

Meditation Course

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Practical teachings on mindfulness meditation for students in east and west given in Kagyu Samye Ling, Scotland, January 1995. Edited.

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Session 1

Prayer to Root Guru

*Glorious root guru sitting on a lotus and moon disc
on top of my head
look at me with your great kindness
and grant me the accomplishment of body speech and mind.*

Four Dharmas of Gampopa

*Grant your blessing so that my mind may be one with the dharma
Grant your blessing so that the dharma may go along the path
Grant your blessing so that the dharma may clarify confusion
Grant your blessing so that I may transform confusion into wisdom.*

This is the first session of this weekend course called “Walking together with me to clean up Samye Ling”. Tidying or cleaning up Samye Ling can be looked from one point of view or another, but the main external image which we use, is very much influenced by ourselves. If there is something that is unclean, which needs to be tidied up externally, then it also must have something to do with our mind, because the mind is the one which influences and dominates our life. The mind and the body depend on each other. If the mind is unclear or impure, whatever we do physically is also unclear or impure. That does not mean the majority people in Samye Ling have an unclear mind, but on the other hand it doesn't mean that they would have very clear mind either.

I think since we are in a spiritual community, or we believe in such, it is our responsibility that at least what we do, spiritually or in a worldly way, is not unworthwhile. It means redoing the constant business, which is causing somebody else becoming unmindful. I wouldn't call it a bad action or anybody's bad intention, but it is unthoughtfulness or unmindfulness. Everybody is thinking what would be easiest for themselves in the sense of responsibilities. For example jobs, whatever is the shortest way to achieve the goal, even at cost of causing extra work for other people, one is willing to do that, because the “me”, the “I” is so strong and powerful. But in a spiritual community one must think for other people's benefit. It means whatever you do, it always benefits others. When we talk in a sense of prayer, whatever positive I am thinking, may it be beneficial to others. Whatever I practice, may it benefit others. My thinking, praying and physical action, whatever it is, may it benefit others. If that is our main idea, not just the words but our meaning, then even with very small things one always considers other people. If we always consider others first, we will develop it into a habit.

Sometimes when you think for others there is also a danger overdoing things for others, questioning and reasoning why people don't need your help. In the end it becomes like a punishment and the person who is always offering their help becomes a nuisance constantly asking others what they need. Quite often elderly people feel it like a punishment, when somebody is overdoing things for them and caring too much. So helping others should happen in the middle way, you don't overdo it and you don't ignore things. If you are

mindful, you are automatically concerned: what is useful and what is not useful doesn't depend on oneself, you don't do things which someone else is will be carrying out. You are aware of the other person.

Things have influence on your mind. Meditation is to try to understand these mechanisms of our mind, how the mind is working and how we ourselves can work together with others. It should not become a defense. Many people, when they talk about the meditation aspect, they think: "Today I am meditating; now I am meditating." So you become like a warrior fighting the thoughts which arise within yourself. You have constant war and fighting within: are I and my mind winning, or is my behavior winning? After you have done a meditation session you become more tense and nervous and your behavior becomes strange rather than relaxed and peaceful. That will not be meditation.

Meditation means that you don't fight within yourself. There is nothing to fight about, nobody to fight against. Meditation means to simply sit and observe all the thoughts which arise within yourself, the sounds which you hear externally or internally, feelings, fears and emotional states. Whatever is arising, you just let it come and go freely. You don't aim to a peaceful mind state and you don't try to achieve dark hollow empty space with no thought. So many people are looking for an empty hollow place when they meditate, and that is not meditation. Meditation means simply remaining as it is. In most of the texts it is said: "Do not try to think about past or future, but be with present moment." It doesn't matter what the present is like, positive or negative, useful or not, whatever it is, whatever thoughts arise, you should be mindful with those thoughts.

Quite often people's idea of meditation is to try to get rid of the thoughts, but that's not meditation. To get rid of them is not possible, but when the thoughts arise, face them. For example: "I sit in the shrine," the thought arises. Don't think about the shrine, but about the one who thinks "I am in the shrine, I stay in the shrine." So, relax the thoughts. The next thought could be for example: "I came here." When that thought arises, be mindful of whoever is thinking: "I am coming here." If you are face to face with that, it is called mindfulness.

In order to develop mindfulness you don't have to have positive thoughts like: "I am very joyful." You don't have to create that. And you don't have to look at "I want to murder somebody" as a terrible thought. In the meditation itself you should not look for what is good or bad, but face whatever thoughts appear. You don't try to escape or sort out your thoughts. If the meditation is based on positive motivation or aimed to develop positive words or ideas, then you try to increase positive thoughts and you try to get rid of negative thoughts. But in the actual meditation there isn't something to pick up or throw away.

When we train in this way, it's called mindfulness. When we are mindful, we can be mindful of all our actions. If we are mindful, we don't become tired or feel "I need to rest and relax. I need some place to lie down, I'm too tired." You don't have any of that, all that is due to unmindfulness. When you do things unmindfully, you have much pressure in your mind. The pressure takes over your peacefulness. The best rest, relaxation and achievement in whatever you are doing, is mindfulness.

However, mindfulness should not be applied only in shrine, but every day in whatever job you are doing. Mindfulness in eating, sleeping, talking, writing, in all jobs you need to do. Don't apply mindfulness in one area only, forgetting about it the rest of the time and being unmindful all day. That way you will waste so much time. In a meditation session you concentrate in developing your mindfulness as much as you can, as

you don't have any other jobs at that moment. As soon as you come out from the meditation, apply the mindfulness to your jobs.

Being mindful you won't make so many mistakes in the sense of wrong compassion, wishing to help others but overdoing it or underdoing it and not being actually concerned about anybody or anything. Nobody wants to harm this community intentionally, but because of unmindfulness our actions become obstacles for other people. We leave things in the middle of others' way and they need to do extra work unpreparedly for our sake. What we think, do and say, are contradictory. We say we want to help others, but others have to do things after us three or four times, because one after another we become unmindful. Or whatever we are doing is based on our own ideas, and not on other people's ideas. For example, if someone asks you to do something for them, and they explain what they want you to do, you forget the instructions, because you already fixed your own idea which way things must be. So, whatever you are told you forget, at least half of it. And you put together your idea and the other person's idea and arrive in a conclusion. Then whoever you are doing something for, that person has to undo at least half of it, because it's now based on your idea.

But I have a good feeling, if you have good awareness or mindfulness – I suppose awareness is developed through mindfulness, and mindfulness is what we need to concern ourselves more right now – then through mindfulness one can develop coordination. All our life we ourselves and our organization, not only in here but wherever you go, whatever you do, the biggest problem in our human society is the problem with coordination. There is no coordination whatsoever to try to be satisfied. We just try to feed our ego without coordination. Even we want to do some coordination, it's very much reflected on "I", to fulfil our own ego. You have coordinated me, and the coordination is never in the middle way, it's only one way. That is not pure coordination.

As I said in the beginning, our community is not just simply putting stones and wood and bricks together. That is called one way clean up. You may have to repeat that every day in your life, but on the other hand at the back of that, behind that is the mind training, mindfulness. If we are mindful of our actions, then the constant collecting rubbish from outside is not necessary. With mindfulness you put the rubbish in the right place to start with, when you throw it out from Samye Ling community, so there is no constant movement of rubbish.

Similarly the coordination is most important, but it should not depend on one's own ideas only. It must depend on whatever is most beneficial for the general public, or in this case for the overall community; beauty of landscape, the cleanliness, how to preserve this precious Earth, the precious planet, how to grow plants, flowers and fruits, which give us the right kind of nourishment when we eat, smell, look and touch. It's the positive side. Thinking this way, if we do things for the benefit of others, then automatically you will be included, there is nobody left behind. "Oh I forgot myself, my own benefit." Ego is so tall, it will never be completely demolished and you don't need to worry that you suffer by accomplishing others' benefit. You will never suffer. But you are full of ego, each of us are.

In this way our responsibility is to train our mind, and whatever we see outside is our projection. If we are pure, then outside will be pure. If our mind is impure, outside will be impure. At the moment majority of people's mind is impure and that reflects constantly rubbish everywhere. I have also been out of touch of Samye Ling community, but here people say they are out of touch of themselves. You don't stay here that

long. There are many worldly human relationships, and it is said Samye Ling is not what it used to be. There are expectations and longing for the early good times. At those early times people did not think they were particularly good times. Somehow Samye Ling people found right now that the early times were good. In few years' time these days we are now having will be found as the early good times, too. The good times should be present, not always longing for something in the past. Present has to be made into good times.

Chatting is one of the ten non-virtuous actions, and what we need are the pure virtuous actions. Talk less, think less, and do more positive things, things which benefit everybody. Nowadays we have to talk everything together, and we think talking solves the problems. It doesn't. It's our ego, dealing with our emotions, dealing with our ego which solves our own problems. And not only our own problems, but those related to other's problems. You don't need to beat anybody to solve their problem, but if we beat our mind, we solve other's problems. If we see that our face looks ugly in the mirror, it's no use to break the mirror, there are millions of mirrors. Until you change your body you will see the ugliness in your face on all the mirrors in east and west. However, if you deal with it and see, this is my face, how beautiful my face looks like even if it is ugly – even in its ugliness it's so beautiful – then you can see that in all mirrors. It has nothing to do with the mirror, but it has to do with how you relate to yourself.

So, when we have problem in kitchen or office or wherever, it has nothing to do with other people, but you: you are the one who is not able to deal with the matter. Talking doesn't solve the problem, but mindfulness does. Talking to me doesn't solve it: "Oh I have to go to see Rinpoche, because I have a problem." If you have a hole in your shoes, you need to go to buy new shoes from a shop. Talking to me about it does not solve the problem, but is waste of your and my time. Nobody needs to waste anybody's time if they sit and be mindful, relax and let things come and go freely.

You don't need psychology to deal with your problems, you don't need to take tranquilizers, or go to a mental institution or see a teacher or any advisor in order to overcome you problems. Your problem is in you. The problem arose because you were unmindful. If you are mindful when panic develops, just relax one or two minutes and let the panic come and go. Let it pass and you become peaceful. You don't need to run after packet of cigarettes or cup of tea or coffee in order to overcome it. You don't need to cry. You don't need any of this, those are exaggerated emotions and they are unnecessary.

We are human beings and always looking for somebody else, saying: "Are you in a problem, what can I do?" We constantly blame each other. What is there to blame? We say: "Why don't you be concerned about me?" Why don't you do the one thing and say: "Be happy, be nice, you should enjoy yourself." If someone is trying to enjoy themselves you say: "Why you don't think about me, be concerned about me?" What you want is somebody crying (in pity): "What is happening to you?" If a person doesn't do that to you, you wonder why they are not concerned about you. At that time you are not allowing others to have happiness, but you want them to cry and worry about you constantly. If they do that, for example your spouse, you say that my husband or wife is very good, because they are constantly concerned and regularly crying over my affairs! And they are not allowed to laugh; if they do, they are no longer a good spouse. So, that kind of expectations constantly feed our ego. If we lead spiritual life, to not feed our ego is most important. And to be mindful all the time is most important.

We will do short session of meditation, and after that I hope that once you are mindful and do things properly then there will be no more rubbish inside us or outside of us. Okay?

Session 2

I will talk a little and then we will discuss things. Concerning the weekend course of meditation, it's called "Cleaning up Samye Ling". I already talked a little what cleaning up means. Of course the obvious thing is to try to improve the environment, to be environment-friendly. Through this whoever is taking part in the cleaning up, you can also improve your own home life, once you go there, so that we don't damage this precious Earth, this precious planet, which we all have to maintain. Not only our lives, but our children's and their children's life, many future generations all depend on us and this planet.

This can only improve by our awareness, not by demonstrations. There are so many people who want to improve, one can call them environment-friendly, but their way of improvement is to demonstrate, to change the government's ideas. But when they are at home by themselves, they do entirely opposite; there is no awareness of what their own actions are. They are using chemicals and buying or selling environmentally unfriendly products. So that is looking far away but not closely what you yourself do. If we don't change ourselves, educate ourselves, the whole environment cannot improve, because the improvement is based on each human's education and each human individual's awareness.

Recently we saw many demonstrations against moving animals from England to other countries. I think it's very good to have public demonstrations, yet when those who do demonstrate come home, they don't treat their own children and pets nicely. Although they are jumping and shouting outside, within themselves they are somehow not concerned. Many of us we do many things for other people, but then constantly punish ourselves. Either we take ourselves too seriously, or punish ourselves too much.

So, I think in the Buddhist way, or in a human way the most important thing is that we are responsible for ourselves first. It would be wrong to try to educate the whole world, if the purpose is just for them to accept our personal idea. It's most important to educate ourselves and be mindful of our own actions. We should be mindful that whatever we do ourselves affects other people's life. This is demonstrated very clearly and simply in the environment. Whatever each of us do wrong, this will contribute to the whole world. We are part of that, so the first thing is to educate ourselves. Not to educate others. Once we, each of us, are responsible, the positive actions and awareness of all we are doing helps to make it easier for everybody. Then we don't have to educate anybody. To give an example is the best kind of education. Not to do all the bad things while writing so many books, giving so many lectures, yet being oneself the worst one. That is not solving anything.

Similarly there are so many meditation instructors everywhere, and people feel this is necessary. I think it is very useful, yet meditation instructors themselves, including myself, many of us, we don't know what we are talking about. We may just read a book and hope this is the right one, and pretend we know all the answers. That damages so many people's mind. This is also very dangerous. But if it is a very great teacher, those who really know meditation, they don't have to fly around the whole world organizing courses. They don't have to; everybody goes to see them, because they are like sunshine or magnetic power. All the people who need it are drawn towards them, so the teacher doesn't have to go around. And for those people who really pray and need their help, the distance is no longer a problem. People go to stay with them for one or two years, because he or she has developed a special magnetic power out of loving kindness and compassion and out of meditation.

So, I think that we in the west are too much concerned with courses and quick solution. We are too much concerned with the solution having to be expensive, because we are used to buying and selling. Money is the only answer and rich people can buy anything: happiness, wealth. Whatever you want to achieve you can achieve with money. Similarly quite often when you want to achieve something immediately: happiness or development in meditation, you ask how much it will cost. There cannot be any price for an achievement in meditation. Meditation is within our understanding and cannot be bought by money. Meditation is achieved by diligence by whoever has diligence, whoever has a right frame of mind, and whoever has a right teacher. Without those three things you can't achieve anything.

The teacher is most important. Meditation cannot be learned from books or made up like a recipe mixing things you buy from supermarket or grocery shop next to you, thinking "I must experience this." You may experiment one thing from here and another thing from there. Experiments don't take you anywhere, but you need a technique, a method. Whoever achieves anything through meditation their achievement doesn't come from books. From books you can get advice for your mind, what it means to be a good and honest person and what bad motivation means. But to develop your meditation through books, there is no way.

Meditation depends totally on each individual. If you make effort, then you may have some benefit. It's like food: if you want to be fat, you are the one who has to eat. There is no use to pay someone to eat for you and wish that you would be fat! You can't buy gaining or losing weight by money, it's you who has to work. So you have to give up the idea of buying meditation system, or that you would achieve something on meditation session.

Some people complain that they have done ten years of meditation and they haven't achieved anything. When you ask them how often they meditate, they may say once a week. Now, meditation is like food. Would you be able to maintain your body by eating one meal once a week? I doubt it. You have to eat three meals a day. And then you have to drink, in between you have coffee breaks and tea breaks. After eating and drinking six or seven times during the day you may still feel hungry. Same way meditation is something you have to apply every hour, not just once a year, month or week. The question is good and one can do many things once a week, for example go to church once week. You do all the bad things for six days and on the seventh you wash it off. You could be working in a factory for six days and have shower on the seventh. Then you are clean. You may say: "I've been in church on Sunday, now I'm clean and my mind is very positive. I'm afraid meditation is not like that. Whenever you touch dust you always get dirty. Whenever you wash you always became clean. You cannot wash only once a week. Similarly we have to apply meditation to ourselves every moment.

Very lazy people always say as the first thing that Buddhism means middle way and going to so many sessions is too rigid. Why not to have easy come, easy go approach? It's not very useful, unless you are naturally easy come, easy go kind of person you can't make meditation only to be that way. It's part of your mind, what you inherited. So a very easy person may meditate with a simple technique, but if you are a complicated person, meditation has to be complicated, too. It's important that meditation is applied every day through your life, and not just once a day but at least four, five or ten times a day. You have to apply it every five or ten minutes or every half an hour, if you want to get some benefit. But there is no benefit going to meditate just once a year or one weekend here and there.

When people are interested in meditation, they usually attend many weekend courses in different places. Each teacher may say slightly differently and they end up more confused than before they attended those six or seven sessions of a weekend course. One teacher may recommend you not to do very strict meditation, another one will recommend very strict meditation. One says you only need to apply it once a month and another says meditate every day. Then you end up with much confusion. It's sure each of them in their own way has the truth, but since there are so many techniques of meditation, the best thing is not to let confusion into your life. Find one excellent teacher and maintain that teacher until you stabilize your meditation. Once you stabilize it you can go anywhere, wherever you like. It's important to maintain one teacher and one technique, but as I said, the most important thing is a good teacher.

In Tibetan meditation is called *shine*. Once you apply it a long time, it becomes *lhaktong*. Normally there are these two stages. *Shi* means 'peace' and *ne* means 'state' (of peace). Our life is very busy and especially our mind is busy constantly. When we become very busy we cannot get sleep, we become as if addicted or paranoid. We can't get sleep when we have so many thoughts arising, and we tell ourselves: "I should not think this way." That is another chain of thought, which makes us even busier. "I don't want to think, thinking is wrong." Yet we don't know how to overcome that and how to think less. So we think more and panic more, and become more paranoid. If we realize that the chain of thoughts or too much thinking is wrong, in order to overcome this we should give freedom to our thinking. Many people, when they do meditation they say: "I had a very bad experience." You ask: "What happened?" and they answer: "I am constantly thinking, I am not able to stop during meditation, but keep on thinking all kind of things." If you keep thinking all kind of things and if you fight that thinking saying: "I want to stop thinking, I want to meditate, I should not think, thinking is bad, I thought I am quite honest, I am not honest..." you are creating thinking and not helping to stop it.

How to stop thinking? You tell yourself you can't stop. It is you who tell yourself what you want to think. Let's think more! It's like chaining a child. You put many toys in front of a child and tell them not to play with them. The child will want to play more since they are a child and all children do is playing games with toys. The more you deny, the more the child's desire to play will grow. The situation will get worked up and the child will explode jumping, and you become angry towards their action. So, give freedom: "Okay, you play the game." And the child will only play, they don't get mad and there is no desire to play criminally jumping and hurting. As soon as you give full freedom, by giving freedom the child will stop automatically.

Similarly give freedom to your mind and say: "Okay, you think what you want, I will watch you." As soon as you say that there is no more desire to think, thinking is no longer effective. Most important in meditation is to give freedom to your thoughts. In meditation, during that process of meditation you don't think: this is right thinking and this is wrong thinking. There should not be any difference. All thoughts are equal; there are no first and second category thoughts. "I should think this and not that during the meditation," is not a useful attitude. You accept every thought. In the meditation texts it is said: you should not cling to whatever thoughts are arising as like you do not have clinging to someone's corpse when they die. When somebody is alive you may have clinging to them as beautiful or ugly, nice body, nice shirt, but when the person dies, you don't have clinging to someone dead. Whether the corpse is beautiful or ugly, young or old, it's same, still a corpse. There is no more clinging. Similarly, when the thoughts appear during the meditation, there is no clinging to them.

It is important to give freedom, and on top of that you have to be mindful all the time. Mindfulness is the key to meditation. Whatever is happening when you stay in meditation posture, when you walk out afterwards, be mindful always. Mindfulness is like driving a car. You have to be mindful and not shortsighted. You cannot only look the landscape and you cannot only look the car next to you, but you should see the birds, insects, anything moving as well as the road. You are being mindful so that you don't cause injury. The meditation is very much like that, you must be mindful all the time. When you drive a car you are not concerned about good and bad. You may have some kind of belief in images, but it is your responsibility to be mindful all the time.

In meditation many people try not to have any thoughts. If you have no thoughts in this body, you will be dead. It's not meditation. So, you cannot do without thinking. Thoughts depend on the body and the body depends on the thought process. Don't create a state of no thoughts, and don't create hallucinations. It is not meditation to create hallucinations, but meditation means to remain as it is. Not as it was or as it will be, but living in present. Not in the past, not in the future, but in present. Whatever is the present moment at this particular second, you are living that particular second.

Living in this particular second – whenever you are able to apply that in any place, then that is meditation. Then you will improve that understanding. This is the key or foundation of meditation. How to improve in this is through your diligence with the guidance of a good teacher. The teacher will guide you, because there will be many obstacles, problems. Sometimes there are appreciations and sometimes problems. These problems cannot be solved by individuals themselves.

Before we do a short session if you have any questions, we try to deal with that first. We will not succeed to clean up Samye Ling from the outside today, but whoever wishes to do some jobs, find some inside jobs and if there isn't any, then clean up your rubbish in yourself, maybe that's the best way. Rather than cleaning up, my idea is composting, because compost is very useful. Something you want to get rid of becomes very valuable in the end. Whatever there is in ourselves, all the negative thoughts, if we don't have them, then there are no positive thoughts, either. Negative depends on the positive and vice versa. So I wouldn't say to get rid of, but to use it in the right way, so it becomes useful. And as far as the meditation technique goes, it's said when you have much pain, wherever it is, meditate on the pain itself.

Session 3

As I said yesterday and the day before, the idea of meditation is to try to remain as it is. Most people, when they talk about meditation, they have many expectations for an immediate result. Secondly, whatever we do in our life, for example when studying in order to learn something, we are trying to improve rather than remaining as we are. Therefore whenever we think about meditation, we feel we must start looking differently, thinking differently or eat differently. So there is always a tendency to change something from what you are. But meditation is something where you don't need to change anything. In our life we are changing so many things all the time. That way we continue in a circle of confusion. If we don't want that, the only way to overcome it is to not go round and round or not to think in a different way, but to remain as it is.

In the Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa he is talking to one of his disciples saying that you should meditate as like space, ocean and mountains. The disciple asks: "I tried to meditate as like mountains,

ocean and space, but there are some difficulties. When I meditate as like the ocean, there are so many movements in the ocean. If the movements arise from the ocean, what can I do? I tried to meditate as like mountain, but then there are trees growing, flowers arising, there are so many things of nature moving on the mountain, what should I do? And I tried to meditate as like space, but then there are rains, clouds, sometimes beautiful clouds, sometimes ugly clouds. And there are so many endless things arising in the space itself. Then what can I do?" That was his question.

The answer was: "When you meditate as like water, like ocean, the movements of the ocean are part of the ocean's actions. They come from the ocean and they also dissolve into ocean itself. It calms and different forms and shapes dissolve in there in the end. When you meditate as like solid matter, as a mountain, trees and plants grow there. They grow from the mountain and they die in mountains. They come from and disappear into the mountain itself. When you meditate as like voidness, as space, then clouds arise, birds fly, but wherever the birds fly there is no place where the bird is coming from, there is no foot mark for the birds, they come from space. And all the clouds come from space and disappear into space itself.

Similarly, when you try to meditate, there are thoughts arising in your mind constantly, but the thoughts are not separate from your meditation. When you apply mindfulness then you will see different feelings. You may experience different things, but they come from the mind. They also disappear into the mind. It's part of the mind's activity, not a separate thing. Therefore, when you meditate, you should not try to separate positive and negative thoughts, and you should not think during the meditation that "I should not have any thoughts because I'm meditating." Every action comes from the mind itself and if you let it come and go it will just disappear by itself.

So, what you need for the meditation is merely to apply mindfulness and not trying to do anything else. You have to apply mindfulness all the time, because if you aren't mindful, then you are not meditating. However, tense mindfulness is an obstacle. If you want to make drawings, study or practice, whatever, you have to do it in a relaxed way. The musicians are used as an example, people who play guitar or other string instruments. It's said meditation is like a good musician or actor / actress, one who is totally mindful but at the same time fully relaxed with no tenseness. When you have no tenseness then you can play whatever you are playing very well. You don't make any mistakes. But if you are very tense, you make mistakes all the time. It is important to relax, but that relaxedness comes from mindfulness. Mindfulness is most important for musicians. They play the strings in the middle way; they are not tied too fast, not too loose. If the strings are too tight the instrument gives a harsh sound. If they are too loose, they don't produce any sound. Not too tight, not too loose, but the middle way, and then you will produce a good sound.

Similarly, if you drive a car and only look one foot away from the car you may have an accident. If you look very far away, just the mountains and not the road, then you also have an accident. If you look in a reasonable distance in front of you, you will see all the way from in front of you to the mountains in a relaxed way. Then even you are not holding the wheel with both hands you can do many things. People smoke, shake hands while driving and there is no mistake, you can enjoy. But if you are so tense, nervous, even you are driving only one or two kilometers you can make many accidents.

In meditation you make up many problems when you try to build it up like a pressure cooker. So many people do that. They tie all their feelings and thoughts into their body and think one is not allowed to experience anything beyond one's body. One is not allowed to hear noise, traffic, other people's

conversation or movements. All sounds and feelings they create as an obstacle for the meditation. Doing that is an obstacle. The only thing you are doing during meditation is that you are boiled up like a pressure cooker and then at the end you blow up. "That's it, I've had enough of meditation! I leave today." That's people's attitude, giving up everything. They give up after one or two months and think they started meditating in a wrong way. That is another pressure cooker, you cook it up for some time and then you have another explosion.

So, it's very important that you don't build it up like a pressure cooker. Meditation is like a hot oven, and all the thoughts which are arising, are like snowflakes dropping on hot plate or hot oven, disappearing by themselves gradually. Whenever the snow drops it just melts by the temperature. So you should welcome all the thoughts which are arising during the meditation. When pain arises, pain in your knee or head, welcome your pain. But you don't have to create pain when there is no pain. And you don't have to create a sound when there is no sound. But whatever experience is arising look at it in a positive way. When you look everything positively, you are free from the enemy, whatever it is. Problems, whatever difficulties you have, they don't exist. During the meditation time you must accept everything.

Of course I'm talking about meditation from one point of view only. Each individual may have to apply the technique according to each individual; it may not be the same thing for all. The requirement for each individual is based on your character. One technique may not bring the full benefit, because all of us have little different backgrounds in how we were brought up. What we value as positive and negative is based on the society and country we come from. Good and bad, right and wrong are based on education and therefore there are some differences. Since we are structured and trained in different ways we have to apply meditation techniques differently.

There are thousands of techniques of meditation, not only one or two or three, but endless techniques. And the technique is not something you can learn on your own. The technique is applied similarly as a person who is very good in making sculptures. They can make very good sculptures according to people's feelings, because they can see other people's feelings. They themselves went through those different stages of mind, different ideas. Therefore they can see through all this. So the meditation techniques are applied by very good meditation instructors and they have very big responsibility, because when you try to play a game with human mind, it's the most dangerous game you can ever play in your life. Compared to football or tennis, external games, if there is a danger you may break your arms or legs. You may lose your eye, but beyond that you don't lose anything. But bad meditation instructor can make their students mad for all their life.

Positive and negative developments or non-developments in the spiritual area are all based on mind. Therefore whoever wants to play game with the mind, it is the most dangerous game, and it will be very wise to have a good instructor. The instructor has to be somebody who studied and meditated and developed through experience. But nowadays there are so many people who write so beautiful literature. He or she has been meditating for many years and realized so many different stages. A good father and good mother can make the children very famous without any knowledge. That way people can be trapped by just reading literature, without looking beyond the literature itself.

I know many people who read a book and based on that think the teacher must be very wise, and they go to learn meditation from them. The teacher must be very good because that is what is said in the

information leaflet. But it will be very wise to check that information carefully, because nowadays people can write anything. Even you can write about yourself and claim to have six arms and nine heads. You send the information to a thousand people and they will believe it. When they come to you, you will tell them that they'll see your six arms and nine heads when they are pure enough in their mind to see. And they will believe that too! Cheating is most easy thing to do. If I cheat you and you don't realize I'm cheating, that is also a big mistake. So don't quote me. And there are many others similar like me wandering around talking about meditation, but it has no fruit and no foundation. So it's very important to look carefully. But playing games with your mind is very dangerous.

However, in meditation the first thing is to relax and then to look for a good instructor. Now we will do short session of meditation. Before we do that – it's meant to be discussion anyway, rather than me talking – so today is good weather and we will be able to clean up rubbish outside at least. Maybe there is more accumulation of rubbish inside, but if you have any questions, or you want to discuss or present your point of view of meditation... I'm sure there are many people here saying: "This poor man doesn't know anything about meditation. I am far better." If you think like that I shall welcome your knowledge, which will help me great deal. That will be very useful.

Question: Rinpoche, will you talk a little bit about your meditation teacher?

Rinpoche: My teacher, in what way, size of his body or what he ate? I think my teacher was a very humble teacher. He always told me to be humble. Jamgon Kongtrul, the first Kongtrul Yonten Gyamtso was just an ordinary monk. He became scholarly very famous and expert on all Buddhist teachings and matters of retreat. Kongtrul Yonten Gyamtso slept maybe 2–3 hours per night. He recited mantras with a mala in his left hand. He had a blackboard on his left and then he held a prayer wheel. At the same time he wrote, and he has written over 300 books. As a whole it's called Rinchen Terjuk, The Five Tripitakas. Once he finished writing one blackboard he picked up another one, constantly writing, reciting and meditating and holding the prayer wheel all in one go.

He had so many disciples coming from all over the world. This happened in Palpung Monastery in Tibet long time ago. The First Kongtrul Yonten Gyamtso was a disciple of Situ Rinpoche in his monastery. Since the First Kongtrul Yonten Gyamtso became so famous, many monasteries requested him to go to their monasteries or reincarnate there. He promised many monasteries to go. At the end he was emanated or reincarnated as at least five Kongtruls. So there are different representations: one is specialized in the academic aspect. Maybe they all hold all the wisdom, but each one has a body representation, a speech representation, and a mind representation of Kongtrul Yonten Rinpoche.

The main Kongtrul Rinpoche's reincarnation remained in Palpung. Shechen Kongtrul is the one who was requested by Shechen Monastery. The main nyingmapa monasteries in Central Tibet are called Shechen and Dzogchen, they are the two nyingmapa monasteries, and he became Shechen Kongtrul. He was recognized by Rabjam Rinpoche, the head of Sechen Monastery, as Kongtrul, and he became very famous and learned. Especially he was famous in the meditation aspect. He had students coming to Shechen Monastery from Ladakh, Nepal and Kullu, Tibetan borders. He also had many students coming from the borders of China. All his students were coming from far, far away. Many of them came for one year or for three months work. There were students coming from many other monasteries as well.

Shechen Monastery was very strict monastery and there was strict discipline. I was a monk at that time and we who came to just see Kongtrul Rinpoche and to study in the Shechen shedra, the university, we were monks from far away monasteries. Two times a year we, the monks who had come from far away, had to join together in the monastery and pray. One of the occasions was Guru Rinpoche's dancing, tsechu, the 10th day of the month, and another occasion was just before the Tibetan New Year. At that time the Shechen monks were very well disciplined and they had memorized all the prayers. They were not allowed to have text in front. They also had to wear similar uniforms; they were not allowed to wear anything different. But all the people who came from long distance did not have that information and they could not afford to have exactly similar uniforms. They did not know all the prayers by heart, either, and they needed the text in front.

Then the Shechen Monastery made the decision that these monks from distant places are a bad example for it, and therefore they banned them from taking part in prayers. Kongtrul Rinpoche agreed but said: "Since I am here, I am the cause of your problem, so I will leave." The monastery realized losing him was much worse than breaking the law, and since then the monks from distant monasteries were allowed to sit in the corner. We did not need to look the text or do anything, and we were just chatting! If we wanted to sleep, nobody could see us. The monastery was huge with only few windows. All the disciplined monks were in the center of the hall and those coming from far away were in a dark corner. When you look at it in that way his compassion was enormous.

Those who came to him were poor people. For me it took a month from my monastery on horseback. To walk would have taken more than one and half months. So it was quite far away and that meant difficulties. One could not ask anybody to send you food from home. The only thing you could do was to buy food with whatever money you had with you. It was possible to buy things on that area, but in the end everybody became quite poor. Kongtrul Rinpoche always asked the monks who came from a distance as the first thing, if they had enough to eat. If people did not have enough, he provided not only the teaching but food as well. He had a very tiny room with no decorations, just one clothing to wear, and when he sat he buttoned it up without changing clothing. He had no possessions and a very simple room.

Whatever he owned or people had given to him, he gave to beggars, to other people, and to the monastery to build stupas and temples. Whatever wealth was coming in was going out same time. He ate very simple food. He was not vegetarian but ate meat, whatever people gave to him. The main thing what I see was his kindness, he didn't claim to be learned or a good meditator, but said he was the worst one and that he didn't know anything. He considered himself as the lowest of human beings, yet he had so many students like by magic power drawn to him. Some people had to walk for a whole year to see him. He was always available to people and all the time accessible. Whatever teachings one asked for he never refused, but gave what the student needed, if he thought the person would do something useful with it. But if he thought some person was nuisance he could also be a very rigid to those who might not have taken in all the words he had to tell them. He had enough wisdom to pick up the right ones, and not necessarily helped those whose interest was on the surface only.

I stayed there for a year and half altogether. My main study was the mahamudra course, which you study with Kenting Tai Situpa. That was my main instruction in meditation. I also received many initiations; altogether maybe six months of initiations. So I got many teachings and initiations. And I think compassion is the heart of Shechen Kongtrul's teaching, humbleness, simplicity full of compassion.

Session 4

I would like to talk about the development of meditation. Meditation can be very simple, but it also requires much diligence and much accumulation of merit. Especially if you want to develop not just some peace and tranquility, but if we talk about the idea of enlightenment, then it also needs very much faith and devotion. It depends on very many things, simply sitting and observing your mind is not enough. Everything in our present life depends on our past actions. Our past actions are sometimes positive, sometimes negative and sometimes neutral. Whatever you have done, small or big things, no matter what you have done, all of this has a result in the end, and nothing will be lost. Which results mature first depends, but apart from that everything has a result in the end.

If we look at ourselves, the country where we were born, neighbors, father and mother, brother and sister, communication with friends or enemies, all this is result of accumulation of past actions. Past actions do not mean actions in one past life only. The maturing of the actions depends greatly on what you have done in your past. The result of all actions is similar to the idea of investment. You may invest money for one, two, hundred or thousand years, and it matures. So the past actions do not refer to actions in one life only.

It's the depth of your actions, the place where it was done and the time what was happening during that action, all that is counted, the color of your skin, the shape of your body, the parents, the area, wealth, heritage. This is the accumulation of our past. Everything at the present moment is the cause for future results. So, every action, everything you are doing has future result.

What we do or think now is very important for the future. For this reason I think we all wish to have a positive future and develop the spiritual aspect. Every moment of our time, every thought we think must be done in a positive way and understanding that this is the seed, and we are the ones who will have the fruit. That fruit depends on the present. If you think that way, if you believe in karma, cause and result, then I'm sure everybody is trying their best to improve, because nobody wants anything bad in the future in their lives. But in order to purify your past negative actions it is necessary to accumulate merit and do purification, working very diligently on that.

If you read the stories, even the historical Buddha he didn't awaken without any reason; he did not achieve enlightenment without developing much accumulation of merit. During thousands of lives each time he accumulated very many positive deeds, and each time his life improved because of his compassion to oneself and to all the others. There are many books telling about his life as a king, a peacock, a monkey and just an ordinary person, what he did at those times and how he accumulating positive deeds during each of those lives and how he improved. So the idea of enlightenment is like hanging a carrot in front of a horse. It is very good, but without diligent work, without accumulating merit and purification it cannot be reached.

There maybe one or two people who have so much merit from their past lives, and who are almost at the end, I'm sure they can achieve enlightenment within one life in a very simple way; I'm sure it's possible. But many people may not be even half way, or they are just beginners. So, whatever it is, the accumulation of merit and purification are very important. Simple silent meditation should not be the only way to achieve something.

If we look at various teachers, like mahasiddhas in India and many yogis in Tibet, all those who became very famous, within their life they did so much hard work in order to achieve that. If we look at the life stories of Tilopa and Naropa, which are translated into English and other languages, it becomes very clear that what is needed is devotion and constant diligent work. In Tibet the great yogi Milarepa is very famous, but there are many more yogis and yoginis living simple contemplative life. I would like to talk about one person like this. In my own monastery, when I was very small, there was a great yogi called Chöga Rinpoche. I would like to tell a little bit about his life. He looked like an ordinary person, but through hard work he became very famous in a spiritual way.

When he was 18 or 19 years old he became a monk in my monastery, and his job was to take care of the retreat there. I was told that he was quite tough man. The retreat funds were based on cattle, the female yaks (dri). Various families had many dris and they would milk them and pay five pounds of butter a year to the monastery. The rest they could keep to themselves. So the families who were taking care of the monastery cattle benefitted.

But then you had to go to collect the butter from each family. Each retreaters would have 60 pounds (27 kg) of butter as a salary per year, and the caretaker's job was to collect it. He was a young man and very rough, he fought a lot with people. In the nomadic land there are wild dogs and he also used to beat the dogs quite often. One day he realized that it was not the way of a monk, not a beneficial way to act, and so he run away from the caretaking and went to a place in the Kumbu area, close to Indian border. There he found a teacher and received instructions.

Now he wanted to work very seriously with his practice and did many prostrations. Not only that, but he meditated under a juniper tree for solid three years. In the summer time he collected the seeds of the juniper tree fallen on the ground, one handful a day. Quite often he had no food. Whenever he ate those seeds of the juniper tree, whatever he passed within two or three days from his shit, he collected the remains of the seeds and used again to maintain his body. His food was based on what he could reach within the distance of two or three feet. He did that solidly for three years with no other friends, no shoes, no changing clothes, no position. He lived simply having given everything he had to others.

Through that kind of diligence he achieved something in this life. He became very famous when I was young, and I still remember it, because he came from my monastery. His main practice was nyungnay and thousands of people followed his example. In this fasting practice on those days when you ate, you were allowed to eat very little food, just to manage to maintain your stomach. Normally one would eat every second day, but for two days he did not eat anything. So, one pair of nyugnays took three days for him. On top of that he was constantly doing prostrations and offering thousands of water bowls, because the whole idea in gaining merit is offering. Water is best kind of offering, because one does not have clinging to it worrying that one would run out of money. There is no attachment, no cost moneywise. It is said that a pure offering should be as the offering of water bowls.

I remember that when he was still in retreat his house was just big enough for sitting cross-legged. We offered him food through a small hole to his chamber. His toilet was a small hole under his seat. He did not go out but sat there and had no possessions. Thousands of people came to offer him things, but he threw the things out and gave everything away. There were many beggars who could help themselves and take whatever they wanted. He had no wealth, only one cup and one piece of clothing.

If we want to achieve something in our spiritual life, I think even you are a westerner, there is no special door for them, it will be equal for east and west. Milarepa was similar and he is very famous. He did not require food or clothing, not a thing. He remained in a cave and meditated all his life. He had a special power to heat his body, the power of tummo, and he could sit in snow. No matter how much snow, there was no obstacle for him.

Even during the time of Cultural Revolution Chöga Rinpoche still existed in Tibet, and they put him in prison. Every prisoner was given one handful of barley flour a day. The other prisoners were dying of hunger but he only ate one teaspoon of barley a day. So he had plenty left and he did not require hot water. He only drank one or two spoonful of cold water a day. And he enjoyed the prison and the Chinese refused to accept him there anymore and asked him to leave. For him prison was like a palace. He had no suffering and thus it was useless for him to be in prison.

Many teachers, those who are highly realized – wherever they are, their body is like palace, whatever they hear, the sound is like mantra. Their mind becomes transparent voidness. Wherever they are becomes like palace. So the reality what we are aiming at, looking for comforts – if we want to achieve something, we also have to give up these things. I'm sure few people can achieve this through comforts, but that is an exception. Without hard work you can't achieve anything even in the worldly life. If you want to be a good businessman, without working very hard you cannot be successful in business, or if you want to be a specialized craftsman, all your life from six or seven years old onwards until you die, all you have to do is the same thing every day, every hour. Not doing so many different things, but if you do the one thing, you will become specialized. Repetition and diligence in that repetition is very important. In here we don't have that diligence, we don't make effort. "I only slept for six hours, I'm too tired." If you slept for six hours, why do you need to be tired? Having slept only two hours you might say you are too tired. The great meditators may only sleep for half an hour or not at all in the end. That is very necessary in order to achieve the result, but you may think that's too hard for you, beyond you. However that is wrong way of looking at it, you should continuously make an effort, and then you should make more effort. Don't be satisfied thinking: "My effort is enough."

In order to accumulate merit you should not give up. There have been hundreds of great teachers born in Tibet, who have been very diligent and gathered merit through doing prostrations from East Tibet to Central Tibet. It may take three years and is done with very little food. They have given their body for insects, or for any other use. Not selling it but giving it to others out of compassion. I don't mean burning one's body as a demonstration. When we talk about giving the human body to others it is misleading. For example the monks and nuns in South and North Korea burn their bodies as part of human rights. In Tibet you don't do that, but you may give something from your body out of compassion, because the other person needs it. So compassion and demonstration are two different things. The majority of great teachers demonstrate their own anger and all negativity which is arising within them. That leads to defense and war. Then they overcome and win that war by diligence.

We may be aiming for a fully awakened state within this life, but we are not putting any effort in achieving it. To develop accumulation of merit we need diligence. And above all the blessing is like a raindrop. If there is no drop of rain there will be no crop to grow. So, just simply doing meditation once a week, from time to

time, won't be enough. You must do all types of practice, purifications, charitable work and nyungnays regularly. Also building statues, stupas and cleaning temples, all of this is part of gaining the merit.

If you go to Tsurphu the famous Karmapas, the 1st, 7th and 9th Karmapa, who were teachers of kings and queens in various countries with thousands and thousands of disciples, even they had to work so hard. If you go to the 1st Karmapa Dusum Khyenpa's meditation place where he sat for 13 or 14 years of his life in Tsurphu, you are only able to go in, but you cannot move, it's so small. He sat there day and night. The 7th and 9th Karmapa did the same way 7-9 years of solid meditation in caves. Sometimes they got little food when people were going to pilgrimage, but most of the time no food, no change of clothing, whatever they were wearing. And they were jammed between two rocks with a tiny roof. If you want to be like them then you also have to do similarly what they have done.

What I'm trying to say is that the comforts and diligence we are doing here may not get us anywhere, only planting a very small seed. But quite often people feel: "I'm doing so much here. I used to sleep for ten hours a day, now I only sleep six hours." Six hours is a big deal here. For me six hours is too much, for those who want to achieve something. Work a bit harder, put a bit more effort and maybe it is more useful.

Session 5

As I said yesterday and the day before, to learn meditation from books or from one's friend is not that helpful or useful. If one wants to practice meditation one must have the positive motivation first. The positive motivation is the wish to help all beings as if they were one's own mother. When they have been one's own mother they must have done so many things caring for their child. No matter how bad mother, there is no comparison to a mother, as she is most close to the child, and therefore one must look all the positive things one's mother has done to us. Not to look all the negative things one's mother has done to us but the positive things. If you keep looking from the positive side of you and your mother, then you will find many positive and good things which you had not thought before. Then you may find the pure sense of you and your mother. When you realize this, then you have a very strong urge that "I want to help my mother". When you have this particular desire, then you must apply this to all other beings as being your mother.

The children always look at the negative aspect and the Buddhists are always giving the mother as an example. So many have a negative view, but that negative view is only based on the experience you had, the problems you had between you and your present mother, and you are never able to see the positive side. Sometimes why not to look at what the parents did to me. I didn't ask them to help me. Nobody asked to help each other, but it's the force of karma that you have to be the child and they have to be your parents. Nobody is there by their free will, but it's a result of causes, as I told you yesterday: parents, relatives, wealth, the place where you are born, where you grow up, in which country, poor or rich, it's all based on what you have done in your past lives, the accumulation of this, and then you become the product of your past accumulation.

So, there must be a very strong wish to have all this. In order to have this one must attend to peacefulness and tranquil mind. In order to develop peace and tranquil mind, the only way to achieve it is through meditation. Of course you can achieve it through taking the bodhisattva vows and developing the bodhisattva ideal. But that ideal can be very temporary until one develops something peaceful within oneself through practice. This practice is not just beneficial for one or two minutes here and there or for

half a day. With 20 minutes practice one does not get the full benefit. If one is looking for the benefit aspect, one must apply the mindfulness every minute every day of your life. Also it's very important to practice in a group. The group will give the strength or energy if you are a very lazy person. A lazy person can gain the benefit through the group. You should not just depend on the group meditation, but you must apply the meditation all the time. When you are able to apply the mindfulness, the mindfulness is like a kind of focus. When you have a tower full of prisoners and you call a watchman, he sits in the highest part of the building and his job is to watch for 24 hours a day, whether the prisoners escape or not. He watches all the time. Mindfulness is very much like this. You have to apply the mindfulness as a watchman.

Of course it's not that easy, but leaving it alone has no benefit. One must apply this whenever one can. Even you can do it just one or two minutes while you are talking, while you are having a cup of tea, while having a conversation, when you are lying in a bed, whenever you remember, wherever your body is at that particular time, even you are in a pub, or in a car. You don't need to think any place as wrong to meditate or wrong place for mindfulness and you don't need to choose any place as right for it. Wherever you are, apply mindfulness as a watchtower.

But if you then become like a watchtower you may become very tense. If you concentrate too seriously you may make mistakes of all the things on the ground and see for example a dog becoming like a human being. When there is one prisoner escaping look more in a telescopic way. Mindfulness has to happen in a distance, not becoming narrow or tense. Being tense you make many mistakes. So, look from a distance and what is happening in your mind does not matter. What you are thinking doesn't matter.

Mindfulness is best rest and relaxation. If you become very tense while working in an office and especially if you have to work in a panic situation, if you apply mindfulness regularly, then there is no more panic, the feeling "I need to rest or I'm going to be mad" doesn't exist. That kind of pressure in your job only comes when you are not mindful. So, it's most important to apply mindfulness regularly in whatever you are doing if you want peace. In the countries in which they apply meditation regularly, like in Japan in offices and even in factories most of the workmen do meditation session before they start their work. Their purpose is not enlightenment, but with no tension in mind they produce goods faster and without mistakes. They have realized that to achieve good results in factories it's necessary to apply mindfulness regularly.

If such person chooses so, it also helps them in achieving enlightenment, if that is what they wish. The mindfulness practice for more efficiency in a worldly way and for achieving enlightenment is similar. Not everybody meditates in order to achieve enlightenment, but since we all have so much pressure, difficulties and sickness in daily life – we are humans with ignorance, and problems arise every day – when we become mindful we are able to accept what is happening to us. Those who have much education have intelligent ignorance and those with less education have non-intelligent ignorance, and we try to present our ignorance all the time to others. Rather than accepting everything we are presenting the ignorance, and therefore complications and difficulties arise. When we become mindful we are able to accept everything, whatever happens to us, and we are no longer looking for a way to escape. Accepting is a good way of overcoming difficulties.

Does this mean we should not have plans and hopes? Not at all, you can have thousands of plans and hopes for improvement. Acceptance doesn't mean you can't make any plans or have any goals. It means that when you are not able to fulfill or achieve your goal and expectations in spite of trying, when there are

personal difficulties, external or internal difficulties, whatever way an obstacle arises, then you wouldn't panic, and you would accept it as a lesson. So you can prepare, plan and have projects. Acceptance means when you aren't able to achieve that, you are satisfied with what you have done without despairing how you invested years in doing something in vain, and totally ruined your life. That is a wrong way of looking at things. There is nothing to be ruined.

This human life is like playing a game in a dream. We are not more than that; we are living in a dream and we experience a dream. You can have good, bad and strange dreams, but when you recognize that this is a dream, then there is no more suffering. We should realize this is an illusory kind of life, transparent life, and all wealth, education and possessions are only temporary. The longest time we may use those things is maybe less than a hundred years. Whatever we have inherited as wealth and education becomes useless. We came here naked and when we die in the end, there is nothing more left of us than one handful of earth. In between that from birth to death we are part of a game, which we should not take too seriously. If two children play games we may say: "Don't fight just because one is winning and the other one fears of losing, it's only a game." But we adults are also in a game, but we fight quite easily when we feel our life is ruined. At that time think about it; you are worse than a child.

Living in a game we should not take very seriously. On the other hand we should not just lie down all day, now realizing it's only a game – not doing anything would also be wastage. We should be active as humans. But don't panic, the panic is our problem. Mood swings are a problem, our moods swing from left to right, right to left all the time like a pendulum. We should stabilize our mind, accept everything and whatever it is, appreciate that and thank for everything. Whether Christian or Buddhist they always say: thank you God, you are giving me nice food today, nice chicken, nice pint of beer. But then it's difficult when God doesn't give us anything! Thank you for not giving me anything today. That's difficult, isn't it? When you have very nice food to eat, you thank God. I think you have to come further than that. Thank you, God, for giving me nothing. It's the best thing, because giving you everything is increasing your desire.

To take everything away from me, to leave me in street, to put me in jail... and when you are in jail you can practice meditation. It's kind of free sponsorship for meditation, why not? You have everything in the European jails. You have single rooms with toilets inside and food is fed to you. And they allow you to see your teacher once a month, what else you need? But don't go tomorrow! However, a dharma practitioner should not create crime or that kind of negative situation on purpose. The jail in itself is not a bad thing. If you know how to practice then you are in the right kind of atmosphere and you can achieve enlightenment in jail. If that situation arises, you should thank for God putting you in jail, where you can practice properly. Even that situation you can regard as something positive.

I am trying to say that there is nothing which is not positive. Everything is positive. Stealing all your wealth is positive and you can thank God for giving you the opportunity to not to cling to your wealth. That is a big freedom for everybody. Each time turn even very negative things into positive. One should not create the negative on purpose, but if the negative happens automatically, then you use that for the positive. That is called "looking everything with a positive attitude and appreciating everything". If you are sick, thank God for the sickness. Through this sickness may I be able to purify all my past actions. It is said that through the bodhisattva practice and through a positive way of looking even the sickness can be useful. Do not pity yourself thinking "I'm the only one who is sick, why do I have to be sick and nobody else?" That way you become more sick. This is called turning everything into positive.

When you turn everything into positive, then there is no suffering whatsoever, and you have a more positive dream. As I said at the moment living our life is part of a dream, but a positive dream, or if you are training in dreams as part of practice, when there is a negative dream, then you realize: "I am dreaming." I train in dreams in order to learn how to change my dreams." As soon as you recognize this is a dream, while you are still in a dream state, you can have kind of two states: one is dreaming and the other one is realizing "I am now dreaming". At that particular moment all the tragic experiences – you can have a dream that somebody is chopping your head off, picking your eyes off or chopping your friends, fighting, you can have horrible dreams – but as soon as you realize these are a dream, I am dreaming, the fear is no longer there. No matter even you are chopped in thousand pieces, you just realize this is a dream.

So, to recognize and realize a dream is to free you from your fear. But when you don't realize this is my dreaming, then a tiny fear like losing a finger defeats you and when you wake up you have to touch your fingers to check if they still exist. And for few days afterwards you will be very careful with your fingers fearing you may lose one, because you had such dream. Thus you live in fear. So it's very important not to be frightened, but to realize and appreciate everything. Above all be mindful all the time.

Especially when you see you are developing panic, don't let it take over. As soon as you realize it, sit for two or three minutes, just chill with mindfulness. Then everything goes away by itself and becomes much more comfortable. But at that time when you have quite strong panic, even you remain mindful, it's difficult to realize: "I am mindful," because you are living in panic. You just try to be mindful and the panic keeps repeating. Whoever is repeating the panic, watch that. Try to achieve empty space at that time. Whoever is panicking, watch that. Whoever is saying: "You are making a mistake," watch that thought, watch who is making the mistake. Watch the first word, for example if "I panic", watch the "I". When the "I" disappears, watch "panic". Watch each word which is arising in you. That is called mindfulness.

Mindfulness is very difficult; I think it's much easier there where there are no distractions. Running into a cave is not easy, we have strings to every direction, and we are tied up with our wealth. Some people may have reasonable wealth, some people may not have, but they are still wishing to have some wealth. So, mentally we are not able to escape in caves, but caves are much better place.

So, if you are looking for peaceful and tranquil state of mind, mindfulness is important. But if you are looking for enlightenment, then you have to do much more than just being mindful. You have to do lots of purifications, you have to develop merit, one has to have to blessing from one's guru, and it also depends on many other things. It's much deeper. There are *shine* and *lhaktong*. *Shine* is the peacefulness and tranquil mind and that can be done. *Lhaktong* can also be done, but I think in order to have the full benefit of *lhaktong* it depends on many things. For that you have to overcome the panic, that maybe the blessing from the guru. That doesn't mean one should not take care of one's child-like mind. One should, and one should take care of all others as well as one can, but one should also overcome one's own panic.

Mindfulness of whatever you are doing and thinking. When you are mindful, what are you thinking? At that time you don't accumulate negative thoughts. Or even if there is a negative thought, it has no more strength. If you are mindful of your actions then you don't say the wrong things, and you don't make mistakes all the time. When you say something and another person become angry, the reason they become angry is that you are not mindful enough of the other person. If you are fully mindful you know each

individual, what they feel, what kind of personality that person has. You use that particular technique to not to be angry. So you can find a very simple solution and make fewer mistakes.

Dedication

*Due to this merit, may I achieve omniscience,
defeat the harmful enemies within me,
and free beings from the sea of existence
that is churned by the waves of birth, ageing, sickness and death.*