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Nectar from the Stream – VII

A selection of teachings presented during the transmission of *The Rinchen Terdzö - 'The Precious Treasure Teachings'* of Jamgon Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye the Great, held at Palpung Sherab Ling Monastic Seat, India, in 2006.

“Until I awaken, I take refuge in
The Buddha, the Dharma, and the Supreme Assembly.
Through the goodness of generosity and other virtues
May I awaken fully in order to help all beings.”

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Calm Abiding and Special Insight Meditation

Before I speak about calm abiding and special insight meditation, I want to say that the instructions that are being presented during this transmission of *The Rinchen Terdzö* of Jamgon Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye are very profound. They become effective for people like us through the practice of calm abiding and insight meditation. Of course, every Dharma practitioner knows what calm abiding and special insight meditation are.

Shamatha is the Sanskrit term that was translated into Tibetan as *zhi-gnäs* and means ‘calm abiding.’ It is the meditative practice of calming the mind and resting free of disturbing thoughts that bring on defilements. *Vipassana* is Sanskrit, *lhag-mthong* in Tibetan, and means

‘special insight.’ Shamatha and vipassana are the two main aspects of meditation practice. If we look at them deeply, there is so much to both of them.

Just practicing hours and hours of shamatha everyday will be beneficial but we will not progress if we only do this. It would be like going on a diet for two months to lose weight and afterwards eating nothing but Hamburgers and Kentucky fried chickens and drinking lots of Coca-Cola everyday for two months. What will happen then? I needn’t answer. This doesn’t mean that I’m against Coca-Cola and these things, but we will become as wide as a mountain if we indulge in them. Then we would have to go on a diet again, even have to starve to lose weight, but this time for three months instead of two.

In that way, for shamatha to be effective, we have to renounce anything that will fuel our emotions and defilements. We have to avoid anything that stimulates and causes our defilements to increase. In the Hinayana instructions, Buddha Shakyamuni taught in a very simple way the ten non-virtues that we must give up and the ten virtues that we should practice. By doing so, our defilements will naturally decrease and will dominate our life less and less.

In Mahayana, we practice the six paramitas, *phar-phyin-drug* (‘the six transcendent actions,’ which are generosity, discipline, patience, diligence, meditative concentration, and discriminating wisdom-awareness). We give rise to Bodhicitta (‘awakened mind’) and also develop the four immeasurables (immeasurable loving kindness, immeasurable compassion, immeasurable joy, and immeasurable equanimity or impartiality). If we practice and develop all of them, our negativities and defilements will naturally decrease and will finally end. We will continue being attached to helping others, though. We will continue having this kind of attachment, which is having Bodhicitta.

Having loyal faith and devotion are paramount for Vajrayana practitioners. When our unwavering and strong faith and devotion, *mös-güs-drag-po*, merge with our primordial potential, which is pristine wisdom, we will have realized and will have become one with the Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya. At that time, we will have traversed and realized the different stages and levels of shamatha and vipassana and then will have transformed all our defilements.

What happens in life when we don’t practice shamatha and vipassana? I don’t have to tell you. All problems taking place on Earth right now and among peoples in the world are due to not having shamatha. Let me tell the story that illustrates what it means to not have established peace for oneself: There is a creature living in the ocean. Its body is so long that it can wrap itself around a huge mountain and doesn’t recognize its own tail when it does. When it is hungry, this creature starts eating its own tail and the more it bites it, the more pain it feels. It becomes very angry and thinks, “Somebody is eating me.” Thinking it is eating the animal that is chewing it up, the crazed creature feels more and more pain, becomes more and more vicious, and bites into its own tail even more ferociously. Actually, it is devouring itself.

Problems that human beings in this world have are like that. If we are able to practice shamatha and calm down, then we won’t have problems anymore. Feeling desperate while having longing faith and devotion is due to not having shamatha. If we have shamatha and strong faith and devotion, then we aren’t in desperation, rather, in accord and in harmony. This will lead to untainted contentment and pure faith and devotion.

Sometimes we hold a 200-kilogram weight over our head and complain that it's too heavy. It's so easy to become free of the burden by just putting it down. Sometimes we have a full plate of chilli peppers, don't stop eating them, and complain that they're too hot. For goodness sake, it's so easy to become free of the misery of feeling that our mouth is burning by not eating the chilli peppers. So, most of the problems in samsara are exactly like that. Of course, all problems are exactly like that when we look back.

Sometimes we are so neurotic that we don't even see why we get into trouble and don't see how we created our own problems. For example, parents often look me up, are very upset and cry. They tell me that their children don't listen to them. They don't remember why their children became the way they are. There are two reasons. One reason is that the parents might have been too strict, so their children become totally wild, even rough and tough. Another reason is that the parents might have been too soft, so their children become totally wild because they got and were allowed to do whatever they wanted. These children grew up like a wild tree that has no specific shape. For example, it's impossible to make a nice bonsai out of a wild tree. A bonsai has to be trimmed from the start. Like that, it's the parents' own doings, but they don't see this and then complain. Of course, they only complain because they care.

There's an easy method that is very handy for everyone. If you have some kind of problem with somebody who is bothering you, then instead of worrying, just say, "I trust the Buddha. I trust the Dharma. I trust the Sangha. I trust my Guru, the deities, and the protectors. I trust all of them whole-heartedly. I have compassion for all sentient beings, also for this trouble-maker." Having said this, repeat the mantra of Noble Chenrezig, OM MANI PEMA HUNG, ten times on your mala. One mala repetition isn't enough, rather, ten malas. Each time you say OM MANI PEMA HUNG, you think that you are purifying your six main defilements and that Chenrezig is reaching all sentient beings in the six realms of conditioned existence and is liberating them from their suffering and misery. The six main defilements are: ego pride, jealousy, desire and attachment, stupidity, miserliness, and aggression. The six realms of samsara that are created by the six main defilements are: the realm of the gods, the realm of the jealous gods, the realm of human beings, the animal realm, the realm of the hungry ghosts, and the hell realms. After having repeated Chenrezig's mantra while counting the beads on your mala ten whole times, you look at your problem. You will definitely see it differently, probably as a good thing, and then it's no longer a problem. You will even see that it was good the problem happened and in this way you will see the other side.

We saw that *lhag-mthong* means 'special insight.' *Lhag* means 'special, extraordinary,' and *mthong* means 'to see.' Let me give an easy example to show what *lhag-mthong* is like: You will see everything yellow if you have a serious case of hepatitis. Our mind is like that; we see everything through the lens of our ego, our "I." Shamatha meditation is like taking medicine to become cured of hepatitis. When we are healthy again, we can clearly see the colour white as white, yellow as yellow, red as red, and so forth. Seeing clearly is the beginning of *lhag-mthong*, 'special insight.' Of course, it has a deeper meaning. By having become calm through the practice of shamatha, we practice *lhag-mthong* in order to see the essence of our mind very clearly, with our clear mind. That is the real meaning of *lhag-mthong* and it applies to seeing everything else in the same way, very clearly.

Bodhisattvas, Dakas and Dakinis

What are Dakas and Dakinis? Dakas are called *dpa'-bo* and Dakinis are called *dpa'-mo* in Tibetan. They are the masculine and feminine aspects of fearlessness. The Sanskrit term *Bodhisattva* is *byang-chub-sems-pa* in Tibetan. The terms *dpa'bo* and *dpa'-mo* are included in

the syllable *pa* of *byang-chub-sems-pa*, so the *pa* in the Tibetan term for Bodhisattva denotes 'Fearless Ones.' A fearless man and fearless woman in Buddhist context don't refer to an aggressive and ruthless person. Usually being fearless means not afraid to be beaten up or to beat others up, not afraid to say and do things, being bold. Being fearless here doesn't mean anything like that. If we understand what the term *Bodhisattva* means, we will understand what fearlessness means.

The syllable *pa* in *byang-chub-sems-pa* refers to a person, to someone who has Bodhicitta, *byang-chub-kyi-sems*, 'awakened mind,' i.e., innate wakefulness. Combining *byang-chub-sems-dpa'-bo* and *byang-chub-sems-dpa'-mo*, a Bodhisattva is *byang-chub-sems-dpa'-bo-pa*, the three syllables *dpa'-bo-pa* sounding alike when pronounced. A Bodhisattva is someone who has taken the vow to attain full and perfect liberation and realization of Buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings by leading them to complete enlightenment. A Bodhisattva is fearless in attaining this goal and fully dedicates himself or herself to accomplishing perfect Buddhahood for this purpose and has no other thought in mind.

As it is, we think about our immediate family, relations, and friends, and they have many problems. Can we solve all their problems and help them become perfect and free? It would be very hard. Committing ourselves to helping everyone become totally free of all limitations and attaining limitless wisdom is quite a big commitment, and it is the vow of a Bodhisattva.

When a Bodhisattva reaches the final destination, then he or she has realized the Dharmakaya, *chös-sku* ('the truth body of a Buddha'). The Dharmakaya manifests as the two form kayas, the Sambhogakaya, *longs-spyöd-rdzogs-pa'i-sku* ('body of perfect enjoyment,' the luminous aspect of Buddhahood that manifests to accomplished practitioners) and the Nirmanakaya, *sprul-sku* ('the manifest body of a Buddha' that can be perceived by ordinary beings). The Dharmakaya manifests as the two kayas spontaneously, not intentionally and not dualistically.

Dakas and Dakinis are not like two people, rather, they are the male and female manifestations of the ultimate Sambhogakaya that blesses and empowers those persons who are able to perceive them as well as other beings, too. Having been blessed, practitioners will attain accomplishments that are similar to the ones that the Dakas and Dakinis have. For example, they manifested at the 24 great sacred places that are situated on the Indian continent and in Himalayan countries. The 24 great sacred places (*gnäs-chen-nyer-gzhi*) are: Jalandhara, Oddiyana, Purnagiri, Kamarupa, Malaya, Sindhu, Nagara, Munmuni, Karunyapataka, Devikota, Karmarapataka, Kulata, Arbuta, Godavari, Himadri, Harikela, Lampaka, Kani, Saurasta, Kalinga, Kokana, Caritra, Kosala, and Vindhyaumarapurika.

Dakas and Dakinis are on another level of realization than we are. We can't just become a Daka or Dakini by placing the crown of the five Dhyani Buddhas on our head and by dancing around with a damaru (*da-ma-ru*, 'the ritual drum' that symbolizes method) in our right hand and a ghanti (*dril-bu*, 'the tantric bell' that symbolizes wisdom) in our left hand. Dakas and Dakinis are Sambhogakaya emanations of a Buddha's accomplishments. Having been blessed and empowered by them, we have the ability to attain similar qualities of accomplishments that they have by practicing to mature and thus reaching their level of high realization.

Dakas, who are the clarity aspect of realization, represent the manifestation of methods. Dakinis, who are the emptiness aspect of realization, represent the manifestation of wisdom. What are methods? They have nothing to do with dualistic attempts to attain a dualistic goal, rather, they are practices to attain perfect realization. What do we realize by practicing the methods? Primordial wisdom, ultimate Bodhicitta, ultimate emptiness. That is our aim, which

at the same time is our potential. How can this be? Ultimately, our potential is primordial wisdom. We will continue wandering in samsara as long as we aren't fully liberated and haven't realized our ultimate, pristine potential. Therefore, to realize primordial wisdom, we engage in the methods, until we attain the accomplishments.

Khregs-chöd and Thöd-rgal

Kregs-chöd and *thöd-rgal* (pronounced 'trekchö' and 'tögal') are the Nyingma terms of two main practices in Dzogchen and, although the meaning is the same, they are known by different names in Mahamudra. There are many profound and deep methods in both practices of trekchö and tögal.

Kregs-chöd means 'cutting through' (the stream of thoughts of the three times) and *thöd-rgal* means 'direct crossing.' Trekchö is practiced first and then tögal, but in actual fact they are practiced hand in hand. For example, how can we practice the first paramita of generosity without having ethical conduct, the second paramita? There's no such thing. We practice all paramitas when we practice one. For instance, since we can make many mistakes, being generous without having realized the sixth paramita of discriminating wisdom-awareness is *lkug-pa*, 'stupid, dumb.' How can this be? We can give the wrong things to the wrong person and as a result many painful things will happen. So, not needing to have highest wisdom but having basic commonsense-wisdom, we simply have to know what we give to whom. Being generous means being diligent. Without being diligent, we might not want to be generous on a specific day for one reason or another and, even though our refrigerator is stacked full of food, maybe ten people will die of starvation because we were lazy and therefore not generous. So, just like all paramitas go together, trekchö and tögal go together.

What is trekchö and tögal? Put simply, trekchö is like the philosophy, the view, and tögal is like the actual meditation. This isn't a 100% adequate definition, but it may become clear when we understand that trekchö is being assertive and decisive. We have managed to stay in samsara because we are not decisive and not fully dedicated. Lord Maitreya will forgive me for saying that even now we are somewhat wishy-washy and have been very wishy-washy for countless lifetimes. That's why we haven't really progressed and are selective. For example, we are selective about the Dharma that our Gurus teach us by keeping what we like in mind and by pretending not to have heard things that sound difficult. This is how we understand, so our understanding is incomplete. It's a must to uphold every single aspect of the Dharma, i.e., we have to fully have compassion, devotion, the Lineage, and renunciation if we want to mature and progress. Putting only ½ of the Dharma that we learned into practice means we will only achieve ½, whereas putting the entire teachings into practice means we will achieve the results fully.

Trekchö means dealing with all karma, all perceptions, and all defilements we have had for countless lifetimes. Relatively speaking, they are deeply ingrained in us. We have to see the fallacy of all these habits and conditions. There are two fallacies or self-deceptions. The first is overcome by seeing that all our habits and perceptions are nothing but an illusion. The second is overcome by not dividing our essence into the Dharmakaya, the Sambhogakaya, and the Nirmanakaya. When we have managed to be totally convinced, not just intellectually but fully convinced on the deepest level, that we have been subject to these two self-deceptive fallacies, then we will have perfected trekchö, i.e., we will have cut through the stream of delusions of the three times.

Tögal is practiced to fully realize the non-duality of the Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya, and Nirmanakaya. While we still perceive our body, speech, and mind dualistically, we slowly become free of dividedness by progressing further and further, until we reach the level at which the ultimate truth is realized and seen as all-pervasive. Having realized that the ultimate truth is all-pervasive, we go beyond perceiving all-pervasion and the absence of all-pervasion by realizing that there is no one who is pervaded and nothing that is pervaded, but that everything is always and already what it is. Let me give an example: If we place a million pots of water in the sun, then the sun will reflect on the water in each pot. We will perceive that there are one million suns, while there is actually only one sun. It shines so brightly that we would damage our eyes if we looked at it directly. The sun doesn't diminish by reflecting one million times on the water that is in each pot. The sun is there and isn't divided into a million suns, because the sun is non-dualistic. Nothing happens to the sun as it shines in the sky and reflects on the water in the million pots. Like this, realization of tögal is primordial, ineffable, incorruptible. Final realization of tögal doesn't mean that there is no longer a subject and objects, rather, it means actually becoming the ultimate truth.



Upholding the Lineage of Buddha Shakyamuni

I want to say that the Lineage of Buddha Shakyamuni has to flourish until the Lineage of Lord Maitreya begins, and, according to the basic calculation, this will happen in approximately two millions years from now.

Even though we have a good intention, if we aren't really sincere, then anything we do can cause the Lineage of Buddha Shakyamuni to come to an end thousands or maybe hundreds of thousands of years earlier than it is said that it can last. When the samaya is broken, the Lineage is disrupted and ends. When there is no more Lineage, then there will be no Buddhadharmā. Who wants to be responsible for that? I don't. Therefore, some people say that I'm hard-headed, old-fashioned, orthodox, all kinds of things, which is fine with me. I don't think that I have that much ego, but I have lots of ego to say, "I'm not better than Shri Tilopa. I'm not better than Shri Naropa. I'm not better than Marpa Lotsawa, or Jetsün Milarepa, or Guru Rinpoche, or the 1st Gyalwa Karmapa, or the 9th Gyalwa Karmapa, or the

VIIIth Tai Situ, or Jamgon Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye.” I don’t have the ego to say that I am better. And I don’t have the ego to say, “They have done something wrong and I’m going to fix it. I’ll make it right.” It’s very important for us to uphold the Lineage “just as it is.”

The most important practice for disciples of the Dharma is Ngöndro, the preliminary practice that consists of four foundation practices, not just one or two parts. They were started by Shri Tilopa, Shri Naropa, Marpa Lotsawa, and Jetsün Milarepa and were written down by so many great masters, such as the IXth Gyalwa Karmapa and Jamgon Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye the Great in *The Torch of Certainty*. The four foundations are: making 110.000 prostrations, repeating 110.000 Vajrasattva mantras while meditating the instructions, arranging 110.000 mandalas, and reciting *The Guru-Yoga Prayer* 110.000 times. I can’t tell anyone that they have to do all four practices, but the Ngöndro is like that. I stayed in Ladakh when I was about 22 or 23. There was a Drikung Kagyü master who refused giving teachings to devotees who hadn’t completed the entire Ngöndro 13 times. Marpa made Milarepa build four houses before he imparted transmissions to him. Why? It was and is for the disciples’ benefit. For example, if somebody wants to erect a 100-storey building and, to save money, asks the architect to make plans of a foundation for only 5 floors, the building will collapse when 10 are completed. That’s what happens.

Worldwide, more and more people are becoming Buddhists, which I find very inspiring. But this doesn’t mean that we should become missionaries. I won’t, because I don’t believe in behaving like that. We can preserve the teachings, which cannot be done by going around as a missionary and trying to convert people. If we preserve the pure Dharma, it will propagate by itself. People will see the Dharma, appreciate what they can appreciate, and will benefit. Therefore, it’s very important not to think about people’s faults but to recognize our own faults and to appreciate and acknowledge other people’s qualities and our own qualities, too. But we shouldn’t be euphoric about our qualities, which will turn into weaknesses if we are. So, it’s very important to have the sacred outlook. The teachings and practices have the same purpose as they did for the Buddha, for Guru Rinpoche, for Shri Tilopa and Shri Naropa, for Marpa Lotsawa, and for Jetsün Milarepa. That very purpose should be our purpose.

Some people refer to those days as “the old days.” They say that we are now living in modern times and that we have to go about it differently. I totally disagree. What’s the difference between knocking our head against a stone that a Neanderthal used and a “modern” stone? Our head will bleed and the blood will be red. What has actually changed? People are trying to play games with each other – that has changed. I’m not very good at that, so people say I am hard-headed and old-fashioned. I appreciate if what I say knocks students’ heads. I think they are here to receive *The Rinchen Terdzö* transmissions and teachings because they trust that I am their Guru and they are my disciples. Not being omniscient, I don’t know what they are thinking, but that’s what I think. It’s my duty to point out their weaknesses when I see and notice them. It’s not my duty to tell students to go on a vacation to Hawaii where the weather is warm and the beaches are nice or to do things that make them happy. My duty is to transmit the Dharma that I received from my Guru. Furthermore, I don’t think students are here because they think that I’m powerful, or rich, or am in a high position. I have a hollow and empty bamboo name that doesn’t mean anything, so I don’t think students came here for any of those reasons. Rather, I think that they came here to receive the pure Dharma from the unbroken Lineage. That’s why it’s my duty to sincerely tell everybody what I think, without adding or subtracting anything, without being afraid of pointing out their weaknesses to them. I want students to see their own faults so that they can fix them. I needn’t speak about their qualities. Everybody knows, better than anyone else, which qualities they have because that is what we magnify.

Let me say that in the old days there were many great masters of the Kadampa Tradition who practiced the Dharma in their everyday lives. They had white and black pebbles and maybe two bags or two containers. When they had a positive thought or did something good, they put a white pebble into the bag reserved for the white pebbles, and when they thought or did anything bad, they put a black pebble into the bag meant for the black pebbles. This way they could see how many negative thoughts they had or bad things they had done at the end of the day so that they could work at becoming better. I'm not suggesting that everyone should do this, but we should really appreciate and honestly acknowledge when we see that somebody did something good or bad and when we did something good or bad. We shouldn't exhibit or write a book about this, but we should know that being truthful enables us to advance in our Dharma practice and thus to mature. If we are honest by accepting our own weaknesses and strengths as well as those of others, we can practice according to the Lineage. Then everything will be positive and good and the Dharma will really flourish.

It's very special when people who don't belong to the Lineage simply say the word "Buddha," because they make a connection that way. Yet, there is the risk that these people might misuse Buddhism for deceptive purposes. Buddhism is for all sentient beings to reach Buddhahood. There's no other purpose. Becoming free of suffering while practicing the different stages of the path to accomplish realization takes place between now and then. Buddhism is very powerful, abundant, and can be misused, so if there is no Lineage, then the Buddhadharma might be shortened by hundreds of thousands, maybe even millions of years. It needn't take a long time for the Lineage to disappear; it can happen within one generation. So, I sincerely pray to the Buddha that what I have said here reaches you and that you feel hit and will wake up and mature. If students don't wish to transform the faults I addressed in these teachings, I pray that they are very happy and wish them all the best.

Sectarianism

People talk about non-sectarianism as being something different, like a new Lineage. We all should be non-sectarian. You know, nobody should be sectarian. Do you understand? Being non-sectarian means practicing whatever we are practicing, following whatever Lineage we are following and doing so properly. Being non-sectarian means upholding the own Lineage and respecting all other Lineages. For example, many instructions and empowerments in *The Rinchen Terdzö* are from the Nyingma Lineage, therefore we should also do our best for that Lineage. It is what Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye did, but we should engage in the practices that were given to us by our Lineage masters.

Lhaje Gampopa received teachings from great Kadampa masters, who later became the Gelug Tradition. After having received the Kadampa teachings and after having practiced them, Lhaje Gampopa received the teachings of the Marpa Kagyü. He united the teachings of the Kadampa and Marpa Kagyü, merging two rivers into one stream, and thus he established the Mahamudra Lineage as we know it today. That is Rime, *ris-med*, 'free of arbitrary judgments, unbiased, having respect for all traditions.'

We dedicate our body, speech, and mind to our Lineage by practicing the Dharma that we have learned for the benefit of all sentient beings. Our practice is the essence of the Dharma that we came across throughout very many lifetimes. Our practice is a karmic connection that we uphold, while we cherish and respect everyone else's tradition. This is very important, otherwise we become sectarian.

I don't think many people understand what it means to be non-sectarian. Some people tell me, "I'm not sectarian." When they say this, they are really saying that they are sectarian. Saying, "I'm not sectarian" is actually saying, "I am sectarian." It's not acceptable for anybody to be sectarian in any form or way. Kagyüpas will not accept sectarianism. Nyingmapas will not accept sectarianism. Gelugpas will not accept sectarianism. Sakyapas will not accept sectarianism. Followers of the eight major Vajrayana Buddhist Lineages, the Theravada Tradition, as well as the Mahayana Tradition, actually nobody, should accept sectarianism.

How do we recognize somebody who is sectarian? People who are sectarian think, "My Dharma is good, everybody else's is bad." That's being sectarian. Or they think, "I will do everything in my power to make everybody become my follower." That's being sectarian, and it's not acceptable.

Breaking Samaya

Now I will speak about breaking samaya, *dam-tshig* in Tibetan, 'the sacred oath or commitment of a Vajrayana practitioner.'

Why does somebody break the samaya, their word? There are several reasons for breaking it. One general reason is that such a person lacks merit and lacks wisdom. It's very simple. For example, our immune system isn't strong when we are physically weak. If we are together with someone who has a cough or another contagious sickness, we will catch it right away. We won't become infected if we have a strong immune system, though. It's like that.

Another reason somebody breaks the samaya, which is more serious, is that he has a wrong aspiration. Vajrayana practitioners aspire to attain Buddhahood to be able to reliably help all sentient beings reach the same goal and are therefore of service to them. Having a wrong view opposes this aspiration. What is the opposite of the noble aspiration of a Bodhisattva? Somebody who has the wrong view wants to become a Buddha so that he is glorified. He wants others to bow to him, wants to be greater than everybody else, wants everybody to listen to him, wants everybody to respect him. So, having a lowly aspiration like that is a reason why people break their samaya.

What is the result of having forsaken samaya? It is called *sdig* in Tibetan. *sDig* is like lots of pollution in a city. Our eyes, ears, nose, clothes, everything will be affected when we are in a polluted city. Although we can't see it clearly, we will be affected by *sdig* in that we can't see, hear, talk, or think clearly. *sDig* has to do with evil, and the vilest of all evils is breaking samaya. Of course, there are other evils, too, but that is what I am speaking about here.

What happens when somebody has broken his samaya? The result is *sdig* and means that he doesn't see his own faults but only sees his own sort of greatness, more and more. Furthermore, he only sees faults in other people and can't see their goodness. It makes him happy to see or learn about other people's faults and shortcomings and to talk about them; and it makes him happy to only think about his own greatness, to boast and talk about himself. Also, he is unhappy when he hears or learns that somebody is doing well and that they look good; he even doubts that it's true. If he is told that somebody isn't doing well and doesn't look all too good, he immediately believes what he hears and doesn't have slightest doubts. So, these are signs of *sdig*.

Are there any other results of having broken samaya? The least horrific result will be that this person will be born in one of the hells. Being born in a hell means this person suffers very

much, but he can't hurt anybody there. The second worst and the most serious result will be that he will be born as a very powerful human being who only has evil intentions in mind and has the ability to carry them out. He will hurt very many people. He will also instigate many clashes, battles, and wars because people listen to him. In contrast, nobody will listen to somebody who has bad intentions if he isn't powerful; or somebody who wants to do something unlawful will be locked up before he pulls his plans through. But somebody with broken samaya will succeed in his wickedness. Since somebody who broke samaya will continue being as evil as he is, it's a very serious matter, because he will be born as Rudra, which can be translated as 'devil.' When Rudra stands up, his head reaches to the top of Mt. Meru, his feet reach down to the golden ground under the ocean, and he can hold the sun and moon in his two hands. He can boil all oceans and poison them. The fumes of his breath reach all galaxies in outer space. That's how powerful he is. Only the Buddha in the manifestation of Vajravahni or Hayagriva can tame this most evil of all evil devils. His mind has to be transformed; his body has to be transformed; his power has to be transformed. We call this most evil of all evil devils "Madman Rudra." So, in this way, worse than being born in the most horrendous hell of all hells is being born as Rudra, because he can and will create an enormous amount of suffering for so very many sentient beings.

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Mahamudra

Mahamudra, *phyag-rgya-chen-po*, is the sacred Lineage of instructions that disciples practice in order to attain complete openness. Nothing is concealed or hidden and therefore Mahamudra pertains to everything. The main themes of Mahamudra are view, meditation, and conduct.

The Mahamudra view is most important because it is the ground. Understanding the view means understanding the ground. The most important thing to know is that everything is present at all times and nothing is missing. There is nothing to take away and there is nothing to add. Recognizing *de-kho-na-nyid*, 'as it is,' means recognizing that everything is always and already present. We haven't acquired anything when we become a Buddha, rather, at that time we have realized what always has been there. And what always has been there is the ground, which is known by realizing the ultimate view.

Ground Mahamudra means having the view that ultimately there is no duality; it means knowing that nothing is divided. We come to realize that everything is non-differentiate by practicing the path. Since all things are ever perfect and pure, we come to realize that nothing is sacred and there is nothing that is not sacred.

Not having realized the ultimate view, i.e., not having become free of duality, we need to do what is beneficial and good and refrain from doing what is harmful and bad. That is why we practice the path of Mahamudra, until we fully realize the view. Fruition Mahamudra is realization of the view and is won by practicing the path of Mahamudra.

Ultimate Bodhicitta

In the section of *The Rinchen Terdzö* that we are looking at here, it is said that relatively all sentient beings are overwhelmed by illusion, but ultimately everything is Dharmadhatu, *chöskyi-dbyings*, literally meaning 'the essence of phenomena.' It is also interpreted as meaning 'the expanse of phenomena,' which refers to the limitlessness of phenomena, the endless

expanse of all things. Since everything is Dharmadhatu, then primordial, pristine wisdom means having been 'liberated by itself in the limitless expanse of being,' i.e., nobody is liberated from anything. Thus, ultimate Bodhicitta means just leaving the mind as *de-kho-nanyid*, 'as it is.'

Clinging to duality and having attachment, we will have compassion for victims and be angry at the perpetrator. We will have compassion for the poor but dislike the rich. We will have compassion for the weak but resent powerful people. We will have compassion for the uneducated but won't have compassion for persons who enjoyed an education. In this way, our compassion is partial, which isn't what having ultimate Bodhicitta means. Ultimate Bodhicitta means not being prejudiced and not being partial. We have to have limitless compassion, i.e., we must have compassion for perpetrators, the wealthy, the powerful, the educated, too, because they will become victims; they will become poor, weak, uneducated, and so forth. We have seen this happen many times in our life. These persons and beings create the causes and conditions for their own suffering and misery, and so we have compassion for them.

Bodhicitta, *byang-chub-kyi-sems* ('awakened mind of loving kindness and compassion'), is very precious and doesn't mean we pity and look down on those who are less fortunate than we are. Of course, we should do whatever we can to help those persons or beings we pity. In Vajrayana, having compassion is much deeper than that. It means knowing that ultimately everybody is sacred and pure.

Being impartial doesn't mean we don't hear sounds, don't see things, don't talk, and don't do anything. Hearing, seeing, talking, and doing things isn't the problem, rather, clinging to things is the problem. Shri Tilopa told his heart-disciple Naropa: "Child, it is not by appearances that you are fettered but by clinging." So, we try not to be attached and not to cling to things and we try not to reject anything. Since everything is a manifestation of the five wisdoms, how can we cling to or reject anything? If we do, they become the five main defilements, the five poisons. We have to give up clinging and rejecting things and just be in the primordial, non-dualistic state of freedom and openness. But how can we do this? By having unconditional and limitless compassion, devotion, determination, and dedication for enlightenment of all sentient beings. If we have these qualities of Bodhicitta, then, just like the flames and smoke of a fire naturally rise - free of intention -, we will have pure compassion, pure devotion, and complete dedication. Then everything will be fine and we will progress naturally.

Being humans, we want to help all other human beings and animals, too. We don't want to help them when we see that they are in need because we are self-centered, rather, out of respect and compassion. We know that they all have Buddha nature. This doesn't mean they have to become Buddhists. Those are two different things. This reminds me of what I experienced with my western disciples.

A long time ago, students told me that they were very sceptical of organized religion. I didn't understand them at that time and responded, "If you don't like organized religion, do you like disorganized religion?" I appreciate when things aren't messy but organized because it makes things easy. Years later I understood that organized religion is actually dogmatic, is only an idea that lacks lineage, blessings, compassion, devotion, and dedication. Lacking these qualities means that it is nothing. So, if this happens to Buddhism, I wouldn't want to be a Buddhist anymore. In that case, Dharma would become like a teashop, a talk show, a profession, a way of making a living. People would take up the profession of being Dharma

teachers or meditation instructors, but that isn't what the Buddhadharma is about. Now I understand what my students meant and totally agree with their scepticism about organized religion.

I also remember having said to my students that eyes cannot lie. Looking into the eyes of somebody who tries to imitate being sincere, dedicated, or devoted, it is possible to see whether he or she has compassion, devotion, the wish to attain Buddhahood, faith, and so forth. This person may say this with his or her mouth, but it's not in the eyes. Sometimes we can see people's character in their eyes. Therefore, the four contemplations that turn the mind to the Dharma are very important. The four contemplations are: contemplating the precious human life, contemplating impermanence and death, contemplating karma, and contemplating the defects of samsara. If we contemplate them correctly, then we can appreciate the Vajrayana teachings that everything is a manifestation of Buddha.

There are religions that state that somebody created everything. Vajrayana teaches that everyone creates their own manifestations and everyone's essence is Dharmakaya. It follows that everything arises out of the Dharmakaya. I have no problems with understanding this. I know that if I cling to my mind, then I will be dragged into samsara, just like a fly is dragged into a web by a spider. I know that realizing this is the cause and condition for my liberation. A fire needs a big field, so the big illusion is the big field for our liberation.

Mind is Space

Our mind is space, precious space. I'm not saying it is like space, rather, it is space. It becomes clear why we say this if we ask, "Where does our mind go after we have died? What does our mind merge with when we die?" The coarse substances of our body dissolve into earth when we die. The liquids in our body merge into water. The heat of our body merges into fire and seconds afterwards our body becomes cold. Our respiration goes into air. And where does our mind go? With what will our mind merge when we die? Our mind will merge with space. If we don't understand this, we might think that our mind will become nothing. But space isn't nothing; it is everything. Nothing could or would be present if there were no space. In this way, Jamgon Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye tells us:

"Space is mind.
Mind is space.
There is no mind other than space.
There is no space other than mind."

When we understand this, then we see ignorance manifesting in millions of ways in every moment - the ignorance of not knowing not-knowing itself. What does not-knowing itself mean? We don't know. Let me explain it more easily:

Mind is Dharmakaya.
Speech is Sambhogakaya.
Body is Nirmanakaya.

Not knowing this, we call our mind "I." We call our speech "My language and my expression." And we call our body "My body, my dear and precious body."

All suffering that we cause ourselves and others arises from ignorance as to our essence and true nature. Everything manifests in that way. We remain unable to see any manifestation for its true worth as long as we don't realize our essence and the essence of everything.

We saw that the essence of everything is the same as the essence of everyone's mind. We saw that the essence of our mind as well as that of everyone else is the Dharmakaya, that the essence of everything we and others speak and say is the Sambhogakaya, and that the essence of our body and that of all living beings is the Nirmanakaya. When we have fully realized this and are certain of it in our heart, then we will have realized *kregs-chöd*, 'cutting through.' We do everything we can to avoid anything that nourishes our defilements and do everything we can so that our three kayas manifest. When they manifest openly, non-dualistically, purely, we will have accomplished *thöd-rgal*, 'direct crossing.'

You know that I am a Mahamudra practitioner and might think it is strange that I am using Dzogchen terminology. But the meaning is the same. In Mahamudra, we speak of *rtse-gcig* ('one-pointed'), *sprös-bräl* ('free of mental fabrications'), *ro-gcig* ('one taste'), and *gom-med* ('non-meditation'). Non-meditation means we have achieved the purpose of practice, so we don't need to practice anymore because we have become. In this way, putting on our clothes is offering to the Nirmanakaya Buddha. Putting on ornaments is offering to the Sambhogakaya Buddha and Nirmanakaya Buddha. Being at peace and in harmony is offering to the Dharmakaya Buddha. When we have realized this, we dare not do anything wrong; in fact, we won't do anything wrong and the thought won't even occur to us. When we really know and perceive this, then every sentient being is Buddha for us and our heart is a Buddha, too. Then we will never be disrespectful towards ourselves by being self-deceptive. This is called "vajra pride," which has nothing to do with ego pride.

But Vajrayana is very dangerous for people who aren't ready. If they don't listen carefully, then they won't hear what I am saying but will only hear what they want to hear. Then they might think, "My body is Nirmanakaya. My mind is Dharmakaya. My activity is Sambhogakaya," and things like that. They will do whatever they want in the name of the Dharma, creating the biggest bad karma that they ever created. In that way, they are breaking all three commitments, the vinaya vows, the Bodhisattva vows, and samaya. By acting like that, they break the vinaya vows because they are charlatans. They break the Bodhisattva vows because they cheat sentient beings. The Bodhisattva's main vow is not to abandon any sentient being, but abandon them from what? From enlightenment. If people tell a spiritual lie, then they have abandoned sentient beings, because they cheat and lead them away from enlightenment. They break the tantric vow, because Tantra is for truth, thus they break the samaya of the ultimate truth. We call it "speaking the ultimate lie." It is the dangerous part.

When we understand what it means to keep the vows and the samaya - without losing them for anything in the world, not even for the sake of our life -, we hold them in our heart for the benefit of all sentient beings. We don't show off and boast, but keep the vows and samaya like a treasure in our heart. We do whatever we can in the world, but we keep the vows in our heart and thus stay connected with the pure Lineage of these wonderful and most meaningful teachings.

Universal Space in the Relative World of Existence

Jamgon Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye compiled many sacred instructions into *The Rinchen Terdzö*. All instructions deal with the ultimate truth as well as the relative truth.

Ultimately, the Buddha, the deities, Guru Rinpoche, all saints and sages are present in space, but we are where we are, “down here.” And all beings living in the lower realms are “down there.” What are we doing? We are praying for all sentient beings, and that’s the truth of the relative world. Ultimately, there’s no difference between the Buddha and every living being, but relatively there is. Since we haven’t realized the ultimate truth, we live in the relative world of ultimate space.

We looked at the verse:

“Space is mind.
Mind is space.
There is no mind other than space.
There is no space other than mind.”

This verse doesn’t refer to space on a relative level, but it speaks about the ultimate reality of space, which is Dharmadhatu (*chös-kyi-dbyings*, ‘the essence of phenomena, the vast expanse of phenomena’). That is what ultimate space is.

If we have engaged in bad deeds and accumulated bad karma, as a result we will be born in another universe, in another realm of existence that might be ten billion light years away. The moment we die here, we will be born there. Since everyone’s mind is all-pervading, after death it won’t take ten million light years for our mind to go from here to there. Right now we live in a relative world that we created and continue creating because we haven’t realized the ultimate truth. So we practice and try to realize the ultimate truth.

How does the Buddha’s activity manifest? In the same way. But for us, if three people ask us a question at the same time while in the same place, we become angry because we can’t handle three things at the same time. We will tell two of them, “Sit down and wait.” We will answer their questions later, one at a time; this is our limitation. But the Buddha’s activity isn’t limited. The Buddha’s blessings manifest openly and freely to everyone living in the billions of universes who pray to him at the same time – because the mind is space.

Having pure faith and sincere devotion for the Buddha and having genuine Bodhicitta are like sleeping on the lap of Guru Rinpoche. Wherever we are and at all times, we feel like a baby on his lap. For a Tibetan, it’s inappropriate to say “sleeping on his lap,” because it is being very disrespectful towards Guru Rinpoche to think that one climbs on his lap and sleeps there. In the Tibetan and Indian culture, devotees touch the feet of holy individuals or images of saints and sages with their forehead, so we touch the feet of Buddha Shakyamuni and Guru Rinpoche in that way at all times.

The Buddha’s loving kindness, wisdom, and compassion are all-encompassing, all-embracing, all-pervading, therefore nothing is left out or dismissed. No matter which practice we are doing, we should know that the Buddha, the Bodhisattvas, and all deities are always and already within and outside of us. We don’t realize this because we are ignorantly dualistic. Let me give an example: The tips of my middle finger don’t touch the tips of my second and fourth fingers. Why? Because they are already touching each other. There’s no difference between the tips of these fingers, except for the fact that we divide.

In the same way, our mind is recognizing our mind in every moment of time, but we don’t realize this and therefore practice so that we do. It will take a long time because of the fact that we have been and continue misunderstanding and misinterpreting what already is. Due to

our ignorance of not recognizing ourselves, we call what we think we are “I.” We will never be able to pinpoint another “I.” No matter how long, or how intensively, or how far we search, we will see everyone who refers to his or her “I” as “other.” Why? Because there is only one “I” in the entire universe. But, if we try to find this “I,” we will never find it because it isn’t founded. Thinking it is founded and truly exists is called “ignorance, illusion.”

It’s impossible to throw out our ignorance or have it amputated by a surgeon. We have to transform it into realization. How do we do this? By relinquishing our clinging to duality, by realizing selflessness, by developing more and more devotion and compassion for all sentient beings. Cultivating these qualities will help us overcome our basic defilements that father and mother our suffering and discontent.

By transforming the “I” that we cling to so strongly into selflessness, devotion, and compassion, our innate, primordial nature unfolds and will slowly manifest openly and freely for the benefit of all living beings. Then we will have realized the indivisibility of emptiness and manifestation - the ultimate truth. Thank you very much.

Dedication Prayers

Through this goodness may omniscience be attained
And thereby may every enemy (mental defilement) be overcome.
May beings be liberated from the ocean of samsara
That is troubled by waves of birth, old age, sickness, and death.

By this virtue may I quickly attain the state of Guru Buddha and then
Lead every being without exception to that very state!
May precious and supreme Bodhicitta that has not been generated now be so,
And may precious Bodhicitta that has already been never decline, but continuously increase!

May the Glorious Lamas and Khenpos live long.
May peace and happiness fully arise for beings as countless in number as space is vast in extent.
Having accumulated merit and purified negativities,
May all living beings without exception swiftly establish the levels and grounds of Buddhahood.

Long Life Prayer for H.E. the XIIth Khentin Tai Situpa, Pema Dönyö Nyingche, composed by H.H. the XVIIth Gyalwa Karmapa

The Regent of the Future Buddha, the Undefeatable,
The Regent of the Lotus, the protector of all beings and the teachings,
Tai Situ Pema Dönyö,
May your life be long and your activities be extensive.

Long Life Prayer for H.H. the XVIIth Gyalwa Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje, composed by H.E. the XIIth Goshir Gyaltshab Rinpoche, Dragpa Tenpe Yaphal

Naturally arising Dharmakaya, unchanging and ever-present,
Karmapa, you appear as the form kayas’ magical illusions.
May your three secret vajras remain stable in the realms
And your infinite, spontaneous activity blaze in glory.



Photo of H.E. Tai Situ Rinpoche in 2008 provided by Mahamudra.org in Malaysia. The original transcript of His Eminence Tai Situ Rinpoche's teachings was transcribed at Palpung Sherab Ling and sent to the editor of this article in 2007 by Zhyisil Chökyi Ghatsäl Charitable Trust, Auckland, New Zealand, with the request to edit the books entitled "*Nectar of Dharma*" by Khentin Tai Situpa. This article contains the teachings that were presented on October 26, 30, 31, November 7, 8, 11-14, 2006. They were edited and arranged for the Dharma Download Project of Khenpo Karma Namgyal at Karma Lekshey Ling Monastery in Nepal and for the website of Karma Sherab Ling in Münster by Gaby Hollmann, responsible for all mistakes. Photo of Jobo Buddha in the Jokhang taken in 1986 by Gaby Hollmann. Photo of beautiful rose taken and kindly offered by Josef Kerklau of Münster. All persons and organizations mentioned here have copyright for their contribution. This article is made available for personal use only and may not be reproduced in any form nor be published. Munich, 2009.