

THE NATURAL FREEDOM OF THE MIND

Extracts

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Friday

We're going to look a little bit at the nature of the mind in the dzogchen tradition. Generally speaking, it's said, mind is like space. So here we have a lot of space and people are spaced out in the room, so that's a very good beginning. Because finding some space around you in every situation in life is very important. We have outer space, and inner space and only when we have enough space do we have perspective, which allows things to take on their proper shape. And especially, with perspective we can see that it is our own involvement that makes some things big and some things small. Certain aspects of the world appeal to us strongly and so we spend our time and give ourselves to them. And that allows these objects or people to show more of themselves, but of course it also gives us the opportunity to project more onto these people and objects.

So the question is how to see without fabricating. The most basic question of course is for each of us here we are, what are we here as, that is to say what sort of identity do we imagine we have. We're all used to making statements about ourselves, defining ourselves. The identity is our way of being able to define how we feel we are, and it is formulated across different registers. (...)

We've had so many different kinds of experiences in our lives, we have different kinds of enthusiasms and interests, and this may be more or less available. For example, somebody might enjoy singing but when they were young they might have been told they are not very good at singing. So of course they like to sing and they don't like to sing at the same time. And this ambivalence acts as a kind of restriction or site of forgetting of one's own potential. Identity is not something fixed. In fact, it's situationally evoked most of the time, because how we can reveal ourselves to the other it's not just a matter of our personal confidence, but also the feeling tone that we have of the other person's availability to us. In Buddhism this is referred to as dependant co-origination or interdependence. How we emerge into the world with others arises as a co-creation of becoming. If we're speaking to older people or young adults or children our voice will change in terms of its tone and volume, our vocabulary and grammar is likely to change as well. We find ourselves taking on a shape that's likely to give the best interface with how we imagine them to be. When we relax and at ease in ourselves, we tend to find that communication flows by itself. And when we become more neurotic, or self referential, or self-doubting this preoccupation with our own habit formation gets in a way of connecting with the other. So in Buddhism, generally it's suggested that we need wisdom in order to develop compassion. Wisdom essentially is to see the illusory nature of the restrictive habit formations,

which we frequently identify with. Wisdom allows us to see that the building blocks out of which we create both our areas of competence and our avoided areas of incompetence, these building blocks have no true substance to them. (...)

So it becomes very important to have some sense of this construction “because I am like this”. If I am like thisness, if the seeming givenness of our “I am like this”, that is just a fact, it’s difficult to examine. Especially because if it’s a limitation, it’s a little bit humiliating or embarrassing to see oneself always as quite small. If we’re a bit shy or get confused or make mistakes with grammar or whatever, I lack confidence. How do we get confidence? We don’t really know. Other people know where the shop is but we never founded it. So they have confidence and we don’t have it. We get used to being a little inhibited. This is just me, this is how I am. And this feels then like an absolute limit. Is this really the case? From the point of view of meditation, the strong belief that we are what we take ourselves to be is a delusion created by not understanding the nature of thought. Everything that we encounter whether it appears to be outside of us or inside of us is experience. (...)

The basic point here is that the world is not constituted out of separate things, which have their own internal essence or substance. We live within many many intermeshing webs of communication. We have the web of visual display, the colours and shapes in the room, we have the semantic web, the juxtaposition of words and thoughts supporting them whereby we generate new meanings moment by moment. We have webs of feeling, which are linked to memories from the past, hopes for the future. That is to say the field of our experience is very rich. Many many different factors are operating at once. But if we think more, what is it? What should I do? That is a kind of extractive question, it’s a dislocating question. I’m separated from my embodied world, my being part of existence, and then living in this little island of myself I look out at this world full of people and things and oh, who are you, what are you up to? Do I like you, do I not like you? One question leads to more and more questions. (...)

The basic position which in Buddhism is referred to as samsara starts with the sense of oneself as isolated as an individual. And an individual is one who is separated from others but also is a unit. It’s a very strange thing to call ourselves. Most of us are quite highly fragmented, we’re not indivisible at all, it’s a kind of term, like being autonomous. Madness! We are not in the least autonomous, we’re highly dependent. We depend on air coming in and out of our nostrils, we depend on food which we didn’t grow for ourselves, we wear clothes made by other people but actually we are autonomous individuals. This is a kind of autohypnosis whereby we each fabricate a notion that I am an island onto myself and therefore I have a choice whether I

connect or not. This notion of a self-referential ego as being the basis of ourselves, or of our life, from the Buddhist point of view is a terrible misapprehension, it's a mistake which generates more and more difficulties for us in the course of our lives. The root difficulty in Buddhism is described as ignorance leading to attachment, this means basically ignoring what is actually here, how it actually is and then, becoming attached to our ideas and interpretations of how it seems to us. Having created our private world of interpretations which takes a lot of time and effort to do, and has to be maintained constantly, we don't have much time to see what is here if we stop building. (...)

If everything is up to us to choose and the world is increasingly experienced as a range of commodities then as a free consumer in a capitalist economy, I have this infinite richness of options in front of me. But what will I choose? What will be my criteria for choice? So you can see how questions, and uncertainties, and insecurities can mushroom and spread out from this very quickly. The root of this is an assumption "I am me". But who are you? I told you, I am me. I am me is sufficient, completely meaningful. (...)

The basis of this is being able to say "This is a table, this is a cup, I am me". And because you are a human being and I am a human being we will agree these are non-negotiable statements. We all know this is a cup and if I say I am me, you know what I mean. So when you say I am me, I accept. And you with equal-politeness will agree that when I say I am me, yes. We agree to allow each other to be stupid. Because we are not inquiring what does that mean to say I am me. It becomes a statement with a big full stop at the end which seals us into a cul-de-sac. And there is something quite reassuring about these dead ends because we can all agree there is no way further to go, I am what I am and indeed within the semiotic web, there are final statements. We say this is a cup, I am me, these become axioms, subject-verb-object. (...)

What I'm pointing out to here is the intoxication with language which allows us to create new expressions, new mental situations. But with this wonderful quality that what I create appears to be a description. It appears to be truly existing out there. And I am just observing how it is. So a child might say cabbages are disgusting. And the mother says you don't like cabbage. You don't have a happy marriage with cabbage. Not a successful relationship. I'm willing to let you say that, I don't like cabbage but you are not entitled to say cabbage is horrible. Because I eat cabbage and for me it's not horrible. So in families you often have this kind of discussion. And they're very helpful because they let us see how the subjective feeling tone flips itself into an objective statement. (...)

Once this fabrication occurs, you put your own invested belief into it, it appears very strongly real as if it was true. But you have just constructed this. It is an idea. Mickey Mouse is gorgeous. Why not? It's just an idea. Mickey Mouse exists. If you believe in him he does exist. Father Christmas exists. This is our mind constructing and then believing that the construction is true in itself. This is the dynamic nature of ignorance in Buddhist teaching. (...)

When we look at our mind in meditation, we see that sensations and thoughts and feelings are always transitory. They have no solid substance on their own and we, the subject experiencing the thought, also have no capacity to hold on to the thought. Perhaps you read something in a book, it's a very interesting idea, and you start to think about it but probably not for more than a minute. If you keep thinking, your own thoughts about will open in up into thinking about new areas. The thought that you were focusing on dissolves into something else. And yet we come to fix conclusions, which seem to give a definite reality to constructions that we build. This is like a kind of dark miracle. A miracle in that, on the basis of transitory ungraspable phenomena we build seemingly solid enduring edifices. On the basis of these transitory and ungraspable phenomena –the thoughts and so on – we create the seemingly solid reliable enduring factors of our existence. How do we do that? By denial of the actual nature of the phenomena. In Buddhism this is described as grasping at the illusory self-substance of the object. So we see an object as having inherent self nature. So, beside me there is a table. Because I'm using it as a table. We could also seat on it, or stand on it. We could take one side off and make a little home for a pet mouse in it. You could put a stick in one end and take a string from the other end and make a little musical instrument. There are thousands of things we can do with this wooden box. But once we decide it's a table, we don't need to imagine anything else. The creation of the table is the death of the imagination. If our imagination stays alive, we deconstruct the tableness of the table in order to allow the potential embedded in whatever might be there. And we have done this to ourselves.

We have incredible potential. We can show many different moods and ways of walking and talking but we become used to being ourselves. This ourselves is an artificial construct, a construct which is maintained by forgetting our potential. Potentials are a bit scary because how would I know who I was if I could just be whatever was going to happen? I need to be in charge of me. I can't trust the spontaneity of co-emergence. I want to know in advance what is going to happen. (...)

In Buddhism, the first thing we look at is impermanence. The content of the mind and the content of our visual, auditory and sensory experience is ever changing. How can you make something stable out of that which is always moving. You can't. (...)

When we see, oh my thoughts are coming and going, my feelings are coming and going, the sensations in my body are coming and going, once we start to see that, oh the world is dynamic, then we have a kind of paradigm shift. I am moving in a moving world. Trying to stabilize the moving world doesn't make much sense, I need to become better at movement, I need to move with circumstances, I don't know what is going to come, so I'm going to give up the fantasy of control. That doesn't mean that I go to the other polarity, which is to feel out of control but rather in the middle I am with what is occurring and moving with that. Sometimes, coming forward, sometimes, giving space but always in connection. And then we start to see, oh I'm not an autonomous individual, I am a participant, part of what is already here. So rather than going into myself to think about what might be out there, I can relax and live through my senses, through my embodied being with the world as it shows itself. Allowing myself to be as I manifest. We can be sad, we can feel hopeless, we can feel hopeful. And see what this does to the body and how it positions us closer to other people or further away. The more we allow this display of expression, the lessening of identification with particular shapes and the less identification we're having as definitive of me, oh this is potential manifesting. Where does this potential come from? This is the mind displaying itself. What is the mind? Then we start to explore. Is the mind a thing? Is the mind inside my body? Is it outside my body? Is it big, is it small? Through relaxing into the meditation and making these explorations again and again, we start to get a feel of the unspeakable mystery of existence. (...)

The ground of being is always open and the forms which we manifest in are relational. This frees us from the sense that we have a particular shape, which we have to protect under all circumstances. That's a great relief. All this busy work of holding myself in place! And we can be with our feelings. If this is difficult for other people that's because of their limitations. You cannot rescue people from themselves. (...)

What is so toxic about the rawness of experience? The function of meditation is to allow us to experience our life as it is. In dzogchen practice, there are two main instructions in terms of meditation. To not try to hang on to what you like and not try to get rid of what you don't like. Offer hospitality to whatever occurs as it occurs. We might think but I don't want to be like this. Okay, so what are you going to do? I'm going to pretend not to be the way I am. And now I am able to like myself. Because the self that I like is not the self that I really am. That is tragic. What

it mean's is that you create or you continue the inner duality between the anxious self-formation which is judging how I am and the flow of experience. How can we ever be integrated, how can we relax and be at home in ourselves if we think there is something wrong with us. (...)

Difficult to find anything that everybody could agree with as the truth. Buddhism would say of course! Because what we have access to is experience. Each of us is a mind, the mind, our mind, that is to say a quality of awareness or an awareness which reveals the ever changing unfolding of the patterns of the world. Which world? Our world. Our worlds have some kind of interface. We have no access to the contents of other people's minds. We infer, we imagine, we interpret. This is experience. The world is experience. Not objective fact. (...)

This is very radical. It means in the world there is nothing to catch. But there is experience. So I am catching the cup in my hand, I have got something in my hand, I'm holding the cup with two hands, you can see that I am doing this, that is to say you are experiencing something. And I'm experiencing something. And we can give different descriptions of what we experience. What you actually experience is light. You see light. You don't see a cup. A cup you invent in your head. Without the concept of a cup you wouldn't know what it was. A six months baby can look at me doing this. It doesn't know what I'm doing but it sees something, it has an experience. We have an experience into which we massage cognitive structures, conceptual elaboration which takes the raw fresh field of the moment and cooks it into a familiar dish. We add the flavours we like and know. And so we customise the world. (...)

The beginning of the meditation is starting to be curious about what it means to be alive, to observe the flow of experience without correcting or controlling, and observing directly the formation of the patterning of our experience. In that we also open to the mind itself. Then our mind is not a self, an ego formation, which continues through time, the mind is an awareness which is open and naked and fresh showing whatever is occurring. And it is also the energy which is unfolding within it. In terms of awareness we are nothing at all because we can't find this awareness as something. And yet the awareness shows the field of experience, this room with the people in it and within that field, each of us is the unique specific particularity of our embodied being. In dzogchen, the whole focus is to realise the inseparability of these three aspects. However we are inseparable from the field of everything else which is occurring. And this field is inseparable from its ground, which is opened awareness. So it's not that we strongly exist as just this individual ego autonomy because whatever constructs, this is dynamic and changing. The fact that it's ungraspable doesn't mean that it's not here. When we talk, when we walk we influence other people. Other people are also energetic formations. So we are patterns

of energy in a field of energy within the space of open awareness. We are not the master, we are not the slave. On the level of manifestation, we are part of the field and so we have to work with the circumstances that arise. (...)

Our awareness is always opened and in its ungraspability is indestructible. Which is an amazing range of possibility. As this embodied self we could say from the individual point of view that we are very vulnerable. The world can get to us in all sorts of ways. But if we open to the fact that we are always already part of the world then we find ourselves responding to what happens. If I build myself as a castle, I don't want to be invaded. That's the only function of having a castle, it's to stop people invading. But if I am a participant, the other people are not invaders in my space because I don't have a space, I'm participating in the open space. And the issue then is how do I find the resources to respond to this particular person. (...)

Generally speaking, being flexible is pretty good. Being sclerotic is not much fun. So in that way, just by very minor adjustments to our vision, what we might see as obstacles and provocations we can now experience as invitations, invitations to open ourselves up, remind us that when we close down into our neurotic formation, we don't benefit ourselves and we don't benefit other people. When people annoy us, they remind us that we're getting lost. Correcting them is not going help us be not lost. We release ourselves from lostness. And that's one of the helpful functions of meditation, it let's us slip out of concretise structures more quickly, with more grace.

This is a very brief introduction to how rigidity and control formations arise and the possibility to relax these and experience the natural freedom and openness and hospitality of our awareness, which is always present.

Saturday

So, I'll just say a little bit and then we'll do some practice together. As many of you will know, the story of Buddhism began when a very pretty young man called Siddhartha in North India had some experiences, which disturbed his sense of how things were. He'd had a very protected existence, always having his needs met automatically, and he was surrounded by healthy beautiful people. But one day when he ventured outside of his compound he sees a sick person, an old person and a corpse, a dead person. And this is quite shocking for him. It causes him to put into questions the assumptions that he had about what life is all about. If I can get old and sick and die, then this realm that I am in is not helping me understand that it has some faults

embedded in it. Another day he sees a wandering holy man and he decides that oh maybe he should follow that path because that person is looking for truth. Then he goes through many different experiences and finally awakens to his own actual situation. (...)

So Buddhism begins with a disruption of assumptions. That had he not have these disturbing experiences, his life would have gone by on pleasures and then he would have died. That is to say he was sealed inside a self-fulfilling set of assumptions about how life should be lived. (...)

Life is easier with anaesthesia. So this is really what Buddhism begins with. This young man, Siddhartha, is fighting against the culturally induced anaesthesia of his family situation. Because direct experience shifts everything. So the first simple kind of practice that we do is shamatha. Focusing our attention on the breath or on some simple external object like a mark on a wooden floor and resting our attention on that and returning to it whenever we get distracted. The function of this is to detoxify the addictive quality of thinking and feeling in sensing. Somebody who smokes cigarettes regularly will have the experience of opening the packet, putting the cigarette in the mouth and lighting it without being conscious of doing this. It is automatic. Something is happening but it is as if nothing is happening because the person is so used to that happening. And this merging into the experience so that what one is blind to what one is doing is probably something we can recognize in some of our own external behaviours with relation to food, or the Internet, many things can capture our time and our energy without us hardly being aware of it.

In the meditation whenever a thought is coming out, we try to allow it to be just there as it were in our peripheral vision. The thought is a possibility, we could be part of it and through that make it part of us, or it can be allowed just to go away. So what we find in a practice is that although we try to focus clearly on the flow of the breath, we get lost. We suddenly become aware, oh I've gone somewhere else. This should be terrifying. This is really scaring. I say this is my mind, I say this is my hand, I'm sitting here with my mind - I hope - and my hand. If my hand suddenly went up my nose, this is quite alarming. James, what are you doing? I don't often find my finger up my nose. But I often find I'm caught up in thoughts. Controlling the body is not so difficult. Having a sense of resisting the temptation to identify with passing thoughts, feelings and sensations, this is more difficult. Because it happens without our awareness. It's not as if it arrives as a possibility and you have a moment of choice. But we find ourselves distracted.

There are two important things in this. One is we need to increase our clarity and that means increasing our calm so that we can see things before they quite arrive. So we try to simplify our

lives and not live with too much excitement because otherwise little secret thoughts can hide in this over busy movement of the mind. The second aspect is if I get lost without intention in loosing myself then my fantasy that I am in charge of my life, that I am the boss of my existence, this may need to be examined. If I get lost, who is losing me? I'm becoming aware of being lost after the fact of being lost. So when I see myself as the agent, as the one who makes things happen in my life, this maybe a deluding narrative, that I am living in an illusion that I am in charge of my existence. If I accept life is happening to me, there are two questions: what is then life and what is me? When we start to attend we find that life is a process of experience, transient patternings of energy. Because of the patterning there appears to be the repetition of certain features, which allows us to take them to be enduring. But the pattern itself is repeating, it's not something, which is there all the time. And who, who is the one who is here? I develop attention, I am attentive and yet I'm not, because I got lost. So the sense that I can stand apart from the world and make choices, which is the basis for the democratic freedom to be a consumers capitalist, the notion that the world is created out of commodities, that everything is owned by someone, everything is a marketable object, and therefore as a consumer I exercise the freedom of choice, when we start to meditate we see we have no choice. We have already bought the thought without examining it. You wouldn't do that in a supermarket.

It's my mind, this is an excellent thought factory, highest quality of thinking. And then you sit in a meditation and you find some weird, weird construction, it's completely enveloping you. Something has gone wrong in the quality control department of the factory. So, the meditation is not just to achieve a slightly calmer mind but it's to open up the possibility of seeing what we are up to, of observing the actual process whereby we move from a degree of clarity to a degree of enmeshed confusion. And the thing about calm is that it allows more subtle expressions to be recognised early. If you go out in countryside where it's quiet and you stand or seat still, you start to hear the small insects, which you wouldn't hear if they were in a garden in the city. In the city we get used to they're being a lot of background noise and in order to deal with that we sort of dull our sensibility so it's not to be disturbed. So one of the functions of meditation is a resensitisation of ourselves so that we start to pick up the very subtle traces of past thoughts and the very subtle beginning movements of future thoughts.

And this allows us to separate out from their enticing pool the force that they have that they will offer us true meaning. Because all of us are looking for meaning in life we have a sense of lack, something is missing. What is missing? It could be anything. Yesterday when I was coming from the airport with Manon, we were in a bus, there was a mother with two small children. The children had been sharing a little container of juice, the process of sharing this was not very

easily managed but when it was empty it was nothing at all. It was one of these thin metal, kind of container, I don't know how to describe that. The boy discovered that he could blow down the straw and make it go big and small, big and small. So his small sister's hand keeps going out to grab this. When the juice was finished she had no interest but now ..., now I need that. Lack suddenly was disclosed to her and the more he had pleasure blowing this up and down, the greater her lack and need became. When we look around in life we see many many of these situations. That is to say lack is a free-floating signifier, which can lock on to anything, which arises.

(...) From the Buddhist point of view the question is what is it that is missing. Is it an object which is out there, is it some qualities of the subject? If I had more compassion, if I was more generous, if I was more thoughtful, then I would be a complete human being. But from the meditative point of view, in order for me to be complete, the only thing I have to find is myself. We might think, well I already have myself. In fact of course we already have many ideas about ourselves, we can tell many stories about ourselves. But as we get older and we look back we see, oh I had a lot of selves and at the different stages of my life I define myself in very different ways. So what I take myself to be is maybe not me because if it was truly me it wouldn't change. What I take to be myself is a situation or a manifestation, a construct co-created with the factors around me. (...)

Whatever we say about ourselves is constructed out of situation of factors, not intrinsic factors. So is there any intrinsic truth or basis for our own sense of our existence? This is the real goal of meditation, to awaken to the one who is here. Not indirectly through telling ourselves stories about who we are but through being present in the moment of the arising of experience, not intoxicated just by experience, not holding ourselves back as some cool and distant observer but allowing the non duality of fresh present awareness, and the unfolding of the manifold existences we encounter. So we begin with just some basic calming of the mind in order just to loosen up the nature of our attachment and find that by doing less we have more. (...) Having more is not necessarily a feeling of more. Sufficient on to the day, what do we actually need depends on the actual lack not the imagined lack. And we only can know that when we get closer to ourselves. We have to look who is the one who is lacking. But we can't find that unless we taste the lack. We won't taste the lack if we're constantly eating thoughts.

Okay, so, sit in a comfortable way, let your spine carry the weight of the body so that the muscles are very free and relaxed. You can sit with your hands on your knees or folded in front of you. For this practice the chin is slightly down, the tongue is resting on the hard of the palate beyond

the front teeth, the eyes are slightly opened gazing down the line of the nose, shoulders are back and dropped, and the breath is moving easily a little through the mouth but mainly through the nose. You can sit in a full lotus if you can but this is not necessary.

And then we simply track the movement of the breath as we feel it on the nostrils. This is not something to think about, you're just being with sensory manifestation. And whenever you find your attention wandering of and you are caught in something else, very gently bring it back to the focus.

[Practice]

So one other useful function of this simple practice is that it's a kind of diagnostic. Through it we start to see that we have certain faults and failings. So what should we do? As a subject I realise I could do better. That is to say I comment on myself and I see room for improvement. Therefore I should try harder. Where I am is not so good, that would be better if I were somewhere else.

Therefore I should make use of the holy Dharma in order to get somewhere else. In the Nyingmapa's system we have nine yanas. Yana means basically a vehicle, a method for traveling. And we have five ways and ten stages. If you want to take the train to Zürich you probably have quite a lot of stations on the road. When you get to each station you can look how many kilometres you have come and how many kilometres you still have to go. So as you move up the ten stages of the Mahayana path you can do exactly the same. A sense of progress, a sense of accomplishment.

That's one way of orienting oneself. There is a long way to go, the great heroes are already there but we are walking slowly. Unfortunately death is going to meet us before we arrive at our destination. Better luck next life. The dzogchen tradition is very different. It says: Oh you have problems? Who has problems? This is much quicker. When you focus your attention on being present, on being aware, you become aware of distraction. And distraction means being moved from where you are. There is a traction, a pull, so you get distorted. Ah something to do, this is good we like something to do. From this day on I will always do my best to resist distraction. Even if I am not going on a big journey I can still be a hero. So I'm going to struggle with distraction. If you want to defeat your enemy, you have to find your enemy. So you look at your mind, there is this dangerous thought, get your gun out but before you can pull the trigger it's

gone. This feeling which seems to catch you, you're going to strangle it, is gone. Very difficult to be a hero.

Thoughts, feelings and sensations go free by themselves. This is the deep basis all the dzogchen path, which is a strange path because it's a path to being here. It doesn't involve going anywhere else. What goes somewhere else is the illusory journey of thoughts and feelings and sensations. But our awareness never moves. Everything else is moving. Experience is always moving. But without awareness there is no experience. Movement and stillness are inseparable. It's not that movement is the enemy. The problem is the forgetfulness of stillness in the moment of movement. The nature of the mind is space. When we look out and we see the sky, clouds move through. The sky is not contaminated by clouds. Clouds are, if you like, one the ways the sky shows its potential. So white clouds, dark clouds, storms, rainbows and clear blue open space. So what do I have to do? I don't have to do anything. How do I do that? That's how we get lost, trying to do something which can't be done.

One of the very interesting things which CR Lama points out in this book which we now have in French, he points out the irrelevance of human knowledge. This is not an ego inflation statement. This is ego deflation. You are redundant because your activity, which you are so proud of, has caused nothing but trouble. I don't like this story. I want to be special and I want to do things and I want people to see what I do and then I want them to like me. The ego inserts itself like a cuckoo in the nest. But what is the ego? The ego is excess or a whirlpool, a swirl of energetic formation. This is what we have to see. So really all what we have to do is to observe ourselves in the process of being ourselves. Look, don't act. Because when we see, the need for action is less and less. When we see that I am dynamic, that we are born and die again and again and again, what I take myself to be is exactly a taking, a theft, out of the undivided field of experience I roll a little circle around certain aspects and say in this minute I am this. And then in the next moment you say, I am something else, and then something else. The most reliable thing about us is our unreliability. This is impermanent nature of the mind.

So you can see there is a crossroad here. You can decide ah, I'm going to be reliable. I'm not going to be like one these lost people wandering in samsara, I will know what I think, and I say what I think and I will be clear. Impossible. Impossible. Because the mind is open. We say my mind as if it was my possession. But we appear within our mind. The ego is niched in the mind. But we act and behave as if the mind was niched inside the ego. This is big category confusion.

So how could I ever know how I should be? The less able we are to define who we are, the more we can allow our potential to arise as required into the situation. This is the functional meaning

of non-duality, means by not holding yourself apart as something separate, but by being a participant the spontaneity of movement will arise as part of the field and will be intrinsically harmonious. But if you start from a position of separation, there is you and there is me, and I have to work out what to say, then a whole sequence of adjustments is required. Because I say something with an intention but you react to it in a way I didn't expect and so now I have to say, well I know I said that but I didn't really mean that, what I meant was... There is no end to this. And so nothing we say is complete or clean.

The meaning of dzogpachenpo is the great accomplishment. And this means that from the very beginning everything has been whole, every part is a participant part, not a part held apart. By trusting the wholeness of the situation, less meant activity is required and we find ourselves just moving in connectivity. The focus of the practice in dzogchen is to open to the awareness which is already present and to allow the freshness of the arising of the manifestation through the body and speech and so on, with less and less interference from the programs and templates and habitual formations which we have already acquired and adopted as who we are.

Of course the teaching is part of a tradition. The teachings that I have primarily are from the Nyingma tradition, which is a set of lineages, which have two forms: opened and treasure. The opened lineage is a lineage that comes from Buddha Shakyamuni and from some other early Buddhas and has been passed on from generation to generation. And the other lineage is as treasure and was taught by Padmasambhava in Tibet in the seventh, eight-century of the Christian era. The teachings were then hidden some in the earth, some in water, some in the sky and were later revealed by people who were the reincarnation of the early students of Padmasambhava. That is to say some people have an inspiration, which allows the depth of the Dharma to shine through them. As we were looking just before the break, this potential is in every one.

The freshness of the mind of the Buddha is present with all of us. The accounts of the first manifestation of Padmasambhava say he isn't born in a human way but manifested in a middle of a lake on a big lotus in the form of an eight years old boy. And he had little bits of sweat on his face as if in the summer time you go out in the garden and you pick some vegetables, it still has little drops of dew on it. Completely fresh and not interfered within the factory. So this is a symbol of the different possibilities of our existence as well. You have the outer lineages, which are transmitted by someone to you and you have the direct lineage of your own awareness. The function of the outer lineage is to awaken the inner lineage.

The function of the teacher is to be a site of recognition of yourself. There are many many things in Buddhism that you can learn, there are hundreds of thousands of books, hundreds of thousands of different meditation practices and so on. But knowing about something is not the same as inhabiting it. To inhabit something is to make it your own, that you massage it into yourself so that you become the living embodiment of it. So it's very important to learn how to transform what appears as objective knowledge into subjective experience. The central question then is how do I find myself? I am here, I am hidden from myself by myself and because I am hiding myself from myself who will I ask to stop doing this. Then you get more and more steps of self-talking to self about what's the problem with your self. Then you have a multiplication and not integration.

In the tradition we talk about the guru. Guru essentially means yourself. The guru is not somebody else. The guru is the generosity of the world manifesting as the way of returning you to you. The guru can be visualised as Padmasambhava or in a physical form or as Tara or as any of the tantric forms. In the tantric system you work with idealisation. The guru is perfect, I am not perfect. By praying to the guru with great faith I become in connection with the teacher. Then we might visualise rays of lights coming from the teacher, white light from the forehead coming into your forehead, red light from the throat coming to your throat, blue light from the heart coming to your heart purifying all the limitations and imperfections of body, speech and mind. Then the lights come altogether from these three places and you are full of light. The guru in front of you is in a form of light, he comes to the top of your head and dissolves into a ball of light, which comes into your heart. Then your body, which is full of light, dissolves into that ball of light. So the only thing which exists is one ball of three-coloured light which becomes smaller and smaller and smaller until it vanishes in space. In this spacious opened state you are inseparable from the mind of the guru. And then gradually thoughts, feelings, sensations arise, everything you see is the form of the guru appearance and emptiness, everything you hear is mantra, sound and emptiness, and all thoughts and mental experience is the mind of the guru.

Then you continue with that understanding. So when a thought arises in the mind "Mister Trump is an hassle", is this really the mind of the guru? Why would an enlightened mind of all the Buddhas give rise to such a thought? When I would make such a question to CR Lama, he would say: "When you meet the Buddha ask him, don't ask me". (...)

When I showed my holy guru that I have thoughts like this, he said, "I'm glad you are able to tell the Buddha who he is. So you know what the Buddha is like." We don't know what the Buddha's like. This is the difficulty of being with things as they are because we already have many

thoughts about how they should be. (...) Everything is the mind of the Buddha. You mean when the Russian are bombing the innocent people in Syria, this is the mind of the Buddha? Surely the Buddha is good and that is bad. If it this, it can't be that. This is good, this is bad, they are not the same. This is the way duality in the mind, firstly subject and object and then good and bad, mine and yours, sacred-profane, enlightened-not enlightened, all these many many dualities manifest. This is our own mind. We say this is good, we say that is bad. (...)

These are opinions. On the basis of opinions we like to kill people. All the wars in the world are created by opinions. By taking an idea, blowing on it three times and turning it into the truth. (...)

Judgement is something you have to be very careful, especially in the practice of meditation. We have to see the difference between two aspects. One we can call discernment, which means the accurate perception of what is there. For example, you might have three tomatoes. And you eat a bit from each of them. You can say this tomato tastes more sweet than that one. The colour of this tomato is a deeper red than the colour of that one. This is discernment. I am bringing my attention to the actual qualities of what is revealed. But when I say, "Oh, this is a terrible tomato, how can they sell such rubbish!" this is a judgement. So the judgement is taking a position, a strong position towards what is discerned. Discernment has a relational quality. (...)

These ordinary life experiences are very helpful because they show how easy it is for us to slip into building models, building structures of interpretation, which appear to be illuminating, but are actually obscuring. If we want the freshness of the situation we have to clean the palate between each course of a meal. Now how do we do this with the mind? Because these thoughts are wedding themselves together into patterns very quickly. The key freshener is emptiness. Emptiness means that whatever is being experienced and the experiencer of the experience are not things, not separate items but are appearances. Something appears to the eyes, to the ears, to the memory. And that appearance is impactful, it has its quality, which is revealed in the moment but there is no internal definition to it. It arises due to causes and circumstances and then its impact diminishes, it vanishes and there is space for something else. The fact that it's there means it's not nothing at all, this is not an annihilationist view, there is something which is nothing, as it set's up very clearly in the Heart sutra. When the sunshine comes through the roof there is appearance, which we merged with our thoughts of good times to come. We put our emotional life into the flow of the changing light. So we have an emotional resonance, a cognitive resonance but there is nothing to grasp. So emptiness is the basic space of potential, it is both the source of what arises and it is the space within which everything arises. And it is the ground,

which is inseparable from whatever arises. So thoughts don't leap out of the mind like a fish leaping out of water, thoughts are in the mind. This room is in the mind. Experience is the movement of the mind and as such it is impactful and ungraspable. We arise with it but we can't get it, which is the freshness of our existence. In Sanskrit this is called *sahaj*. *Sahaj* is the spontaneous co-emergence of subject and object. It means there are not two things but there is not one thing, it is the non-dual integrated arising. Appearance is inseparable from emptiness. It doesn't mean that appearance is dissolved into emptiness and becomes empty but rather that ungraspability shows many different forms of itself. (...)

So the encouragement here is just to start to really observe how busy you are in generating your particular tape on the world. It's not about trying to stop the thought production. In the afternoon we will do some meditation, which helps us to just allow these movement to be there but with less disturbance. But the first thing is to really see how much busy movement is in our life. The ego is a commentarial function. It's always giving its opinion, running a narrative, which is creating patterns of importance. And from the point of view of the ego this is vital because this is how it confirms its existence. From the point of view of opened awareness this is very sad. Awareness says but you are hiding your own actuality from yourself, it is our own activity, which blinds us to the openness of being. There is no devil doing it, no force of evil. (...)

When you walk down your street and they're any gardens, did you notice that the buds are starting to come out on the branches, didn't you find that there has been some fresh moment in which the person has been touched? And they were touched because the world came to them. The depressive factory, which is pumping out hopelessness and uselessness on to everything and on to themselves, that engine was stopped for a moment because they were touched and moved. We all have that kind of experience. Suddenly you see a little robin hopping about and you're touched. "Oh!" and that "Oh!" is very nice, something came in, "Oh!" comes out. The mind is empty. Just some kind of soft gentle surprise. This is on a very general level. This is an indication that the freshness is always there. It's not something you have to get from somewhere else or is the reward of doing a lot of practices. The freshness is the ground of our experience always present, always generous. But when we are caught up in our thought production it becomes invisible to us. So this is the practice, to open to freshness. When we go out of here into the street, there are cars, there are people, we have a lot of capacity to tell the world what it is, which means we will have a stale world. The world is being constructed in our own image. Just relaxing and allowing the shapes of the cars, the shapes of the people to come to you. Be undefended, receptive. And the world starts to feel very different. In that way we realise that the hunger of the ego to go and get what it needs is ridiculous. We are living in a land of plenty, there

is beauty everywhere. And yet we are hungry. Everything is Padmasambhava so why do we say: not this, I want that.

These *Three statements of Garab Dorje* begin with what could be called an introduction. Sometimes it's translated as pointing out. We can point out something. I can point out where the clock is. There is something, which can be pointed out. But the mind cannot be pointed out because it's not a thing. So before we even begin to consider what Garab Dorje said we have to be clear about the nature of knowledge. Knowledge is based generally in public life on the accumulation of bits of information. But some things can only be shown. So the tradition Tibetan example for this is if somebody doesn't know what sweetness is, you could use thousands and thousands of words to try to describe sweetness and they can memorise all these words but they still wouldn't know what is sweetness. Well you can take a spoon full of honey and put it on the tongue and they immediately would know what is sweet. Then now that they know what sweetness is you could ask them to tell you what it is. And they also would find it impossible. So when we were talking about pointing out the mind or describing the nature of the mind and so on, it's important to take the words in a very light way. They are metaphorical, they allude to things, which evoke something, but they cannot precisely describe what it is. They are an invitation to put yourself in the way of something, which is already there. To put yourself in the way of your mind is to get out of the way of yourself, which is to get yourself out of the way. It means simply to relax and open and to be with what is here.

When the thought arises it's a kind of illumination. Generally speaking this is the light, which our life is governed by. The light of conceptual elaboration. The more thoughts we have, the most sophisticated thoughts we have we can illuminate more and more areas of life. What is difficult to recognise is that this practice of illumination is itself obscuring. (...)

In order to find ourselves we need to have an illumination, which is not that of concepts. When you see paintings of the primordial Buddha Kungtu Zangpo, he is dark blue in colour. This is the colour of the sky at the very first moment of the dawn. It's just a couple of shades up from black. Out of not knowing comes light. First you have to not know. (...) From the point of view of Dzogchen you have to not feel like you. Who will I feel like? Feel like anything. The mind is just empty. Nothing. Stuff is happening but it's not me. Live it alone. (...) So when thoughts and feelings arise in the mind they can be experienced but if you try to incorporate them into your sense of self, this becomes a problem. We arrive with nothing, we play, it's not ours, and then we leave with nothing. The playing is playing in emptiness. The nothingness of the dark gives rise to Samantabhadra, the Buddha. It is the radiance of the mind, which shows itself. It's not an

illumination, which brings something into the foreground and others into the back but the very soft light of early dawn, which is inclusive. It's very beautiful if you're up early on a summer morning and you are out in the country and you see the first light filling the valley and everything is just as it is in its own place. This is the light of the mind of Samantabhadra. It's not a busy light it's not doing things and making things. It's a light that we can be. When we open to the dawn we are part of that experience. When the mind is quiet and the world is quiet there is wholeness. So what is my mind? From the very beginning our mind is here. Without a mind we wouldn't be able to think or walk or move, the mind is the illuminator. It illuminates everything. We turn our head everything in the room is illuminated just as it is. It's not selective. In the tradition it's often compared to be like a mirror. The mirror shows whatever is placed in front of it, the mirror is not selective, it's not composing any image. It's a simple showing, a showing, which doesn't invite, doesn't hold on and doesn't push away. It just allows. The reflection is in the mirror, it's not added on to the mirror. But you can't take a reflection out of the mirror. Nor can you say the reflection is the mirror. Because the mirror is not defined by the particular image which is being reflected at the moment. Similarly our mind is opened and empty, moment by moment you have sensations, feelings, thoughts, memories, hopes, and fears arising and passing. They are us, they are in us, they are me. And then they're gone. I am this and I'm not. (...) What arises is what is there which is true experientially but not essentially. Just as the reflection in the mirror is there, undeniable, and yet has no self-substance. There is no essence to the reflection. In the traditional example, full moon light if you're outside, you see the reflection of the moon in a pond. If the night is calm and the water is unruffled then you see the moon very clearly. It is as if the moon is in the water. It's the moon! Look at the moon! But it's not the moon, but it appears to be the moon. You look at your face in the mirror, it's me but it's not you. Something is there but there is no truth, or reality, or substance to it. It is the illusory nature of phenomena, which is both the consequence of, and the guarantor of the emptiness of the mind. If the mind was a solid substance, a piece of clay, a piece of wood, of metal you could make many things of it but not everything. (...)

But you are your mind. The real question is how not to be the one who doesn't know how to find their mind. Your mind is hidden by the mind's own mental construction. But the thoughts don't hide the mind by standing between me and the mind. If I am looking in a mirror to try to see my reflection how will I find that reflection? If I put my hand in front of my face the reflection of my face will be hidden by the reflection of my hand. Something has been interposed between me and my own mind. So I have to remove this as if it's an obscuration. I want to find my mind. As CR Lama explained a dog has a tail. The dog and the tail belong together. (...)

I am the movement of my mind. The mind comes first. It shows the interplay, the eternal dance of subject and object. In our normal way of conceptualizing, I am a permanent fixture, which has experiences. Experiences come and go but I'm always here. I can remember being five years of age. I can remember my first bicycle. I have had so many experiences. This is the view of duality. I am the enjoying subject and I have had experiences out of which I can create more stories. But who is this I talking of itself? Everything I say about me is arising and passing. The impermanent flow, the ever-changing flow of the unfolding energy of the mind shows itself as subject and object. Every subject exists with object. You don't have the subject without anything going on. Subject and object is a pas de deux, it's not a solo. The subject side in the pas de deux of dualistic experiences is me. I'm here but I am the tail of the dog. That's a central thing. Where is the dog? If you think I am going to work everything out, I am going to find my mind, the ego is big and powerful and the mind is a little lost sheep wandering on the hill. And this is what makes meditation very difficult. Because you're starting with false axioms and the axioms determine the progression of your understanding. So when it says the mind is naked, what could it be recovered by? The perception of subject and object. But I rely on the perception of subject and object to help me know what it's going on. So this is the radical shift. Enlightenment is not gained by more thinking or better thinking, it's not a conceptual creation, it is the direct revelation of how it is. I am going to meditate by letting go of myself. By allowing all that I take to be myself to be what it actually is which is part of the flow of experiences. That is to say I am an experience not the experiencer, I experience myself. I experience myself talking with you, looking around at different people. In that moment I can see that I, as energetic formation, is something arising and passing. So who is experiencing myself as an experience? That's what we want to find.

So when we do the meditation, the simplest way is just to seat in a comfortable way and relaxing to the outbreath. We do it with a gaze slightly opened looking into the space in front of us, because we don't want to create the sense of going into myself, we're just here. What's here is me and everything. Here I am, thoughts, feelings, sensations are going on. There is an urge to identification with certain aspects of what is arising as me. I become a little bit aware of some tension in my legs because of the angle of the chair, oh my legs are bit sore, this is a construction but it seems to be something about me. Let it go. Whatever occurs let it go. The letting go is not effortful, because everything goes by itself anyway. It's the holding on which is effortful. So we're just sitting, Saturday afternoon, time is going by, nothing is gained, nothing is lost. Where, how and with whom is this occurring? If I don't tell myself a story about who is the experiencer, experience is occurring, therefore there is an experiencer, if you want to find the experiencer be at the point of experience. (...) Again and again, not merging into the experience and being part of it, not standing apart from it separately and trying to examine it, but be the very field of

awareness within which experience is arising and passing. (...) Just as with a mirror, you wouldn't have a reflection without the mirror but the particular details of the reflection doesn't define the actual nature of the mirror. We are not locking the flow of experience, we are not trying to capture any of it, we're just staying present in the very moment of the unfolding of space and time. Don't push away thoughts you think are negative, don't try to hang on to thoughts which are positive, just relax into the opened presence which is your awareness, which is simply allowing the energy formation, which is the self-referential ego to relax into its own ground of spaciousness. Okay so we try this for a while.

[Practice]

So with this kind of meditation, at first you don't want to do it for too long. It's not a matter of making effort, it's not a matter of struggling. But again and again gently finding yourself where experience is. It's just a matter of practice. For some people it's quite easy, for others it's more difficult, but it's not a raise or a competition, it's about being fully at home in yourself. (...) What we are doing in our practice, again and again, it's giving a very subtle rebalancing so that we are as close to our experience as possible without falling in. Not merged in it, not apart from it, but present with it. The mirror is present with the reflection. The mirror is not doing anything to the reflection, not defending itself against the reflection, or rearranging it, or trying to get rid of it. So if you are sitting and you feel a bit heavy, if a thought comes "I don't know what I am doing, this is not meditation", just sit with that. (...)

Here all the thoughts have the same status. They are just reflections. Ignorance, the beginning of samsara is the identification with the thought. Who identifies with the thought? The thought of I. Samsara is thought chasing thought, building thought. (...) You never see the mirror, you just see the reflection. (...)

Samsara is an ungrateful child. The mother is there. In the Buddhist tradition the mother is considered the great mother, which is prajnaparamita, emptiness itself, the wisdom of awaking to emptiness. The child and the mother are never separated. The child is continuously dependent on the mother but the child says I exist, I'm just me, I have always just been myself. Because the child doesn't remember coming out of the mother's body. The child says as long as I can remember I've been me. The mother is thinking, "oh oh, I have a different memory". (...)

In the book of this *Collected Works of CR Lama*, you find in the first two chapters a very condensed description of the tantric and Dzogchen paths. And they are very helpful because they

show the particular interest or orientation of the different styles of practice. (...) But the Buddhism we need is the Buddhism we can use. (...) If you're a beginner, and you're upset, and you're confused, you put your hands together and you pray big mama, big papa, please save me. You call the mama Tara, you call the papa Padmasambhava, and this is the best practice because it fits the quality of your energy. You feel small and desperate and you want to hang on to something, rather than phoning your friend in the middle of the night and giving him a hard time because they can't really help you, pray! And dissolve into the deity! At other times when you are more relaxed and at home in yourself, you can do the Dzogchen direct sitting practice. What this means is, you have to respect yourself. You have to find the dignity of your own embodied existence and work with that. (...)

We have started to look at this paradox that when we are chasing something we are usually disappointed and when we open to nothing we find we have everything. It's not that the desire for something is bad or wrong, it's just that it is upper focused. We can look just now, if you just focus your gaze directly in front of you, you get a particular kind of experience. And then if you relax your gaze and open a peripheral vision you have a completely different experience. Your wide room is always here but when you have this fixated vision, you don't see it. It hasn't vanished or gone somewhere else. When we let go of the fixation on something by not wishing for anything in particular, we find everything becomes available. And then having access to everything by being relaxed and opened, the sense of lack, the sense of something missing starts to dissolve. What could be more than this? What makes this small is comparing it with that. When you have just this, this is this. It is what it is, and we're with this, this is it. Satisfaction and contentment is revealed through being opened and empty, and being accessible to everything. This is a kind of pulsation. The space of the mind is available to everything. We are not blocking or editing our receptivity. And we are available in that we can manifest different aspects of ourselves according to the situation.

This is quite difficult to talk about. In the tradition they tend to talk about it in a rather distanced way. For example in terms of what are called the three kayas, or the three modes of the Buddha's existence. The first is the Dharmakaya, which is the mind of the Buddha inseparable from open space. And because it's without limit in any direction, everything is already within it and so it has no lack. Then without effort, the clarity of the spaciousness reveals itself. So looking again at this image of the mirror, when you look into the mirror to find the mirroriness of the mirror, you can't find anything. But the mirror shows itself through its clarity of revealing reflections of whatever is placed in front of it.

In the same way our mind is empty and so it has hospitality for everything but its shining quality, or illuminating quality of clarity, is the display of the field of experience. It doesn't have to do anything to do it. Within this opened clarity of our mind we find ourselves walking and talking and speaking. This arises situationally. Probably when we find ourselves in this particular building, we're talking to people in ways that we might don't talk if we were at work. The setting allows and supports particular kinds of conversations. We don't decide to talk in a particular way but by being in touch with the field, by being part of the field, you find that particular kinds of words come out of your mouth. In the tradition this is the Sambogakaya, which is the enjoyment, or the aesthetic appreciation quality of the clarity of the field, which is often linked to the idea of pure Buddha land, like Buddha Amithaba's Western paradise. Our world here in this room at the moment is also a Buddha field. Within that the Nirmanakaya, the movement of the energy of the Buddha as a compassionate expression, just arises. Something occurs. We find ourselves being part of something in a particular way. (...) When we are self-forgetful, we do being ourselves better, just very interesting. When I don't know that I'm doing me, I do me better. This is what it means by the Nirmanakaya just radiates out through the shared field of connectivity. When we retreat into a kind of anxiety about ourselves, this creates a kind of threshold in front of us, which we have to step over to go out into the world. This dualistic splitting generates a feeling of self-consciousness and a process of artificiality. How will I be, how should I be in order to be okay with these people? What are they thinking about me? Many unanswerable questions are generated by anxiety. And in response to these questions, the anxious person formulates rituals and obsessional behaviours as a way of trying to regulate the uncertainty of existence.

The problem is not the unpredictability of the world, but our alienation from the non-dual field of experience, we ourselves cut ourselves off. You can try this as an experiment, go into a café or a bar and hold in mind the thought "everyone is looking at me and they don't like me". And stay for about half an hour looking around and checking if people are looking at you. You will not feel very relax. Who is creating the lack of relaxation? You yourself. You're bringing in a particular reading to the situation, you say I am an object, which can be judged and evaluated by other people. I am there at the mercy of the thoughts they have about me. People are shy, embarrassed, and ashamed; this kind of apprehension of the world is very normal. A whole feeling of insecurity and paranoia is generated from the basic supposition, the basic proposition "I am an object". I am a thing. And therefore I can be defined. I can be caught. But when we are relaxed and opened, we can't be caught. (...)

So we do a little bit more meditation now. And we want to explore precisely for ourselves “Am I an object? Is my mind a thing?” Now what are the qualities of things? They are located. Beside me there is a wooden box, this box is on my left-hand side. The box is smaller than me, it has a colour, it has a shape, which I can define, it has a beginning and an end. (...)

When we start to look at the mind, in the tradition we look at five questions. Because we want to see, is the mind a thing like all the other seeming things in the world. Does the mind have a shape? Is it round or square, triangular? Does it have a colour? Does it have a size, is it bigger than the body, is it bigger than the house, is it smaller than the body, is it located in the brain? Then there are three linked questions. Where does the mind come from? Where does the mind rest, at this moment, at each and every moment where is the mind? And does the mind ever leave, does it go away some place? We know that thoughts arise, and stay, and go. As do feelings, and sensations, and buses. (...) So our question is: is the mind something in the same family as all the other phenomena?

Or is it different? What we are looking for is not just an idea about it, but we’re looking for direct experience. You can see with small babies, they are quite interested in their mouth and when they start to develop the teeth, they’re chewing on the fingers. And at a certain moment “Aahh!” they have the experience, this is my finger! This is not theory. “Aouh!” this is direct experience. So that’s what we want. We don’t want an idea about an idea about an idea because they always vanish. We want to directly taste “oh it is this!” Because it is the direct experience, which opens up a new vista. Ideas about belong in one paradigm. But the direct experience opens up another kind of space.

Okay we can start in the same way, seat in a relax way. You can release tensions through a long slow outbreath. And then you just sit with what ever is occurring, present. Then very gently allow these questions to arise. We want the questioning to be very soft and gentle. Not a kind of invasive active questioning but more a kind of passive receptive questioning. Are we sitting available? The mind is there because we are not dead. So what is this? See if you can, just by your own availability, allow yourself to see how your mind is. With these five questions, just very gently illuminating the area of exploration. Any questions about that before we begin? So we do this for a while.

[Practice]

These questions are the great friends of meditators. It's normal in Western cultures to think that mind is in the brain and the brain is in the skull. That there is a material basis for the mind, that it arises due to causes and conditions and will vanish due to causes and conditions. That is to say the mind is just like everything else. So we then have that support, if you hold that kind of view it supports you in the idea that something is coming into your mind and going out of your mind. Where was it before it came into your mind? And where is the boarder crossing from no mind to mind? We are sitting here, we maybe hear a car on the road outside. Of course we don't hear a car in the road outside, we hear a sound and we interpret on the basis of our knowledge and habit formations "Oh that is a sound of a car, which is on the road outside". The sound is where? (...) When a sound arises, the immediacy of it is in our mind. Where is our mind, where the sound is? Does my mind move from here to where the cup falls over (*a cup just fell on the floor*)? As soon as the cup is falling, it's as if my mind is apprehending or revealing this experience. (...)

Does a mind have a shape? What do we find? The mind seems to be able to open up. In this room the limit of what we can see is the walls. If we keep looking we see, oh sometimes the mind looks big big big, and sometimes it looks very small. Just as if you had a mirror, maybe I'm shaving and I'm looking in a mirror and my face is quite close to the mirror, it's quite small. But if I take the mirror out into the street, the whole sky is in the mirror. (...) If the mind were a thing, it would have a fixed shape. So maybe the mind doesn't have a shape. But its quality is that it can appear to show us shape. Just as when you look out on a beautiful summer's day, the sky looks so big. And then on a grey autumn's day when the clouds are low, the sky looks quite small. The sky has not become small but it appears small because that is the limit of our experience. (...) This is the quality, or the shape, which arises inside the openness of the mind. The mind itself is neither big nor small. But the patterns of manifestations of mood, feeling, sensation, memory, intention, demand, all the many factors that can flow through us, this gives the shape to our sense of our self and the world.

Where does the mind come from? Has ever be a time without the mind? Our life is our awareness. If it's coming from somewhere, where would it come from? It comes from there to here, so I'm here and my mind came from there to me? But if I'm here, who is the one that is here when my mind is somewhere else? (...) Thoughts can go, I can, well we can all think, try to remember something that happen to you between the ages of five and ten. Just take a moment, see what comes to mind. (Silence) Okay, do you have some memories? It's possible to remember something. So sitting here, did you go into the past? Did the past come to you? (...)

So we investigate by allowing the unfolding of experience again and again. So when you're just sitting, many many different kind of experience arise. Maybe happy, sad, busy, confused, all kinds. They're arising, you are here, this is what is occurring in and as the content of the mind. What kind of container could allow such a perfect fitting with whatever arose? (...) Now given the variety of experiences that you have, rising moods, thinking moods and so on, dancing with music, eating food, kissing someone and so on, what is the container? Seems to be a perfect fit! (...)

You can talk about it forever and it won't really help, just give you more and more mental furniture. The main thing is to get a sense about the definition and there are now many books including the *Simply being* book I wrote some years ago, which sets out the view, the understanding very clearly. As far as it can go. But each of us has to take these words, take these ideas and massage them into ourselves. (...)

We take these questions and hold them, if you are sitting on the bus going to work, having a shower, just let them be part of your experience. Of where am I now, what is this? (...) The more you allow these questions to be normal, they can be, sitting on the bus, waiting or in a café with a friend, at work, when life is easy, when life is hard, if experience is arising the mind is there, how is the mind? (...) The awareness which is always there, every day, every moment of every day, we haven't explored this at all. This is quite remarkable.

So all that we are doing in the practice is to relax into the spaciousness of the mind. And allow it to show itself. Now space can only really reveal itself to space. So one kind of instruction or suggestion you find in the traditional texts is that you should meditate "sky to sky". That is to say, when we are opening to ourselves, we are like the sky and what we open to is also like the sky. Two spaces within which shapes and forms and colours and memories are moving. These are not two spaces, they're really one space. The more we practice, the more this is obvious. (...)

The main thing is the space. When you're clear that the mind is space, then everything which appears is the manifestation of the space, devoid of substance and yet there. So then you have emptiness and clarity inseparable. And then when the meditation finishes and you start to engage with the world, you find yourself moment by moment in a precise form. So it's not as if we were in a meditation and then came out of the meditation into another world, but more like the meditation is like being the sea on a calm day, deep and the surface is shimmering in the sunlight. Then the wind blows a little bit and the surface of the sea starts to move. What is moving? The water of the sea. The wave is not something different from the ocean. It's how the

ocean shows its motility, its capacity for movement. (...) You can't catch a wave, it has a shape but an ungraspable shape. So in the same way when we are happy or sad, or feeling very bright and intelligent, or feel dull and stupid, these are moments of manifestation, there are manifestations of the energy embedded in the clarity, which is embedded in the spaciousness. And this is the basic view of Dzogchen. The meditation practice is not very complicated. But there are many difficulties to be overcome because of our habit formations. Through time many techniques, which operate as antidotes have been developed and it's possible to teach Dzogchen in that way, with many many techniques. But my own main teacher, C.R Lama, always said stay with the most simple point, which is illuminated by the great masters. The mind is always here, be present with and as the mind, don't follow after past thoughts, don't wait expectantly for future thoughts, don't try to hang on to what you like and push away what you don't like, rest in open spaciousness, and the dynamic nature of experience will show the self liberating nature of the mind, like a snake untying itself the mind will move free. And when you become free your mind becomes like an empty house. And if the thief of habitual formation breaks in, it has nothing to attach itself to. So this is the practice.

So we continue with the practice, but this time we do the first part through guru yoga. As I was saying earlier, guru means the teacher but also means the Buddha mind and it also means your own mind. When we are established in the sense of duality, we feel I am in here and other people, the world is out there. So I pray to the guru. But as we have been looking wherever I am, the world is. I come with the world. The world is as much me as my embodied self. In fact, I see the world more clearly than I see my body. So from the point of view of Dzogchen, the mind sometimes looks primarily like object and sometimes looks primarily like subject. If you're out in the hills and you're just looking at this beautiful view, you give yourself to the view and the view gives itself to you, but it's also as if the view is you. So what we are trying to dissolve all the time is the restricted idea that I sit inside my skin bag, intrinsically, innately separate from the world around me.

So in the practice, in the space in front of us, about two arms length away from us we imagine a white letter A. The letter A could be in roman capital letter or Tibetan letter if you know what it looks like. In the Sanskrit and Tibetan alphabets all the consonants take the vowel A. And A is said to be the primordial sound with all other sounds arising as a variation on it. Usually small babies begin with ma-ma, pa-pa and so on, aaaa-mama-papa, there is an interruption to the flow of A. A is seen as the basis of all sounds and therefore of all worlds and therefore of all conceptual constructions and therefore all the varieties of samsara. A is also the essence of the Prajnaparamita's teachings. There is a very extensive prajnaparamita in a hundred thousand

verses, many reductions done to the Heart Sutra, then to four lines verse in praise of prajnaparamita, then the mantra of the Heart Sutra and then just the letter A. Because when A-A-A, it's a sound, which is empty, it doesn't really signify very much, it's not defined very much, in that sense it's open and empty, and yet because it's the basis of all the other sounds it expresses a rich potential.

Emptiness is nothing, which is everything. So when we visualise this letter A, this is the presence of the awareness of all the Buddhas, which is the wisdom that understands the empty nature, which is the ground of everything, which manifests the wisdom of understanding emptiness. The empty nature of all phenomena. We can imagine that this letter condenses all the awareness of all the Buddhas. And it's surrounded by light in the traditional Tibetan colours, white, red, blue, yellow and green, and this represents the five poisons and the five wisdoms. The five poisons are stupidity, or assumptions, desire, aversion, jealousy and pride. And the five wisdoms are their purification or transformation. Assumption becomes the wisdom of the Dharmadhatu, that is to say the natural openness of the mind, which includes all phenomena, all dharmas. The purification of desire is the wisdom of discernment, which sees each thing precisely as it is. The purification of anger is the mirror-like wisdom. The purification of jealousy is the wisdom, which accomplishes everything. The purification of pride is the wisdom of equality, that all things are equal in their emptiness.

So all the energy of restriction and all the energy of freedom radiates from A. Because it's often said in Dzogchen texts, there is one ground and two paths. The ground is the openness of the mind itself. One path is the path of being aware of this, being present in and as this, and the other path is the path of ignoring the ground and fabricating illusory forms, which is the generation of samsara. So what it's saying is that confusion and awakening have the same ground. They are not two separate families coming from two different places. So being present in this state of A, all the potential of samsara and nirvana is revealed.

So we rest in an open way and together we make the sound of A three times. And as we are making this sound, we're releasing all the tensions of our body, our voice and our mind so that we are just open to this symbol of the mind of the Buddha. And after we've made the sound, after a few seconds, this form in front of us dissolves into light and in to space, and we just sit in openness as we were doing before. And then when you can, when it seems right, you gently bring up these questions we've been looking at.

[Practice]

That brings us to the end of our study together today but we can also take the practice of it, these ideas and the awareness, take it into the evening, whatever we're doing. Keep on not to judge ourselves but simply observe, allow your own existence to show itself without making it artificial.

Sunday

We start with the three A as we began yesterday. Just in the space in front, seeing this letter A with the coloured light. And releasing the tensions of body, speech and mind through making the sound of A three times. We want to allow this really to come out in an open clear way.

[Practice]

So yesterday we were looking a bit at the first statement of Garab Dorje, which is to open yourself to your own, to the truth of your own being. So when we sit in the practice, we become increasingly aware of the movement of the mind. Our mind is like the sky, our experience is like different kinds of clouds moving through it. Sometimes the clouds seem to pervade the whole sky, and then we can be forgetful that the sky is there as the medium and the generosity that allows the clouds to be there. So again we sit and sit and just allow the movement of experience until we are clear that the mind itself doesn't move but everything else is moving. Now of course when we look around the room, we can think oh I was here yesterday. It's the same room. Is it? This is something we have to really be clear about. Most of us don't have a fantastic visual memory so we rely on concepts, on signs and signifiers. Nothing is radically different and so we take it that it is the same. But the sky is slightly different, the amount of light coming in through upper windows is slightly different, day-by-day the sun is moving toward its southern point and so the illumination is slightly different. What we see is the illumination, this is different. What we imagine, what we think is it's the same room. Conceptually the room is the same. Phenomenologically it's different. This is the radical point of difference. (.)

Because we're here in this room and in fact I was here two years ago. It's the same place two years later. We can imagine many things have happened here in that time. So I may feel that it's the same room but someone like Dom who's here regularly will have a whole sequence of memories, which I have no sense of and that will be his room. So if we get clear about this it is very helpful. The room as experience is always uniquely personal. (...)

The second statement of Garab Dorje who's a founding voice in the lineage of Dzogchen is to become clear that this is how it is. To not remain in doubt. This is not a cognitive decision but it's by staying present again and again that we see oh in fact my awareness is always open but the thoughts and feelings and sensations I have are both changeable and they have different qualities. Sometimes I feel expansive, sometimes I feel contracted. So I can feel quite small but I'm aware that I feel small because my feeling smallness is within my ever-open awareness. The very dark cloud the huge thunderstorm, which might be quite frightening is in the ever-open sky. Our feeling of closure, our feeling of being trapped and lost and stupid and everything is a waste of time, this kind of contorted twisting situation that we might experience is within the openness of our mind. We are open and small at the same time. The openness is infinite, it has no limit of time and space. This condensed and disturbed state of mind is finite.

And it passes. But while it's there it's me. So this is the central thing. (...)

So from the dzogchen point of view, however your mind is, remain open and relax without judging, without engagement trying to change things, not hanging on to the bits you like, not trying to get rid of the bits you don't like. This is the essential difference between dzogchen practice and the other schools in Tibetan Buddhism. By resting and relaxing into the infinity of awareness itself, the finite forms, which arise and pass are free to come and go as they do. When a form arises, when a mood arises and you think I can't bare it, I don't want to be like this, you had invested too much significant in this particular form. (...) So in order to protect myself I'm marking out some territory where I feel safe, with the knowledge there are some things, which are just impossible for me. I wouldn't be me if I did that. If that happens to me I don't know what I would do. So we restrict ourselves. From the point of view of dzogchen this is incredibly sad. Because actually these situations which seem so terrible and so painful are transient. So we always have the choice, what is our fundamental or based sense of being. (...)

We can be hyper sensitive about some things and completely insensitive about other things. So when we are in our ego things are really gonna matter. This is not an illusion, this is what it feels like. When we relax into awareness it doesn't matter. This is like with small children, they get upset about situations. And they don't have the capacity to soothe themselves. And so the mother has to soothe the child and make the world safe for them. Gradually we learn to be better at self-soothing. In this image of the mother and son which is used quite a lot in explanations, the mother is our original nature, this infinite awareness there from the very beginning and the child is the way in which our energetic expression has broken, seems to have broken free and have a life on its own. When the mother and child meet the mother contains the child and the

child relaxes. But if the child is all alone they can't soothe themselves. This is the agitation of our ego state, which is full of hopes and fears. So relaxing and opening into what is always present, our awareness, we are able to allow all the forms of agitations to self soothe or in the language of dzogchen to self liberate. And then experiences go by without any trace. Our ego tends to vibrate with the resonance of many past experiences. But awareness has no resonance in that way. This is why it's described as being naked and fresh. It's naked because it's not covered over by accumulations of past experiences or assumptions about future experiences. And it's fresh because it's always open and available to the next moment. (...) What is really precious is what is there all the time, always available, which is our own nature. But as in the traditional Tibetan example like the farmer who goes out on the hill looking for his lost cow, which is actually at home in the barn we go looking here, there, in samsara for something to fill us, to make us feel better but we don't look at our own mind. So this is the second point of Garab Dorje. Keep looking and looking until you taste this directly and then be clear that that is enough.

So this takes us to the third point or statement of Garab Dorje, which is to continue in this way. Which means to stay with the integration of all experiences in the openness of awareness. This doesn't mean continuing to be a Buddhist. So the practice is not about becoming a Buddhist. Buddhist is a temporary structure to help you awaken to your own nature or your own being. To be a Buddhist and have a membership card is not much better than being a butcher. Because it functions as an identity.

All compounded things are impermanent. If you take refuge in the finite you will always be cheated because the finite is unreliable. But if you take refuge in the infinite, it will be always reliable. In the tradition it's called *vajra*. *Vajra*, or *dorje* in Tibetan, means indestructible, it can never be broken. We look at the sky, many things happen in the sky, nuclear explosions go on, all kinds of pollution go up in the sky. The sky itself is not destroyed. This is the fundamental basis of contentment or satisfaction. In Tibetan it's called *tsimpa* and it means this is enough. (...) If everything was just sugar it would be a strange world. So although we might say we don't, bitter and sour are not our favourite tastes, they're quite important in cooking, they provide a kind of counterpoint, which highlights certain other flavours. So when we see that sadness, hopelessness, anger, jealousy, bitterness, all of these feelings are just flavours. They don't mean that you are a bad person. I shouldn't be jealous! Why not? Not so bad. Jealousy is a taste, hatred is a taste. If you taste the taste, you know what it is. (...) In that way we don't allow experience to be experience, experience is a cloud, it's not a solid truth. So then paradoxically I can be jealous! I can be fully jealous and upset because it's not defining who I am. You don't have to pretend in

anyway or modulate your expression, you can just be what you are because you're only be this for the moment. And after something else will be there. (...)

So awareness is the absolute central focus. Again and again we have to observe how we cheat ourselves, where we confuse subjectivity with awareness. (...) One term for awareness in Tibetan is *yeshe*. *Ye* means from the very beginning, which means without ever any beginning, means infinite, and *shepa* means to know. But it doesn't mean knowing things, so it's more the clarity or the revelatory quality of being. (...) The fact that the sky is just there is like the fact that the mind is just here. It's not created by mental activity. It's not improved by good deeds. It's not destroyed by bad deeds. What is improved or harmed is patterning of energy. Wisdom is awakening to this unborn quality of presence. Compassion is the movement of the energy, which arises ceaselessly in the field of awareness because when you awaken to your own ground you don't need to be self-corrected. You can relax and trust you are okay. And therefore the energy is for the other. Without driving it by making a vow or a conscious intention, we awaken to the very simple fact that you are my world, that we are participants in the field of the environment. The environment is not something other than me, which I enter or don't enter. I am enworlded. (...)

So from this point of view the paradox is the less hard you try, the more wisdom and compassion are available, this is the view of dzogchen. It's not the view of tantra or general Mahayana Buddhism. They have a different view, a different kind of meditation and different kind of behaviour. This way of practice suits some people perhaps more than others due to their habits and interests, its not about right or wrong. But if you can see the nature of awareness and be that nature of awareness, then many problems cease.

We'll look at some problems that can arise in meditation. In a book of translations that I did, *Simply Being*, there are three chapters, which deal with meditation problems, two of them written by Patrul Rinpoche and one by CR Lama's first incarnation. (...) Typically they say, oh some great meditators are upset and crying because for many years they practice meditation but don't get any result. They feel depressed and hopeless. Don't try to change the depression and hopelessness. Stay present with the depression and hopelessness and observe the one who is experiencing. This observer is not me looking at something. It's more to observe from inside, to be the one who is experiencing. Stay on the one. Awareness is there. (...)

So when you go looking to find it as something, you get lost. Because you won't find it as something, it's not a location where you can say this is awareness and this is not awareness. Everywhere is awareness. So whatever is happening, be there, with whatever is happening. (...)

The ego is a formation, it says I tell the truth. But it's unreliable. Because what it says is true on Monday and is not true on Tuesday. So in terms of the meditation, we relax, we open when we're sitting. Our mind is dull. We feel a bit not quite here. Then the instruction is just stay open into being not quite here, sitting like a cow in a field. The clarity of the mind is illuminating the dullness of the content of the mind. When the mirror is showing something very ugly, the reflection is ugly, or dirty, or some horrible colours, some mountains of dog's shit, it shows that. We look at the reflection, we say oh. But the reason we see the reflection is because of the clarity of the mirror. The clarity of the mirror is not improved by having a bright shiny reflection. (...)

And awareness is clear. It is the clarity of the mind that shows this horrible little aspect of yourself. So don't fall into merging with the transient content of the mind, don't stand apart from it in judgement, or trying changing, be present as the clarity, which illuminates what's there. Now this is easy to say and difficult to do. (...)

It's a very subtle kind of working, finding the balance point where you are present with what is arising, not falling into it, not too far away from it but just being with, which is not being apart from. And this is why the image of the mirror is very helpful again. The reflection in the mirror is very intimate, it's in the mirror but it doesn't contaminate the mirror. So when this feeling is inside your mind, it's really you. And if you take up antipathy and negative feelings towards it, you really want to get rid of it because, oh burk, it's contaminating me, then many many problems in meditation arise. Because then we think oh my mind is full of obscuration, I can't do the meditation, I need to do purification. (...) Well from the point of view of dzogchen adopting these antidotes is unhelpful. Why? Because they confirm the true force and reality of the obscuration. This is a real problem and **I** have to do something about it. Subject-verb-object, we are back with a dualistic structure. Of course the ego feels better because it feels it is not at the mercy of this horrible stuff, which is inside. (...)

What is arising cannot contaminate the mirror. The mind as the infinite offers hospitality to everything but it's not touched by it. So this is the meaning of non-duality. What is arising in the mind and the mind itself are inseparable. But there are not the same. What is inside the mind, the content of the mind is moving and changing. The mind itself is not moving or changing. But they are inseparable. This is the key point. If you stay with the mind itself, the impermanent contents of the mind go free by themselves. The ego's effort is not required. In the first two chapters of this book from C.R Lama, Rinpoche says on several occasions human knowledge is

not necessary, it's not required. Means you don't need to develop highly intelligent thoughts, you don't need to have a great knowledge of Dharma, you need to trust that your own awareness is pure from the very beginning. Which is the first instruction of Garab Dorje. Open up and be present with whom you have been from the very beginning. With different kinds of experience arising and passing, stay present with the clarity that the content moves but the mind doesn't move. And then the third statement is: continuing that way. Nothing is lacking. It's fine. It's perfect as it is. This is the meaning of dzogpachenpo.

But say you have been meditating for ten years or twenty years. And you sit down and your mind is crazy. You say this is a stupid mind, I can't meditate. Or I have the wrong meditation method. My mind shouldn't be like this. I read the brochure, I sent off my order and they delivered the wrong meditation. My mind should be shiny. But this is not true. (...) Why shouldn't your mind have trouble? If you say I want to take the bodhisattva path and open my being to other people, don't be surprised when the neighbours are strange. It's like that. You do tonglen practice, giving out good positive feelings to others and inviting trouble into you, you say I practice equanimity, no differentiation between friends and enemies and now you have a lot of shit in your mind. (...) We say everything which arises is Padmasambhava. Everything is the radiance of the mind. But in **my** mind I want a bright shiny bit. Everything has the same nature but I want to have a menu. I want to choose what makes me feel good. And if you see this, this is how the ego contaminates, or how the personal sense of subjectivity contaminates our availability to the openness of awareness. You have all these fantasies that people should be very kind or generous if they have been doing practice for a long time.

But actually the key thing is that whatever is arising is integrated in our awareness, that it is like an illusion, like a mirage, a rainbow, something which is there but has no essence. So when we read the stories of the great early yogis in India, the eighty-four mahasiddhas and so on, they were often very strange people. They were not developing a petit-bourgeois life-style. They were living on the edge of society doing often activities, which were regarded as dirty or very low status in the culture. And in the tantric system we have the three white offerings sugar, milk, yogurt and so on. And then you have the more problematic offerings of meat and urine and shit and so on. Why would you offer "caca" to the Buddha? Caca is disgusting. The view that caca is disgusting is connected with human situation. If we were to carry out some research, and interview a thousand flies which is a good sample in Geneva, I think they would agree, no, caca is wonderful. And the flies would say, listen we eat and also we use Internet and we know that in India people have shit everywhere. Our cousins over there are happy all the time but in Geneva they always put it on the toilets and wash it away. It's really hard to find good human caca, these

days. So for us caca is disgusting but for the flies it's delicious. It's not intrinsically disgusting. But we live in our fixation that we are the centre of the world, and that our criteria for evaluation is the truth then we say good, bad, right, wrong. And it's for that reason that these different kinds of offerings are made to the Buddha. So that we can understand impartiality, that everything has the same taste of emptiness. Everything is like an illusion, a reflection. There is nothing essentially bad or harmful in these substances. Situationally they may not be delicious for us but that judgement arises due to causes and conditions, the particular nature of our embodiment. So again and again we have to see, oh this strong judgement, my sense that I know the truth about what is here is in fact only an opinion, a point of view generated by the point from which I view it. So if I'm looking from the point of view of the ego what I like, what I don't like, then I will have very strong view of what is good and what is bad.

(...) So when we sit in a meditation and we open to how ever our mind is, when we feel disappointed, frustrated, blocked in how we want things to progress, we should take this as a sign not that something should be done, that we should be doing something else, but simply that we are looking from the point of view of the ego which is simply doing its job which is to say offering a biased reading. So we have fused into the ego position and we are engaged in an internal dialog between two aspects of the same experiential field. (...)

Simply relax in the outbreath and be aware that this position of judgements, which feels like me is just another temporary construction, just some pattern of energy moving through the mind. We do this again and again. It becomes easier to recognize how we cheat ourselves. How we grasp on to some floating debris. Rather than learning to swim. If you swim in the ocean of the mind it's very nice because it's dynamic. But if you're clinging to a bit of wood from the boat you are just at the mercy of all the waves.

So what these great masters point out is: don't be misled into taking the current pattern of the content of the mind as being some revelation of a fundamental truth about yourself, don't be defined by what is arising. And this of course links back to what we had at the very beginning, looking at the nature of identity, that our identity is a process of generating composite formations. This is in the house of compassion. We have our identity as a social function. The roles we have at work allow us to enter into certain buildings and talk in certain ways. Identity and role are part of the choreography of social existence, of interaction, they are not a final definition of who we are. The more we see that, the more we see, oh this is the theatre of the

mind, that due to causes and circumstances we can speak in a particular way and then due to other causes and circumstances we can't. It's just like that, it's not intrinsic.

So in the meditation, very simple, we relax and open and stay present with whatever is occurring. This is exactly the meditation that Buddha Shakyamuni was doing when he was sitting under the Bodhi tree. Many things were moving around him, the different maras or tempting or terrifying demons were operating and he is not reacting. Not reacting doesn't mean like trying to be brave when you are in the dentist chair. It's not an act of will or courage. So in the Tibetan paintings that they have of the Buddha at the moment of enlightenment you see that the depiction of the maras drawn by the back with a bow and arrow, and the arrow goes towards the Buddha and turns out into a flower. It's not dangerous because it doesn't really arrive.

The reflection in the mirror doesn't touch the mirror. This is the great mystery of existence that we both are and are not the content of our mind. With ignorance and attachment we over fixate on the content of the mind and take it to be ourselves. The dissolving of ignorance is to recognize the ground basis, the being of awareness, rigpa, within which the content of the mind is moving. And this is enough. There are many many other kinds of meditation and they are dedicated to transforming energy. If you pray or do pujas for Tara or Chenrezi, it's developing kindness and softness. If you meditate on Dorje Drolo, it's developing strong energy and force. These are patterns of, or these are designed to increase the repertoire of moves that you can make in your interaction in the world. Which can be useful.

The key thing is to be open to your own ground nature, to the mind itself. So again and again we simply return into this practice. Whatever is occurring, we just enter into the practice and stay with it. Without hopes or fears. Without selective attention. Without any notion of where we are going. We are just present in this moment as it is. Undefined and hospitable. And this is the heart of Samanthabhadra, the great founding Buddha of the lineage.

So now we do a last meditation together. We do it again starting with the three A. And just to remind yourself you might want to take up these five questions again: where the mind comes from, where it stays, where it goes, what colour and shape it is, and what size or dimension it is.

[Practice]

Whatever merit arises from our study and practice together we dedicate it to the benefit of all beings. So we can imagine rays of lights spreading out from our heart going in all directions, making contact with all the many kinds of beings.

Ge wa di yi nyur drub dak
Ugyan lama drub gyur nae
Dro wa chi kyang malupa
De yi sa la goe par shog

Now our brief period of time together has come to an end. (...)

It's not easy to sustain focus attention for these hours, with many technical terms involved and talking about topics on the very edge of language but the good feeling generated by everyone's participation made my job much easier. So thank you for that and perhaps we meet again.