.

Ok the past. Where is the past? The past does not even exist anymore it is just an idea. The experience of a moment ago when you asked the question. Where is it now?

Q: But if there is timeless awareness the past is now.

LT: Of course it is now, everything is now, timeless awareness means that there is no past, no present and no future. Even 'the now' you can't find.

Q: It's not that they all coexist at the same time?

LT: There is no coexistence, no.

So to put it simply the past is over it is dead, it is not a live experience, so forget about it in meditation. This is very important when I meditate now, it means to take on this attitude, I am not trying to reflect on things in order to learn from them and so on. I simplify my mind into that Mahamudra awareness. Then in the usual order of explanation the future is talked about, the present comes first, but here we will talk first about the future.

Q: What does it mean when it says that it causes concepts of grasper and grasped to arise?

LT: Me and my past, the grasper is always 'I', 'me', the subject and the object is what we grasp at. Reflecting on what I experienced in the past reinforces the clinging. That's the meaning here.

Now let's jump and talk about the future.

Do not reflect means do not anticipate the future.

That's the key word: 'anticipation'.

If you anticipate and make plans for the future, you betray your practice and you miss a chance to recognise the main practice. Therefore it is said "do not betray to the enemy."

Actually the Tibetan says 'do not let your practice slip into the hands of the enemy'. It's the same thing. I and what I will do in the future, my plans what I want and what I do not want. This thinking about the future increases thinking

about the self, it nourishes it and that's the so called enemy, it is this clinging to self. When our practice slips into a practice of self-concern, our practice slips into the hands of the enemy, we have betrayed our true purpose and we miss a chance to recognise the main practice which is knowing the nature of mind. And then of course when we understand that it is stupid to think about the future. That it is thinking about something non-existent. Just like the past which doesn't exist anymore, that it doesn't make sense. Then we say OK the solution must be in the present. Then we say the present, the present is the solution. We make the present into a thing. Next mistake.

So Orgyenpa says:

Do not think about the present. If you fabricate anything on top of the present, you make a fundamental mistake about the practice and your meditation becomes a victim of circumstances. This is like letting a stranger into your house. Therefore it is said, "do not spoil {your practice} with corrections".

Let's go slowly. Already 'think about the present'. It doesn't make sense; present experience is there, it doesn't need thinking about it doesn't need our comments. When we think about the present it is one way of changing the present experience. We might want to make it more joyful, more empty, more this and that. We are always fabricating a present which we want to be a little different than what we have right now. So you get the feeling, we are manipulating the present, that is the problem. And we are creating a distance, the one who is observing and having the experience, again we are creating a subject object split.

So we have an experience, we are experiencing something right now in the present. For Mahamudra practice it is irrelevant if we like that or not, what is happening or not. If we think oh my mind has to be more relaxed clearer more open, then we are trying to change the present moment. Then we become a victim of circumstances. Our practice of Mahamudra will start only when we are bright clear present awake. When all the ideal adjectives can be attributed to the present experience. No, come on, Mahamudra is just now. As we are, now, nothing to change. If we get into judging and commenting on our present experience with the wish to have something better, a different experience, we are victim to the changing circumstances of life.

This is like letting a stranger into your house. Who is coming into our house? A judge is coming in, judging the situation, good or not good, do it better. It is like a stranger coming in and commanding us. And also this commenting on our experience makes us a stranger to our experience. We separate from the experience. It makes us separate, not the same as our experience, but the one who looks on and evaluates and influences.

Therefore it is said do not practice your practice with corrections. Now I think the meaning should be clear: that whenever we come with corrections, we spoil the experience. In the English language we are missing a word in the French and German we can say something like 'le vécu immédiat' direct,

immediate, experienced, life as it lived. Living experience. Maybe 'do not spoil life with correction'?

Q: How does that fit with holding the cup as a way of clearing away dullness?

LT: It doesn't fit, yesterday we were looking at methods to clear away dullness as a preparation for shamatha. The difference between shamatha and Mahamudra is that when you practice shamatha there is someone carrying the glass and paying attention. In Mahamudra we are the carrying of the glass. You could almost say we are the glass. We are not separate from the experience, from the observer and what is being observed. And it is more stable than shamatha; it is safer.

I noticed when I took the glass from the last person and carried it over to the sink it was still quite full. I noticed that I stopped myself from thinking that I was carrying a glass, I was just doing it. It was just a doing and that is why it was so easy. It becomes easy when you really become what is happening and there is no separation.

You do not have to antidote the sleepiness the dullness, you just have to know the true nature of the sleepy state. We have not covered this in the course yet, we will come to this.

Q: what you were just saying about putting aside a commentary on the experience and speaking about judging or evaluating, is this what is sometimes talked about as the watcher, observer or a tendency to watch experience or awareness?

LT: Yes it's the same.

Q: So then it's about trying to not have the observer.

LT: Normally the instruction is to become one with the experience, but this instruction is not so perfect. It would be better to say drop everything which separates, which divides the experience in two. There is not two coming together becoming one, it is that there has always been only one, and there is an artificial separation that creates the observer and the observed. So we can drop that tension, let go of the tension that divides reality into two seemingly separate entities. The idea is that we are making an effort. There is a fundamental tension that produces duality. Let go of that unnecessary tension and the experience of just being will appear.

So it is fundamentally different to any approach which says there are two which become one. This is a delusion, the two which seem to be there: me and the other, this is the creation of a tension in our mind. For example, you think there is an individual self and a god self and finally the two merge into one. Or it could be me and the table. Normally when a person hears about non-duality they feel that the subject, me, and the object, the table, become one. That is the normal wrong understanding.

What is really meant is that in the seeing of the table, in the touching of the table, in the experience of just now, feeling 'table' there are not two, not 'I' and 'table'. There is just the feeling experience and in that there are not two.

And when there is thinking we have the feeling 'I' have a thought. That's the normal ordinary, confused way of experiencing it. You say to your friend 'Oh, I had a good thought'. In the thinking there is no separation of thinker and thought, it's thinking. In the walking, there is no 'I' and 'a walk' there is just walking. With seeing, there is no 'I' and thing seen, there is just seeing, right? When you become very subtle in your observation of mind you notice that 'I' appears as a second thought, there is another thought that creates the 'I', and that is also just a thought.

Q: When you gave us questions to look into our mind and see what's going on, it's very hard to do that without this separation.

LT: Yes, very hard.

Q: Is it possible, would that be included in Mahamudra?

LT: That would be a moment of true seeing, of intuitive insight, when there is seeing without someone who sees, or the slight evaluation, that's the true *vipassana*. Without the separation there is direct experience.

Q: But there is a knowing.

LT: There is a knowing but no knower.

Meditation

We are practicing not getting into thinking about past present and future.

We open the eyes and we relax while staying wide awake. The meditation instruction is to simply be without commenting.

Relax the temptation to make comments on the present.

End

In the next break of 25 mins. Go to a place and continue just like this. Allow yourself to just be, being the experience.

I guess you would like to know how it continues with the other three instructions, right? Actually, everything has already been said. 'Do not meditate' basically means 'do not fabricate your meditation according to your ideas of how meditation should be'. Since you haven't heard much about

emptiness you probably don't fall into the mistake that is referred to here, 'do not meditate on emptiness'; I hope not! But you might have heard about non-self and you might be tempted to meditate on non-self or you might find non-duality fantastic, so you might want to meditate on non-duality, or simplicity, that would be a good one!

Whenever we do things like that we have a meditator here and idea there and our meditation is again in a subtle way encouraging ego-centred activity, how I want things to be. Even when we meditate on simply being, we have the semiconscious wish that with simply being we will be better. So to not meditate, this instruction is the same as the last one 'allow life experience to be as it is and *in* that be aware. It is not on top of the life experience, that we have to be aware, its already part of it. Being alive is this vivid being of just now. And when we are dull and drowsy we are vividly dull and drowsy. When we are sad and full of doubts and feeling alone, we are vividly sad, vividly being full of doubts fully alone. Fully being without resisting the experience.

Natasha is doing a fantastic job, I am using the gerundial form all the time because it is the best one in the English language to express the flow, and so she has to invent and find all these flowy expressions in Greek. You see what the English language does, maybe it is the same in Greek. When we say 'I am' it is very solid as oppose to 'being'. It's this structure of subject and object, in every language. In German we have verbs that have become nouns e.g. 'rleben', which is quite flowing.

In the Tibetan language most of the sentences don't have a subject. The translator chooses 'we' or 'I' or 'you'. Sometimes it is indicated if one wants to be precise. It is a very flowing language and in the beginning when we were translating from Tibetan we did not understand how significant the absence of the subject was in those sentences. But I have deviated a little bit from the subject.

If you meditate on the world and its inhabitants as being empty in a limited sort of way, like a vase empty of water, you will not understand the meaning of the abiding nature. Therefore it is said "leave appearances as they are".

The Tibetan word is **gnas lugs**. it is translated as 'abiding nature', but it means abiding in the sense of it always is, you will not understand the way it always is. If you allow our living experience to be just as it is without trying to change it then we will begin to understand how it is. The understanding can only arise when we stop trying to change it.

It is the same with our husbands, partners, friends: as long as we are trying to change them, we will not truly understand them. But, more importantly, as long as we are trying to change ourselves we will not know who we are.

Q: Did I understand correctly, we must first relax the mind because the wish to change things is a wish and it is dualistic? Is it a question of getting more and

more subtle and then at some point there is no need for the separation and we can see what it's like?

LT: Yes, you allow your mind not to enter all this superfluous activity of changing creating evaluating. All this is unnecessary activity you allow your mind to become more simple. I am using the language of 'allowing' not 'must'. "you must relax!". Not wishing so much just allowing, just giving permission and then mind will open up and relax because it is its nature.

Q: Is it an intention to allow?

LT: Well it is more a wisdom than an intention. I will explain to you how it is. More an understanding, a wisdom. Of course there is the wish to relax, when you hear the teaching and so on and you live the difference in experience of tension and relaxation and you wish to relax more, this basically is the case. What I am talking about is the next level. It's like I am always checking 'Am I still breathing? Yes I am still breathing.' And we see how unnecessary this attention is to something that happens by itself and seeing how unnecessary it is we drop that behaviour. It is not so much the wish to drop it but it is the understanding that it is absolutely not needed.

Q: What I mean is when I observe and I catch myself and I remember to allow myself to relax and that is an intention.

LT: Yes, and I want you to change that a little bit. Now you can take the next step, instead of reminding yourself to relax look and see how unnecessary the tension is. Instead of giving yourself an impulse to do something differently, you look at what you are actually doing. The relaxation will follow automatically when you see what is actually happening. Reminding oneself to relax is equivalent to trying to manipulate the situation.

Q: What happens with unwholesome actions if we don't try and change ourselves?

LT: What I mean is getting an unprejudiced experience of how we are without preconceived ideas. Behind your question is the idea that I am a certain way and I have some negative emotions, and if I don't watch out I will go in a wrong direction, and I will harm others. But what I mean is to be so deeply unprejudiced that even this so called 'negative emotion' you don't believe to truly exist. You look at how it is, and it dissolves on the spot. There is no danger coming from it if there is no holding on to it. We don't need to let it go; we discover that it goes by itself.

So actually for as long as you have the idea that you are a potentially harmful person then you will control yourself. You will fight against the negative emotion, and you will not discover that actually you don't have to fight. In the experience of just being, you discover how free the mind actually is. Nothing stays by itself, except if we fight against it, identify with it etc. Then it stays, but this is exactly what we are encouraged to look into, that it is unnecessary. No need for fighting, no need for identifying. Only when we leave this basic

being unchanged, unaltered, we discover that it is an already awakened being. In Mahamudra terms, only if we leave it unaltered we discover that it is self-liberating.

Q: You said the understanding arises when we stop manipulating. How does this relate to 'as long as we try to change ourselves we will not know ourselves?'

LT: What I said was that as long as we try and work on ourselves – you know: change, reform, improve, and so on – we do not discover that basically nothing needs to be done, that all our seeming problems are self-liberating. That it dissolves by itself. Whatever emotion we have, whatever hang up, it is discovered to be self-liberating, it dissolves by itself. The message is that as long as you try to change yourself you don't discover that you are already a buddha.

Q: Thanks for the compliment.

LT: But you know that when you state a fact it is not really a compliment.

You get a feeling now for how deeply this approach relies on our trust in our basic nature. Completely trusting and knowing that whatever arises in mind is indeed self-liberating and that there is no exception to that. Whatever arises liberates itself by itself.

Q: What is the balance between this, waking up from the dream and turning the bad dream into a good dream?

LT: We don't balance this: one thing first and the other second. If possible we look directly and rest in that self-liberating nature. That's always the first approach. Then, if that is not possible, we use the methods to make the bad dream into a good dream. Self-liberating nature is the end of the dream, the end of the delusion. I mean there is nothing to do, so we can relax.

Q: And we are already buddhas, so we can't lose!

LT: Allow it to happen. Take a posture that is very relaxing for you. Put all the notes, all the paper away. It's the time to meditate.

Meditation

We are allowing the self-liberation of experiences to happen. It happens anyhow. For now, we are slightly interested in getting to know this self-liberation. When we are confident in that we don't have to watch it.

20 min practice

End

How do you feel?

Happy...At peace.....Soft....pleasant....refreshed....relaxed, soothed.....

Feeling drowsy, awareness was on the drowsiness and moving onto the sounds and back to the drowsiness and she got tired. And then she accepted it.

LT: At the point of accepting the drowsiness, it doesn't take long until the freshness comes back.

Q: I observed myself manipulating the situation. So now I am a little bit tight inside and not peaceful because I am watching the sky, and between two breaths there was a moment I was touched by the expansiveness, and then quickly the feeling of wanting it.

LT: No need for comment! For all of you who found the way into some freshness and peace – did you do anything?

Q: Yes I did. Thoughts came up, but as soon as I accepted that, it was not a problem. So I did something; I accepted the situation.

LT: I would say that was a non-doing. You stopped doing something that you were doing before: criticising.

Q: Yes!

LT: And that's the same for Christina, as soon as she looked into the sky she stopped doing something that she was doing before and she found openness, and then the doing started again. You interpret it as doing something, but actually you stop doing something.

You see how our mind interprets this? It is the same discussion as before, is relaxing doing something, or do we stop doing something?

Q: In not doing something there is still an intention there?

LT: You think there is intention but don't just think about it have a good look. Don't just think there is an intention find the intention. This is what I tried to make clear to you, try to find the intention and you will see that as long as you have intention you are not relaxed. When there is understanding of how we obstruct natural being, there is fresh being, peacefulness all the time. We obstruct and resist all the time and when there is understanding of this unnecessary tension we create, when that understand results in a letting go, it's not a doing but just letting go of what we were doing before. It is automatic, when there is this understanding letting go is automatic, when there is no understanding, clinging is also automatic. When you have the intention or wish not to be drowsy all the problems come from that. When you reach the point of accepting your drowsiness as I said you would have needed some time to experience the result of that deep acceptance then you will realise how drowsiness is also self-liberating.

You can describe samsara in two ways. A very current way is to describe it as the world of clinging. We function in the patterns of clinging. Now what I am doing with you is taking a different approach, working on stopping to fight. Because you can also describe Samsara as fighting or resisting all the time. Fighting or resisting does not allow experiences to go their own way, it gives them substance, gives them solidity makes them something I have to deal with I have to change. change and this resistance to what is prevents the normal very quick self-liberation. You will always experience a very peaceful vivid fresh peaceful joyful mind when you relax, when you stop fighting, it will always be like that it is a law of mind. It's something you can trust, and to our normal functioning it is like blow to the face. The less we do the better we are. The description of the suffering of the suffering in the human race is 'business', always doing, doing, doing, doing.

Now from this experience of self-liberation which you just got a taste of, you didn't liberate any of your thoughts and feelings, you didn't do anything to liberate them. It happened by itself, and it was like a disentangling of your inner processes that happens. They disentangle and the mind is back into a natural ease.

For as long as we are fighting and resisting and clinging we go against the self-liberating nature of all experiences. In the good old teachings this is called resisting change, impermanence is just another word for self-liberating nature. When the Buddha taught everything changes, another way of saying that is everything self-liberates, or nothing is permanent, nothing stays. Nothing has substance. Or everything is empty of 'self', something that persists, something that lasts, something that is unchanging. Mahamudra uses the language of self-liberating which is beautiful because it gives us the key of letting everything, your mind liberate itself. Letting all the contents all the knots, whatever it might be unravel itself. Allow, let change do its work, let the nature of phenomena be, let it happen.

Q: But sometimes it's not easy. I have had the experience of trying to let go but not being able to. So then I prayed to the teachers and the Buddha, and then it was easier.

LT: Absolutely, prayer opens us and we can abandon ourselves.

Q: Often an instruction is 'don't do anything just be aware'. So is the 'just be aware' also manipulating.

LT: Yes 'just be aware' is too much, it's something on top. When I give these instructions I often introduce the meditation in a gradual way. For example I will start out saying 'Just be aware of change' or the vivid nature of experience. Then when the students have relaxed a little with that instruction I will say 'just be aware', 'let it be'. Then it's necessary to continue, I will say 'Just be' then I will say 'be', or 'being'. And then silence. In the Prajnaparamita it's just 'Ah'. Yes it exists, the shortest sutra and it is a fantastic Ah. It contains the Ah of surprise, the Ah of inexpressibility, the Ah of

ungraspable, the Ah of space, and the Ah of not knowing and no more concepts, no more representations. So if one wants to use sounds then Ah is the best meditation instruction.

10 minutes break, I don't know what you need a break from! It's just so you don't enter doing again.

Karma

Karma is always created when we resist self-liberation. Karma is Don Quixote fighting the wings of the windmills. Fighting against seeming enemies, just like Don Quixote took the wings of the windmill to be real enemies. It always comes from the idea of a 'self', 'me' wanting or not wanting anything.

That was the teaching on Karma for today!

Where is the refuge? What do we do when we take refuge? We connect to the qualities of the Buddha, the Awakened qualities in ourselves. Do we need a prayer for that? No, it's not necessary? When we are not connected how do we establish the connection? Sometimes a prayer helps to establish the connection, but we can do the prayer without making that connection. The prayer is not the guarantee, what is the guarantee? Thanasis says lighting a candle is a good way of connecting, is that like a prayer? Where is the Buddha? How do we find the Buddha in us?

Q: Letting ourselves be touched,being present, aware,accepting not being aware, important start to connecting.

LT: The basic process is to remember, somehow we have to remember and in order to remember we remind ourselves. The candle is a reminder the prayer is a reminder, the visualisation is a reminder. From the reminder comes the remembering and that is a new experience, the remembering is not an old experience it is a fresh experience. Now we have talked so much about it that the Buddha is already here. We are remembering. The Buddha is this ungraspable dimension or experience of just now. It is this fluidity and openness, natural benevolence. Authentic, simple. The Buddha is remembering the Dharma. In Order to evoke the Buddha what did I do? I was actually describing the truth of being and that is the real Dharma.

The Mahamudra prayer which I taught you two or three years ago. When there is this awareness of knowing the nature of mind, it says in the prayer, the Buddha is right there, he is nowhere else.

Ok that's enough as a refuge. So how is mind? Any news, since yesterday?

Q: A Mystery.

LT: Yes I agree a beautiful mystery.

Q: The first question was 'is the mind the same in the consciousness of the six senses?' It seemed that it was clearly the same because it was just knowing that I was seeing, or knowing hearing. And then for the more subtle ones like smell I went to my nose and said 'is there smell?' And there was knowing of the smell and the same with taste, knowing there was a taste. And then I went on and said that well it's the same knowing but it seemed to be localised or moving as it was a sight or a sound over here and then when I had the thought 'oh it is all the same knowing', I said well this is a thought and the knowing of that was also just knowing.

LT: Thank you very much for bringing us right back into the subject, what Joy noticed was that for every one of the six sense there was a knowing. Although the knowing was knowing something different. Knowing seems to be a basic quality of mind, we cannot imagine mind to be without the capacity of knowing.

Q: The last question was can there be sense experience without a body? I notice that the different awareness, sense stimuli, have a body reaction. The more awareness I have the more reactions I feel in my body to the six senses. So I come to the conclusion that the more one opens up and relaxes, maybe it could be that with all of the six senses there is a corresponding bodily reaction.

LT: I would go along with that, we cannot be sure that it is with all sense impressions, because there are so many, but the more sensitive we become the more we notice that almost everything has a corresponding physical sensation that accompanies it. So there is this basic knowing and we begin to discover that between the senses and the physical sensations there is a strong connection.

Then there is the third question about the connection between the sensations and feeling. Sensations of agreeable or disagreeable and then the different feeling tones going along with it.

Q: Looking at flowers and trees I felt a deep connection with the senses, but some experiences left my body neutral. I was surprised. For example an ant, I examined my mind, what is an ant for me why don't I have any response to its life and struggles. And through engaging with the concepts I started to have feelings for the ant. I felt at this time I was in dualism, like or don't like, I am divided in this way. I don't have equanimity. Why don't I have the same feelings and reactions in my body when I see every creature? So this observation made me feel tearful and I opened my mind and my small experience, so the benefit of the exercise, to break the pattern of like and don't like.

LT: I would like to comment on two aspects, the first thing that Anna observed was that there was this liking and disliking and the neutral ground in between. Then she noticed that for those experiences that left her neutral, untouched, if she developed interest for them they stopped being so neutral and a feeling tone developed. She developed more interest in the ants and she developed more feeling for them and then something happened and you could feel how you're being opened by them.

As a general orientation, we have stronger feelings and we notice feelings where we are interested. We can be interested positively or negatively, attachment and aversion. There is a certain sort of interest which stimulates receptivity, something like compassion, an openness of the heart. An interest which is not just about attachment and aversion, there is an interest that opens up to this interconnectedness, this being with others on this planet and you connected that with equanimity. What Anna discovered was that before she was not equanimous in the sense that she had more interest in some beings than in others. And as she extended her interest into areas where she wasn't interested before she saw that the empathetic resonance with those ants was developing, a very important discovery. The point I want to make is that the equanimity of the four teachings of the Buddha, love compassion joy and equanimity, is an interested equanimity. It's an empathetic equanimity it is not closed off. What we call ignorance or sometimes even translated as stupidity comes from a lack of interest and is the incapacity to resonate, to be interested and to feel understand a situation a perception an experience. So the equanimity which we talk about here is a loving, joyful, compassionate experience. Equanimity here has understanding, wisdom. What we call *Avidya*, *Marigpa*, the basic problem of Samsara, is connected to a lack of interest, a lack of sensitivity. And instead of sensing, there is a judging - I like I I don't like. So where there could be sensitivity and understanding, it's replaced by labelling views or lack of interest, withdrawing. So the knowing the *Vidya* or *Rigpa* we are talking about is not just a factual knowing, knowing a fact, it is a sensitive understanding, knowing, even knowing with the heart not with concepts, an inner knowing. What we often call awareness, a sensitive awareness. Very different from knowledge, nothing to do with knowledge.

Now we are just one step away from understanding Awakening. When we awaken this is usually defined as entering *Vidya*, *rigpa* the true knowing and now we understand that this means to awaken to this sensitive resonating understanding of just how it is, without labels and judgements. That is awakening, it's a different knowing to the one that knows facts, we are awakening to our true being we are never more alive than when we are in this sensitive empathetic understanding in our heart. This intuitive understanding of connectedness of illusory nature, of knowing just how it is, Do you get the link I am making, we awaken really to what is the most human quality, this knowing with the heart and that is the meaning of *Rigpa* this is awakening, this is where freedom comes from, to truly be, just that. And this knowing has no centre. And no limits. It's just knowing, and it's always there, it's the nature of every moment of experience. When now we are wide awake, open and we

feel from within the quality of that knowing, this total sensitivity, openness without centre and very vividly experiencing what is, that's it. That's *Rigpa*, that is what we are all up to now.

So the three descriptions that we have just had. The knowing that was found in all the 6 senses, the knowing in the whole body alongside the sense experience, the knowing where there was a sense of interconnectedness and a caring equanimity. Bringing all of that together, this is what we are up to, this is the quality of awakening already coming through. Let it become more and more vivid, and as it becomes more vivid it becomes more and more ungraspable, you can't put a finger on it. It's impossible, it escapes every attempt to truly describe it. And to say 'I have it' is just so absurd. So the sort of feeling of 'self' in that sensitivity just feels like a condensation, ok there is this thought, but it is just as empty as anything else, it is just as insubstantial, it doesn't receive more belief than any other aspect of experience.

So this was a little excursion into the nature of mind, thanks to your wonderful explanations and discoveries. Now we will follow the text a little bit, we are on page 159. The beginning of the Chapter on Intuitive insight.

The last sentence was:

Be like a child seeing paintings in a temple, clear perception without grasping

Imagine you replace the word 'perception' by 'knowing', clear knowing without grasping.

While in this state investigate minutely your calm mind what is its essential nature.

We have said a few things about this already, essentially it is knowing. It is this calm knowing being aware.

What colour does it have? What form does it have? What kind of shape, what appearance? Is it something material or not?

These five questions all have one idea behind them, to find out whether mind is a thing or not. If mind is 'something' then it should have a colour a shape a place and appearance and some characteristics which you can describe. I can describe this glass as being round transparent cool filled with water and so on and it is here in my hand and now on the table, so all the characteristics' are there to say what this glass is. Now is mind something? Can we describe it what colour would you give to mind how would you describe it?

What colour is mind?

Q: Whatever you like!A good thought is black!

LT: Does it change colour or does the thought change colour?

Q: No, mind is white.

LT: Like a blank screen?

Q: Colour is a creation of the mind, so it is the mind's creation, the colour white.

LT: Can you prove that? There is a way that we can show this. Can you see the sky, look at the sky and then let the window and everything drop away and really look in to your mind and let the mind become like the sky. Take away the roof the ceiling the walls and let your mind become the same as the sky. What do you observe in terms of colour? Can you imagine for some moments the mind could have the colour of the sky? Yes? And then it's the same if we look down at the carpet we could get completely absorbed in the carpet and then it could have that colour. Just to be sure at that time there were not two minds? There was not a mind with a sky like colour and a second mind with a white colour. Try again and look. Mind is adapting. The reason that you said it was white is because you are in touch with an inner luminosity of mind. Something clear, a clear quality. Mind can take on the colours it can take on the colours and becomes completely the experience of seeing those colours.

And I just want to put you at ease, when I was 25 years old I received this exact teaching from Tenga Rinpoche for the first time and he asked us the question and told us to go and meditate in our tents and come back the next day and tell him what colour mind is. And I told him a luminous white. I thought it was like this, since then I have come to understand that mind has no colour, it is perceiving colours, adapting and completely changing but in itself it has no substance, not structure which would take on a colour.

Q: Can we say that when we reach enlightenment we can use the full 100% capacity of our brain.

LT: We have the capacity to use much more of our brain depending on what function we want to do. It has been proven by brain scientists that meditation uses more of the brain's capacity. I was involved in brain research where, in comparison to the control group, much more of the brain remained active. In order to perform simple actions much more of the brain remained active and there was still the possibility of changing the action right up until it occurred, whereas in the control group they were almost compelled to follow through the action. Basically you could say that we learn to use right and left hemisphere together.

To come back to these wonderful questions:

What form does it have what kind of shape, what appearance?

This mind, this knowing? Always answering from experience, not from brain research.

Q: Mind could have any form we want to give it, it is changes. The mind takes any form.

Q: To start with I can perceive the mind as having a form like the sky or something but when I try to find the form it's very difficult to find the form.

LT: Yes it's the same with me, when I look at you I see your form, but I am sorry to say the mind does not take the form it sees! The mind sees everything and at the same time it is hearing, feeling and so on, so my mind does not have the visual form of what I see, there is much more to mind than the visual form I see.

Imagine a triangle close your eyes and visualise a triangle, does your mind in this case have the visual form of a triangle.

Q: No form no shape no colour just empty space, I am imagining the triangle but when I say there is no triangle, it is not there.

LT: So let me see there is empty space then there is the 'I' and then there is the triangle, how many minds does that make? Is the 'I' outside mind or is it a different mind.

Q: Everything is mind which is differentiating by itself.

LT: So the 'I' is also part of mind and how about the triangle? I want you to investigate because if in the empty space there is I and a triangle then it's not so empty.

Q: We are putting the objects in there.

LT: So we and the objects are not part of mind? If you are not sure investigate.

If you say that mind is empty and that I and we and the triangle or whatever form we perceive are not mind then we possibly have to deal with three minds, but perhaps is it more like this that you want to say that the I and we and the forms are just passing phenomena, is that what you want to say? And this empty feeling or empty quality of mind is something that stays. This would be something that is always there this nature of mind is always present is it?

Q: Yes it has no limitation.

LT: Yes but you still seem to have this spatial idea of emptiness I can see through your gestures.

Q: It is something that has no limitation and whatever we think it is written on a blackboard and then erased and something else is there, but the mind is everything the blackboard and the writing and the erasing.

LT: So now we are getting more clear, whatever is the mind, empty, ungraspable, and in that sense impressions arise, they are mind, but they disappear and what always stays is always this quality of empty ungraspable quality.

So now the last question for you. The thoughts written on the backdrop of experience, do they also have this empty ungraspable nature?

Q: Everything feels like a dream.

LT: So we could say that the triangle and the 'I' making the triangle everything has a dreamlike nature?

Q: Possibly, it's not very clear.

LT: So you have almost got it clear. In the course of this week, look more into this, let drop all your ideas about how mind is and investigate again and again. And then where now you say 'possibly', certainty will come.

Q: When I think about a triangle, I somehow see a form of a triangle, so I could say that mind takes the form of a triangle but there is so much sounds around, my body feeling around. That's why I cannot say that my mind is a triangle.

LT: Yes that is a very convincing reason, there is not only the triangle, there is around the triangle, there are the sounds the feelings and so on. So mind is more than the triangle we visualise, definitely.

Q: I don't understand these questions, the reason for them, because it is obvious that mind has no colour no form and so on.

LT: The question is mind something? We talk about the mind.

Q: Isn't it obvious that is not? For me it's like gravity, like a quality and within this gravity you have 5 kg 80 kg whatever, but is the quality with which something can happen?

LT: So you are very sure it's not something, but then what is quality, it's not gravity, it's a different quality.

Q: It is the quality of being aware, and to be aware in different senses, it can express itself differently.

Q: So mind is experience.

LT: Yes perhaps mind is experience, question mark!?

Q: So is mind also the opposite - no awareness?

LT: Interesting, where is mind when we are unconscious, where is mind when we are asleep?

Q: Mind is there, we are elsewhere?

LT: So if mind is there, is it there as something, or is there a quality which is not something. A nothing which has a quality? Simon says it is not something, but if you say it's there, you still get the feeling that is somewhere, so where is it? Which place would it be in? When we are asleep where is the mind? Awareness? And then on top of that can mind go crazy? Can mind awaken? If yes then it is something. Then we have a crazy mind an awakened mind, how many other minds? A sad mind? Or is it that the quality of knowing gets confused, crazy. If the quality is knowing can there be crazy knowing? Strange!

OK let's go into the break!

Q: You are going to make us crazy, not the mind!

LT: That's my job! You think you are so sure, so you have 20 minutes to come back with the answer, we are in an Enlightenment intensive here you know, 20 minutes is a lot of time.

Break

Q: Mind is an experience with or without thoughts.

LT: Something like an ongoing experience or is it one experience?

Q: Ongoing ever-changing, characterised by the quality of knowing whether consciously or not.

LT: Of being aware, whether consciously or unconsciously aware. A continuous ongoing experience sometimes conscious, sometimes unconscious, that seems to indicate that there could be unconscious experience. Is this a contradiction or not?

Q: No not for me, sometimes I react to a situation without knowing why or even being aware that I am reacting until later.

LT: Could we say that what is usually called mind is a process of experiencing, of being aware knowing, living. Which sometimes shows more of its qualities of being wide awake, sensory perception and at other times when we are asleep, it is more basic rudimentary way of being aware? Is that a good description?

Q: What came to me today, is that our mind has a capacity to function with awareness within the continuity of our experience. It's not a thing, but it can be recognised by both its qualities and its effects.

Q: In the night, even if sensory experience is reduced the mind can create such experiences that I don't know if I am dreaming or not. So for me that mind is dynamic, there is a continuous dynamic expression.

LT: So there are processes going on in sleep that we might not be so aware of but if we do become aware, then we might discover that there is a lot going on!

Q: The questions about whether the mind is a thing. I think it is not a thing, and I was reflecting on that sitting by the pool. If mind is not a thing then things aren't things either. So my assumption that there is a table and people and pool. There can't be a separation between the mind and the experience of the mind. So if the mind isn't a thing my assumptions that these things in my experience are things can't be true, and I just felt something fall away. On a human level I realise that I am holding myself apart, I am having my retreat, my experience of the retreat, my experience of these teachings. And just to be with the fact that all of this is mine, all of it, it feels scary and vulnerable.

LT: Vulnerable a little bit insecure?

Q: Yes and there is a sense of richness in the sense of depths.

LT: The richness is it like a potential for something new, what is it?

Q: There is a feeling that if I can find the words I am going to cry, maybe. For all my life I have been looking for the truth, and there is this question that is coming, is this search for the truth, the nature of the mind, are they the same? And with that is sadness and being moved.

LT: I go slowly, so there is this understanding that mind is not a thing and that if mind is not a thing then everything perceived is not a thing. You feel this to be in a way relieving, there was a dropping away. But it also leaves you somehow vulnerable because some previous certainties, assumptions about realities have disappeared. And is it right that you feel at the point where the richness comes that the quest for knowing the nature of mind is almost there? And there comes the thought that perhaps this is the nature of mind, to want to know its own nature? How about if it is nature of mind to know its own nature? How about if it is the nature of mind not only to want to know its own nature, but to actually know it? Then that is the end of searching!

Take time to let every cell of your body feel it, every part of your being.

Let's all meditate together.

Meditation

As a sangha as a group of practitioners we can allow ourselves to be sensitive, soft and even vulnerable together, from that sensitivity all understanding arises.

So Francesca where does mind come from?

Q: From space?

LT: Maybe mind does not come from space, maybe it is space, and maybe it's the space of knowing everything? Maybe it's the space in which all life happens? Yes I could live with that – In Sanskrit it is called *Dharmadhatu* the space of all appearances all life. That's the nature of mind. *Dhatu* means space *dharma* means phenomena it refers to all experience.

Q: I was feeling that we use the mind for all sorts of things, firstly the creator of thoughts, of fantasy, of drama, and all this. 'This came to my mind'. Then we also use it for the nature of mind which is this very sharp and soft capacity to just know what is; nothing else. Then there is this question what about when there are no phenomena to be known – where is mind? And what came to me is it just this immense potential to know, of knowing. It was the word potential that I was intrigued by.

LT: This immense potential of knowing, and the nature of knowing in itself, and the mind as the creator of so many experiences, thought and so on, are they in anyway contradictory? What to do with these different ways of using mind?

Q: Personally I would like two different words because it can bring about confusion.

LT: Is the potential to know perhaps not the same potential as the one of creation?

Q: It seems to me that the potential for creation is not based on truth whereas the potential to know just wants to know what is.

LT: So what is created is in that sense illusion? And what is known is the truth? But you can know illusion, illusion can be known. Is illusion then truth? The knowing of the illusion is the truth, is it then any more an illusion? If the illusion is know it is not an illusion, stay with that meditate on that for a while...

Mind creates ideas and thoughts, but mind is also the quality of knowing you can find in all the senses. Is this not contradictory, could the potential of knowing and the potential of creation not be the same. But what if what is created is an illusion and what is known the truth, then if what is created is known, does it become the truth? The knowing is the truth, but if the illusion is known as an illusion is it still an illusion?

Q: If it is really known as an illusion it just disappears.

LT: When the mind of the Buddha uses words and thoughts and ideas, is the Buddha fooled by an illusion? Can the Buddha use words without them

disappearing immediately just because he knows them to be illusion? So one can know an illusion, work with an illusion and not be fooled by the illusion at the same time. So the creative aspect of mind can be known in its illusory quality. And I would say this all happens in the same mind, right? So we come to a conclusion that the dynamic aspect of mind and the knowing aspect of mind are not necessarily separate. The manifold creations of mind, which are perceptions ideas sensory experiences, all of that, can be known in there illusory nature. Knowing them in there illusory nature, means that we don't cling to them, so most of them disappear on their own because they are not receiving any interest. But some of them might be helpful, and in this way the illusory manifestations in the mind of a Buddha are called skilful means, a Buddha employs words, ideas, gestures as skilful means to point out the true nature of life, of existence. All of this is so called mind.

Let's meditate a little bit more:

Meditation

..... (long pause)

Knowing the stream of experiences to be of a dream like nature, very vivid, very real, but at the same time ungraspable.

..... (long pause)

Mind has a space like quality, and yet there are so many forms colours sounds tastes colours and so on experienced. And in all of that there is a vivid knowing, that's why sometimes mind is called dynamic space.

..... (long pause)

Bell

Let us read out the last sentences of this chapter.

We were with the question: **Is mind something material or not?**

Where has it first come from where does it stay now, where does it finally cease?

The question is has mind always been there or did it come from somewhere and will it stop sometime?

Is it in the body or outside or both or in-between? Does it exist in any form in the names we give to it?

Like in my name the name I was given, is my mind connected with the name?

Does it exist in inner matter (the body) **or outer matter** (things – is there mind in the earth, in the trees, in the seas in the sky)?

Is there mind in the six kinds of living being like in all human beings, in all the animals in all the insects and in the invisible beings?

Is it the same mind in those different beings, or is it a different mind? If you do find that it has such and such a colour shape and essential nature, very good, if you cannot find anything, do not get discouraged, enquire into it again and again with great perseverance.

Ask yourself those questions and in a very relaxed way see if some answers arise. Actually what we were discussing comes from later on in the insight chapter. Many of the questions we were discussing are far more advanced than these questions. But that's fine, like this we just go with your experiences and reflections. However I do want to know if your mind and my mind are the same mind or a different mind. I want to know this tomorrow, give it a try tonight.

Day 5

We are entering a second phase now of our retreat. You notice this morning we have already come to some elements that give more structure to our practice. So far when we have been meditating we have more or less been following an intuitive process, which is difficult for most practitioners to repeat at home. There is a need for a little bit more structure. Some of you have been through such structures already, they are called Sadhanas in Sanskrit which means a sequence of contemplations, prayers and meditation, where it's like you are getting on a train and it takes you from station to station until you arrive in a relaxed, open state of mind. When I look at you, as far as I know, about half of you already have a direct personal knowledge and experience of working with such sadhanas. For others of you this is completely new and as we are sharing the dharma together here, I want to offer you this structure as it comes from the teaching of the 9th Karmapa. So for those who participated in the teaching last year we take the engagement to continue practicing for one hour every day throughout the whole year, and this includes deep reflection on our existence, or that which turns our minds towards spiritual practice. Then there is this deep commitment to this path of awakening and not do it just for ourselves but to really dedicate our practice to everyone we meet. This is the combined practice of refuge and Bodhicitta.

We express this through the movement of the prostrations which we did this morning together. What I would like to suggest to you is that, starting from tomorrow morning, for those who would like to, we meet earlier, say six thirty and we have longer to do the prostration practice and go slowly through the different steps of the practice. The refuge, the prostrations, the Bodhicitta were explained last year. This year there is another preliminary practice which I will explain which is the Vajrasattva practice and then we can include that into our preliminaries. Then there is one practitioner here who is so quick that she already needs the next preliminary practice, the explanations for the Mandala Offering practice. This is a practice of generosity, of giving or sharing. Whatever arises in mind is shared with all the awakened beings and all those around us. I will reserve the formal instructions of that for next year as it will become too much to do Vajrasattva and Mandala Offering in the remaining days. I could do it, but you would be over-burdened with information. I will give instructions tonight to all those who wish, as an additional program. We could do this on the beach as there are a lot of pebbles we can offer. We could also have a fire on the beach. The Mandala offering is like offering into a wisdom fire, our inner wisdom consumes all our attachments and is being offered into the universe.

TILOPA'S SIX INSTRUCTIONS continued. [Page 126.](#)

Remember the 6 most important meditation instructions?

1. Do not think about the past
2. Do not think about the future
3. Do not think about the present

4. Do not meditate on emptiness and so on
5. Do not analyse
6. Leave the mind as it is, natural.

These six need to be embedded in us and should stay with you for the rest of your life. When you don't know how to meditate your mind will turn to these lines naturally.

Do not meditate on emptiness. If you meditate on this world and its inhabitants as being empty in a limited way, like a vase being empty of water, you will not understand the meaning of the abiding nature. Therefore it is said, "leave appearances as they are".

I want to give you another explanation of what 'empty' means. If you go and search for me in my room up there now, you will enter the room searching for me. You will open the door and look everywhere and say to your friend, the room is empty. What you actually mean is that there is no one there; Tilmann is not there. You checked carefully and the words you use are "the room is empty" but the room is not empty, there is lots of stuff in there. In the same way our minds and appearances are empty, there is no one there but mind is very rich and appearances themselves are very rich - colours, sounds, smells all very rich sensory experience, but empty of a 'self', a nucleus or a core that is there and would always be there. It's like the vase, when we expect the vase to have flowers and we see it without flowers, we say the vase is empty, but it is full of air and water.

So the meaning here is 'empty of what we expect to be there', that's the important point. It's not a nothingness but in comparison to our expectations we say that it is empty. When I say my mind is empty it does not mean that there is nothing, not at all! I'm saying well I expected to find someone in there, a self, but looking everywhere, like searching in the room, I find nobody.

For so many years I lived with the feeling that Tilmann existed and if I looked I would find him, so he must be somewhere in my mind. Then searching, looking and looking in meditation going to the deepest samadhis, the deepest absorptions, no Tilmann to be found, so I say my mind is empty. Then I do the same investigation for a sound, a sight, a thought. I look to see if I can find something in the thought, in the sound, in the sight that will last, that would be like the core of the experience. Then again I discover there is nothing which doesn't change in there, there is just process. The experiences are empty of substance, of a core, of a self, we call this empty of substantiality. What I have explained to you is two aspects of emptiness, the emptiness of the individual, the person and the emptiness of phenomena. In both cases we are surprised to find that although there is such a vivid experience, there is nothing substantial in there. I think you can share the feeling of when you are angry, or when you feel insulted or something, the feelings are so strong they seem to really exist. Or when Francesca is afraid of the bees and she hears the buzzing, she feels the fear is so solid and true. But when you look into the fear, when you look into the anger, whatever feeling seems to be so solid, nothing solid can be found. This discovery was called anatman, no-self, absence of an unchanging core, absence of

something which is always there in a person or an experience. This same discovery later on was called sunyata, emptiness, but it is just expressing the surprise of not discovering what we expected to discover.

This discovery opens a lot of possibilities. If our experiences have nothing substantial, well that's why they can change. That's why they are self-liberating because there is nothing which obstructs their liberation, there changing into something else. Once we have understood this we might be tempted in our meditation to impose that view on our experience. This is the meditator who sits there and says to himself "everything is empty, myself and all phenomena, just like blank space", but this is just like painting over experience or not wanting to enter into experience. Awakening is to enter completely into the experience and to see it, to experience from within how it has no substance. So actually meditation means complete contact, and not protecting oneself against the world. Entering the complete contact within the experience we discover that everything is changing, that experience, life, is a flow, a constant flow. This is the true awareness of emptiness to discover that everything is 100% flow, there is nothing staying either in happiness or suffering.

So the fourth instruction **do not meditate** means not to impose any understanding from the past onto our present experience but to keep a very curious mind, so that we discover again and again the nature of experience. So 'do not meditate' means remain interested like a beginner, keep the famous beginner's mind.

Do not analyse objects of thought, however well and brilliantly you may do it, it does not go beyond characteristics, conceptual mind and mental objects. Therefore it is said "do not analyse objects of desire." Or clinging.

Can you see your tendency to analyse? How does it show, how do you know? When do you analyse?

Q: it feels like trying and it's exhausting and I notice I am not aware of the whole.

LT: Yes, you are not fully aware of the whole, you single out something to analyse, this is one way to notice.

Q: I know by the result that I take a problem and analyse it and solve it, or it goes badly and I don't.

LT: You describe the process well of singling out something and analysing it and maybe you get a good result, or maybe you don't.

Q: When I feel the separation, I feel the thought process being separated from my direct experience.

LT: Yes, yes, this is the important point!

Q: Firstly, I need a lot of time to look back at things. I imagine I am taking myself away from the actual experience and then I have to try and let the emotions calm down because when I try to analyse with emotions, I don't get it.

LT: Very often analysis is connected with judgement: good and bad. What do I like? What do I not like? What shall I do? So we have collected together some of the characteristics. When I start analysing, I am not with my direct experience anymore. I single out some aspect of my experience and I focus on the characteristics of this experience, and I do this with my conceptual mind. This conceptual mind is heavily influenced by liking and not liking and views and opinions.

This is a good quality and something we need to do at times in our life e.g. why did something go wrong, how could it go better? It's a very important thing to do. Did you notice that this analysis continues even when we don't want to analyse? It continues on its own. I guess it's something you are very familiar with when you have a problem and you can't fall asleep because of so-called analysis but it's not very clear, not very constructive.

I want to draw your attention to the fact that we are actually doing this on a small level constantly. We sit in meditation and there is a sound, we zoom in on the sound and we try to find out this sound, who is it talking, what are they talking about? What is it? Is it a tractor, is it a truck, what is it actually? Is it the garbage man, what's going on? This trying to identify, what sound is this? What taste is this? What smell is this? What was I thinking? Is it a good thought or not? We are constantly into analysing all the senses. In true meditation we learn to stop that compulsive analysis. We learn to relax that analysis of the various sense objects, but especially also concerning our present state of being. Am I doing ok? Is my meditation going ok? What do the others think of me? Does my teacher think I'm ok?

So you see these six instructions we are exploring now are for meditation, they are not for daily life. In meditation we learn to be free of the compulsory behaviour we are usually engaged in because of the many things in our life. Basically we are like a thinking machine that cannot stop, always thinking about the past, the future, conceptualising about the present, imposing our views, analysing and behind that there is one wish - just to be natural. We would love to be just natural.

However in order to experience natural being we have to get out of this hamster wheel. Do you have hamsters in Greece? Yes. You know I had many hamsters, some of them were very difficult to get off the wheel. I could open the cage very wide and they could run around all my room but it took a while before they discovered they could be natural and not always on this wheel. When I was cycling through Great Britain and Ireland I noticed my own mind was like being on a hamster wheel, always thinking, reflecting, analysing. I was 18 years old at the time. I asked myself if I was sick or what, I don't want to live my life like this!

At 18 I started to meditate and I knew the solution was there, and yes it's possible to get out of the hamster wheel and enjoy life as it is. It is possible to be free of thinking about the past, present, future, free of imposing views on reality, free of analysing. It is possible and that is the joy of being! Yes, I can go onto the hamster wheel now that is called the bicycle, and my mind is still free. Now the wonderful thing is that even in activity, in teaching, mind is still free of this compulsory judgement and analysis. What I did not understand then that I do now, is that the freedom comes with the very small things in life, those which usually go unnoticed.

I know you have already discovered the same thing. You know that in order to feel well in the body it is important to relax all these compulsory reactions to the feelings in the body, now it's itching and having to scratch, always changing posture. If we want to have peace in the body we have to be able to relax with the sensations in the body. If we want to relax with our eyes with visual impression we should not respond to everything we see. In the beginning my meditation teacher said "clean up your room, tidy up your room, make everything nice so that this will have an influence on your mind and help you to become clear and straight inside." Later on he said "make a pile of mess and look onto the mess and relax completely with your eyes open with no reaction to it."

One has to be able to look at all sides and remain relaxed. In the same way with temperature, with weather, dark and light and all of this. If you want to have peace of mind you have to be able to relax. Sounds, most of you live in towns and you can't switch off the sounds, so we want to be in silence, we would love to be in silence but we have to relax with the sounds. (Sound of a car horn sounds from the street on cue!). Relaxing with smells, sometimes odours can be so strong they almost eject us out of the toilet! But what is the problem, for a file this is the sign to go there! Taste, how to relax with tastes? So called good food, bad food, if it is just about taste, how free are we? Then thoughts, the ideas that come to mind, the memories, to relax with the sudden impulses that come to mind. There are a lot, it's like a firework show at times.

So these five instructions we have looked at so far invite us to relax the compulsory, the obsessive reactions to what is happening, to experience and to leave it as simple as it is. This is why the 6th is leave the mind as it is, and you were quoting your teacher Satyanandi, "mind is an experience", just that! When we say leave the mind as it is it means leave experience, leave life as it is. I would now like to meditate with you exactly as we have described and come back to the last instruction after.

Meditation

Sit with a straight back, eyes open and looking straight forward, head and neck relaxed. If anyone feels a bit drowsy, stand up and meditate like that. Relax the belly, like a baby that has been fed and is completely trusting and relaxed.

The breathing is flowing in and out and we become aware how our whole body is breathing.
 Whatever feelings arise in the body, we notice them, we accept them and we stay relaxed with them.
 Feeling the body from the soles of the feet up to the top of the head. Giving the same attention to all parts of the body.
 Opening up to all sounds without analysing and without out giving preference to sounds.
 Together with the sounds we can also hear the silence. Together with the colours and forms we can also see space.
 Feeling, hearing, seeing, tasting, smelling.
 And being aware of the inner processes, the thoughts, the moods.
 How does it feel to be completely open with no reactions, with no compulsory reactions?
 Relax even more into this experience, not trying to meditate, just allowing the mind to be free.
 Relax even more whilst staying wide awake.

.....

You are always including all sense experiences. You were saying something about the one taste of many experiences, and the many tastes of just awareness. So I want you to find out exactly what taste experience has. You have the choice between vanilla taste, coffee taste, (ice cream is handed around to everyone's surprise). I thought this would be a good object to meditate on change, as I watch, it dissolves....

BODHICITTA

We will fill in the gap a little bit later. There are two sections missing in our transmission up to this point which are a little bit of a technical explanation on how to develop Bodhicitta. I will give you this explanation but I am sure we have got a feeling of Bodhicitta already. Basically as we saw during all the previous years, Bodhicitta is about offering oneself to the world. World means to all living beings wherever they are in the universe. This is very difficult to understand even as a concept, what that might mean. There is a simple golden rule which helps with that. The one most important person is the one in front of us. It is the one in which we are in relationship with, it's the person we think of. All those who come to our mind, these are all living beings, and if we continue to practice that with all people we meet or think of, then everyone will be included. They just have to appear in our perception, that's all. I say this because Bodhicitta sometimes becomes such an abstract idea, trying to think of beings we don't know, we don't know what they think or feel, how they are, how they live, what they wish for, but when the time is right we will, and then if we are willing to give them our full attention that is all that is needed. Bodhicitta means that my body, my life belongs to the overall situation. All qualities of this mind are dedicated to the awakening of everyone I meet. I'm not dedicated to the neuroses of the person I meet, by Bodhicitta one does not become a slave to the emotions of other people. One is completely free

and out of love one decides to give to the other person, put all our energy into the awakening of those we meet.

Many of you are fathers or mothers and you know that love does not mean to go along with everything your child wants. Bodhichitta means to have the love and wisdom of an enlightened mother or father, and to offer this awakened love, this wise love, to everyone we meet as if they were our children. So this does not become an attitude of pride, then we remember that we have been there children in previous lives. Of course I don't remember that I was your child, but it is a good idea to think that you have already cared for me as your child and now I am just repaying your kindness. Actually when you consider that we have been for each other, mother and child, father and child, lover and so on, what we end up with is that we are a network of deep friendships, deep concern for each other. Perhaps in previous lives we have been killing each other and now we realise how stupid that was that we got carried along by emotions and there is more wisdom and more love, and now we realise that you me and everyone is just striving for happiness. We say "oh I was so stupid I didn't realise the Greek, the Turkish, the Germans, the French, the Brazilian, and everyone just wants to be happy, and their greatest wish would be to find a happiness that doesn't just go away the next day, a stable happiness. Again and again wars are created and what's behind this, the wish for happiness, the wish for safety, the wish for an easy life, for possessions and of course a lot of egocentric behaviour. We realise now that the only true source of happiness is to become free in our own mind, to be really free of all these compulsory egocentric reactions. That is the only solution, there is no other. If we want everyone to be happy that is equivalent to helping everyone establish themselves in awakening, there is no other solution. As long as egocentric attitudes continue to wish for personal profit and the wish to create allies and enemies, this will always continue. We understand what I have described is samsara and is potentially without end, but we know that something is stronger than samsara, it is the underlying nature of mind which is stronger than all confusion that exists in all these people, all these living beings. So we say that's what we go for, that's the resource of happiness, that's what I direct my attention to and I will help everyone I meet to enter into that sort of happiness which we call Awakening and as an expression of that I will first work on myself because if I don't know the way, how shall I help others. All this work I do with my own mind in order to achieve liberation, in order to free myself, is dedicated to my former mothers, fathers, friends and enemies. This decision to act like this is taken in complete freedom. Then we remind ourselves of this decision every day and we put it into practice.

Q. But isn't it egocentric to want to lead all beings to Awakening?

LT: No, it's fulfilling their wishes. Ask anyone you like if they want to be happy. Those who do not want to be happy you don't need to help. So the first thing we do with people who say they can't be happy without having enough to eat, so we take care of that. Then they say in order to be happy I need some medicine, some support, and some help when I get old and weak, so we offer that support as part of bodhisattva practice. Then they may say, in order to be

happy I need contact, I need friendship, I need to laugh and dance so we laugh and dance with them and offer our friendship, our support to them. As they see that they have so much support but still the mind goes off to all kinds of confusion, then the wish to learn more to be free in mind arises in the people we meet. Then we say yes I also know something for that, it's called Dharma practice; the practice of becoming free from all these compulsory reactions of mind. If you want to find the source of that kind of happiness then keep your life simple and dedicate some of your energy into freeing your mind and practicing some of the qualities like generosity, friendship, develop some trust in yourself, speak truthfully, begin sharing the basics of Dharma. Does this make sense?

Q: If I say this to my mother she will say 'go away, leave me alone'.

LT: Yes so then you will answer as a Bodhisattva. Yes but this is beautiful Mum, look at how Jesus Christ lived his life! Let's do it just like this, this is wonderful! Because your heart is really open, you will accompany your Mum to go to church and you will discuss with her when you come home and describe everything the Bible says in terms of the path of Awakening. This is exactly what we are asked to do. We always speak the language of the person in front of us, not our own language. And Thanasi, think of your communist friends, you don't talk about Christ to them or use Buddhist words, talk with Communist words - friendship, sharing, stepping out of egocentric attitudes and they will understand: then you have someone who is into martial arts and fighting and so on and you need to adapt your language to speaking in martial art terms, and you will tell them yes! Become a fighter, a real fighter of the heart. Learn how you can learn not to take the attack from the front, step aside and let the impulse pass by. You talk like this to them and you explain the Dharma in the language of a warrior. As bodhisattvas we have no religion, we only have the commitment to lead everyone to true happiness, that's our only commitment. One of my teachers, one of these big Rinpoches, said at a public talk 'we don't need Buddhists in this world, we need happy and free people.

Q: But then my mother will tell me, well we don't want to be saints here, we want to live in this world.

LT: Yes! Then you say 'yes of course let's be humans living in this world. Mum never do anything which goes against your heart.' Then she will say 'ok this is good let's drink a raki together!' Then you say 'ok let's drink a raki together' and you drink. She is a little older than you and she wakes up with a head ache but you don't wake up with one. Then you say 'Oh Mum I am sorry I should not have drunk these 5 rakis with you yesterday. Maybe one would have been enough and we could have changed to coke cola. Because of this care you have in your heart, you will always find the good solution, always caring for happiness. You see we are flexible, we don't have a position to hold, we don't have anything to defend, it's just the love and the wisdom of our heart. This is not a position, it's just this lovely energy which gives this whole process of life this taste of Bodhicitta and makes us so flexible.

I know what I am talking about. My parents disinherited me because I became a Buddhist monk. I went to church, because my father was a priest, as a Buddhist monk and I sang the songs with him and we discussed the Bible and he was so surprised! He would only believe that I was normal when I drank a beer with him and then finally he decided to put me back into the heritage and he wanted me to look after him when he got old and he gave me all his accounts to look after. All the normal things, but why? Because I don't have to be a Buddhist, even my wife is not a Buddhist, it's not necessary to make the world Buddhist. She's a dharma practitioner, that's the real thing, to be a dharma practitioner. How is that now when you imagine coming home to your mother, will it be ok?

Q: I don't know if she will like that...

LT: You have to try, you have to be patient as you have been like this for maybe forty years and if you change, they need some years before they can accept your change, it may not go quickly.

Q: I have a friend some years ago who was studying Zen in Japan and whenever she went home she would have lots of conflict with her parents about having become a Buddhist. One day she realised instead of trying to be a Buddhist she should just try and be a Buddha and it changed everything!

LT: That's good! So instead of trying to be a Buddhist, let's try and be a Buddha. A Buddha has no religion, he is the servant of everyone he or she meets, the servant of their liberation, of their happiness, of their freedom. In order to do that we become Buddha **Vajrasattva**.

From among the four forces (of purification), the supreme force of applying antidotes is relying on the visualisation and recitation of Vajrasattva.

This meditation that we will learn now is an antidote to the ego centric attitude that is at the root of all our negativity and harmful acts.

Page 71 Lesson 11 - Exercise 10

VAJRASATTVA PRACTICE

Begin by visualising above yourself in your ordinary form, (so we keep the shape we are now) **from the syllable *Pam* a white lotus.** So you have *Pam* a syllable and a white lotus. **From the syllable *A*** on top of the moon disc, **and on top of this form the white syllable *Hum*** which transforms into a **white five-spoked vajra with a *Hum* in its centre.** Do you know what a vajra is, the thing the vajra masters hold in their hand? It's like a sceptre and you can see an illustration of Vajrasattva holding one in his right hand on [page 204](#). It is standing upright and the *hum* is found in the sphere at its centre. Keep your hand in this page for the rest of the description. So this vajra appears and from it **emanate light rays** going in all directions of the universe **making offerings to the enlightened ones,** and at the same time

these light rays go to all sentient beings and accomplish their benefit. So there is a double emanation one going to the Buddhas and at the same time going to all beings in all the universes, and then the light rays come back with the blessings of the Buddhas and with the blessings of this compassionate activity and it comes back into the *hum* in the centre of the vajra.

When the light rays have gathered back, the vajra transforms into the Bhagavan Vajrasattva, who in essence is our root teacher. Bhagavan is another word for Buddha. So there are light rays coming back which have the power to transform this vajra into the being of the vajra, which is the Buddha appearing as light above our head. He is brilliantly white, the commentators say like fresh snow in the sunlight, and white light rays are going out from him, but also light rays in all the other colours of the rainbow. **He is white and has one face and two arms. In his right hand he holds a five spoked vajra upright in front of his heart. In his left hand he proudly holds a bell with a vajra handle against his hip.** Do you notice that the lower side of this bell is upward? It is a symbol of emptiness and the sounding part is upward, and you see that below the hand the vajra handle is showing like a half vajra. When it says 'he proudly holds the bell', this is a Vajrayana, a tantric way of talking which means with the self-assurance of a Buddha. The word vajra means indestructible so this is vajra pride, indestructible self-confidence. (Along with the written words you have in the book I add some words which is the oral transmission which you can make some pencil notes of in your book.). **His legs are in the sattva posture**, which is short for bodhisattva, the right leg in front of the left and the ankles flat on the ground and the knees also flat on the ground. Why is this called the bodhisattva posture? Because bodhisattvas are always ready to help, so from this posture it is easy to get up and help. A bodhisattva is always willing to move when something needs to be done. In the vajra or lotus posture it is a little bit more difficult to get up. **His upper and lower garments are of multi-coloured divine silk. His hair is tied in a top knot, which is crowned by master Akshobhya**, (a blue Buddha) **the Lord of the family.** So this is his own guru. **He is adorned with all the ornaments made from diverse precious substances; a crown, earrings, a short necklace, arm let's, bracelets, anklets, a belt, and a long necklace. He is adorned with the attributes and signs of a Buddha** (the 32 and 80 signs) **and emanates boundless light rays.**

You will not be surprised that in any cultures including the Greek Orthodox tradition, if you go into the churches you see representations of God radiating with golden light going out in all directions. So in a similar way this is connecting us with the qualities of Awakening. This is very common to traditions to have this. Some traditions do not allow God to be represented and others allow it. I love going into the Greek Orthodox churches as usually they are very quiet and peaceful and excellent places for meditation. In Thessaloniki they are the only cool and quiet places! Of course I grew up in Protestant places and when I became a Buddhist to begin with I thought I had to stay away from these places, but no, why? The people going to church are searching for the same inner peace and openness as we are. In our Buddhist monastery we often received monks and nuns from the catholic tradition, and

it was very easy to exchange with them once we had become clear that we actually mean the same thing when we talk about God.

What we do in this meditation is we visualise Buddha Vajrasattva on top of our head, we connect to qualities which are qualities of complete Awakening, and then we discover that these qualities are actually present in our own heart. We must always be aware that what we talk about now is imagination, a visualisation. **He appears clearly like a reflection in a mirror, perceivable, yet not really existing.** It's very important not to make this highest truth into 'somebody' or 'something', don't substantiate it, leave it open, just like a reflection in a mirror.

In his heart, on a moon disc is a white Hum, and around it the syllables OM Vajrasattva hum, and around these (still on the moon mat) are the hundred syllables starting with OM Vajrasattva samayaup to the end of this mantra which is sattva ah. You see it ends with the syllable Ah and I have told you about this syllable before, it's on purpose that it ends with the syllable which is the most open sound, Ah where there is no more clinging. **All the syllables are white, like strings of pearls, going clockwise around in a circle.** This means that the syllables are written like this going around clockwise as if you can read them from the inside. **The light rays emanating from them invite the whole assembly of enlightened teachers, yidams, Buddhas, bodhisattvas, viras, dakinis, Dharma protectors and guardians of the ten directions and the three times.**

Vira is the word for heroes, same as dakas, and dakinis are messengers of wisdom in female form. Dharma protectors are all those forces that protect the authentic teaching of liberation. So we imagine that all the support of all the awakened beings in all universes dissolve into Vajrasattva on top of our head. In this way we perceive them as the form containing all the sources of refuge, they are all united in Vajrasattva. So we have a charged figure on top of our head, charged with blessings.

Then we turn ourselves to the guru Vajrasattva, the Buddha who represents the Union of all the teachers we have confidence in.

'Guru Vajrasattva , please cleanse away and purify the whole accumulation of harmful actions, veils, faults, and downfalls of myself and all other living beings in the vastness of space.'

Basically we are saying please help me to not identify with all this negativity, all these egocentric attitudes in my own mind, because it is exactly this that keeps me from helping others, I want to be free to be able to help others. We do this at the same time along with all living beings. So if someone comes to my mind at this time, for example I think of my partner or my children, then they also have a Vajrasattva on top of their heads and as I do the practice for myself, the practice is also being done for them. So everyone is connected to his or her true being, the Buddha nature is represented, symbolically, on top of each and every sentient being.

To have a white Buddha on top of the head, how is that? Can you imagine a white light on top of the head? Like a sphere of light. This sphere of light is enough, you just need to see this light and think it is Vajrasattva and that is sufficient. When you sit by the swimming pool later on, see if in this sphere of light you might see a little bit of a Buddha. Then sometimes at night when you fall asleep you can remember that Buddha, he is always with you. This is how Gendun Rinpoche taught us, he said if you cannot visualise all these details, do not worry, just having trust in the Buddha is sufficient to make the practice work.

In order to visualise the best attitude is to let the Buddha appear by himself, not trying to create it but to discover it. It's interesting I never saw before the Buddha above my head, but now that I look at it, yes, I discover it! It's interesting how that changes the perspective when you allow yourself to discover instead of creating. Instead of trying to get everything right, just think the Buddha is saying 'hi, I'm here' and waves the hand. (To Francesca) Did you try seeing him waving his hand (yes) on top of your head, or on top of my head? Oh because my Buddha was waving to your Buddha. Yours is waving too, good!

Allow yourselves to be in this simple way, playful way, let it appear, it's all there. How big is the Buddha on top of your head? Yours is like this, ok, and yours is like this, ok, any other sizes? One of the exercises is to make the Buddha really big, really, really big! Allow yourself to make your Buddha really big. How big is it now?

Q. Endless

LT: Endless, wow! Now make the Buddha really small, really small. How small is it now?

Q: like a light point

LT: Yes, yes. So this flexibility of making big and small is part of the training. The Buddha is complete no matter how big or how small it is, it's always complete. Titika I ask you to go into this microscopic light sphere and from the light sphere have a look how big it is?

Q: It's infinite.

LT: Yes, that's it, thank you Titika. When you go into the centre of the experience, even if before it was so small, when you are in the centre of it, it takes all our mind. Again it is as big as filling all our mind. So whatever you want to see clearly, just go into it, just go into it. You want to see the vajra in the hand of Vajrasattva, just go closer in to it. You can really use your mind. Go behind the left earlobe of Vajrasattva. Are you there? Yes instead of a fly sitting on his earlobe..... What I am showing you are exercises from the tantric tradition, and it shows us the enormous potential of our mind, what we are experiencing, the force of creative mind.

Q: It's a new experience as normally when we visualise we visualise the Buddha's coming into us, and now I can go to the Buddha.

LT: Yes, yes you can go to the Buddha. This practice of visualising the Buddha is not only to receive blessing and to connect with awakening, it is also meant to help us understand the nature of projections, how worlds arise and disappear.

MEDITATION

And again, let the Buddha meditate, the Buddha inside of us.

You have to ask for yourself, is there a risk of becoming drowsy? If that is the case, stand up or sit really straight, the idea is not to sit too comfortably.

Put all texts and notes away and just meditate.

In the same way make your mind free from all this conceptual thinking; no need to think about anything just now. The things in our life that need some thinking can wait for half an hour. Past, future and the present do not need to be commented on right now.

We are very aware of how it feels in the body, very aware of hearing, seeing, and of how we feel inside.

Every cell of our body is alive. Mind is completely alive and vivid. We do not try to meditate, we are just alive.

Maintain a fresh awareness as if this was the first moment of your life.

Just being in that simple presence, without conceptual thinking, without meditating on anything and without analysing anything.

Is there anything in this experience of just now, that is not changing?

Is there something stable?

Who is meditating?

Is there someone?

.....

There is no need to discuss the answers. If you feel, if you are aware, the answers will come from that. We can discuss this a little later when you have more experience. But remember to ask yourself questions. Is indeed everything changing in that experience, or might there be something stable somewhere?

Do not jump to conclusions. And the question 'who is meditating?', 'who is aware?', 'where am I when no one is passing comments?'

In-between those questions always relax, relax, relax as much as possible.

Talking much will not help. It helps to a certain degree as we did yesterday, but if we discuss too much, again it is based on very little experience and a lot of conclusions and opinions coming from very little experience.

In order to explore the mind you need to come into a very calm state, a calm way of being, and then just a slight interest and looking, just a little interest for how it is.

Continue doing this in the quiet atmosphere of this place, and avoid chatting around the place. Hearing you makes me rejoice in that you are developing sangha, but then there is no need for more, you can offer to each other the friendship place of space, silence and respect. You can talk amongst yourselves when you are away from the building so I would like to stimulate in you that when you come from the beach, that you stop a moment and then not continue your conversation as you go to your rooms and you remember 'oh the silence starts' and the silence starts before you can be heard in the hotel. Just offering ourselves ideal conditions for practice so there is the silence inside the place and the opportunity for as much communication as we want outside the buildings. Then we will have a good mix - social context, silence. A friendship context and silence and in the silence we can still feel the friendship. What I really encourage you to do is to touch each other, to show the friendship not so much through words but by putting a hand on the shoulder or a warm look in the eyes, this can save us many words. Let us see how Vajrasattva is a friend to us

Vajrasattva Practice Continued. Page 72.

So on this page there was this prayer, this request to Guru Vajrasattva on top of our head. Someone remarked to me at lunch that this sounds like a prayer to God and then he will do what is necessary to purify our sins. If you like you can change the words because this is your prayer, you pray, you address Vajrasattva in the way you want to address him. So I might say 'please Vajrasattva help me to open my eyes and understand'. You do it in your way. Feel free to adapt the practice at those points where it has the taste of it being not really yours, strange to you.

The practice has to serve the practitioner it's not the practitioner who serves the practice. Practice here means method, it's not that we are the servants of the method. The feeling expressed here is Wow! I see that I am so caught up in my egocentricities and negativities that I don't really know how to get out of them: Buddhas please help! The Buddhas help in the way that Vajrasattva is there and he unites all the presence of all Buddha's and serves in a way as someone we can talk there.

We need a possibility for dialogue, as this is how we normally function. At the end of the practice we will dissolve Vajrasattva and he will come to rest in us, he doesn't remain separate, he is not like some god or something where they always remain separate, no, no, it always dissolves back into where it came from, our own mind. It took me a long time to understand why these Buddhist prayers sound so dualistic. Actually this is on purpose because we function in a dualistic way and when we are desperate we are very dualistic and we need to talk to someone and be received in love and feel it coming to us and we need this kind of relationship. Now look what happens

Having prayed to Vajrasattva like this, there flows from the seed syllable, from the mantra strings, and the moon in the heart of guru Vajrasattva a stream of wisdom nectar, filling his form completely with whiteness,

nectar, white light. What is translated here as wisdom nectar could also be translated as awareness nectar, it's the same word, same meaning. In other texts it is called the nectar of Bodhichitta, relative and ultimate Bodhichitta, which is the unity of compassion and wisdom. So there is this heart response from Vajrasattva, and already his whole being is being filled with this heart response, this white nectar light. **The excess of this flows continuously from the right toe of his right foot, like from a beer mug flowing over, and enters our body through the brahma opening.** Have you ever opened a barrel of beer? You pull the stopper and swoosh, it comes out. This is exactly how our teacher taught it to us, this is not my invention, this is Tibetan symbolism! What it means is that the force of love and compassion is so strong that it naturally goes out, whoooosh, and it reaches us and completely fills us. It's the nectar of bodhichitta.

It washes out all the unwholesome actions, veils, illnesses, demonic forces, damaged and broken commitments, harmful things, and impurities which we have accumulated in all our existences since beginningless samsara.

So this bodhichitta nectar enters us and washes away all our negative identifications, all the traces of the emotions, the stupid things we have though, spoken and done, all the remainders of difficulties in our lives. Just to make sure we realise this, it leaves the body **in the form of pus, blood, or smoky broth, or liquid charcoal, like chaff being carried away by a river.** So we have a stream entering here at the top of our head of pure love. You know how it feels when you come into the presence of a very loving person, something strange happens, we feel all our impurities, the lack of love, the holding on, it's almost like we can't open up completely. This is what is happening now. We encounter love and all of our resistances and negative associations, 'I'm not worthy', 'I can't do it', 'I'm so bad', all of this goes out. For as long as the shower continues what goes in is white and what goes out is dark. Just to symbolise that there is really a transformation happening. **This blackness pours out of our two lower doors, the openings of our senses, the pores of our skin, and our fingertips, and dissolves into the mighty golden base below us.**

Where does this mighty golden base come from? It's what we are sitting on obviously. This is the nature of our mind, we are sitting on gold! All the negativity, all the identifications, the clings, the dualistic mind, dissolves into that golden, open nature of mind where there is no more clinging, it dissolves into the dimension of no more clinging. In a visualisation every aspect of what we visualise is ourselves, our own mind. Vajrasattva is ourselves, the devotion to him is ourselves, the heart response, the love it's within our own mind that it is happening. Receiving the love is another aspect of our mind, as is the letting go that is happening in our mind and the understanding that it all dissolves into the nature of mind itself.

Our whole body, white and purified, has become filled to the brim with white wisdom nectar.

So then we close the pores and so on, the purification has been done and there is only white nectar present in our feeling of ourselves, we have become completely pure. We have become love and wisdom, we have become Bodhichitta and it overflows, it's more than we can have. It comes in through the top of our head and flows outside, around us.

This excess overflows and touches the foot of Vajrasattva. It then flows down and envelops us, whiteness inside, whiteness outside, completely agreeable.

Imagining all of this we recite the one hundred syllables and the six syllables as much as you can. So traditionally the hundred syllables are recited for this purification process and when you say 'now it's enough and I close the pores and so on'. This is when you recite the six syllable mantra. We sit in this perfection, everything is perfect now, nothing more to regret, no shame, no feelings of guilt, complete joy and feelings of love and openness Life has never been so beautiful. Then in the traditional texts, you join the palms of your hands to your heart, and then we pray, which is the next big paragraph.

Now whenever I teach this people find this prayer, which comes now, in the wrong place, because it seems to be going back to this attitude of 'I need to be purified, please help me'. But this has all gone, that was at the beginning of the practice. Actually this prayer here serves a different purpose, it's like the stamp, the seal at the end of the purification. We do it as if we were still at the beginning and do it up until this point, and then what is important is the answer from Vajrasattva. So basically this prayer describes the attitude at the beginning of the practice. Protector is another name for the Buddha, it protects our path to awakening.

'Protector, out of ignorance and delusion, I have transgressed and damaged my vajra commitments. Guru protector, grant me your protector. Oh lord, holder of the vajra, you are the embodiment of compassion, Lord of living beings, I take refuge in you. I confess all the breaches and violations of the main and branch commitments of body, speech and mind. Please grant your blessing to cleanse away and purify the whole accumulation of harmful actions, veils, faults and downfalls.'

Don't worry about the list of stupid things we can do in our lives, all of what we regret here. It's technical, there are lists behind it, main and branch commitments and so on. There is one way of knowing it all, which summarises all of this -whenever I was not in bodhichitta. Whenever I was not in love, compassion, understanding, wisdom. Whenever I was in a dualistic state of mind or emotional state and acting out of that. So I lay open all of this mess that has been our life at times. All of these moments when I was not my authentic self. I was doing things which now I wouldn't want to do again, and I was thinking in ways that were not helpful to myself or others.

At this point in the practice I am still with the purity and all of it is overflowing, and now from a point of view of being connected with my purity, I make a complete, open confession. I put everything out into the open. It's the best place from which to make a confession because we are not identified with it anymore. When we are connected with purity and then think back on all the ego centred attitudes, there is a cure happening. If we can confess extensively from within the identifications we are always in this mea culpa approach, always blaming ourselves and the confession might not even help us. It might just get us deeper and deeper into the negativity. I'm good for nothing, I will never be able to practice, you know, look at me and beat me! We are now in the purity, in the Bodhichitta, and from there we make a vast confession of everything that went wrong, and that's ok. The solution is already there.

Q: is Dorje Sempa the same as Vajrasattva.

LT: Yes Dorje Sempa is the Tibetan name for Vajrasattva. Vajrasattva is the Sanskrit name.

Brain research now confirms this, that the best place to remember negativity, is when we are deeply installed in our resources, otherwise we create more trouble, we continue in the same patterns as before. Now the reaction from guru Vajrasattva is different.

The guru Vajrasattva on top of our head is pleased and confirms with a smile, 'child of the family, all your harmful actions, veils, faults and downfalls are cleansed and purified'

It's done! There is nothing more to be done. At the same time he melts into light and dissolves into us.

The light dissolves into us and we become Vajrasattva. **Think that the body, speech and mind of guru Vajrasattva and our own body, speech and mind become inseparable like water poured into water, and remain without reference point.**

There is no more difference, no more difference between the most pure we can feel, meet, imagine and ourselves. The Buddha does not say "oh it's good that you pray to me, pray more and one day you will become pure". No, no, complete purity now! The moment you are not identified, you let go, the moment your mind opens, complete purity is there. Our body is the body of a Buddha, our speech is the speech of a Buddha, our mind is the mind of a Buddha. Inseparable like water poured into water. This is the message of the Dharma, inherent purity, it's the nature of our mind. Remaining without reference point means we remain in Mahamudra. No thinking of past, present, future, not meditating, not analysing, just leaving it as it is.

Then when thinking starts again, seal your session with dedications and aspirations. Having thus dedicated the wholesome roots to enlightenment, get into your daily activities.

This was my first Vajrayana practice. I will tell you how I reacted to it. It was in 1984 and Kalu Rinpoche was giving the big Kalachakra initiation in France and as an introductory initiation there was this Vajrasattva empowerment given. I had met Gendun Rinpoche, and I had taken refuge with Shamar Rinpoche and actually he gave me permission and encouragement to go and practice vipassana. So I had been practicing three years of very intense vipassana, every three months a ten day retreat, and every day two hours of practice. Then I had met my wife-to-be, Lama Elena who some of you know, and she came from the Tibetan tradition and she took me to Kalu Rinpoche. Then he gives these visualisations like I have done today and empowerment so and so on. So I get all the blessings and so on, and we get out of the ceremony and I say to Elaina "the Buddha never taught that. There is no trace of this in the Pali suttas. Why do we not find this in the old texts?". Elena was saying "No, no this is true Dharma and I don't know about the texts but it is true Dharma." And I am saying "No, no I have studied all the texts and there is no mention of this in any of the old Pali texts." Oh Buddha, it was getting so hot, I remember she jumped up and ran away, jumped over a fence and disappeared. We didn't talk much until the evening but we slept in the same tent.

During the night I had a strange dream. At the end of the dream I remembered every detail. The Buddha came to me in the dream and said "this is my teaching". That was the only person I would have trusted! Very, very clearly without doubt, "this is my teaching, even if it is not found in the Pali suttas, don't worry, this is true Dharma." I was very shocked. It was against my own views, but it was so clear and so convincing that the very next day I learnt the hundred syllable mantra. I had it written on a piece of paper, all these hundred Sanskrit syllables, and by the end of the day I had learned it by heart. Then I got the rest of the empowerment. Three months later we went to see Kalu Rinpoche in a different place in France and I got the personal lung for the practice and a few explanations for the practice, but I didn't practice.

Another three months later in January, the night before my Birthday, Elaina had a dream. She was told "now teach Tilmann the Vajrasattva practice". So it was my birthday morning and she said I have a strange present to offer you. I said "what is it?" "I had a dream and I was told to offer you the Vajrasattva practice." I said "Ok I trust your dream". That morning she sat down with me and did a guided meditation. So she told me how to do all these steps, and I visualised. Because my mind was trained with vipassana it was very easy for me to visualise all the details and I still remembered the mantra. The blessing was so strong, I remember I was reciting the mantra and feeling this nectar, and she was describing it so beautifully and everything was just there. I really lived the experience and the blessing was so strong I remember after the meditation I fell flat on my back.

I am telling you this story to encourage you to trust the practice and to open up to it and to let it work on you, to abandon yourself to the practice. It is a very powerful practice. Later on Gendun Rinpoche told us that just one mala, 108 recitations of the mantra, if you do it with your full dedication, with your full presence, is enough to open your mind to full purity. It takes 20 minutes,

that's all, and it works. I will lead it through for us all, but don't expect to be lying on your backs after, the conditions all came together and it was the perfect moment.

MANDALA OFFERING PRACTICE on the beach

So today, tonight we are doing the real thing, this is how it was done originally. The yogis were out in nature and they wanted to practice bodhichitta and letting go. The old commentaries still talk about stone plates, then later on, when things got more refined, then it became this kind of mandala (showing the metal mandala with rings etc.).

We have two mandalas. First we need to install the mandala which represents the refuges. In the centre are the teachers, all the masters of the transmission. To the front, the yidams; to the right of the centre the Buddhas; behind the Dharma; to the left of the centre the sangha and all around all the other awakened beings and below, the protectors - dakas, dakinis and so on. Now into this mandala, which I turn towards myself now, I will invite the true refuge to send blessings and to install themselves into this mandala which is called the drupe mandala in Tibetan, the mandala of accomplishment.

Chant refuge prayers

We imagine that the blessings of the lamas, the Buddhas and all the awakened protectors dissolves into this mandala of accomplishment, and this is our shrine.

Now I request that each one of you offer your most beautiful stone or flower or piece of food, to this shrine to make it really beautiful. We put these round the mandala of accomplishment, which is the refuge. What counts is the love in which we offer it.

So the idea is that you make a shrine that is the refuge, with the five points we have seen.

I am now going to show you the traditional offering of a mandala which remains in place, with three rings.

Chants Tibetan verses whilst filling the first ring.... The central mountain, the eastern continent, the southern continent, the western continent, the northern continent. Then the sub-continents.

Then come all the other traditional offerings.

These are all the offering goddesses surrounding the mandala in the sky. Then we offer the sun and the moon, the jewel umbrella and the victory umbrella.

Then we fill up with many offerings all around.

Then we imagine that this is the whole universe, everything we cling to, and this we offer to the Buddhas.

Then normally you would put this mandala with the other one and it would stay in place the whole time you are doing your offerings.

This already gives you a bit of an idea about what we are going to do.

The central mountain is our spine, the trunk of our body. The four continents are the two arms and two legs. The pillars on top of the mountain, is our head. Sun and moon are our two eyes. All the other offerings are all the sense impressions, all the wonderful sense delights that we can experience.

Then comes the easy bit now. You take the smaller mandala ring (on the beach it is our stone plate) and on this one you will offer *everything*. So you start with an empty stone plate and you put all the small stones into your lap. The traditional text says **by sprinkling this base with perfumed water, putting flowers on top of it and adorning it with mount Meru and the four continents, sun and moon and by offering it in our imagination to the Buddhas, may all sentient beings enjoy the Pure Lands.** This means enjoy Awakening. This offering we repeat many times. (Demonstrates how this is done whilst reciting verses)

We drop stones on the centre, behind, right, in front, left, diagonally across the centre both sun and moon and then this is the offering and we wipe it off. OK this was just to show you. Now relax, and think what it is you are clinging on to and you imagine that you offer that to the Buddhas and to all sentient beings. You can offer saying the mantra ***om mani padme hum*** You think, for example, something really important to you like this evening tonight and you imagine ***om mani padme mum, om mani padme hum.....*** And you offer like this. Then you think of another thing you want to offer and repeat this, don't think too much, just offer whatever comes to your mind. Imagine you are letting go of it and that you invite the blessing of the dharma and the Buddhas into that. When you have done one offering, in the old tradition, it is good to raise the mandala for a moment before emptying it into your lap.

Day 6

REFUGE AND PROSTRATION PRACTICE

Breathing exercises and just sitting

As we drink our cup of tea, we reflect on how precious this human existence is. How wonderful this morning is, we can be so thankful to have such wonderful people around us and that we have found this wonderful teaching that opens the mind. What a wonderful and blessed life! Then we reflect that though we might still feel young, we never know when we will die, how long this life will be, no one knows. What is most important for me today, what shall I concentrate on? How do I want to speak, act, how do I want to *be*; what will make me and others really happy?

With this we direct our mind to the refuge. We can imagine we meet the Buddha, or Tara, in front of us, surrounded by awakened beings without number. We ourselves are accompanied by our mother and father, all our friends and also those who seem to be difficult for us. With this we take refuge, we direct our minds towards awakening. (Recite refuge prayers)

Now everyone, in the way you feel is most appropriate, can do the prostration practice for about 10 or 15 minutes, imagining that we direct ourselves towards awakening, love, compassion, wisdom and just do the small or the big prostration. You can recite whatever prayer you know. Namo Buddha, namo Dharma, namo sangha is the simplest one.

Join your hands together so they touch, like a prayer mudra on the ground.

As we sit down we continue to take refuge as when we are sitting it is a little bit easier to visualise, so you continue a little bit in that spirit.

Then we sit simply in the refuge, as if the Buddha was meditating. The Buddha dissolves into us and we let this open presence completely take over.

Then we join the simple presence with the breathing, with the heart and the four immeasurable qualities - love, compassion, joy and equanimity. We join this with our wish that all beings be happy, may they be free from suffering, may we all experience true joy, and may we rest in great equanimity. With these wishes in our heart, we continue to meditate, breathing from the heart.

VAJRASATTVA PRACTICE

In order to start your own session I will give you a few moments to settle, to go for refuge and develop Bodhicitta and get yourself prepared inwardly for the Vajrasattva practice.

To start, let us relax into a wide open space without hanging on to any forms of thinking.

Then from within that wide open awareness, we let the white syllable **bam** form on top of our head. It sends out light to all the Buddhas and the light comes back and transforms into a white, open lotus. On top of this lotus is the white syllable **Ah** which then transforms into a flat moon disc lying in the centre of the lotus. On the top of this moon disc, from the letter **Hum**, appears a vajra, standing up in the centre of the moon disc. In the centre of the vajra is again the letter **Hum**. It sends out light into all directions, making offerings to the Buddhas and inviting their blessings, and touching all beings and inviting them to reconnect with their Buddha nature. When the light returns from this activity, then the light transforms into Buddha Vajrasattva: brilliant white, sitting crossed legged; one head, two arms. In his right hand he holds a vajra at his heart. In his left hand he holds a bell with a vajra handle, which is turned towards the sky. The bell rests close to his hip. He sits in bodhisattva posture, completely straight, luminous and looking at us with a smile. He is adorned with many precious ornaments, the symbol of all the awakened qualities.

In his heart there is again a moon disc with a **Hum** at the centre. Around the **Hum** there are the six letters **OM benzasatto hum**. These six letters form the inner circle. Around on the edge are the letters of the long, hundred syllable mantra. Both are written in such a way that they can be read from the inside. We take time to visualise Vajrasattva on top of our head with the syllables at his heart. As we do this we enter the feeling of his completely benevolent presence, his complete purity and we say inwardly a prayer like "please help me and all others to realise our true nature. Please help us to clear away all obstacles to awakening. I open myself completely to your beneficial influence." Hearing those words, Vajrasattva smiles and from the **Hum** in his heart the nectar of Bodhichitta begins to flow. The syllable **Hum** gives off pearls of nectar which forms a stream which fills the whole moon disc. The mantra too starts giving off white nectar and the nectar starts to overflow from the moon disc and fills the whole body of Vajrasattva. Vajrasattva boils over with love and this wisdom Bodhichitta nectar, and it comes out of his right big toe and falls directly into our head. As we visualise this today we will recite the short mantra **OM Benza Satto Hum**. We visualise the nectar streaming and the two mantras begin to turn anticlockwise in a circle, circling the central syllable **Hum** which remains stable. We imagine the nectar goes through our body and purifies all our impurities; all our doubts, all our lack of self-esteem and we are gradually filled with light. I invite you to say the mantra out loud as this helps to purify speech at the same time.

Imagine that the nectar cleanses all traces of emotional anger that have been left in our being. That we become free at the moment of this strong emotion of aversion. All impurities leave our body and go into the golden ground which is the nature of our mind, they just dissolve into that.

Then we do the same thing for the emotion pride. We imagine that all the traces and patterns of pride are purified. Especially we think of the subtle pride that is present now, that has been present for the last few days and we invite Bodhichitta to come exactly into that place.

Then we open up in the same way to wherever we have been entering desire or clinging, we open up to true love and generosity and let the nectar enter those places, we let Bodhichitta be where usually we feel full of desire.

Then we do the same thing for the feelings of jealousy, of rivalry, of competition.

Then we do the same thing for all the moments of lack of awareness; where ever there has been lack of sensitivity, dullness, ignorance, and perhaps giving rise to feelings of fear or insecurity. All of this opens up to the stream of nectar coming from Vajrasattva.

Then we gradually let the purification finish and we close the paws and imagine we become ourselves, pure Bodhichitta, and the nectar is overflowing from the top of our head so inside and outside we are filled and surrounded by Bodhichitta nectar.

Then we thank Vajrasattva for having shown me my true nature. May I remember my true nature all the time. Vajrasattva smiles and says "yes my daughter, my son, you are the same as myself" and then dissolves into light. This light enters us and we become Vajrasattva, like him with the same body, same speech, same mind. With this we rest in silence and let the Buddha meditate.

THE PRAYERS

The tradition is so rich in prayers, there are so many prayers. This one comes from Atisha, one of the very famous Indian masters who spent some twelve years in Tibet. Atisha was a contemporary of Marpa the Translator which is at the juncture of India and Tibet for the Kagyu lineage. Atisha actually wanted Marpa to translate for him when he came to Tibet. This prayer is pretty much used in every Tibetan tradition.

I would like you to have a look at the meaning which is just above the Tibetan phonetics. The phonetics always follow the English prayer, they are always below. The prayer says **until awakening we take refuge with the Buddha, the Dharma and the supreme assembly. Through the power of practicing the liberating qualities, may we realise Buddhahood in order to benefit sentient beings.** The first two lines are actually the refuge and the next are developing Bodhichitta. Can you agree to what is said there? Check it, take a look. Are there any problems with the words that are stated there? OK. Because you understand the words Buddha, Dharma, Sangha. If you understand, then you understand that this is not religious. It means to go towards awakening and to practice the truth and to rely on authentic spiritual friends, and whatever awakening happens to us, we will share it with others. Do you know what the liberating qualities, the Paramitas, do you know what is meant by this? You all must know because no one said they didn't know! This is the practice you can take home with you, you remember I told you about it. (Hands out sheets)

What are the Paramitas, what do you know about them?

Q: Generosity, patience, joyful perseverance,

LT: Yes this is the energy, the fourth one.

Q: Meditation, wisdom.

LT: Yes meditation is not a quality, it's meditative absorption or meditative stability, that's the quality.

Q: Ethical behaviour

LT: Yes ethical behaviour, wholesome conduct which is often translated as discipline which is a wrong translation. *Sila* in Sanskrit, which means that which refreshes the mind, when we hear discipline we don't exactly have that association. The Tibetan word *tsondru* means the way to behave, to conduct oneself. What is the way - wholesome, refreshing conduct.

The liberating qualities are like this: imagine that you have a tree, the trunk is compassion which means caring for each other which gives rise to all the other qualities. Because we care we give - material generosity, helping each other and giving the Dharma. Because we care for each other we practise respect or wholesome conduct, we protect life instead of killing, we speak in a healing, helpful way instead of speaking in a divisive way, and so on. Because we care for ourselves and others we practice the Dharma which is the supreme form of wholesome conduct. Because we care for each other, because we have this love and compassion at the root, then we practice patience. We don't get angry with one another when we are imperfect, we don't have an idea of how the other one should be. Because we have this love and compassion for each other, we joyfully engage in Dharma practice, wholesome activities, all the various activities of awakening. This is called joyful perseverance, we never give up because we really care. It's this great joyful energy which comes from the heart.

For example you organise a retreat in Pelion and you write all the hundreds of emails and this comes from the joy of sharing the Dharma, sharing what is really good for each other. Then from caring, from love and compassion, also comes the wish to be less of a nuisance in this world, and from that understanding comes the wish to calm down, to develop one's emotions, to calm down and develop deep emotional stability. The Tibetan word for this dhyana Paramita, this meditative stability, is *samten* which means stable bodhichitta, stable motivation. So this fifth Paramita which is translated as meditation, actually means a very stable attitude of concern for everyone, Bodhichitta, not self-concern. Self-concern is de-stabilising, what is stabilising is to be in love and compassion for all, ourselves included. It is to be stable in ones aspiration for Awakening, for a completely open mind.

Then comes Wisdom. Wisdom comes from understanding firstly cause and effect, all these karmic relationships. So it is all this emotional and social understanding, psychological understanding of how mind works. Then it goes beyond that to understanding the true nature of mind and our experiences, that there is no self to be found in our own mind and that there is nothing stable in the emotions, thoughts and all these experiences that make up life.

So coming from the trunk or roots of caring, love and compassion come all the various forms of understanding. This understanding you know, generosity comes from understanding, wholesome conduct comes from understanding, patience comes from understanding, joyful perseverance comes from understanding, meditative absorption, mental stability, comes from understanding and wisdom of course *is* understanding. So just as you cannot separate the roots of a tree from the trunk and from its branches and leaves, so you cannot separate love, caring, compassion from the various forms of understanding that arise from it. So when in our prayer we say **through the power of practicing liberating qualities in order to benefit living beings** we express this unity of compassion and wisdom. The Dharma is only one thing - understanding. Understanding ourselves, understanding others, which means understanding the mind and the world, understanding how suffering arises, understanding how freedom arises, that's all. Perhaps understanding too how to communicate all that. It's all in one, it's all in one. Do you know what we need in order to understand? We need compassion and we need sati, that capacity that always directs the mind to the next thing or the next aspect of life that we wish to understand, that which is most important for us to understand, sati will bring us back to just that. So we need this awareness, this mindfulness with the inherent quality of reminding us of what is most important now and to be able to stay with that and deepen it. This is how understanding develops. By the way our friend sati is written with one t in Pali. It's good to know the proper name of our friend. His family name is Buddha.

Q: Are Buddha Vajradhara and Vajrasattva the same?

LT: Buddha Vajradhara and Buddha Vajrasattva are different in appearance but same in essence. Buddha Vajradhara is blue and Buddha Vajrasattva is white. Vajradhara has a vajra and bell in his left hand, exactly like Vajrasattva and Vajradhara holds the bell and the vajra in front of his chest, crossed, as a sign of the unity of compassion, which is the vajra, and bell which is wisdom. The unity of compassion and wisdom at the front at the level of our heart. This is the sign of primordial awakening. Vajrasattva has the vajra in front of the heart and the bell at the level of the hip on the left, which means the indestructible vajra nature of Awakening by understanding emptiness, Wisdom. I wouldn't be surprised if they changed colour again. If they happen to appear as a red Buddha, they are usually called Amitabha. Different in appearance, same in essence. Then there is also a yellow one and a green one. We will not go into details as this is just the creative minds of centuries of practitioners who have had all kinds of visions and then they have described these visions and then practices have developed.

So this prayer,

**Sangha cho dang tsog-kyi nam la
Jang-chub bar-du dag-ni kyab-su chi.
Dag-gi jin sog gyi-pe so-nam kyi
dro la pen-chir sangye drup-par shog.**

contains all the refuges of the Dharma. It is the prayer with which I wake up in the morning and with which I fall asleep in the evening. It is a reminder that is sufficient to be reminded of all of the rest of the Dharma. It's good to have such reminders. Choose your own reminder and cultivate it until it becomes a habit that effects the rest of your life. You might come across prayers that deeply touch you, the shorter they are, the better. Work with them until you know them by heart and they begin to flow naturally on their own in your mind.

When we were in a three-year retreat with a group, we were all reading this book about a Russian pilgrim who had a prayer of the heart. A Russian Orthodox practitioner who was doing a prayer connected with Jesus, and it's the same principle. You have to do it until it becomes a flow inside you. The prayer just continues on its own to always bring us to this deep understanding of what is the really important thing in life, the important qualities. In later centuries in India starting from the second and third centuries, the mantras developed which are prayers in such a condensed form that the individual syllables don't seem to make much sense any more it's so condensed. This morning we were doing the mantra **OM Vajrasattva Hum** pronounced in Tibetan **OM Benza Satto Hung**. The meaning of this mantra is **OM** which calls on the wisdom and the blessing of all Awakened ones. It's the standard syllable in India which always invokes the wisdom and blessings of awakening, which basically means we cannot experience awakening by our own efforts, it's not the ego, the me which will be able to accomplish Awakening, we are opening up to this other dimension, the non-self dimension. **Vajra** pronounced **Benza** means indestructible. It is also connected with this great force to cut through all delusion, this penetrating, cutting through, which finishes all confusion, illusion, emotional entanglement. **Sattva** pronounced **satto**, means the being, like you're a being, I'm a being, but not an entity in a limited form. Here the Sanskrit form carries a connotation which was overlooked by Tibetans, of hero, a courageous being. So we are saying and this is a reminder of our own indestructible nature and the indestructible nature of all sentient beings, and within this there is complete freedom from fear, there is absolute no fear. The word vajra reminds us of the vajra samadhi of the Buddha which is the imperturbable samadhi which cannot be disturbed by anything or anyone. The word satva as it also has this connotation of hero, connects to the incredible force to communicate the dharma, to live, to be the dharma in this world. Unshakeable. **HUM** is the syllable of awakened activity. Which means by the blessing **OM** of the Buddhas, may the activity of Awakened being manifest in this world. So this activity of awakening, of indestructible being made manifest, and active principle everywhere! May the activity of this indestructible mind quality manifest everywhere!

So you realise that these six syllables carry a lot of meaning with them. They connect us to the true nature of our mind. As we recite the mantra we are stabilised in that understanding. A mantra is meant to stabilise our mind. That's why we use mantra; it is the shortest form of prayer.

Then there is the 100 syllable mantra of Vajrasattva. The 100 syllables are actually not a mantra but a dharani. A dharani is easier to understand the words and the meaning, it's not so condensed as a mantra. There are commentaries written about the meaning of the 100 syllable mantra. This is quite challenging. I can offer this explanation to you, I have translated from the Tibetan. These days the Tibetan teachers are advising us to come back to the Sanskrit and to use that, but please don't ask this from me. I have recited literally millions of these and I can't see a reason to change now because it has worked. To change now would be like screwing up my own mind as I have the habit and it works on its own now. If you already have the habit, stay with that habit. If you don't have the habit yet, go to the Sanskrit if you like, you don't have to. Actually it's not Tibetan and Sanskrit, actually what happened is most of the Tibetan translators didn't go to India to study Sanskrit, they went to Nepal to study Sanskrit. Just as you have in every country between the North and the South in the same language, very different pronunciations or dialects. The Nepalis had a different pronunciation of Sanskrit which the Tibetans learnt and then they added a little bit more on their own. So what we are pronouncing in Tibetan is what they thought for centuries was the correct pronunciation of Sanskrit. So it shows it is not the words but the mind, the understanding which carries the meaning. I'm very glad that Saramati has been keeping quiet so far because he is a professor of Sanskrit and I'm sure he would have lots to comment on about my simple explanations! Those who wish to know more, please sit next to him at lunch and ask him more and he can tell you the true story!

Q: I wanted to ask something about chanting mantras. So in our tradition we chant the 100-syllable mantra with a tune which has a speed which goes like this..... So to do 108 mantras takes about three hours.

LT: Usually Tibetans don't chant in this slow way, they do a maximum of 21 in a slow way.

Q: Do you think there is a benefit in chanting fast?

LT: Definitely! Because there is much less control in mind. Yes definitely, you let it flow. This means letting go of the control in the speech so it is important that mantra becomes like a flow and that you can relax the intellectual control on your voice

Q: That's interesting as when we chant mantras in the way we do, I usually get quite tense.

LT: Yes, yes. So chanting mantras is a nice group activity but when you chant mantras on your own and you do it for 12 hours a day for a year or so, you wouldn't want to be chanting all the time. When you encounter this chanting of the mantra, when there is an initiation or empowerment given in the Tibetan tradition then the participants are asked to chant together to purify the mind. Then there is usually an *Omdze*, someone who is leading the chant and while the master is preparing for the initiation the others chant the mantra so that

they don't get completely distracted and keep onto the purity of their own mind.

There is a purification of speech that happens when we use mantra. We learn to express sounds, words of love and compassion, wisdom without needing to think intellectually along with the sound. You will see that if you pronounce the 100 syllable mantra with an audible voice, you will come to feel some blockages here and there and as you continue they will open up, they will purify. Actually the meaning here is that all our speech becomes like a mantra. Our speech begins to flow very naturally from the heart without all this control. Using mantra, a practitioner can experience how it is to communicate, share this sound, this prayer with the world without ego, the 'me' needing to do something. Then, as we get used to this, we find ourselves using normal language with the same quality of the heart, the same relaxation on the inside as with mantra and our normal communication begins to have the flavour of mantra.

So this is one of the three important areas in which the tantric practitioner works. This is mantra and speech, and I will quickly explain about mudra and body and about the mind. I'm talking about the Buddhist tantra, I don't know anything about the Hindu tantra. In Buddhist tantra we work on body, speech and mind. The idea is to synchronise all three so that they become a complete unity, which originally they are. You may have heard about mudras which are used to express symbolically some deeper meaning. Yesterday on the beach we used mudra to perform the offering. We were making the mudra of making the mandala and then lifting it to the Buddhas which mean please accept. The same thing can be expressed like this (shows with his hands) this is the mandala mudra. In the centre is Meru and here we have the four continents so when we make this mudra we offer the whole world to awakening. There are many, many mudras, it's like sign language. You communicate with your hands and you have complete mindfulness in your body as you are speaking with your body. It's very beautiful and the meaning is to unite one's awareness with the movements of the body. You may have noticed when observing people that some people when they move their hands and speak, the movement isn't synchronised, it doesn't go together. It's really important to synchronise the hand movements with what you say and then the words and your mental attitude becomes very strong. The more words, inner attitude and hands go together then the stronger the communication becomes. The synchronisation of body, speech and mind is a very important point in tantric practice and every movement of the body becomes a mudra, just like every word becomes mantra. Walking becomes mudra, it's the expression of being completely in one's body as one is placing the feet and walking. We learn this and practice and then we begin to speak with our *whole* body. The prostrations we did this morning are also mudra. Going to the heart expresses one thing, then touching the three points and prostrating expresses another thing. Completely bending the head and actually touching the ground with one's whole body is a very strong symbol and during the moments we speak and we do these movements, our mind is exactly in that which we communicate, there is no difference between the three. If you are

really united you cannot do this movement without going into a flowing state of mind. It's hard to do it rigidly; it changes the experience immediately.

So the one mudra we use when we are doing mantra is one little movement with our fingers, we are pulling the beads of the mala towards us. The thumb goes around the bead and pulls it towards us. Depending on which practice we are doing the thumb will go around clockwise or anti-clockwise. It's like going around a stupa, you are walking around the stupa of awakening. Or another meaning which comes from the Chenrezi or Avalokiteshvara practice and chanting **OM MANI PADME HUM** you are pulling sentient beings out of samsara, or from a yidam practice you are inviting the dakini messengers to open your mind. Every sensory experience is a dakini, so we open up to sensory experience, we approach it, we accept it and we let it go. Whatever sound, thought, visual impression, physical impression, are all invited and it's a dakini giving us a message. The message which the dakini delivers is 'this is not substantial, this is your own mind'. Depending on the practice we use a different number of fingers on which we have the mala sliding. You can have the mala slide on three fingers, on two fingers, normally it's four. Four stands here for the four activities of awakening.

The same lama who offered us this very profound, but hard to understand transmission, continues now with a different way of explaining.

Q: I have a question about what went before. What you said about as we don't pursue the past thought we are less emotionally attached, even the memory of what has gone before is not so imprinted. Following that, sometime over the hour we were together something deepened and at a certain point I think you said something which really helped me out of my dualistic state, but I don't remember what it was! It would be useful to know the things that helped that

LT: If you cannot remember, even if it was something important, don't worry. The real important understanding, what we call the intuitive Insight, will always be there. You can always rely on that. The rest is some conceptual bridge which you had. You cannot remember the bridge that got you there, don't worry about that. There will be more.

Normally we think we have to control our mind in meditation. But listen, a yogi lets his mind go wherever it chooses, like a fool, the cows he is tending. You agree a fool is not a very good herder. The cows will go wherever they please. What happens if we do this with our minds? We let the thoughts go wherever they please? It is a rhetorical question. If no one is interested in the thoughts they will go, but go nowhere, just disappear. If there is no fuel, no oil on the fire simple.

Q: Are we talking about meditation exclusively?

LT: Yes only about meditation as in everyday life we need to have moments to plan for the future, to learn from the past, to structure the present. This is a capacity we know well, it is about the letting go; the freedom we have lost. You will see when we learn that freedom again, how it will change our way of planning and structuring, there will be an effect on that, we will become light handed. All of this is about meditation.

Day 7

Let's chant together the prayer to the Lama: (chanting)

Then we purify the breath. As you get more familiar you can imagine that each time we breathe out we let go of all our pre-occupations. And as we breathe in, the rainbow light enters together with the in breath. (Deep breathing)

.....

I want to show you a little bit, when we hold the breath and we feel it becomes uncomfortable, "I want to breathe out". We don't immediately breathe out; we put the fists underneath and we hold just a few seconds longer, and then we breathe out, so it's a very controlled breathing out. And if we do it in a group, you can go before, you know, if you decide that now is too much; and you can wait for the others to finish.

The best way to do this is to not have any other breath in between; so here as we change sides and so on, there is no other breath in between, just always the one, and the full breathing out. And same here, but of course if you breathe out before the group, then you breathe normally, and you wait for the group to finish. Shall we do three more? We can start like this. One out breath and then we hold it; we'll hold it a bit longer now, so that you can practice (Deep breathing). Remember before breathing out, the hands and the fists are at your knees, and then as you decide to breathe out, you release them....

You know this is the old exercise these yogis used to do: they put a pile of dust here, ashes, and see if they can, with the prana coming through the fingers, blow the ashes. Right? So you do like this...(deep breath). So remember to have the control, and then you relax. And for you Popi you were leaning a little bit forward, so relax, lean back a little bit; otherwise it's perfect. Now as we go through the four contemplations which turn the mind towards the Dharma, I will just ring the singing bowl four times. And as each one rings, and you can read, you can contemplate what it means to you now: what is precious now, what are we thankful for now, how I feel change and impermanence now. And yes I have the text here; maybe you need the small text. (Bell x 4).....(concluding bells)

In this last contemplation the three kinds of suffering are mentioned. Do you remember them? -The obvious suffering, which is really all the disagreeable experiences. -The suffering of change; that even agreeable situations that we experience, because we cling to them, when they change and they change to something less agreeable, then there is this tension of something nice going away. This is the suffering due to changing agreeable situations.

And the last one? Use your own words; you know what you want to say but use your own words. -The suffering due to the nature of conditioned

existence. This is the suffering, the tension in our mind, due to the duality of subject/object, due to this split in our experience: “I” so important, and “my” experience; the objects, the other people. This tension is the most basic form of tension.

Okay let's recite together the summary starting on the bottom of page 1; we can read together: **“Grateful for the opportunity to practice today, I am aware of the ever-changing nature of life and inevitable death. And will use my body, speech and mind for whatever is beneficial. I go towards true happiness and freedom, rejoicing in loving awareness, in every situation.”**

This is pulling the four contemplations together in one little text. And now we go for the refuge practice with the prostrations. Here, you can choose a little bit how you visualise the refuge in front of you. It is most important to have the one central figure, like the Buddha or one awakened being that you really trust in. Choose one for now, for today. Okay.

In the Mahamudra transmission, it's the blue Buddha, which is the symbol of the awakening of ^[SEP]all Buddhas, all awakened ones; this is the symbol of the awakened mind, Buddha Vajradhara. Surrounded by all the awakened ones that we have confidence in. And some of you have great confidence in Jesus Christ as well; put him there. Put whatever; if it's Krishna, Ganesha, you can invite them, but here you have to be sure it's awakening. So in the centre you have to be sure that it's really true, complete awakening; that's what it's all about. And they represent love, compassion, wisdom, and all that we really want to realize before we die, and in all the lives to come we want to practice that...And then we stand up and we do the prostration coming from the heart, open with body, speech and mind for the blessing of the refuge and, as we touch the ground, with five places, we imagine that all the five mental poisons, they are called like this, the five big emotions, they dissolve into the golden ground and that they become free. Become free, together benefiting sentient beings. Is there a need for translation? Okay, let's do it again. Let's sing the first three ones together and then everyone goes at his own speed. (Chanting and prostrations)....You can of course do it in Greek or whatever language you like... (Prostrations and chanting continue)

.....Imagine that together with all living beings we direct ourselves towards true happiness....Awakening.^[SEP](Chanting and prostrations continue)....I have to tell you a little detail. In this tradition, when we are down and we are lying on the ground, we don't stay; we don't because we are just saying okay, let go and here we go again for the benefit of sentient beings. We don't stay in samsara; we go back into awakening and we serve all sentient beings. Maybe you want to do less or take rest, but no rest for samsara.(Chanting and prostrations continue).....^[SEP]If you need a rest, you can always take it standing..... And I have to tell you something more. When you go down you have to watch out that it is good for your back. Don't go down like this.....but go a little bit into the knees, and then you slide forward. Keep the belly muscles and the back muscles very tight, and when you get up, then go like this.....yeah, and then.....When you do it quickly then you see the movement; you first touch

with the knees and when you become really quick then the hands take over all the weight and there is almost no touching. Popi, you try it first. (laughter). Good. Good. Simon?

I immediately feel my knees move.

LT: You feel you have to preserve your knees?

Q: Yeah!

LT: Okay. Then you're doing it the safe way, what is good for you. But you can also do it even sitting. Just do the prostrations like this. But take care of your back! Okay Popi, do three. Yes. Like this. Put your feet together when you are down; feet and hands for a moment they touch each other. Yes. The energy you need is just so much that you're not sliding forward. Exactly, like that. At the last moment, there is a stretching here, so your whole body is stretched out. and then we get up. Okay. Because it's a mudra that is supposed to open the energy channels in the body, so it is a stretching. So let's try it. (Chanting and prostrations..)

And then we let the refuge dissolve into multi-coloured light which enters our stream of being; we become inseparable from the body, speech and mind of the awakened ones.....^[L]_[SEP]And we connect to our heart, breathing with love, compassion, joy, and equanimity. Breathing with a soft heart.

.....

(Bell) You can continue if you wish. The others, we can have a 10 minute break before continuing with the Vajrasattva practice.^[L]_[SEP]And I wish to welcome Amritsagar. Your girlfriend, right? Since you are together it's really important that you are here so you can share what is so important to you Thanasi as well. So that's really good. Welcome. And you can explain to her whatever is needed from the text or for the practice. Just share.^[L]_[SEP] But now we stay in silence for the break.

.....

Now for the Vajrasattva practice. You notice that I did not write it out here in the text; it's not inside, but actually the Karmapa himself gives a beautiful outline of the practice which one can follow; one can go through until one knows everything by heart. Then one does not have to read the visualisation, it comes by itself. But today I will make it a guided meditation to remind you of the visualisation. But those who are interested, you can follow in the text so that you know exactly how to do it at home.

Page 71: Yanis, when standing is getting too much because it is a long session, you can also walk up and down. While he is reciting mantra, he can also walk. When we are reciting mantras, the sound of someone walking is not disturbing. Let's quickly take refuge, so that those who come fresh are

connected to the refuge; and here, already if it comes spontaneously you can visualise Vajrasattva as your refuge. (Chanting) When breathing in and out after the refuge, we connect with bodhicitta and the wish to practice for all living beings. And due to that wish the white syllable “Pam” appears over our head which symbolizes bodhicitta. It transforms into a white, pure lotus that also represents bodhicitta. On top of it from the syllable “A” comes a white moon disc, flat and completely round and shining. It represents the skilful means of bodhicitta, the skilful means of wisdom and compassion. On that, from the syllable “Hum” comes a five-spoked vajra, standing upright, with the syllable “Hum” in its centre. From this emanate light rays making offerings to the enlightened ones. And the light rays also go to all sentient beings, accomplishing their benefits. Then the light rays gather back into the vajra, which transforms into the form of Buddha Vajrasattva. Vajrasattva is in essence our root teacher, the teacher we have confidence in. He is white and has one face and two arms. In his right hand he holds a five-spoked vajra upright in front of his heart. In his left hand he proudly holds a bell with a vajra handle against his hip. This means with the full assurance of awakening; this is the meaning of pride here. This bell is of a silver colour and the vajra is of a golden colour. And we remember that the vajra is the sign of compassion and skilful means, and that the bell is the sign of wisdom and emptiness. Buddha Vajrasattva is seated in the bodhisattva posture, which means with the right leg in front. His upper and lower garments are of multi-coloured divine silk. He is dressed like an Indian prince which shows the richness, the wealth of qualities; all of the awakened qualities are present in him. His hair is tied up in a topknot, which is crowned by master Akshobhya, the Buddha who represents his own teacher. He is the lord of the vajra family. The topknot with Akshobhya signifies that Vajrasattva has attained complete awakening and that he is crowned by all the Buddhas, he is blessed by all the Buddhas.

Vajrasattva is adorned with all the standard ornaments made by diverse precious substances. He wears a crown, which is a diadem, on the front of his forehead, the top of his forehead, which has five jewels, and these five jewels symbolize that he has realized the wisdom of the five Buddha families. He wears earrings, a short necklace, armlets, bracelets, anklets, a belt and a long necklace. Together these ornaments represent the six paramitas, the six liberating qualities of awakening. His body is also adorned with all the 32 and 80 signs of a Buddha. His appearance is very inspiring, full of dignity. And he emanates boundless light rays of rainbow colour into all directions. He appears clearly like a reflection in a mirror, perceivable yet not really existing. The Buddha is complete transparent, only made of light.

In his heart is another moon disc lying flat and on this stands a white “Hum” surrounded by the six syllable mantra “Om benza sato hung”, written clockwise and as if you can read it from the inside looking from the syllable “hung”. In the second circle are written the hundred syllables “Om benza sato samayam, anupalaya, etc.”, the long mantra of Vajrasattva. All these syllables

are white and shining like stars, or like strings of pearls. They are written clockwise, and later on when we recite the mantra, they will turn anti-clockwise.

Then we imagine that from these mantras and the syllable “Hum” in the heart of Vajrasattva emanate light rays which go to all the awakened ones in all universes. The awakened ones respond with sending back their blessings again in the form of light rays. And they grant their full blessing and ask Vajrasattva to act on their behalf as the refuge of all sentient beings. And we pray to Vajrasattva and say: Please open my mind, please help me to become aware of all the hindrances that obstruct the path to awakening, and not to identify with them; please grant your blessing that bodhicitta enters everywhere where there are still some traces of negativity. With this prayer we begin to recite the mantra. The mantra again is the short mantra “Om benza sato hung”.

(Chanting of mantra)

We imagine that the bodhicitta nectar flows from the turning mantra garland, fills the body of Vajrasattva, and enters us, purifying all the negativity, all the resistances, all the lack of awareness. Now I will not talk during the mantra phase. If you remember something that is closing your heart, some difficult memory, bring this loving nectar-like awareness into that memory. Lay open whatever you wish to confess and regret it deeply. Then let go of it and take the decision to practice bodhicitta in such situations. And then sit in the confidence of being a Buddha yourself.

(Chanting of mantra)

And those of us who know the long mantra, we can do the long mantra.

(Chanting continues)

If some difficult memory comes up, stay connected with the nectar flow.

(Chanting continues)

Now with the last part of the mantra recitation, we definitely let go of all identifications, it all dissolves into the golden ground below us and we recite the mantra “Om benza sato hung” letting ourselves be filled with the white bodhicitta nectar until it overflows and fills us even on the outside. And we sit in the deep confidence of being inside and outside Buddha mind, the awareness of all the Buddhas.

(Chanting of mantra)

And then we address ourselves the last time to Vajrasattva. We ask him is it really so that everything is purified now? And Vajrasattva smiles and says “of

course, my daughter; of course, my son” and dissolves into light. And this light dissolves into us and we become identical to Buddha Vajrasattva; in body, speech and mind we are just the same. Om benza sato hung. And then we dedicate with the very last prayer on page 3. (Chanting) The meaning was:

“Through this wholesome action, May I quickly accomplish Mahamudra, And establish all living beings, Without exception in that realisation.”

The meaning of the prayer is simple: may I realize Mahamudra and help everyone else to also realize it. That’s pretty much the program for the rest of our life. Now enjoy breakfast and if possible keep silent.

So as you probably have noticed we have three more days to go; Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. Thursday is departure day; the English group has to go very early. So these 3 days I want to focus with you on meditation. And you saw yesterday evening I gave you a little push to finish the chapter on the Four Forces so we could do it in just one session. So you will discover the jewels in those four forces as you are actually doing the practice, so think of them again and again, and you will see that there is a deep understanding of human nature in them.

I will give the explanations of the Vajrasattva mantra probably in the beginning of the afternoon session. Now we will continue a little bit with meditation teaching.

We are on page 139, **lesson 28**.

Now you remember the instructions of lesson 27, which was visualizing the Buddha in front of us. It was called an outer object because the point of reference is seemingly outside, but it is in our mind of course, it’s our own visualisation. So we will now take the next step which is bringing the visualisation into our own body, into our heart. This is done in order to help us understand that even what we imagine to be outside is still our mind. Do you know this famous Zen saying “If you meet the Buddha, kill him.”? It doesn’t incite to murder. It means if you fall into the illusion that the Buddha is outside of you and you think you can meet him outside, then kill that illusion. So focusing the mind on an inner object is usually a pure inner object, something that is really inspiring to connect with the pure qualities of awakening. The text says **“Visualize in the middle of an eight-petalled lotus in your heart any yidam deity you like!**

A yidam is a Buddha which is helping us to “yi-dam”: to “dam”, to stabilize our “yi-“, our mind! Some of the classical ones you might know are Tara, and Chenrezig (Avalokiteshvara in Sanskrit). We can also take the Buddha, to visualise the Buddha in our heart, or any other meditation deity to which we feel a deep connection. If, for example, a pure lotus flower for you is a symbol of awakening, then you can just visualise such a pure lotus and you don’t need to put a meditation deity on top, there is no need. You can also visualise a sphere of light, or nothing at all, just connecting to the open vivid nature of

our heart-mind. The meditation deity in our heart serves like a bridge to go from ordinary perception of ourselves to a perception of our own awakened nature, so we can feel how free we can actually be. So, for example, with my mother, I would tell her to just visualise Jesus Christ in her heart. It doesn't make a difference what form you choose; it's important that the form connects us with the best and deepest of our qualities.

We might think as Buddhists that it is a sacrilege to visualise something else, but the important thing is to connect it with the qualities of awakening. So I have worked with people who simply felt like having a rainbow in their heart, or a sunrise. Or you can even imagine being at the beach down there, the water in front of you, the sky and the sea merging and you can have that inside your own being, your chest. Is your mind flexible enough, playful enough, to visualise that inside? Here you are now, running on the beach down there? It's possible. We can breathe inside here, we can breathe the air from down there. We carry with us the possibility to enter that inner surrounding that we choose to be. Now what seems to be very helpful is that each person decides on a bridge, on some meditation deity that will be most inspiring to us. And when you allow your mind to be playful it can do all sorts of things.

While I talk with you in my heart there is the bodhi tree with the Buddha sitting underneath and about a dozen disciples around. And they are asking questions and the Buddha is answering. And this continues, completely vivid while I talk to you. This is something you will discover is a wonderful capacity of our mind, to open up inner spaces and to stay connected with them as outwardly you are carrying on a different activity.

And it can change; there is an inner life. Now, the inner scene, I allowed it to change and I was very surprised by what happened. I was suddenly inwardly standing at the deathbed of my mother. Which is all very fine. We will all die one day. She went before me, so in a way everything is in normal order. So I talk about this to encourage you to be really flexible and open and to allow these inner visions to arise. And in order to learn that we start with some very helpful, traditional images which are certified, trademarked, qualified, certified; 1,000 years of testing out, no damage, no side effects, only good effects.

Q: Are you doing something to get images or do you just let them appear?

LT: Well, I can do something to stimulate them, otherwise I can also just allow them to appear, I stay connected with the qualities, and from the qualities, they appear. The best way is to give a little impulse, for example, saying now, oh, let me *discover* Vajrasattva in my heart; so you give a little direction. And then you discover that it is unfolding, you're not making it, it is unfolding to your inner vision. Like when I was talking to you, I invited Vajrasattva into my heart, and discovered him in my heart when answering you. And I also give space for something surprising to happen; so not control everything but allow for some spontaneity in this manifestation. The surprise was that Vajrasattva was waving his vajra and saying "Hi, Here I am; you are calling me in from outside; now I am not only on the top of your head, but as you like, here I am in the middle of your heart." There was a dialogue going on and, then as she

was translating, I talked to you again, and then he said “now let’s be serious”, and he placed himself in the proper posture. So stay close to the tradition because this is the certified method; this is the one you can be sure there is no harm, there is only benefit. But do not imprison your mind in the method because it is the method that has to serve your mind.

So for now I invite you to work with Vajrasattva so that we are doing each exercise with the same image; it will make things easier. Because the next half sentence [on [page139](#)] says “...**either in the procedure of the five aspects of manifest enlightenment or in the threefold procedure, or all at once, complete the moment you think of it.**” The five-fold procedure of visualisation, this is the one we used in the Vajrasattva practice. The lotus, the moon, and the attribute, the vajra with the HUNG in the centre, sending out the light, the light coming back, and then the appearance of the physical form of Vajrasattva, makes five. I made it; I’m very proud of myself; I got that together. This would be the extensive procedure, and then there comes the average version, the three steps. !

So the three-fold would be the lotus, moon and vajra with the hung; the lotus, the moon and the attribute, they appear together in one figure, you have them all there, the lotus, the moon disc and the vajra. Then there is the sending out and the coming back of the light, the second; and third one is the appearance of Vajrasattva.

And then there is the all-at-once visualisation, boof! all at once, Vajrasattva is there.

But usually in the Vajrayana, this Buddhist tantric approach, you learn the step by step procedure, and when you’re familiar with that, you simplify and it appears by itself. Whatever we are familiar with is really easy to let appear in one moment. I think it was quite easy for you to have the beach come back, because we just saw it recently, and so it’s very present in our mind, we didn’t need to construct. If we don’t remember, we probably have to say, okay, there is the curve of the pebbles, there is the water, all these different shapes of rocks on the right, all these different shapes of rocks on the left side; and you go through the details and like this you invite the overall pictures step by step. And don’t be surprised that sometimes what we are most familiar with is more difficult to visualise. For example many people find it difficult to visualise the face of their mother or to visualise ourselves, although we look everyday into the mirror. That has different reasons, because it’s very close to us; we don’t have the necessary distance.

Now I have to explain to you why there is a seed syllable, and then from the “Pam”, which is short for padma, the lotus, there appears the lotus. Why are they preceded by the seed syllables? Why are there all these syllables, what are they doing in there?!

The reason is that everything we see, we visualise, or we think is preceded by an idea; it is like the germ from which the full image arises. Like the seed, it’s called seed syllable. So when I told you to visualise the beach you heard the word beach. That was an idea. From the idea, which you can write as your

seed syllable, “beach”, it unfolds and becomes the lived experience of beach. But it was preceded by something which you just heard, the word that came to your ears and was understood in mind, and from that it all came. So I say the face of your mother, and the seed syllable would be “Mom”. From “Mom”, there she is, then it unfolds; you know, first there is the idea and then is the unfolding of the idea.

So the seed syllable HUNG for Vajrasattva is the essence, the condensed essence, the full energy, of everything that Vajrasattva stands for. It unites the purity, the bodhicitta, the activity, all the qualities of Buddhahood; the white syllable HUNG. And this seed idea, this seed syllable, then communicates by rays of light with the Buddhas and with all sentient beings. And through this, this key idea is put into context. You can only understand Vajrasattva in relation to all other Buddhas and in relation to sentient beings. That what makes Vajrasattva exactly that, the one that unites the qualities of all Buddhas, and the one who takes care of all sentient beings.

Let’s take another seed syllable: “Dad”, which probably in Greek it would be “Pa”; you know, father, dad. It’s “Ba”? “Baba”; okay, “Ba”. And when you think of dad, that’s very fine but when you put dad in the context of his ancestors and in the context of his children; surrounded and in contact with the children and in contact with all the ancestors, then “dad” takes the full meaning. It is in that context that this idea really develops its full strength. Otherwise it’s just a person alone which we call “dad”; we don’t really see why we call him dad. We only see that when we see the family connections; and of course, his wife, the mother.

Here we are dealing with an awakened dimension, so by putting the “hung”, which is the idea of Vajrasattva, into the context of all Buddhas who send their empowerment, then we put this Buddha in the context of all the awakening that ever has happened, happens now, and will happen in all universes. And then the light going to all sentient beings puts this Buddha in the context of all those who might ever need support to enter awakening. And that’s the meaning of bodhicitta, to go towards awakening for all sentient beings. So from that Vajrasattva appears; that’s the real reason Vajrasattva appears; because of bodhicitta.

Let’s do that; let’s do that exercise. You might be more at ease doing it with closed eyes, but visualisation does not depend on closed eyes at all. We can calm our mind and open it at the same time.

Breathing in and breathing out, we open the inner space. And within that space in our heart appears the syllable PAM; from this white PAM comes a white lotus with eight petals. It is completely alive with a slight pink tinge to it emanating light. And we understand from within that this stands for compassion, as the most important aspect of bodhicitta. And then..

Let us finish this small lesson on visualizing or, better, focusing the mind on an inner object. The Karmapa continues writing and says [\[page 139\]](#) **“If you prefer, you can meditate on your teacher [in your heart].”** This means you could do a guru yoga with the guru in your heart. This does not refer to want-

to-be gurus like myself; I don't want you to visualise me in your heart. It refers to gurus like Milarepa, Gampopa, the Karmapas, or maybe from other traditions, those which you are inspired by, and which are surely fully awakened.

“If the mind does not stay on the face, the arms and so on, hold the mind on their essence, a dazzling white, bright and luminous light sphere [or the seed syllable, which has the same function].” The meaning of this is to tie our elephant mind with the rope of mindfulness to the pillar of the object [which means the visualisation]. You know this famous drawing of the elephant which starts out black and then is being guided on the path of mental calm until it becomes completely stable and white. It is not only a Zen drawing, it was very famous in the Tibetan tradition as well. First our mind is more like a wild elephant which needs to be tamed. And how do we tame our mind? By connecting it again and again to the qualities of awakening. It's a nice way to get tamed. And what is the rope? The rope is not a rope to beat or to chain, but it's a rope of mindfulness. It's the friend *sati* always reminding us 'Come back dear elephant, visualise the Buddha in your heart.' Like this it is *sati* reminding us, bringing us back. We always come back as if through our intention we were connected to the meditation object.

Sometimes when our mind is wired, the image of a rope is really good, because we are like; we want to go off, this way, and okay, back here, and back here, and back here. And we remind ourselves very often to come back to the object. And we have done that 20 times, 30 times, and then that agitation will calm down, and then we have to remind ourselves less often.

“From the *Sutralamkara* we hear [[lots of loud ambient noise]] [be patient whatever arises]...

“ ‘ With the support of an object the non-objectifiable is fully brought forth.’ ”

That's quite a profound quote. So we use the support of a visualisation which has characteristics; you can describe it. Like a Buddha in our heart with all the different characteristics we talked about. But actually we are meditating on what cannot be described, which is the meaning behind the symbolism; the symbolism is indicating a deeper meaning which cannot be described in words. We are actually meditating on the nature of mind, awakened mind. And we use the help of visualising a meditation deity which serves as a bridge or a opening door to that which cannot be described. So up to here this was in this section then meditating with objects with some reference point; actually the word object means reference point, something you can relate to.

How was it for you to do this exercise with the Buddha in your heart? Did you make any new discoveries, even some surprise discoveries? And what questions arose from that?

Q: For me, many feelings came up, more quickly than in other visualisations or other meditations with no visualisations. So it was the sentimental part of

myself. And after that, another thing was a very big feeling of purification and releasing; it was very effective for me.

LT: Would you be okay to indicate what kinds of feelings came while you were meditating?

Q: Emotions from a remembrance of specific events in my life that had to do with attachment, with anger, with aversion.

LT: And then the presence of Vajrasattva in your own heart, did it help you?

Q: Yes, it helped me [???] to be dissolved by this visualisation of nectar that filled me, from my hair [to there ???].

LT: Ok. Good. Thank you.
Would anyone else be willing to share a little bit?

Q: For me, it's not so easy; the visualisation was quite complicated for me to get it; so I just let it go. It was easy to get the feeling, just the feeling, without any pictures or visualisation, so I chose that way.

LT: This is probably due to trying too hard. So next time you give it a try, remind yourself of simply discovering what is already there. And you might just discover that this presence which you fear is very light, and maybe you begin to discover that it is easy to feel like light rays coming from your heart, like beginning to discover also with the visual imagination.

Q: We say visualisation, but somehow it differs from the visual imprint I have from objects that I see, so it is more thought than picture.

LT: It is thinking; it is part of the mental processes; it is moving mind. When it stays conceptual thought then we do not see anything, we do not hear any sounds, it's just really then like words. But then we can also think in a non-conceptual way, which are these images and sounds and feelings, and they can express themselves later on in concepts, but this is also all kinds of mind movements which you can call thinking; it's non-conceptual thinking.

So with this non-conceptual thinking, it's not important for these images whether you have actually seen them before or never seen any of them. It's not important if one has visual experience from the past or whether one is just really making it up.

Q: So is it okay when I start to hold onto an image, when it becomes more solid, then to leave it and go back to this searching or active mind.

LT: It's stimulating.

Q: Yes, stimulating.

LT: Yes, this is very helpful; make it come alive again. That's why I gave you

this help with the kind of throbbing seed syllable, because then it doesn't become static. That's why the mantras are turning and so on. It's staying alive; it doesn't become just like a photo.

In the Tibetan language they don't call it photo meditation, but thangka meditation. The thangka is something like this; this is a thangka. And then to visualise as if you were looking at the thangka is one of the errors of visualisation practice. It's too static; you shouldn't have such a static image. And so we do as Michael suggested, we relax a little and let it come afresh and more alive.

Q: This time, visualizing in the heart seemed much more natural. Because of this positioning, when I visualise on my head it's almost as if my eyes want to go up there, but when it was in the heart there was no feeling of location; it was just right in the centre of my being. So much easier and more natural.

LT: For many it feels like this. That what is supposed to be more difficult, in the heart, actually feels more natural to many of us. You can do it like this. But, this thing with the eyes going up there is because you still connect the outer vision seen with the inner imagination; you have not really become confident that the outer seeing has nothing to do with the inner seeing.

Q: It's very difficult with it on the head because I don't know how to look at it; from the front, from behind.

LT: It shows that actually it would be good for you for some time to continue with that until you have become completely at peace with the idea of having a Buddha somewhere in space. It shows that we always want to position ourselves in relation to the reference point, above, behind, above, below. So the exercise continues then. You would imagine looking at Buddha Vajrasattva on top, from front, from the left, from behind, from the right, above, below; and you go inside, you look inside; and then you do all at once.

The difficulty you experience is part of the cognitive process, not the emotional process. It's the way we habitually perceive reality. We have this habit that when we see, we see in front, in our visual field, and so we continue with this habit into the imagination. And in our contact with people, the same thing happens. And one of the famous relationship exercises is that now, when I am looking at you, I imagine what it must be like for you to look at me. And then we continue and at the same time I imagine how it is like for Anna to be looking at you. And for everyone in the room to be looking at the two of us. And then how it feels from within for each one of us in the room, how it feels from within, what we see. So you see how this exercise of visualisation is connected with the capacity to take a different perspective, and then to take all perspectives, and then to take all perspectives at once.

And that's called an awakened perspective, which has no centre.

Q: What Titika experienced was very deep and very natural. She was following instructions easily and she was feeling in unity with these

instructions, with all the visualisations. And she felt deeply calmed and into light and becoming one with the Buddha; the Buddha was everywhere, inside, outside, above, below; in this formless state, and at this point, being Buddha Vajrasattva in her heart, she put in her heart people with problems and all the people who are responsible for love and justice on the planet, with the wish that they become purified, and she felt on the crown of her head a very intense sensation of heat and itchiness, and it was a very full experience.

LT: Titika, what you discovered was actually the next step in practice; it opened up naturally to you. You entered natural yidam practice. Which means that the Buddha in our heart begins to fill all our mind. There is nothing else left but this Buddha presence, this awakened presence. This is what you experienced. We become the Buddha and then we begin to perform Buddha activity, which is taking sentient beings into our heart. And so because it has happened naturally to you, you can continue like this. And when you recite the mantra you can recite it like this.

Let's have another break of 20 minutes and then we'll meditate quietly; I'll do some guided meditation with you.

.....

Would you prefer to meditate standing? You can do it anytime.
It's a bit hot today. I heard some of us have little problem with low blood pressure when it's so hot; Some of us have to deal with high blood pressure. We take it as it comes, we relax with it.

Andreas I saw you have my latest book with you; I want to show it to the others. This book came out in German at the end of December; it is a translation of a commentary to this book. It is called *The Torch of True Meaning*; and this is *The Ocean of True Meaning*. In English the old title is *The Torch of Certainty*. I translated the text from Tibetan; the text is by Jamgon Kongtrul, a famous 19th century master of Tibet. And this is the text we usually use for explaining the preliminary practices. This is the page with the drawing of Vajrasattva. And then when you go into the mandala section you find many, many drawings of the Mandala of the universe with the 37 points; how to place the rice seeds, the long version and the short version; and then we made drawings of all the traditional offerings. So, what I suggest is that one of you makes photos of the pages so you can have them for your practice.

And already someone has offered to translate it into English, the new translation here, the same translator who did *Heart Advice of a Mahamudra Master* by Gendun Rinpoche, for which Vessantara and Vijayamala did the final English proofreading. So hopefully you get that done before we reach the mandala section.

Let's begin with another **meditation**.

We do as usual, we feel our body, the physical sensations.

And I want to draw your attention to the fact that there is no body.

Body is only an idea. What is the feeling, what are all the feelings which all together make up the experience of the body just now?

...

And then have a look if you can separate the body experience from the mind experience---actually we cannot.

What we call mind is actually just an idea. What is the actual experience of what we usually call mind?

Meditating without ideas of a body and of a mind. Be in the direct experience.

...

Remain fluid in the experience of just now

...

Remain fluid and aware.

...

{bell}

In the meditation section where we were, on page 127, the Karmapa continues; this is just after the six points of Tilopa, at the bottom of the page: **"The main method in seeking mental calm is first of all devotion to the spiritual teachers."**

He has not talked much about this so far in the book, though we did not work on the section of the guru yoga yet, but actually it's very important for Mahamudra practice. This devotion is an inspiration, a love, a respect and gratitude. And this inspiration comes from our feeling, yes, yes, there is something in the teachers which I need and that inspires me; yes, I would like to become like that, this aspect of freedom, fluidity, openness, and so forth; I feel the qualities.

And there is this gratitude for the generations of teachers, you know for two and a half thousand years, going through the times, and learning, practicing and then passing on the Dharma; it's incredible. And just by this gratitude one can feel a deep devotion.

And then there comes the actual experience that we put the Dharma into practice, the Dharma which we receive, we can read, which we hear, we can study; we put it into practice and it works. And when it works we have this feeling of wow, the mind becomes calm, it becomes wide open, easier to feel love and compassion, and we are so thankful; and this again nourishes our devotion for the Dharma and those who pass on the Dharma to us, whoever it is.

The text continues:

"Then it is important to keep the body posture and the gaze correctly."

When we can we sit straight with a relaxed gaze. When the back is not straight it is difficult to enter into a really clear mind. A crooked posture, always slumping back and so on, leads to a dull mind usually. When we have learned to enter a calm clear mind with the help of a good posture, then we

also know how to find in that calm clear mind when relaxing the posture. Then it is possible, it is easier because we know the way, we know how to get there.

I cannot really advise you to always meditate on your sofa with your pillows around you. Your practice will not develop so nicely. But I do advise you to use the sofa for meditation when you feel tired and you need that relaxation; then maybe it's the best place to be. In addition to that you could apply the following method of settling the mind according to Saraha (Indian, 2nd century):

“If I let the mind go free it will remain firm and unmoving. I have realized it to be like a camel mother doing always the opposite.”

If I leave the mind free, I give it all space, the mind stays and becomes calm. We have done this many times in these past days, I think you have some experience of it.

When I try to control the mind, telling it “stay”, it revolts inside. This is true for the mind which is not at ease yet, not really relaxed. A trained mind, which is a comfortable mind, you can tell it to stay, it will stay; you can tell it to go it will also stay.

A normal mind when you tell it “think, think, think”, it does not remember how to think; when you tell it “don't think”, it will think of all kinds of things. A well-trained mind will think when you tell it to think and will stop when you tell it to stop, it will relax when you tell it to relax; it just does what is needed.

You need to understand what a rope is and what is meant by ‘tying’. Here, the rope of mindfulness is to always remember sati, bringing you back, let the mind free, let it free, let it be free, that's the rope of mindfulness. Unwavering. So, it's still the rope of mindfulness; as I explained before, the rope is not a rope, but it is loving-kindness, loving-awareness, and it tells us, “Do the best; do what's best for you.”

Q: So this isn't manipulating things?

LT: No, it's inviting the mind to take all its freedom, and we are unwavering in that. Yes.

Q: Unwavering means stable? Yes.

So what's this example with the mother camel? A mother camel is a camel which has a young camel at home. As soon as you set it free, it will go home. You go on the trip with a mother camel, you only have to tell it where you want to go; the way back it will find all alone. There is nothing more important for a camel mother than to stay with its young baby. And when you try to take it away it resists. Of course, you can convince it, but then it wants to come home very quickly. Now, our mind is like that; it wants to go home. Where is home? It's this wide open relaxed natural being; that's our home.

Our mind is like a rubber band. It always wants to go into the state of least tension. And all this thinking, this emotional entanglement, it's under so much tension. The moment we allow the mind, it will go home. This is an incredible discovery, when you begin to see that. Wow. Then meditation becomes so easy. You just let the camel mother go home. Relax and go home.

There is also the example of the wild horse. Give the wild horse all the space to run, it will run for a while, and it will settle and be very quiet. Somewhere it will settle. And we agitate our mind with hope and fear and bring it under tension, then, well it is not at home.

So, in a way, the mind seeks home, seeks its own nature. It's the agitated mind that wants to go home. The nature of mind, once we're in natural mind as it is, does not seek for anything. So that was the meaning of this famous quote by Sahara.

If you think that you must hold onto the mind, not letting it escape anywhere, this thought form itself, this idea itself, will cause mental activity.

"For example, we come newly to a town" or a small village like Kalamaki, and "we are told by the local sheriff of the place to not go anywhere else, to stay here for today. Through this request, which is like an order, we will find it difficult to do so, even if we had originally come to this place with the intention of staying. We will think "this is not a good idea; I had better get out of here!" and we will make preparations to escape. If the sheriff had not said anything, the newcomer would have stayed happily as long as he had come to stay for."

Our mind is like that. If you tell it "This is your new home; stay here!", it will quickly find other occupations. "Come on, you must relax this is good for you." No, tell your mind "Do what you want. Run if you want; take all this, all this space, is here for you." And let the karmic fireworks die down by themselves, work themselves out; it might take a little while, but why not? No problem. In this case, the only one who is tense in the story is be the sheriff. It's the sheriff that's got ego, who is always not sure if things go the right way. This self-importance is actually what needs to relax. And it's only if that relaxes that we can give space to the mind to be as it is. The sheriff has to relax.

So Karmapa continues:

Relax completely without laying any work on the mind, and just be undistracted without meditating on anything whatsoever.

This paragraph here [\[page 128\]](#), I will give you as we do the meditation. These are all direct meditation instructions. So let's do another little session of meditation.

Meditation

So allow the mind to do whatever it wishes to do.

...

"[Relax completely], not laying any work on the mind."

...

"Just be undistracted without meditating on anything whatsoever."...

"Remain relaxed, loose, at ease without fabricating or altering anything whatsoever."...

"Stay spaciously in a state that is unconcerned, free from hope and fear."...

"Not pursuing the past, not anticipating the future.." and not thinking about the present; without any modification, just being aware....

Simply aware....

"Cut completely all mental elaborations concerning the outer world"; which means no need to think about sensory experiences....

Know all experiences to be mind....

[End of meditation]

Chanting dedication.

I encourage you in your lunch break to do at least one other meditation session like this one for yourself to see if you can get yourself into this deep, calm and openness. You have it all here, all the instructions are written here. And you need to be able to do this yourself. i am a bad teacher if I can't get you to do this yourself.

.....

Page 160, **lesson 41:**

Here we go again with intuitive insight:

Later the teacher will ask the practitioner: 'What is the essence of mind like when it is calm?'

So I would like to hear your answers. What is the mind like in-between thoughts? That's what's called the calm mind; the calm mind is the one which is not into conceptual thinking. How is the mind?

Want to check first before giving an answer? Oh, there is an answer coming-Varasuri?

Varasuri: Still, silent and lucid.

LT: Still, silent and lucid, okay. How still is it? Is it an unmoving stillness, or

what kind is it?

Q: A vivid stillness.

LT: A vivid stillness. What makes it vivid?

Q: Clarity of mind. Unobstructedness.

LT: Yes, unobstructedness. What do you mean? What do you observe when, what is your experience when you live unobstructed, when you live this vividness? What is really going on there?

Q: Joy.

LT: Oh, it's even joyful. Oh it's not so calm then; there is something going on, there is some joy, that taste of joy, and vivid; there is a clarity. Okay, good.

How is it for you? Is it like she says? What is your experience? Ulrika [???

Ulrika: My experience is that at a certain stage when ...[indistinct???]... It's not easy to describe; it's something pulsating, something which is constantly active, pulsing, and it's not easy to ...[???

LT: Yes, there is a pulsating quality to that. Yes, I can relate to that observation. Sounds very vivid as well. There is no conceptual thinking but still there is something very alive there. And it's everywhere.

Further observations? Saramati and then Satyanandi.

Q: It reminds me of when I was young, up until my teenage years, during summer vacations I would often wake in the morning and feel a sense that anything was possible; including just staying in bed.

LT: There is this feeling of a vibrant potential, yeah?

Q: Yes. But I was eager to get up; I never stayed in bed.

Q: What I experience is there is, well, a knowing quality.

LT: A knowing quality, sure...

Q: And it feels as though my head, the bones of the skull open, and there's a flowing quality that feels very refreshing.

LT: A refreshing, flowing quality and physically feeling that because there's no thinking, there is the possibility to expand. Yes.

Q: I don't know if that's it, but I feel like I jump into another dimension; it's a clear, vivid quality.

LT: And this jump, where does it come from? What was there before? So there is this clear, vivid dimension....

Q: It's a strange state, I would say; it is a little bit like falling asleep, but instead of falling asleep, there is a jump

LT: So a real shift, a real shift of dimension. Yes.

Q: For me, I am feeling my body stretching out the sides, and thoughts are coming but not so fast, so I have more space, coming and going and not so

LT: So there's a slowing down of the thinking process, and some movement, and this feeling of physical expansion, and more space.

Q: For me there's a sense of curiosity but without thoughts, and with the curiosity is a sense of humour, a sense of amusement, quite light. And I was thinking about that and an image came of the Cheshire cat from 'Alice in Wonderland', sitting on a branch on a tree, and the cat disappears and just the smile is left. The smile is the qualities.

LT: So it's a real lightness, so it's a smile; and this smile, is it about something?

Q: No.

LT: No. It is a smile not really with a cause. Yes, Like this. It's maybe related to the joy that Varasuri was talking about.

LT: Popi you look like you also want to share something about the calm mind. Is it true? How is your discovery of the calm mind?

Popi: I don't know.

LT: You don't know? What happens when the last part has finished before the next one comes? What is in-between?

Q: I don't know, because I don't have an experience there.

LT: Yes. Say what you can't say, in Greek.

Q: There is no-one at that point observing what is happening.

LT: Yes. You really get lost. So is there any problem with that?

Q: No.

LT: Good. Get lost more often. It's fine. And when you think, when the thinking comes back, how is it then?

Q: Then there is the desire to create an image for this experience, but it's a

desire of the mind to do this.

LT: And because you are aware that it is a desire of the mind, you don't follow this desire. Is that so?

Q [Transl by Natasha]: She follows it. She can create the experience and she can describe it, but it is not true.

LT: That's very good. You don't have to describe the experience. And to carry that over into the thinking mind also, no need to form unnecessary concepts, no need; rest as simple as it was before, even in the active mind.

If it's possible, go back and forth, active mind, calm mind; thinking mind, no-thinking mind. See. What is the difference, if there is a difference, how it is. Okay. Thank you. You have a question about this?

Q: Not yet

LT: Not yet; it's about to form. It's underground. Tell me when it comes.

Now let's see what Karmapa finds with our answers. Let's have a look, page 160:

"If [the practitioner] answers, 'Apart from the mind being calm, I do not know what the essence [the essential nature] of mind is like'.

You know that's what Varasuri was first saying, it's still and clear and so on; what kind of stillness? And if she had said "Apart from being still, I don't know", then maybe she would have received the next one. But she went further, she described further, she was more there, able to describe more.

"And then the teacher should ask, 'Well, is this consciousness something dull, rather obscure and dark, or is it something clear, vividly alert and naked?' If [the practitioner] **answers that it is like the latter, then [the practitioner] has seen the essence of mind.**"

We have to add here, has "observed" some of the essential nature of mind, not "seen" the nature of mind; that is not yet. Really the practitioner was in touch with the nature of mind.

"If however he [or she] answers that it is like the former, he should practice some more."

Okay, let's practice this.

Meditation:

Allow the mind to be completely free....

Let it gallop like a horse on an enormous mountain....

And be aware, if you can see an active mind, be curious and interested; how is it active? How is it when the mind is thinking, hearing, seeing, displaying images, sounds?...

And if the mind is not moving, be interested to know how is it this mind, how is it to be calm, not thinking?...

Is your experience of now an active awareness or a calm awareness?...

Open even more. Relax. No need to fabricate anything.

And looking in, how's your mind now?...

Bell.

Now when it is still fresh, if you compare your experience of calm with your experience at the very beginning of this retreat. Has it changed? Has it developed?

Maybe it is difficult to remember; do you feel something has changed for you?

Q: My stillness is deeper and stays more in the moment, when the mind has no thought.

LT: Yes. Deeper stillness and it stays longer, and the space between is longer.

Anyone else who can say something else about the difference observed? Any other observations on how your experience of the calm mind has changed from eight days ago?

Q: I'm noticing there's more trust, trust to relax.

LT: And what effect does this increased trust have on the way you feel, the way you experience your mind?

Q: I think what I was saying earlier about curiosity and humour being there is part of the result, like relaxing in my shoulders, relaxing and the effect that has on my mind. There's a looking for understanding from a different direction, and it's happening on its own.

Q: For me it became far easier just to relax;... if I'm thinking or if I'm talking outside and coming back, it's easy to just let it go, and just stay in a calm mind.

LT: So there's a much easier access to a calm mind, to find your way back to it.

Q: It's easier to switch.

Q: The struggle between calm mind and thoughts has become more like a play, a game; they don't chase each other; they just happen.

LT: They just happen. There is no more struggle in that case.

Q: There is a feeling of coming home.

LT: A feeling of coming home.

Q: For me, something inside myself is dropping, ... but I have more tension, something to let go deeper.

I am sitting here, it is good. I am trying to listen to the teachings and I am happy with all, but in meditation ...

LT: Relax, relax more, more often lying down, more often offering yourself this depth of relaxation as far as you can go.

Q: ..I discover that in these last sessions that I relax, but then the mind appears a little bit cloudy and I am almost falling asleep; not falling asleep, but suddenly I am half asleep and I discover, oh, there are thoughts, cloudy like in the morning when I wake up. I am not sure this is the right way.

LT: So when you relax, do I understand properly, it becomes a little bit duller.

A: Yeah; first maybe there's an experience of clarity, or clear mind, or mind or whatever, and then.. slowly..]

LT: We have two possibilities. You can become aware inside of the dullness, of the sleepiness, and begin to be interested in how is this sleepy mind? Or you keep your sessions short, you finish the session as long as you are still in the clarity; you don't go further. That is why I keep the meditation sessions with you quite short; because if you were to go longer, many of you would have that experience that Andreas is describing. Many of you would go into this torpor (sluggishness, drowsiness).

Q: I haven't much to compare, but from just one day being with you, I notice the flies don't bother me so much, but there's a certain kind of strength or power that comes from the stillness. It wants to stay there, so it doesn't let things affect it so much. But then I have a thing like Andreas has that goes on for longer.

LT: Twenty minutes break and then we will listen to the Karmapa again, what he says to these questions.

p 160:

"Again the teacher will ask the practitioner, 'What difference is there between the calm mind as you have experienced it previously and now?'" [Well let's think, perhaps] "...the student replies, 'Previously mental calm was an experience of an easy, loose consciousness with the appearances becoming [after a while] dim and hazy, into which I relaxed

and made no more effort as I used to do previously. I did not recognize each thought and did not see the essence [nature] of mind. There was a dense calm, as if the consciousness had fallen into a pit. Or like a fly stuck wherever it lands, there was a settling in a state of unclear awareness.” This was previously.

“‘Nowadays the calm mind is clear and bright and ungraspable.’ [this kind of student] has seen the essence [nature] of mind only a little bit.” To us it sounds maybe really nice, that the mind is already clear and bright and we get in touch with this ungraspable nature, but this is not yet quite it. **“If the answer is that the mind is the same as before, then the teacher should give the following instructions:”**

So, as before, this would be a calm that is just calm, and you can’t say more about it. Calm, relaxed and clear. Then the teacher would say something like this:

“‘ With this kind of experience you can only suppress the mind [the emotions, the mental poisons].’”

You can only pacify them for a while, but they will come up as soon as you let go of the control. Actually this kind of mental calm would be used to get away from the emotions. It’s a form of control, I am finding my peace somewhere else. I’m not opening up to the experience but trying to get into my little cocoon. Many people meditate like this, many, many, many. Because this seems to be the quickest way to be happy; to get away from the dangerous stuff, the emotional stuff, and use my spiritual practice to get at something more peaceful, safe, and quiet. Am I the only one who did that in the past or do you know this kind of thing? (Laughter) I guess you know. If you haven’t found out yet, check if it is not still going on. (Laughter)

You might have been surprised that, here, the way we practised from the beginning, from the first day, was opening, opening, opening, right? This was what we did. Very little control and concentration. I showed you a little bit how to do it; remember the exercise with the waterfall? But your tendency to control is already so big, that I don’t need to reinforce that. And then the surprise is that as we open up, open up, open up, we find a calm that is not suppressing, doing away with the emotions. And some of you were surprised to feel that this is coming up, emotions are coming up from within, because you lifted off the lid, you opened the lid, and something was touched, something came up, and it’s a good process, it’s a part of really establishing mental calm. It’s part of it to go to one’s vulnerability, this sensitivity, this feeling of being unsure. Actually becoming human. Being human in the best sense, letting everything come up and appear and not identifying, not reacting to it, but accepting it and letting it pass on.

Let’s see what the teacher continues to say here:

“To attain enlightenment you have to experience in addition to it [to this calm mind] the insight of [timeless] primordial awareness. Therefore persevere in your practice until this insight arises.”

Actually, this is very general advice. What will come later is that just calm is not insight. In the calm, allow the natural activity of mind to arise and look at its very nature. See that there is, like Michael says, no need to struggle; the thoughts, the emotions that come up, if we let them be, then we understand that there is no need to struggle. This is insight; insight tells us that there is no need to do anything about that.

p 161: **“If you cannot find anything when investigating the calm mind, allow the mind to be active. Examine minutely this restless activity of all kinds of thoughts and mental movements called mind. “**

This is when I asked you: be curious; how is the active mind? How is the thinking mind? How is the calm mind? And look, go forward and go back and be curious in all aspects of mind. What can you observe when the mind is active?

“Is there a colour, shape, or is there is something like an essential nature of this active mind?”

And then he goes a little further and he asks us to investigate:

“Is it in the forms that are the objects of the eye, is it in the objects of the five sense organs, the sounds, smells, odours, tastes and tactile sensations?”

So this active mind, is it in the perceptions, is that what is the active mind? Does the active mind have a different place than the calm mind? Is it like the calm mind is here and the active mind goes everywhere?

“Is the active mind between head and foot, in the sense organs, the inner organs, the extremities, the body, the hair and the skin. Does it move in the five outer elements...”

Its not easy to understand what is meant here. It is that every object is a different combination of the five elements: earth, water, fire, wind and space. So this refers to the qualities of solidity, fluidity or cohesion, temperature, movement, and then space is that which allows everything else to happen. So the question is double here: is there mind in the object? is there mind in the trees, in the wood, in the floor; or is mind outside of the object? If mind is in the objects and objects are combinations of the five elements, these five qualities, is mind in the elements? This is not so stupid as it sounds to us, because mind has a feeling of presence, of something stable, and solid there; it has a fluidity; we sometimes talk about mind being warm or cold, it has temperature; it has movement; it has space; so perhaps some people think that this is not different from the elements, these basic qualities that make up objects.

And how is it with “the five kinds of sentient beings? “. We have the hell realms, the hungry ghosts, the animals, the humans and the gods; these are the five. All the gods are put together here. So this is the question also: is it the same mind that is shared by all beings? Is it an individual mind? Is the calm mind my mind, and the active mind the mind that makes everyone move

and talk? Or is it rather the opposite? That the active mind is my mind, and the calm mind is the one which is shared by everyone?

When we ask ourselves these questions then we can see how many ideas we are willing to produce and how sure we are. Oh no, my mind is my mind; this mind is not your mind. Then, how is mind-reading possible; how is it possible to know the thoughts of someone else? You know there are questions that come up which you can't solve. You took a position, and this position does not cover all areas of experience. If objects are not mind, how can mind know something that essentially different from itself? How will something which is mind be able to know something which is matter? How does the contact happen between two completely different things? Many questions arise and then we see that we live with assumptions about mind and reality which we have never become aware of. Many people when you ask "Where is your mind?" "Well, my mind is in this body, because wherever this body goes, the mind is there." And then you ask "Well, is the mind equally distributed in the body?" "Yes, of course it's equally distributed in the whole body." Then, if you lose a leg, do you have less mind? If you lose two legs, and so on.. What to do? The assumption that mind was distributed is not correct. So maybe mind is in the brain. If mind is in the brain, then when brain stops, there should be no mind? Right? What are you going to do with those experiences that people, after operations---and it happened with a neurosurgeon as well---can even, with a flat EEG, they can report what has happened in the surgery room. They came back to life and they could tell everything that was happening during the time of a flat EEG.

Q|: Is this non-objective, because they are not repeatable...science?

LT: No, this is completely objective, because subjective science exists. Let's be honest; there is science that is based on machines, science based on subjective reports, and if people...this neurosurgeon that I talked to started actually collecting them, such individual reports from all over the planet, and there was more than just one. Science is based on experience, and it has not to be repeated, the experiment has to be carefully examined and then we see what deductions we can draw from it. Science is not only experimental science; it is also phenomenal science, observing phenomena and, from that, then be able to come to predictions that then can be proved. That is then the experiment, it is a later step.

But subjective sciences exist, like psychology which is actually first of all a subjective science, it goes on what people report. And meditation---and this is the strong point of it--- is a subjective science, very strong. It's good to make the point, we are talking about science. Because here the questions I am giving you, show that in spite of all the science of the last two centuries, we run around with very unscientific assumptions about reality. It's incredible.

Okay this was a little bit too much and you can make a summary of it Natasha. (Laughter) This was the most terrible thing, when I was translating for Tibetan teachers, from English into German, and then I had a good memory like Natasha, and I could repeat 20 minutes of talking non-stop, and

then they asked me “Don’t translate everything; just summarize.” That was the worst.

So theory is one thing, and observing is another thing; so what we want to do is not to reach a new and better theory, but we want to come closer to experience. So it’s good if are willing to put some questions to ourselves, and face our not knowing; very uncomfortable. This lhaktong that we are doing, this intuitive insight approach, makes you feel very uncomfortable. If I press the questions a little harder everyone will get really confused and uncomfortable. You will be “But I came on retreat to have a calm mind and you know, what’s going on now?” If we know the nature of mind none of these questions are troubling to us.

Q: [translated by Natasha]: Yanis wants to ask about what we were saying before: the mind is playful and plays games and he’s asking if in meditation the mind can play games?

LT: Does mind ever stop playing games, Yanis?

Q: I don’t know.

LT: Have a look if your mind ever stops playing. Or to put it in different words, does your mind ever stop being creative? Anyhow to give you an answer: yes, allow your mind in meditation to be creative and playful. And look at how the play arises and disappears. Some teachers have said that actually we are like children who started to play and then the game became serious. And that’s when we became adults with lots of problems in samsara. It’s like you see children play and it starts out easy, you know, we do like this, like this, we do a game and so on. And then there can come a point when a child begins to take it seriously, and then the other one also take it seriously, and then the whole thing finishes in a fight and wounded hearts and so on, and really, what started so nicely turned out as a catastrophe.

So what Bodhidaka was saying, that you were finding some sense of humour without a reason and this lightness, this is exactly when the playfulness of mind is allowed to be fed again; it’s one of the signs that the tension is released in mind. And that’s where these explanations come from, from this experience.

So then the last two sentences: p 161: **“Investigate minutely what exactly is the essence [essential nature] of the active mind and [what is the essential nature of] the calm mind. Is [this mind] something existent or non-existent? Or is it both at the same time or neither of them? ”**

We could go on a long time

(in response to question) Every single position here makes sense. , mind exists in a way, does it?

Q: Probably.

LT: How do we talk? How do you understand me? How do I understand you?
Thanks to mind, right?

Q: Yes.

LT: So that's the level of understanding we start out with. We are sure something like mind, consciousness, awareness must be there because that's how we learn, that's how we understand, and that's how we communicate. So, okay.

But then we look and search for the mind. Like we did last year also, we started looking and searching for the mind. So you don't find the mind, right? So, does it mean that there is no mind?

Q: Yes.

LT: Yes. So, when there is no mind, normally we would say, no, mind doesn't exist. Because we can't find anything that could be described as mind, so mind does not exist.
No. How is it?

Q: It doesn't mean that because we can't find the mind, the mind does not exist.

LT: Oh, okay. So we can't find mind but it exists a little bit outside of our perception? if you answer that you cannot say that mind doesn't exist because you can't see it, then the conclusion would be, oh, then it must be beyond perceptions; something which we haven't found yet but is still going to be there if we look more carefully. This is one way of understanding you. Is this what you mean?

Q: What we can see are the results of the mind.

LT: You can see the effects of mind. When we can see effects, there should be a cause, right?

Where is the cause?

Q: I don't know yet.

LT: Okay. Search a little bit more. This honest process everyone should actually go through, this honest searching, for oneself.

Q: Would it be easier to look at the effects then arrive at the cause?

LT: You are allowed to do that, sure. Go ahead.
Tell me what you find.

Q: I think this is the mind, the process.

LT: Okay, the process is the mind.

Look. Look deeper. The solutions are not for today, maybe tomorrow. Have a look.

I definitely agree it's a process. That's the best way to describe it. And in the process a lot happens. Whether that which happens is effect or cause, this you have to find out. You tell me tomorrow.

Q: But yesterday and the day before we were saying that cause and effect are not separated.

LT: Ah, you remember. (Laughter) Yes we said that, it's good that at least one person remembers. Yes, if they are not separated, then what does it mean?

Q: It's a process.

LT: There is no effect and there is no cause.

Q: Are we not already getting worse and conceptualising and putting everything in a frame?

LT: We are actually not finding a frame; we are not even finding anything to put into a frame! (Laughter)

You are getting to the really important point; the attempt is to find words, to find a frame, is maybe not the problem. You're right, right on. However, if we don't investigate the frames we already have unconsciously they will continue to dominate us, and have enormous consequences. We take emotions to be real. We take concepts to have power. These frames, these conceptual frames, these ideas, if we don't investigate them, the consequence is that they dominate us unknowingly, unconsciously.

You know the joke would be someone saying, "I don't believe in these frames. You piss off. You are just disturbing me with all your questions. And then you can see someone is professing a no-frame but using 'I', 'I', 'I' all the time; and that's the frame of reference. Then you ask, "Where is the 'I'? Come on, show me." "Who cares!" and you almost get into fighting. So one can emotionally defend all kinds of standpoints, even the standpoint of not wanting a standpoint and not having one. The emotional adherence to exactly that shows that it is a standpoint.

Okay, to finish now, the Buddha's point of view is to be able to understand all these views, how they can arise, and not to say it is like this and not like that. But to see that all these viewpoints, these opinions, these ideas do not completely correspond to the actual lived experience. And then that's most difficult to be completely at peace and not have an opinion, but to completely

know, there is complete knowing. All the views that are proposed are known to be wrong, and it is exactly known why they are wrong. They are known to be wrong and also the reason why they are wrong, and why they are limited views. The view, this deep seeing of the Buddha transcends all the views and does not establish a new right view. The right view of the Buddha is transcending all views. It's not that there is a correct belief that we are arriving at. This is quite important, a little bit difficult maybe to grasp. The practical application of that is, "Yes, indeed, I understand how one can feel 'I', how one can feel to be someone, a self." However this does not completely correspond to how life is, it's a limiting view that is a source of tension, of suffering. And so on. The capacity to understand all views and to go beyond all of them.

Chanting.

You might be able to find some peace again. The longing for peace. So, let's go down to the rock and enjoy a Chenrezig practice.

Day 8

We are on the last few days and you need to check you know how to practice by yourselves.

We did everything together, I explained everything, and now you need to do it yourselves.

So probably we start with directing our mind to the refuge, developing Bodhicitta and then discovering Vajrasattva in our mind in this step by step process. Remember? It's all in the book.

Then as Vajrasattva appears, starting the mantra, letting the nectar flow down. And then working with what arises; whatever you remember. Some emotional hang ups, some acts which were not so proper and bringing it out into the open. And letting the loving awareness enter that.

So this remembering of whatever was our emotional difficulty, or the situations in life where we were caught by our patterns, we do this with a very light attitude, not going so heavily. Remember it lightly. Bring it out and let the awareness enter it.

So we can do the opening prayers together and then you open your notes and read the description of Vajrasattva and you develop your own inner lama, using your little reminder. You take yourself by the hand.

Page 71 in the English. This is what you need when you start visualising Vajrasattva.

Let us take refuge together and develop Bodhicitta. (Chanting) And then the lotus the moon disc the vajra and finally Vajrasattva appear. When the outer visualisation is there then you establish seed syllable with the 2 mantra garlands and begin reciting the manta

(Individual Vajrasattva practice)

.....

I want to finish the transmission of Vajrasattva. There are 2 parts that I still have to share with you. One is the mantra itself and the *lung* for the mantra, which gives the authorisation to use the mantra. And then there is a little section in the book which talks about the signs of purification, so we will also have a look at that.

(refuge prayers)

In order to receive the *Lung* I will have to say the mantra to you and you repeat it 3 times after me, that's the traditional way of doing it. I have received the *lung* in Tibetan so that is how I will give it to you, it has Tibetan pronunciation.

First the short mantra, the 6 syllable mantra

Please repeat after me

Om Benzo Satto Hum x3

And once in Sanskrit

Om Vajrasattva Hung

(followed by the long mantra *Lung*)

This was the formal permission to recite the mantra and I have given you the full explanations and the introduction to the meaning.

Actually the long one is a *Dharani* not a mantra in the formal sense. I have written out the meaning of the *Dharani*, this follows a Tibetan commentary on the Vajrasattva practice. It's a tradition of **Samtig Dorgen?** the secret drop Vajrasattva practice. Here they take every syllable, analyse it and explain what the real meaning is. Natasha and I will give the English and Greek translation first and then I will give you a bit more of detailed explanation afterwards.

Vajrasattva, the indestructible union of emptiness and compassion,

Appearing as the vajra body of all Sugatas help me to protect my samayas (commitments on the vajrayana path).

You Vajrasattva, please stay close to me, in a stable way.

(stable as the unchanging true nature of all phenomena)

Please cause me to be completely satisfied (by the taste of great unchanging bliss)

And completely develop (this bliss)

Please take care of me with loving care.

Bestow on me completely all accomplishments.

Cause all my actions and my mind to be virtuous.

May I realise the pure nature of the senses, of the skandhas (the aggregates of existence), and of the 5 Buddha families

Oh all you victorious, thus gone ones, do not abandon me,

Cause the vajra dimension to be realised.

Great Samaya being (who never leaves the timeless dimension)

May all become of that one taste.

So from this condensed translation, we take the meaning of what we just recited as a mantra and we have given very simple explanations, but there is a lot behind it, it's like a long condensed prayer.

So now I will go through and give you the approximate Dharma meaning of each syllable.

The syllable OM represents the Vajra body of all sugatas, which is the word for buddhas, those gone into bliss. Vajra means indestructible. The indestructible nature of wisdom and emptiness. Sattva means hero or the courageous one. It stands for the skilful means of Great compassion or great unchanging bliss. So Vajrasattva means emptiness and great compassion inseparable and indestructible.

Samaya means vow or commitment, ones sacred word, and it goes together with Manupalaya which means to protect. So protect me in my sacred vows. What is the sacred vow? – To stay true to the nature of mind. This is the root samaya. Not leaving non-dual mind. Not entering dualistic clinging.

The Vajrasattva again with Tenopa, this is just turning to Vajrasattva and saying 'You Vajrasattva'. And then the meaning of tista dhredo me bhava: 'Stay with me in a stable way'. So what is meant by please stay close to me in a stable way? It doesn't mean that a person should stay close to me but that Vajrasattva as the unchanging true nature of all phenomena should always accompany me. So the wish is that by working with Vajrasattva that this self-awareness can spontaneously appear, that the nature of mind can spontaneously become clear.

Then we have Suttoshayo me bahva. The meaning here is, please make it that I am completely satisfied. And satisfied refers to the taste of great unchanging bliss.

Supposhayo me bahava; please make it that I am completely developed, all is unfolded, brought forth. The deeper meaning here is that timeless awareness unfolds.

Annurakto me bhava – take care of me! We are turning to the Buddha mind the union of compassion and wisdom to always take care of me, to remind me of my true nature.

Sarvasiddhi, sarva means all and Siddhi are the 2 kinds of accomplishments; the relative accomplishments like clairvoyance reading thoughts and so on and the highest accomplishment of Mahamudra itself, knowing the nature of mind.

When it goes together with Sarvasiddhi me preacha then it means please bestow completely all accomplishments on me.

Then again we have Sarva, all 'Sarva karma sucha me'. Karma means action, with the following chitta shri kuru, all my actions and my mind (chitta) make that they all become virtuous' shri means virtue, kuru means do something, act...

Then we come to this syllable HUNG which is the seed syllable of all the 5 Buddha families and it is also the seed syllable in the heart of Vajrasattva and it refers to the perfectly pure nature of the 5 skandhas.

Some of you don't know about the skandhas or aggregates. When we look at what we usually identify with, we can find 5 domains, 5 dimensions of existence where we have the strongest identifications. The first one is called forms, this includes the perceptions of the five outer senses in the usual explanation. Usually we say I am what I experience, my experience is 'me'. Then the next one is called sensations, this is referring to the feelings of liking disliking and not caring, here the identification is I am my likes and dislikes this is 'me', my style, my taste, my preferences. The third one's called 'distinctions' the capacity to distinguish between different experiences, and we also greatly identify with our distinctions in the conceptual sphere, the ideas with which we categorise reality. We greatly identify with that, I know that this is that and this is not that, thinking in categories. Then it gets a little more complicated: 'the formations', projections. This is the inner cinema that we develop, there is wholesome cinema and the unwholesome cinema, suffering. Some of the formations are simply the capacity to focus, to hold on to an object, it's how we create the world. So in order to develop the world of our inner projections we need to focus, and then from there we can develop a nice helpful way of perceiving reality, or we can develop a very unwholesome way of perceiving reality. For example, anger and desire are very strong forces that create films, ways of seeing the world with a lot of tension. We say 'I am angry, I want this I am full of desire and so on'. But as we relax and the mind opens, we touch states of mind that are free of anger, free of desire and the other forms of clinging. And we come into a very open way of perceiving reality, fluid, helpful, with love and compassion. Although this is very virtuous and wholesome, as long as the dualistic mind is involved, the feeling of 'I', then this is still an artificial creation of 'my world', the way 'I perceive the world. So this was the 4th aggregate, the aggregate of 'formations' because we are 'forming', creating what in Germany we call *Gestalt*, we are giving a form a shape to our world and worlds are constantly arising due to this creative process in our mind. The 5th aggregate is consciousnesses, you have to say this in the plural because this is usually the 6 consciousnesses, starting with the physical, the auditory, the visual, the gustatory, the olfactory and the mental consciousness. Basically the problem behind that is that we say 'I am my mind, I am the capacity to know to see and so on', there is identification with different aspects of consciousness.

I just remind you that we are still in the explanation of the syllable HUNG! This is the inherent purity of the five skandhas. And the meaning here is that as we are practicing Vajrasattva, relating to the syllable HUNG as a symbol of support, we are actually working on purifying our identification with the five skandhas. So when we say 'make all my actions and my mind virtuous and

help me to protect my samaya, we are actually saying please help me to understand that there is no self. And to be more precise, because it is very easy to realise that there is no self, it means 'yes, I am not perceptions, I am not sensations of agreeable and disagreeable, I am not the distinctions or ideas I have about things. There is no 'I' in all the films, the emotional projects that I undertake, there is no self in the consciousnesses. To realise that, that each aspect of life, all the five skandhas, they are just a flow of changing experiences, all the time changing experiences. All is process no stable individual self. So basically we are saying please show me the process nature of reality.

This is a turning point in the mantra, after this comes HA HA HA HA HO...this is an expression of joy and liberation, we understand, we got the point. So here HA HA HA HA HO represents the completely pure nature of all objects of perception. From a different commentary, the 4 HA's represent different sorts of Joy. From the joy of direct experience to the ultimate joy of mahamudra. In other explanations there are 16 joys but they are condensed into 4 here to simplify it. The 5th syllable HO makes the link to the 5 aggregates the 5 tathagata's HO is also an aspect of joy but also of victory, of complete understanding. So we have joy for the first 4 and then the 5th victory, and then Baghavan – the completely victorious one, who has conquered all delusion, victorious over the 4 maras; One of them is this belief in the aggregates as a self, skandha mara, the other is klesha mara to believe in the reality of emotions. So at this point in the recitation of the mantra we can tune into the freedom from identification with the skandhas with the kleshas, the emotional perturbations, we can feel this freedom and we are a bhagavan, or if we don't feel it yet we at least relate to Vajrasattva as the bhagavan on top of our head or in our heart.

Then we continue with Sarva Tathagata, all thatagatas, all thus gone ones, gone into suchness, or gone like all Buddhas before, it's a name for all buddhas. Vajra – indestructible. This links with the next phrase.

Sarva Tathagata Vajra Ma me Muncha. Which means 'all you tathagatas, all you thus gone ones, do not abandon me'. So when you join the meaning of HA HA HA HA HO, the five Bagahvans, the five Tathagatas do not abandon me, then actually it means this great unchanging bliss should not abandon me, because the tathagatas here are represented by the five joys and the victory over the maras. So please may there be no separation from the great bliss is the actual meaning.

Then we say Vajri Bhava which means make that there is Vajra. The meaning is make that the indestructible dimension is realised.

Then we say Mahasamayasattva. Which means 'the great samaya being'. Maha is great, Samaya is the vow or commitment, and sattva again means being or courageous being, hero. And the meaning of great hero is that Vajrasattva never leaves the great dimension of time that is beyond time, so timeless dimension.

AH the last syllable means to dwell in the meaning of the five families, the five tathagatas to enter the very nature of their realisation. The meaning that the commentary gives is that with the syllable AH we enter into the one taste the inseparability of all the Buddhas.

The commentary finishes with a small paragraph of explanation. Through this mantra recitation all concepts of samsaric syllables, words and names as well as all clinging to speech are purified. And because all clinging to speech and words and syllables should be purified, then most Tibetan teachers will never give an explanation of the meaning of the mantra! The approach which I took is to show you how each word points beyond what words can capture, it always points to the ultimate dimension, and concerning the fruit of that mantra recitation, it says we create an auspicious connection, a *tendrel* with indestructible, enlightened speech. So it's a good indication that in the future our speech will become like this. So that is the real meaning of all mantra practice, that by using speech in a mantric way, we enter Enlightened speech, the speech which expresses the dimension of awakening. So it will allow us in the future to turn the wheel of mantra for those who come to us and ask for our advice and to speak in a completely pure way. And with the dissolution phase, the completion phase of the Vajrasattva practice, we establish the basis for the purification of *prana*, subtle energies, which means that our body will begin to reflect the awakened energy of the mind, it is inseparable from it and we become a Vajra body.

Ok so that was it! Now how to use this? Is it enough to have heard it once and to trust that deep inside you have understood. There is no need to repeat this translation again and again to ourselves, because we will just create concepts which we will then put on our practice. I am sure that beyond the words, which you might not have completely captured, they were too far out sometimes, but your inner being has understood. So trust yourself, trust your own mind to understand what the intellect cannot grasp. May the intellect be exhausted and give way to the heart to awaken. Then the heart understanding will take the intellect along and the intellect will also understand and will be a wonderful servant of awakening.

Now we meditate a little bit together.

I am so happy to see some of you lying down and relaxed it is really good, it means that you have enough trust now to know that it is not by effort and wanting that you will understand and become free. Basically, fundamentally its trust, devotion, forgetting oneself, love, they will make us free.

Meditation (10 mins)

(Prayers)

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No Need to take refuge because we haven't been out of the refuge.

Page 128 where we left off yesterday we are still in this very long quote of Orgenpa:

Even a thought such as “if meditation arises, I will be glad, if it does not arise it is bad” will cause the thoughts to spread.

You just had the proof of this in the last session, after your intellect was exhausted by deep meaning, then you entered meditation without any further wish to think! You didn't tell yourself 'I have to meditate,' it just happened.

We have done this many times now during these retreat days. We have found that to tell myself “well meditation has to arise now, that would be good”, we encounter obstacles, we encounter dullness and agitation. Unfortunately, some people are so clever and can manipulate their minds so well that they actually do enter into something like meditation by wanting to meditate. They find out subtle ways of not thinking and how to control things so that thoughts don't arise. They are able to maintain the attention on breathing or some meditation object for quite a while and they derive a subtle gratification from that peace so they will continue training in that way. But they will notice that in a subtle way, this kind of meditation always feels like self-manipulation and that if they are honest, they are running away from something.

By letting the mind be as it is, open and relaxed, in a state free from an object of meditation and meditator, at last it will settle naturally. Saraha said: “The mind is tied up by business. It will be untied if you relax, no doubt.” To stop all mental elaborations about the three times and to stay without contrivance is the best way of seeking a calm mind.

If we go towards a calm mind, what we call *shamatha*, by this natural settling of the mind, then we are on the direct path toward realisation, towards realising the of the nature of mind. Because it is that same capacity to trust and to relax that we need to enter into Mahamudra.

Otherwise, if you are motivated by excessive craving, agitated by a meditator and a meditation of sending out and gathering in, getting habituated neither to the body posture nor the gaze, nor surrendering the mind with intensive devotion, then no matter how long you sit motionlessly, the mind does not want to settle.

The meditator and their meditation what a joke! To be present, to be alive, to be aware does not need a meditator. All this wanting and identification with that will continue all the time to create obstacles. A meditator not clinging to their meditation is also relaxed when disturbances come.

Someone sits down next to you and starts talking to you and you are absorbed in your meditation. You say “oh yes and your meditation continues in the communication, no clinging to meditation no resistance to communication. You can ask whether it is important or not and return to your meditation? If we want to meditate without disturbance, we go to a place where no one disturbs us. Or we make it clear to ourselves, yes now I just stay calm, but we know that staying calm is just another way of being natural and this staying calm continues in communication.

When you look back on this retreat, and you think “Oh I meditated well, or I did not meditate so well.” If those thoughts are present, then I am the first one to be unhappy. If you come from the retreat and you feel quite natural and open and you feel no one has ever meditated, then I am happy. We find meditators they have these badges ‘epaulette’ we say in French, and they count the retreats or the years they have meditated and it’s obvious what this is doing to the mind. The only thing that counts is if we have become more fluid, more part of life, more in tune with life, and from that the absorption and the understanding will arise naturally because we are open and without manipulation.

So this mediation of sending out and gathering in, is like sitting in Vajrasattva practice and sending out light to all beings and gathering in or creating the development phase (*kyerim*) and we are so involved in what we are doing as a meditator that we don’t get the point of practice. When we come out of a practice with the feeling ‘now I have accomplished the practice as it should be, all the visualisations were fine’ and so on, we miss the point. These visualisations were created in order for us to be able to forget ourselves, to be no-one, to be one and not a separate individual who tried to get somewhere.

It’s also very interesting with the body posture. There is a natural sitting straight and feeling the energy flow and that is without effort, that is something that happens naturally when the mind becomes clear and we should not obstruct that, when it comes, this movement to straighten up to be present, to take our place, we should allow it to happen. Then actions will continue to be helpful to our practice. Some practitioners hear about relaxation and that with Lama Tillman you can lie down and meditate lying down and so on. And actually we use this as an excuse because we want to avoid straightness clarity and so on, to go towards drowsy states of mind, we always go with the relaxation we don’t even need it, but we prefer to sit in a cloud where actually we are avoiding being clear, we are avoiding being who we really are. A human being that becomes free straightens up, opens the chest, there is no fear of anything, in Tibetan they say ‘like a lion’ and it means that the chest comes out and we are not afraid of anything. We don’t walk around hunched up and we don’t sit hunched. So with the body posture, if we make too much effort, it will create the opposite, it will make us tense and agitated, but if we don’t allow the movements of the body of straightening up and opening out to happen then actually we are clinging to a way of being which is very limited. We can sit very dignified on a chair; it doesn’t mean that we have to sit on the floor. And you feel that sitting in your natural dignity actually helps with clarity of mind.

Then the next sentence talks of 'surrendering the mind with intense devotion.' Devotion is a remedy for pride. Behind pride is fear, not allowing ourselves to surrender is that we are continuing the logic of fear. When we are unable to feel devotion, to feel this joy and wish to serve then we are holding ourselves back due to some fear. We think we are strong but actually we are maintaining our little fortress of 'me', 'I don't need to bow down etc.' But it's so beautiful, you can bow down and you can stand up and be a lion again, it's so fluid, the ego is not creating obstacles. So surrendering the mind, this means giving up control. Wishing to control is an expression of fear, I guess you follow me on that? And this whole need and wish for control has developed because of difficult experiences in our lives. I don't know about past lives, but definitely this life has a big part to play in that. Then we continue with this fear and wish and need for control in situations where there is nothing to be afraid of. We are accompanied by a feeling of insecurity in our practice, it is there underground all the time. This very basic fear, this base line insecurity, is part of what the Buddha called ignorance, lack of awareness. Bringing in awareness into those areas means that we find out there is a possibility of trusting, letting go, it's OK, it's not so dangerous to let go. We trust a little more and let go a little more and there is another confirming experience and like this we trust more.

So when in Mahamudra we say you can reach Mahamudra just through devotion, it is talking about this mechanism. The Mahamudra I teach to you comes for the tradition of Gampopa and his Mahamudra was called the Mahamudra of devotion, which involves trust, gratitude, love, all the qualities that allow us to surrender. To abandon control. The basic mechanism is to let the Buddha meditate, to let the Buddha take over. To trust the nature of our mind, that is the Buddha

In general the mind has the characteristic that if you want to hold it, it cannot be held, and if you want to let it free it cannot go anywhere. Since all the signs of hope and fear rest on this fact, meditation will not arise, unless you know how to relax the mind in itself.

So this finishes the quote of Orgenpa. The signs of hope and fear are all the symptoms of wanting and aversion. And the root cause of this fear that I was talking about, is that we do not trust that our own mind is OK if we let it go free. That is the root point, we always come back to that. Something may go wrong, this is the feeling, and this is what we have to relax. And imagine how easy then it will be to die. Because that is then the only thing that is left to us. When we die what can we relax into? Only into the nature of mind that's the only thing that goes with us. That's why true meditation is called practice for dying. We can do that, that's a new meditation instruction, sit down and die! Isn't that a little like what you experienced when you were lying there? You give up. Some of you were blissed out, the others were conceptually overwhelmed, but all of us just gave up! In this giving up there is such a joy, such a happiness a freedom a space. And that is exactly what we seem to encounter at death, that's what all the masters say, if we would truly give up

and we go into trust and Bodhichitta, we go into deep trust, then dying becomes a moment of awakening.

Q: Thank you for reminding us, I don't know why the mind keeps forgetting these basic instructions all the time.

LT: You are welcome, when I get tired I give you these instructions they refresh me each time.

Q: If you die before you die, then you will not die when you die!

LT: Great! This is the nectar of immortality. Without there being anyone who is immortal. There will be no immortality if there is someone. Let us just die for a moment then.....You are getting ready to die? Ok make a last call to your bank account, get your dress right and your body straight!

(Silent Meditation 5 mins)

Q: How can we develop the capacity to really listen from the heart to someone else?

LT: This takes us into the encounter with others and we must bring Dharma practice into that. Wholesome communication is part of the 8-fold path it is central to practice. I myself am just discovering what it really means. I can look back to when I was 20 years old, I felt so separated from others and not really able to listen from the heart and understand others, feel others. I was so much in my own world and I did not really know how to understand what was going on for other people what their world was like. I developed the wish to learn that, and I am still learning. What helped me very much was first to learn to listen so completely that I was able to repeat what the other person said, with the same inner emotion, the same inner meaning. So that the person felt understood by the way I took in the words and what was said. It's like with the psychotherapy of Rogers, the technique of mirroring, but it's a deep mirroring, you go from the heart and you repeat not only the words, but also the emotional tone, the emotion that goes along with it. I was a homeopath in those days and it was my practice to write down exactly in the patient's own words, how they described the symptoms, and not how I interpreted the symptoms. It was hours of really quoting others on paper and trying to understand from within what they meant. And you know when we communicate and we say to a person what we have understood we often change something and I could feel this strong tendency in my mind to write something else down than what I had heard because it fitted me more. 'Me'. So then the next step was to verify whether I had understood properly, "do I understand properly, is this what you mean?" This also takes courage, you know, when your friend is talking to you and you say 'did I understand properly? Is this what you feel?' You are accepting not knowing, we are discovering and this verifying is very important. And then listening with one's heart, one will listen deeper than what is expressed in words. First we learn to listen properly to what is expressed in words and then we go deeper, to what is not expressed. Then, at the same time, we listen with our heart and we feel

something and we ask the other person, is it possible that in what you are saying there is a little bit of that? We give our understanding back with slightly changed words, but not words which we have arranged ourselves. Words that open up the other person for a deeper understanding of themselves.

It's like in mediation we take up the attitude of not knowing, we discover, we don't know. That's why first encounters are often so nice, when we meet someone fresh and we don't know the person yet and we try to find out. But then when we get married and live together and so on then we think we know and that's the trap. We think we know our parents, we think we know our children, but not at all, we don't know. Listening from the heart is always an attitude of deep loving curiosity, the wish to discover together in a way that will help. So in my own learning it is always a little step to say that I don't understand, I don't know. In the beginning I thought that the other person who wants to be understood would take this as a difficulty. But actually most people are very happy if I say that I don't know and I don't understand because it gives them a chance to say more, to explain more, and I listen with the heart and this listening is already the greatest present I can give. So we always verify, we feel with the heart, we go deeper, we offer our heart observation with a few words, asking if it is like this and then we listen to the correction. We listen to how it really is and then we absolutely 100% accept wait the other person is saying. And then there might still be something beyond that and we continue deepening. So it is always the other person who we are listening to and is the one who is doing the discovery and is completely in charge of the communication process on the level of contents. We believe the other person, communication cannot happen if we don't believe the other person, it's a must. I have practiced this even with psychotic people. I believe that they experience the world like this, I don't believe that the world is like this, but that they experience it like this. And from there we can enter deep, deep communication, which brings people back to clarity in very short time.

There is a lot of subtle work to find here, but this is a short summary and with these general words we can do it. Maybe a last thing, when the listening has become so full and complete, something happens between myself and the other person it feels like the listening has arrived at a completeness and finishes in an understanding. There is a mutually shared understanding. In the best cases there is a shift there at the end and then peace comes and there is no more need to express something about this matter.

I have made an offer to the other person I give them time and energy for deep listening so that this person is understood, but this listening and the understanding that comes from that does not oblige me to do anything else, just that. So with the owner of the hotel here, there is deep listening to her fears and needs and so on until I come to the understanding of where for her there is the breaking point, where it can't go further, it's not negotiable beyond that point. And then there is a second step. I can see for myself, do I want to go with that, can I accept that or should I look for a different solution. I am not a slave I am still free to take my own decisions with that understanding.

The listening has to include a sense of on which level the person wants to be listened to and to respect that. The boss doesn't want to be listened to on the level of needs and fears, but just on the level of advice and commands and so on. Then maybe when you are out for a coffee and in a different situation she might want to be listened to differently. It's not always the same, the same person changes, so in these cases you can ask. 'Do you just want me to do these things or would you like to have more of my observations?' If you are not sure ask, but it's very important to respect what level of communication is actually there.

Q: With my mother at certain times there is a connection and then she might start telling stories which she has told me over and over again, and I feel as though my attention is being hijacked or something, and at that point I don't want to listen any more.

LT: No that's like slavery of the neurosis to some extent. The original question was about how to listen, not about how to share. We are very much with the aspect of listening now and not with our own involvement with the situation, which is the missing part. I haven't talked about a complete communication, I have talked about the listening. OK?

So I was waiting for this to come I responded first to this wish and then actually like you are in a situation like with your mother, the question is how to be in an authentic communication between mother and daughter. That is also really helpful, how helpful is it to let someone repeat the same stories over and over, what is the deeper need behind that? What is my need and wish and need in the situation and how can we manage all that?

Q: The irony is that if I do the same she says 'you've told me that!'.

LT: So it needs us to find good ways to say 'oh Mum, I guess I have heard the story before, maybe you didn't know' in very loving ways. Sometime when my father was entering dementia, I was giving him the missing words, and then he said 'oh you know this story?'. Very much be contact with ourselves in the communication, what do I want, need in this communication, do I want to be acknowledged or can I hold my response back. Sometimes we can be 100% with the other person, sometimes it can be 50/50. Sometimes we want the full attention. We have to know what we want, be clear in our mind.

Q: With someone with dementia I am happy for them to say the same thing.

LT: Well as long as you think your mother is 'normal', but she is not! We had an agreement in our retreat group, all young men between the ages of 25 -50, we said we would stop each other after the 3rd repetition of the same story. Three time was OK, three times with the same story, you can still find some new stuff and it's a little bit interesting, but after that we promised one another to stop.

Q: Why is it that when we put a label on someone, dementia or another problem, is it so much easier to adopt this attitude. Because with parents the

reaction, the explosion can be really automatic. You are so close, you go 'boom' and you don't even realise, you realise afterwards.

LT: The Dharma contributes a very interesting explanation of this. It is the error of the dharma practitioner that we believe the other person is free in doing what they are doing. This is especially true with our parents and with people of authority, because we grew up and we were so small and incapable. Our parents knew everything, they were in charge of the world, they were so powerful. It was not possible for us to see how limited their world was how caught they were in emotional patterns. When we put a diagnosis, dementia or whatever, we can say 'ah we understand this person is not free to be different. So this is the most important factor in helping us not to become angry, to see how the other person is not as free to act differently as we might suppose. You know if the person is chained in emotional patterns they are obliged to act in that way for as long as he or she has not become free from those patterns. And this is why we say understanding is the root of patience or compassion. Because it is understanding the lack of freedom on the other side that makes us 'ah OK samsaric bondage, I know that, I understand you cannot act differently.' This is the same attitude we take towards ourselves, we are patient with ourselves. We have to be patient with ourselves because we are not as free as we would like to be. That's why for proud people it's extremely difficult to be patient with themselves, because part of ordinary pride is not to make mistakes. And to look at one's own incompetence, always making the same mistakes over and over again, is difficult to accept and one would like to deny it, not only to others but also to oneself.

Q: With this communication we are talking about how is it that we won't become the emotional pattern that the other person is clinging to?

LT: Because in our own heart is love and compassion and wisdom and that is an absolute protection from the becoming the emotional pattern the other person is clinging to, however if we identify and we let our own patterns be stimulated by the patterns of the other person we might both end up in confusion. But with love and wisdom in our heart, we are completely immune from the other person's story, while developing complete understanding, it is not affecting your clarity of mind, your peace of mind, because there is no identification. However this is difficult if we ourselves have unresolved issues, if we have not worked through our own issues, then listening to someone with something similar is inevitably going to stimulate something for us and then we need to make a certain effort to be clear of what we want in the situation, to really stay in love and wisdom and not work so much with ourselves. Or we say ok let's both grow through this and really take the opportunity to each one work with their own stuff. It's a little bit risky.

Q: I read that a definition of craziness was repeating the same behaviour over and over and expecting the same result all the time, that expectation in itself creates a tension.

LT: So we are pretty crazy right! Well I am definitely not an expert in communication, there are others in the room who could probably say a lot

more about it, but I have shared with you what I know from a Dharma perspective. You might think I am good at communication because you meet me in my area of specialisation, and then I seem to understand quickly and have appropriate responses. But if you meet me in other areas I am learning even more! Area of specialisation means that the person only has to say a little and intuitively from experience you know what the person needs. But that happens to each one of you where you are the experts, it happens to you in those areas.

Q: In body movement terms, before you help the person you have to try and find out where they want to go.

LT: All of what we have been talking about is about Sangha, the third jewel of refuge, which is all about friendship and helping each other. That's why I am extremely happy that in a retreat like this we do not only have the element of meditation, but of communication. Every one decides how much to enter into communication, but I can see that you have gotten to know each other really well and that a Sangha feeling has developed, some real friendship is there, friendship with new people. That's wonderful, I don't know how you did it!

So let's die for 5 more minutes.....

Meditation (5 mins)

.....

(Prayers)

Meditation (20 mins)

You can start directly by feeling this body mind union.

All the six senses working simultaneously, without separation.

And we are immediately in touch with full awareness of just now.

If you need a reminder then remind yourself of the immediacy of coming back to just now, ungraspable and vivid.

Relax when you wish to maintain something.

End

Let's see what Tilopa tells us. A special person this Tilopa. First he was a monk then he went away and then as far as I remember his story, he stayed in a deep hole where he couldn't get out by himself. And he asked for his hands and feet to be chained so he couldn't just crawl or climb out. People were bringing him food offerings etc. He took the vow to stay in this hole until he could get out by magical powers. It took him about 12 years to get them. Then he went to Calcutta and worked as a grinder of sesame seeds. 'Til' means sesame and Tilopa is the one who grinds the sesame. And in the evening and nights he worked as a pimp for his consort, bringing the clients to the brothel. And from time to time he taught some dharma because he couldn't avoid being discovered. At one point, it says in the story (and it's a good story), that he was flying in sexual union above the market place with his consort, they were up in the sky and every one could see them in complete bliss. So some had confidence and some didn't!

He became the teacher of Naropa, who was one of the most learned panditas scholars of the then Buddhist Northern India, in the famous university of Narlanda. He was the cream of the cream of scholarship in Buddhism at that time. He was really top. One day Naropa understood that his knowledge of the Dharma was not sufficient, and he was not deeply realised, not able to go beyond birth and death. He heard the name Tilopa in a vision, and he felt such great devotion that he left his seat as a pandita, a professor for some 30,000 to 100,000 monks I don't know the numbers, but it was huge this university. So he abandoned everything and went to search for Tilopa. He saw an old man by the Ganges fishing and frying fish, and he thought that that could not be him. He had originally thought that it was him but because he was eating fish, he thought that this could not be his guru because he should be a vegetarian. So he did not ask his question he went away, but then he went back to have another look and he saw that Tilopa was throwing the fish-bones back into the water and saying a mantra and the fish went swimming off. Naropa was shocked it broke through his concepts, which was quite something! He recognised Tilopa and wanted to be his student and Tilopa said yes, come stay close to me and I will teach you, he accepted him. Then he didn't say a word, One year passed, not a word, 365 days of living together and not a word.

Tilopa would always ask Naropa to do different things. One day he asked him to jump into a pond, the pond was full of leaches and he jumped in and the leaches were eating him all over and taking all the blood out of his body and then, Tilopa said his magic mantra and everything was fine again. This went on with 12 minor and twelve major tests without a single teaching, except. "If I had a student who had devotion then he would jump out of the tower window." Then Naropa would jump out and break his bones and Tilopa would snap his fingers and mend everything. With every trial and test that Tilopa gave him, Naropa had to overcome fears. Each trial was connected with a fear, so each one overcame the fear and developed trust in its place. This included social fears, one time there was a wedding party coming along the road with the bride and groom. And Tilopa said: "If I had a student who had some devotion

he would just go and finish with this phoney business and take the bride off!" Then Naropa full of devotion went and dragged the bride from the chariot, but the people ran after him and beat him up completely. Every time he had a trial it was followed by a year of not saying anything. The last one was the famous slapping of the sandal. No words. And then Tilopa said, "It's already there!", and Naropa's mind had been purified so much that at that moment it opened into the complete unshakable realisation of Mahamudra and he never fell back from that.

I think these kind of stories fit very well with the Greek soil and the Greek sagas (and Greek sandals!)

Q: Are you going to treat us like that?!

LT: I don't dare, no one taught me the mantra!

So our teacher Gendun Rinpoche, would sometimes slap us. We would come for blessing, very pious students and we would wait for him to take our head, and do the blessing prayer. And sometimes 'bouf', the prayer would come with such force. One time I was alone with him for a long time with just the Tibetan translator and he explained to me for about ¼ hour – ½ hour, under which circumstances I should slap students, I should really hit them! When they need it, when it really bestows blessings, when it really brings them back to their senses, how to get them out of their psychological crisis, by hitting, so the transmission continues until today, and he said it would be such a quick way sometimes, but here in the West it's difficult, people don't know how to take that, the devotion is not deep enough. He only threatened, I remember when he was very old sitting outside the house we had built for the Karmapa with his stick. I am coming up the hill, and he stands there with his long walking stick going "come!, come!, come!". We were playing, I would come over and say 'Yes go ahead, hit', and he would give the blessing.

So this is triggered when I hear the name Tilopa, it's a digression which gives you a little of the flavour of Mahamudra. Then when Naropa was enlightened Tilopa started to speak. But with this guy who was so heavily into concepts, Tilopa knew from the very first moment, don't speak to him, no concepts.

So when he talked he said things like this:

Tilopa:

Give up all physical activities and stay at ease in the natural state. Do not speak, sounds are empty like echoes, Do not think about anything, but look at the transcendent reality. This body is hollow like a bamboo stalk. The mind is like the middle of space, transcending thought. Relax into this state without discarding or adopting anything.

So this is about the amount of teaching Naropa would receive after having had a trial or a beating. And then he would write this down later on, he remembered every word and that was his practice for one year.

Transcendent means the reality that transcends words, it's not conventional reality. So then a year later:

If you do not conceptualise and are free from all craving, everything will be self-arising and self-subsiding like drawings on water.

This is a suggestion I would like you to put into direct practice, to sit at the swimming pool and make drawings in the water.

So do that and as you draw contemplate the nature of your thinking, the nature of sensory experience. Draw again and especially do things like drawing your own name. 'I' 'Ego' and so on draw and contemplate.

If you do not transgress the principle of non-dwelling and non-focusing, you do not transgress your commitment (samaya), you are a torch dispelling the darkness.

Non-dwelling implies a wish to maintain a certain experience, a certain way of being. I think what we are just reading is an extract from the famous Gangamas – it has become famous on its own as a Mahamudra song. He gave these spontaneous songs.

So have a look where the commitment is: 'don't dwell, don't focus'. This non-dwelling is meant as an instruction to allow us to enter constantly flowing experience where nothing ever dwells. And stability is not found by dwelling, by letting the mind rest somewhere to the exclusion of the rest of reality. Stability is the experience of being one with the flow, of being the flow.

It's the same with non-focusing, it doesn't mean that your eyes don't focus any more or you can't hear clearly. It means not holding on longer than necessary to anything just being aware and also, it is like this, being the flow. Then you have a torch a brilliant light of liberation and wisdom which dispels the darkness in the minds of disciples. Because you are so free, not holding on anywhere, not dwelling anywhere, not focusing, this natural freedom will automatically be a light to others and help everyone understand what freedom really is.

If you are free from all craving and do not dwell in extreme views, you will understand all the dharma scriptures without exception.

You can hear behind these words that he is talking to professor Naropa. He was brilliant and he tried his best to understand the scriptures, but he did not understand through trust and from within, but by comparing with other texts, this is the implication, and so he reached the wrong conclusions. So the craving is a very general word which it means all forms of desire, clinging, wanting and includes the wanting to understand. You might have this experience with this book, you might feel that some passages are a little bit difficult to understand and that you want to understand them better. The way to understand is not by thinking hard about the passages or comparing them with other commentaries, It's fine you can do that and you will find the same

things written elsewhere, but the way to understand is to let the understanding come to you. The best way is to make a prayer and to let go. If you want to understand a text, you pray to the author. In this case you would say 'oh Tilopa what did you really mean and you would keep that prayer in your heart and send it into space and relax in the confidence. And you will be surprised that it all opens up from within and it doesn't take long. It's our openness our devotion, our prayer. There is a wish and then the letting go of the wish and that opens all the capacity of our mind to understand, because there is the letting go, our mind is not squeezed. It has access to everything we usually don't know and feel. But the Dharma is just a description of what is already all there, so it's already all there and if we can relax like this we will understand.

If you exert yourself in this approach (which is without exertion!), You will be liberated from the prison of samsara. Remaining consistently in this attitude, all the veils of harmful actions will be burnt and you will be a torch of the teaching.

Then another year passed, and Naropa didn't know it would be a year, it could have been forever, there was no announcement of the timescale of when the next teaching would happen. The hidden instruction here is chose a passage and work with it for one year. Every year I will teach you the same things, it will not change, the words will change, maybe some methods will be there but always it is the same teaching. We don't see much of a difference between the one instruction and the second one here from Tilopa, it's the same flavour. Different words, pointing in a slightly different way, but the same flavour.

All the years I was with Lama Gendun in retreat, I would carefully take notes, like you and I would always practice with the last thing he said until we met each other the next time. And I had the feeling that I was definitely progressing. Then when I was asked to teach myself (far too early by the way), I went back to my notes from the beginning and I saw that he had been teaching me the same thing from the beginning, the whole teaching was there in the first notes I took. But I didn't understand. Later on I took notes because I was a teacher and there was a commitment to passing on the teaching to others so I was studying to be a better teacher. Then I realised that the notes I took from the teaching are fine to prepare the conceptual structure. But that the real teaching is not something that we remember, but it's what lives in us, it lives and I don't have to remember a single thing. There are some conceptual conventions OK I can explain to you the five skandhas the five aggregates lie this morning and so on and I can go into quite a lot of detail about it and I would also need my notes if we went into quite a lot of detail about it. But there is no need to go back to notes for the real teaching, either it's there and it makes sense or its not there and that's maybe not important, or it's not lived yet and then it's better not to teach it.

So I ask you also to work with the notes that you take now until you meet with the next teaching which makes sense to you, it can be another teacher it's not important that it is me. And you integrate it, you work with it and let it come from the inside, not by thinking about it. And you trust that whatever you have

understood you don't need to understand because you have understood it. If you have understood it here, inside, then you don't need to write it down. You need to write down what you have not understood and you want to contemplate, where you feel there is a message that you can't fully get, and then you chew it until its fully digested. We call these key instructions, we receive pointing out instructions, key instructions, which open the doors to understanding. And these instructions need to be contemplated in this way. Bringing to mind and then trust that just by bringing them to mind they will work in you. You can add a prayer, but then leave them and they work in the back of our minds, they clarify themselves in very surprising ways. What is needed for this clarification to happen is that you allow for a lot of relaxation in your life. Space like in the mornings when you get up you don't jump and run to do a lot of things but you give unstructured space in which you lightly connect with the teaching, or even let it come by itself. The more relaxed we are, the better our potential can work, because there is relaxed space and it can work by itself.

Break

People go out and do drawings on the water. (20 mins)

Perhaps they are still doing drawings on the water? Sometimes we have this idea of a teaching that should start but the teaching is already going on!

Q: I tried to draw things on the water but it wasn't possible. So I didn't want to let it go so I tried harder. I changed the way I drew on the water so that it would stay longer. I tried to see if straight lines were better than round lines, for example, but no change, I had to give up. But then I thought if I wipe away all my drawings, but that was very sad for me even that didn't work. So then it seemed that all the work I did to make a state not appear, to make things of the past, which I was not happy with disappear, it doesn't work anyway, so why do I do it.

LT: The drawings of the past are already gone, if you try to wipe them off you are in a way recreating them unnecessarily, they are already gone. It's interesting to see how hard one tries isn't it? Were you reminded of what we do with our thinking? Micheal is giving us a teaching here. When we are not sure if something is true we repeat it more often and more insistently and then it becomes true! Any other observations from the break?

Q: I was drawing things like my name, names of friends and money, they all seemed to disappear and then I drew love and something in me felt that it staid longer! And I felt if I could put my hand down into the water and draw it deeper it would stay longer still. And maybe if I got right to the bottom of the pool I would find it was written there anyway.

LT: Any other observations?

Q: When I started writing in the pool, I started with me, you, they all started to disappear and I started to laugh inside, it was so, funny is not the word but

lightly amusing, So I started to write things that I am holding on in, because they disappear, so it was a very liberating experience, just seeing that there is nothing to it. I was quite enjoyable and freeing.

LT: Interesting how actually doing it brings this lightness.

Q: We are all laughing about it but inside I feel sadness because this is the way we manage our life.

LT: It's a bad joke, it's samsara, giving importance, self-importance. Forgetting about change, not being in the flow.

Q: I also tried to write my name on the water and I realised that it didn't stay there, but if I write it and put some effort in I can see my name written. So if I try hard I can see it without it being there, but then I rubbed it out just to be sure.

LT: Why did you wipe just to be sure?

Q: You never know it might stay there!

LT: When we think something the thought is very strong and when it's gone we would like to have a wipe out to be sure, it's not going to influence me anymore.

Q: I was writing and drawing and I knew it was going to disappear, but what I was really surprised by was that it was disappearing before I was even writing. It was like, you couldn't even begin to form the picture, even a smile or simple circle. It wasn't even that I put something there and then it would go, it wasn't there at all.

LT: Yes you can't get to the end of the name or drawing and then have it disappear, not possible. Not even a single letter.

Q: It's disappearing as you put it in there.

LT: Yes

Q: I had a similar experience I tried to write my name but it was far too long so then I just wrote 'I', but that was also too long!

Q: I had another story, I was sad about there being no possibility of cheating the water and then suddenly I didn't know any more how deep my hand was in the water. There was some kind of contact but I couldn't realise what it was, where was the water starting, where was my hand? So I didn't know what to do any more, I did something, but I don't know if I did it or the water did it. There was something very strange.

LT: Was it like losing the limits, you didn't know where the water started and where your hand started?

Q: Yes and where action started, where was the one who initiated things? I didn't want to do things any more, but things happened, and this was neither good nor bad, it was something very strange.

LT: How quickly do movement and mind, single thought movements or sense impressions dissolve, how long do they stay? You cannot say? Can anyone say?

Q: Doesn't it depend on how much you are holding on to the thought?

LT: That could be a way of getting it, so if there is no holding on to the thought, how long does it stay?

Q: Less than the drawing in the water.

Q: There is no staying because it is going as it is coming.

LT: So there is no staying. Is there a coming?

Q: No.

LT: Is there a going?

Q: No.

LT: So come on there is nothing going on or what! OK yes interesting. Is it like this, is it coming as it is going, and there is no coming or going?

Q: Didn't we say that once we become aware of the experience it is liberated by itself? It's not like it disappears, but there is awareness of the experience?

LT: How is that for you, Is it like that?

Q: What is movement actually?

LT: What is *your* answer to that?

Q: !!!!!

LT: Ok, let's leave it at that. I am very happy with your observations, a great exercise. Not only do the drawings dissolve as we make them. We observe that it is happening at the same time, in fact we have to say non-dissolution, because there is no coming and going, no arising and no dissolution.

Q: It could be also, if there is, there is not.

LT: I would like to give you a little further teaching from the Mahamudra which is exactly on this point.

Ah now you are taking out your notes!

Ok The first thing we realised on this retreat, as a group we became clear about the self-liberation of whatever arises, the *rangdröl*, Self – *rang*; liberation - *dröl*. This *rangdröl* is a surprise discovery to people who feel there are entities arising in mind and we have to do something to liberate them. Then to find out well, that emotion, that sense impression is gone by itself. So the first discovery of self-liberation is made in a mind which is still clinging to the true existence of emotions and thoughts and impressions, and then it sees that they are not quite as existent as I thought because they dissolve by themselves. And then due to this discovery, our mind becomes more and more fluid, we allow the natural process. And we come to the discovery that indeed what we call mind is movement, is process, from beginning to end, never anything else. We are still working with concepts of arising, staying and passing away, but as we allow the mind to become really fluid, we cannot find a duration for how long something stays. When we are completely relaxed, when we allow the self-liberation to happen constantly, immediately, then how long does anything actually stay? An idea, a thought, an impression? And then we realise that as it is coming it is already going, and we can't even really see *it* coming and *it* going and the time *it* stays. We cannot define it.

This discovery is called *shardröl*, liberation in the arising – *Shar* means arising. It's also sometimes called liberation in the arising. And then we come with the observation of this, we come to investigate, come on I still experience all this, I see you very clearly, we hear, there are words, everything is like it was before, but I don't find the moment when it stays, the moment when it arises, the moment when it goes, what is going on here? Then it dawns on us that the question is not with the arising or the going. It's with the idea of 'it'. 'Thingness', 'itness'. It's the conviction, the idea, that we are dealing with entities. An entity of thought, a unit, something that hangs together and makes a unit. A sound entity, a visual entity an idea entity.

The problem is there, there are no entities in the movement. There is continuity, and there is nowhere in the movement where there is a cut to make an entity. Can you later on go back to the swimming pool and do it again and look at the *shardröl* simultaneous appearance and dissolution. And simultaneous means not in a moment, but it means it's the same thing, the arising is the dissolution, is the liberation. It's not one movement, we tend to create units of experience, we say when the swallow came in and when it flew out again and in between ...we create a unit. But when did the swallow begin to fly in, how far away was the beginning of its flying in and when in here did the flying out begin?

Do you understand it's just concepts, it's just continuous movements, and with sense perception continuing, continuing, no entities. It's incredible and now when you go back to the pool. You enjoy the *shardröl* the dissolution as it arises, that's real creativity, everything is possible and nothing stays. That like out mind, this pool out there is fresh to receive all our drawings and you will never exhaust the capacity of the pool to receive our drawings, because they are *shardröl*. If there were moments of existence then they would block

other moments, but no nothing is ever blocking because of simultaneous arising and liberation.

If there is clinging to something, then it is not that *shardröl* stops. All the various attempts that Micheal put so well in his story, the attempt to make it last, any experience that you like, that attempt doesn't stop *shardröl*. We have to find means that something similar is being reproduced, so we have the impression that the same thought, the same idea, the same experience continues. We cannot stop *shardröl*, what we will do is, we will produce a similar experience as the one before and this gives us the impression that the same experience is continuous, but it's only similar.

So Micheal could collaborate with 10 of you and you would all put your fingers in the water and you would draw together and create the impression that one drawing existed. This is what we are doing, we are producing multitude of thoughts. Our patterns produce a multitude of similar thoughts that create the impression of something stable. A stable thought, a stable visualisation, whatever you like becomes stable. And this is one of the reasons we visualise, to understand that a visualisation is also *shardröl*. It dissolves as it arises and if we want to have a stable visualisation, we have to give continuous interest, continuous input and enhance it so that it arises. And if you look closely it never stays the same for any definable time. It is as vibrant as when you look out over the water at midday and you see the flickering of the heat above the water or above the sand. This flickering indicates the change. You would not be able to see this little vibration if it was stable. Constant movement.

Q: I am looking at something and in one minute I don't know how many units I am producing.

(LT: at least 32 per second I think)

Q: OK when I look at it, I have the feeling that it is a continuous process without units. So when you say if it there were units you wouldn't see the vibration. How is it that I see the vibration although they are units?

LT: We are talking about the relationship between a staccato process of let's say 50 pictures per second and our impression of watching something continuous. In a film we want to have a stable picture, the seemingly same picture has to be repeated at least 32 times per second. The same picture has to be repeated many, many times. That is sufficient to create the illusion of stability in us, or the impression of a flow. So these are units perceived as a stability. But then you have to go into the detail. The seeing of the units lasts also for some time and there is seeing going on, there is an on-going process of seeing. And there are now laws to stop people slipping in one picture, say of coca cola, which goes unnoticed because you don't see it, but it makes people want to drink coca cola. So it's not allowed because mind perceives. There is this on-going fluid process of perceiving and even if units are presented to it then even between the units there is still the sensitivity and the receptivity. So we could try to cut that down to what is still a perceptible

time difference, but as you can see with all that arises in the mind, and experiences, they are gone the moment we are aware of them, already something else is in the awareness. The awareness is not in itself stable. What is perceived outside might be stable, since yesterday this table hasn't changed very much, but the perceiving mind, the experience of the table is a changing one. So this is why you thought maybe the question was not to the point because the seemingly stable units were not inside the mind but outside the mind, and you were wondering about the relationship. This table seems to be very stable, every time we look at it we have a similar impression in mind, but if we really become aware of what we are seeing we can look at the table continuously, but as we are looking the experience of seeing has this vibrant quality of being dynamic. That's the important point. Not if outside there are units or not.

Q: I was reminded of a story of a very accomplished Chinese calligrapher, with a brush. He was very renowned and very accomplished and there was a wealthy collector who thought 'I must have calligraphy from this master', he was the finest master there was, but there was none to be had in all the markets. So he went to the master's house and the master was in his studio doing calligraphy, so he thought 'Ah, now I can get some!' The master was sitting there at his desk with the charcoal brazier, little stove, keeping him warm. And he would do a very beautiful piece of calligraphy and immediately he would screw it up and put it in the fire. The collector was furious and distressed at the same time and finally he said "Can I just have one piece of your calligraphy?" and the master looked at him and said "No!".

LT: In our own experience, who is the collector? who is the calligrapher? and where is the calligraphy? and what do we want to collect? And the answer must be no.

With this understanding of *shardröl*:

Cut all attachment and aversion relationships with your country and people. Meditate alone in forests, mountain retreats and in solitary places. Stay in a state free from intentional meditation. When you attain the unattainable Mahamudra is attained.

So this would be a good final quote for the seminar – see you next year! Take *shardröl* in your evening practice. To observe if it is truly like this and be constantly aware of it. It will introduce you to an incredible purity of mind if you stay like that.

Day 9

Vajrasattva practice

So now we will do the Vajrasattva practice, you might want to use the long mantra a bit to get to know it. And you might want to have your notes or your book close to you so you can do the visualisation. I will recite out loud the rhythm of the long mantra so we can do it together. When there is an initiation in the temple this is the rhythm used so that people can get into the atmosphere of the purification.

And just to remind you that this is all done in the context of Mahamudra so you don't have to worry about doing it correctly, just discover it, let it appear, give a little impulse in that direction and then trust does the rest. It is the trust that makes it work.

First we take refuge and Bodhichitta.....

The first thing is to completely relax the mind and from there the visualisation appears. Then step by step, the lotus the moon, the vajra with the HUNG, and the light going out to the buddhas and all sentient beings. Coming back with blessings. And the vajra transforms into Vajrasattva. Take some time to discover his outward appearance and when you are done with this go to the central syllable HUNG on the moon disc in his heart.

And discover also this luminous transparent nature with so much light radiating from it.

When you are ready, make your personal prayer to the Buddha Vajrasattva....

You can say inwardly: into which area of your life, your consciousness do you want to invite the Buddha Vajrasattva?

Then we visualise his response in the nectar stream; you already know the details.....then we will recite the long mantra.....

Long mantra recitation.....

With the mind as vast as space...

Then we can change to the short mantra and we are just filled with Bodhichitta nectar inside and outside.

And we imagine that it is the same for all living beings, everyone completely opens into Bodhichitta.

(mantra continues...)

With the last short prayer from us, then Vajrasattva will dissolve into light and melt with us.

We can imagine saying something like 'please Vajrasattva bestow the blessing of Mahamudra on us'.

Silent meditation....

(Prayers)

.....

At the end of the chapter on karma there is still page 38:

'The sutra states the actions of Devadatta will not ripen in the earth, in the water or elsewhere, but they will ripen exclusively in his aggregates and in the sense faculties that he will obtain. In whom else should they ripen?

Some of you might know Devadatta was one of the cousins of the Buddha and he became a member of the Order but he then turned out to be continuing in the spirit of rivalry. He created a split in the Sangha for a short time and tried to kill the Buddha so there were a lot of heavy actions that he performed. The question is about karma in general and whether karma can ripen anywhere else than in the midstream of the person who has been thinking feeling acting in that way. So no, the consequences of the actions will ripen in our own experience and not in the experience of someone else. The Abhidamasamuchaya explains this a little bit more:

'What is the meaning of getting our karmic share? It means that you will experience the consequences of the actions you have committed because wholesome and unwholesome actions have their corresponding results.'

We can connect that with the next sutra, the sutra requested by Surata.

From hot seeds hot fruit will grow, from sweet seeds sweet fruits will grow. From these examples the wise will understand that the ripening of unwholesome actions is hot and the ripening of wholesome actions is sweet.

So the meaning is that we ourselves experience the consequences of our actions and the second is that what we experience corresponds to the origins. So if in origin it was a seed or action or thought motivated by an egocentric attitude, then of course it will not be awakening that results but a tense state an experience of suffering that results. And then we read the smirtipatta, the Sanskrit version of the Sattipattana it says here that

Fire can become cold, the wind can be caught with a net, the sun and moon can fall on the flatlands, but the ripening of karma cannot fail.

So it's like saying the sky might fall on our head but karma will never waver.

So don't believe that the effects of our thoughts will get lost, they will ripen and we have to face up to that. So this is the section on lesson 4. The next part will follow next year.

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Page 74: Signs of Purification

Then, at the end of the Vajrasattva practice, we look to the signs of purifying karma. If we do the Vajrasattva practice and we link it with the 4 forces plus the visualization and the mantra, then the following signs can be expected.

The following things will not happen if there is not a true awareness of one's own patterns, bringing them out in the open, regretting and inviting Bodhichitta into that. This is absolutely necessary, otherwise these signs will not appear.

So the signs arise due to the fact that one really faces up to one's difficult patterns, one's strong emotions and one's harmful deeds of the past. And into this one brings the bodhichitta nectar of Vajrasattva and feels the new freedom. One feels one's mind expanding and becoming fresh, the feelings of guilt have completely disappeared. There is no more identification with those past actions, and then the following signs will appear:

Your body feels light, you sleep little and feel healthy and joyful. You have dreams of washing, of stripping yourself naked. You also dream that blood is dripping from your body. Or you dream of having diarrhoea or vomiting, or you dream of putting on white clothing. Furthermore, to dream of vomiting bad food, drinking curd and milk, seeing the sun and moon, flying in the sky, of burning fires, of subduing a bull or a black man, of seeing the Sangha, monks and nuns, of a tree from which milk flows, of elephants and bulls, of climbing on a mountain, a lion throne, or a palace, of listening to the Dharma, are signs of having purified harmful actions and veils. However, it would be pointless to abandon your practice as soon as some signs appear. You must continue to make efforts and practice continuously.

In my experience as a retreat guide I have seen all these signs appear, without any exception, and it's very surprising. Even for westerners, who have very little experience of elephants, the purifying signs of elephants appear. You understand that some of the signs relate to the strong impression of getting rid of poisons, you bring it out and get rid of it; and other dreams or signs are being able to fight with something dark, something which is trying to overcome us, and to be able to be stronger and overcome this strong force. So this is connected to the first phase of the practice, the intense purification.

Then there are signs of being completely purified; there are signs of great relief and of feeling deep satisfaction: being able to drink milk or take yogurt; taking a meal where one is completely satisfied or absorbing nectar. This is related to the second phase of practice, where we fill up with nectar and we sit

in this great plenitude.

And then there are some dreams which show the effort we have put in, like climbing a mountain and then at the end of it one arrives in openness; this kind of dream. Climbing a mountain and arriving at the top; this shows the intensity of one's practice.

The joyful mind, the light body, not so much need for sleep, these are the deep signs that one is also purifying the energy field of one's body. And the inner signs of that are dreams of pure assemblies, the sangha, listening to the Dharma, flying — all of these dreams belong to the experience of one's own internal purity. So these signs will surely appear if you really put energy into the practice. It shows that the practice reaches the preconscious or subconscious levels.

It is very easy to have such dreams, even after the explanations if something is touched in us. A single session which is really taken to heart can already produce such signs at night. This is nice but it is just a beginning. One has to continue and continue until all signs disappear. At first there are a lot of signs and then one continues until one is at ease with all aspects of one's life and one is not ashamed of any emotion that we have, any of the aspects of our life. We are so completely open that feelings of shame, of guilt, have disappeared from our personality, and there is a deep trust which comes, a trust in one's inherent pure nature, and this trust carries through one's practice.

There are some other signs, such as suddenly we begin to understand a lot easier, blockages in our intellect have been removed as well. It's easy to understand the Dharma, easy to understand things in the world. Our mind has become more fluid and our memory has become much better. One is more open to others because one doesn't have anything to hide anymore. So this is what usually happens to anyone who does this practice intensively. This is not publicity; this is just describing the facts. There are signs for every practice we are doing, for every little change. It is through these signs that the teacher can know what is going on. There are not so many places where these signs are described, but here is one and actually such observations exist for every method that is being described in the text. One usually knows. There are some signs which are similar and some which are very specific for each practice.

One can differentiate. There are dreams of flying that we can have just because the wind element is dominant in our body. They are just dreams of flying; there is nothing special about that. But the flying of these purification dreams has a different quality to it. Similarity there are different ways of climbing a mountain or different ways of being with the Sangha.

So we have done the whole package of Vajrasattva and since we all practice for an hour a day, this is part of what you can practice. And others don't manage to practice every day, so you just do your best. Remember the Dharma as much as possible and practice it in every situation. It should be

possible to give it a try. To start Vajrasattva and really do it with one's heart, because I do not know a better Dharma method to purify all these hang-ups, these feelings of guilt and shame that we have inside us. There is one good practice: confessing directly to one's friends and being able to relax directly into the love and acceptance which comes. That is similar to the practice we can do at home. Then you don't need Vajrasattva; your friend is Vajrasattva! Then you can seal that experience, really bring it into your body with the practice.

Some Questions on Karma.

Q: What about experiences that are not karmic, which are instinctual levels of mind?

LT: There are two sides to the questions, how does karma manifest? – karma usually manifests in the form of experiences sensations, often connected with sensations of the body. Then on a more subtle level karma also manifests in the mind, all these thoughts that arise, all these impressions thoughts ideas that arise due to previous imprints, this is also karma. These arising emotions and thoughts have a sensation of agreeable or disagreeable associated with them. Normally when people talk about karma they think karma has to manifest in outer situations. But there is no need for this a Yogi who sits in a cave experiences the effects of their karma just on the cushion. And actually it is said that if a meditator has strong unpleasant experiences, it can prevent accidents or illness in the outer situation as he is now working through them in retreat and is dissolving the karmic potential for something very heavy to happen in life.

The second part of the question is what we call karma. Does karma come from previous lives or is it only from this life. So there is a large part of karma which is where we are born the conditions of our birth the society, and this seems to be very largely influence from conditions before this life. But we cannot separate so clearly because if something is strong enough to have an effect on our next life it has to have an effect already now. It has to produce something already now, and some actions are clearly described as producing their effect in this very life. So for example that we feel close to Dharma teaching can be effect from previous lives, and it might take us as far as taking refuge and developing Bodhicitta, but the effects of taking refuge and developing Bodhicitta will not wait until next life, they will manifest in this life already. When I was looking at the reason why so many scholars talk about karma as belonging to previous life and then the Mano Niyama belonging to this life, the effects of childhood and so on, it was because they were talking a lot about what normal people could not see, so talking a lot about these connections with past and future lives. They were not talking about the effects of this life because people can observe that quite easily. So I think it's not founded to make an artificial separation between effects coming from a previous life and effects coming from early in this life and effects coming from yesterday. It's not necessary to give it a different name, it's all the effects of

actions. If for example we go out into the night without putting on any clothes and the next day we have fever, then this is the effect of the stupidity of yesterday. It's a direct karmic effect, but we don't normally call it karma because it happened yesterday, we often use the term karma for what is longer ago, but actually you cannot separate time, it's just a continuity, you know, before this after this. Actually for the mind stream, it doesn't matter.

In Psychotherapy and in any other situation in life, when we experience something which is very disagreeable, a challenge to us, and we do not react in the usual way but go into openness, so that it can dissolve without identification, at that moment we are purifying karma. There is a difference between exhaustion of karma and purification of karma. So for example our karma might mean that we get cancer now. And if we are not open to that and we react with anger and clinging and fear and we insult the doctors than we continue in the same patterns that has led up to this situation. Old Karma is not purified and we continue in the same way of being. The effect of old karma is exhausted you can say, it finds its fruit, but there is just as much accumulation of new karma, so you cannot say that your weight of karma has become less. However if something difficult manifests and it is transformed into practice and there is a very open way of dealing with it, then this karmic momentum has come to an end and even something difficult might have given rise to a very new positive karma, a very great positivity with non-identification. It's an incredible opportunity and it's real purification of karma and that is what is happening in psychotherapy.

It is said that when we are a child we are not intentionally acting on the world. How much intention does a baby have? The baby can be full of emotion but not have the capacity to act, it does not mean there is no intentionality. In a small child, if there is no reaction, there will be no trace it is activity in the child's mind that creates the trace. The kind of reactivity of each child is a little bit different, the kind of situations in our families which have created traces in our minds is a little bit different between brothers and sisters, even between twins. It shows it's individual karma the reactions are personal and some react more strongly to some situations rather than others.

Q Can we be a victim of other people's karma?

LT: We are constantly a victim of other people's karma. I am a victim of all the people that live here in this house in this hotel, it all influences me, it all has an effect, but I would never directly feel your emotions. I am not a victim of your karma, but of what you do because of your karma, how you influence the group how you influence me. So I have to stand up to that but I will not experience your thoughts your emotions your ideas, only what you bring out towards me,

Maybe here you confuse the act and the effect of the act. I am subject to your actions what you do, even the way you are, I resonate with that. This is what is constantly happening with everyone. But I don't experience the karmic ripening in your mind. Maybe I misunderstood?

Q: Someone who gets murdered is the victim of an incredible karma.....

LT: That's why I said you are confusing the act and the result. We are subject to situations which we encounter. You can make full stop there, if you add victim to the karma you are getting into some complicated interpretation.

So those who are killed cannot continue with their lives, all of that is completely clear. The murderer has emotions arising in their mind, these emotions and the situations of difficulty which he encountered are of course due to karma. That is the ripening of karma. It ripens in that person. But how does that person deal with that ripening, will they go and confide to someone else will they take a weapon. Will they run away? All of the different possibilities are not included in the karma, this is where the person still has possibility to decide something. So it's not automatic that the murder will happen.

The coming about of the strong emotional reaction, or the difficult situation is a result of the karma, but then it's how we deal with that. So if you say that the one who is assassinated is the victim of the karma of another person then there is a missing link there, which is the missing link of the new possibilities of acting. The new act which now manifests in the world. It's not the old karma.

For victims, their minds will continue depending on their karma, it won't necessarily have negative effects, it depends how they are with it. Maybe you have experienced this with something a little easier.

Say for example you have been robbed, you may have a moment of anger, but that might even be followed by feelings of compassion and generosity and you may even say, OK if he needs it then may he be happy with it, and may it have no karmic consequences for him. I offer it to him, and you make something really beautiful from that situation.

There are people who have been murdered with prayers on their lips and feelings of love and compassion in their hearts and definitely for them the future is bright. But that is not normally the case. OK Karma tends to take us into a lot of theoretical questions and this is not so helpful, we should talk about what we can see and experience. There is always a tendency to go into speculation, because we do not know what has come before our lives and afterward. One begins quoting commentaries and masters, and many things have been said, but karma actually means that I experience the fruit of my actions. And it doesn't mean that everything I experience is my personal karma. It is not my personal karma that it will be raining when I get back to Germany. I am determined not to take it personally.

Let's meditate a little bit.

Meditation

Now you know how to meditate you just need to remind yourself a little bit and

then it will be very easy.....

.....

Now we will go to page 130, your favourite section. On the top of the page.

The Text is entitled: **Resting in the nature of mind**

The Tibetan term means something more like when you are sick and then you recover, 'convalescing in the nature of mind'.

First stay completely relaxed. Then look at the mind directly and thoroughly in order to clear up the stains of concentration.

The stains of wanting to be absorbed, the effect of them is to manifest as dullness agitation boredom sleepiness. When mind is not clear we can take it as a sure sign that there is clinging somewhere, there is a tension somewhere.

And finally give up all grasping in order to mix meditation and post meditation

So we do not enter grasping again when we go into activity, the time between meditations is called post meditation. The activity phase.

So we go into activity with the same non-grasping as we cultivated in mediation.

To mix meditation and activity is the essential point of practice.

Mediation is not necessary in itself, why sit still and do nothing? I don't see any meaning in that. It is to learn not to do anything not to get involved not to identify and then to carry that into activity. Since I still get tense and fall into grasping when I am in activity then it is very helpful for me to continue to mediate and let go deeply and then again go into activity.

Now in that mixing of meditation and post meditation do not analyze past actions do not anticipate future ones, remain in a spacious state without grasping at the present.

So it's very similar to the mediation instruction where it was not thinking about the past and not thinking about the future and not conceptualizing the present. Here it concerns our actions. We stay right there with what is going on. We have to think of future actions that's normal, we have to know that OK now I want to go up to my room and get something. That's very simple, it's an idea of what I want to do and that's it, finished. No anticipation about how it will be when I go up to my room, who I will meet and so on, no just simple.

It's the same if you go on vacation, you decide to go to Turkey, but you don't

get engaged in how it will be and who you will meet ect...

Greek people are now beginning to go on holiday to Turkey because of the crisis!

Q: Can you say just don't proliferate.

LT: Yes, you can also say just keep it simple. Just what is needed. Careful planning is OK as long as it is just doing what is necessary and not over planning, are you getting involved in unnecessary worries and trying to control everything that is happening? You have to find out for yourself? What is simple? How simple can it be?

For example you might have the possibility to getting paid for a 4 year PHD thesis, and you could go into all sorts of ideas about how it will be and what you will do, but you haven't even been awarded it yet, so the day when it's sure, you can begin thinking about it.

So keep it simple and remain in this spacious mind. Spacious here means have your senses open and really be in complete contact or interconnectedness with the situation.

Cut the coming and going of thoughts concerning the three times, like this abide in non-conceptual concentration or absorption, while in activity.

Q: What is the difference between identification and being?

LT: Identification is where we react when challenges come, we will react with wanting, not wanting, feeling agressed, to be personally concerned, this is identification. Being also means we can have a direction in life. So being is not just being like a leaf in the wind which is carried away. We can still have a direction in life, but when obstacles happen we don't take it personally, there is no personal reaction. We don't depend on what is going on to be happy. The true happiness is inside and there is no need to identify with the things that are going on. It's possible to do them and it's good if they work but there is no problem if it doesn't work out. When the happiness is free from this identification there is no grasping to what is going on.

For example, if you are completely identified with a project and the project works well, you are happy, but if it doesn't then you are unhappy, then there is grasping. So this freedom not to have to depend on what is going on outside is called non-identification.

For completeness there is also negative identification, we can also react emotionally to the difficulty and need the problems, this is also identification: the more I have problems the more I exist.

Q: You could also think in terms of investing in problems (not necessarily financial!)

LT: So the question was on the level of the relationship to the outer world. The inner level of identification always related to a feeling of a subject, 'I', 'me'. This is a sign, when there is a strong sense of 'I', 'me', 'I want' 'I don't want'. Then there is identification.

The Amulet box of Mahamudra

This is a *gau* in Tibetan, the Tibetan masters carry them around with a string tied around the neck and they have all the precious things in them, like precious substances etc.) This is going to be a *rangbab* instruction.

Pray fervently to the teacher on top of your head and then relax the muscles in the four extremities and remain in a state of effortlessness.

So you all remember *rangbab* from last year, this is actually meant like this; let your extremities fall down naturally, making no effort what so ever. This has become a favourite on retreats! So the four energy channels refer to the channels in the arms and the legs, and one makes no effort what so ever, no effort to hold up ones back, it's the natural disposition in the body. Then there comes a more difficult point, the *rangbab* of speech, which means silence!

Make no effort to open or close your lips and do not speak, this is the natural disposition of speech

The word *rangbab* is translated here as natural disposition. Then we go to the mind...

Remain thought free and open free from the thought of wishing to practice the gaze and without even thinking of doing the preliminary practices, this is the natural disposition (*rangbab*) of mind.

So this is the *rangbab* of body speech and mind, no effort in any area of our being. From the point of this Mahamudra practice, thinking, engaging in thoughts about past present and future is effort it is not *rangbab*, the wish to practice is tension. The wish to be different to how one is, this is tension. With the mouth, even when we meditate we can keep tension in the mouth so we drop all of that. Sometimes the mouth drops open; sometimes it remains closed. You don't have any idea of how it should be.

Remaining in this thought-free state, like gods in the desire realm, the sensual gods, is the measure of the first preliminary, it is called normal mind also called ordinary mind.

It appears to all sentient beings, for example when they rest out of fatigue from heavy work, the 'pouf' nothing more to do. Gendun Rinpoche, explained that it's like the farmer who comes back from his fields and sits down in front of his door, and 'Poof', that state before he has the thought of what to do next. And we have to allow ourselves to experience this state as much as possible. So this is our point of reference for our meditation, as relaxed as that and then

not tired, we keep wide awake. And this relaxation is carried into the activity, and we see how much it is possible to be like that even when active? How relaxed can we be when walking for example? We can walk very relaxed or with a lot of tension. How relaxed can we be when speaking and talking, and so on? You begin to introduce this into all areas of life, this search for the *rangbab* quality.

This state appears to all sentient beings but because they do not recognize it they keep wandering in samsara. Now you should recognize it at all times. Whether you are eating or holding a mala, whatever comes remain thought free by means of the elephant gaze.

The elephant cannot see his own feet, well he could perhaps if he tried, but usually there is no need. There is a wide open look, and as he is walking he takes in the whole situation and walks automatically. The elephant is taken as an example because there is a self-assurance and fearlessness, and the elephant has hardly any enemies. So he can be free of fear and that can be something that expresses itself in the way of looking, it can be free of fear.

In the same way whether you look to the right, or to the left, or into the sky, or wherever first go to luminous emptiness without grasping, as when the eyes have become numb.

'Numb' here means that you cannot see clearly when you are tired, you relax you do exactly what you would do if you don't see clearly. You relax. You can even go to all the extremes, look right look left, look up and then relax and then they will stay. In meditation actually we were told to roll our eyes, thereby stimulating all the muscles and then we can relax, because sometimes we forget where the easy gaze is, how it feels, so we go a little bit to the extremes, we 'stretch' and then we feel the relaxation, like we do when we stretch the body. So wherever we look, we look with luminous emptiness. Luminous means clear perception of colours and forms, but at the same time there is no grasping, we know it to be ungraspable, this is what we call *sel tong*, luminous emptiness. Talking from experience, it's like being amazed at how luminous, clear and precise everything appears, and then at the same time inwardly being in a very spacious state, where there is no grasping at any individual object.

Thinking 'this is my self-arisen preliminary' you should remain thought free in this recognition, moreover when you go for a walk to fulfil nature's call in this thought free and open state you will not be embarrassed or in panic even when you are surrounded by one hundred women.

This is obviously an instruction for men, right! But the same holds true for all our experience all of body speech and mind, the *rangbab*, let's just be as open, as natural as possible. And in this state there is no embarrassment, when others see us naked, crying. Whatever is there is just how it is; we don't need to be embarrassed. This is for ourselves, we are not embarrassed, but

maybe others will be and in that respect we take care. I just remembered how in a very natural way I stopped the car and got out on a Brazilian highway and the cops stopped. They came over and said what are you doing here? It didn't look like much of a highway actually! They said don't you think of the women and children who might be driving along. They were thinking of the embarrassment I might be creating for others, that's why the cops stopped. I didn't see many cars. Anyhow they were out fulfilling their duty.

“At all time during the four daily activities, lying, standing, sitting, walking, you should not stay away from this experience of luminous emptiness without grasping.”

Isn't that a beautiful instruction? It's something we can take with us, it's a good guideline for our daily activities.

Q: It is very nice to be in this state of *rangbab*, but what happens if when you are walking on the street, and someone starts to behave badly to you, or your house is falling down?

LT: You do what is necessary and you stay in *rangbab*. You know the idea is to stay in luminous clarity, non-identified. It's better for you to train like when you teach yoga, you teach, you show you have to do things, you want to make something good for your students, but at the same time you don't have to be so concerned. So you train like this and sometimes you can stay like this when someone criticizes you, but this is the more difficult practice, I can't do it at all times, it depends how close the person is to me. Maybe you are confusing this *rangbab* natural luminosity with being inert 'mue' in French. Not being able to react or respond to anything, because I showed you with this letting everything fall, so it seems passive. But this letting everything fall, this passive state is just to learn how it feels inside and then we carry that state into activity.

You can also compare it to a dance, but not a performance dance with a lot of wanting but being able to take all life as a dance with this *rangbab* attitude.

Q: When he talks about *rangbab* as a preliminary is that because it is not the actual nature of existence?

LT: I think he uses this expression because our normal experience is like this and we can relate to it, and then he explains that this is a preliminary because it is within the dualistic realm of functioning. Everyone here knows what I talk about, but the experiences you refer to inwardly are dualistic; there is a slight observer in there. What we usually notice when we refer to relaxation and being very natural is a dualistic experience. The state when the farmer comes home and does not recognize, is a moment of going through a non-dual experience and that's the real thing, it's not the preliminary any more, it's Mahamudra. So when we think this is my 'self' relaxing this is a preliminary, the observer is acting, we are close to what it could actually be and then we are asked to relax more, stay away from all further labelling, don't think about it anymore, leave it as it is. So we are asked to take the most relaxed state

that we are aware of as our guide to go there and relax within that even more, to forget ourselves in that. We go through this state every night when we go to sleep and no one recognizes this, this is the door to liberation, this carefree, completely open state just as we let go of all the preoccupations of the day, before we enter this not very conscious state of deep sleep, this in between, this is it and none of us has ever recognized that as the entrance door to liberation, we are being told now and then we can develop a little bit more awareness of that, but yes it is as simple as that. In a nutshell Mahamudra is to be as relaxed and natural as at the moment just before falling asleep with the fully awakened mind, in full presence, without any trace of drowsiness, that's the challenge that's awakening.

There is awareness not anyone who is aware. But we start from the unaware perspective so there is someone who is aware.

From the Shikshasamuccaya: “While moving, sitting lying and standing be completely attentive. When walking, gaze at the distance of a wooden yoke and your mind will stay without delusion”

Here it is not saying that we should look a meter or two meters in front, they are pointing to the way our gaze is and our inner state of mind. So that by looking differently we can enter an experience without delusion, that's why the quote is here. So when we look with clear luminous emptiness. The advice here is that sometimes we don't know how to influence our state of mind, and we can use the way we look and it has an effect back on our mind, that's why he is coming to the gaze at the end of all these Mahamudra instructions.

Do it now, you open up all your peripheral vision, without having to make sure you really see to the edges of your visual field, you open up your vision and you relax with what you see. You are seeing close and far and seeing whatever is there and all this seeing is with the taste of Mahamudra. So look like the elephant, the elephant's gaze is sometimes far away, sometimes close by, to the right or to the left. You don't have to control the gaze, rather you leave it free and completely relaxed.

(3-minute practice of the gaze...)

Ok thank you, you can practice this in all situations, it's like he says here:

In brief, when talking, reciting sutras, muttering mantras listening to or teaching the Dharma at all times stay undistracted from this thought - free of luminous emptiness without grasping.

And the Karmapa gives all these instructions before he gives the meditation methods. You see that when you turn the page you have specific methods of meditation. So when we meditate on an outer object, when we meditate on a visualization, when we meditate on the breathing, all of this is done with exactly this attitude which is described here, he takes care that we do not practice these specific methods with a clinging mind which is focusing fixing, trying to get a result, but with this relaxation and then the methods will be

most beneficial, otherwise we might stay years meditating with these more specific methods and never come to this openness.

Make it your essential endeavour to put into practice the immaculate teachings of the venerable Kagyu masters of the past. This is important.

Let's make it our endeavour to practice at least what we have practiced this year. And you know who the greatest master is? Yes, yourself. So put into practice everything you have understood, that you have realized to be true and helpful. If you do that you will go off like a rocket.

So we have finished the transmission for the retreat and this afternoon we will just do some guided meditation and exchange. You may have some questions about how to continue.

(Prayers)

(In fact the afternoon session was an open practice led by Vessantara, not recorded here.)

***** **END** *****