

# **The Mahamudra Eliminating The Darkness Of Ignorance**

## **Part One: PRELIMINARIES**

### **Refuge, Prostration and Bodhicitta**

The explanation of how to practice this Mahamudra of the undeclared lineage of the precious Kagyu is divided into three sections: the preliminaries, the actual body of the practice and the concluding material.

For the first of these, there is to start with going for refuge and developing an Enlightened Motive of Bodhicitta.

There are both common and extraordinary preliminary practices, The common are to meditate on the precious human rebirth, death and impermanence, karma or the law of cause and effect, and the disadvantages of samsara or cyclic existence. As a common-ground, they form the context for all Buddhist practice and help set your motivation. The extraordinary preliminaries (ngon-dro) are prostration while taking refuge, Vajrasattva purification, mandala offering and Guru-yoga.

There are many styles in which the latter set may be practiced, but the most usual is to perform 100,000 repetitions of each in turn in one continuous effort. Another method is to do a certain portion of each every day as part of your daily practice. The number of repetitions may vary and sometimes you are told to keep count, while at others not, but to continue until you receive signs of success. The set maybe repeated several times on different occasions or continued at a slower pace throughout your life. Furthermore, the actual practices you do as preliminaries may vary as well. Your guru will decide what is best for you. What follows is a general description of the standard preliminaries as practiced in the Karma Kagyu lineage. The specific, detailed instructions should be received from your Guru.

The purpose of preliminaries is to eliminate or purify yourself of the obstacles that might hinder your practice and to accumulate the merit that will bring you success. Prostration and Vajrasattva meditation accomplish the former, while mandala offering and Guru-yoga the latter. Thinking about the law of cause and effect and about all the non-virtuous actions you have committed in the past and how you will have to experience suffering as their result, you should feel great regret and turn to the Three Jewels for refuge. These are the Buddhas or Fully Awakened Beings, the Dharma or their teachings and the Sangha or spiritual community of those who realize them. Entrusting yourself to these three, you should offer prostration in order to cleanse yourself of unripened suffering.

Furthermore, you should realize how all sentient beings want only happiness and never to suffer, but are unaware of how to bring this about. They do not know that virtuous, kind actions bring happiness, while cruel, non-virtuous ones bring only pain. Therefore, develop compassion for them and wish by your practice to purify them as well. And finally you should set your motivation as Bodhicitta, the Enlightened Motive, wishing

that by taking refuge and prostrating, you will eliminate all obstacles so that you can attain the enlightened state of a Buddha, in order truly to be able to benefit all others.

In the space before you, visualize a wish-fulfilling tree with one trunk and dividing into five branches. On the center of the trunk is your Guru (in the form Vajradhara), in front are the meditational deities, to his right the Buddhas, behind him, the Dharma scriptures and to his left the Sangha. Each is surrounded by a cluster of figures of his own class. You should go for refuge (prostrating while) saying the appropriate verse and visualizing yourself surrounded by a multitude of all motherly sentient beings with yourself in front as their leader and all of them joining you in a chorus taking refuge.

This visualization is of the field of merit or tree of assembled Gurus. Imagine around you is a beautiful park, with soft grassy meadows and gentle animals. In the center of an exquisite lake is a wish-fulfilling tree as described above. Vajradhara or in Tibetan Dorje Chang, is the form Buddha takes in the tantras. The meditational deities, (yidams) include Vajrayogini, Heruka and so forth; the Buddhas are those of the past, present and future; the Dharma is represented by the scriptural texts of "The Three Baskets (Tripitaka)" and the Sangha by such Bodhisattvas as Avalokitesvara and Tara, as well as Pratyekabuddhas and Sravakas such as Sariputra and so on. Around the lower portion of the tree are the Dharmapalas and protectors such as Mahakala. If you do not know what all these figures look like or cannot visualize them clearly, do not worry. At least, have the faith that they are there before you. Through familiarity and pictures you will learn to see them.

Visualize yourself in your ordinary form, with all your male relatives to your right and female to your left. Imagine that you are in an enormous crowd of people and animals, yourself as their leader, and all prostrating and taking refuge. Prostrating by touching clasped hands - palms together, fingers outstretched and thumbs tucked in - to the top of your head, mid-brow, throat and heart, then go down to the ground and stretch out fully with hands extended before you. Arise quickly. Do these while repeating such verses as "I and all motherly sentient beings as vast as space.... go for refuge in the holy, venerable Gurus. We go for refuge in the Yidams and host of their mandala deities. We go for refuge in the Blessed Buddhas. We go for refuge in the Holy Dharma. We go for refuge in the Noble Sanghas. We go for refuge in the host of Dakas, Dakinis, Dharmapalas and Protectors who have the eye of pristine awareness." Throughout, maintain a strong state of concentration, faith and sincerity. These three - bowing, reciting and concentrating are known as the physical, verbal and mental prostration. You should repeat the verse and physical prostration 100,000 times, as well as begin any meditation session with at least seven.

When prostrating you will experience much suffering. View this like the pain of an injection you are happy to endure in order to be cured of an illness. Your discomfort is proportionate to the amount of unripened suffering and negative karma you are being cleansed of. When you ache, feel that you are not only eliminating, by experiencing now, the suffering you might have had in a more severe form in an unfortunate rebirth, but also that you are taking away this suffering from others. If you are hot or cold, pray that this eliminates that which the hell creatures feel. Take hunger and thirst from hungry ghost

and, if your mind becomes dull and blank with fatigue, imagine that animals are freed from their stupidity. With strong faith and constantly re-confirmed motivation, you will have no doubts about what you are doing. Should thoughts arise to leave it and do something else, regard them as a jeering crowd and pay them no heed.

You should also recite, "(I go for refuge until I am enlightened) to the Buddhas, the Dharma and the Highest Assembly...." and so forth while thinking, "Realizing that all beings have been my mother and father, I shall go for refuge and develop an Enlightened Motive of Bodhicitta." In addition you should meditate on the four immeasurable, "May all sentient beings be endowed with happiness and the causes for joy..." and so forth.

The stanza, "I go for refuge until I am enlightened to the Buddhas, the Dharma and the Highest Assembly. From the virtuous merit that I will collect by practicing giving and other perfections, may I attain the state of a Buddha to be able to benefit all sentient beings," is the most commonly recited one for enhancing your development of Bodhicitta. The four immeasurable are:-

- (1) love, wishing all beings to be endowed with happiness and the causes for joy,
- (2) compassion, wishing them to be parted from suffering and the causes for grief,
- (3) joy, wishing them never to be parted from the happiness they have and
- (4) equanimity, wishing that they be freed from all attachment and repulsion and from all notions of some being close and others distant.

At the conclusion you should meditate that the objects of refuge melt into light and dissolve into you and that your mind-stream has thus been purified.

When you have finished your prostration session, dissolve all the figures into the central one of your Guru as the Buddha Vajradhara and finally him into yourself. Remain in a non-objectifying state of inseparable Voidness and clarity, not directed at any extreme mode of exercise. In other words, do not make anything into a concrete, truly existent object. Rather, remain in the here and now, and feel you are completely purified.

That is the first (preliminary practice), the meditations for going for refuge and developing an Enlightened Motive.

## **B) Vajrasattva Meditation**

Vajrasattva, or in Tibetan Dorje Sempa, is a form of the Buddhas dedicated to purifying and eliminating from others suffering, sickness and the unripened, unfortunate consequences of their previously committed non-virtue. He appears in many forms, peaceful or as Heruka Vajrasattva, either alone or with consort. His practice can be either more or less elaborate. What follows is a purification method with the solitary Vajrasattva.

On the crown of your head (visualize) your Guru as Vajrasattva, white in color, with right hand holding a vajra scepter at his heart and left, holding a bell at his hip, and arrayed

with the major and minor marks of a Buddha.

On the top of your head in your ordinary form visualize a syllable PAM. This transforms into a white lotus and on it, from a syllable AH, appears a flat, full moon disc. On top of it, a syllable HUM transforms into a five-pointed vajra or diamond scepter marked in the center with a HUM. Light rays are emitted and re-absorbed twice, the first time making offerings to the various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and the second eliminating the suffering of all beings. The vajra then transforms into the solitary Vajrasattva, as described above. His left leg is on top of his right thigh and his right leg is extended downwards. In his heart is a moon-disc with an upright, white syllable HUM in its center.

Vajrasattva has both, a hundred, and a six-syllable mantra and they may be arranged in several ways, either clockwise counter-clockwise, revolving or stationary. In this particular meditation, his hundred-syllable mantra, which you will be repeating 100,000 times, is arranged counter-clockwise along the outside rim of the moon-disc in his heart. The letters are white, upright, facing inwards and do not revolve.

After meditating like this, you should recite, "O Guru-Vajrasattva, please cleanse me of all obstacles and unripened, unfortunate consequences of my previously committed non-virtuous actions." In addition, you should apply the (four) various (opponent powers) of declaring your previous non-virtue.

For this meditation to be most effective it must be complete with the four opponent powers used in confession or declaring your previously committed non-virtuous actions. First, you must recall all your mistakes and feel sincere regret. The second is promising to try your hardest not to repeat them. Next, you must rely on the basis or object against which your non-virtue has been committed, namely your commitment to the refuges and Bodhicitta. Thus by again taking refuge and enhancing your Enlightened Motive, you reinforce the foundation for your morality. Lastly, you apply such purifying practices as those of Vajrasattva to remove all stains. If these four are incomplete, whatever purification you do will be only a temporary white washing. But with these four opponents and sincere conviction in their ability to cleanse you, there is no doubt that they will work.

Then visualize white nectar falling from the large toe of Vajrasattva's (right) foot, entering through the crown of your head and filling your entire body. All your obstacles and unripened consequences leave you and in their place you are entirely filled with nectar.

As you recite the hundred-syllable mantra, white lights and purifying nectars are emitted from the moon-disc, seed-syllable HUM and mantra at his heart, completely filling his body, overflowing and entering you as above. Imagine that from the pores and orifices of your body, obstacles and unripened, unfortunate consequences leave in the form of soot and black tar, sickness and disease as pus, blood, mud and snot, and the harmful influence of malevolent spirits as snakes, scorpions, spiders, and insects. All these dissolve into the ground and in their place you are filled with white nectar and lights.

Visualize this same process occurring for all sentient beings around you, with either each having his own Vajrasattva on the crown of his head or everyone sharing one large figure.

Feeling pleased, your Guru (Vajrasattva) melts into light (and dissolves into you). You should meditate that your body, speech and mind and those of Vajrasattva have inseparably mixed and that you have been cleansed of all obstacles and unripened, unfortunate consequences. That is the second (preliminary practice): Vajrasattva meditation and mantra recitation.

### **C) Mandala Offering**

Offerings in general are not made in order to please or bribe the object to which they are presented. They are a symbol of your total dedication to Enlightenment as represented by the Gurus and the Three Jewels of Refuge, and are offered in order to gain the merit that will bring you to their state. When you plant crops in a field, it is not the ground that benefits, but you yourself. Likewise, making offerings to the assembled Gurus as the field of merit brings you to Enlightenment so that you can benefit all.

There are many types of mandalas. One classification is the celestial mansions in which the meditational deities dwell. These are the three dimensional structures, the ground plans of which are depicted in mandala paintings. Another type is the one used in offerings, consisting of a plate-like base, rings, a crown and rice, grain or jewels and is symbolic of the universe.

You should meditate that (before you) is a mandala mansion with five clusters of figures within. In the center is your Guru (as Vajradhara), before him the meditational deities, to his right the Buddhas, behind him the Dharma scriptures and to his left the Sangha. This is the mandala realized before you.

In general, mandala mansions are square with a ground floor and steeple-like structure. In the center of each wall is a door, entrance-corridor, porch and archway, the latter of which is flanked on top by two deer and a Dharma wheel. The exact architectural structure and proportions differ slightly for each meditational deity and can be very complex.

In the center of such a transparent building, made of light and visualized before you, is your Guru in the form of Vajradhara. He is on a throne supported by lions with a lotus and moon-cushion seat. Above him are the entire lineage Gurus, from Vajradhara himself through Tilopa, Naropa and so forth down to his own root Guru. Around him are four groups of figures as above, similar to the refuge and prostration visualization. This is your field of merit to whom you make offerings.

Then construct another mandala with its mounds and offer it with the stanza "...a mandala built on a base resplendent with flowers, saffron water and incense..." and so forth, along with the rest of the mandala procedures. Thus you should present both actual

material offerings and mentally created ones.

With a standard mandala offering set, first, hold the base plate and wipe it clean while reciting once Vajrasattva's hundred-syllable mantra to purify defilements. Next, put a drop of water on it to signify your Bodhicitta motivation and the moisture of your compassion. Then placing the first ring on the base, add mounds of rice, grain and so forth in the appropriate directions for each of the places, treasures and goddesses mentioned, until all the rings are filled and it is crowned with the jeweled top. This is the actual material offering done while reciting the appropriate stanzas.

The mentally created one is your visualization as described by these stanzas. What you are offering is the entire universe and all its wealth as portrayed by Buddha in the Abhidharma teachings. Buddha described the universe differently on separate occasions to varying people, since depending on your state of purify you see things differently. According to this particular description, there is the golden earth or base with an iron ring or fence around its perimeter and a salt-water ocean on the outside. On the inside of the fence, one in each cardinal direction, are the four continents each with two sub-continents between it and the fence, all separated by oceans. On the other side of the continents, progressively closer to the center are alternating rings of seven golden mountains and seven fresh-water lakes. In the center itself is Mount Meru, square, stupa-shaped, with four steps or levels going up from the bottom. Its eastern face is of white crystal, southern of blue lapis lazuli, western of red ruby and northern of green emerald. The ocean and sky in each direction are of the corresponding color. The eastern continent and sub-continents are half-moon shaped with the flat edge towards Mount Meru; the southern are curved trapezoids, with concave sides, concave longer top away from Mount Meru and convex shorter bottom near it; the western are circular and the northern square.

Human life, as we know it, is found on the southern continent, where the oceans and sky are blue. The other continents should not be thought of as places in outer space, which can be reached by rocket ship. You can only go there if you have accumulated the karma for such a rebirth.

The verse you repeat 100,000 times for this preliminary is, "By directing to the Fields of Buddhas this offering of a mandala built on a base resplendent with flowers, saffron water and incense, adorned with Mount Meru and the four continents, as well as with the sun and the moon, may all sentient beings be led to these Fields."

By the force of such offerings, you complete your two collections (of merit and insight) and receive the blessings to develop sublime experiences and insights. Having made requests for such (blessings), you should think that the host of deities in the mandala realized before you melt into light and dissolve into you. In this way you complete the two collections.

By presenting to the pure objects in the mandala realized before you, both the material offering of the mandala set and the visualized universe, you accumulate merit. By doing so while meditating on the non-objectifying state of Voidness with respect to the

offerings, you accumulated insight. By the force of these two collections you overcome the two sets of obstacles, those preventing Liberations and Omniscience. The collection of merit results in your attainment of the Form Bodies of a Buddha, and that of insight in the Wisdom Bodies. The Form Bodies are the Emanation (Nirmanakaya) and Utility Bodies (Sambhogakaya). The former appear to ordinary beings with the karma to see them, while the latter only to Arya Bodhisattvas, that is those with an Enlightened Motive who have bare perception of Voidness. The Wisdom Bodies are the Nature (Svabhavakaya) and Wisdom-Truth Bodies (Dharmakaya). According to this text, the former is the Omniscient mind of a Buddha and the Voidness of that mind, while the latter is the inseparability of the former three. The definitions, however, of these last two bodies are more often reversed and sometimes Dharmakaya is used alone as a general term for both. Moreover, there are many other levels on which the various Buddha bodies can be understood and defined.

That is the third (preliminary practice): applying effort in the instructions for the mandala offering.

## **D) Guru-Yoga**

The last of the extraordinary preliminaries, also for accumulating merit and blessings is Guru-Yoga. For this, you should visualize yourself in the form of a meditational deity. Anyone will do, but usually Vajrayogini is chosen. She is red in color, has one face, two arms, two legs and stands on one leg, with her left foot on top of a lotus, corpse and sun-disc, and her right foot bent upwards towards her left thigh. She holds in her right hand a butcher's cleaver above her head and in her left a skull-cup at her heart. A khatvanga-staff rests on her left shoulder. With yourself in this form, proceed with the practices.

You should meditate that on the crown on your head is your root Guru, either in his own bodily form or in the aspect of a meditational deity, whichever you prefer. You should meditate either that all the (lineage) Gurus going back to Vajradhara are stacked one atop the other above his head or that they are all clustered around him. You should make requests to them very strongly and for a long time with immeasurable fervent regard, loving respect and extraordinary sincerity. When your attitude has changed (for the better), make it stable. Then all the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Dakas, Dakinis, Dharmapalas and protectors together with their encourage dissolve into your root Guru as incorporating and embodying them all.

As indicated above, there are many varieties of Guru-Yoga visualizing your root Guru either in his own form, or as Vajradhara, Marpa, Milarepa, Gampopa, Karmapa and so forth. Your Guru may tell you to choose Vajradhara, in which case he would be on a lion-supported throne, lotus and sun-disc, surrounded by four clusters of figures and the lineage guru as in the refuge and mandala visualizations. However, a solitary figure of your enthroned Guru surrounded by lineage Gurus will do, since your root Guru

embodies all the Three Refuges.

Make the outer, inner and secret offerings and offer the seven limbs of prayer: - Outer offerings are of the desirable objects of the senses, either materially arranged or mentally created. Inner ones are of the purified meats and liquid symbolic of the transformation of your delusions, aggregates and so forth. Secret offerings are of the circumstances or generating the blissful consciousness for the most powerful realization of Voidness.

The seven limbs of prayer or seven-limbed puja include:

(1) prostrating (2) making offerings (3) confessing or declaring your previous non-virtue (4) rejoicing in the merit of others (5) requesting the Gurus to teach (6) beseeching them not to pass away and (7) dedicating your merit. An eighth limb of taking refuge is sometimes added between the second and third.

Strongly take refuge, enhance your Enlightened Motive and make requests with such verses as: " All motherly sentient beings equal in number to (the vastness of) space make requests to the Guru as the precious Buddha.... as the all-pervasive Dharmakaya, ...as the Sambhogakaya of Great Bliss,... as the compassionate Nirmanakaya...." and so forth.

Implied by the request to the Guru as the precious Buddhas is that he incorporates all Three Jewels of Refuge. His body stands for the Sangha, his speech the Dharma and his mind the Buddha. Thus this verse is to the Guru as the body, speech and mind of the Buddhas, that is the Three Precious Gems, as well as to him as the three Buddha bodies. This may be repeated 100,000 times or, more usually, the following six-line verse of the First Karmapa is said that many times in addition to a million repetitions, of the Karmapa mantra.

" I make requests to the precious Guru. Bless me to clear my mind of grasping for true identities. Bless me to develop on my mind-stream the insight to see all worldly thoughts as unnecessary. Bless me that my non-Dharmic thoughts shall cease. Bless me to realize my mind has no birth. Bless me that my deceptive notions shall dissolve in their place. Bless me to realize all appearances of existence as Dharmakaya."

Then your Guru dissolves into you and you should think that your Guru's body, speech and mind have become inseparably mixed with your own mind. Having done this, remain fixed in a state free from mental fabrications (of extreme modes of existence).

At the conclusion of your recitations session, you should visualize your Guru granting you the four tantric empowerments as follows. First white light is emitted from his



forehead to yours, eliminating the obstacles due to the non-virtuous actions of your body. It grants you the vase empowerment, permitting you to engage in the development stage practices, and plants the seed for your attaining the Nirmanakaya or Emanation Body of a Buddha.

Red light is emitted from his throat to yours, eliminating the obstacles due to your non-virtuous speech. It grants the secret empowerment, permitting you to meditate on the completing stage practice involving the body's subtle energy system and plants the seed for the Sambhogakaya. Blue light from his heart to yours eliminates the obstacles due to mental non-virtue, grants the wisdom empowerment permitting you to engage in the practices of union and plants the seed for the Dharmakaya.

Finally white, red and blue lights are emitted from all three places simultaneously to yours, eliminating physical, verbal and mental obstacles all together, granting the word empowerment permitting you to practice Mahamudra or the completing stage without signs and planting the seed for the Svabhavakaya.

After all this, visualize that the lineage Gurus dissolve one into each other into your root Guru and that he dissolves into you. Remain in a non-objectifying state of Voidness and then dedicate the merit for the Enlightenment of all.

If you exert effort by relying on this method for gaining insights into Mahamudra, the Great Seal of Voidness, you will receive (the Gurus') blessings and inspiration. That is the fourth (preliminary practice) : meditation on Guru-yoga.

## **E) Death and Impermanence**

If you do not meditate on impermanence, you will not turn your mind away from concern for this life. If you do not turn your mind, you will not become liberated from samsara, or cyclic existence. Concerning this (Nagajuna has said in his "Suhrllekha), " There are many things that can harm our life, for it is impermanent like a bubble on water that can burst by the wind. It is a great miracle that after exhaling we take our next breath and after falling asleep we wake up again."

In general, all conditioned phenomena are impermanent and, specifically, the life force of sentient beings is impermanent like a bubble. You can never know when you die. There is no certainty that you will not die right now. Moreover, at the time of death nothing except the Dharma is of any help. If you work for meaningless worldly things or activities for this lifetime, you will be unable to pass beyond the causes for suffering. Therefore vow that whenever your mind wanders for even a moment towards thoughts of food, clothing and so forth for this lifetime, you will think of death.

All conditioned phenomena, that is those that depend on causes and circumstances, are impermanent. This includes both animate and inanimate objects, sentient beings and their

environment. A solid structure today can crumble into dust tomorrow. In particular, your own life is extremely fragile and can be lost very easily. No one can guarantee he will be alive tomorrow and when your time is up, no friends, doctors, medicine, money or fame can prevent you from death. The only thing that can help is the practice of Dharma. If you have accumulated many virtuous deeds during your life, you can die in peace assured that as a result of your white karma you will gain fortunate rebirth.

Therefore do not be fooled into thinking that sensory pleasures can bring you lasting happiness. If you are attracted to beautiful sights, think how the moth is lured to his death by his enchantment with flame. For sounds, consider how a duck is seduced by a hunter's duck-call. Bees are attracted to the smell of a Venus fly-trap and flies to that of feces, only to drown in a toilet. Fish are lured on to a hook by their desire for the taste of a worm. Elephants, obsessed with the physical sensation of scratching themselves, are led by their tame brethren between two thorny trees and thus are captured by trainers and taken into bondage. By thinking of these examples, turn your mind from concern for worldly pleasures, seeing that they are only causes for more suffering. Realising you may die at any moment, do not waste your time on trivial matters. Regard food and clothing as a condemned man would his final meal and costume.

You should count how many of your friends and relatives have passed away in their own time and think about the manner in which they died and how their corpse was taken to the cemetery and nothing remains of their body. (By thinking how) you too do not transcend such a nature, you should work yourself into a state of trembling fear like someone who has been placed into hands of a hangman. Do not let your mind escape into mental wandering. When you have completely lost any interest in this life, meditate on this state becoming completely involved in it. This is the fifth (preliminary practice): meditation on death and impermanence.

These meditations are not designed to make you depressed. If their result were just the pessimistic anguish that "I am going to die and there is nothing i can do", then meditation would be only a cause for anxiety and suffering. The whole point of death meditation is to urge you into the practice of Dharma, into the consideration of karma and the law of cause and effect and how you can do something to affect your future rebirths. Thus meditation should spur you on like a fighter being pushed into an arena. As Je-tzun Mi-la ra-pa said, "I went to the mountains because I feared death. But now that I see the true Dharmakaya nature of my mind, even if death comes I have no fear".

## **F) Karma and the Law of Cause and Effect**

After this it is necessary not to be confused about what is to be adopted and abandoned with reference to karma and the law of cause and effect. The fruits of whatever actions are done by any living being ripen on that individual being himself. Moreover, if you commit the ten non-virtuous actions you are born in one of the unfortunate states of rebirth. Depending on which of the three poisons they are committed with, their frequency, who their object is and whether they are serious, middling or minor in nature,

you are reborn either as a hell creature, hungry ghost or animal. Once you are born such, you have experience infathomable suffering. Depending on whether you commit great, middling or slightly virtuous actions, you are reborn either in the Formless or Form Realms or as a god in the Desire Realm. Therefore at all times examine (the actions you do through) the three gateways of your (body, speech and mind).

The basic facts of the law of cause and effect are that happiness results from virtuous actions or "white" karma and suffering from non-virtuous or "black" karma. Furthermore, whatever you do ripens on you alone; if you kill someone, the effect will not ripen on your parents or children, only on you. Therefore you must abandon cruel actions and adopt kind ones if you wish to benefit yourself and then others.

The ten no-virtuous actions are divided into three of the body, four of speech and three of mind. Those of the body are killing, taking what is not given or stealing, and indulging in improper sexual conduct such as adultery or rape. The four of speech are lying, using divisive language, speaking abusive harsh words, and idly gossiping. The three of mind are having covetous thoughts to possess what belongs to others, harbouring ill-will, and holding distorted views such as disbelief in cause and effect.

The ten merely virtuous actions are to refrain from the ten non-virtuous ones. The ten especially virtuous ones, however, are saving others' lives, practicing generosity, keeping strict morality and encouraging others to do like-wise, speaking the truth without causing confusion, intermediating quarrels and reconciling enemies, talking sweetly and calmly, speaking meaningfully such as by teaching and praying, having few desires and knowing satisfaction, having good-will towards others and holding correct views with faith and conviction in the teachings.

If you save others' live and refuse to kill, your own life will be longer, whereas if you persist in killing your life will be short and filled with disease. If you are generous and never steal, you will come into wealth. But if you rob you will be poor and always subject to theft. From strict morality and abandoning sexual misconduct you will have a pleasing appearance and good marital relations and friendship. But if you cause harm by your sexual behavior, you will be ugly, have poor marriages and an unfaithful spouse.

By speaking the truth and never lying, other will believe what you say. But on one will heed or believe your words if you always lie. If you refrain from divisive language and try to bring people together, your relations with friends will always be close. However, if you cause divisions, you will accumulate enemies, be the focus of jealousies and have poor relations with others. From speaking pleasantly and never harshly, other will speak nicely to you. But you will only receive abuse and have to hear unpleasantness if you persist in cursing others. If you speak meaningfully and never gossip, you yourself will hear meaningful things; whereas if you continue to chatter idly, meaningless drival is all you will hear.

If you are content and never covetous, you will never be in want of anything. But if you always covet your neighbour's possessions you will become a beggar always in want. By

having good-will and no malice for others, people will treat you nicely and regard you well, whereas ill-will only brings you suspicion and harm from others. Lastly, if you hold correct, undistorted views, your intelligence and wisdom will increase and your mind will be ever sharp. However, from clinging to distorted ones you will be narrow-minded, dull-witted and filled with doubts.

The result of karma can be divided in many ways, such as that found in the text. Another way is in term of the delusions motivating your actions. If you act under the strong influence of pride and arrogance, you will be reborn as a god; from jealousy an anti-god; desire a human; closed mindedness an animal; miserliness a hungry ghost; and from anger as a hell creature. Therefore try to eliminate the delusions and practice virtuous actions in order to become liberated from all six realms of cyclic existence or samsara and ultimately to attain Enlightenment.

Whatever virtuous actions you do, try to increase and expand them. Whatever non-virtuous or unspecified actions you commit, try to eliminate and bring them to halt. In other words, without being confused about what should be abandoned or adopted, engaged in or turned away from, break the streams of continuity of your non-virtuous actions and have the wheel of the virtuous actions of your three gateways be without any gaps. This is the meaning of Buddha's teaching and the aim of the practices, and you should act accordingly. Therefore once you have learned in great detail about what should be adopted and abandoned with respect to karma and the law of cause and effect, train yourself in this. That is the sixth (preliminary practice): the teachings of karma and the law of cause and effect.

## **G) The disadvantages of Samsara**

After this, if you do not meditate on the disadvantages of samsara or cyclic existence, you will not turn away from compulsive attraction to it, nor will you develop thoughts of renunciation. From such a situation, experiences and insight will not dawn in your mind-stream. Because you will be depriving yourself of your share of such dawning's, you must meditate on the suffering at samsara in order to abandon it.

In connection with this, if sentient beings are reborn as hell creatures, they have such sufferings as those of the eight hot hells, the eight cold hells, the neighbouring hells and occasional hells. Hungry ghosts have hunger and thirst. Animals have being killed and slaughtered. Humans have birth, old age, sickness and death. Gods have falling from their state and their consciousness being transferred. Anti-gods have quarrelling and fighting. Such are the sufferings peculiar to the six states of rebirth.

Moreover, the obvious suffering you experience is the suffering of misery. That which appears to be pleasure is the suffering of change. That which appears to be pleasure is the suffering of change. That which has a neutral feeling-tone is the all-pervasive suffering. Because you are uninterruptedly harmed by this last one, it does not matter which state of samsara you are in. Even if you have attained the position of a universal cakra-emperor, Brahma or Indra and so forth, you have not transcended suffering. Therefore, with the

conviction that samsara is like a prison, a deep pit or a mass of flames, you should from now on continually, as much as possible, seek a method for becoming liberated from it.

Samsara means "to circle", in other words to revolve continually through the cycle of birth, sickness, old age, death, then rebirth, sickness and so forth. It is propelled and perpetuated by ignorance and its mechanism described by the twelve links of interdependent origination. There are four methods of being born, namely from a womb, an egg, heat and moisture and by miraculous transformation. These bring you into one of the six rebirth states as a hell creature, hungry ghost, human, anti-god or god. The first five are in the Desire Realm and the gods span all Three Realms: the Desire, Form and Formless. But no matter where and how you are reborn, there is only suffering.

Each of the rebirth states has its own peculiar disadvantage as mentioned in the text. The three general sufferings of misery, change and that which is all-pervasive are found throughout. The first is the obvious pain of sickness, old age and so forth. The suffering of change comes from seemingly pleasant things such as delicious food or a walk in the country which can turn into an upset stomach or blisters. All-pervasive suffering appears neutral or unobvious to ordinary beings, like the sensation of a piece of hair on your palm, but is as sharp as a hair in your eye to Aryas with bare perception of Voidness. It is the suffering inherent in the fact of being born with contaminated aggregates which by their very nature are like a magnet attracting sickness, old age and death.

Meditating on all these disadvantages of samsara, you should develop renunciation or the state of mind that wishes to be completely free of all suffering. This is the Hinayana motivation and with it an understanding of Voidness brings you Liberation. But to overcome not only the obstacles preventing Liberation, but those blocking Omniscience as well, you must develop an Enlightened Motive of Bodhicitta. Seeing that all beings experience the sufferings of samsara and wish as you do for release from its bondage and to attain ultimate happiness, you should strive to attain Buddhahood in order to liberate both yourself and other. This motive gives the realization of Voidness the added force that will bring you Enlightenment.

Even if you achieve the Liberation of a Hinayana practitioner, which is a state beyond this (samsara), you have still not attained the state of ultimate happiness. Therefore you should try to achieve this peerless Enlightenment by all means. For this purpose then, with the certainty that all sentient beings without exception have been noting but your mothers and fathers, beginninglessly kind, you should develop an unhypocritical Enlightened Motive of Bodhicitta, thinking, "I shall definitely work to place them all in the peerless bliss of complete and perfect Enlightenment." That is the seventh (preliminary practice): making efforts in this (direction).

## **H) The precious Human Rebirth**

The working basis for practicing like this is the precious human body. Because it is very difficult to obtain, you should not let yourself come under the sway of indifference or laziness, but should totally involve yourself in the practices. If when your fully endowed

human body is snatched away by the demons of death and impermanence, you have to go empty-handed, then what will you do? Because this precious human form is difficult to obtain and easily lost, you should try to make your attainment of a fully endowed one purposeful at all times and in all situations. To make efforts in this is the eighth (preliminary practice).

A human form fully endowed with all the liberties and opportunities to study and practice the Dharma is extremely rare and precious. It is the vehicle through which you will attain Enlightenment or, if you are not careful, a lower rebirth. Its cause are your collections of merit and insight, particularly morality, as well as prayers for such a rebirth state. Shantideva has said that its attainment is as rare as the odds for a blind turtle living on the bottom of an ocean and rising to the surface only once every hundred years to surface at just the spot where it would put its neck through a golden yoke that is floating about blown by the winds. In this analogy, the turtle is sentient beings, being blind is their ignorance, being on the bottom of the ocean is the lower rebirth states, coming to the surface is being reborn, the golden yoke is a precious human rebirth and its being blown by the winds is the vicissitudes of karma.

From the point of view of numbers as well, a human birth is rare. It is said that the number of hell creatures equals the grains of sand in the desert, hungry ghost the dust particles in the air, animals the stars at night and humans the number of stars seen during the day. If you consider how it is possible to take a census of the number of people in state, but impossible to count the animals, insects and microbes there, you will gain an appreciation of this. Furthermore, out of the world population, those with a kind heart are even rarer and, of those, the ones who have the liberty, opportunity and inclination to follow the Dharma are practically unheard of.

Therefore, having attained a precious human rebirth, do not waste it, for death will come all too soon. Do not be like a sea expedition going out for treasure and returning empty-handed. Without regard for temporary pleasure, practice the Dharma and gain ultimate and lasting happiness.

## **I) The Causal Condition for Success**

Of the four conditions for successful practice, the causal one is making an effort to train your mind-stream with (thoughts of) impermanence and to develop renunciation. Furthermore, it is to turn away from compulsive attraction by seeing the (unsatisfactory) quality of all thing of samsara with respect to yourself and to things in general. That is the ninth (preliminary practice).

Just as the causal conditions for a visual cognition are the elements of earth, water, fire, energy-wind and space of the object and of the cognitive base of the eye, likewise these common preliminaries are the building blocks of meditation.

## **J) The Main Condition**

You should devote yourself to a perfect spiritual master such as the Guru who is a personality of the lineage, the Guru which is the words of the Buddha, the Guru which is ultimate reality, the Guru which is an imputation on an appearance and so forth. Then you must practise in whichever way he orally instructs you. Because being cared for by a perfect master is the main condition (for success), you should devote yourself in this way. That is the tenth (preliminary practice).

The main condition for a visual cognition is the cognitive power of the eye. Likewise through the power of your devotion you will be able to realize all insights.

## **K) The Objective Condition**

You must cut off completely all sectarian, biased feelings since (all the schools of tenets and lineages) are established by imputation and mental labeling and are conventionalities (for leading disciples to Enlightenment). You must develop the certainty that they are all non-contradictory and from each you can come to the natural, especially distinguished, primordial nature of reality, the abiding state of all things. As this is the objective condition for being undeceived about what is to be meditated upon, you must become certain like this. That is the eleventh (preliminary practice).

All the different schools of theories expounded in India and Tibet derive from Sakyamuni Buddha and are expressions of his skilful means to lead disciples of varying dispositions to the realization of ultimate reality. They are different ways of explaining the same thing and, being merely words, are established as schools by people's mentally labeling them as such. None are in conflict. Just as a visual form is the object condition for a visual cognition, so is your nonsectarian understanding of the true nature of the mind for successful practice.

## **L) The Immediate Condition**

Not only must you make sincere effort from your heart with a state of mind in which you are free from compulsive attachment to meditation, you must also not have any sign whatsoever of expectations or worries such as thinking, "If I meditate now or in while, but if not I am worthless." Because being free from expectations and worries is the immediate condition (for success), you must practice in a state of mind that is uncontrived. That is the twelfth (preliminary practice).

The immediately preceding moment of consciousness is the immediate condition for a visual cognition, providing the continuity of its awareness. The above state of mind has a similar function in Mahamudra meditation.

## **Part Two :**

### **Mental Quiescence Meditation**

#### **The Essential Postures of Body and Mind**

The actual body of the practice is divided into two: mental quiescence meditation (samatha, zhi-na) and penetrative insight meditation (vipasyana, lhag-t'ong). The first is as follows.

In general there are many methods for developing single-minded concentration (samadhi, ting-nge-dzin), but if you know one essential method, then hindrances and interferences will not come about and you will develop effortlessly the experiences and insights into primordial, pristine awareness, free from any faults with respect to mental quiescence and penetrative insight.

The teachings of the meditative posture of Vairocana are a method for developing single-minded concentration for the development and completing stages of anuttarayoga tantra, and an effortless non-conceptual experience of bliss and clarity. Therefore beginners should rely on this essential point about the bodily posture.

For this, in order to control the downward-going energy, your legs should be either in the vajra-position or in the cross-legged posture of ordinary beings. In order to place the energy-winds of the solid element of the body into the central energy-channel, straighten your spine like the end of a spear. In order to induce the energy-winds of the liquid element into the central channel, place your hands in the equipoise meditation posture and hold them beneath your navel, and also raise both your shoulders back and even. To induce the energy-winds of the heat element into the central channel, keep your neck slightly bent like a hook. To induce the energy-wind of the gaseous element into the central channel, have your eyes neither wide-open nor shut tight, but gazing at a point straight ahead from the tip of your nose. Your tongue and lips should be in their normal, relaxed condition or you may have your tongue touch your upper palate.

Mental quiescence or calm abiding is a blissful stage of single-minded concentration free of thought and devoid of the five obstacles of mental dullness, agitation, foggy-mindedness, sleepiness and staleness. It can be achieved by many methods: focusing on an object, or none, or even on a conceptual thought such as visualisation of the Four Noble Truths, in which case free of thought means free of extraneous thought. It is not at all blank-minded and is essential for all practices, especially those of the highest classification of tantra, annuttarayoga.

According to the tantra teachings, the mind and the energy-winds upon which it rides are inseparable. If the energy-winds (prana, lung) are properly channeled, the mind will be focused; but when they run wild then thoughts do likewise. These winds run through energy-channels (nadi, tza ), the main ones being the central, right and left ones parallel to and slightly in front of the spine. Normally the winds pass only through the right and



left ones, and in this way act as the vehicle for deluded thoughts. Such delusions are stopped, however, when the energy-winds carrying them are no longer available, having been channelised and centralised into the central energy-channel. Therefore if your rough body is straight and in the correct posture, your energy-channels will also be in a proper position. Then the energy-winds can flow freely through them and, when properly channeled, your mind will be fully focused. For this reason the bodily posture of Vairocana is essential.

There are various classifications of energy-winds. According to the “Six Yogas of Naropa”, there are five major ones: (1) downwards-going, controlling the discharge and retention of wastes in the lower orifices, (2) upward-going, controlling swallowing, speaking and other activities of the throat, (3) life-sustaining, maintaining the spark of life, (4) equalising, for digestion and separation of wastes and (5) all-pervading, handling all motor activities. Another classification is of the energy-winds associated with each of the bodily elements of earth, water, fire, energy-wind and space. In this text, both systems are mixed and the various parts of Vairocana's posture deal with channelising assorted ones of them.

The vajra-position is with both legs crossed, the feet resting on the opposite calves or thighs. The equipoise meditation posture of the hands is with them in your lap, palms facing upwards, left hand beneath the right with thumbs upright and touching. It is helpful to have a cushion beneath your backside.

With your body in this essential posture, the many advantages of a non-conceptual state and so forth will come about once you have naturally cleansed yourself of your tendency to follow trains of thought. But even if you merely hold your body in this essential posture, your body and mind will become blissful and tranquil. Therefore holding yourself neither too tightly nor too tensely, first expel a little air and then maintain your breathing in an unforced manner.

When expelling air, feel that you are exhaling faults and distractions. Practice first some breath awareness and when you are calm, there is no need to focus on your breath any longer.

Refresh your memory a little about the preliminaries and then do not give any heed to (thoughts of) your past activities or think about what you will do in the future or what you are doing here. Place your mind, without (consciously) adopting or abandoning, in a fluid, natural state of being here and now, in which you are not manufacturing your ordinary, usual types of cognitions about the present moment. By doing this, your mind becomes pliable and you can develop single-minded concentration. Because these essential postures of the body and mind are the foundation stone for meditation, you should exert an effort in them. That is the first point (for mental quiescence meditation).

## **Focusing on a Visual Object**

If you are unable to settle your mind in this state, you should focus by looking at an external object such as a stick, a pebble, a Buddha statue, a flame of a butter lamp, the sky and so forth, whatever suits you. Do not think about such things as the colour or shape of the object, which is the basis of your meditation. Rather place your attention single-mindedly without any wandering on merely the object itself and abandon having your mind being either too tight or too sloppy. Cut off completely any extraneous train of thought.

If your mind is too tense, you will experience anxiety and frustration, if too loose mental dullness, foggy-mindedness and sleepiness. Like the strings of a lute, your mind should be tuned just right without any distortion.

The process of settling the mind on a visual object is like trying to see a stone on the bottom of a glass of muddy, turbulent water. Without worrying about the colour or shape of the stone, you will see it clearly when the mud subsides. Likewise when your thoughts subside you will be left with a clear view of your object. Therefore look at objects as a small child would without any mental chatter or commentary.

If you can focus without any conceptual thought or ideas, this is good. But should they arise, do not follow them out. Just let them pass and they will disappear. If you allow a thought to grow into a train of thought, it will be an obstacle to your meditation. You must realise that thoughts are the play of the mind, like ripples on water and light on leaves. They naturally dissolve.

You can also focus in front of you on either a written or visualised white syllable OM, red AH and blue HUM, which are the nature of the body, speech and mind of all the Buddhas, or on white, red and blue dots, whichever suits you. In short, you should aim and fix your mind single-pointedly to whatever type of visual form suits it and gives it pleasure to hold. If you try to settle your mind on something that it finds uncomfortable to fix on or which your intellect cannot grasp, then when you try to make it go (to this object), it will ignore it. Having no interest (in this object), it will fix on something extraneous.

You should cut off completely all signs of thoughts such as thinking “I am meditating” or “I am not meditating” or expectations to settle your mind or worries that you will be unable to settle it. Meditate having your mindfulness keep a check not to let your mind fix for even an instant on something extraneous, which it should not be meditating on at all. Do this well and let your meditation sessions be short and frequent. This is important for training your mind to settle single-pointedly which continuing clarity, lucidity and eagerness, so that it will not repeatedly lose the continuity of this state because of becoming tired.

At first it is important to have short, but frequent meditation sessions. If you find the meditation blissful and soothing, you may pursue it for a longer period of time. However,

if you begin to become depressed or bored while meditating, perhaps your sessions are too long. If you are tired, meditation becomes an unpleasant ordeal and you will not wish to continue. Therefore gauge yourself accordingly and take a break while you are still fresh and wish to continue. That way you will be happy to resume meditation. Suppose you have to walk twenty miles. If you go slowly and take frequent rests, you will not exhaust yourself and will reach your goal. The same is true for meditation.

If it is comfortable for your mind to take any one of these visual objects as its basis or focus for meditation, you should choose that one. If you wish to take each of these objects in turn, progressively, this is permitted. But, if you have taken one and find that sufficient, do not feel you have to go on to take them all as if going through an alphabet primer. In short, having your mind hold whichever visual form suits, it is the second point ( for mental quiescence meditation).

## **Other Sensory Objects**

Once you have held such a (visual) object, then in progressive order you should take (as your object for concentration) a sound which is the object of your ear's consciousness, a smell which is the object of your nose's, a taste which is the object of your tongue's, a tactile sensation which is the object of your body's and so forth. For this, as far as sounds, smells and so forth go, you should direct your mind at merely an outstanding sound or a strong odour and hold it with the hook of your mindfulness not letting (your mind) wander astray. Except for letting your mind settle to its own level, you should not make any judgments whatsoever about the quality, quantity and so forth (of your object).

Thus whatever situation you happen to be in, use it to help develop mental quiescence. If where you are meditating is noisy or someone is playing the radio, focus on the pure audio sensation of it without judgments, reactions or identifying the sound. For touch, you can focus on the feel of your clothing next to your skin. It is not necessary to eat something during meditation to focus on tastes. You can do this while taking your meals. Simply remain detached and follow the instructions as before.

When your mind has been holding whatever it has, you should break your session while you still have full clarity and then take a rest. This way you will not become bored. In-between sessions do not let the rope of your mindfulness break. As for how to look, you should be directed on what is in front of your nose. As for your body and speech, whether you are walking or sitting, talking or speaking, do these neither too strongly nor too much. As for your mind, try to cut the stream of your conceptual thoughts and mental chatter. By stages like this, you will build up the habit of single-mindedness. That is the third point (for mental quiescence meditation).

Therefore if you lessen your activities, your mind will naturally quiet down. If you are constantly busy, it is more difficult to focus the mind since you will be worrying about many things at once and become easily scattered or mentally exhausted.

## **Eliminating Mental Dullness and Agitation**

Furthermore, to eliminate such faults as mental dullness and agitation, you should visualise at the middle of your brow a dot the size of a pea, white, shining, lustrous, spherical and extremely clear and direct your mind towards it. Sometimes you should direct your mind towards a black, lustrous, spherical dot the size of a pea at the point in front of you where your folded legs touch your seat. For mental dullness you should direct your attention to the white one and your way of looking should be as if into space. Your body should be in a breezy place and you should splash your face with running water. Wear thin clothes and follow a light diet. Do not sit near fire or in the sun. If you have mental agitation and your mind proceeds in many (directions), the visualisation and way of looking should be directed to the black dot. As for your activities, keep warm, do exercise and eat heavy, nutritious food.

Mental dullness and agitation are the greatest obstacles to mental quiescence. With dullness, your mind either has no clarity or, if it does, you are in a daze. To perk yourself up, visualise a white dot at your brow and thus bend your mind upwards. The effectiveness of the colour white for eliminating dullness can be illustrated by putting a white cloth in front of your eyes. The white colour being the image on your mind awakens you a little and your mind naturally becomes brighter. Furthermore, if you stay in the sun or in a warm, stuffy place you will inevitably become drowsy and dull. Therefore stay where it is cool and breezy and you will be fresher. Also diet is extremely important. Light food makes the mind similarly light

With agitation, on the other hand, you are over-excited and your mind cannot stay where you wish to place it. Even if it maintains a hold on an object, part of it starts to wander astray. Visualising a black dot by your seat bends the mind downwards and the sombre colour naturally makes your mind more subdued. If you are very fidgety, physical exercise will tire you and cause your mind to wander less. Much agitation is due to the energy-winds being too light and active. Therefore a heavy, fatty diet will weight down these winds and make you less flighty.

Thus for a properly balanced meditation it is important to look after your body. Your mind rides on the energy-winds through the energy-channels of your subtle body. For these to flow properly depends on the condition of your rough physical body. Therefore a sound body and mind are interdependent.

If you have neither mental dullness nor agitation, direct your eyes and mind to either a small blue dot or an actual (small blue) object (on the ground) at the distance in front of you of the end of your shadow (or about an arrow's length away). With respect to these, first you should think, "The dot and so forth I am supposed to meditate on is like this," and then you should simply project your mind out to it. If after this (the visualised object) is clear, this is best. But even if it is not clear, you should merely think that there is an object like this and then make that the focus of your attention. Then without making any

analysis or minute enquiry about it, let your mind reach its level and naturally settle on it without any wandering.

The blue of a clear, dustless autumn sky is a neutral colour that neither uplifts nor subdues the mind. It is beneficial to have both mental placement and clarity with respect to this dot, but if you have only placement this is enough. With sufficient concentration, clarity will come automatically.

While you still have full clarity, break your session and then continue meditating later. In other words, have short and frequent sessions. Holding your mind (like this) is the fourth point

(for mental quiescence meditation).

## **Focusing on No Object**

As for directing your mind on no basis or object, you should stare blankly into space straight in front of you with opened eyes and not direct your mind at any object whatsoever.

Space, like the nature of the mind, is a permanent, unconditioned phenomenon not dependent on causes or circumstances. Therefore staring into space before you is a method of approach for meditation on the mind itself.

This meditation is also similar to those done in anuttarayoga tantra practices concerning the death process. Normally consciousness relies on all the bodily elements as its basis. During the death process, however, the elements as bases progressively fail and consciousness rely on less and less of them. This is figuratively described as the elements dissolving one into each other. First the earth or solid element fails and consciousness can no longer rely on it. Then the same happens with the water or liquid, fire or heat and energy-wind or gaseous elements. Finally, the finest level of consciousness, relying only on space, is left alone, inseparable from the finest level of life-sustaining energy. This is what experiences the Clear Light of death and passes into the in-between or “bardo” state and on into your next rebirth. Thus meditation on the mind with no object is similar to the tantric ones taking the Dharmakaya as a pathway for death, in which you simulate in meditation the dissolution process of death and focus finally on the space-like mind itself in the Dharmakaya Clear Light experience.

Meditation on no object should not be confused with blank-mindedness in which you are completely dull as if in a stupor or a faint. It is extremely alert, mindful and clear, but as in the Clear Light death meditations, without any object or thoughts.

Without letting your mind think about anything, do not allow even the slightest mental wandering. Do not direct your mind to (thoughts of) what qualities this state has or does not have, or the past or the future. Post your mindfulness as a spy to check with great

diligence that you do not wander astray, and then relax. In other words, place yourself in a tranquil, uncontrived state of being here and now.

Do not wander for even an instant. Be as (attentive as) when threading a needle. Do not let your mind be turbulent, rather have it like an ocean without any waves. Do not self-consciously try to accomplish anything, rather fix your mind like an eagle soaring. Be completely free from all expectations and worries.

When you have no mental wandering, thoughts will not come. But when mental wandering occurs, then because your thoughts will come one after the other, try to recognise them for what they are as soon as they arise. In other words, stare right at them and then fix your mind as before. No matter what thoughts arise in this way, just recognise them for what they are. Place your attention right on them without thinking anything like “I must block them” or “I have succeeded (in blocking them)” or feeling happy or unhappy. Just look at them with the eye of discriminating awareness. Take the thought itself as the basis or object for your mind to hold and then fix upon it. Train your mind not to fall into either too tense or too loose a state. That is the fifth point (for mental quiescence meditation).

When you begin to meditate, it may seem that your thoughts are increasing. This is not so, for you are merely becoming more aware of the amount of mental traffic that passes through your mind.

The mind and its thoughts are neither the same nor different. If they were one, there would be no way to quiet or eliminate thoughts. If they were different and separable, you could have thoughts without a mind. Thoughts are the temporary play of the mind. The mind is clear and pure without any specific qualities, like a mirror. Thoughts are like the images on that mirror; they cannot be separated from it, nor are they the same as it.

Thoughts are the result of confusion about the true nature of reality, and there are many different kinds. Coarse or rough thoughts are easy to identify. For instance, if you are meditating on a cup, and the thought arises that you want a drink of tea and then you call someone to fetch it for you, this is a coarse thought. A fine or subtle thought would be thinking, “This is a cup” or “It is made of white porcelain”, or identifying the sound of a radio while trying to focus on the cup. But whatever type of thought arises, identify it for what it is. Recognise that it is merely a thought, the play of the mind like an image on a mirror, and without grasping at it let it pass. Have your thoughts continually dissolve like a parade of characters marching across a stage without any ever standing still.

If you think that a little thought does not matter, this is a poor attitude. Forest fires grow from a small flame. Likewise from the small thought “This is a tea cup”, if you dwell on it you will soon be in the kitchen brewing tea having completely discarded your meditation. Just look at the thought, without following it out, and it will naturally dissolve. There is nothing else it can do.

## **Focusing on the Breath and the Three Stages of Settling the Mind**

As a method to hold the mind, you can direct it on the breath as its basis or object. Hold your breath with vase-breathing practice and fix your mind single-pointedly on it without any mental wandering. If you cannot hold your breath in the vase-breath manner, you should take as your object such things as the counting of your breath. Count your inhaling, exhaling and holding of your breath. Count at first up to twenty-one rounds and then gradually extend it to a hundred. Direct your mind to your nostrils and hold your attention on counting your breaths without letting your mind wander elsewhere.

But if you can hold your breath while (your body is) filled (with air) and then release it (with the vase-breathing technique), you should first expel all the air (from your lungs) three times and then breathe in as much air as you can. Force it down beneath the navel and when you can no longer hold it, release it and exhale. Do this again and again and do not let your mind wander to anything other than this.

Focusing on the breath is another effective way to settle the mind. As mentioned above, the mind rides on the energy-winds or breath. Therefore if there is much turbulent breathing, there are many disturbing thoughts. If your breathing is relaxed, quiet or held, so will be your mind.

There are several types of breathing. Even or normal breathing is the type you have when neither sick nor excited. Intermediate is when you inhale and slightly hold your breath. Vase-like breathing is when you inhale, contract your sphincters and hold your upper and lower breaths brought together.

This last type has several divisions depending on where the breaths are held. The large vase-breath is held between the throat and navel centre, the intermediate between the heart and navel, and the small at the navel. Internal vase-breathing is held inside, while external on the exhale. In general, vase-like breathing has four defining characteristics: (1) held breath, (2) extended abdomen, (3) the ability for the breath to leak either out of your pores or into the central energy-channel and (4) the ability for the breath to be shot out of the top of the head through the central energy-channel once it has been held for a very long time.

Vase-breathing is a very advanced and potentially dangerous practice. Your Guru will normally teach it to you only after you have completed the extraordinary preliminaries of 100,000 prostrations and so forth. If you tamper incorrectly with your breathing, you can throw your energy systems into imbalance, causing much nervousness, frustration of energy and wild thought-patterns.

If mental dullness or agitation occurs, exert effort in the methods to eliminate them in stages. If you cannot settle your mind on any of these types of objects enumerated, then take any other kind of object for meditation that suits you. Personality types are not all the same. Some people hear the teachings just two or three times and then are able to develop a settling of their mind. Some are unable to develop this even though they

meditate a great deal. But if you nourish it and do not give up out of slothfulness, it is impossible for you not to develop it. But it is necessary to have an experienced Guru to dispel your problems, induce your success and so forth.

Nourishing (your meditation) in this way, (you pass through) three stages of settling your mind. The first is like a steep mountain waterfall. Your thoughts are coarse and many. On the second, your coarse thoughts set (like the sun). Although occasionally some thoughts will suddenly occur, you recognise them for what they are and as soon as you do so, they subside by themselves. The steam of your meditation flows on gently and steadily like a mighty river. Finally all your thoughts, both coarse and subtle, set (like the sun) and you settle in equipoise into a non-conceptual state.

This third stage is also referred to as the river having merged into the ocean or the child reuniting with his mother after a long separation. Your thoughts are the river or child and the mind the ocean or mother. All turbulence and uneasiness have been settled, all murkiness stilled and you are in a perfect, pristine state. A more elaborate description of nine stages of settling the mind is found in the works of Asanga and Kamalasila. There the discussion is found of the eight composing mental faculties to eliminate the five deterrents of concentration, as well as explanations of the four types of attention and six mental powers used to progress through the nine stages. Although such an outline can be applied here, this present work does not include such detail.

Because it is possible to have such a settling of the mind into a non-conceptual state of bliss and clarity in which your mind is in equipoise, alert, vivid, pristine and pure, you should enhance your enthusiastic perseverance until you attain such a settling. Even after you have reached such a state, you must practice so that its continuity will not be broken. That is the sixth point (for mental quiescence meditation).

## **Eliminating Mental Tightness and Looseness**

If you have not reached this third stage of settling the mind, you must further enhance your enthusiastic perseverance. This you should do through the three techniques of tightening (your mental grip), relaxing it and meditating while being turned away (from both these necessities).

For tightening (your mental grip if it is too loose), you should sit in the essential bodily position, look in the proper way and take control of your cognitions. In other words, tighten up your meditation with discipline. Do not let your mind wander for even an instant. Be as if walking across a single-planked bridge. Draw your mind tight and perk it up so that it is vibrant (like a bell) but without thinking, "This is the object I should be meditating on." Do not let your mind wander for even a moment and make your meditation sessions short and frequent.



For relaxing (your mental grip if it is too tight), do exercises and then (sit) looking in the proper way.

If you are tense, nervous and over-agitated, prostration and circumambulation of religious sites are recommended. This is a beneficial way to harness and use your excess-energy. Afterwards when you are physically tired and sit back down in meditation your mind as well as your body will relax and you will have less mental disturbance.

Do not direct your mind at any object, rather let your mind relax itself and loosen down to its natural state, uncontrived, unself-conscious, not anxiously caring. Just place it on whatever comes up. Let it become tranquil and relaxed. It will reach its own level in equipoise. Do not try to accomplish anything or exert yourself. Relax like a baby with a full stomach or a pile of straw when the rope tying it has been cut. Then fix your mind and have your mindfulness be in the ever-present moment so that you do not wander at all from this state.

Except for this, there is nothing to meditate upon. Just place your mind in its natural state and if your meditation sessions are short, lengthen them slightly. Settle in a resplendent state of mind, and if it dissolves take a rest. But even in-between meditation sessions, have your mindfulness keep a careful check.

When meditating while turned away (from the necessity either to tighten or relax your mental grip), there will be times when you have no mental wandering and then thoughts will not come. But when your mind wanders or many thoughts arise due to some fleeting circumstances, if you try to get rid of them, you will not be able. Just look right at them kindly and think, "Wherever you are going, just go!" And thus you will intrude (and sever) the train of their going. Then one more will arise, a second will arise - recognise them for what they are. Do not even try to get rid of or abandon them, and do not follow them out. Do not be happy if your mind is settled or unhappy if it is running. Do not worry about your meditation not happening or have expectations and hopes that it will be good. Without any expectations or worries, have your mind take hold of the thought itself as its basis (for attention).

You will never be able to reach a non-conceptual state by blocking conceptual thoughts. Take these very thoughts themselves as your object and focus right on them. Conceptual thoughts dissolve by themselves. When they clear away, a non-conceptual state will dawn. Therefore practice like that. That is the seventh point (for mental quiescence meditation).

## **The Actual State of Mental Quiescence and the Three Boons**

Next is the way to develop the (actual) state of mental quiescence and being made to recognise (its nature). According to its definition, mental quiescence is a state in which your mind is quieted of all-mental wandering, be it thoughts or grasping at defining characteristics. It is a placement of the mind in single-pointed concentration on the non-

conceptual nature of things and is free of mental dullness, agitation and foggy-mindedness. Previously this had been attained with effort, but now it does not rely on any effort. It comes about easily and is blissful, expansively roomy and flexibly fluid. Even when you arise from meditation, your mind does not alter at all. No matter where it goes, it comes back and rests in this very state.

Just as a pigeon released from a boat in mid-ocean can do nothing but return to its ship, your mind, no matter how active it is, can only return to its settled state once you have achieved mental quiescence.

When you are walking, sitting, or whatever, your cognitions are at a leisurely pace, your mind is stable, relaxed, at ease, alert, clearly reflecting whatever appears, not garishly sparkingly, but more toned down. Because your cognitions are not sticky with respect to their objects, they do not grasp at all their details and thus your mind does not indulge itself in mental wandering.

At all times your mind should be stable like Mount Meru and clear like a mirror able to reflect anything. You should not be excited or inquisitively looking everywhere. If you focus too minutely on details, your mind will spin and become overwhelmed with thoughts. Be subdued and just let all thoughts and appearances pass through your mind without grasping onto them. If you are walking down a busy street and even should a dancing girl happen to be performing on the side of the road, just let her image pass through your awareness without letting your attention become glued to her. To be able always to maintain your mental composure is a sign of mental quiescence.

There are three equal boons you receive (in this state) - bliss, clarity and (bare) non-conceptuality. Depending on which is in a greater proportion, many things can occur such as the boon of heightened vision, the boon of heightened hearing, extra-sensory perception and even extra-physical powers. There are the ten signs (of single-minded concentration) and so forth. Any of these may happen when your mental quiescence is faultless, and such things will develop on your mind-stream like this. These are the foundation that will give rise to all benefits such as those deriving from penetrative insight.

So at this point, whether you have physical sickness, mental suffering, good or bad dreams, extra-sensory or extra-physical experiences, boons such as bliss, clarity or bare non-conceptuality - no matter what happens, good or bad - do not be attached or compulsively attracted. For sure they have no essence at all, so do not indulge yourself with any thoughts of happiness or depression about them. If you are obsessed with these boons, they will only serve as a root for samsara, making you circle into one of the Three Realms. They cannot liberate you from cyclic existence. Even non-Buddhists have such accomplishments (as these boons), but they are of no benefit to them.

Extra-sensory and extra-physical experiences are a side product of single-minded concentration and mental quiescence. Even non-Buddhists attain them through various

meditational techniques. In themselves, they are of no consequence unless used as a means for benefiting others.

The boon experiences of bliss, clarity and bare non-conceptuality are the field from which the crop of penetrative insight into their Voidness arises. To be obsessed with any of them not realising their Voidness, leads to a rebirth in samsara as a god. Being born as a god in the Desire Realm comes from attachment to the boon of bliss, in the Form Realm from clarity and in the Formless from compulsive desire for bareness.

In short, if you are obsessed with and attached to whatever experiences and insights you have, you will destroy them. Be detached from them and remain steadily in a non-compulsive state of being unattracted. With enthusiastic perseverance, pull yourself out of restrictive laziness. If you meditate while increasing your tolerance for hardships, you will reap benefits beyond all imagination.

Be like Jetzun Milarepa who meditated in high mountain caves for twelve years eating only nettles. Do not give up if your food runs out or your bed is too hard. Like lifting yourself out of a box, uplift yourself from making excuses for not practicing. With perseverance you will reach Enlightenment.

Therefore you must study about this (with a teacher). As both the Guru and disciple must not make any mistakes about the actual boons, comprehension (of the instructions), meditational insights and the way to develop (mental quiescence), make sure to recognise and know them with certainty.

The main thing is not to have any compulsive attraction to sensory objects and to have uncontrived admiration and loving respect for your Guru. Cultivate an Enlightened Motive of Bodhicitta with respect to the six types of beings. Have your mindfulness keep a close check so that you have no mental wandering. Make short-term plans as if you had no time and execute them straight up and down like bellows. Accomplish what you begin. Do not let yourself come under the sway of polite affectations or the eight worldly feelings.

The root of all attainments is your Guru-devotion and unwavering faith in his instructions. This, combined with the highest motivation of Bodhicitta, will propel you on to become a Buddha.

As death can come at any moment, do not make long-term fanciful plans such as “Next year I shall build a house and then take a wife. This room will be the nursery. I will have three children and the furniture will be walnut...” and so forth. Live in the present moment with the goal of Enlightenment. Whatever you set out to do, such as a seven-day retreat, carry it through to completion. If you give up in the middle, this sets up a very self-defeating pattern.

Do not let yourself come under the influence of polite affectations such as flattering others for favors or trying to save face. Be like Jetzun Milarepa who had no servants or

masters to worry about. Cast off your bondage to the eight worldly feelings of being pleased when receiving gifts, love, attention and so forth, displeased when not, elated when everything is going well, depressed when it is not, delighted when hearing pleasant things, annoyed when not, being happy when praised and upset when abused. All this is very important, if you practice faultlessly like this, you will develop experiences and insight without any effort. Therefore exert yourself to act in this way. That is the eighth point (for mental quiescence meditation)

## **Part Three**

### **Penetrative Insight Meditation**

#### **A) Looking At the Settled Mind**

The second main topic is penetrative insight meditation (vipasyana). You should sit in the essential bodily posture as before. At this point, the way of looking is extremely important. Your eyes should not be blinking, wavering to and fro or changing focus, but should be staring intensely with sharp focus directly ahead (slightly upwards) at the empty space before you.

In mental quiescence your mind has become like a clear mirror. With penetrative insight you examine the nature of this mirror and the images in it. The way of looking is slightly different for these two. In mental quiescence your eyes should be looking straightforward, relaxed and in focus. For penetrative insight look more intensely and slightly upwards. This uplifts and sharpens the mind. The difference is like between your arms when it is at ease and when flexed.

Place your mind in a faultlessly settled state of equipoise in which it is natural, at its own level, uncontrived, unself-conscious, not anxiously caring and then make it slightly more intense so that it is clear and vivid, and have your mindfulness keep an ever-present check so that you have no mental wandering.

Now look scrupulously at the nature of your mind when it is in full, perfect mental quiescence. By nature does it have a colour, a form, a shape? Does it have an arising, a ceasing, an enduring, or not? Is it outside, inside, or where is it settled? Aside from this settled state, is there another consciousness separate from it? Is it nothing whatsoever, a blank emptiness that cannot be identified (as this or that)? Or, in this settled state, is there consciousness which although it cannot be identified (as this or that) is still a vividness, a pristine purity, a resplendence but which just cannot be put into words (like a mute person's tasting of sugar)? The nature of this settled mind, is it a total blackness, or is it a clear, vivid brightness?

All the crucial (attainments) are in terms of what it means by the true abiding nature of the reality of this (mind).

If you realise the true nature of your mind, your Buddha-nature, you have Enlightenment. If confused about it and shrouded in the darkness of ignorance, you have samsara and bring yourself suffering.

Therefore (when your Guru questions you about your meditation) if you spout forth intellectual ideas about it, or parrot descriptions you have heard, or use high-falutin Dharma jargon (you do not understand), or, because your mind is gripped by the eight worldly feelings (and you want to impress him), you say you have had fantastic flashes and insights when you have not - if you respond like this, it is like pulling the wool over your own eyes. You are only deceiving yourself. And if you are ordained, then you have broken your vow not to lie to your Guru with polite affectations. Therefore practise conscientiously. Do not patch up (some experience) out of your imagination, but be completely honest and (speak from) the experiences and insights that develop within yourself from the force of your own meditation.

Do not worry if what you experience sounds a bit silly. If after looking you find that your mind is white, report this to your Guru. He will say, for instance, to check if it is ever yellow. If you come back and say, "It is yellow." He will then say, "No, actually it is neither." Through such honest exchange and interplay, your Guru will be able to lead you to recognize the nature of your mind. When you look at or examine your mind with incessant questions as above, you may not recognize its nature even if you see it. Therefore, you must rely on your Guru and be totally honest with him, otherwise he cannot help you. What is at stake is your liberation from suffering, Enlightenment and ability to help others.

As this is imperative, tighten your awareness and look (at your mind). Then take a rest and afterwards have another look. As it is necessary to look at the nature of the mind when it is settled, the way you should set it throughout all of this is to place it in a clear, lucid, shining state like the sun free of all clouds.

Tightening your awareness at this point and making an effort to look at its nature is the first way for you to be made to recognize (the nature of your mind). As this is so, the Guru must question and train his disciples in accordance with their mental temperaments and capacities. In order to tame some, it may be necessary to push and question them repeatedly in order to see if they have an intellectual understanding, a flash experience, an insight or a solid experience, and to make them recognize these without mixing in affected Dharma jargon. The disciple likewise must exert himself in this. That is the first point (for penetrative insight meditation): looking at the nature of the (settled) mind.

## **Looking at the Moving or Thinking Mind**

Next, to cut from its root the foundation (of ignorance) you must examine thoroughly the moving mind or train of thought, and be made to recognize it for what it is. Adopt the bodily posture, way of looking and acting as before. Place yourself in a state in which

you have bliss, clarity and bare non-conceptuality - all three, and then relax in this pristine purity and let a fleeting thought arise all of a sudden from this (state), or purposely emanate a thought of whatever seems suitable.

Look at the nature of the cognition that has been emanated. Look at it at the time it is emanated. Having looked at the enduring of what has been emanated, does it have a colour, or a shape? Is there a place it arose from, a place it endured in, a place it ceased into? What about it? Is (this thought) located outside, or inside the body? If it is inside, is it in the center of the heart, for instance, (in the brain) and so forth? Inside, outside, wherever it is, just how does it endure and how is it emanated? Investigate this.

This mind, is (its nature) a conditioned phenomenon (arising from causes), or is it unconditioned? Does it have an arising, a cessation, a colour, or a shape? If it does, then what kind does it have, or is it the case that you think it does not (have any arising and so forth)? If you say that it cannot be thought of as being like this, well then, is there still some conscious aspect of it, which nevertheless has no arising or cessation and so forth? When you look at a thought, is it that all thoughts are a voidness, free from all mental fabrications (of extreme modes of existence), with no arising or cessation? After you have looked at a thought, is it that it disappears completely, leaving no trace? All thoughts that occur, is it that they pop up but cannot be identified (as being like this or like that)? Take a look. If you say that they pop up but cannot be identified (as being like this or like that), then at that very moment (when a thought pops up), is there or is there not (another) thought to the effect that there is no identifiable component here?

There is no end to the amount of questions to which you can subject a thought such as “I saw my friend yesterday.” Where is this thought? Where did it come from? What is it made of? Is this thought the same shape as your friend and is the image of your friend the same as your friend himself? When this thought passes, does it leave no trace like a cloud disappearing from the sky, or does it leave a footprint like a child walking on the beach? If you say this thought has no qualities and cannot be found, then what about the thought that thinks that? If a mute person cannot put his thoughts into words, does this mean he has no thoughts?

By interrogating thought like this you can “question it to death.” If you are plagued by thieves and you catch one and publicly flog him, and then do the same for several more, the thieves will get the idea not to come any more and you will be free of them. The same thing will happen with your thoughts. Persistent questioning takes the life out of them and they will not bother to come so often. And when they do, they will be weaker in force and not so bold. In this way you will come to see the nature of your mind and thoughts.

After a thought has arisen or you have made one come, take a look at it without blocking or grasping on to it. Whether it has a happy (feeling) to it or an unhappy one, look at the individual natures of happy and unhappy (feeling tones). No matter how many thoughts you have, look at them. When a delusion has arisen strongly, such as one of the five poisons (of desire, anger, closed-mindedness, pride or jealousy), or you make one arise, take a look at it too. Making sure to cut out any exaggerated ideas you might superimpose

from within, look at the (deluded) thought itself (such as anger), the object of that thought (an image of an enemy) and the immediately preceding thought and check to see, for instance, if there is any difference as far as the mind (or consciousness aspect of them) is concerned.

When you see that the nature of thought is a bright, clear awareness, then look to see whether there is any difference between the bright, clear awareness you saw previously with respect to the settled mind and the bright, clear awareness you see now with respect to a thought. If you cannot decide, then draw the thought back and place yourself into a state of clear awareness.

This is a figure of speech. Thoughts are not like a jack-in-the-box, which you can stuff back into your mind. What is meant is to cease interrogating the thought and let it dissolve.

When (another) thought all of a sudden comes up when you are not looking, then look at its very nature to see how it in no way adulterates that of your original, normal consciousness.

When a wave rises and falls, has the ocean basically changed? Does a cloud affect the sky? As this is what you must see, look very well.

In short, when the Guru and disciple working together have reached this conclusion based on how thoughts arise (in the disciple) and how he understands them, then the root has been cut of the foundation (of his ignorance) and the true meaning has been reached. That is the second point (for penetrative insight meditation): making an effort in the methods to look at (the nature of the moving mind) so as to see and be made to recognize it for what it is.

## **Looking at the mind Reflecting Appearances and at the Mind in Relation to the Body**

Next, in order to be made to recognize the inseparability of the mind and appearances, you should look (at the mind) when it is reflecting an appearance (in a moment of bare perception). With your way of looking and bodily posture as before, focus your eyes and attention single-pointedly on a specific object, such as a vase, your image in a mirror, Mount Meru or any suitable visual form in the space (before you). Look at it scrupulously. Relax your awareness of it slightly, and then look at it again.

Likewise, look at the nature of a sound that is the object of your ears' (consciousness) and see if there is any difference (in nature) between a pleasant and an unpleasant, or a loud and a soft one. Look at the sound of your own voice and that of someone else, and so forth. Likewise look at a fragrant smell that appears as an object to your nose's (consciousness) and at a foul one, at both a delicious and an unpalatable taste on your

tongue, at both a pleasant and an unpleasant, a hot and a cold and at an intensely painful physical sensation on your body - look at whatever comes up. At such a time, is the appearance something that passes away by ceasing to exist? When reflecting an appearance, are the mind and the appearance two separate things? Does the appearance come into the mind (from outside) or is it that when the mind reflects something it goes out and catches hold of an appearance thinking "I am going to reflect it"? Actually, the mind and appearances (on it) are inseparable (like a "magic mirror" and the images on it). There is just the resplendence of an appearance and Voidness, with no (truly existent) object.

Take a look at the consciousness that is doing the looking and at its five types of sense objects, each in turn (first sights, then sounds, smells, tastes and tactile sensations). Look to see if there is any difference between these two (namely, consciousness and the appearance of its sense objects), and then look for what is the difference between an appearance that is the object (of a consciousness) and the consciousness that has it as its object. When you have looked at an object, is it the case that the object is something out there, solid and real?

When you close your eyes, does it disappear? When you put your hand in front of your eyes, where is the clarity of the appearance?

If you say it is not, then it seems as though there is no difference at all between an object (on the one side) and the mind (on the other) that can look starkly at (this object) without any obstruction but which (on its own part) is at ease, does not hold (anything as its object) and in which nothing (appears) clearly. If you say it is impossible to think that there is no difference between these (two), but rather it is the case that the object is something out there, solid and real, then what about the very thought that thinks that? (Is its object something out there?) Take a look at this.

Likewise, look to see whether the body and the mind are the same or different. If they are the same (or one thing), then the body which is something that arises and ceases and the mind which is something permanent (by nature) with no arising or cessation would have to be the same.

Although your cognitions, like your body, change from moment to moment and are thus impermanent, the nature of the mind as a clear, void, blissful awareness is something that does not change and is permanent in the sense that it does not depend on causes or circumstances. The nature of your mind does not arise out of nothing when you are born or wake up, nor does it cease when you die or fall asleep. The awareness is by nature the same regardless of what it is aware of.

And if they are different, then you should be able to identify two separate things, the body and the mind (totally apart from each other). But the mind is not something that you can pinpoint here (or there). It is not (only) at the top of your body or at the bottom, it completely pervades it. The fact that you can experience feelings (all over), what is that due to?



The body and mind are like something that supports and the thing that is supported (like a cup and the tea in it). But, if you say that the body is outside and the mind inside, (as two separate things) like a man and his clothing, then when it comes to experiencing feeling, if you think that it is the body alone that has feelings, then a corpse would also have to have feelings. If you say that the mind (alone) has the feelings, then the two (body and mind) would have to be different (and unrelated).

Now the mind is something that cannot be killed or in any way affected. If when your body is pricked by a thorn your mind feels it, then how is this different from the example when you burn the clothes worn by someone you burn the person who is wearing them too?

When you prick the body, do you prick the mind also? After looking at this thoroughly, you must reach a firm decision.

Namely, you must decide that the body and mind are neither the same, nor different. Conventionally they are like something that supports and the thing supported, but ultimately they are not two inherently existing objects sharing such a relation.

In connection with this you must also realise that whatever feelings arise are like waves and (your mind is like) water. Because when you place your mind on this realization you cut through from this state to the true meaning of the actual nature of reality, you must look (at your mind) like this. That is the third point (for penetrative insight meditation)

## **Looking at the Settled and Moving Minds Together**

Once more settle your mind into a state of pure clarity and Voidness and look at its nature. Then make a thought arise and look at its nature. Look to see if the natures of these two - the settled mind and the moving mind - are the same or different. After looking, if you see that they are different, then how are they different? Do the settled and moving minds alternately come up like when you have strung thread around two poles and twirl it together (to make a string)? Is the settled mind like a field and the moving mind that arises like the crops growing in it? Or are the two of them the same like a snake or rope and its coils (in that you cannot have a coil separate from the rope)? If so, then when the mind is settled without any thought arising, is it also moving, and when it is moving, is it also settled? There is a big difference between the moving mind, which can think up anything and fantasies in endless variety, and the settled mind, which stays without moving. But if you think that the two are different in nature, then is the difference in terms of colour, shape and so forth? Is it in terms of arising, endurance and cessation, or of past, present and future, or of permanence and impermanence? Look to see how they are different.

When you know through meditation what thoughts truly are, then (you realize that) the nature of both the settled and moving minds is nothing but the same. The way they arise

is by alternating, and when it is settled there is nothing that is moving and when it is moving there is nothing that is settled. Like water and waves, it is the mind alone that functions and acts. That is all there is to it. When you understand that both the settled and moving minds are nothing more than a brilliant, clear Voidness, then you have a little understanding.

It is like a mirror, which has the same void clarity whether or not it is reflecting an object.

Now, when you draw a thought in (for interrogation) and then place yourself in meditation, is it that (the thought) has gone into a clear Voidness, or has it disappeared and afterwards in its place is a clear Voidness?

In other words, is it like the darkness of night dissolving into the clarity of daylight? Or is it like the darkness disappearing and being replaced by daylight?

Or is it that the vivid thought itself is a clear Voidness? If you think that it is like either of the former two, you still must make very strong requests to your Guru (for his inspiration) and then look once more with effort and try to see with certainty how things really are.

The ways of looking at the nature (of the mind) can be approached in three styles.

These ways of looking have been at the settled mind, the moving or thinking mind, the mind reflecting an appearance, the mind in relation to the body and both the settled and moving minds together.

Those who skip ahead develop penetrative insight first and then mental quiescence, or sometimes they develop both together at the same time when previously they had neither. Those for whom it happens at once develop both mental quiescence and penetrative insight at the same time by merely being taught their descriptions. This is due to the power of their previous training.

This refers to instincts from former lifetimes as is the case with Incarnate Lamas (Tulkus).

Those who progress gradually develop these in stages. Here (the explanation has been given) in accordance with this latter type of person's approach and it must be taught after assessing the way in which the disciple has his experiences.

When looking, you must place yourself in a state of clarity without any grasping, like a small child looking (at the paintings of deities) in a temple. Exert yourself with great enthusiasm to look in this way and abandon laziness. Turn away from your compulsive obsessions and have no requirements (which you feel must be met before you can practise). Have a renounced mind and faith, admiration and loving respect for your Guru. Make your mindfulness firm so that your mind does not wander and practise in an uncontrived state without being fettered by expectations or worries. Be interested only in your future lives without letting yourself go after ever-changing worldly concerns. If you make an effort to look at the mind (with an Enlightened Motive of Bodhicitta), then it is

impossible for you not to develop quickly and with certainty the pristine awareness of penetrative insight. Therefore decide about the settled and moving minds. That is the fourth point (for penetrative insight meditation).

## **Recognizing the Nature of the Settled Mind**

If you have cultivated looking at the nature (of the mind) like this in accordance with the oral teachings concerning the mind, there is practically no need for (your Guru) to make you recognize (its nature). It will reveal itself to you from within. Some people, however, do not recognize it even if this has happened. Others will have only a dry intellectual understanding of it from reading or hearing teachings and, although they have developed no experience or insight despite their desire to do so, will say they have and describe them in unerring Dharma jargon. The Guru must be able to differentiate these (types of people) and the disciple on his part must practise taking all this to heart.

After you have examined or looked at the nature of the mind and reached a decision about it, you must experience it in meditation and recognize the experience in terms of what you have previously ascertained. Therefore the Guru is essential, for through his interplay and questioning he leads you to the correct decision about the nature of your mind and confirms for you when you have had a true meditational experience or insight into it. This is what it means for a Guru to make you recognize your mind or, literally, to introduce you to it.

The first way to make beginners recognize the nature (of the mind) when they are looking at it (is as follows). Look at the nature of the settled mind in the way as was done before. The nature of the settled mind is a clear, vivid brilliance, not a total nothingness. In this settled state there is clear, open, resplendent, gently flowing consciousness, which cannot be identified (as this or that). You cannot say that it is like this, that it has a colour, a shape and so forth. It cannot be put into words or expressed as being like this or that. Although it cannot be identified (as this or that), nevertheless pristine, pure, brilliant, resplendent, vivid (moments of) consciousness, which make things clear with no obstruction, happen to you (all the time). This consciousness is not something that previously you did not see, but now you do; or previously you did not experience, but now you do; or previously you did not know about, but now you do.

It has always been the case, for the nature of the mind is permanent.

But you must know from the depths of your heart that it cannot be pinpointed or said to be like this or that.

If you have only a (dry, smug) intellectual understanding that it is a clear, resplendent, unidentifiable state of clarity and Voidness, you will be unable to make any progress. Therefore this will not do. But if this (realization) has dawned from within (from your own meditational practice), then you have really had penetrative insight into the (nature

of) the settled mind. Therefore except for conscientiously (meditating) starkly on the nature (of the mind), there is no way to see it.

If (the Guru) introduces you to it prematurely, you will be left with only a dry intellectual understanding and will become jaded. Then no matter what other things he may try to explain to you, they will only cause harm. Therefore (the Guru) must not try to make you recognize (the nature of your mind before you are ready to see it).

If the Guru tries to make you recognize the nature of your mind before you have had any meditative experience, you will have only an intellectual understanding. Because of your smugness and self-satisfaction, you will become jaded, lacking all appreciation for the profundity of the teachings. Closed-mindedly you will feel you understand everything already and therefore will disparage all your Guru's further efforts to teach you. Like a stone in water, you will not absorb anything he says and thus you will make no progress. Therefore it is better for the Guru to be reserved about teaching the nature of the mind, lest he do so prematurely and jade the disciple.

If you have not cut the stream of your thoughts, you will not see the nature (of your settled mind). If you do not see this nature, you cannot be made to recognize it for what it is. And if you have not recognized it, then your meditation will not become an actual path (to Enlightenment)

When you have excellent experiences and boons (in meditation), look at them. Even when things are going poorly, try repeatedly to intensify the clarity.

In other words, when you are in pain, do not indulge yourself but rather look at the nature of the mind experiencing this pain and try to intensify and focus on its clarity. This is similar to the technique used to eliminate mental wandering in tantric visualization meditations, namely intensify the clarity of the visualization and extraneous mental activity disappears.

To teach the methods for cultivating such type of practice is called a (meaningful) oral explanation. When you know how to meditate, it is called a finished oral explanation. Then if you cultivate this state without any mental wandering, there will be no trouble in developing experiences and insights. Therefore, in order to reach certainty about the nature (of the mind) after you have seen it and to have all your doubts cut, it is necessary (for a Guru) to introduce you to it (in other words, cause you to recognize it).

In general, there are two things (needed) in meditation, mental quiescence and penetrative insight. Of these, (mental quiescence) is when your mind has been placed in its relaxed, natural state and you have a settling of the mind into its natural, clear, resplendent state after all thoughts have been quieted in their place (having looked at them the moment they arose). Your conventional mind does not indulge in any mental wandering concerning this life or worldly things. It is blissful and tranquil, with all delusions quieted into a fine sleep. Settled single-pointedly on the nature of virtue, your mind stays wherever you place it for as long as you want. It is under your control. You do not feel

even the passing of your breath in and out. If your (meditation) is like this, then it is a distinguished state of mental quiescence.

The flash experiences and boons of bliss, clarity and bare non-conceptuality (you receive in this state) are very important. They do not fulfill the requirement to count as insights, (for that you need penetrative insight), but you cannot do without them. If you cultivate them without any compulsive attachment, and remain in this state (of mental quiescence) without letting yourself lapse into any mental dullness, agitation or unspecified state of indifference, you will come to know and experience what kind of object your mind is - although you cannot say that the nature of the mind is like this or that, or has this colour or that shape, for it is beyond all words, thoughts and description. It cannot be put into words, like the sexual bliss of a young adult. A unity of clarity and Voidness, it is free from all extremes of mentally fabricated (modes of existence) and cannot be identified (as this or that). It is unadulterated by any conceptual thoughts of the Dharma. It is unsullied by any conceptual worldly thoughts. It cannot be pinned down (with the conceptual thought that) this is a non-conceptual state or one of mental quiescence.

Such a consciousness which is in its own state, at its own level, in its own place is called the root of all good qualities, the normal mind or simply the mind. If you are unconscious of it, then you have ignorance or unawareness and the cyclic existence of samsara. But if you are conscious of it, this is called awareness, pristine awareness, Nirvana, the pristine awareness of simultaneity, the primordial state, the Clear Light, or penetrative insight. Therefore now you should divide clearly this headwater of either samsara or Nirvana.

If you recognize the mind, it is Nirvana; but if you do not, then it brings you samsara. Thus the nature of samsara and Nirvana is the same. Their difference is in terms of your awareness of their future.

When your Guru introduces you to the nature (of your mind), you will recognize it like meeting (an old friend) you knew long ago. Such recognition is called recognising the mind. (The nature of the mind) is not something produced by the great discriminating intelligence of a disciple or the skilful oral teaching of a Guru.

It has been there all the time and is something you come to recognize only through meditational practice.

From time immemorial (your mind) has been like this, but because it has been obscured by delusions and thoughts you did not recognize it. But now that the stream of your thoughts has been cut and you have been introduced to it, you know it.

The mind is a pristine clarity that cannot be identified (as this or that). Although it has no inherently existent nature as such, yet it allows for clear appearances. The defining characteristic of the mind is that by nature it is clear, void awareness. It is pristine and alert with no discontinuity. That is the nature (of the mind). When you have a stark recognition of this, cultivate it at all times without any wavering. The benefits from this are beyond all imagination.

Therefore to develop penetrative insight into (the nature of) the settled mind and to recognize it, there is this first actual introduction (by your Guru to your mind). Take it to heart, put it into practice and cultivate it continually. This is extremely important. That is the fifth point (for penetrative insight meditation); recognizing in this way (the nature of the settled mind) and cultivating it.

## **Recognising the Nature of the Moving or Thinking Mind**

The second way of looking (namely at the nature of the moving or thinking mind) cuts the root of the foundation (of ignorance). There are two points (in connection with this): (1) being introduced to the non-conceptual mind and (2) being introduced to the moving mind or thoughts, (this latter one) referring to being introduced to the moving mind when a thought has already arisen or you make one arise.

The first is as follows. You have looked at the pristine, clear, resplendent, non-conceptual settled mind, which is an awareness free of mental dullness and agitation. You know that (its nature) has no arising or cessation, yet you do not (conceptually) think, "It has no arising or cessation, no colour, shape and so forth." To do that is penetrative insight into the non-conceptual mind.

To conceptualise about the lack of qualities of the non-conceptual state of mind is to go to an extreme of making non-existence into a "thing".

As for the second, if you say that all thoughts (by nature) are a total Voidness with no arising or cessation, you are taking Voidness too literally (and going to the extreme of nihilism). What they are, is a vividness that leaves no trace and (the nature of) which has no arising, cessation or enduring and cannot be identified as having this colour, that shape and so forth. If (you realize) this much, you have developed a little (understanding). Furthermore, you must recognize that they cannot be identified as this or that and to do so without conceptually thinking, "They cannot be identified as this or that." And, without any grasping or contradiction (in your mind between thoughts being both vivid and void, you must recognize) that thoughts both arise and subside at exactly the same time (like a drawing on water). In addition you must gain the insight that there is not the slightest difference (in nature) between thoughts and the object of thought, between the mind when it is settled and when it is moving, between past (and present) mind, between past (and present) thoughts and so forth. (They are all by nature) clear, brilliant awareness.

When you draw a thought in (for interrogation) or when a thought disappears, it is not that it has gone into a clear Voidness (or one has been left in its place). Rather, the thought that arises all of a sudden is itself a clear Voidness. When you realize or gain this insight, then you have recognized (the nature of thought).

There is not even the slightest difference between the non-conceptual state and that of true insight into the fact that moving thoughts, the settled mind and the nature of thoughts

themselves are all three clear, void and brilliant. To hold the two (as being different) is an interpolation of the mind that does not recognize them.

Previously when you did not recognize (the nature of) thoughts, you were to take them into your meditation. This was ignorance (or unawareness). But now that you recognize them, you can meditate on thoughts themselves and thus they become awareness or pristine awareness. Now you can make thoughts the root of meditation. Previously the thoughts themselves were obscuring themselves, and so you could not see them.

They were so thick; they obscured their own nature. But now they are transparent; you can see right through them.

This present meditation on conceptual thoughts is known to be more especially distinguished than the meditation on the non-conceptual state. Therefore whatever thoughts arise, you should take them as what to recognize. When thoughts do not arise, they stay in this state of them not arising. There is no need to emanate (or produce) them. When they do arise, then stay in this state of them arising. There is no need to collect them back. Therefore, without giving any heed to expectations or worries, bring your thoughts themselves into the nature of your meditation.

Thoughts are nothing more than the mind. This mind, which naturally subsides, is the Dharmakaya, by nature a clear, void brilliance, devoid of anything to be subsided or anything to do so the subsiding. When you gain this insight, then you have had penetrative insight (into the nature of) thought. You have recognized the Dharmakaya, which is a unity of clarity and Voidness.

Thus you must realise that thoughts, being a clear Voidness, arise and subside at exactly the same time, like a handprint on water. They have no endurance and there is no interval between their arising and subsiding. Nor is there space between them as if they were "things" that could be separated by space. This is what the term "naturally subsides" means, which when translated literally is "self-liberation".

In short, you should recognize whatever (thoughts) arise, place your mind single-pointedly and uncontrivedly right on their very nature, without any mental wandering, and cultivate this state. This is the second actual introduction (by your Guru to the nature of your mind). Having recognized it, however, is not enough. You must cultivate the continuity (of this awareness). That is the sixth point (for penetrative insight meditation).

## **Recognizing the Nature of the Mind Reflecting Appearances and of the Mind in Relation to the Body.**

The third introduction is being made to recognize (the nature) of the mind reflecting an appearance and this is in terms of the inseparability of the mind and appearances. When you look at any of the five types of external sense objects (sights, sounds, smell, tastes or

tactile sensations), the object which is obvious with no obstruction but about which you cannot think that it is some object out there, solid and real, and the vivid mind that is looking at it without actually clutching something - these two are neither the same, nor different. However you should not (conceptually) think that they are neither (the same, nor different).

To do so would imply that being neither was some sort of inherent nature truly existent in them.

Likewise, the body and the mind are neither the same nor different. They are inseparable, a unity of clarity and Voidness, of appearance and Voidness, like the (reflection of the) moon in water.

If the reflection or appearance of the moon in a puddle and the water were the same, the when you put your hand over it, the appearance should still be there. If they were different, you should be able to lift the appearance off the puddle like a piece of paper.

Furthermore, whatever feelings you have, such as hot or cold, are also appearances. Because you do not recognize them as (a unity of) appearance and Voidness, your mind mentally labels them (as truly existent) and thus you have the infinite variety of grasping. But aside from this, on the ultimate level, whatever physical or mental feelings you have are devoid of being an (inherently existing) basis for labeling. You must gain this insight.

In a dream, you have a body and you see many appearances, and they all seem real and truly existent. But when you awake, you see that they were all of your mind and appearing to your mind, and that they had no true basis for their existence or for you to have labeled them 'my body' and so forth. The same is true of death with reference to your life's experiences and when you awake from ignorance and see what you deceptively considered concrete and real is actually void of existing as such.

Appearances all come from the mind. If you think there are ghosts or demons, you will see them. If you do not believe in them, you will not. Once Jetzun Milarepa was meditating in a cave and, noticing a hole in the wall, he wondered if it might contain a ghost. As soon as this thought arose, a horrible ogress riding on a musk deer appeared and asked him, "Why did you call me"? Your grasping ego sent for me. Quiet your mind and then I can leave." Likewise, it is because you have been fooled into thinking that appearances exist as real, solid objects "out there" that you believe them to exist that way. This is nothing more than superstition.

All appearances are reflections of the mind, void of true, inherent existence as something solid "out there" existing from its own side. For instance, great Lamas will come to Bodhgaya and see it as a paradise and all the people there as deities. To a beggar, it will appear as a hell. And for each of them, this is reality. Consider a glass of liquid. A hell-creature sees it as molten copper, a hungry ghost as pus and blood, a fish as a home, a human as water and a god as nectar. Each of this is merely an appearance to and of the



mind. However things appear to you that is your mind. But appearances are all deceptive, because they appear to be real and “out there”, when in fact they are not.

Consider the same person wearing the same set of thick clothes in summer and in winter. At one time he labels them heavy, at another thin and light. What is the basis for his labeling them as such? There cannot be an inherently existing basis for this in the clothing: it is all appearance. The same is true with feelings.

Snuff and chili pepper are either delicious or terrible depending on what you are accustomed to, in other words how they appear to you.

Whatever appearance comes up (before you, such as your finger), look at it (in an intensely staring) manner and focus your mind (on it single-pointedly for several minutes). Then relax your stare a little. At first all the details are sharply there. But then after a while, the (image) goes away in its very place because either you became nauseated and did not want to look at it anymore, or your eyes went numb or started to tear. But then when you look at it a little (once more), a vivid appearance that cannot be grasped comes (again). It has come back in its very place.

At this point (you should realize) that your own (mind) and the appearances to and of it are inseparable. They are (a unity of) appearance and Voidness, resplendent without any object (inherently existing on its own side). Because there is this reflexive appearance of the actual abiding nature of reality, also known as the defining characteristic of the mind, there are no two separate, different things - external appearances and the internal mind. The mind's own luster arises with no obstruction; that is all.

Appearances as objects to be grasped and consciousnesses to grasp them are both the arising of deception. At such a time, these (appearances) cannot be singled out to the side; they appear because they are the self-deception of the mind. Therefore the mind is the appearances. Aside from this, there is no such thing as an appearance that can be established even to the slightest degree as existing inherently as a separate object.

A scarecrow seen at a distance appears to be a man. What is this appearance, except for your mind?

Previously, because this was obscured by ignorance or the mind's grasping (for true existence) you could not see it. But now that the stream of your grasping conceptual mind has been cut, you can recognize the (reflecting mind's) own nature and that there are no (truly existent) objects. Without grasping at appearances (to be truly existent) you see that appearances are resplendent and void and are not (inherently existing) objects. They are known as the light-rays of the Dharmakaya, appearances arising simultaneously (with Voidness, like a sprout and its shadow).

Thus when your friend appears before you, just see his appearance and remain in the here and now. Do not think, “O, what a good friend he is,” or “What a horrible friend, he didn't write.” Do not cling to an idea of this person as an unchanging concept, inherently

existent, solid and real. Remain open, fresh and spontaneous, without expectations, worries or preconceptions and realize the inseparability of appearance and Voidness. Remain with the void appearance of the person and not your fixed ideas.

Now cultivate (this awareness) without any fabrication. Give free rein to your six conglomerates and cultivate practicing in terms of whatever appears to the mind.

The six conglomerates are the consciousness, cognitive power and objects of your faculties of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking. Realizing that a consciousness, cognitive power and object are all three interdependent, void of existing inherently alone and all necessary for a cognition, just relax and be aware of whatever comes up.

With your mind comfortable and at ease in this state, place it uncontrivedly on the actual nature of reality. Do not try to achieve bliss, clarity, Voidness or excellence. Do not dwell on the past. Do not think of the future. Have no thoughts of the present. Do not meditate by intellectualizing. Letting your mind be at its own level, fluidly flowing in the here and now, without any effort or anxious cares, place yourself in the natural state of the mind itself. Place yourself in a state of the inseparability of appearance and Voidness, the inseparability of the sounding (of sounds) and Voidness, the inseparability of bliss and Voidness, the inseparability awareness and Voidness, the inseparability of clarity and Voidness. When you understand with bare perception the inseparability of appearance and Voidness like this, namely how appearances are not blocked but likewise cannot be grasped, then you have had penetrative insight into (the mind reflecting) appearances. You have recognized the Dharmakaya, which is a unity of Voidness and appearance. If you cultivate the continuity of this state, you will develop stable, sublime experiences and insights. Being made to recognize the nature of the mind reflecting appearances is the third introduction. That is the seventh point (for penetrative insight meditation); cultivating your practice in this way.

## **Recognizing the Nature of the Settled and Moving Minds Together**

Next is the introduction made after having looked to see if the settled and moving minds are the same or different. When you analysed whether the settled and moving minds were the same or different, you understood from (the nature of) the two how to make thoughts into your meditation, for the settled and moving minds are nothing but the same. The way they arise is that they alternate. When the mind is settled it is not moving, and when it is moving it is not settled. But the agent for both is the mind alone and the nature of both is a clear, void brilliance. It is nothing more than that.

Furthermore, it is not that after you draw a thought in (for interrogation) then you see a clear, void brilliance. Nor is it that when a memory or thought disappears, it goes into a clear Voidness or one is left in its place. Rather, the thoughts that arise in the moment all

of a sudden are themselves a clear, void brilliance. When you have gained this insight or understanding, you know the abiding nature of the mind.

The settled and moving states can be referred to as fingers dividing from the same hand.

They are both of the same nature as the hand, but if it is one finger it is not the other.

When the mind is settled it is a clear resplendence in a non-conceptual state. When it is moving with thoughts, the nature of these thoughts themselves is a clear, void brilliance. It is nothing more than that.

When you have the insight that all appearances of objects are simply affectations of the mind like waves on water and cannot be ultimately established as having any true, independent existence, this is (known as) the recognition of appearances as the mind. When you analyse the nature of this mind to see if it has a going, a staying or a coming and have the insight that it cannot be established as having any of these, for the mind, like a dream-elephant or horse, ultimately has no true existence, this is the recognition of the mind as Voidness.

(Furthermore) when you have the insight that various (appearances) spontaneously arise from this state of pure clarity and Voidness, without any obstruction like (the reflections of) the moon in water, this is the recognition of Voidness as spontaneous (arisa). And concerning this spontaneously arisen clear, void awareness which is free of all mental fabrications (of extreme modes of existence), which is not something that comes about by change, which does not waver from (or in any way block) the Great Bliss and which has just spontaneously arisen – when you are convinced that it arises and subsides at exactly the same moment like the knotting and uncoiling of a snake, this is the recognition of spontaneous (arisa) as automatically subsiding of itself.

The mind you are to be made to recognize is normal consciousness, which can think up anything and everything, is all-aware and all-flexible. It itself is known as the unity of clarity and Voidness, the Great Bliss, the Voidness possessing that which is perpetually supreme, or Mahamudra, the Great Seal of Voidness. When you recognize it, this is known as the insight of Mahamudra. Therefore place your mind in its own state of vivid awareness without anything to meditate on and without letting it wander for even an instant. Relax and be at ease without any expectations or worries, hopes that your meditation will be good or fears that it will be bad. By cultivating the natural state of your normal consciousness, you will behold in the very instant of here and now the Mahamudra Great Seal of Voidness, the unity of bliss and Voidness and (you will see it) like the clear expanse of cloudless space.

Now that mental quiescence has been joined with penetrative insight, sublime experiences and insights will happen. This fulfils the requirement of actually having entered the path of Liberation. Voidness is the way the mind is, clarity is its defining characteristic and the unity of these is the mind's nature. (There are many names for) this clear, vivid brilliance with a nature of bliss, clarity and bare (non-conceptuality), which is

free of all extremes of mentally fabricated (modes of existence) such as good or bad, arising, ceasing or enduring, existing or not existing, permanent or impermanent and which is beyond all words and thoughts, which cannot be identified (as this or that) and yet can be experienced. It is known as the very essence of great pristine awareness, the reality of the great natural occurrence, the abiding nature of the way in which all knowables exist, pure awareness, the very nature of things, the equal factor (of samsara and Nirvana), the Great Bliss, the Buddha-nature, the perfection of wisdom, omniscience, the Voidness possessing that which is perpetually supreme.

Because everything can be understood by the mind, it is (called) mind-only. Because it is free of all extremes or middle, it is Madhyamaka, the Great Central position. Because it is difficult for everyone to comprehend, it is the hidden, or secret tantra. Because it destroys all deceptions, it is the Vajrayana Diamond-hard Vehicle. Because it beholds the essence of Buddhahood, it is called the Dharmakaya.

In short, what you must recognize is that which is free from all mental fabrications that would grasp at a duality (of truly existent consciousness and objects), in other words the pristine awareness of non-duality, the equal factor (of samsara and Nirvana), the Great Bliss free from mental fabrications, the Mahamudra Great Seal of Voidness. Furthermore, you should float above (the ocean of samsara) on your fervent regard and loving respect (for your Guru) which you take as what is most vital. The circle continually in making requests (to him for inspiration) without ever feeling you have done enough. And then alight upon an obvious placing of his inspiration and blessings on you.

When you recognize that there is this stark brilliance as part of yourself, unobstructed, unhidden, free from being unobvious, you have arrived at the Mahamudra that is the basis. To look at the nature (of the mind) is the Mahamudra that is the path. To realize (this nature) with full conviction is the Mahamudra that is the result. Therefore joyfully cultivate yourself in this way.

Now the attainment of a (fully endowed) human body has become meaningful. You have actually entered the path of Liberation and made samsara have an end. Therefore meditate well and with joy, and cultivate this for a long time. That is extremely important. Having looked at the settled and moving minds and been introduced (to their actual natures), you have recognized that appearances are the mind, the mind is Voidness, Voidness is spontaneous (arises) and spontaneous (arises) automatically subsides of itself. This is Mahamudra, pointing a finger at the Dharmakaya. Cultivate its practice continually. Follow it through to the end. Without leaving it as only a (dry) intellectual understanding, be certain to place it on your mind-stream. That is the eighth point (for penetrative insight meditation).