



Khenpo Sherab Gyaltzen

Instructions on “*An Elucidation of the Treatise, ‘Calling the Lama from Afar’*” composed by Jamgon Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye the Great

Presented at Karma Chang Chub Choephel Ling, Heidelberg, in December 2013.

This article of teachings that Khenpo Sherab Gyaltzen generously imparted is dedicated in memory of His Eminence the Third Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche, Karma Lodrö Chökyi Senge (1954-1992), to the long life of His Eminence Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche, Lodrö Chökyi Nyima, of His Holiness the 17th Gyalwa Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje, of all prestigious Khenpos and Lamas of the Karma Kagyü Lineage, and to the preservation of the pure Lineage of Jamgon Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye.

Venerable Khenpo Sherab Gyaltzen Negi graduated from Nalanda Institute at Rumtek Monastery in 1991 and was awarded the title of Khenpo in recognition of his scholarship. He taught at the Nalanda Institute one and a half years and joined Kagyu Thekchen Ling in Lava, Kalimpong in 1992 to serve the various projects and activities of His Eminence Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche. He also completed the traditional three-year Shangpa Kagyu retreat at Mirik Monastery under the guidance of Very Venerable Bokar Rinpoche and Khenpo Lodro Donyod Rinpoche. Today, he is mainly involved with work for the Rigpe Dorje Publications.

One

Before beginning with the teachings, I want to greet everyone I know as well as those persons I am meeting for the first time. We will be looking at the Guru yoga practice entitled “Calling the Lama from Afar.” The Heidelberg center is an auspicious location to do this. I am very happy about this opportunity. So that we practice with mindfulness and awareness and don’t give in to distractions, we give rise to the mind of awakening before engaging in any Dharma

activity. According to the recommendations of former great Lamas, at the end of every practice we dedicate the merit.

Since our mind depends upon our body, we need to have a healthy body. What are the conditions for having a healthy body? Good nutrition. Then we will be healthy. As a result, our mind will have a good basis and we will be able to practice. Our meals should consist of three parts, an appetizer, a main dish, and dessert. In that way, whether we meditate a Yidam, practice Mahamudra, or are practicing Bodhicitta, this principle applies to every Dharma practice. First we give rise to the mind of awakening, then we attentively meditate the main section of the practice, and finally we dedicate the merit. The Buddha taught that if these parts of the practice are included in any practice that we do, then every section of our practice will be virtuous and meritorious. Therefore, before beginning our discussion of the spiritual song, “Calling to the Lama from Afar,” we give rise to the correct motivation. Our motivation is to receive these teachings, to study and contemplate them, and to realize the meaning so that we attain the ability to free all living beings from the ocean of samsara and to help everyone attain the spiritual level of Vajradhara.

To deepen our devotion, we will be discussing the prayer “Calling the Lama from Afar” that was composed by Jamgon Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye. We need to be joyous about studying this sacred text, otherwise we will see no reason to learn about it. How can we become happy about this opportunity? By looking at the life of Jamgon Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye. By learning about his great qualities and gaining trust in him, we become enthused. It is like learning about a new handy that we then wish to purchase. So, let us look at Jamgon Kongtrul Lodrö’s life.

There are a great variety of biographies of Jamgon Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye. There are outer biographies as well as inner, secret, and hidden hagiographies. His life is described as “the four greatnesses.” The first greatness concerns his previous lives, prior to his birth in 1813. There are many accounts of his earlier incarnations. It is recorded that he was born in India as well as that he was born in Tibet, that he was a great translator, that he was a treasure revealer, that he was a highly realized master, that he always practiced the Buddha’s teachings, and that he helped many sentient beings. At the time of Shakyamuni Buddha, Lodrö Thaye was Ananda. Five hundred years later he was Aryadeva, who was a student of Nagarjuna. During the time of the Tibetan king Songtsen Gampo, he was Thönmi Sambota who invented the Tibetan written script. During the time of Padmasambhava, he was the great translator Vairocana. He taught Buddhism during all these lives as a great Bodhisattva and translator. His previous lives are listed in the prayer entitled “The Lives of Lodrö Thaye” as well as in the book, “The Past Incarnations of H.E. Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche” (published by the Jamgon Kongtrul Labrang, Pullahari Monastery, Nepal, 2004).

Jamgon Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye was born and lived in Tibet. He had mastered reading and writing by the time he was five years old and saw Manjushri face-to-face when he was seven years old. He studied the scriptures, learned from many Lamas, and so forth. Since he studied with Lamas from various traditions and revered them, he was non-sectarian. He contemplated all the teachings he had received by having heard them; he meditated them and perfectly realized the pure view.

Who were the many Lamas that Jamgon Kongtrul met? There are the eight practice lineages or traditions of Tibet. He received all teachings of these lineages, reflected the meaning, and compiled and authored everything he had received into 95 volumes of scriptures. They are

referred to as “The Five Great Treasures, *mDzöd chen lnga*.” In the chronological order in which he composed them, they are:

- “Shecha Dzö, The Encompassment of All Knowledge“ (an extensive compendium that succinctly elucidates the logical progression through the study and practices of the paths taught in Sutra and Tantra and the final fruition);
- “The Kagyü Ngagdzö, The Treasury of Mantra of the Kagyü School” (a compendium of practices, ancient and new Tantras, accompanied by the completion stage of the Tantra, the rites of empowerment, and various authorizations);
- “Dam Ngagdzö, The Treasury of Precious Key Instructions” (the collected instructions of the Eight Great Lineages practiced in Tibet. These teachings reveal the essence of Jamgon Kongtrul’s open-mindedness since they are a collection of instructions gathered impartially from other sources rather than from his own summary of them);
- “Rinchen Terdzö, The Precious Treasure Teachings” (a collection of the Termas that Jamgon Kongtrul found, gathered, compiled, and arranged for initiations with the help of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo and Chogyur Lingpa); and
- “Gyachen Kadzö, The Treasury of Vast Teachings“ (a collection of writings, such as praises and advice, as well as compositions on medicine, science, and so on).

Looking at this enormous amount of writings, it seems as though Jamgon Kongtrul had only studied the Dharma all his life long and then composed these volumes of texts. If we think of the two kinds of benefit, for oneself and for others, it is evident that he benefitted others in elaborate and profound ways. When we look at the times, most disciples studied with Jamgon Lodrö Thaye. He responded to his many students’ requests by granting them transmissions, empowerments, pith instructions, and mind instructions from the eight lineages of Buddhism. He did not belong to a specific lineage, though. It seems as if he only gave teachings and empowerments during his life.

In “The Lankavatasutra” it is recorded that the Buddha had predicted Jamgon Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye, that he would appear in Tibet, offer the teachings, and benefit many disciples. In a hidden text, Guru Rinpoche also prophesied that Yungdrung, which was Jamgon Kongtrul’s family name, would appear in Tibet and that he would benefit the teachings and living beings immensely. This is the fourth greatness, the greatness of prophecy. The first greatness is his line of incarnations, the second greatness is benefitting the self, and the third greatness is benefitting others.

Due to the short time available to us during this seminar, my introduction to the life of Lodrö Thaye is very short. There are many detailed and lengthy biographies and hagiographies that have been translated into English and that are available to interested students.

An author of sacred texts needs to have three qualities. The best quality is having realized the true nature of phenomena. The middling quality is having encountered face-to-face ones meditation deity. Anybody who writes a text needs to at least have the lesser quality, which is being expert in the five sciences (medicine, linguistics, etc.). Jamgon Rinpoche possessed all three qualities. He had realized the true nature of phenomena and had encountered many meditation deities. Bodhisattva Manjushri appeared to him when he was seven years old. He saw the meditation deity the moment he meditated upon a Yidam, e.g., Chakrasamvara. Actually, he had written about ten fields of knowledge and therefore we can appreciate that anything he did was magnificent and immaculate. Anybody who writes a scientific text needs to be an expert in that specific field. He was more than an expert in every field of knowledge.

The authentic teachings of the Buddha are divided into three vehicles, Hinayana, Mahayana, and Vajrayana. How do we enter the Hinayana? By seeking refuge. The basis or ground of refuge is renunciation. We enter Mahayana by giving rise to Bodhicitta. The root of Bodhicitta is loving kindness and compassion. The ground that we need in order to enter the vehicle of Vajrayana is the empowerment. The prerequisite for receiving the empowerment is having devotion. “Calling the Lama from Afar” is a Vajrayana text that encompasses the view of Mahamudra.

What do all of us wish to avoid and be free from? Suffering and pain. What causes suffering and pain? Our karma that we create due to our conflicting emotions or mind poisons. Why do we have conflicting emotions? Because we fail to realize and therefore are ignorant of the primordially pure and true nature of our mind. Negative emotions arise due to ignorance, and negative emotions cause us to create karma that brings on suffering and pain. What do we need to overcome in order to become free from suffering? Ignorance, and it is necessary to find means to overcome and dispel ignorance. We can do this by developing and gaining certainty of the Mahamudra view.

We need our Lama’s blessing in order to give rise to and develop the view of Mahamudra. It is only possible to receive his blessing by having faith and devotion in him. How do we engender faith and devotion in our Lama? By calling to him. The view of Mahamudra blossoms in our mind when he bestows his blessing. That is the meaning of the sacred text, “Calling the Lama from Afar,” and that is why we recite it.

Mahamudra is based on Mahayana. To practice Mahayana correctly, it is necessary to give rise to love and compassion and the mind of awakening. To practice Hinayana correctly, we need to develop renunciation of samsara. Both aspects of practice, which can be compared to the basement or ground floor of a multi-storied house, are prerequisites for perfecting Mahamudra. In the same way, the Ngöndro preliminary practices, which are preparations for the main practices, are just as important. Since participants of this course know this and have done these practices, during the short time available to us this weekend, we will speak a little bit about the main sections of “Calling the Lama from Afar” that is related to Mahamudra and that is a profound and vast Guru yoga practice. Participants can read the detailed instructions by Tenga Rinpoche, Jamgon Rinpoche, and Khyentse Rinpoche.

If we understand the title, “Calling the Lama from Afar,” we will understand that it embraces the entire contents. It is divided into three sections. First I want to speak about the second section, which describes the aim of both the Sutra and Tantra traditions.

The aim of both Sutrayana and Tantrayana is identical, while the methods to achieve Buddhahood differ. The Sutrayana doesn’t have a great variety of practices to achieve the final result. The practices are renunciation, the development of Bodhicitta, engaging in the six perfections, giving rise to and having the four types of mindfulness. There are four classes of practices in Vajrayana. They are: Kriyatantra, Charyatantra, Yogatantra, and Anuttarayogatantra. Each class offers a variety of practices that accord with a student’s abilities. The time it takes to achieve perfect Buddhahood also varies in each Yana. It takes a long time for practitioners of Sutrayana, whereas it is possible to achieve Buddhahood and thus to become a perfect Buddha in one lifetime by practicing Vajrayana.

A Sutrayana practitioner who is endowed with the same highest capabilities as Shakyamuni before he became the Buddha can achieve Buddhahood in three long kalpas. A Sutrayana practitioner who has middling capabilities needs 47 kalpas to achieve the same goal. By

practicing the methods that are taught in Sutrayana, somebody who has lesser capabilities needs all the many more kalpas to achieve Buddhahood. A practitioner of Tantrayana, who has highest abilities like Jestün Milarepa, can achieve Buddhahood in a single lifetime. Somebody who has middling abilities can achieve Buddhahood in seven lifetimes by practicing Mantrayana, and somebody with lesser abilities can achieve the goal by practicing this Yana for 16 lifetimes.

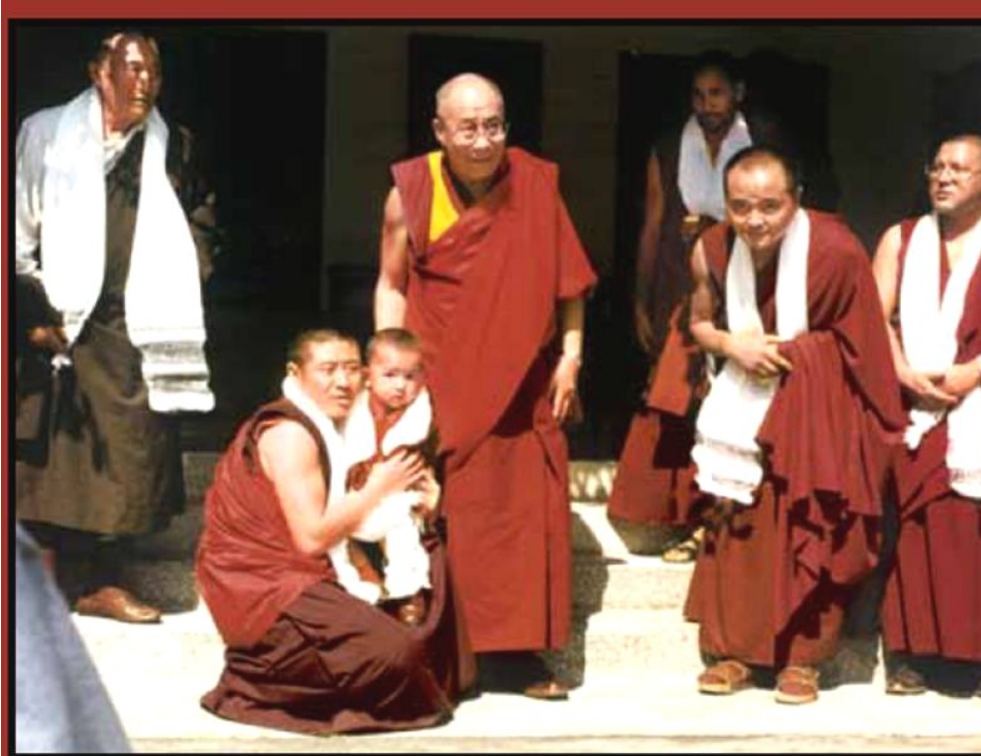
Practitioners of Sutrayana engage in learning to overcome their mind poisons and worldly pleasures by living in solitude and by avoiding the company of crowds; they need to have keen capabilities. Followers of Mantrayana do not need to renounce worldly pleasures, rather, they learn to use the mind poisons while practicing the path; they need to have a stronger mind and even more keen capabilities than Sutrayana practitioners. Why are there these differences? It is due to the Lama's blessing while practicing the path of Mantrayana. Sutrayana practitioners have no Lama and therefore do not receive a blessing. To engage in a Tantra meditation, followers of Mantrayana need to have received the respective initiation, the reading transmission, and the practice instructions from a Lama. In that ceremony, the disciple is blessed, and this differentiates Tantrayana from Sutrayana.

To receive the Lama's blessing, a disciple makes a request, such as in the spiritual song, "Calling the Lama from Afar." The practice of reciting this prayer is Guru yoga; it is said to be the essence of the path. Guru yoga is a very vast practice. What do we need so that we have faith and devotion to engage in this practice? The Kadampa masters refer to calling the Lama as "the path of the blessing" and teach that devotion is the root of the blessing. We need devotion in order to receive our Lama's blessing, and we receive his blessing by calling to him through prayer. But it is necessary to know who the Lama is that we are calling.

What does the term "Lama" mean? It is a Tibetan term that was translated from the Sanskrit word "Guru." The Sanskrit term denotes 'heavy.' We can look at this from two angles, from that of the master and from that of the disciple. In which way is the Lama heavy? Because his mind is replete with excellent qualities and because his disciples see his compassionate goodness. When he accepts somebody as a disciple, the Lama has an enormous responsibility. This, too, can be considered heavy.

The Tibetan term "Lama" consists of two words, *lha* and *ma*. *Lha* refers to his qualities, which are 'the highest.' *Ma* means 'mother.' She is the one who has been kindest to her child. In the same way, a Lama has kindness and compassion for his students and disciples. If we appreciate that our Lama's qualities are the same as those of the Buddha (which is expressed in the Tibetan term *lha*), we will aspire to develop the same qualities. If we understand that our Lama's kindness is like that of a mother (which is expressed in the Tibetan term *ma*) and greater than that of the Buddha, we will respect and appreciate him. A disciple who has fully developed faith and devotion in his or her Lama receives the highest blessings. A disciple who has mediocre faith and devotion in his or her Lama receives good blessings, whereas somebody who has little faith and devotion is only able to receive a slight blessing. The best way to see our Lama is as a Buddha, in which case we will be blessed by a Buddha.

The Mahamudra teachings list four kinds of Lamas. The first is the Lineage Lama in human form, the Lama represented by the teachings, the symbolical Lama in the form of appearances, and the Lama of absolute reality. They are also referred to as the outer Lama, the inner Lama, the concealed Lama, and the secret Lama.



(Top) Hair-cutting ceremony by His Holiness the Dalai Lama

(Bottom) His Holiness Dalai Lama with (from left) Tsewang Norbu, General Secretary of Palpung Labrang; Lama Tsewang Phuntsok; His Eminence Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche; Gyaltzen Zangpo (background); Tenzin Dorjee; and Acharya Sherab Gyaltzen

Two

The first Lama we pray to when reciting “Calling the Lama from Afar” is the Lineage Lama in human form. He is the Primordial Buddha Vajradhara. He manifested in a human form as Tilopa, Naropa, Marpa, Milarepa, Gampopa, Karmapa, and so forth, up to and including our Root Guru. All these great masters received, upheld, and transmitted the empowerments, the reading transmissions, and the practice instructions to their disciples. The disciples in turn practiced, attained realization, and taught their disciples. This is what is meant by Lineage. These extraordinary, realized masters are also referred to as the Golden Chain of the Transmission Lineage. This Transmission Lineage is called “Golden” because not one single master in this chain of realized beings was faulty or fake. In short, all Lineage Lamas listed in this prayer, up to and including our Root Guru, belong to the Golden Chain of realized masters in human form. They are also referred to as the “outer Lama.”

The Lineage Lama in human form is our own Root Lama. He teaches us how to engage in the ordinary and extraordinary preliminary practices of the path, until we attain the view of Mahamudra. He teaches us to become a fit vessel for Mahamudra by offering us the pointing out instructions of the view, which we need to practice until we have gained certainty. Then we see that there is no discrepancy in the teachings of Hinayana and Vajrayana and realize the true nature of our mind. This is the second Lama, the Lama of the teachings.

Hinayana practitioners might argue that Buddha Shakyamuni did not teach Mahayana, but that it was invented by Nagarjuna. Mahayana practitioners might argue that Vajrayana was not taught by the Buddha, but that it was invented by Tibetan Lamas. Looking at the different

levels of Tantra, the Kriya yoga practitioners might think that there is a discrepancy with the other levels of Tantra. When we have received Mahamudra pointing out instructions from our Lama, then we understand that the different levels of teachings do not contradict each other, but that each teaching is a method that enables practitioners to realize the nature of their mind.

The symbolic Lama is the third kind of Lama who manifests in the form of appearances. When we have gained certainty in the Mahamudra instructions that our Lama offered us, then all objects that our sensory consciousnesses apperceive are teachings, i.e., a form that we apperceive is a teaching, a sound that we hear is a teaching, and so forth. For example, bees exert much energy to collect nectar and to make honey that humans take away from them. In the same way, humans exert much energy to acquire riches and to hoard anything they were able to buy or collect. But we will lose everything when we die. This is what is meant as the symbolic Lama in the form of appearances.

We experience most suffering via our physical body. It is important to realize that it is useless being attached to our body that is like a hotel room we rent for a short while and enjoy. Our body is also the symbolic Lama in the form of appearances. Another appearance of the symbolic Lama is the four seasons. Flowers and trees blossom in the spring, bloom and change in the summer, and wither in the fall. Everything we see, hear, smell, taste, and touch is the symbolic Lama and can be brought to the path of Dharma.

When our Lama has transmitted the pointing out instructions of the Mahamudra view to us and while we gain certainty by meditated them again and again, then our transitory veils diminish and finally we realize the true nature of our mind that manifests openly. This is the fourth kind of Lama, the Lama of absolute reality. He is referred to as the inner and secret Lama.

When we have realized the true nature of our mind, then we will have realized two aspects of our mind. We will have realized the luminous clarity as well as the empty nature of our mind. The luminous clarity of our mind is associated with the secret Lama and our mind's empty nature is associated with the inner Lama. All suffering ends when we have realized the indivisibility of our mind's clear and empty nature. Then our mind poisons as well as their roots will have ended. Our karma ends when we have dispelled our ignorance, which is the root of all mind poisons and disrupting emotions. This is called liberation.

What is the basis of the fourth kind of Lama? The third symbolic Lama, who is based on the Buddha's teachings. The Lama in the form of the Buddha's teachings is based on the Lineage Lamas who manifested in human form. The Lineage Lamas have shown and have transmitted the view of Mahamudra in an unbroken succession. Our Lama accepted us as disciples and imparted the Mahamudra teachings to us. He is therefore the root of all Lamas, which is the reason he is our Root Lama. We do not have direct access to the Lineage Lamas, but our Root Lama fully imparts the blessings of Mahamudra and thus of all Lamas of the Lineage to us. In this way, we are connected to each Lineage Lama, all the way back to Vajradhara, i.e., Dorje Chang in Tibetan.

It would be wrong to think that we do not receive the blessing of each Lineage Lama when we are connected with our Lama. We receive their blessing automatically when we are connected with our Root Lama. This doesn't apply exclusively to Mahamudra, but to all Yidam empowerments, transmissions, and explanations. Our Root Guru is our connection to all Lineage Lamas, all the way back to Dorje Chang. For example, power stations are usually situated a great distance from homes, so cables run from a power station to specific homes

and supply them with electricity. In the same way, when we are connected with a Lama, we are automatically connected to all Lineage Lamas and receive their blessings.

The Lineage blessing is very important, especially for Tibetans who belong to one of the four traditions, which are the Kagyü, Nyingma, Sakya, and Gelug. Since it has never been interrupted, the Kagyü Lineage is called “The Golden Chain of Lineage Holders.”

We spoke about the meaning and importance of the Lama, about calling to him so that devotion arises within us and we receive his blessing. Therefore we need to know what the blessing means. Followers of Hinduism, for example, think that a blessing is imparted from a higher being that is outside and completely different than the devotees. We see this differently. We understand that a Lama who imparts a blessing was once a person like we are. He, too, followed a Lama, received teachings from him, practiced the path, realized the true nature of his mind, and became a realized individual. He is not a worldly ruler. We can become like him if we start the way he did, by receiving the teachings and by practicing them. In other traditions, people remain average people who believe that a god or deity is different and for all times remains far apart from them.

It is said that the true nature of the Lama’s mind and the disciple’s mind that needs to be tamed are identical. This refers to the Buddha nature, which all living beings have. Our mind is by nature pure and free of veils of any kind, which is why there is no difference between our Lama’s mind and our mind and why they are in essence the same. Since this is the case, why is he different? He has become free of all transitory veils, whereas we have not. This differentiates us, whereas in essence we are not different. We have the same wonderful qualities of the natural state as our Lama. The only difference is whether we have become free of momentary veils or not. To become free, we need to be connected to our Lama. How do we do this? By having faith and devotion in him and by practicing his instructions.

Our faith and devotion in our Lama increase by praying to him. In that way, our transitory obscurations diminish and the qualities of our mind’s true nature increase and manifest more and more clearly. When this happens, then we have fully received our Lama’s blessing. It isn’t given to us from outside ourselves. For example, solar energy panels are directed toward the sun. They store the sun’s heat and convey it to an oven or receptor. In that way, when our mind is directed towards our Lama, he blesses us to have the same qualities as he has. This is what receiving his blessing means.

Our Lama is the object of our respect, so we need to know him well. In the beginning, we need to be very skilled in testing him before we become committed. In the middle, we need to be very skilled in relying on him and on his teachings. At the end, we need to be very skilled in realizing his instructions. The Lama also tests a person before accepting him or her as a disciple. Furthermore, we need to check whether we have a karmic connection and then we need to ask him to become our Lama. If he accepts us as a disciple, then we have to follow his instructions.

Our Lama is like a GPS navigation system that shows us the best way to get through a large city. In that way, he tells us which meditation deity we should practice and how to best become free of our problems. There are a great variety of GPS systems on the market. A bad one might lead us in the wrong direction and would only be a waste of money. Likewise, there are many fake Lamas and many who aren’t that good. Just like we check the GPS system that we plan to buy, we need to check a Lama and find out whether he has all qualities that a Lama needs to have, whether we have a karmic connection, and so forth. After we have checked,

have made the request, and he has accepted us as a disciple, we rely upon him. We should not reconsider our choice later, change our mind, or have regrets, but rely upon him like we do upon a GPS system.

We need an authentic, qualified, and realized Lama. We need to rely upon him with devotion and be just like a solar panel that is facing the sun. It is useless relying on a solar panel if we think the sun rises in the west. In the same way, our devotion has to face the right direction, otherwise there is no benefit.

It can happen that things don't turn out the way we had thought and that we are disappointed in our Lama. Why does this happen? Like in our example, maybe because the solar panel is dirty. In the same way, even though we have devotion for our Lama, we might lack the pure view of him. So we need the right direction and the pure view. If we have them, then we can easily receive our Lama's blessing. Without any impediments, we can easily realize our mind's natural qualities. If we have devotion but lack the pure view, then we will find faults in our Lama. This often happens to beginners who still have momentary veils. These momentary veils cause students to see faults in others, which is like wearing glasses tinted in red. Having devotion but lacking the pure view is truly a problem. We need both.

As in our example, a solar panel can capture the warmth of the sun if it is clean and if it is positioned correctly. Like that, we need to have devotion and the pure view. Then our innate, natural qualities can manifest more and more clearly. That is what blessing means. To understand this better, we can look at the relationship between Marpa and his disciple Milarepa who was told to haul rocks from far away and to build towers that he was told to tear down, again and again. Since Milarepa had the pure view and saw his Lama as a Buddha, his devotion never diminished. It is very useful reading the life stories of Marpa and Milarepa because then our devotion increases. When we have devotion and the pure view of our Lama, then his blessing can easily enter us.

There are four kinds of blessings. They are: (1) the naturally arisen blessing of loving kindness and compassion, (2) the blessing of continuous loving kindness and compassion for all sentient beings, (3) the blessing of loving kindness and compassion in the right moment for the disciple, and (4) the blessing of loving kindness and compassion that is bestowed when requested through prayer. It is said that the essence of the four kinds of blessings is the same, but that there are these four aspects. The first and second kinds are those of the Lamas, the Buddhas, and Bodhisattvas. The third and fourth kinds are those of the Lamas, the Buddhas, and Bodhisattvas as they are received and experienced by devotees.

The first blessing is naturally present at all times, which is the meaning of "naturally arisen." The second blessing can be compared with a stream of water that continues flowing and never stops. The third blessing can be best understood through a story: During the times of Buddha Shakyamuni there was a man named Angulimala, which means 'chain of fingers.' He had a false spiritual friend who told him that he would attain ultimate freedom if he wore a necklace consisting of a chopped off finger from each of the 1000 people he should kill. When he had killed 999 people, already had a finger from each dangling from his necklace, he didn't kill an old woman he encountered. Through a karmic connection that went back many lifetimes, the Buddha appeared before Angulimala in that moment and told him to stop. He taught him the painful consequences of killing and how to attain true liberation. Angulimala became a disciple of the Buddha, practiced the teachings, and became an Arhat in that very life. This life story shows us how the third blessing of compassion in the right moment for the disciple works. At that time, Angulimala did not request the Buddha's blessing. Rather, the Buddha

appeared to Angulimala because his good karma and positive wishes that he made in previous lives had ripened. Another example for the third kind of blessing is the karmic connection and loving wishes that ripen when a mother stops her baby from falling over a cliff.

An example for the fourth kind of blessing that is granted through prayer is a compassionate wealthy person. Without judging, he helps every beggar who requests help. There is a difference between beggars who knock on his door and ask for help and those who don't. In the same way, the Lamas, Buddhas, and Bodhisattvas are non-judgemental and do not discriminate between people who call them and who might seem closer. Everybody who calls them receives their blessing, which is spontaneously granted and continuous when there is an auspicious or good connection that is invoked through prayer. An auspicious connection might have been established in a previous life, as in the case of the third kind of blessing that Angulimala received, or in this life. For example, if somebody has spontaneous joy and trust when they first see H.H. the Dalai Lama or Gyalwa Karmapa, tears might flow from their eyes, then they have a karmic connection that they created in a previous life and that ripens in this life. There are many examples for natural confidence and trust that a follower created by making wishing prayers in a previous life. Somebody who has not taken refuge but has positive feelings when he meets or sees a Lama shows that this person received the third kind of blessing because of the auspicious connection that he had established in a previous life. Devotees receive the fourth kind of blessing by having established an auspicious connection to the Three Jewels and Three Roots in their present life. We, too, receive the fourth kind of blessing by establishing an auspicious connection through making wishing prayers or by reciting "Calling the Lama from Afar."

Three

We looked at the four kinds of blessings. To receive and fully experience the fourth blessing, it is necessary to have created a good and auspicious connection with the Lama and with the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. This can be compared to a poverty-stricken person asking a compassionate and wealthy donor for help. Like that, the best way to receive the blessings from our Lama and from the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas is to call out in prayer to them. There are a great variety of prayers.

"Calling the Lama from Afar" is divided into three sections. All three sections can be compared to a baby crying to its mother for help. In the same way, we call to our Lama. Three conditions need to be present for this to occur. They are: being in samsara due to our negative emotions, karma that we created and continue creating, and suffering that we experience as a result. If we understand that samsara entails suffering, then we seek protection from our Lama and call to him. Our supplication will be good when these three conditions are fulfilled. But we need to recognize the three kinds of suffering. They are: the suffering of suffering, the suffering of change, and the all-pervading suffering of that which is composite. The first kind of suffering is easy to understand, e.g., the suffering that we experience when we have a headache, when we are hungry, when we freeze, and so forth. The second and third kinds are difficult to comprehend, but it is important to understand them.

We know that there are remedies for the first kind of suffering, that we can take pills against a headache or against a sickness, that we can have a meal when we are hungry, that we can wear warm clothes when we are cold, or that we can drink water to quench our thirst. What happens when we have a meal to remedy our hunger? We are satisfied and content. But if we continued eating after having had enough, we will have created the cause of suffering as well as suffering itself. This example illustrates the suffering of change. Shantideva compared the

suffering of change with the joy that is experienced by licking honey smeared on a knife's blade. If we don't get enough and continue licking the blade, we will eventually cut and harm our tongue. Then the remedy against hunger will have become the cause of suffering. This applies for riches, too. We suffer if we are never satisfied with the wealth and riches we managed to accumulate and hoard.

What is all-pervading suffering of that which is composite? It is the suffering that arises due to having no control over and as a result of living our lives in dependence upon our negative emotions and karma. Then our negative emotions and karma determine our experiences and rebirth. All beings undergo old age, sickness, and death. Not many living beings have the capacity to stay as young as Bodhisattva Manjushri. We, in contrast, become older, get sick, and approach our death. We cannot control or postpone this process, nor stop death from occurring, nor control our future rebirth. Instead, we are subject to and dependent upon our negative emotions, from one life to the next. For example, when somebody who has always been healthy and well learns that he has an incurable disease, then that person becomes aware of the third kind of suffering, the all-pervading suffering of that which is composite. It pervades all six realms of samsara. Now, beings living in the hell and hungry ghost realms do not understand the suffering of change, whereas beings living in the realm of the gods only experience the suffering of change once, when their karma is spent and their condition changes. Humans experience both of these two categories of suffering directly. The third kind of suffering, which is very subtle, pertains to all beings living in the six realms of conditioned existence; therefore it is called "all-pervading."

The three main emotions that engender suffering are attachment, aversion, and indifference. Aversion causes suffering of suffering, and attachment brings on suffering of change. The third kind of suffering, the all-pervading suffering of that which is composite, has to do with all feelings of indifference. Thus we see that our emotions cause the three kinds of suffering that we experience. When the Buddha turned the Wheel of Dharma the very first time, he taught that it is important to understand the third kind of suffering.

By looking at life in any of the six realms of samsaric existence, we understand that samsara is marked by suffering. Having understood that all rounds of samsaric existence are based upon our mind poisons, the wish to become free from samsara awakens in us. Who can help us become free from samsara's sufferings? Our Lama. We trust him when we understand and appreciate that he can help us become free.

It is important to fully understand the three types of suffering by engaging in analytical investigations. In that way we realize the importance of becoming free. Understanding suffering and being confident that our Lama can show us how to become free from samsara are the first and second prerequisites that we need in order to attain this goal. When we trust and have faith in our Lama, we also need to have the third prerequisite, which is feeling that we are far away from him. Then we call him, just like a forlorn child that is suffering from unbearable hunger, thirst, heat, or cold. This child trusts that its mother will help and will offer protection. It realizes that it is not directly united with its mother, but is far away from her and therefore cries loudly. These are the three conditions that we need to have when calling to our Lama. The last verse of the third section of "The Supplication Prayer" summarizes this in words. The supplication is:

"We pray to you, precious Lama.
Kind Lama, Lord of Dharma, we call out to you with longing.

For us, unworthy ones, you are the only hope.
Bless us that your mind blends with ours.”

What does “precious Lama; Kind Lama, Lord of Dharma” mean? They are descriptions of the Lama, just like the word ‘mama’ is for a child that is calling its mother. “Precious” refers to something that is invaluable. It is a wish-fulfilling jewel that can fulfil any wish that we have. Our Lama is the precious One who fulfils all wishes by showing us the way to liberation from suffering and to omniscience. The next descriptions, “Kind Lama, Lord of Dharma,” do not refer to the many spiritual friends who might think are important, rather, these descriptions refer to the king and master, the “Lord of Dharma.” By reciting the line, “Bless us that your mind blends with ours,” we ask our Lama to fulfil our wishes. How do we call our Lama from afar? With longing faith and devotion, which we engender and increase by reciting the third line, “For us, unworthy ones, you are the only hope.” In summary: How do we develop faith and devotion in our Lama? By learning about and again and again recalling his enlightened qualities.

Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the past, present, and future abide in the ten directions of space. The description “unworthy ones” refers to us and points to the fact that we aren’t able to see, face-to-face, nor to receive the teachings from the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the three times and ten directions. Since we lack enough merit, we cannot perceive that ultimately our Lama is a Buddha and that he embodies the Three Kayas of a Buddha. That is why we feel unworthy and unfortunate. Due to our cognitive veils, we aren’t able to perceive our Lama as the Dharmakaya Buddha. Due to the veils of our mind poisons, we cannot perceive our Lama as the Sambhogakaya Buddha. Due to our karmic veils, we are not able to appreciate and experience our Lama as the Nirmanakaya Buddha. We do not have enough merit and therefore consider ourselves as unworthy. We also think we are unworthy because we feel that our Lama’s qualities that are equal to those of a Buddha are quite distanced from us. Two attitudes can arise in us, firstly, that we feel extremely apart from our Lama and secondly, that we have faith and confidence that he is equal to a Buddha. The words in the above verse, “you are the only hope” denote that he is the only One for beings like us to be able to acknowledge and appreciate the Living Buddha.

Our Lama appears in the form of a human being in order to teach us the Dharma and to show us enlightened activities. This also means that our Lama’s kindness is greater than that of the Buddha. It is important to reflect and fully understand this. Our Lama has appeared in the form of a human being, he has taught and continues teaching and guiding us, so his kindness is greater than that of the historical Buddha. We reflect that his kindness is greater than that of the Buddha so that our faith increases; and we reflect that his qualities are greater than those of the Buddha so that our devotion increases. When we have perfect faith and devotion, we fully acknowledge and realize that our Lama is a Buddha. We learn that the Kadampa masters teach that the king of devotion is seeing the Lama as a Buddha; the meaning in this line of “The Supplication Prayer” is the same.

Looking at the three divisions of “The Supplication Prayer,” we see that different wishing prayers are recited in each section. In the first section we pray to the Lamas of the various traditions and transmission lineages to bless us so that we realize all aspects of the paths and their results. In the second section we pray to be able to realize the view of Mahamudra or Vajrayana. For this to occur, we pray that we overcome impediments and become a fit vessel by developing both mundane and extraordinary abilities. In the final and last prayer, we pray that our Lama’s mind and our mind become inseparable.

Why are there three kinds of requests in this supplication prayer? Because “Calling the Lama from Afar” consists of three sections. The absolute nature of everyone’s mind is non-differentiate, but our Lama has dispelled all adventitious stains and temporary veils that obscure his pure vision of reality. On the relative level, we have not overcome our superficial, deceptive veils and have not developed and perfected excellent qualities of worth. Our Lama has and therefore he is different and far away from us. We acknowledge this difference and for this reason recite the first and second supplications in the first two sections. Since the nature of our Lama’s mind and that of all living beings is inseparable and non-differentiate, we recite the last line of the third supplication verse of “The Prayer.” It is: “Bless us that your mind blends with ours.”

Why are there two categories of supplications, relative and absolute? In the first case of relative reality, there are disciples that are very far away from their Lama. Why is there such a great distance between a Lama and his disciples? Because he has practiced the path, has completely dispelled all deceptive veils, has fully realized the view of Mahamudra, and has achieved perfect enlightenment, whereas they have not. If we understand that we follow after our afflictive emotions and thus create negative karma, that we experience the three kinds of suffering as a result, that we have not understood or realized the true nature of our mind, but wander in samsara, then we understand that we are very far away from our Lama. There is another type of persons who are fit vessels, but who are far away from their Lama; they are far away from their Lama, but they are not far away from the path.

Four

“Calling the Lama from Afar” consists of three sections. How should they be understood? On the absolute level of reality, i.e., from the perspective of our mind’s true nature, the mind of our Lama and our mind are inseparable. On the relative level, i.e., relatively, we are far apart and are very different when it comes to the qualities of the path and the result.

The first request of the first section of “Calling the Lama from Afar” is spoken by a disciple who has so far not attained any results and who is very far away from the Lama.

We need to have three conditions so that we recite the request correctly, so that it is beneficial and good. They are: confidence, aspiration, and trust. How does confidence arise? By understanding that our Lama is far away. How do we know this and how do we gain confidence? By learning, contemplating, and meditating we realize that our Lama is not different or apart from us, but that he is far away due to our adventitious mental defilements and veils. Having gained confidence in him, we understand that our Lama is far away because we haven’t developed the qualities of the path that he has. How can we develop the same qualities? By coming closer to him. Therefore we wish to come closer to him and to develop the same qualities. How do we acquire the same qualities that our Lama has? Through his blessing, which we receive by having the wish.

The third condition we need to have is trust, which means we trust that we will mature through the power of his blessing. This is the context of the first request, in which we pray: “Please bless me so that the qualities of both the path and the result ripen in me.” This line is short, so why is the entire prayer long?

There are eight practice lineages and the essence of their instructions is alike. But followers have different propensities and abilities, therefore there are different practice lineages, the Kagyü, Shangpa, Nyingma, etc. Jamgon Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye had faith and devotion in each

one and practiced each lineage without discriminating the one from the other, i.e., in a non-sectarian way. Since he had received teachings from many Lamas of the various lineages, the first section of “Calling the Lama from Afar” is a song of praise to many great teachers and Lamas. The prayer of that section is a request to these Lamas for their blessing, to become inseparably united with them. The verse is:

“Essence of the Buddhas of the three times,
Source of genuine Dharma in scripture and realization,
Master of the noble gathering of sangha,
Root Lama, may you think of us.”

This verse denotes that the Lama is the embodiment of the Three Jewels, i.e., the embodiment of the Buddha, who is the source of the teachings, the transmission of the Dharma, and the noble Sangha. We pray that the qualities of the Three Jewels ripen in us. The verses are:

“Great treasure of blessing and compassion,
Source of the two siddhis,
Buddha activity that grants whatever is desired,
Root Lama, may you think of us.

“Great treasure of blessing and compassion,
Source of the two siddhis,
Buddha activity that grants whatever is desired,
Root Lama, may you think of us.”

In Mantrayana, our Lama is the embodiment of the Three Roots. The root or source of the blessing is our Lama. The source of realisation is the Yidam meditation deity; and the source of enlightened activities is the Protectors. When we call to our Lama, we visualize him as the Three Roots and request that he grants us the blessing to realize the Three Roots. Then:

“Lama Amitabha, think of us.
Behold us from the expanse of the dharmakaya, free of fabrication,
We wander in samsara through the force of negative karma;
Bring us to rebirth in your pure land of bliss.”

We visualize our Lama as Buddha Amitabha who represents the Dharmakaya when we recite this prayer. Then we visualize and pray to our Lama as the mighty One, Chenrezig, the Sambhogakaya Buddha:

“Lama Chenrezik, think of us.
See us from the expanse of the luminous sambhogakaya.
Pacify completely the suffering of the six kinds of beings
And totally transform the three realms of samsara.”

Then we visualize our Lama as Lama Padmasambhava who represents the Nirmanakaya:

“Lama Padmasambhava, think of us.
Behold us from the luminous lotus of Nga Yab Ling.
In these dark times, swiftly protect with your compassion
Tibetan disciples, all those who are destitute and without refuge.”

More Lamas are called in the prayer and asked to grant their blessings so that the practice, the path, and the result ripen in us.

“Lama Yeshe Tsogyel, think of us.
Behold us from the dakinis’ city of great bliss.
Bring us, who have committed negative actions,
Across the ocean of samsara to the great city of liberation.

“Lamas of the oral transmission and terma lineages, think of us.
Behold us from the expanse of primordial wisdom, the union (of appearance and emptiness).
Help us to break through the dark prison of our confused mind
And make the sun of realization arise.

“Omniscient Drime Ozer, think of us.
Behold us from the expanse of the five spontaneous lights.
Help us to perfect the great display of mind, primordially pure,
And to complete the four stages of ati yoga.

“Incomparable Atisha and your heart son,
Amidst hundreds of deities, behold us from Tushita.
Bring about the birth in our mind stream
Of bodhichitta, the essence of emptiness and compassion.

“Supreme siddhas, Marpa, Milarepa, and Gampopa, think of us.
Behold us from the space of great vajra bliss.
Enable us to attain the supreme siddhi of Mahamudra – bliss and emptiness inseparable;
Awaken the dharmakaya in our heart of hearts.”

We pray these verses so that our Root Lama’s mind and our mind become inseparable. Again, it is important to have the three conditions (which are conviction, aspiration, and trust) so that the supplication prayer can be fulfilled.

Our Lama is a great distance from us because we have not become a fit vessel. But we are also far away from having taken the path. Why? We have very many unfavourable conditions and not enough favourable conditions. We need to understand why we are so far apart from our Lama and from the path. Because we haven’t really engendered renunciation, Bodhichitta, i.e., love and compassion. If we understand this, we will have realized that we are still very far away from the path. For example, there need to be favourable conditions for planting a seed of a rose bush in the ground. But for the seed to grow, more favourable conditions are needed, like good earth, moisture, etc. and unfavourable conditions need to be avoided, e.g., it is useless planting a seed in an area that has too much rain, storms, or hail. Likewise, if we want to plant the seed of Mahamudra in our mind, we need favourable conditions. They are having given rise to (1) renunciation of samsara, which we lack because of being overly concerned about worldly pleasures, (2) loving kindness and compassion, which we lack because of self-concern, and (3) trust and devotion in our Lama.

We need to identify the impediments to the path and identify the favourable conditions so that confidence and devotion are planted and grow in us. Then the strong wish will arise in us to give up what needs to be abandoned and to develop what we need in order to progress along the path. We do this by following the advice of a spiritual friend or a Lama. Trust and devotion will grow in us as a result. We need strong conviction, determined aspiration, and

trust. When we have them, we pray that we fully overcome all detrimental conditions and perfectly establish all favorable conditions. This is addressed in the prayer of the second part of “Calling the Lama from Afar”:

“Alas, sentient beings like ourselves, who have committed negative actions,
Wander in samsara from beginningless time.
Still experiencing endless suffering,
We do not feel even an instant of repentance.
Lama, think of us, behold us swiftly with compassion.
Bless us that renunciation arises from the depth of our heart.

“Though we have attained a precious human birth with leisure and resources, we waste it,
Constantly distracted by the activities of this hollow life.
When it comes to accomplishing the great goal of liberation, we are overcome by laziness
And return empty-handed from a land filled with jewels.
Lama, think of us, behold us swiftly with compassion.
Bless us that we make this life meaningful.”

If possible, we should recite the entire prayer. If we don’t have much time, it is appropriate to start reciting the prayer from here onward and to the end:

“There is no one on this earth who will not die.
Even now, people are passing away, one after the other.
We also soon must die, but like a fool, we plan to live long.
Lama, think of us, behold us swiftly with compassion.
Bless us that we curtail all of our scheming.

“We will be separated from our closest friends.
Others will enjoy the wealth we as misers kept.
Even our body we hold so dear will be left behind.
And our consciousness will wander without direction in the bardos of samsara.
Lama, think of us, behold us swiftly with compassion.
Bless us that we realize the futility of this life.

“In front, the black darkness of fear waits to take us in;
From behind, we are chased by the fierce red wind of karma.
The hideous messengers of the lord of death beat and stab us,
And so we must experience the unbearable sufferings of the lower realms.
Lama, think of us, behold us swiftly with compassion.
Bless us that we are liberated from the chasms of lower realms.

“We conceal within ourselves a mountain of faults; yet, we put down others and broadcast their shortcomings, though they be minute as a sesame seed.
Though we have not the slightest good qualities, we boast saying how great we are.
We have the label of Dharma practitioners, but practice only non-Dharma.
Lama, think of us, behold us swiftly with compassion.
Bless us that we loose our pride and self-centeredness.

“We conceal within the demon of ego-clinging that always brings us to ruin.
All of our thoughts cause kleshas to increase.
All of our actions have non-virtuous results.

We have not even turned towards the path of liberation.
Lama, think of us, behold us swiftly with compassion.
Bless us that grasping onto a self be uprooted.

“A little praise makes us happy; a little blame makes us sad.
With a few harsh words, we lose the armor of our patience.
Even if we see those who are destitute, no compassion arises.
When there is an opportunity to be generous, we are tied in knots by greed.
Lama, think of us, behold us swiftly with compassion,
Bless us that our mind be one with the Dharma.

“We think samsara is worthwhile, when it is not.
We give up our higher vision for the sake of food and clothes.
Although we have all that is needed, we constantly want more.
Our minds are deceived by unreal, illusory phenomena.
Lama, think of us, behold us swiftly with compassion.
Bless us that we let go of attachment to this life.

“Not able to endure the merest physical or mental pain,
With blind courage, we do not hesitate to fall into lower realms.
Although we see directly the unfailing law of cause and effect,
We do not act virtuously, but increase our non-virtuous activity.
Lama, think of us, behold us swiftly with compassion.
Bless us that we come to trust completely in the laws of karma.

“We hate our enemies and cling to friends.
Lost in the darkness of ignorance, we do not know what to accept or reject.
When practicing Dharma, we fall into dullness, drowsiness, and sleep.
When not practicing Dharma, we are clever and our senses are clear.
Lama, think of us, behold us swiftly with compassion.
Bless us that we overcome our enemy, the kleshas.

“From the outside, we appear to be genuine Dharma practitioners;
On the inside, our minds have not blended with the Dharma.
We conceal our kleshas inside like a poisonous snake.
Yet when difficult situations arise, the hidden faults of a poor practitioner come to light.
Lama, think of us, behold us swiftly with compassion.
Bless us that we ourselves are able to tame our mind.

“Not recognizing our own faults,
We take the form of a Dharma practitioner, while engaging in non-dharmic pursuits.
We are habituated to kleshas and non-virtuous activity.
Again and again virtuous intentions arise; again and again they are cut off.
Lama, think of us, behold us swiftly with compassion.
Bless us that we see our own faults.

“With the passing of each day, we come closer and closer to death.
As each day arrives, our mind gets more and more rigid.
Though we serve the Lama, our devotion is gradually obscured.
Our love, affection, and pure outlook towards our Dharma friends diminishes.
Lama, think of us, behold us swiftly with compassion.

Bless us that we tame our obstinate mind.

“Although we have taken refuge, engendered bodhichitta, and made prayers,
Devotion and compassion have not arisen in the depth of our being.
Dharma activity and the practice of virtue have turned into hollow words;
Our empty achievements are many, but none have moved our mind.
Lama, think of us, behold us swiftly with compassion.
Bless us that whatever we do is in harmony with the Dharma.

“All suffering arises from wanting happiness for ourselves;
Although it is taught that enlightenment is attained through benefiting others.
We engender bodhichitta, while secretly cherishing our own desires.
We do not benefit others, and further, we even unconsciously harm them.
Lama, think of us, behold us swiftly with compassion.
Bless us that we are able to exchange self for other.

“Our Lama is actually the appearance of the Buddha himself, but we take him to be an ordinary human being.
We come to forget the Lama’s kindness in giving us profound instructions.
We are upset if we do not get what we want.
We see the Lama’s activity and behavior through the veil of doubts and wrong views.
Lama, think of us, behold us swiftly with compassion.
Bless us that, free of obscurations, our devotion increases.

“Our own mind is the Buddha, but we do not recognize it.
All concepts are the dharmakaya, but we do not realize it.
This is the uncontrived natural state, but we cannot sustain it.
This is the true nature of the mind, settled into itself, but we are unable to believe it.
Lama, think of us, behold us swiftly with compassion.
Bless us that self-awareness be liberated into its ground.

“Death is certain to come, but we are unable to take this to heart.
Genuine Dharma is certain to benefit, but we are unable to practice correctly.
The truth of karma is certain, but we do not decide correctly what to give up and accept.
It is certainly necessary to be mindful and alert, but these qualities are not stable within, and we are carried away by distraction.
Lama, think of us, behold us swiftly with compassion.
Bless us that we stay mindful with no distractions.

“Out of previous negative karma, we are born at the end of this degenerate time.
All our previous actions have become the cause of suffering.
Bad friends cast over us the shadow of their negative actions.
Our practice of virtue is corrupted by meaningless gossip.
Lama, think of us, behold us swiftly with compassion.
Bless us that we take the Dharma deep to heart.

“At first, there is nothing but Dharma on our mind,
But at the end, the result is the cause of samsara and lower realms.
The harvest of liberation is destroyed by the frost of non-virtuous activity.
We, like wild savages, have lost our ultimate vision.
Lama, think of us, behold us swiftly with compassion.

Bless us that within we bring the genuine Dharma to perfection.

“Bless us that repentance arises deep from within.

Bless us that we curtail all our scheming.

Bless us that from the depth of our heart, we remember death.

Bless us that we develop certainty in the laws of karma.

Bless us that our path is free of obstacles.

Bless us that we are able to exert ourselves in practice.

Bless us that we bring difficult situations onto the path.

Bless us that antidotes, through their own power, are completely effective.

Bless us that genuine devotion arise.

Bless us that we see the very face of the mind’s true nature.

Bless us that self-awareness awakens in the center of our heart.

Bless us that delusive appearances are completely eliminated.

Bless us that we achieve enlightenment in one lifetime.”

If we have very little time, we recite only the last verse of the third section of the prayer. It is:

“We pray to you, precious Lama.

Kind Lama, Lord of Dharma, we call out to you with longing.

For us, unworthy ones, you are the only hope. Bless us that your mind blends with ours.”

In this last prayer of the third section we pray that on the absolute level of existence there be no difference between our Lama and us. To accomplish this, we need the strong conviction, aspiration, and trust. How do we accomplish this? Let us consider the following example: Clouds do not pollute or change the sky which is always pure. Or, if not stirred, we experience water that contains mud as pure. In the same way, because our mind is by nature pure and not polluted by adventitious stains, it cannot be divided into good or bad. Likewise, by hearing the teachings, by contemplating and meditating them, we gain certainty that the mind of our Lama and our mind are identical. We are able to have the strong wish to unite with the mind of our Lama because our mind is by nature pure.

Through practice, we can cleanse our mind of adventitious stains. We can become free of clinging to what appears dualistically by practicing the path. Then the profound wish will arise in us to become inseparably united and one with our Lama. How can our Lama’s mind and our mind become inseparable? Through our trust in him and through his blessing, which is the third condition we need. How does our Lama’s mind melt with ours?

We cling to appearances that seem dualistic because we are not aware of the true nature of our mind, which is free of adventitious stains, doubts, intellectual manipulations, shallow thoughts, etc. This clinging creates samsara by which we experience suffering and pain. For example, the nature of water is being moist and fluid. It freezes to ice when exposed to very low temperatures and becomes fluid again when the temperature rises above freezing point. In that way, since beginningless time, the nature of our mind is Buddha. We do not realize that we are deluded and confused by appearances and thus do not recognize our mind’s true nature. When we become free of not-knowing the way things appear and the way things really are, then we will have become free from duality and the temporary veils that cause us to misapprehend appearances. At that time, the sun of primordial wisdom will shine in and through us and the mind of our Lama and our mind will have become inseparable.

The third section of “Calling the Lama from Afar” is about deepening our confidence and devotion. The more we recite the prayer, the more they increase and intensify. This is the purpose of the third section of the prayer. As beginners, our confidence and devotion are slight and not like a sharp knife. Reciting the prayer again and again is like sharpening a knife so that it is possible to cut things with ease.

In the beginning, our faith and devotion are unstable and artificial. Having recalled and reflected that our Lama’s qualities are equal to those of a Buddha and that his kindness towards us is even greater than that of the Buddha, we meditate that and again and again call him. In this way, our devotion becomes less and less artificial. It is like learning to drive a car. At first our eyes are busy, while our hands and feet move around. In the beginning, we think it is impossible to concentrate and carry out all these tasks. By practicing and learning to concentrate more and more intensively, one day we will be able to drive with ease and will even be able to converse or drink a cup of coffee while driving and watching the traffic. Another example is that of a frail and weak elderly person. He might need a cane to stand up and walk. In the beginning, we also need a support so that our faith and devotion in our Lama are not artificial, but become stable and natural. We do this by calling to our Lama, again and again.

It is not necessary to recite the prayer when we have full faith and devotion in our Lama, when we remember his qualities, when we spontaneously see him before us. Then, when we merely hear his name, goose bumps and tears come to our eyes. This is having continuous faith and devotion. They are like having two legs to walk. They support each other. If we keep on reciting the prayer, our faith and devotion will increase.

By calling to our Lama with faith and devotion, we will receive his blessings and our body, speech and mind will become inseparable. Then we will be free of dualistic veils and our mind’s innate wisdom and compassion will naturally shine forth. Our Lama’s body and our body will become one taste, in which case appearances and emptiness will be experienced as inseparable. Our Lama’s speech and our speech will become sound-emptiness inseparable, and our Lama’s mind and our mind become awareness-emptiness inseparable.

How do we become one with our Lama? By practicing the path. When our Lama’s body, speech, and mind have become inseparably one with our body, speech, and mind, then we dedicate our lives to Mahamudra. By accomplishing Mahamudra, we fully and perfectly realize that our Lama’s body, speech, and mind are not separate from ours, but that they are of one taste.

We repeat the last verse of “Calling the Lama from Afar” three times. When we recite it the third time, we visualize that our Lama melts with us and we rest as long as possible in the experience and realization that his body, speech, and mind are inseparably united with our body, speech, and mind. When a thought arises, we stop with the visualization, dedicate the merit of our practice, and make wishing prayers. While involved in daily activities, we experience all appearances as our Lama’s body, all sounds as our Lama’s enlightened speech, and all thoughts as the playful expression of our Lama’s wisdom. Then anything we do and everything we experience becomes Guru yoga.

Five

Khenpo spoke in English here: Thanks to everyone for having given me the opportunity to discuss “Calling the Lama from Afar.” It was a very good opportunity for me to reflect and

contemplate my practice while I was in the three-year retreat. It has been a very precious opportunity for me that you made it possible for me to come to Heidelberg and discuss the prayer from the point of view of my experience as well as from the intellectual point of view. I really appreciate that you made it possible for me to come here and for your patience, also for the translation. Thank you for that. Also, I want to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to Lama Dorothea for having made it possible for me to see how to manage Dharma activities at the center Karma Chang Chub Choephel Ling. I was able to see the great devotion, sincerity, determination, and hard work for the flourishing of Dharma activities. I really appreciate that. I also want to thank everyone involved in bringing Dharma activities to flourish. I want to thank everyone for your hospitality and for taking care of me while I was here. I would also like to thank the translator. I don't think it would have been possible to present these teachings without her translation. I really appreciate her help for translating my teachings into the German language for everybody. I also would like to make the aspiration that whatever knowledge and experience I could share of the prayer with you becomes the cause to increase your devotion to your teacher, great and greater, stronger and stronger, that it can bring the blessing from all the Kagyü Lineage Masters as well as the Buddha and Bodhisattvas, that it is the cause to receive the blessing so that it enters into your mind stream, to reveal the true nature of your mind, which is the Guru of the Dharmata that is inseparable from the mind of your Guru. I hope it will happen as soon as possible, in this life time. I would also like to thank the cook. The food was very delicious, and I enjoyed it, also for staying here. Thanks to all of you. I really appreciate this, and it teaches me that I should stay here longer.

Now we should dedicate any merit that we have accumulated by listening, contemplating, and meditating, that it is the cause that the Karmapa and the three Regents can come and visit, not only Europe, but all over the world. We should make a dedication prayer so that is possible, so that they can travel as soon as possible.



The translation of the Root Text was made by Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche and Michele Martin and is indebted to a version by the Nalanda Translation Committee in "Journey without Goal" by Chogyam Trungpa (Shambhala, 1985). It was printed in: "His Eminence Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche. In Memory," Jamgon Kongtrul Labrang, Rumtek, Sikkim, 1992, pages 42-73. / The teachings presented by Khenpo Sherab Gyaltzen were translated into English from the excellent German translation offered by Sina Joos and arranged in this form by Gaby Hollmann. The short biography of Khenpo is courtesy of the official website of H.E. Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche. The photo of Khenpo and the Heidelberg Castle across the river was taken and kindly offered by Jeannette Flach. The photo of the beautiful flower is an offering from Lena Fong. Many thanks to Lama Dorothea Nett for having hosted this event and for having made the recording available.