



365 DAILY TEACHINGS
KHENCHEN THRANGU RINPOCHE



365

SELECTED TALKS AND TEACHINGS

FROM THE VERY VENERABLE
KHENCHEN THRANGU RINPOCHE

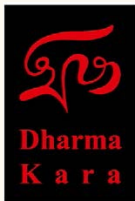


Edited by Acharya Dechen Phuntsok

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Editor's Foreword

The aim of this book is to convey the essence of Buddhism, offering practical wisdom for our daily lives in the words of the Very Venerable Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche. Rinpoche's inspirational teachings are simple, meaningful and easy to understand. This book will help us improve our state of mind and discover peace from deep within.

Today, people are extremely busy and face endless problems. The only way to truly eliminate that suffering is dharma practice. To practice the dharma, we must rely on a genuine guidance. Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche was one of the few genuinely wise and highly-distinguished scholars of our time. He gave teachings in over 25 countries and, in particular, was one of the most highly regarded masters of mahamudra meditation. He touched the lives of students from all parts of the world through his compassionate presence, his immense knowledge, and his way of making even complex teachings accessible to all practitioners.

He was the personal teacher of the four principal Karma Kagyu Rinpoches: His Eminence (H.E.) Shamar Rinpoche, H.E Situ Rinpoche, H.E Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche, and H.E Gyaltsab Rinpoche. Because of his vast knowledge of the dharma, Rinpoche was appointed by His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama to be the personal tutor for His Holiness the Seventeenth Gyalwang Karmapa and was given the title *Yongdzin* (honorific title for tutor to His Holiness). Through these concise teachings of Rinpoche, we can benefit from his wisdom while being engaged with our daily activities.

I humbly offer you 365 short teachings by Kyabje Yongdzin Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche. These teachings are meant to be contemplated and practiced frequently and eventually, bring joy through diligence. I hope that you will experience ultimate happiness and wisdom and fulfill all your wishes in particular.

I also request your forgiveness for any mistakes that I have made while assembling this edition.

— Acharya Dechen Phuntsok
at Nammo Buddha
on the 1st of July 2023

Translation note

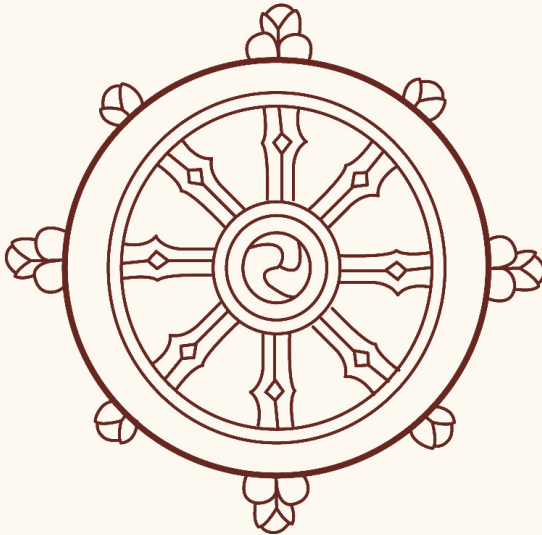
This edition has been excerpted from a vast collection of Rinpoche's teachings that have been translated previously into English by a number of highly skilled translators. However, a few teachings have been newly translated from Tibetan by the editor. Because different translators occasionally have alternative preferences for rendering Tibetan terms into English (e g. 'bodhichitta' versus 'awakening mind'), some minor word substitutions have been made in this collection for the sake of consistency, while attempting to remain faithful to the meaning. Please see the glossary for more details on usage.

“Please try to listen to these teachings with a pure motivation. A pure motivation is very important when we listen to the teachings and it is also important at all other times. In this way, we align our thinking with the dharma.”

*By Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche
From The Middle-way Meditation Instructions:
Developing Compassion through Wisdom*

January

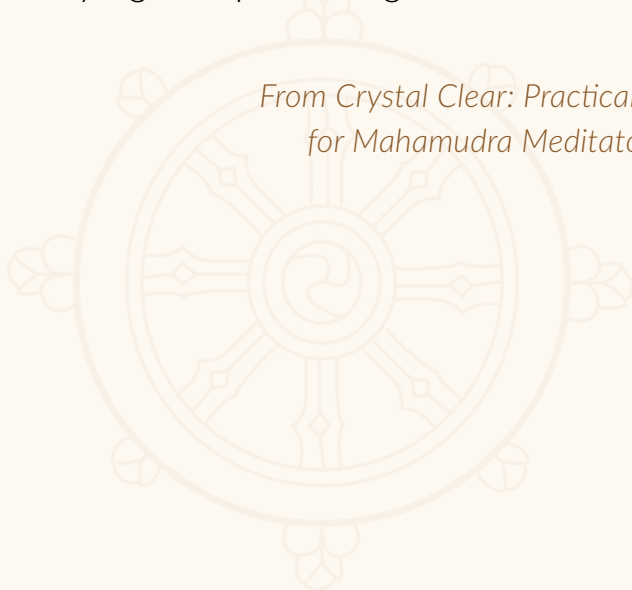
THE IMPORTANCE OF FAITH,
DEVOTION AND GOOD MOTIVATION



January 1

It is important to have a pure motivation whenever studying and practicing the dharma.

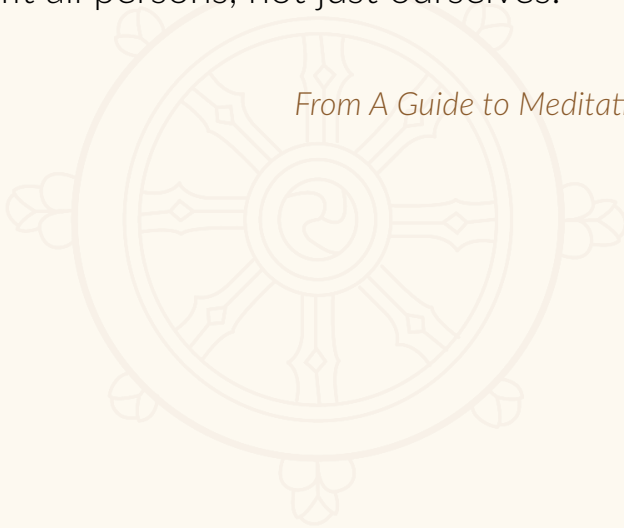
*From Crystal Clear: Practical Advice
for Mahamudra Meditators, p. 3*



January 2

The one thing common to all meditation practice is having the right motivation of wanting to benefit all persons, not just ourselves.

From A Guide to Meditation, p. 4



January 3

There is nothing wrong if we practice out of a wish for ourselves to be happy and to be free from suffering and illnesses, but this type of motivation is more limited. We need to practice with a vast motivation that seeks to benefit all sentient beings.

*From A Life of Happiness,
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners, p. 49*

January 4

Without compassion and the right motivation,
education is not so useful in life.

*From Shree Mangal Dvip Branch School
text book front cover.*



January 5

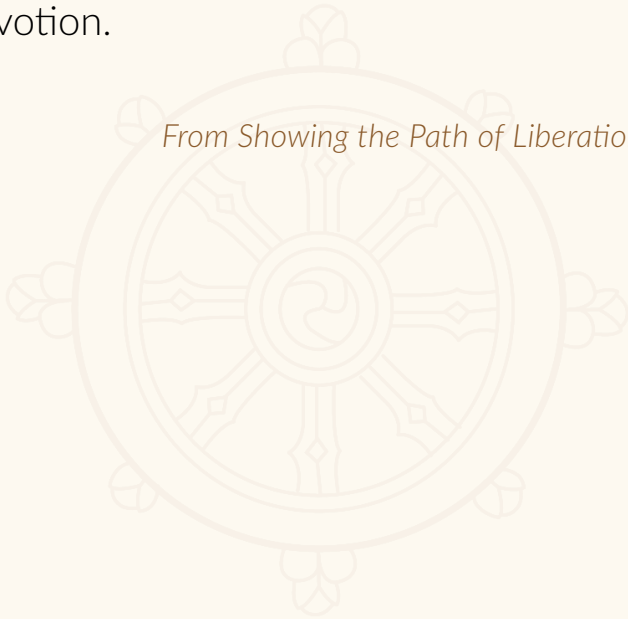
Faith and devotion are like a ring for the hook of the Buddha's compassion and blessings to pull us out of samsara. No matter how much compassion the buddhas have, without devotion nothing will happen.

From A Guide to Meditation, p. 5

January 6

The foundation for the practice of Mahamudra is devotion.

From Showing the Path of Liberation, p. 30



January 7

Bodhichitta is basically a very pure motivation, but that is not all it is. It should not remain a mere motivation but should be put into practice. The way to practice this pure motivation is to practice the six paramitas.

*From Commentary on
the Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 198*

January 8

In the Buddhist tradition, when we listen to dharma, motivation is of the greatest importance. The reason is that if our motivation is pure, the actions of our body and speech will naturally become pure. If our motivation is not pure, then our actions will naturally become impure. Therefore, pure motivation and the correction of our motivation are important.

From Essential Practice, p. 31

January 9

What is the pure motivation that we need? The mind that aspires to supreme awakening for the sake of all sentient beings is the supreme among all motivations; therefore, please rouse that aspiration.

From Essential Practice, p. 31

January 10

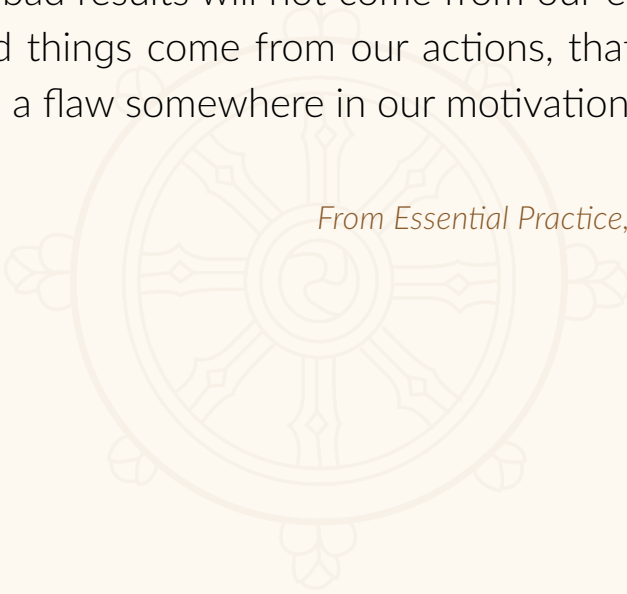
Generally, in the Buddhist way, if we correct our motivation at the start, our conduct can become pure and correct. If we do not correct our motivation at the start, our conduct cannot become pure and correct. For this reason, we need pure motivation.

From Essential Practice, p. 65

January 11

Generally speaking, if our motivation is good, then bad results will not come from our efforts. If bad things come from our actions, that indicates a flaw somewhere in our motivation.

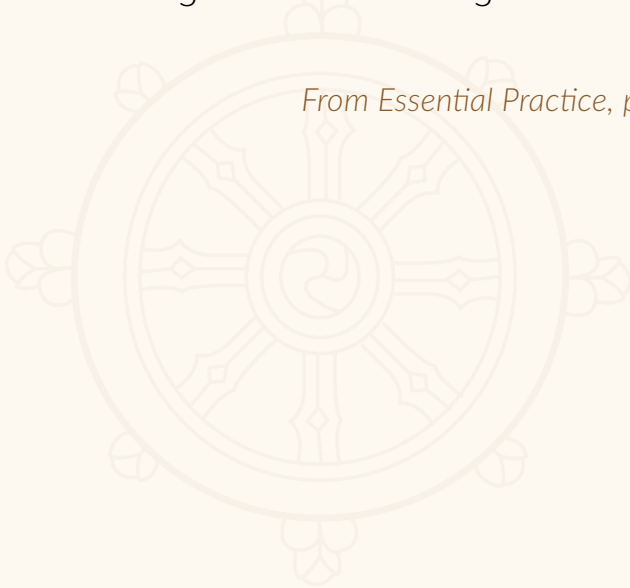
From Essential Practice, p. 113



January 12

Generally, we need faith. Faith means knowledgeable belief together with strength of heart.

From Essential Practice, p. 120



January 13

Generally, at all times and in all activities, we need compassion and bodhichitta. In particular, when we are practicing dharma, or newly requesting dharma, or studying dharma, if we are motivated by the intention to accomplish supreme awakening, in the future our activity will serve as a cause of achieving buddhahood and as a cause of benefiting all sentient beings. That is why we need pure motivation.

From Essential Practice, p. 19

January 14

With faith we can practice dharma; however, our faith must be very firm and stable because if our faith is variable, then mostly likely we won't be able to complete the practice.

*From Commentary on
the Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 36*

January 15

Our faith can change, degrade, and even disappear due to desire, anger, fear, or stupidity. Real faith is stable and unchanging and is beyond any change that could come about by the above four factors.



*From Commentary on the
Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 36-37*

January 16

When you receive instruction in dharma, the motivation with which you do so is extremely important. Recognize that the instructions you are receiving are a basis for your practice of dharma, and that your practice of dharma is of great benefit. This benefit is not limited to you alone or only to a few yourself and a few others but ultimately the benefit of your practice will be enjoyed by all beings who fill space.

From Medicine Buddha Teachings, p. 2

January 17

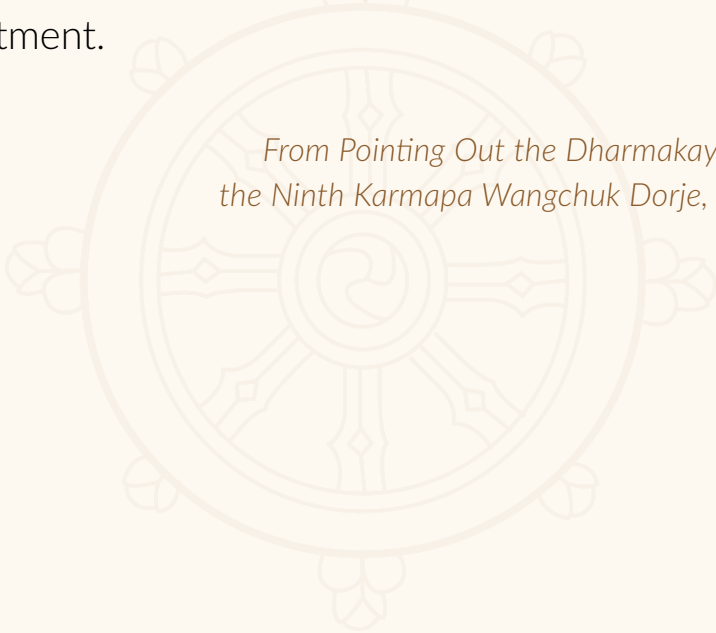
The devotion that one creates or develops in one's own heart is not directly useful in the practice of mahamudra. The devotion that comes spontaneously, which arises without one's having to do anything to one's feelings, is the most important kind of devotion.

From Showing the Path of Liberation, p. 32

January 18

The most important thing that makes meditation work and fruitful is your devotion and commitment.

*From Pointing Out the Dharmakaya of
the Ninth Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje, p. 8*



January 19

The beginning of meditation is devotion.

From Ocean of Philosophy, p. 81



January 20

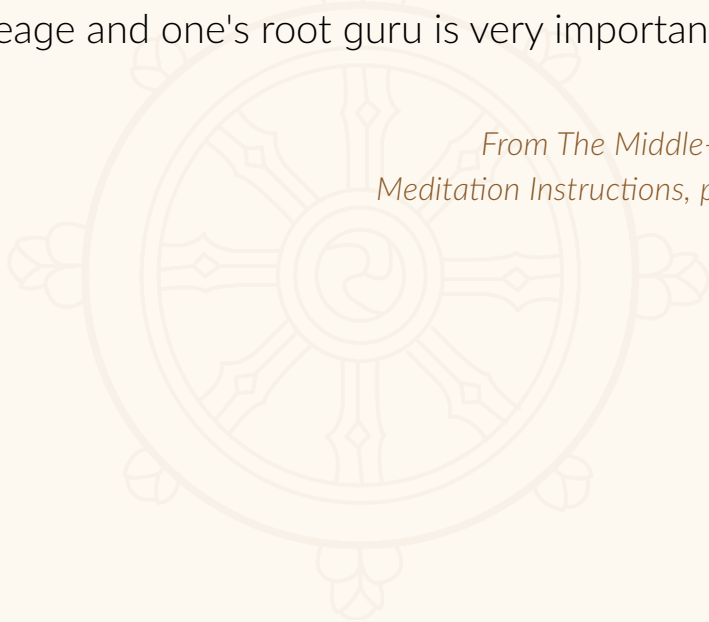
The techniques that I personally use for meditation in the Vajrayana were mostly based on visualization of a deity. This technique improves one's capacity for meditation. Also, the Vajrayana method of meditation can be based on one's devotion in the practice of guru yoga meditation, in which one develops devotion towards one's guru.

*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instructions, p. 50*

January 21

In the development of meditation, devotion for the Buddha, the bodhisattvas, dharma, and one's lineage and one's root guru is very important.

*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instructions, p. 96*



January 22

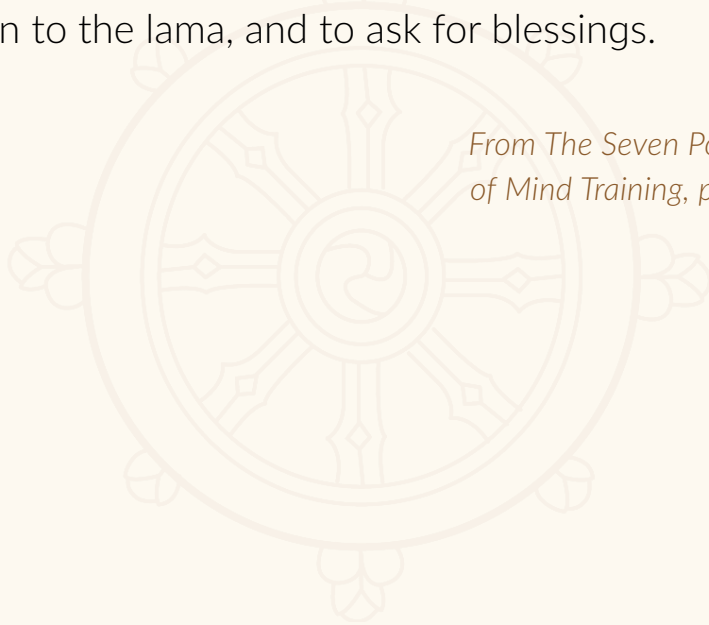
Faith and devotion are important for the practice in general and essential for meditation practice. It is said that devotion is actually the key to the mind. With faith and devotion, one can open the door that leads to knowing the true nature of the mind. That is why one should make sure that there is a sense of faith, devotion and blessing in the meditation.

*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instructions, p. 97*

January 23

It is very important at the beginning of any meditation session to generate great faith and devotion to the lama, and to ask for blessings.

*From The Seven Points
of Mind Training, p. 13*



January 24

We must generate devotion to the teacher, devotion to the dharma, and devotion to dharma practice. Devotion is very important for meditation. If one has devotion, one will then develop a strong conviction in dharma teachings. Without devotion, one won't be able to develop conviction.

*From An Ocean of
the Ultimate Meaning, p. 51*

January 25

We are very fortunate to be able to practice the dharma. To be able to practice with faith and devotion, with diligence, enthusiasm, and interest, and without any doubts or wrong views is very fortunate and beneficial. If in the future your circumstances are adverse, do not feel disheartened, depressed, or saddened. You are still very fortunate. And when favorable conditions arise, you should not waste the opportunity but take advantage of the situation and apply yourself to practice.

*From An Ocean of
the Ultimate Meaning, p. 179*

January 26

Devotion is very important. Without devotion we will not be able to enter the practice of the dharma, maintain the practice of the dharma, or attain the result of the practice of the dharma. Without devotion we will make mistakes. We will think the same way that we did before, and our minds will be directed outwardly. We will not see the essence of the mind.

*From An Ocean of
the Ultimate Meaning, p. 52*

January 27

What is our main consideration when we begin the training of Vajrayana and, in particular, the practice of mahamudra? First of all, great emphasis is placed on cultivating respect, devotion, and strong trust in our personal master, the root guru, as well as in all the masters of the lineage.

From The King of Samadhi, p. 15

January 28

We need to cultivate faith and devotion in our root and lineage teachers to be able to receive the instructions on samadhi. We should then apply these instructions in our own practical experience.



From The King of Samadhi, p. 17

January 29

In order to practice the generation and completion stages, it is essential to have devotion, faith and pure outlook or sacred outlook. Devotion consists of two things. One is interest or enthusiasm and the other aspect is respect. This means being interested in and being enthusiastic about the dharma, and having the respect that comes from understanding its validity and its importance.

*From A Commentary on the
Essence of Creation and Completion, p. 54*

January 30

Devotion and faith are necessary for our experience in meditation to increase. In the Kagyu Lineage Prayer, it is said, “Devotion is the head of meditation.” If we have a head, then we can see, hear, eat, speak, and so forth. If we do not have a head, we can’t do much of anything. Similarly, in meditation if we have devotion, our meditation will improve; it will become clearer and more stable.

From Essentials of Mahamudra, p. 181

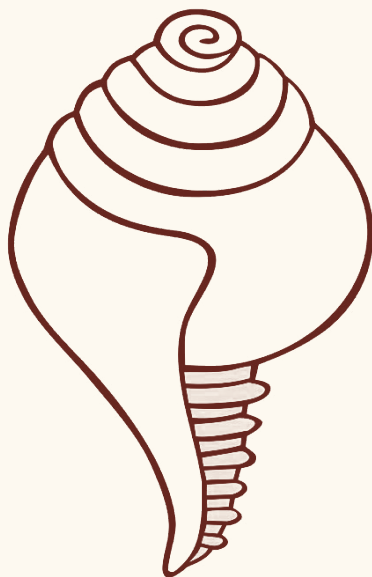
January 31

At all times and in all aspects, motivation must be regarded as important. On the occasion of listening to dharma, it is necessary to develop your motivation.

From Essential Practice, p. 43

February

COMPASSION, MINDFULNESS,
AWARENESS AND CAREFULNESS



February 1

If mindfulness and awareness are well established, then the negative mental afflictions will not come in and wreak havoc, stealing the virtue we have accumulated and harming our practice of meditation.

From The Four Dharmas of Gampopa, p. 18

February 2

Controlling our mind is entirely up to us. This is something we can do ourselves with a little mindfulness and awareness.

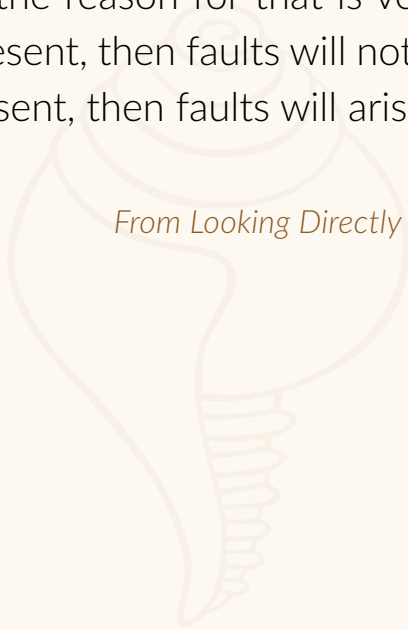
From A Guide to Meditation, p. 17



February 3

Mindfulness and awareness are important at all times, and the reason for that is very simple. If they are present, then faults will not arise, and if they are absent, then faults will arise.

From Looking Directly to Mind, p. 190



February 4

Generally speaking, mindfulness means not forgetting about the object upon which one is meditating. It keeps your mind on the meaning that you are contemplating in your meditation, and it maintains clarity within your meditation.

From Looking Directly at Mind, p. 191

February 5

Mindfulness is the root of awareness, and mindfulness is the root of carefulness. If one sustains mindfulness, then meditation, samadhi, and all the good qualities will increase straight away. If mindfulness declines, then so will one's meditation and one's good qualities.

From Looking Directly at Mind, p. 193

February 6

There are two qualities to be developed, that of loving-kindness and compassion. The practice of loving-kindness is based upon the wish that others be happy and find the causes of happiness. When loving-kindness is perfected in this way, then the practice of compassion is not difficult. Compassion is the wish that they be free from suffering and its causes.

*From Commentary on
the Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 102*

February 7

In general, compassion is an essential quality, so it is very important to develop compassion. We need to develop compassion for all beings without exception.

*From Commentary on
the Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 102-103*

February 8

If we were to hold one quality that represents all the other qualities of the Buddha in the palm of our hand, it would be compassion. As soon as there is compassion, then automatically all the other qualities of the Buddha would be present.

*From Commentary on
the Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 110*

February 9

Developing loving-kindness and compassion is essential to the practice of any religion or even any form of spirituality. Developing love and compassion is also essential for people who are not religious or who don't regard themselves as particularly spiritual.

From Cultivating True Compassion, p. 1

February 10

The attitude of love is understood in the Buddhist tradition as an aspiration for the happiness of another. In the same way, the attitude of compassion is understood as the desire or aspiration for another being to be free from suffering.

From Cultivating True Compassion, p. 4-5

February 11

How can we cultivate loving-kindness and compassion? We need to remove self-grasping and to love others as if they were ourselves. We can use our own experience as an example. When we are sick, worried, exhausted, aging, or under the sway of the afflictions, we seek relief from these sufferings. Likewise, other people do not wish to suffer. Similarly, they also want to experience happiness. This is the reason why we should not harm or inflict pain on others. Instead, we should be kind towards people and help them obtain happiness.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners, p. 39*

February 12

This is the way the system of Middle-way meditation works. First of all, one needs the basis or ground, which is the practice of compassion. Then when one's compassion has sufficiently increased, it becomes bodhichitta. This bodhichitta has to be cultivated until one is ready for the meditation on emptiness.

*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instructions, p. 30*

February 13

When our compassion reaches its highest level, it is called bodhichitta. This is the desire to achieve enlightenment for the sake of all beings. It is the understanding that all beings will end all their suffering when they achieve enlightenment. Once compassion has become complete, it automatically turns into bodhichitta.

*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instructions, p. 27*

February 14

Genuine compassion is good from beginning to end and does not involve hurting anyone in the process. The very fact that it can be beneficial relies on the purity of the action throughout. Any genuine compassionate action will never bring anything painful or negative to another. We must develop the right kind of compassion.

*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instructions, p. 27*

February 15

As the mind is the primary factor in meditation, our attitude is also very important. This is why the Buddha taught that we should try to develop an altruistic attitude of thinking more in terms of others than in terms of ourselves.

*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instructions, p. 69*

February 16

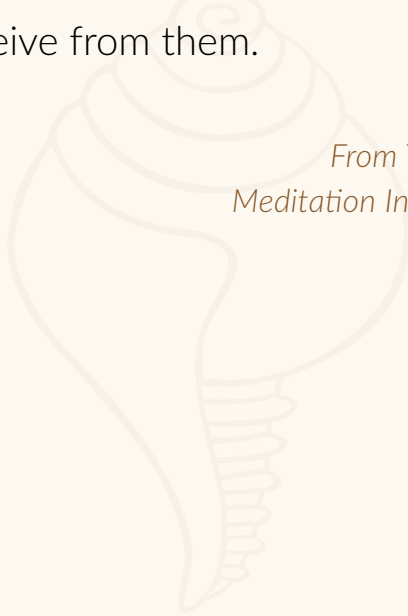
Everybody wants the same thing, which is to be happy and not to suffer. That is why it would be totally unreasonable to think that we have to have compassion for some people and not for others. We must try to have our compassion go out to everyone without distinction.

*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instructions, p. 15*

February 17

How much we feel love and compassion towards others will be how much benefit and help we will receive from them.

*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instructions, p.17*



February 18

Compassion is beneficial in the short term and it is also beneficial in long term because it is the only thing that will always bring a positive result, never a negative or painful result.

*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instructions, p. 18*

February 19

The main point in the system of Middle-way meditation is to meditate in order to understand the true nature of things and to develop the conviction that the nature of things is empty. It is necessary to develop compassion in order to achieve this realization. That is why compassion is the preliminary practice for the actual meditation of the Middle-way.

*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instructions, p. 21*

February 20

It is important, in whatever practice you are doing, to cultivate mindfulness, awareness and carefulness in meditation. Through inculcating these habits in your mind, then the same habits will arise for you in the bardo. When the habits of mindfulness, alertness, carefulness, and so forth arise in the bardo, they will cause the appearances of the bardo to be far less overwhelming. Because the experience of the appearances of the bardo will then be less overwhelming, you will gain more control over what happens to you, including more control over your rebirth. Therefore, mindfulness and awareness are extremely important.

From Journey of the Mind, p. 14

February 21

To practice mindfulness and awareness is to constantly observe what we are thinking and doing. It can be hard for us to know when afflictions like desire, anger, and delusion arise, so we need to check for their presence through the aid of mindfulness and awareness. To be careful is to remind ourselves to be cautious when we realize that our afflictions have arisen. We need to carefully maintain a virtuous motivation.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners, p. 24*

February 22

Whatever the circumstances, whether we are happy or sad, it is beneficial to be able to maintain mindfulness, awareness, and carefulness in cultivating and maintaining meditation.

From An Ocean of the Ultimate Meaning, p. 180

February 23

Loving-kindness and compassion are very important in both dharma practice and everyday life. Loving-kindness is the wish for sentient beings to obtain happiness, while compassion is wanting them to be free from suffering. How can we cultivate loving-kindness and compassion? We need to remove self-grasping and to love others as if they were ourselves.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners,
p. 38-39*

February 24

The main guideline for measuring your progress is how much your negative emotions and selfishness have diminished and how much your compassion, devotion and renunciation have increased.

*From Crystal Clear: Practical Advice
for Mahamudra Meditators, p. 113*

February 25

It is through mindfulness that we will be able to actually achieve samadhi. When we have mindfulness, we are very clear about what is happening in our meditation. Also, between our meditation sessions we shouldn't lose the thread of meditation, so we should with mindfulness carry this power of the meditation into our daily life. Our mindfulness needs to be very stable; it needs to be clear, and it needs to be the strongest mindfulness so that we can achieve the highest samadhi.

*From The Three Vehicles
of Buddhist Practice, p. 15*

February 26

It is very important to develop mindfulness and awareness in post meditation so that when you are working, you are mindful and very aware of what you are doing. If writing a letter, you pay attention to the letter, not letting your mind stray to something else. If you are speaking to someone, you pay attention to that conversation and don't let your mind wander to something else. That way work does not need to be detrimental to the development of mindfulness and awareness.

From Essentials of Mahamudra, p. 29

February 27

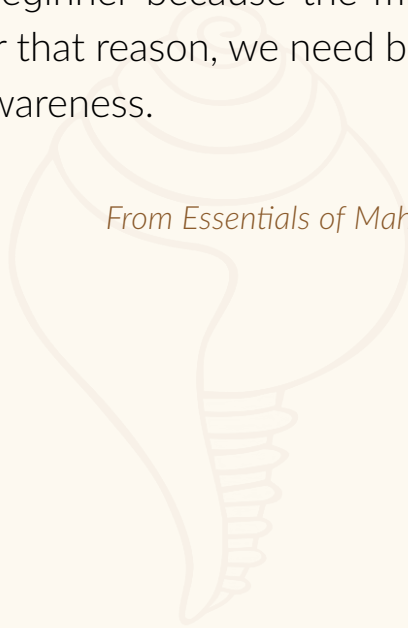
The mindfulness and awareness that one experiences in meditation and in post meditation come about through different techniques. But they are the same in terms of being mindfulness and awareness.

From Essentials of Mahamudra, p. 30

February 28

Achieving an excellent shamatha is rather difficult for a beginner because the mind tends to wander. For that reason, we need both mindfulness and awareness.

From Essentials of Mahamudra, p. 104



February 29

We can't understand the pain of being tortured by illness. We can only truly understand the suffering of sickness by having experienced it for ourselves. By having been sick ourselves, we can better cultivate loving-kindness and compassion. We should put the opportunity of being sick to good use by giving rise to renunciation and devotion, and do our recitations and practices seriously. There will certainly be great blessings if we can do so.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners, p. 65*

March

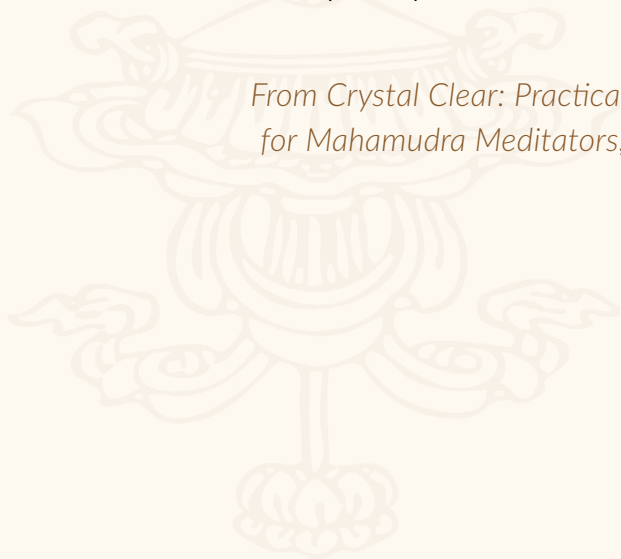
ADVICE FOR DAILY LIFE



March 1

Realization can arise in many different ways depending upon each individual person's inclination, attitudes, mental capacity, and so forth.

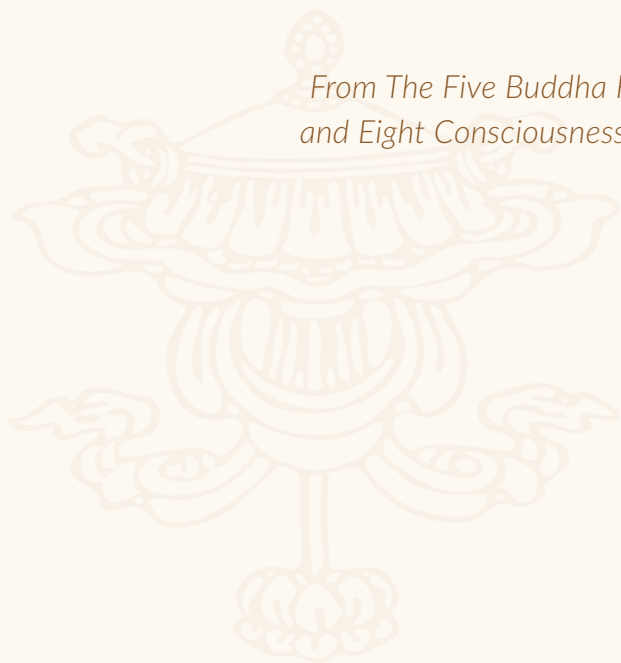
*From Crystal Clear: Practical Advice
for Mahamudra Meditators, p. 140*



March 2

When anger is purified, everything is peaceful.

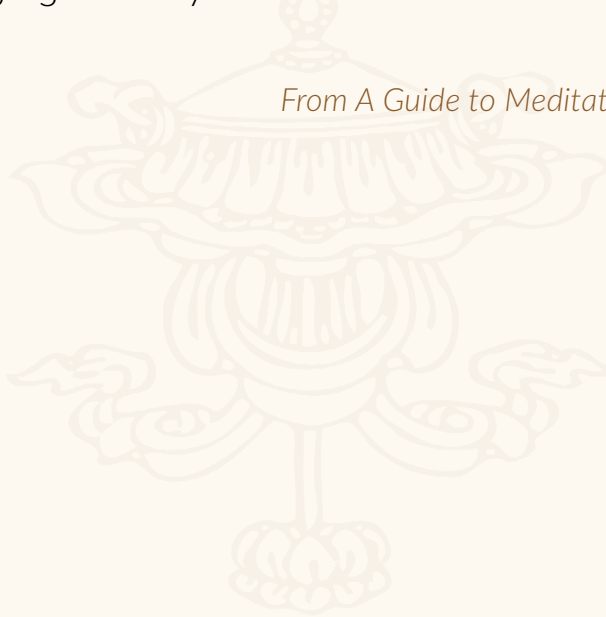
*From The Five Buddha Families
and Eight Consciousnesses, p. 5*



March 3

The starting point of changing what we do is changing the way we think.

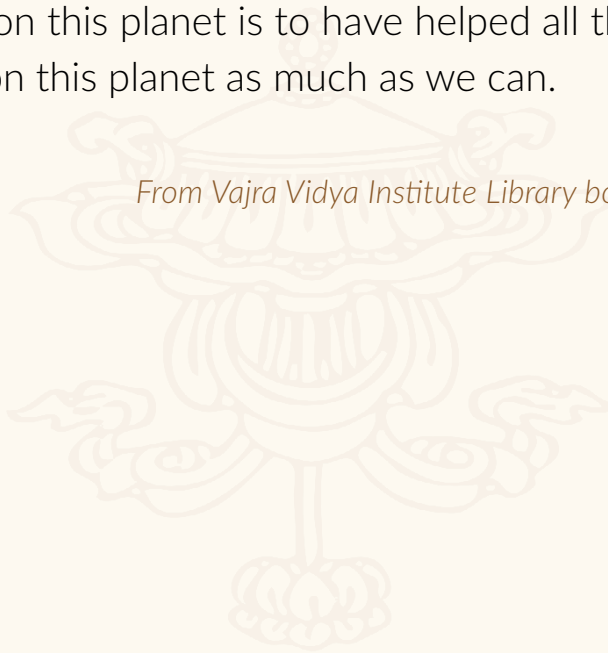
From A Guide to Meditation, p. 3



March 4

The only real meaning we can give to our being born on this planet is to have helped all the beings on this planet as much as we can.

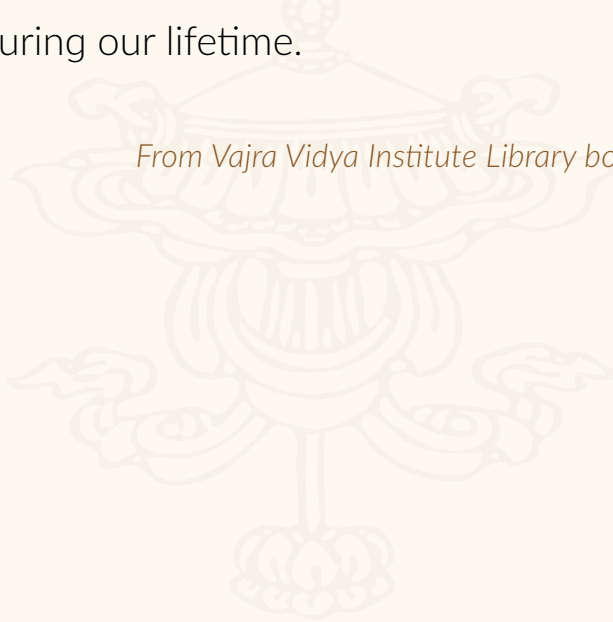
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March 5

The only thing that helps us when we die is whatever virtue we have been able to accumulate during our lifetime.

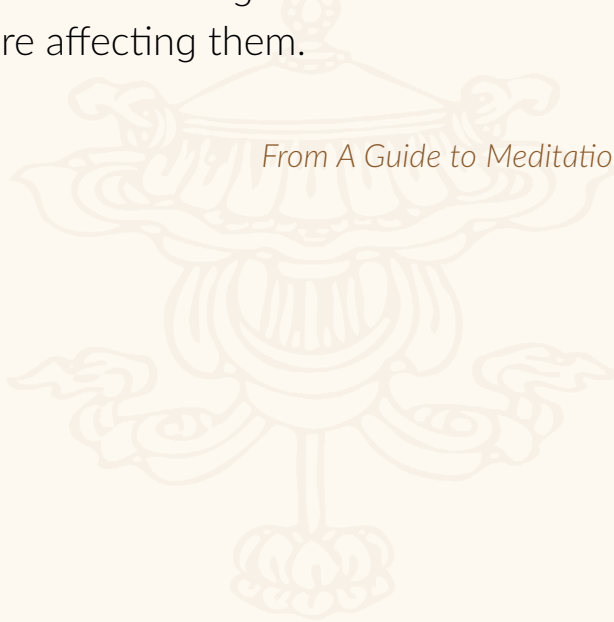
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March 6

We can't change another person's karma, but we are able to change the immediate conditions that are affecting them.

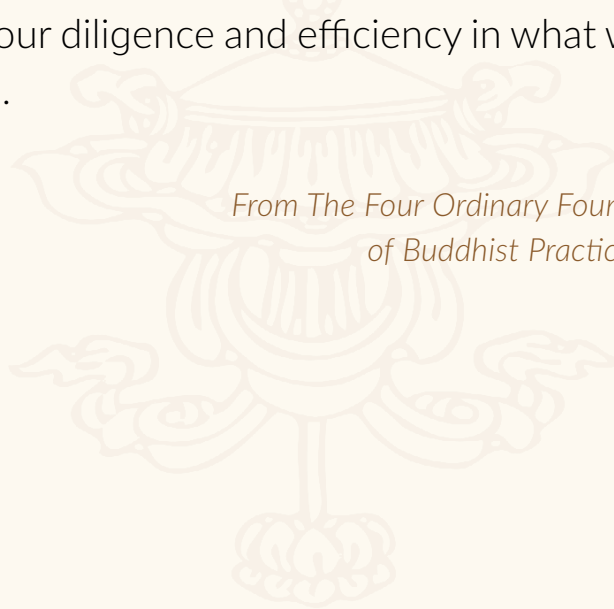
From A Guide to Meditation, p. 18



March 7

Meditating on impermanence makes us become very aware of the passing of time and stimulates our diligence and efficiency in what we are doing.

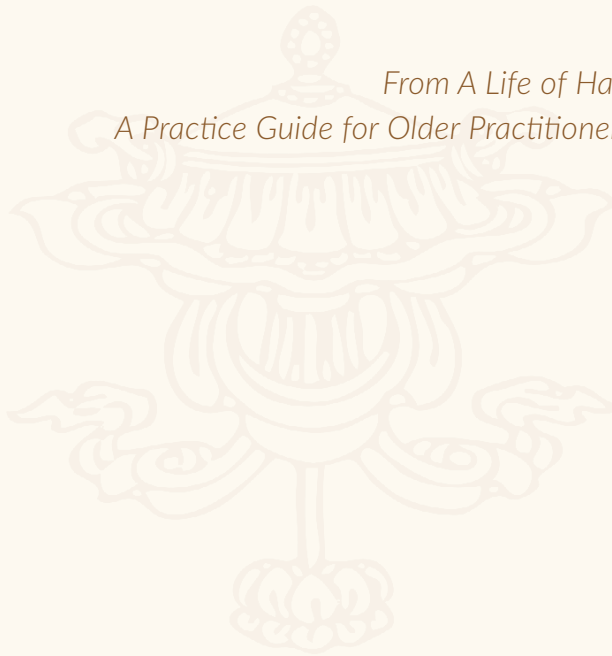
*From The Four Ordinary Foundations
of Buddhist Practice, p. 50*



March 8

To take care of others is to make them happy.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners, p. 73*



March 9

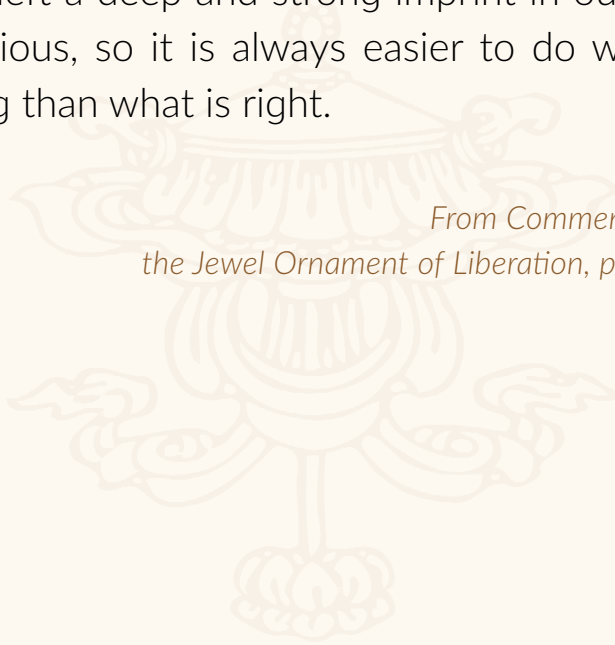
It is important to feel regret about the harmful things we have done. Regret in itself is not positive because what has been done has been done. But it is important for the future because if we regret what we have done we will make sure it won't happen again.

*From Commentary on
the Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 16*

March 10

The bad habits we have developed in samsara have left a deep and strong imprint in our subconscious, so it is always easier to do what is wrong than what is right.

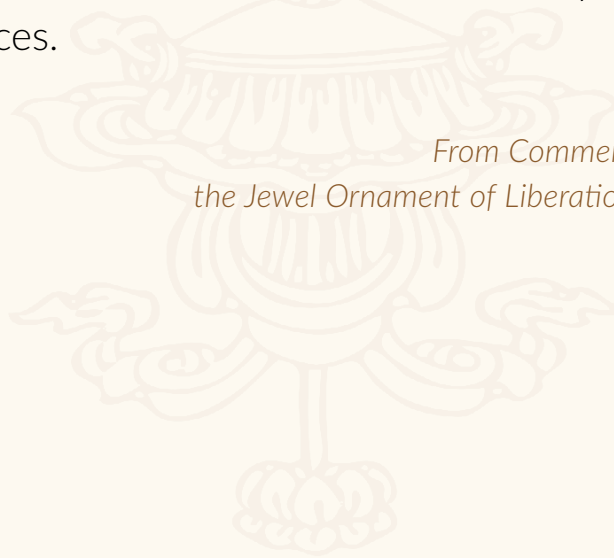
*From Commentary on
the Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 42-43*



March 11

Karma is never exhausted. Whatever we do will always bring a result. We can't expect actions to be lost somewhere and not to have any consequences.

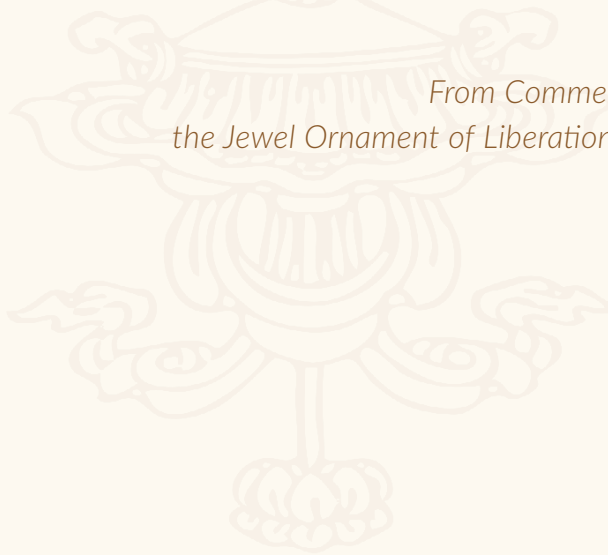
*From Commentary on
the Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 89*



March 12

The feeling of wanting to help others to be happy and free from suffering is a feeling that we should have for everyone without any distinction.

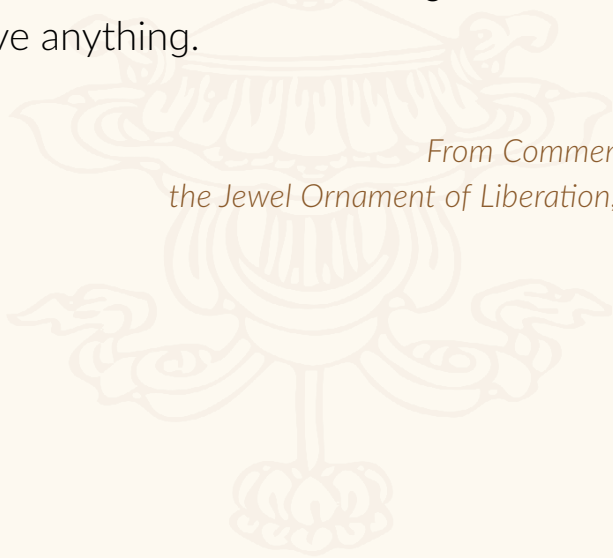
*From Commentary on
the Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 106*



March 13

For whatever we attempt to achieve, even in daily life, we will need diligence in order to achieve a result; without diligence we won't achieve anything.

*From Commentary on
the Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 240*



March 14

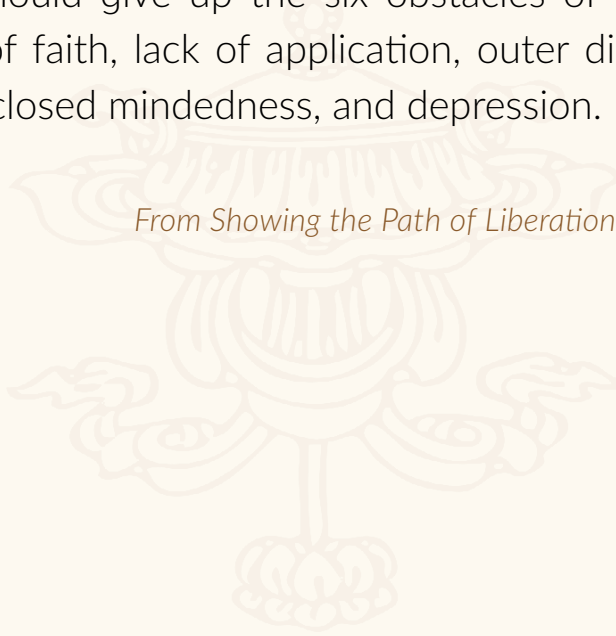
It is important that we don't just pray or wish that things may come about by themselves, but we must try to the best of our capabilities to get the conditions for our wishes.

*From A Commentary on
Shantideva's Guide to the
Bodhisattva's Way of Life, p. 160*

March 15

In general, when listening to dharma teachings, we should give up the six obstacles of pride, lack of faith, lack of application, outer distraction, closed mindedness, and depression.

From Showing the Path of Liberation, p. 5-6



March 16

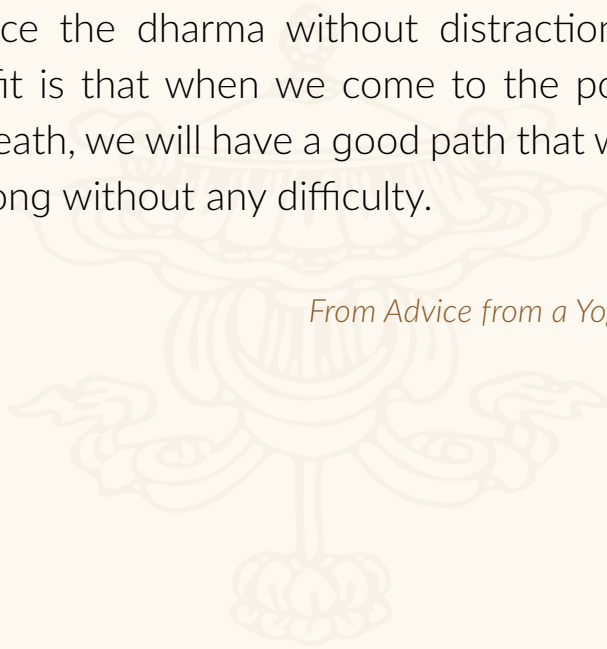
The most important thing is to be as diligent as possible. If we can practice with diligence and we encounter no insurmountable obstacles, we are very fortunate. There is no way to be too diligent about dharma practice, you cannot practice too much. The more you practice, the more it will help you.

From Vivid Awareness, p. 213

March 17

We need to apply ourselves diligently now to practice the dharma without distraction. The benefit is that when we come to the point of our death, we will have a good path that we can go along without any difficulty.

From Advice from a Yogi, p. 38



March 18

Actually, we attain happiness and qualities only because of other sentient beings; they do not cause suffering to arise. For that reason, whether sentient beings are good or bad, big or small, whatever they are like, think that they have been very kind to you. That will increase your cherishing of others.

From The Heart of the Dharma, p. 49

March 19

When we gradually get used to being gentle and taking good care of whatever things there are in this great world, this will benefit everyone. If we are not gentle and haphazardly give up on things and throw them away, that will create harm.

From The Heart of the Dharma, p. 41

March 20

To engender the aspiration for bodhichitta, it is necessary to counteract hindrances and unfavorable conditions. The best method to eliminate these hindrances and unfavorable conditions is the accumulation of merit. The best method to accumulate merit is to practice the seven branches.

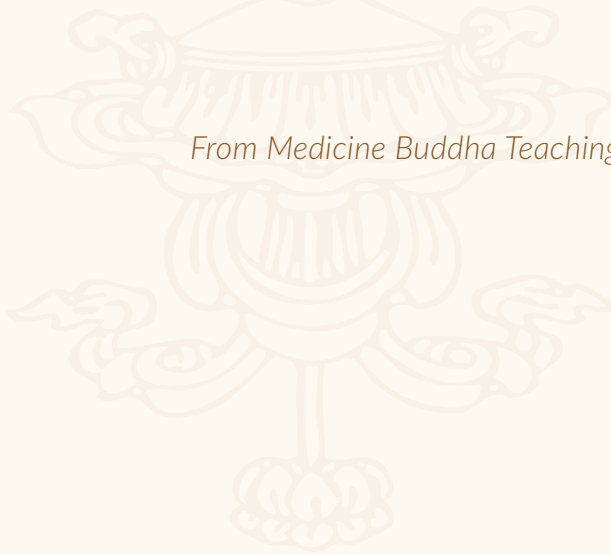


*From A Commentary on
Shantideva's Guide to the
Bodhisattva's Way of Life, p. 17*

March 21

In order to practice the descent of blessing most effectively, it is a good idea to focus the blessings on whatever is afflicting you most at that time.

From Medicine Buddha Teachings, p. 61



March 22

Everything must be done out of great joy. We need to have happiness in doing whatever we do so we never feel like we've had enough. We always just wish for more because it is really enjoyable.

*From A Commentary on
Shantideva's Guide to the
Bodhisattva's Way of Life, p. 96-97*

March 23

In order to enter into the dharma, we must engage in hearing, contemplation, and meditation. Moreover, we need to rely upon a spiritual friend who teaches us meditation and the dharma. A good spiritual friend should be a person we regard highly and who can teach the authentic path of dharma. Since we are dealing with human beings, it is difficult to find someone who has eliminated one hundred percent of all faults and has developed one hundred percent of the good qualities. But we must seek someone capable of teaching the authentic path and teaching it well.

From Essentials of Mahamudra, p. 93

March 24

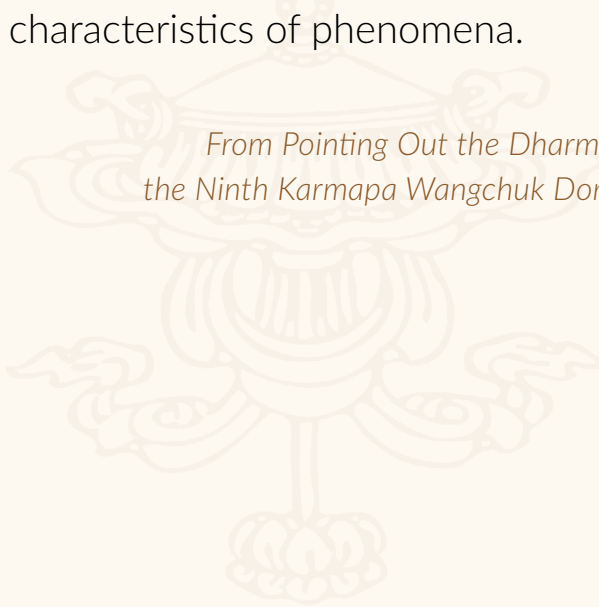
It's very good if we can have the kind of diligence that Milarepa had and be able to practice like him. But it is not wrong to have a lesser degree of diligence in practice. It's perfectly all right to practice just as much dharma as we are able to. Whatever dharma practice we do, it will have a positive result and will never be lost.

From On Buddha Essence, p. 12

March 25

The reason impermanence and selflessness are taught from the beginning is that these are the actual characteristics of phenomena.

*From Pointing Out the Dharmakaya of
the Ninth Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje, p. 11*



March 26

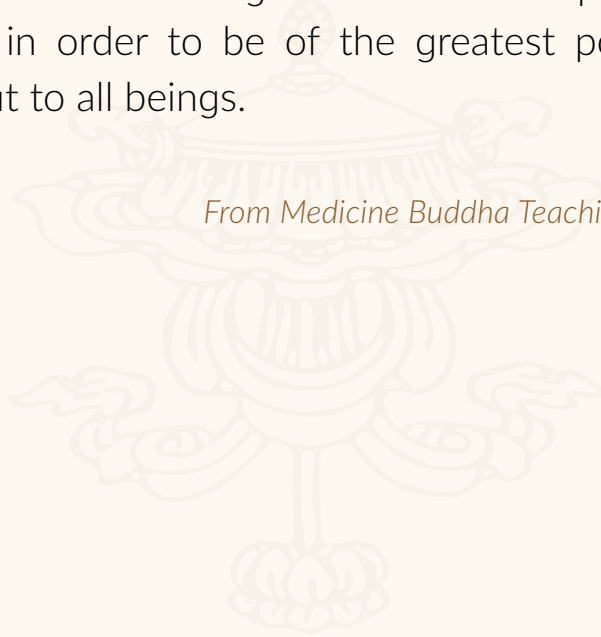
The best type of person to have with you as you die is someone who knows enough about the death process that they can help to guide you through it, who can remind you of what will occur, which will make it easier for you to recognize these various signs of dissolution and so on. Failing that, it is absolutely necessary that the person with you or persons with you be as stable as possible.

From Journey of the Mind, p. 35

March 27

While listening to the teachings, please think that you are listening to them and will practice them in order to be of the greatest possible benefit to all beings.

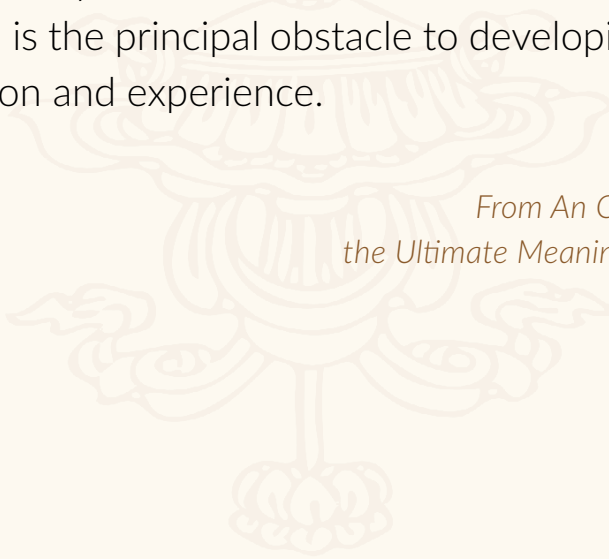
From Medicine Buddha Teachings, p. 3



March 28

If you have the confidence to practice the dharma, you will have diligence. By practicing with diligence, you will be able to eliminate laziness, which is the principal obstacle to developing realization and experience.

*From An Ocean of
the Ultimate Meaning, p. 48*



March 29

Dedicating or sharing merit is something we should always train in at the conclusion of any spiritual practice. We should imagine that whatever good may arise from our practice we share or distribute to all other beings for the general welfare of everyone.

From The King of Samadhi, p. 47

March 30

Everyone wants happiness; that is our goal. But we have to realize that we create our own happiness, that we have the power to produce it. All we need to do is to generate the causes of happiness, which are positive actions, so we have the free choice to create all future happiness, both temporary and ultimate.

*From Commentary on
the Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 80*

March 31

If we sit and think about death and impermanence, we are bound to become a little sad. Most people think it is not a good idea to sit around and think about something which will upset us. But actually, it is a good idea because if we do not think now about death and impermanence, one day they will definitely arrive anyway and then we will not be prepared. Not knowing what to do and what will come next, we will experience great suffering.

From The Seven Points of Mind Training, p. 27

April

BASIC KNOWLEDGE



April 1

The true signs of success are to be kinder, more considerate, more loving, and more compassionate.

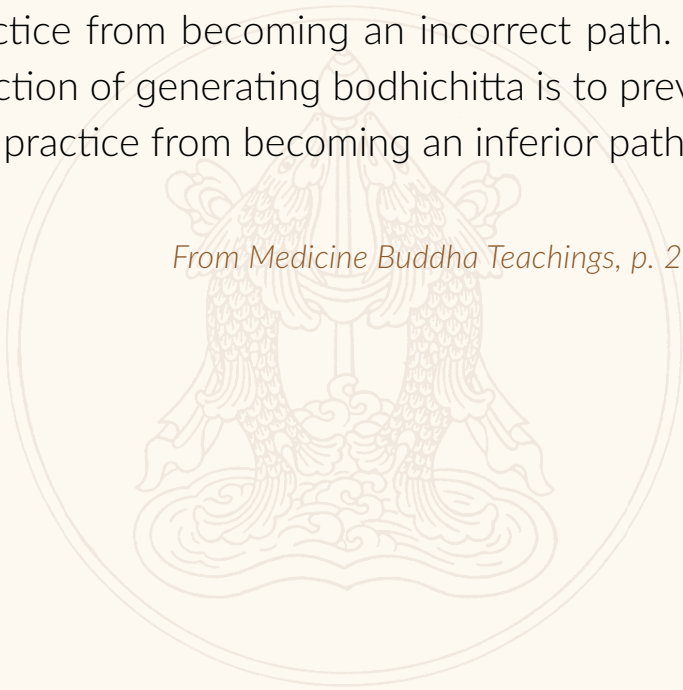
*From Crystal Clear: Practical Advice for
Mahamudra Meditators, p. 113*



April 2

The function of taking refuge is to prevent our practice from becoming an incorrect path. The function of generating bodhichitta is to prevent our practice from becoming an inferior path.

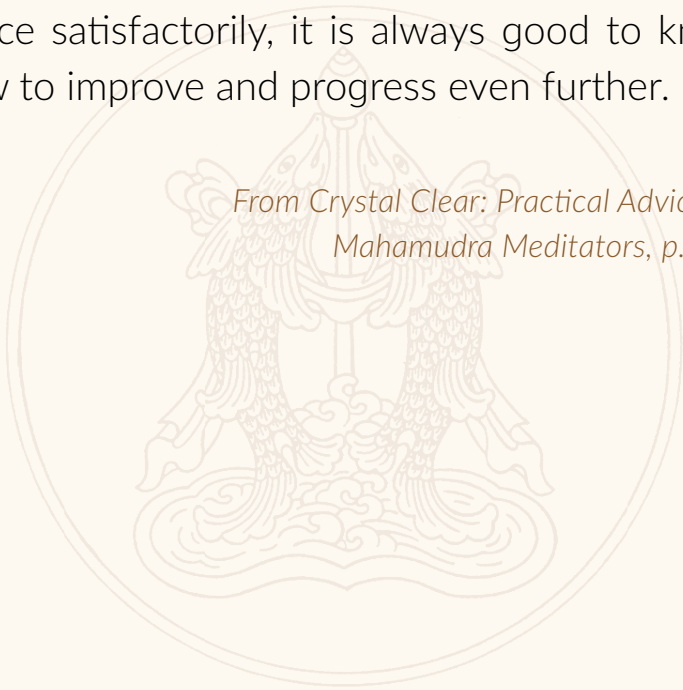
From Medicine Buddha Teachings, p. 20-23



April 3

Though your experience and realization may advance satisfactorily, it is always good to know how to improve and progress even further.

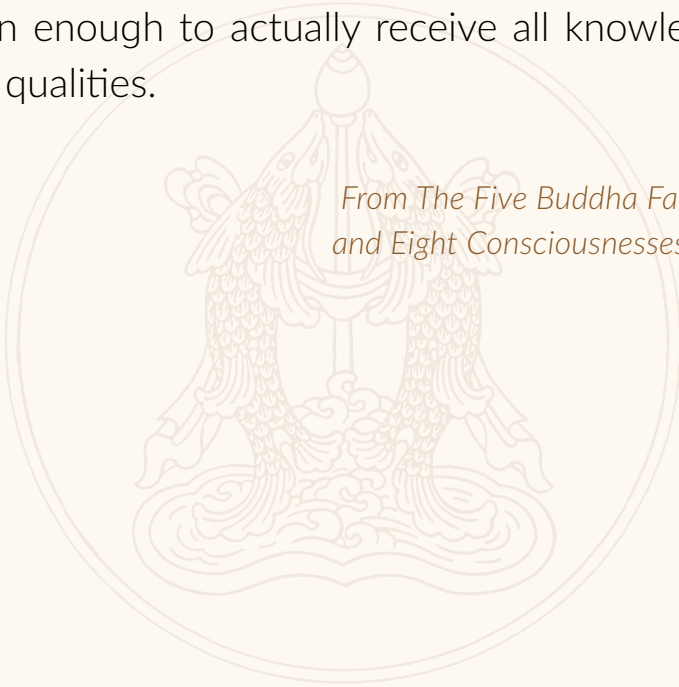
*From Crystal Clear: Practical Advice for
Mahamudra Meditators, p. 141*



April 4

When ego and pride have been removed, one is open enough to actually receive all knowledge and qualities.

*From The Five Buddha Families
and Eight Consciousnesses, p. 6*



April 5

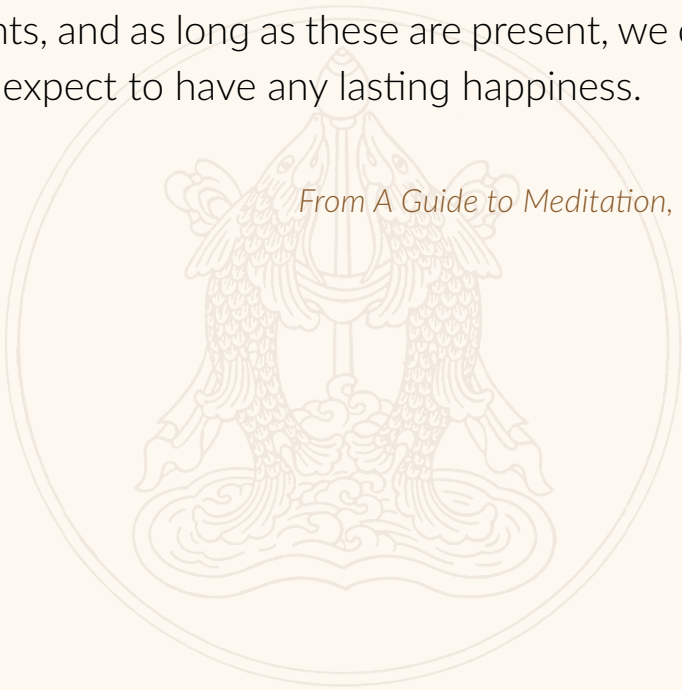
Many people think that giving up and ending our own lives is very straightforward. But this is when we should consider whether we are able to be reborn in a happier place after death, which is something that is really hard to tell. Thus, we should really cherish our human bodies. From the Buddhist perspective, our karma follows us after death and it will not be in our favor. Instead, we should properly utilize this precious human birth to really practice the dharma. It will be helpful towards alleviating the suffering of sickness, and will be beneficial to this life and all the lives that follow.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners, p. 68*

April 6

The root of samsaric existence is the defilements, and as long as these are present, we cannot expect to have any lasting happiness.

From A Guide to Meditation, p. 13



April 7

The classification of refuge has two aspects. These two aspects are conditioned by our meditation and by the quality of our attitude. If we are taking refuge for our own benefit, with a self-centered motivation, then refuge is common. If we are taking refuge for the benefit of all other beings that have been our parents in previous lives, then refuge is special.

*From Commentary on the
Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 121*

April 8

Whenever we study the dharma or do any dharma practice, the most important thing is to have a pure motivation. If we have a pure motivation, whatever we do with our body, speech, and mind will turn out well. But if our motivation is not pure, then even if what we do with our body, speech, and mind seems good from the outside, it will actually not turn out well in the end.

From Vivid Awareness, p. 2

April 9

The roots of our suffering grow within our own minds, rather than externally.

From Essential Practice, p. 111



April 10

It is the nature of desire that it is never satisfied.

*From Commentary on the
Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 200*



April 11

The continuity of realization depends on an unbroken lineage.

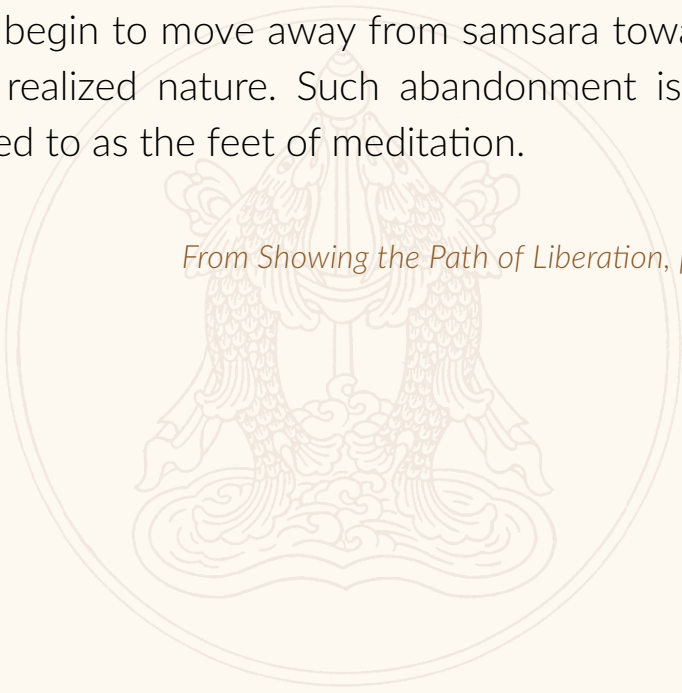
From Showing the Path of Liberation, p. 20



April 12

It is only by abandoning attachment that one can begin to move away from samsara towards the realized nature. Such abandonment is referred to as the feet of meditation.

From Showing the Path of Liberation, p. 27



April 13

The main thought which turns the mind away from samsara is impermanence.

*From Pointing Out the Dharmakaya of
the Ninth Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje, p. 11*



April 14

Sentient beings are obsessed with making themselves happy, and because of that they create a great deal of misfortune for themselves. On the other hand, the buddhas who have reached full liberation from samsara are able to protect and help sentient beings by training for the benefit of others.

*From A Commentary on
Shantideva's Guide to the
Bodhisattva's Way of Life, p. 120*

April 15

The law of karma is that whatever we experience has been created by ourselves. If we experience suffering, we have totally brought it about ourselves. If we experience happiness, we have also brought about that condition.

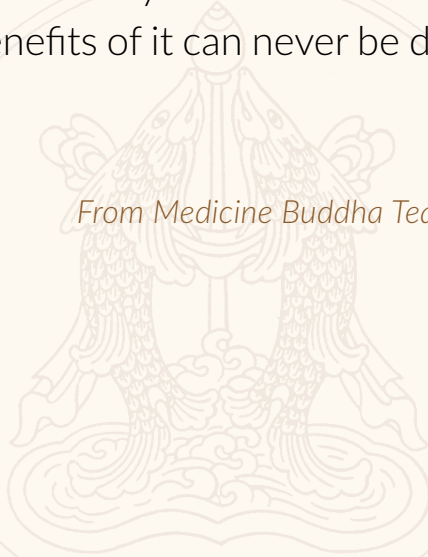


*From A Commentary on
Shantideva's Guide to the
Bodhisattva's Way of Life, p. 29*

April 16

Whatever contact you have made and whatever practice of dharma you have done will never be lost. The benefits of it can never be destroyed or removed.

From Medicine Buddha Teachings, p. 173



April 17

The law of karma is a natural law of cause and effect. Everybody has his or her own karma, which depends on previous deeds. Sentient beings have to exhaust their own karma by themselves.

From On Buddha Essence, p. 126

April 18

The suffering that we take upon ourselves to reach enlightenment has a great purpose, whereas the suffering that comes about because of desire is completely wasted and without any meaning.

*From A Commentary on
Shantideva's Guide to the
Bodhisattva's Way of Life, p. 112*

April 19

Question: As a student new to Buddhism, I have not developed a strong connection to a root guru. How does one practice in that case? Rinpoche: Well, whomever you feel faith in, and devotion and respect toward, no matter which individual, should be your object of refuge. That is whom you visualize.

From The Seven Points of Mind Training, p. 16

April 20

Generally, we have a mind that clings to a self, and this is known as self-grasping. It makes us feel as though we are really important, that we have to become happier than other people. Is it wrong to think in this way? There is nothing particularly bad about thinking like this. However, if we take advantage of others for the sake of our own happiness, we will be the only ones who are happy while others suffer. Building our own happiness upon someone else's pain contradicts the practice of loving-kindness and compassion.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners, p. 38*

April 21

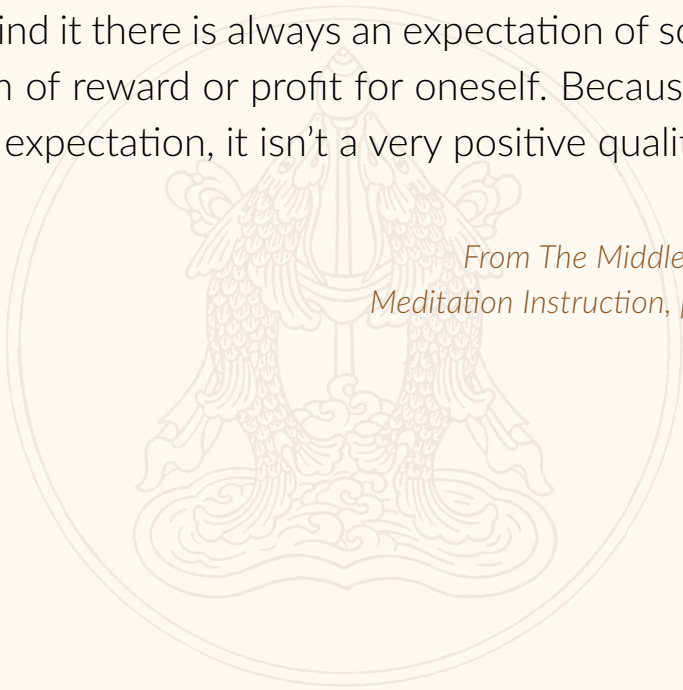
The most important thing to understand about exertion in practice is that the long term is more important than the short term. It is not so important to make a heroic effort on a given day when you are exhausted, to force yourself to practice, as it is to practice steadily over a long time.

*From A Commentary on the
Essence of Creation and Completion, p. 116*

April 22

Attachment may look very similar to love, but behind it there is always an expectation of some form of reward or profit for oneself. Because of this expectation, it isn't a very positive quality.

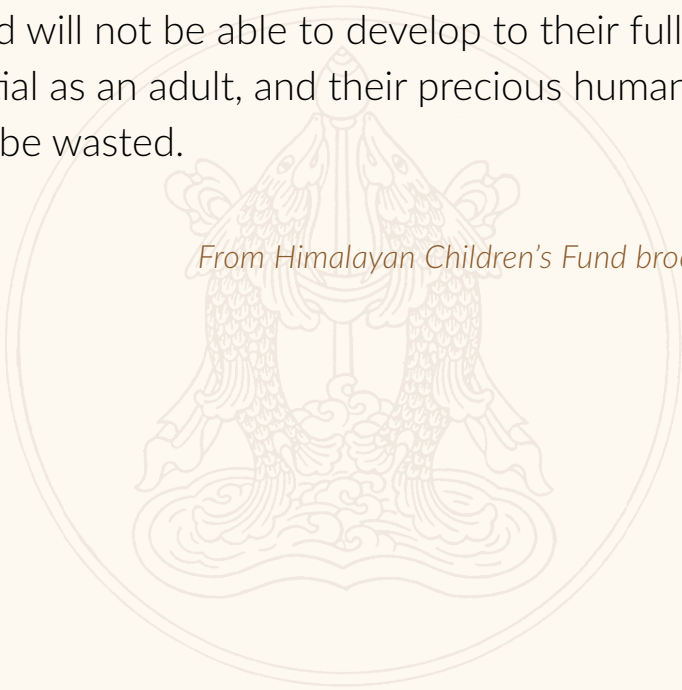
*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instruction, p. 22*



April 23

A child without proper nourishment of body and mind will not be able to develop to their full potential as an adult, and their precious human life will be wasted.

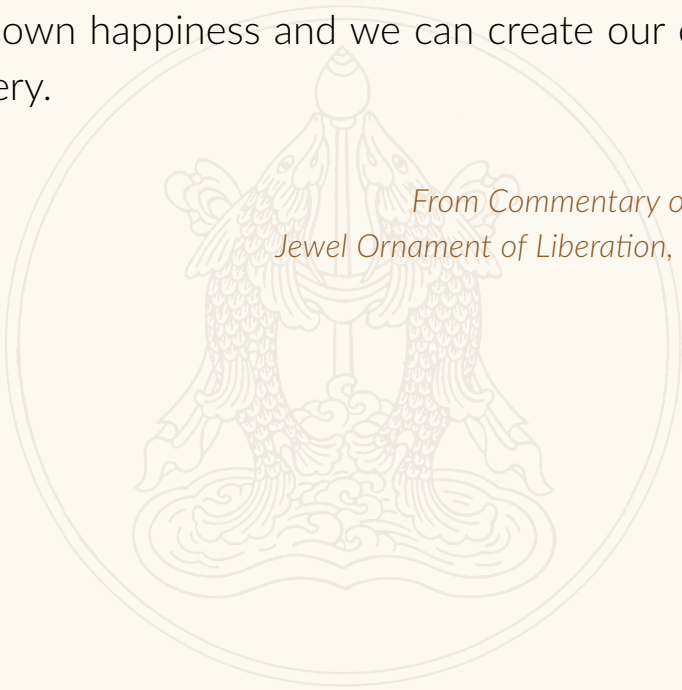
From Himalayan Children's Fund brochure



April 24

Everything is entirely up to us. We can create our own happiness and we can create our own misery.

*From Commentary on the
Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 80*



April 25

The Buddha taught the unmistakable way and gave the teachings on karma in order to show how to escape suffering by eliminating the cause and how to experience happiness by creating its cause. He gave this teaching because he saw everyone wants to experience happiness and avoid suffering and we have to understand that we ourselves are responsible for this.

*From Commentary on the
Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 83*

April 26

When we speak of dharma, we usually refer to the teachings given by the Buddha, but in fact dharma has two meanings: one is the scriptural dharma that came down to us from the Buddha, and the other is the dharma of realization.

*From The Development of
Buddhism in India, p. 15*

April 27

The nature of all perceived phenomena is emptiness, utter peace and perfection. This emptiness is also lucidity and the space for the unlimited possibility of manifestation. It is the nature of the perceiving mind, yet we do not normally see it. Our ignorance has two aspects: We do not see what actually exists (emptiness), and we see what does not really exist (the duality).

From A Song for the King, p. 24

April 28

It is possible to eliminate confused appearances and discover the direct experience of the true nature. If the ground were inherently defective, there would be nothing we could do to change it. But since the ground itself does not consist of confused experiences, our ignorance can be removed and the true nature can be realized.

From A Song for the King, p. 29

April 29

We must understand why we meditate. We do not meditate simply because it feels good or because we want to have great experiences. Nor do we meditate just because we want to feel peaceful and tranquil. We meditate because through meditation, it is possible to utterly eliminate from the mind all of our disturbing emotions. The purpose of meditation is to achieve complete elimination of the mind's afflictions. We meditate because our mind is innately capable of being utterly at peace, completely free of disturbing emotions, and also perfectly insightful and discerning.

From A Song for the King, p. 30-31

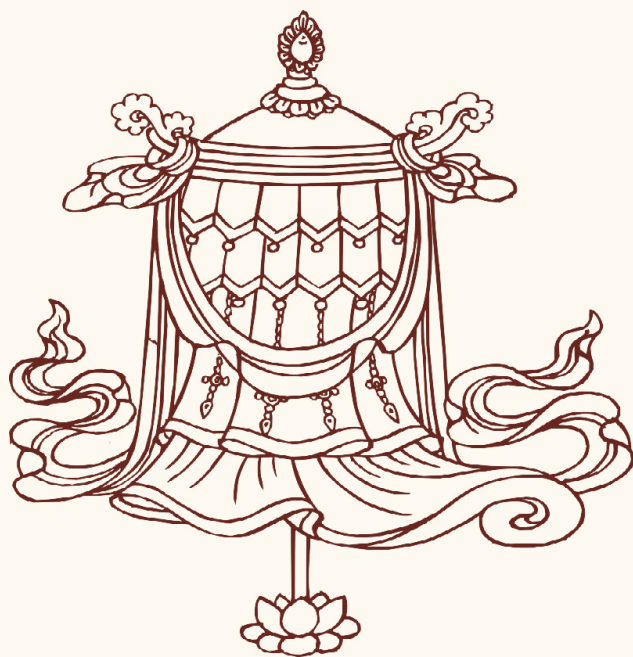
April 30

Because the root of happiness for ourselves and all sentient beings is bodhichitta, we must never forget it. If we think in this way and create strong determination, bodhichitta will occur to us in bardo. We will be able to think such thoughts at the time of death. Then when we are taking our next birth, bodhichitta will naturally occur.

From The Heart of the Dharma, p. 73

May

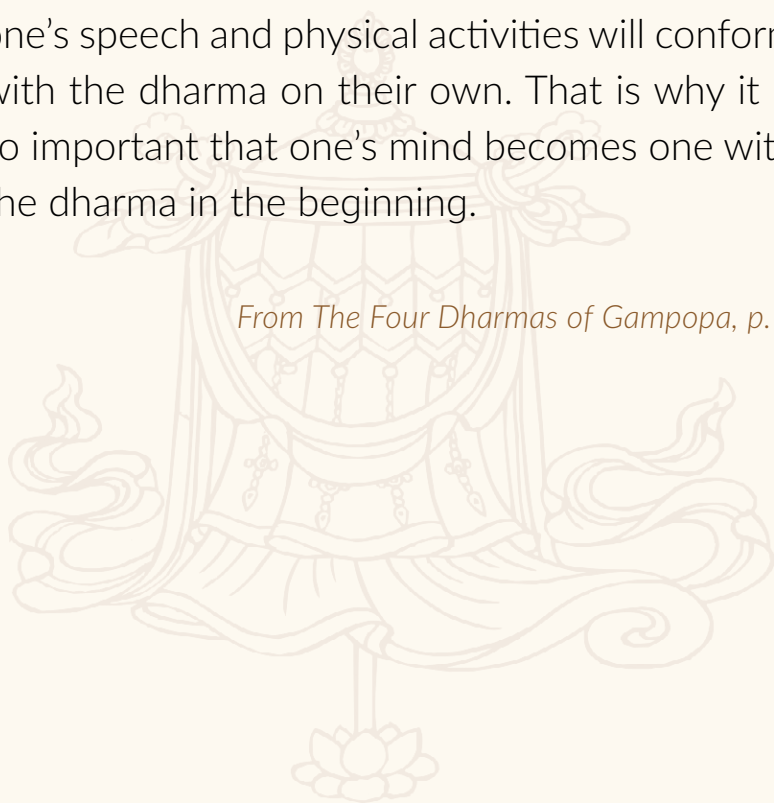
BODY, SPEECH AND MIND



May 1

If one's mind conforms with the dharma, then one's speech and physical activities will conform with the dharma on their own. That is why it is so important that one's mind becomes one with the dharma in the beginning.

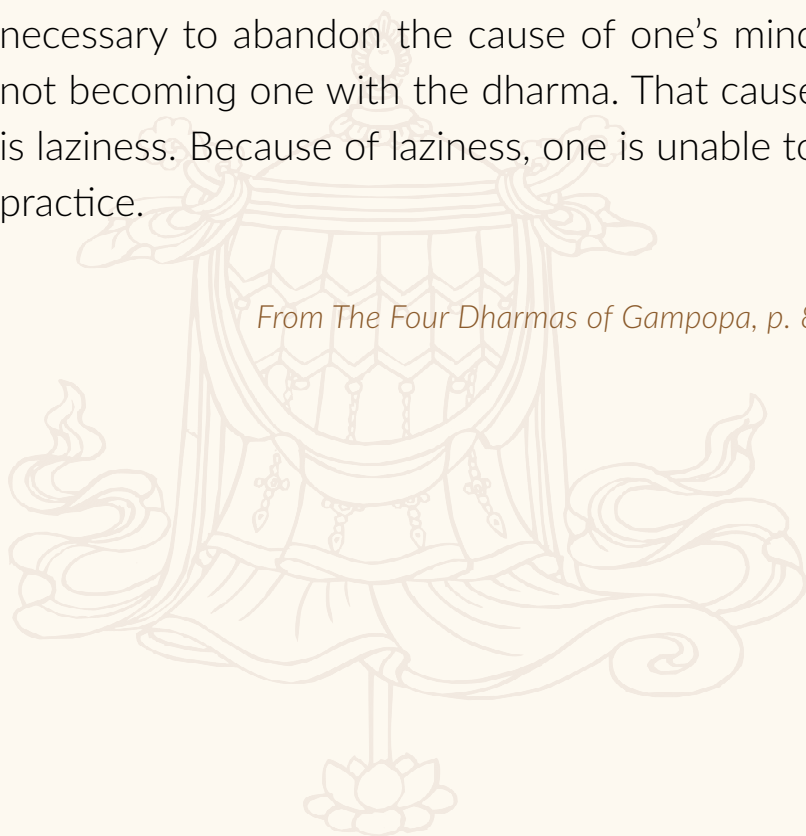
From The Four Dharmas of Gampopa, p. 8



May 2

For one's mind to become one with dharma, it is necessary to abandon the cause of one's mind not becoming one with the dharma. That cause is laziness. Because of laziness, one is unable to practice.

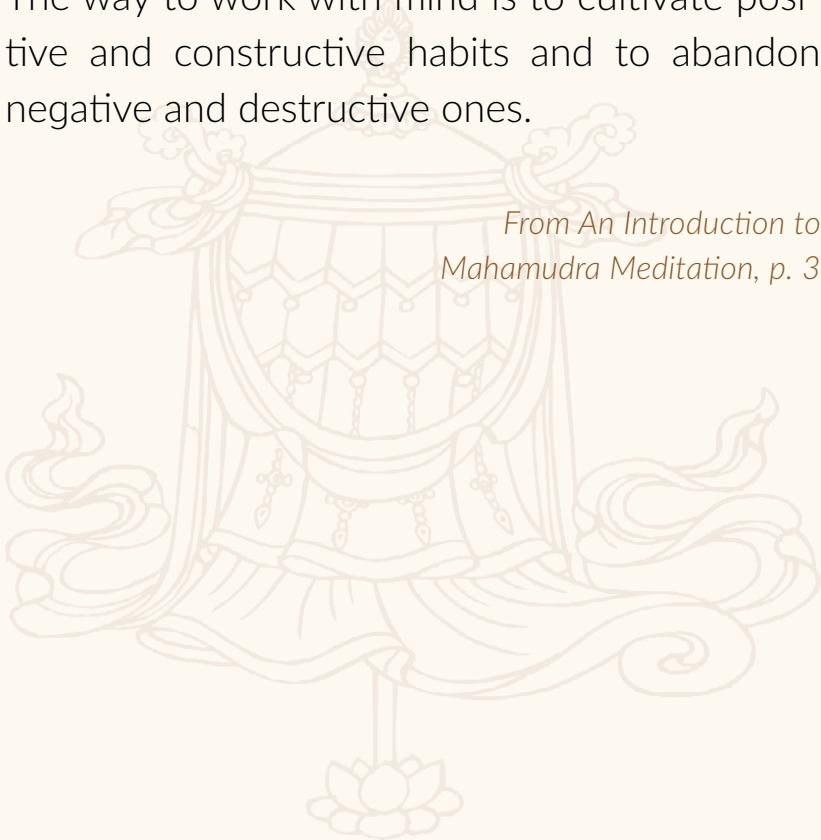
From The Four Dharmas of Gampopa, p. 8



May 3

The way to work with mind is to cultivate positive and constructive habits and to abandon negative and destructive ones.

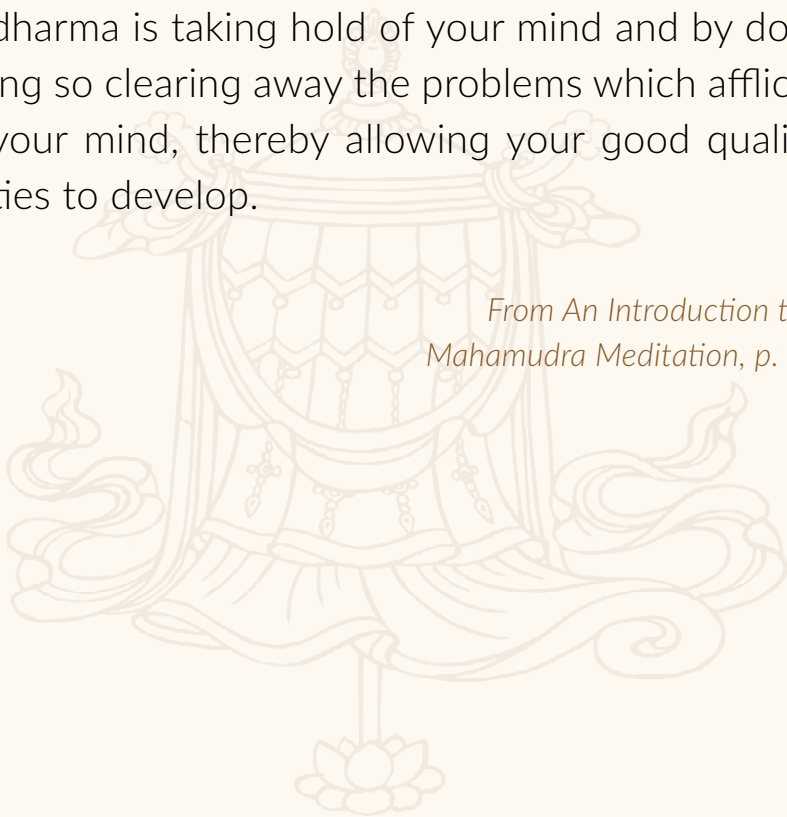
*From An Introduction to
Mahamudra Meditation, p. 3*



May 4

In essence, the basis of all practice of buddha-dharma is taking hold of your mind and by doing so clearing away the problems which afflict your mind, thereby allowing your good qualities to develop.

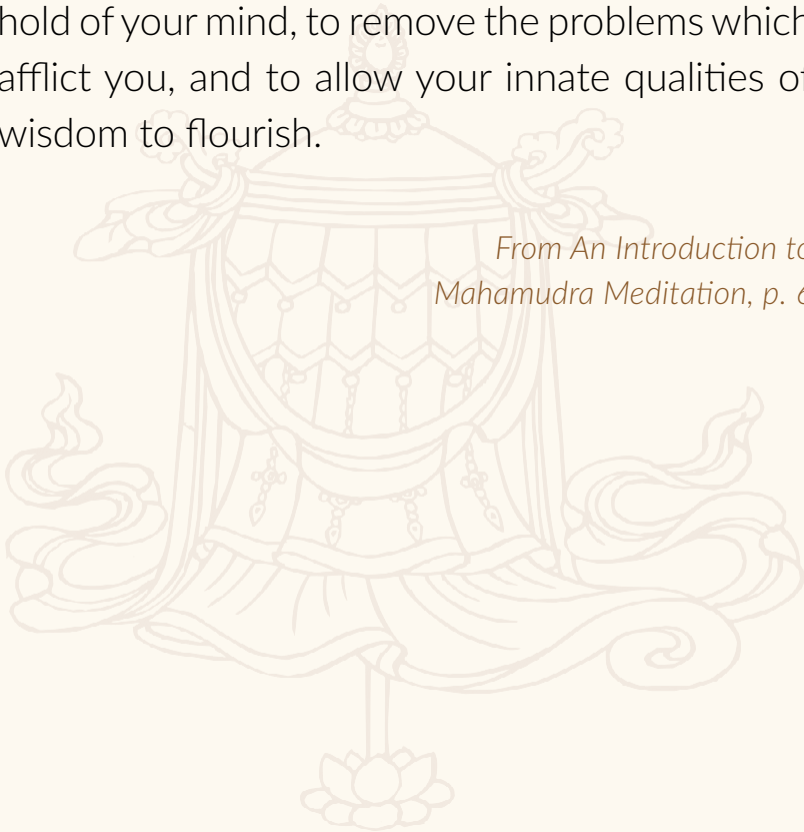
*From An Introduction to
Mahamudra Meditation, p. 6*



May 5

The best way to take care of yourself is to take hold of your mind, to remove the problems which afflict you, and to allow your innate qualities of wisdom to flourish.

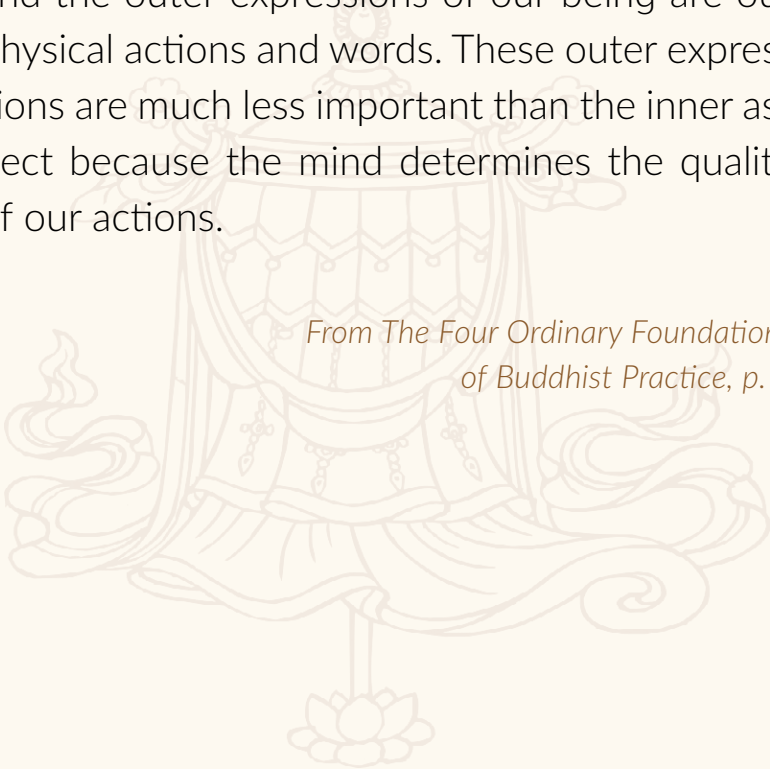
*From An Introduction to
Mahamudra Meditation, p. 6*



May 6

The inner expression of our being is our mind, and the outer expressions of our being are our physical actions and words. These outer expressions are much less important than the inner aspect because the mind determines the quality of our actions.

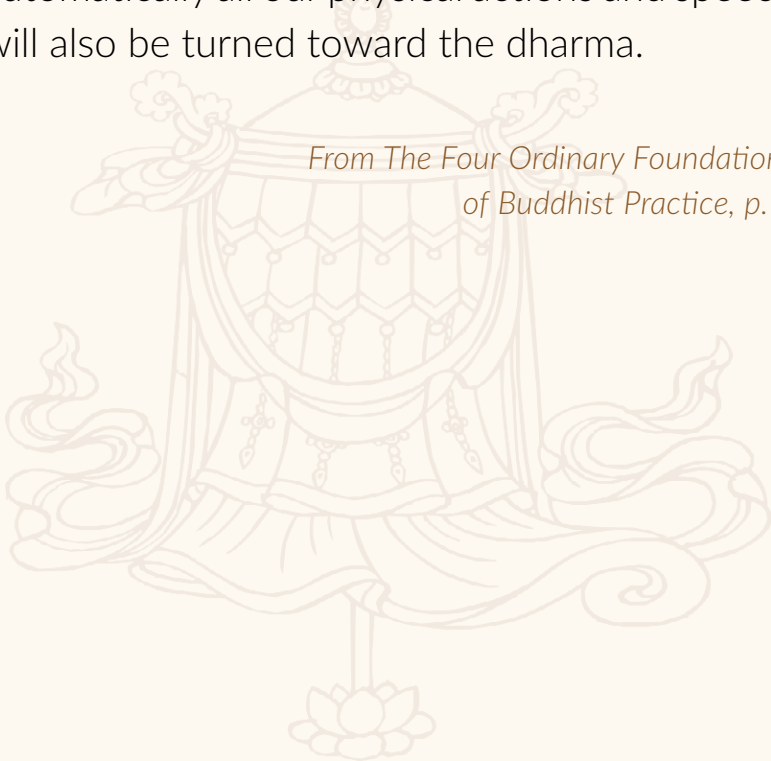
*From The Four Ordinary Foundations
of Buddhist Practice, p. 1*



May 7

If we can turn our mind toward the dharma, then automatically all our physical actions and speech will also be turned toward the dharma.

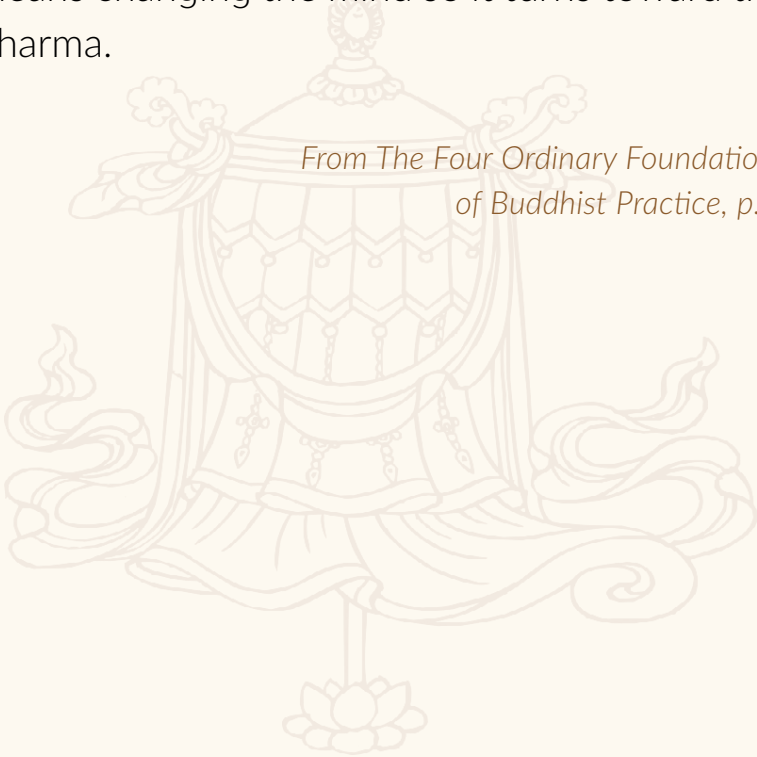
*From The Four Ordinary Foundations
of Buddhist Practice, p. 3*



May 8

Buddhist practice is working on the mind, which means changing the mind so it turns toward the dharma.

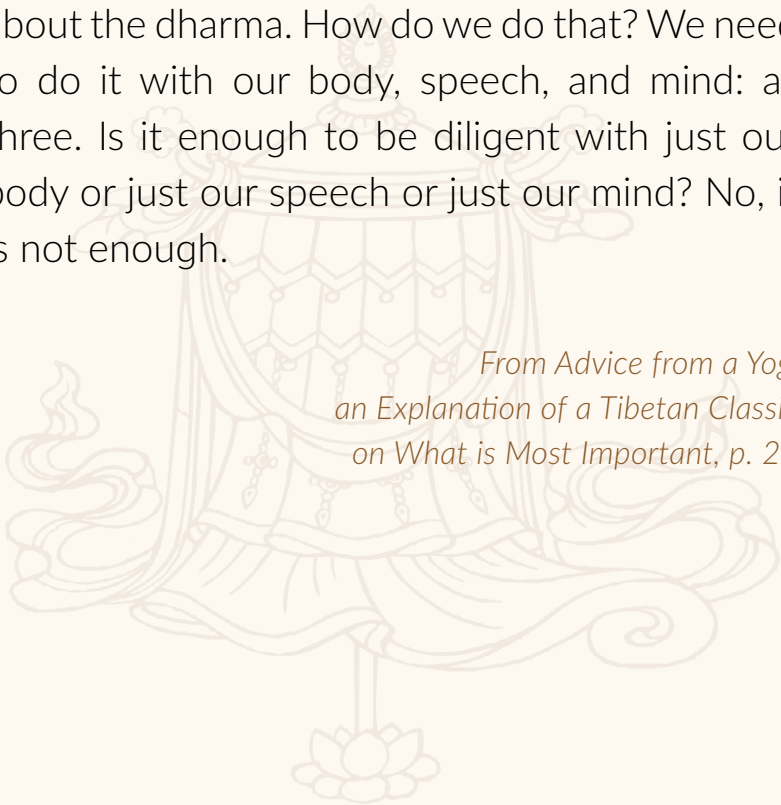
*From The Four Ordinary Foundations
of Buddhist Practice, p. 2*



May 9

Striving at the dharma means being diligent about the dharma. How do we do that? We need to do it with our body, speech, and mind: all three. Is it enough to be diligent with just our body or just our speech or just our mind? No, it is not enough.

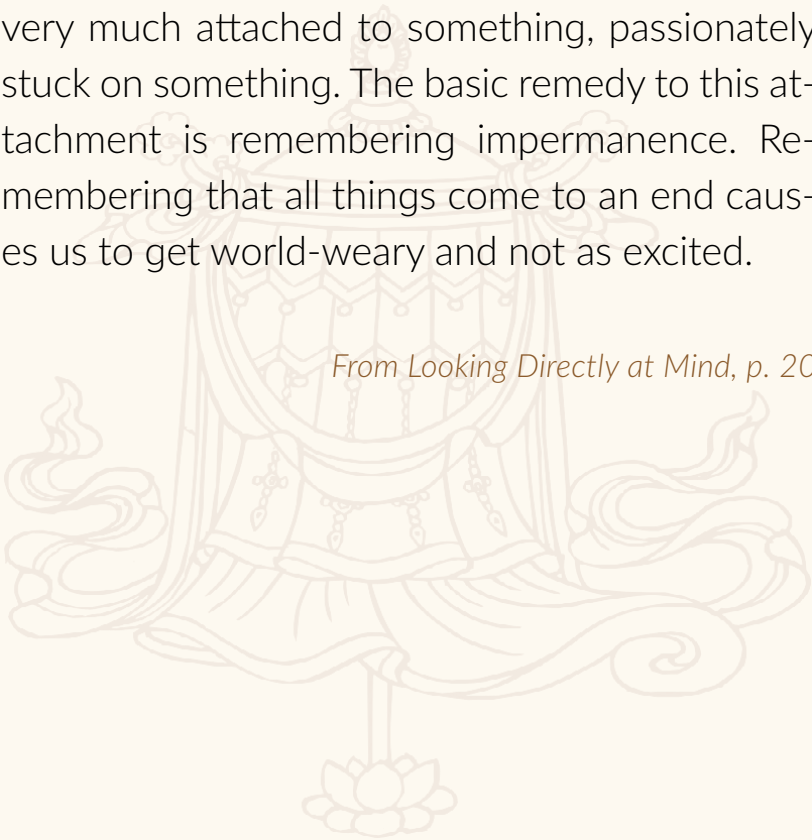
*From Advice from a Yogi
an Explanation of a Tibetan Classic
on What is Most Important, p. 27*



May 10

An excited mind is an instance of the mind being very much attached to something, passionately stuck on something. The basic remedy to this attachment is remembering impermanence. Remembering that all things come to an end causes us to get world-weary and not as excited.

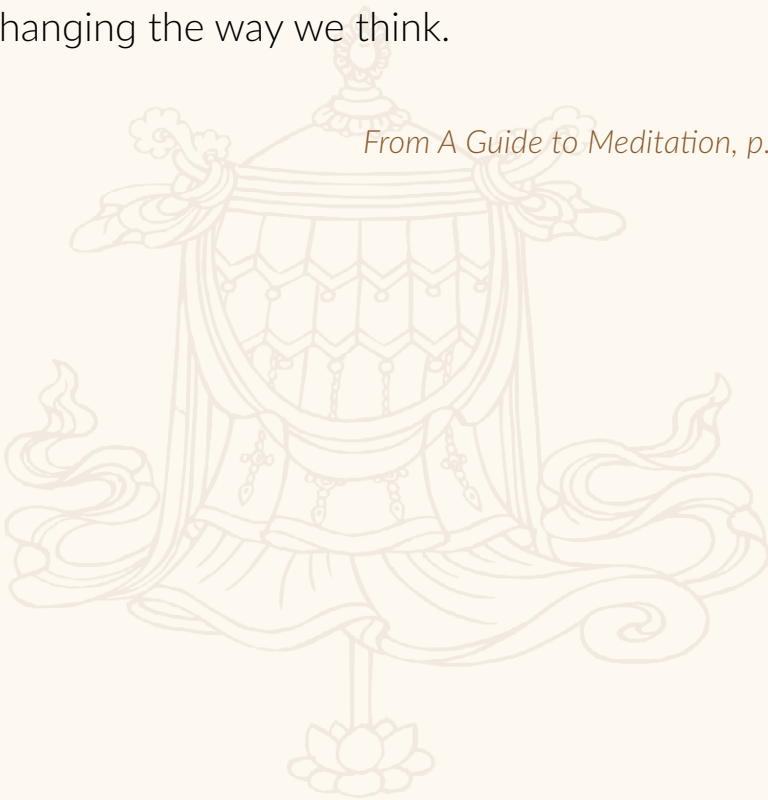
From Looking Directly at Mind, p. 20



May 11

The starting point of changing what we do is
changing the way we think.

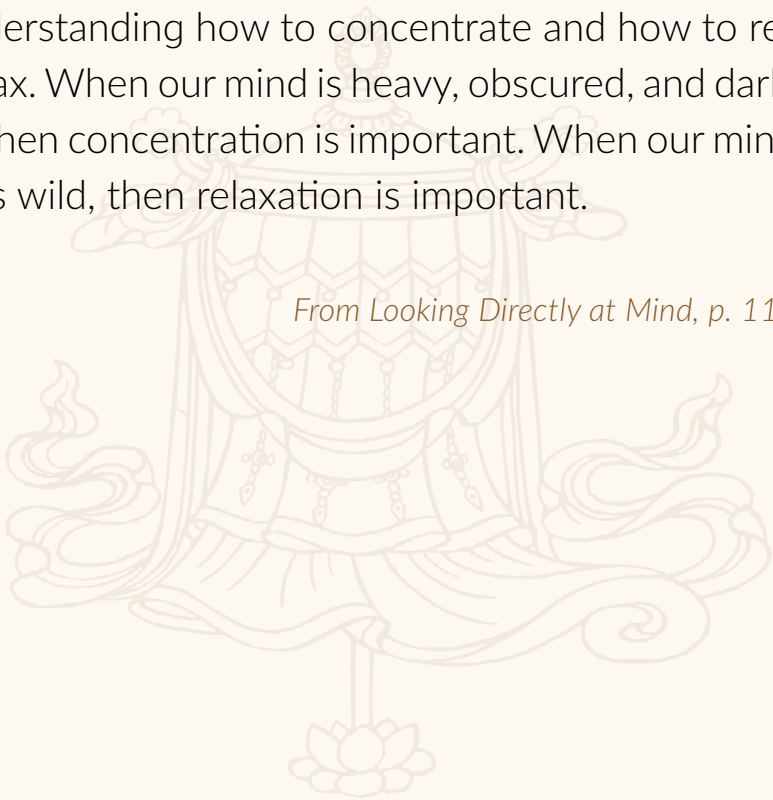
From A Guide to Meditation, p. 3



May 12

The most important thing in meditation is understanding how to concentrate and how to relax. When our mind is heavy, obscured, and dark, then concentration is important. When our mind is wild, then relaxation is important.

From Looking Directly at Mind, p. 113



May 13

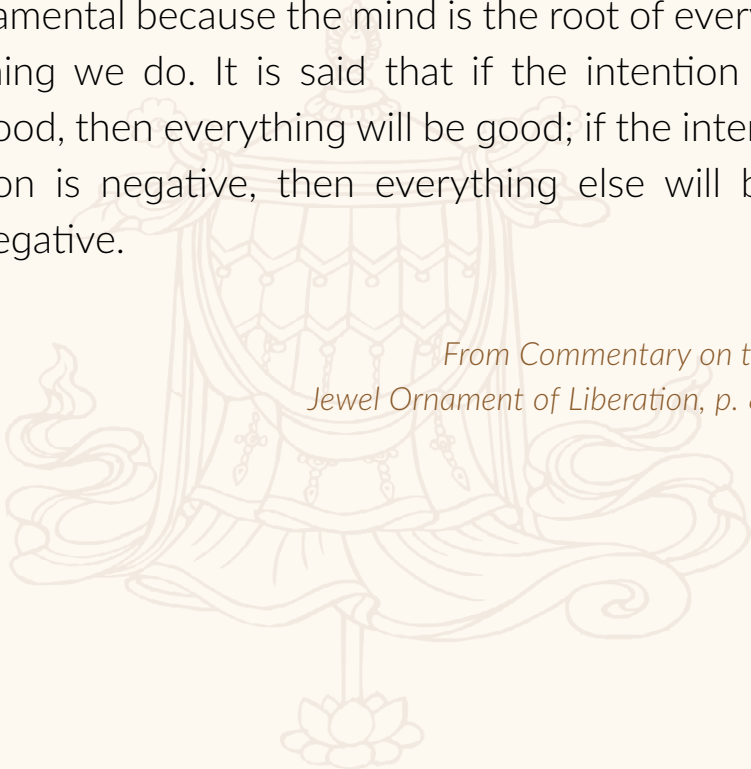
The Buddha said that taming one's mind is very important and the very essence of the dharma. Taming one's mind involves abandoning what is bad and cultivating what is good. One needs to abandon or pacify the afflictions such as desire, aggression, ignorance, pride, and jealousy. One needs to cultivate wisdom, which leads to the good qualities and extraordinary attributes of realized person.

From Looking Directly at Mind, p. 261

May 14

In Buddhism, the mental aspect is the most fundamental because the mind is the root of everything we do. It is said that if the intention is good, then everything will be good; if the intention is negative, then everything else will be negative.

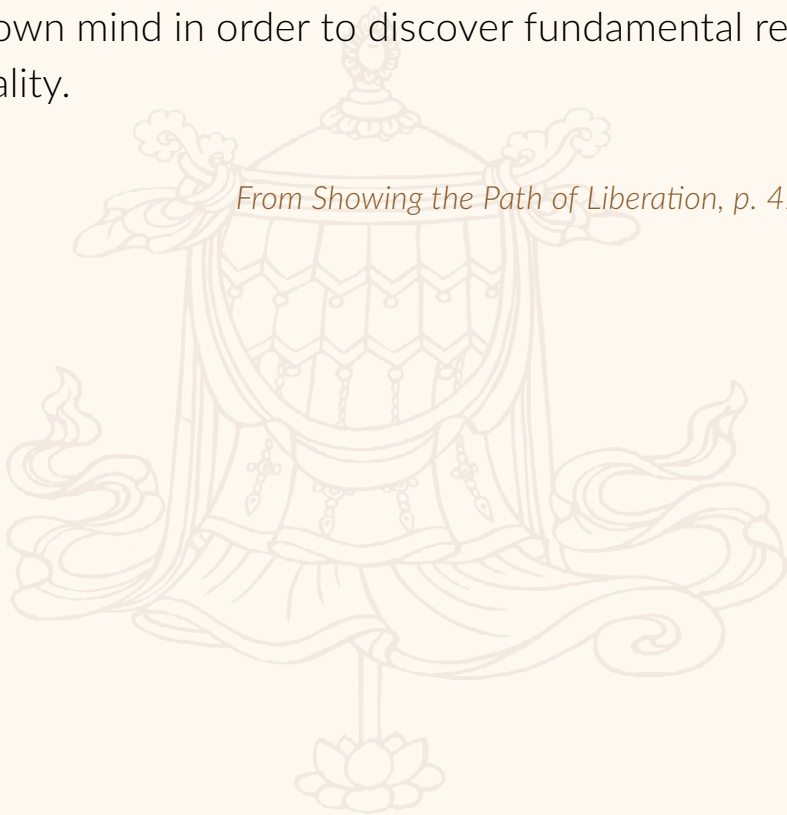
*From Commentary on the
Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 86*



May 15

We must examine the essential nature of our own mind in order to discover fundamental reality.

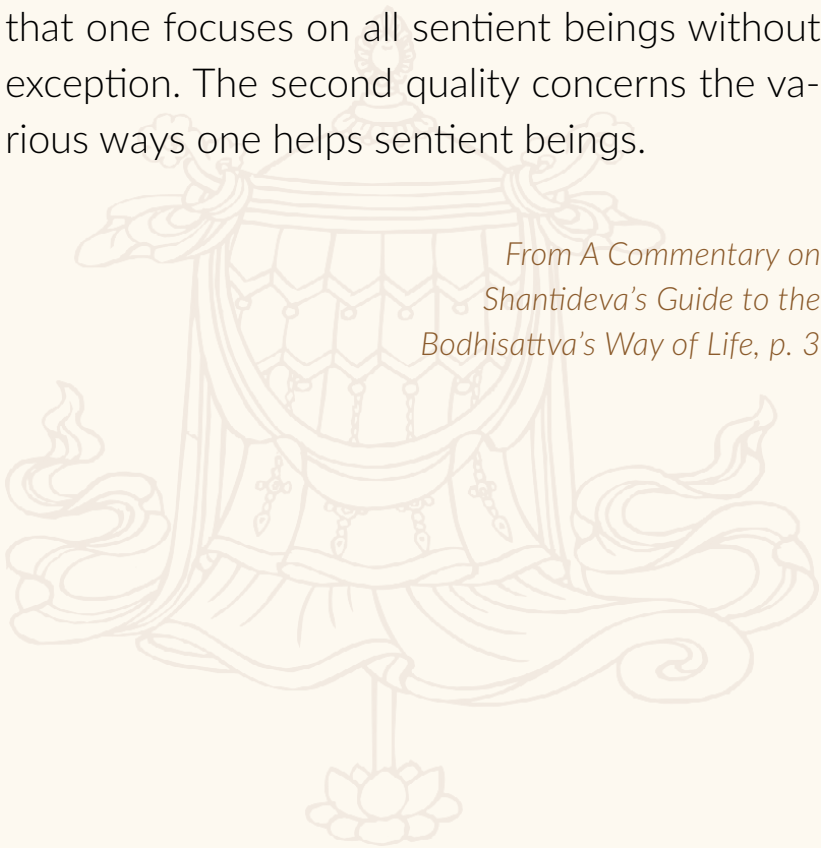
From Showing the Path of Liberation, p. 42



May 16

Bodhichitta has two qualities. The first quality is that one focuses on all sentient beings without exception. The second quality concerns the various ways one helps sentient beings.

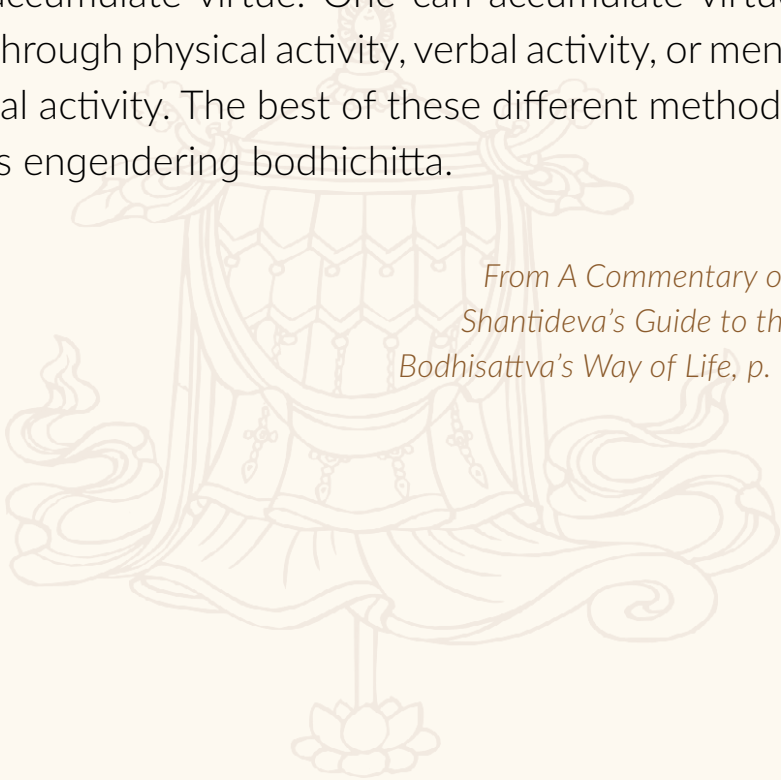
*From A Commentary on
Shantideva's Guide to the
Bodhisattva's Way of Life, p. 3*



May 17

Generally speaking, there are many methods to accumulate virtue. One can accumulate virtue through physical activity, verbal activity, or mental activity. The best of these different methods is engendering bodhichitta.

*From A Commentary on
Shantideva's Guide to the
Bodhisattva's Way of Life, p. 8*



May 18

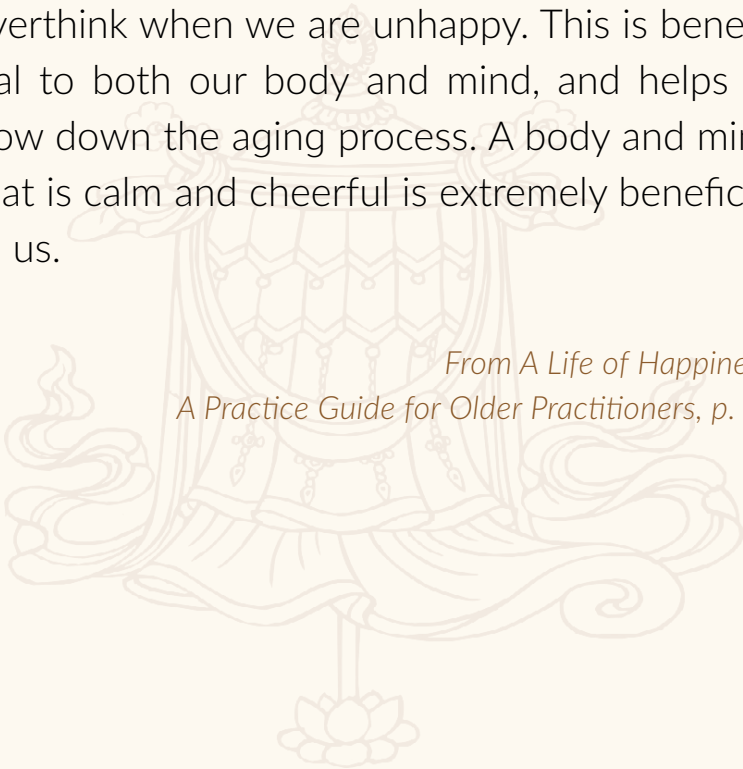
Our mind is the source of all our happiness and all our suffering. If we can control our mind, if we are the master of our mind, we will have the source of our happiness and we won't need to rely on any outer objects to make us happy. If, on the other hand, we don't control our mind, we will always fall prey to thoughts, to negativity, and no matter how many outer pleasures we possess, we will never be able to enjoy them.

*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instructions, p. 69*

May 19

Keep a cheerful, calm state of mind. Try not to overthink when we are unhappy. This is beneficial to both our body and mind, and helps to slow down the aging process. A body and mind that is calm and cheerful is extremely beneficial to us.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners, p. 21*



May 20

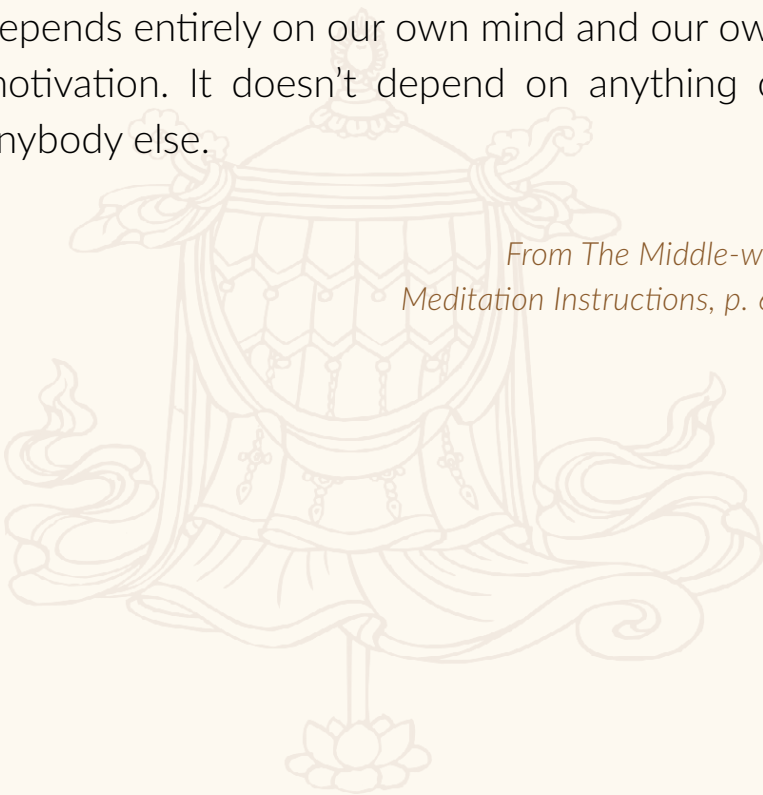
If one wants to achieve anything, whether we are speaking in terms of ultimate realization or proper meditation, the first prerequisite is that the mind be disposed in the proper way. If the mind is right, then everything else will be achieved effortlessly. But if the attitude is wrong, everything else will go wrong as well.

*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instructions, p. 62*

May 21

Any real benefit coming from dharma practice depends entirely on our own mind and our own motivation. It doesn't depend on anything or anybody else.

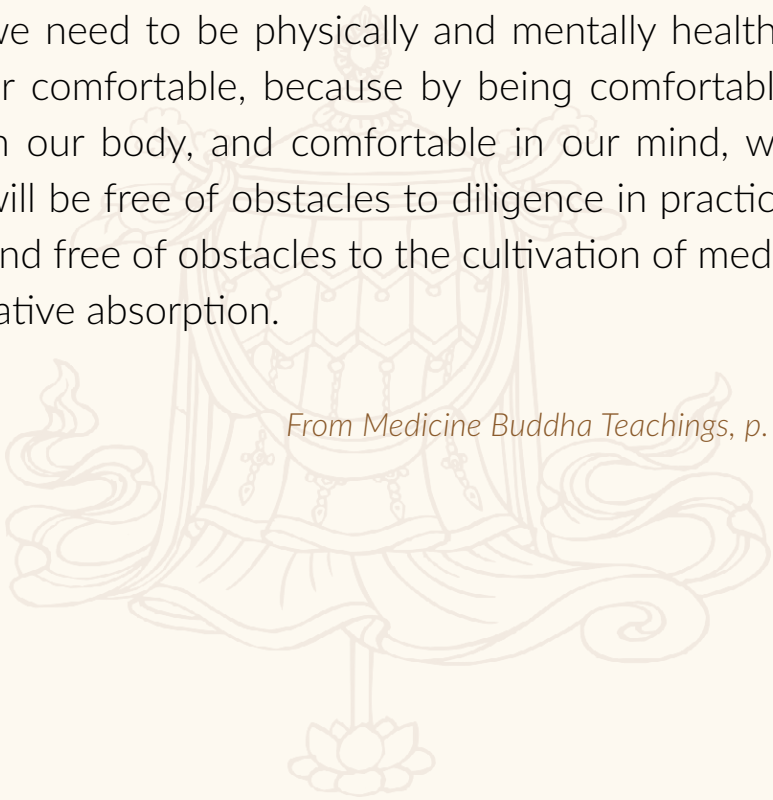
*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instructions, p. 61*



May 22

In order to have a stable and profound practice, we need to be physically and mentally healthy or comfortable, because by being comfortable in our body, and comfortable in our mind, we will be free of obstacles to diligence in practice and free of obstacles to the cultivation of meditative absorption.

From Medicine Buddha Teachings, p. 2



May 23

The short-term benefits of meditation are more than mere peace of mind, because our physical health as well depends to a great extent upon our state of mind. Therefore, if you cultivate a state of mental contentment and peace, then you will tend not to become ill, and you will tend to heal easily if you do become sick. The reason for this is that one of the primary conditions that brings about illness is mental agitation, which produces a corresponding agitation or disturbance of the channels and energies within the body.

*From Teachings on the
Practice of Meditation, p. 3*

May 24

The accumulation of virtue means that when we speak about practicing the dharma it isn't just an intention or an idea. Rather it is in terms of doing something practical and real with our body, speech, and mind. With our body, speech, and mind, we should act as positively as possible. This is what is called “gathering the accumulation of virtue.”

*From Commentary on the
Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 169*

May 25

We need to understand the internal world of the mind. If we have happiness of mind, our environment will appear to us like a palace of the buddhas, no matter where we are. Without happiness of mind, we will feel no pleasure, even if we are living in a palace of gold and silver. If our mind is peaceful and free from fear, we will experience our world as a peaceful, nonthreatening place. Whatever pleasure or pain we experience is our own mind. That is why the mind is the most important thing to understand.

From Essentials of Mahamudra, p. 21

May 26

The pain and discomfort that we experience in our everyday life result from not having control over our own mind. If we achieve shamatha and vipashyana, our mind becomes independent, no longer under the influence of confusion and the disturbing emotions. We then have the power to create a pleasurable life for ourselves.

From Essentials of Mahamudra, p. 26



May 27

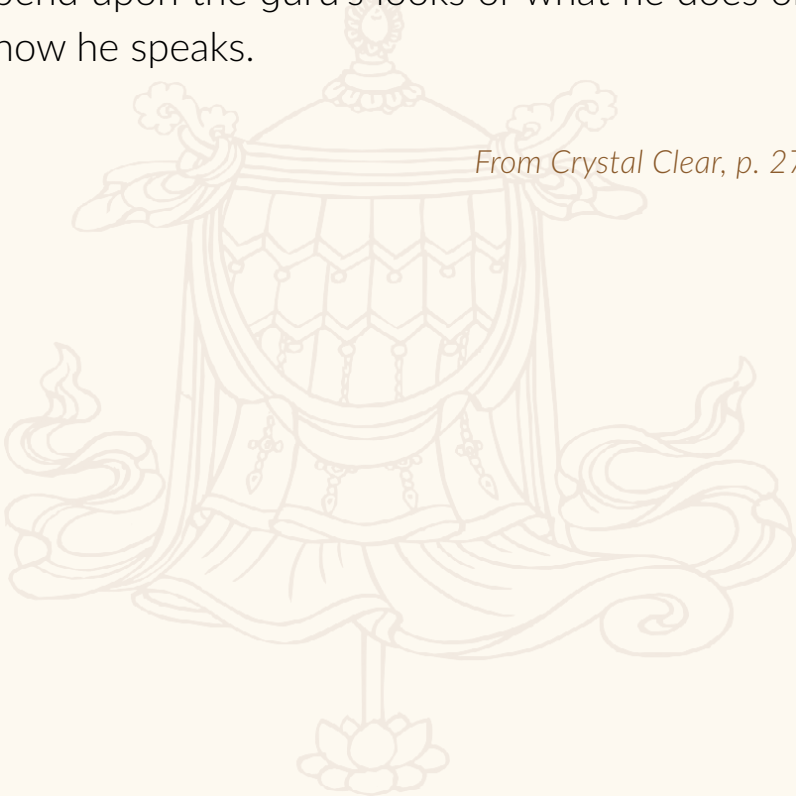
If we feel joy and enthusiasm for meditation and have no doubt about wanting to practice meditation, heaviness of the body will not pose an obstacle. If we feel lazy and don't have a strong wish to meditate, the body will feel heavy or restless. The body and mind appear to be separate but, in fact, the mind is dominant and can overcome the situation of the body.

From Essentials of Mahamudra, p. 27

May 28

The effectiveness of the teaching does not depend upon the guru's looks or what he does or how he speaks.

From Crystal Clear, p. 27



May 29

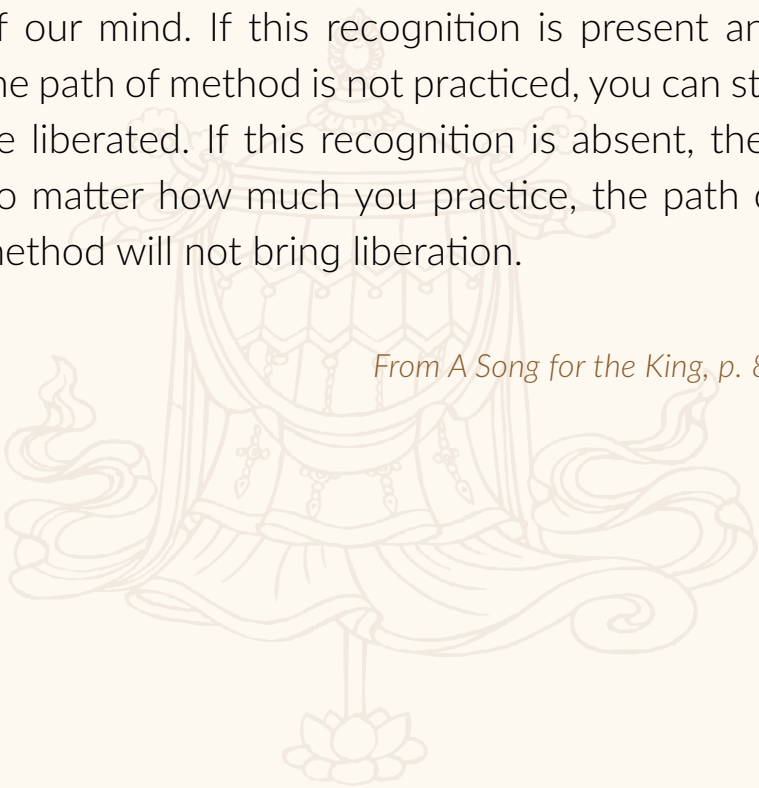
Everyone's mind has two aspects. There is a pure aspect to your mind and there is an impure aspect to your mind. The impure aspect to your mind is called klesha or mental affliction. If you abandon mental afflictions, then all of your actions of body and speech will automatically become dharmic or pure. As long as you have not abandoned mental afflictions, then no matter how good your actions of body and speech may appear, you will still never be happy.

*From A Commentary on the
Essence of Creation and Completion, p. 51*

May 30

What really matters is recognition of the nature of our mind. If this recognition is present and the path of method is not practiced, you can still be liberated. If this recognition is absent, then no matter how much you practice, the path of method will not bring liberation.

From A Song for the King, p. 81



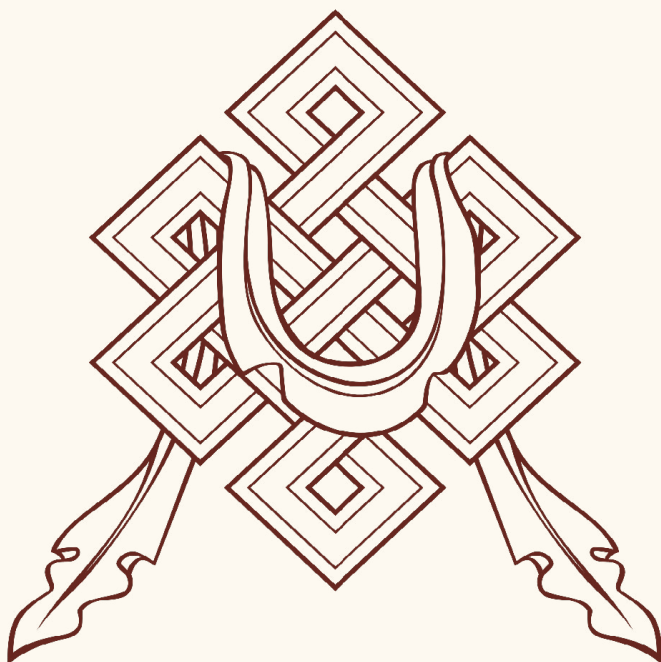
May 31

To create great merit, we visualize the lama's body as being very brilliant and resplendent. We think that the lama has great loving-kindness and compassion for all living beings and wishes that they all be free from suffering. This compassion and love are not limited to particular individuals, but include all living beings. In this way, the lama's mind abides naturally in the sphere of reality.

From The Seven Points of Mind Training, p. 23

June

GENERAL DHARMA TEACHINGS



June 1

One needs to understand that when the Buddha taught, he was not teaching as a great scholar who wanted to demonstrate a particular philosophical point of view or teach for his own sake. His desire was to present the very essence of the deep and vast teachings of Buddhism. For that reason, he gave teachings which suited the abilities of his disciples. All the teachings he gave, some long and some short, were a direct or appropriate response to the development of the disciples who came to listen to him.

*From The Three Vehicles of
Buddhist Practice, p. 1*

June 2

The principal practice which enables us to cut attachment to samsara is to meditate on the impermanent nature of samsara. By meditating on impermanence, we will be less inclined to become involved in worldly activities.

*From The Three Vehicles of
Buddhist Practice, p. 25*

June 3

When we practice dharma, we must not just do it as an outer show or pretense or like a theatrical performance where actors dress up as kings and ministers even though they are not really kings and ministers. We must practice dharma wholeheartedly and very properly with our body, speech, and mind. When we perform virtuous actions with our body, our mind should be there also working for dharma. When we say things, our mind should mean it as well. Practicing the dharma wholeheartedly is very important.

*From The Three Vehicles of
Buddhist Practice, p. 58*

June 4

It is said that the foundations are even more profound than the actual practice itself and that the amount of benefit and development that emerges in the main practices is related entirely to how well one has prepared oneself through the foundations. There are two kinds of foundations: the four ordinary foundations or four thoughts that turn the mind and the four special foundations or the four preliminary practices.

*From The Three Vehicles of
Buddhist Practice, p. 78-79*

June 5

It is very important for us to bring suffering and illness to the path. However, it is very difficult to bring a serious illness to the path from the start. My own guru, when talking about bringing sickness to the path, had us pinch ourselves hard and ask, “Does it hurt?” then he said, “Yes, it hurts. Look right into it; look right into that painful feeling. How is it going? Oh well, it is not so bad. It diminishes; you can actually look right into it.” The point is to start with something small rather than starting with extreme suffering.

From Looking Directly at Mind, p. 244

June 6

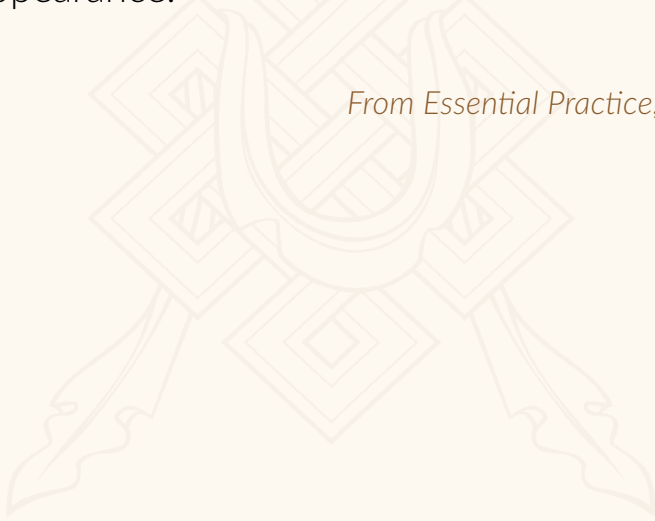
What do we need to do in order to generate knowledge? In our Buddhist tradition, we speak of three aspects of knowledge. The three aspects of knowledge are the knowledge that arises from hearing, the knowledge that arises from contemplation, and the knowledge that arises from meditation. We must generate those three.

From Essential Practice, p. 23

June 7

Generally, the abiding nature and the manner of appearance are different. The ultimate is the abiding nature. Cyclic existence is the manner of appearance.

From Essential Practice, p. 72



June 8

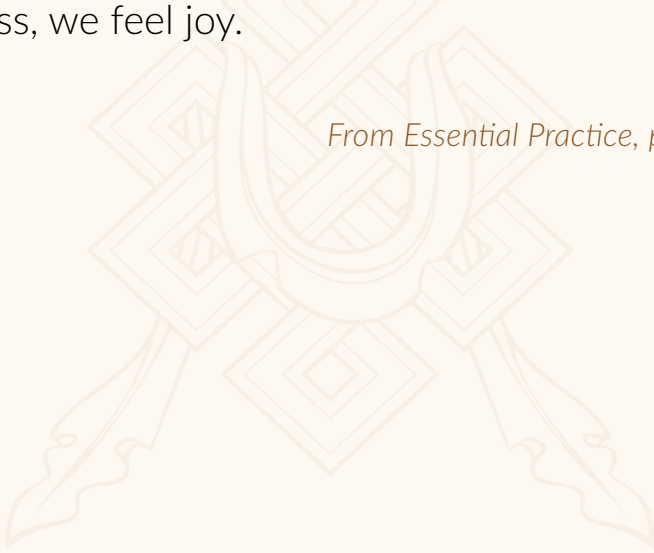
The very first teaching of the Buddha was the importance of learning how to control, how to tame, how to train our mind. This is because with great insight and compassion the Buddha saw that an untrained mind was the primary cause of all beings' suffering and happiness.

*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instructions, p. 69*

June 9

What is the difference between happiness and joy? When we feel love for others, we want them to enjoy happiness. When they enjoy happiness, we feel joy.

From Essential Practice, p. 112



June 10

In general, there are many meditative stabilizations, each different from the others. However, all of them may be included within calm abiding and insight. We must cultivate both calm abiding and insight, for each has its own role. Calm abiding suppresses afflictions. To destroy afflictions from the root, we need insight.

*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instructions, p. 69*

June 11

In general, when we want to do anything, we need two things: to be free of unfavorable conditions and to have the favorable conditions to do it.

*From Commentary on the
Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 30*

June 12

In general, when most people encounter any sort of suffering or difficulties, they tend to take it personally, thinking they are having all these problems and it only happens to them. They may cry, feel depressed and sorry for themselves, or even contemplate suicide. What they don't understand is that what is happening to them is not a personal ordeal but something that everybody experiences. It happens to everyone in samsara.

*From Commentary on the
Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 70*

June 13

The root of both desire and anger is ignorance. Ignorance means not knowing, not properly understanding what is actually there, and not understanding things as they actually are.

*From Commentary on the
Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 241*

June 14

When you begin to practice the basic tranquility meditation, you may find that your mind won't stay still for a moment. But this is not permanent. It will change as you practice, and you will eventually be able to let your mind rest, at which point you will have successfully alleviated the manifest disturbance of these mental afflictions or kleshas.

*From Teachings on the
Practice of Meditation, p. 4*

June 15

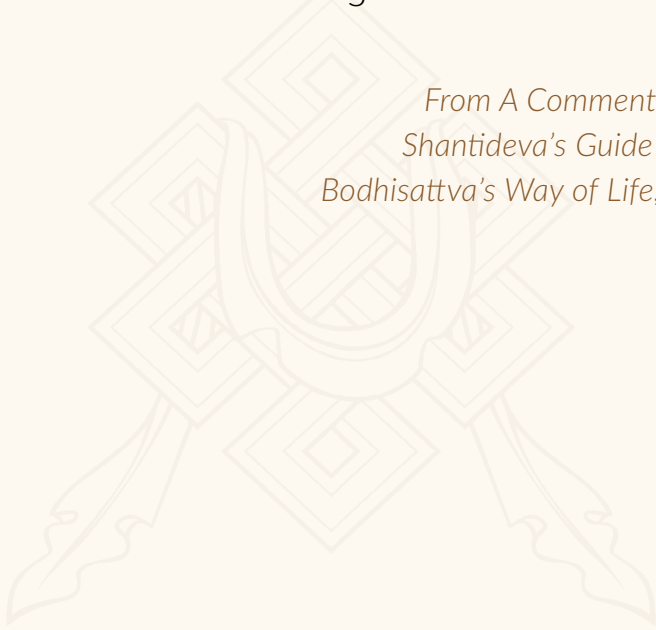
In general, we need to increase our goodwill. When it has increased and we have a lot of goodwill, we will want to be helpful at all times. Generally, there are times when we can help sentient beings who are suffering and times when we cannot. However, if we have goodwill, then whenever we have the opportunity, we will be able to help.

From The Heart of the Dharma, p. 30

June 16

It is important to recognize the faults and defects that ensue from negative actions.

*From A Commentary on
Shantideva's Guide to the
Bodhisattva's Way of Life, p. 25*



June 17

Bodhichitta generally means that one has developed goodness of mind or one has good intentions.

*From A Commentary on
Shantideva's Guide to the
Bodhisattva's Way of Life, p. 30*

June 18

The study of impermanence will really help to turn our mind to the dharma quickly. Once we know just how much everything changes, we become aware that we can't afford to waste time.

*From The Four Ordinary Foundations
of Buddhist Practice, p. 37*

June 19

It is necessary to have certainty about something through examination, because this is what leads you to the kind of understanding which allows no room for mistakes or doubts. Sometimes it's possible to know something, but if you don't know it in such a way so that it is clear enough and certain enough, you may still have doubts, and these doubts may destroy your initial belief and understanding.

*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instructions, p. 38*

June 20

I would like to mention that it is important that we not treat this merely as something that I am telling you and that you are listening to. It is necessary that this information actually become useful and beneficial to you. The degree to which this information will become practically beneficial depends primarily upon our receiving the blessing of the lineage, and that is why, as I have done on the previous two evenings, I will begin by reciting the traditional lineage supplication. Please join me in this with an attitude of faith and devotion.

From Journey of the Mind, p. 42-43

June 21

In the Buddha's tradition, all phenomena are considered to come into existence through two things: the principal cause and the secondary conditions. The principal cause is the actual cause. The secondary conditions aid the development of a particular phenomenon to come into existence.

*From A Commentary on Shantideva's
Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life, p. 35*

June 22

It is not always easy to study dharma; you might face some difficulties, financial or otherwise. But studying and practicing the dharma is something that will be very helpful to you and many others for generations to come.

From Vivid Awareness, p. 2

June 23

Sometimes you will find that there will seem to be a number of obstacles impeding or obstructing your practice, time constraints and so forth, and it may get to the point that you feel you have no opportunity to practice, at least not as much as you would like. In such situations, do not be discouraged. Do not allow yourself to become depressed by the temporary obstruction of your practice, and always remember that even merely encountering such dharma, even hearing it, is something that is extremely fortunate, extremely beneficial in and of itself.

From Medicine Buddha Teachings, p. 173

June 24

Not everything is karma. There are two things to consider: your previous karma and the immediate circumstances. Things like our physical suffering, or whether we are wealthy or impoverished, depend upon our previous karma. Other things, like our state of mind, are more dependent upon circumstances than upon karma.

*From The Seven Points
of Mind Training, p. 7-8*

June 25

Generally, there are two kinds of bodhichitta: relative bodhichitta and absolute bodhichitta. Usually, it is taught that absolute bodhichitta is more important than relative bodhichitta. However, because we are beginners in the mind training teachings, it is taught that relative bodhichitta is most important, while absolute bodhichitta is only briefly mentioned.

*From The Seven Points
of Mind Training, p. 19*

June 26

Generally, one first establishes shamatha meditation, in which the mind does not become involved in the arising of thoughts. Shamatha achieves a state of stability. In vipashyana meditation, one looks to see what is resting in that state of stability. Shamatha meditation is just concerned with the stable state itself, while vipashyana meditation looks to identify that which is in the state of stability.

*From An Ocean of
the Ultimate Meaning, p. 79*

June 27

“A Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life” gives three methods for working with bodhichitta. First, it discusses how to develop bodhichitta that is unborn. Second, it teaches how to develop bodhichitta once it has been born. Finally, it gives the method of how to develop bodhichitta over and over again to prevent it from decreasing.

*From A Commentary on Shantideva’s Guide
to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life, p. 131*

June 28

This dharma of Buddha brings peace, which is freedom from desire and craving and all the other negativities. The spiritual practice of the Buddha is not only going to bring peace to oneself, but it brings peace to other beings.

*From The Four Ordinary Foundations
of Buddhist Practice, p. 1*

June 29

If one has a thorough knowledge of the benefits of bodhichitta, one will naturally be inspired to develop the bodhichitta. One doesn't have to push in order to do so. Knowing the benefits ensuing from having generated the bodhichitta, then naturally without any effort, one will have great inspiration to do so.

*From A Commentary on Shantideva's Guide
to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life, p. 8*

June 30

If we are going to take up virtue and give up wrongdoing, we first need to know what virtue is and then take it up and put it into practice. Likewise, if we want to be free of suffering, we need to know its cause — misdeeds and nonvirtue — and give it up.

From Vivid Awareness, p. 52-53

July

ADVICE ON GROWING OLD
AND THE BARDO



July 1

Presently, in the 21st century, many countries have aging societies and an increase in older members in the population. Although it is true that older people's thinking differs from the rest of the population, it would be quite pointless to believe that we are no longer useful and just feel sorry for ourselves. Why is this so? If we consider it carefully, being able to live into old age is actually a remarkably fortunate thing. If we had died while we were young, we wouldn't have had the chance to grow old.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners, p. 9*

July 2

We might not have had too much time to encounter the dharma and practice when we were younger. Perhaps we had to work hard to make a living and feed our families. Nevertheless, this period of toil has passed. Now that we are older and have retired, we have more opportunities to connect with and practice the dharma. We have more time to learn the dharma that benefits both current and future lifetimes. Thus, we need to really seize this opportunity and work hard at it. We can recite more prayers and do more good deeds, and especially practice the dharma diligently! We need to make full use of this opportunity to practice the dharma. Doing so will definitely bring about results.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners, p. 9-10*

July 3

If you are older now, you have probably experienced many ups and downs and have some life experience to share with younger people. You can tell them about your successes and failures and what attitudes they should take towards achievements and challenges. Remind them not to give in to jealousy and pride when they enjoy moments of success, and not to become devastated and succumb to life's failures. Encourage youth to really think for themselves. As an older person, it is your responsibility to share your precious experience. No matter if they take it to heart or not, based on a virtuous motivation, you have to share your experience with your children or other young people. View it as your responsibility to provide advice.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners, p. 10*

July 4

Now that our worldly concerns in this life are coming to an end, we should be grateful for this invaluable chance to grow old. We should regard this as a wonderful thing and be joyful and happy. We are all similar in the fact that everyone in the world ages, so we should be grateful for being able to live to a ripe old age! Thinking like this is not only beneficial for our bodies, but it also allows us to feel more relaxed mentally. It has great benefits for both mind and body. We need to frequently remind ourselves how fortunate we are to have obtained a precious human body and to have engaged in the study of the dharma.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners, p. 11*

July 5

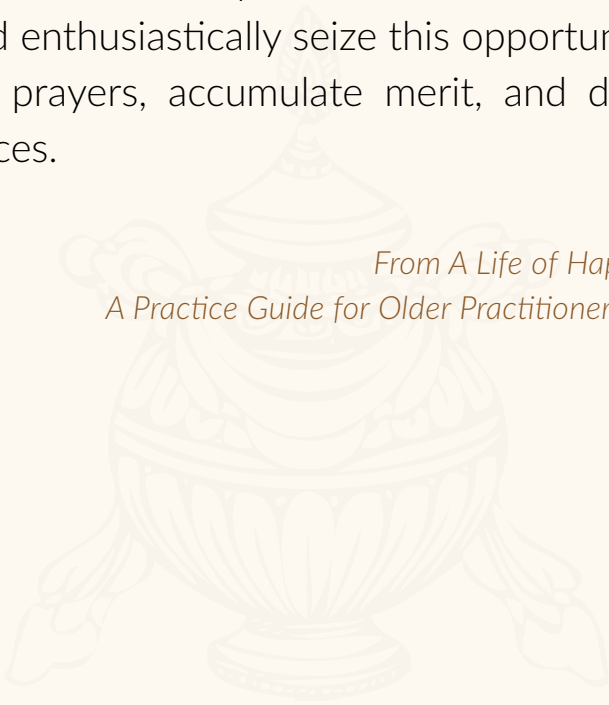
It is such a fortunate thing to be able to grow old! There is a saying from my hometown, “A person’s youth is in their fifties.” From my own experience, I feel that this is rather true. I did not feel old when I reached fifty. I only felt a little older when I reached sixty, and a lot more so when I got to seventy. Now that I am eighty years old, I feel more significant and rapid changes. It is as if I can feel my body’s condition differ from month to month now.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners, p. 12*

July 6

Even if we have only one month left to live, we should enthusiastically seize this opportunity to recite prayers, accumulate merit, and do our practices.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners, p. 15*



July 7

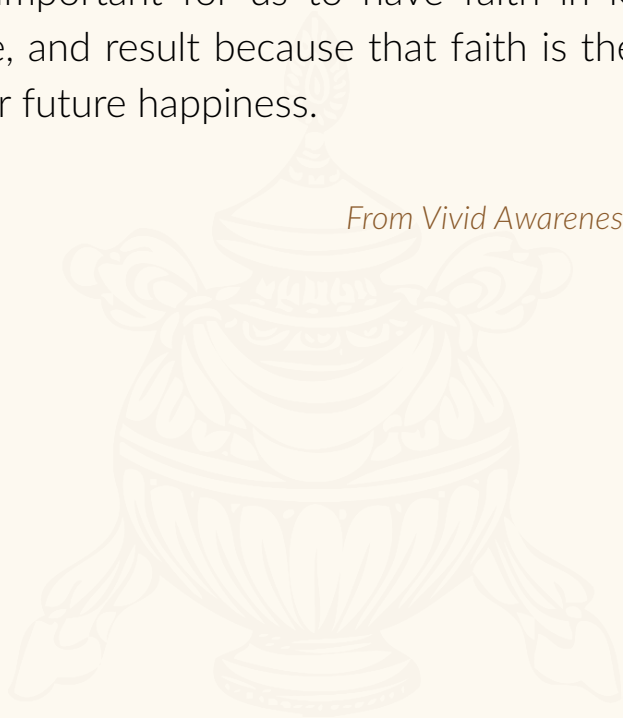
We should make use of our precious time to practice the dharma. We need to be optimistic and joyful and remind ourselves that not everyone is able to live as long as we have. This is not easy to achieve, so we must treasure our aging process and give rise to inner joy.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners, p. 20*

July 8

It is important for us to have faith in karma, cause, and result because that faith is the root of our future happiness.

From Vivid Awareness, p. 45



July 9

We should practice the dharma. Out of all the realms of beings, only humans are able to practice, so we really need to put some effort into it. In this way, we will be able to benefit both ourselves and all other sentient beings. We must not waste this life. Doing so would mean wasting a precious human birth that is incredibly difficult to obtain; this opportunity is not something we can obtain with ease, so we really need to cherish it.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners, p. 31*

July 10

When we find ourselves unable to take our study of the dharma seriously, meditating on impermanence will make us realize that we need to practice the dharma. Even after we have started practicing the dharma, sometimes we get lazy and are unable to focus on the practice. Meditating on impermanence will then encourage us to become very diligent.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners, p. 32*

July 11

Impermanence can be classified in two ways: the impermanence of the external world and the environment, and the impermanence of its inhabitants. The way to meditate on the impermanence of the external world is by observing changes in outer phenomena like the changing seasons. We can meditate on the impermanence of the sentient beings within it through our experience of family and friends passing away. For example, some people die in childhood or in their youth. There is also the process of aging, as we grow up into adulthood and beyond. These are all events happening in our own lives, through which we can experience impermanence.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners,
p. 33-34*

July 12

Generally, whenever we encounter physical discomfort, if we are suffering from pain in a certain part of our body, we can visualize a small Medicine Buddha in that area. Nectar flows from the small Medicine Buddha, removing all our pains and aches. If we experience mental suffering, we can visualize the Medicine Buddha in our hearts pouring out nectar, allowing us to find calm and peace.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners, p. 55*

July 13

When we are older or sick, we will encounter much pain and inconvenience. This is when we should reflect on our precious human birth which is so difficult to obtain. Doing so allows us to live more meaningfully even if we have only a few months or years left to live. Only as a human are we able to study the dharma, allowing us to understand our mind and what the afflictions are, and subsequently to tame our afflictions.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners, p. 67*

July 14

It would be much better for us to start preparing for death as soon as possible. We should make use of our time to listen to more teachings and practice the dharma. We need to cherish every opportunity, even if it is reciting a single MAṆI mantra, reflecting on an oral instruction, or generating a little loving-kindness and compassion. In general, we must remember that every person without exception will encounter sickness and death. Only by choosing the right approach to face these types of suffering can we bring about benefits.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners, p. 71*

July 15

Nowadays, children tend to not really care about or look after their aging parents. Nor do they keep in frequent contact. Children only rush to see their parents once they fall sick or something terrible happens. Even worse, some care solely about their inheritance. It is really important for children to be loving and affectionate towards their parents, and to be there for them at all times.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners, p. 72*

July 16

Older people tend to be more fixed in their thinking. Their tempers might deteriorate and they may develop a fondness for nagging. These attributes can result in their children or caregivers becoming impatient, but this is exactly when we should choose to practice patience and to generate loving-kindness and compassion. In this way, the older person will feel happy and we will gain the opportunity to accumulate merit.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners, p. 73*

July 17

People who are sick tend to be emotionally unstable and prone to anger. We should not talk back or lose our temper. We need to be patient. We should try our best to satisfy their wants and needs and to make them happy. We can pray, do recitations, and dedicate our merit to them. These are the best things we can do for the sick.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners, p. 73*

July 18

We often encounter difficulties and unfavorable situations in life. But we should not give in to despair. When our loved ones leave us, we must not lose hope and become pessimistic; we need to try our best to live on. We might encounter the dharma along the way, and our lives will be transformed as a result.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A practice guide for older practitioners, p. 75*

July 19

Suicide is an extremely terrible thing that brings no benefit but only harm to both ourselves and others. As long as we are alive, there is a chance to lead a wonderful life. Instead of being short-sighted, we should set our eyes on the future.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners, p. 76*

July 20

The thoughts on our mind when we are dying are extremely important. We should not give rise to thoughts like anger, pride, and jealousy. Instead, we need to give rise to loving-kindness, compassion, and bodhichitta. This is very beneficial for the bardo and the next life. Regardless of whether we are Buddhists or not, we need to keep our minds pure and filled with virtuous thoughts when we are dying.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners, p. 69*

July 21

Receiving instructions on the bardo, or “interval,” and also practicing these instructions is very important, particularly because we have been born as human beings. It is very important not only to receive these instructions but also to put them into practice.

From Journey of the Mind, p. 1

July 22

Some people regard the bardo as something unimportant and take the attitude that there is no point in thinking about it or worrying about it. This is a mistaken attitude. The bardo is something that we have experienced already in the past and that we will definitely come to experience again in the future, so it seems unrealistic and an insufficient response to our life situation simply to dismiss it as something one need not think about.

From Journey of the Mind, p. 1-2

July 23

The experience of the bardo does not have to be such a bad or terrifying experience. It could be very negative, but it could also be very positive. Rather than forgetting about it, however, it would be better actually to prevent the bardo from becoming a negative experience and to cause it to become a positive experience by preparing for it in this life.

From Journey of the Mind, p. 2

July 24

The best attitude toward the bardo is the resolution that you will do whatever you can to ensure that the bardo becomes a positive and not a negative experience for you. This is an appropriate attitude because if you put these teachings into practice, you can actually determine what will happen.

From Journey of the Mind, p. 2

July 25

Just as the appearances of this life are produced by states of mind, so are the appearances in the bardo and the appearances in one's future lives produced by states of mind. Positive states of mind produce positive experiences and negative states of mind produce negative appearances or experiences.

From Journey of the Mind, p. 3

July 26

If you cultivate a positive state of mind in this life, the appearances or experiences of this life, of future lives, and of the bardo will become more and more positive. While you may regard the bardo as a state that you have very little control over, the fact is that if you cultivate a strong positive state of mind, you will gain some control over it.

From Journey of the Mind, p. 3

July 27

It is very important that you be in a positive state of mind while dying. If, throughout your life, you have spent most of your time in a state of klesha, then certainly as you are dying the kleshas will come up again and will determine your direction. If, on the other hand, you have devoted most of your time to a state of mindfulness, in which you have remedied the kleshas as they arose, then this habit which you have cultivated will also emerge at the time of death and will help you accordingly. Therefore, it is necessary to generate this habit of mindfulness now, while you are still alive.

From Journey of the Mind, p. 34

July 28

In order to prepare for this phase of the bardo, one needs to cultivate a particular type of samadhi or meditation. In the instructions of the mahasiddhas of the past, there are basically two approaches to doing this. They are called taking inferential valid cognition as the path and taking direct valid cognition as the path. These two approaches exist not only as approaches for dealing with the bardo but as two distinct and important aspects or styles of dharma practice in general.

From Journey of the Mind, p. 56

July 29

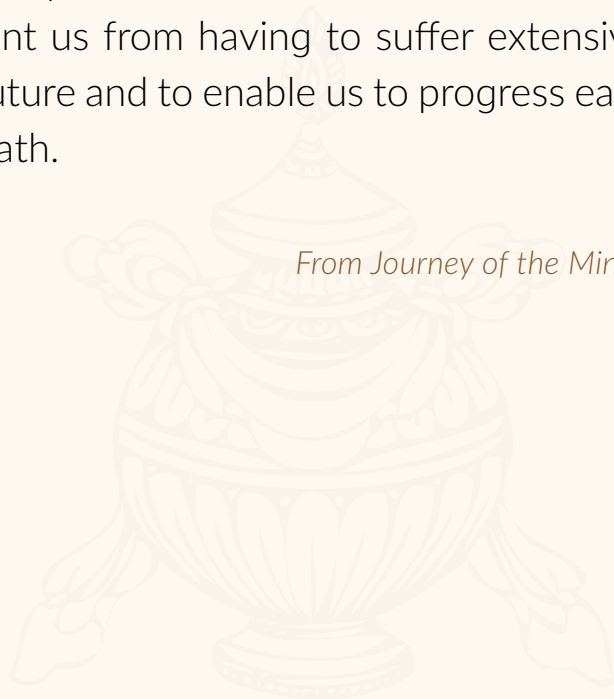
The benefit of having heard these bardo teachings is that it will greatly reduce the amount of suffering you will undergo in samsara in the future and, therefore, will greatly increase your happiness. The benefit of merely hearing these teachings is not something small or minor; it is something tremendous. Because these instructions are genuine and correct in their description of the bardo states, they are particularly helpful to you at that time when you are in the most danger and are undergoing the most stress and terror in other words, when you need them the most.

From Journey of the Mind, p. 107

July 30

The purpose of these bardo instructions is to prevent us from having to suffer extensively in the future and to enable us to progress easily on the path.

From Journey of the Mind, p. 72



July 31

If we start thinking about impermanence now, while we still have time to find skillful means to deal with it, then later we will not be caught unaware. Even though in the short term, the contemplation of death and impermanence might cause discomfort, in the long term it will actually save us from greater suffering.

*From The Seven Points
of Mind Training, p. 27*

August

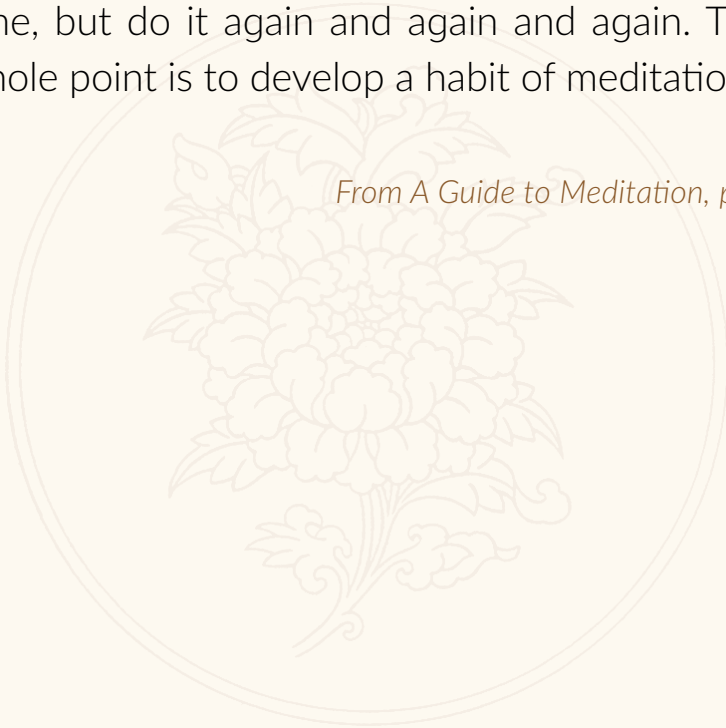
MIND TRAINING



August 1

When one meditates, one should do it for a short time, but do it again and again and again. The whole point is to develop a habit of meditation.

From A Guide to Meditation, p. 9



August 2

In the mind training teachings, the practice of *tonglen* is one of the most important practices for the dying. Tonglen is practiced by using the breath as a support for meditation: As we breathe out, we meditate on sending our happiness to sentient beings. As we breathe in, we meditate that the suffering of all sentient beings dissolves into our bodies.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners, p. 74*

August 3

We often encounter difficulties and unfavorable situations in life. But we should not give in to despair. When our loved ones leave us, we must not lose hope and become pessimistic; we need to try our best to live on. We might encounter the dharma along the way, and our lives will be transformed as a result. The past is gone and we must continue living our lives. We must not be overcome by the grief of the passing of a loved one or consider ending our own lives.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners,
p. 75–76*

August 4

It is worth taking the unpleasant feeling upon oneself for a short while in order to escape suffering and unhappiness forever. Therefore, although meditation on impermanence isn't the most pleasant thing in the world, it is very valuable.

*From Commentary on the
Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 60*

August 5

It is essential that we do not hold the mind too tightly or too loosely with the rope of mindfulness. If we hold our mind too tightly to the object of observation, it doesn't stay; instead, it jumps somewhere else, and when we bring it back, it jumps somewhere else again. On the other hand, if our mindfulness is too loose, we forget that we are practicing meditation; our mind just wanders off and doesn't return. So, it is important to practice mindfulness without being too tight or too loose.

From The Essentials of Mahamudra, p. 37

August 6

Practicing the teachings depends on nobody but us, not even on the presence of Buddha. It depends upon us alone whether we practice or not and whether we are able to generate the necessary qualities of faith, of respect and devotion, of courage and diligence, and of understanding.

*From Commentary on the
Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 122*

August 7

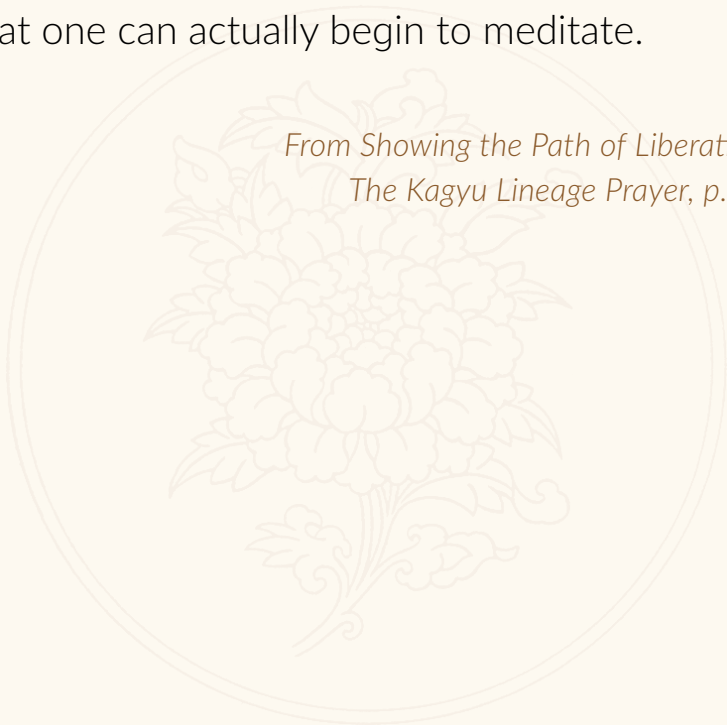
Everyone wants happiness; that is our goal. But we have to realize that we create our own happiness; we have the power to produce it. All we need to do is to generate the causes of happiness, which are positive actions, so we have the free choice to create all future happiness, both temporary and ultimate.

*From Commentary on the
Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 80*

August 8

It is only by abandoning attachment to the world
that one can actually begin to meditate.

*From Showing the Path of Liberation:
The Kagyu Lineage Prayer, p. 27*



August 9

In order to help break attachment to ordinary samsara, and especially to this life, the four thoughts that turn the mind from samsara are taught as the first preliminary stage in practicing dharma.

From Showing the Path of Liberation, p. 28

August 10

To develop true meditation, we must have proper realization. To achieve this realization, we need to purify all our harmful actions, impurities, and obscurations. Once we have done this purification, we need to work on the direct cause for realizing meditation. This direct cause is the accumulation of a great amount of virtue, of positive spiritual energy that will make it possible for us to develop complete understanding.

*From Pointing Out the Dharmakaya of
the Ninth Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje, p. 24-25*

August 11

To develop a peaceful mind that is not under the influence of disturbing emotions, we need to have little desire and to eliminate craving. This is because most of the suffering that we will go through in this life comes from craving or desire. We should try to eliminate our desire.

*From A Commentary on Shantideva's Guide
to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life, p. 108*

August 12

It isn't that difficult to develop good qualities, because we can gain from these positive qualities. It isn't that difficult to give up negative qualities, because we know they are harmful and lead to eventual unhappiness.

*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instructions, p. 77*

August 13

Without control of our mind we won't be able to fulfill our wishes, because within us there won't be the real cause of satisfaction, and again we will end up suffering.

*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instructions, p. 69*

August 14

When we meditate, we shouldn't think that meditation means to force our mind in a stringent way. Meditation is not a straitjacket for the mind, but it's a matter of relaxing as much as we can and to ease ourselves within the thoughts at that particular instant of mind.

*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instructions, p. 66*

August 15

The world is filled with suffering which you cannot stop by trying to pacify all the different negative forces and obstacles. What you can do is put protection on yourself. This protection rids you of clinging to a self.

*From The Seven Points
of Mind Training, p. 32*

August 16

Whatever dharma we practice, whatever mind training we meditate on, the purpose is to reduce or eliminate the clinging to a self. If our clinging doesn't diminish, then our practice isn't working properly. If we notice that the continual thought of ourselves as important is decreasing, then it is one sign that mind training is working.

*From The Seven Points
of Mind Training, p. 51*

August 17

We should not just practice mind training and compassion toward one sentient being while overlooking another. Mind training and bodhi-chitta should apply to all human and nonhuman beings without exception.

*From The Seven Points
of Mind Training, p. 68*

August 18

You need to tame your own mind, for otherwise the mind will fall under the power of thoughts and kleshas. If the mind is tamed, it will not fall under their power, and you will be able to accomplish the good and avoid the bad.

*From An Ocean of
the Ultimate Meaning, p. 25*

August 19

Is it possible to avoid or abandon suffering? Is it possible to abandon the cause of suffering, which is disturbing emotions? Yes, it is possible. Why is it possible to abandon both the cause of disturbing emotions and their resultant pain and suffering? It is possible because the disturbing emotions and the feeling of suffering are both devoid of any true existence whatsoever.

From The King of Samadhi, p. 51-52

August 20

It is possible to abandon disturbing emotions and the feeling of suffering by realizing that their nature is empty and devoid of any substantiality. If they were something real and concrete, we could not free ourselves, but we can free ourselves, simply because they are by nature devoid of any substantial identity.

From The King of Samadhi, p. 52

August 21

Since everything comes down to mind, we can attain the ultimate result. We are able to give up all of samsara because samsara is just the mind. We are able to achieve nirvana because nirvana is just the mind. The afflictions of desire and hatred sometimes seem like solid things that we can't get rid of. But if we look at their ultimate nature, how they actually are, we see that they can disappear. Since we have the instructions, we can have confidence that we can eliminate the afflictions of desire and hatred.

From Advice from a Yogi, p. 85

August 22

We need to enter a path, and having entered it, we should reach the end of the path and attain its fruition. Just entering the path is not enough, and to reach its result, we have to make sure that we enter the path correctly and avoid mistaken ways.

From A Song for the King, p. 79

August 23

Our most common practice is tranquility meditation or shamatha. The need for shamatha practice is that our mind is normally quite agitated by thoughts; we practice shamatha in order to generate a state of mental stability.

*From A Commentary on
the Essence of Creation and Completion, p. 90*

August 24

When practicing and studying, it's important to have a motivation that is free from the afflictions. Among the various pure motivations, the most important is the wish to help ourselves and others. You may already have faith, respect, excitement about the dharma, and the pure motivation of bodhichitta. Still, it is good to recall and reinforce that motivation from time to time. It helps your mind to go toward the dharma, the dharma to become the path.

From Advice from a Yogi, p. 257

August 25

To abandon the mental afflictions, we must first demolish the conception of a self, which is the root of all the mental afflictions. It will not be possible to abandon the mental afflictions without destroying the conception of a self that is their root.

From Essential Practice, p. 144–145

August 26

One does need to have diligence and effort sometimes. It's good to be able to develop the postmeditation state, to be able to practice while doing one's work. It's good to develop diligence to meditate and also to be able to continue the meditation in one's daily life and in one's work. That's very beneficial.

From On Buddha Essence, p. 145

August 27

Having received the blessings of our guru and generated great faith and devotion, we sit with our body up straight and simply pay attention to the passing of the in and out breath. We don't try to regulate the breath, but breathe naturally, staying aware of the breath going out and coming back in. We count the in-breath and the out-breath as one. We do not count out loud but are just aware. On our mala, we pay attention to the passing of the breath in and out for twenty-one counts. We should do this very carefully because this is said to be the vessel for doing shamatha practice.

*From The Seven Points
of Mind Training, p. 25.*

August 28

We need to transform our minds, and generally there are two basic ways we can do this: transforming our minds through relative methods and through ultimate methods. If we want to use the relative methods, we need to rid our minds of ill will and develop our goodwill. In order to do this, we often train in relative bodhi-chitta, and in particular, the instructions on the *lojong* mind training. These instructions will help us develop goodwill and a kind heart toward others. We can use these methods to eliminate our ill will toward others. The main method is to practice the tonglen sending and taking meditation.

From Vivid Awareness, p. 64

August 29

In general shamatha meditation is when the mind is placed somewhere and rests there. But when we practice shamatha, we also investigate to see how the meditation is going while being mindful of the shamatha itself. "Is it going well? Is it not going well? Which antidote needs to be applied?" This checking of our mind as we are practicing is analysis.

From The Essentials of Mahamudra, p. 64

August 30

The most important thing in meditation is to understand how to concentrate and how to relax. Tightening or concentrating the mind when it is appropriate and relaxing it when it is appropriate allows us to develop a shamatha in which the mind rests comfortably, evenly. At this point, it is very important not to let mindfulness degenerate. It is important that mindfulness be strong so that the mind is relaxed, yet bright and one-pointed.

From Essentials of Mahamudra, p. 110

August 31

It is important to think about the reasons for practicing meditation and to understand its benefits. If we do so, it becomes far easier to meditate, and we meditate with joy and with delight. Without doing so, meditation tends to be rather difficult.

From Essentials of Mahamudra, p. 112

September

THE SIX PARAMITAS AND
FIVE KLESHAS



September 1

All the paramitas are very beneficial, but their benefit can only be attained if we practice, and the capacity to practice depends upon diligence. Without diligence we will not be able to achieve the powerful and beneficial results of the paramitas.

*From Commentary on the
Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 229*

September 2

Generosity doesn't depend on the size and quality of what you are giving; generosity only depends upon the pure intention of really wanting to help the person receiving your gift without being attached.

*From Commentary on the
Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 189*

September 3

Generosity doesn't have to do with outer things; it is inner. It depends upon how we think. It is a state of mind that really wants to help others through giving. It is the feeling that we really want to help others through giving something in whatever possible way. It is the feeling of readiness to do whatever we can to help someone by giving him or her whatever they need. So, whether or not we actually have the opportunity to give or not is not so important. What is important is our pure motivation.

*From Commentary on the
Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 197*

September 4

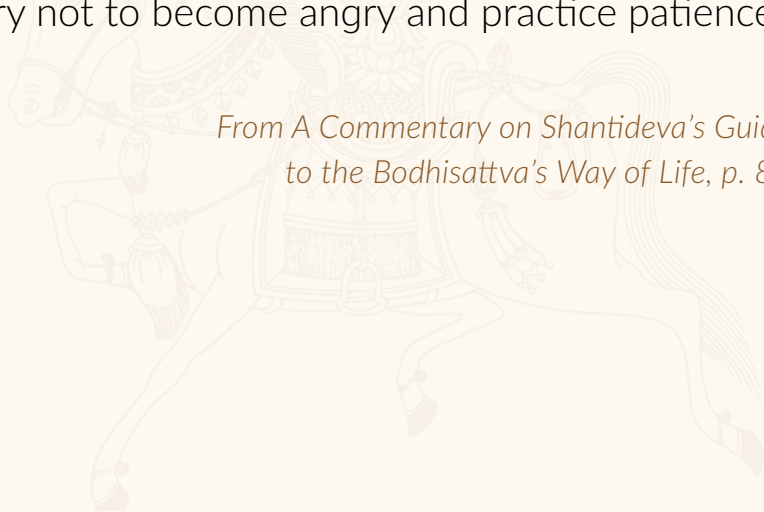
Moral discipline has three aspects: the moral discipline of abandoning wrongdoing, the discipline of accumulating virtuous qualities, and the discipline of benefiting sentient beings. The function of the first aspect of a bodhisattva's discipline is to abandon the negative aspects of your behavior. The function of the second discipline is to increase positive qualities in your being and in your behavior. Both of these are primarily concerned with the individual practitioner. The third aspect of moral discipline is concerned with benefiting others. Benefiting others is, after all, the primary concern of the bodhisattva's discipline.

From Cultivating True Compassion, p. 34

September 5

Practicing patience is a great offering to enlightened beings. It also is achieving your own purpose of bringing meaning to your life. Practicing patience will benefit others also, so one should try not to become angry and practice patience.

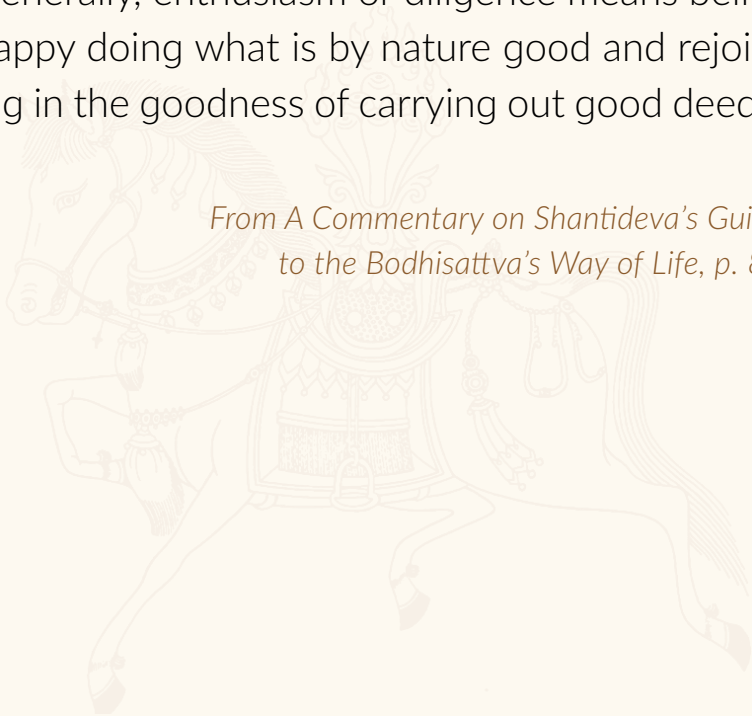
*From A Commentary on Shantideva's Guide
to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life, p. 81*



September 6

Generally, enthusiasm or diligence means being happy doing what is by nature good and rejoicing in the goodness of carrying out good deeds.

*From A Commentary on Shantideva's Guide
to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life, p. 85*



September 7

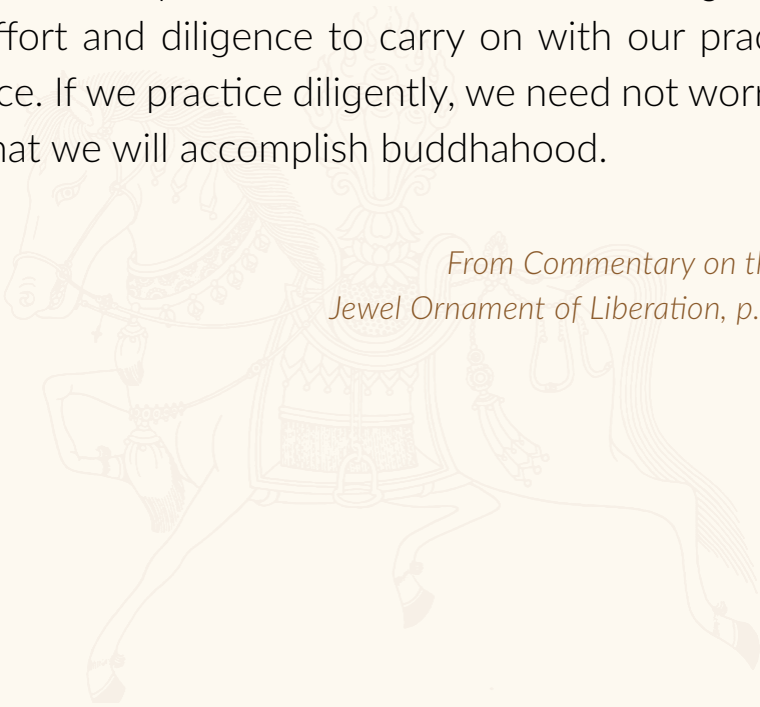
Sometimes we show great diligence and patience in our worldly affairs, but we do not show the same patience and diligence in our dharma practice. If we are like that, then we have “mistaken patience” and “mistaken diligence.” In other words, we should not apply good qualities to an incorrect object.

From The Seven Points of Mind Training, p. 69

September 8

When we practice the dharma, we need great effort and diligence to carry on with our practice. If we practice diligently, we need not worry that we will accomplish buddhahood.

*From Commentary on the
Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 9*



September 9

In order to practice generosity, virtuous conduct, and patience in the face of difficulties, we need the fourth paramita of diligence to implement the first three paramitas and make them increase and become even more powerful factors in our life.

*From The Three Vehicles
of Buddhist Practice, p. 60*

September 10

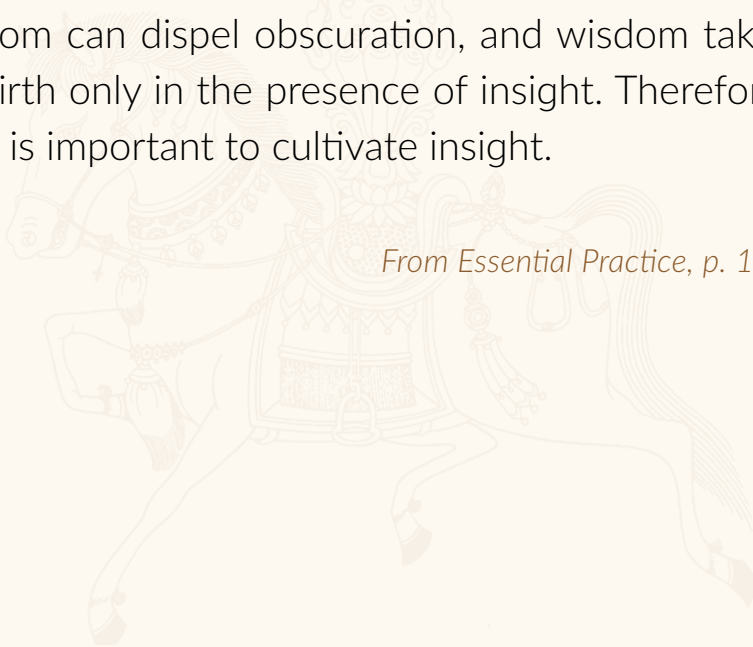
When we meditate, the purpose of meditation is for our mind to become stable and no longer distracted by the influence of thoughts. Our mind becomes calm and under control. Once the mind is calm, we can have a much more direct and immediate contact with reality and develop wisdom more rapidly. This is why the wisdom which develops in meditation is important.

*From The Three Vehicles of
Buddhist Practice, p. 63*

September 11

Calm abiding stabilizes the mind, but calm abiding alone does not generate wisdom. Only wisdom can dispel obscuration, and wisdom takes birth only in the presence of insight. Therefore, it is important to cultivate insight.

From Essential Practice, p. 143



September 12

The practice of generating stability in the mind is shamatha or tranquility meditation, and the practice of generating clarity or lucidity in the mind is vipashyana or insight meditation. The significance of shamatha is that for as long as your mind is not at rest there will be no clarity. There will be no lucidity. Therefore, it seems necessary to practice shamatha before one engages in the practice of vipashyana.

*From A Commentary on the
Essence of Creation and Completion, p. 117*

September 13

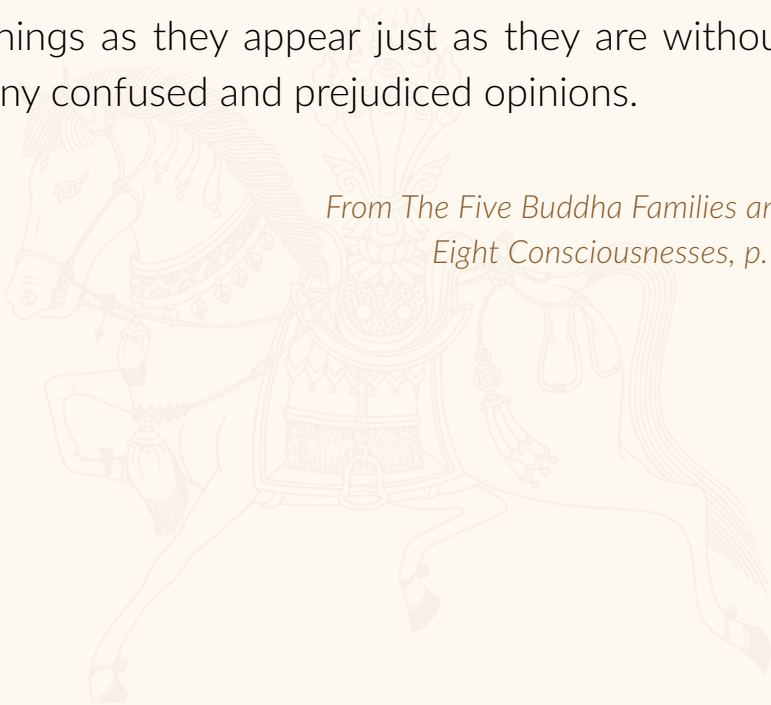
The sixth paramita is wisdom, or prajna in Sanskrit. How much happiness we get out of worldly things depends on how much understanding and wisdom we have. So, wisdom is the very root of happiness and joy and determines the value of all other things. In the ultimate sense the benefit that we can get depends very much on our wisdom and understanding. Also, the ability to help others depends on the degree of our wisdom.

*From The Three Vehicles
of Buddhist Practice, p. 62*

September 14

With the wisdom of discrimination, one knows things as they appear just as they are without any confused and prejudiced opinions.

*From The Five Buddha Families and
Eight Consciousnesses, p. 7*



September 15

How do you generate prajna or discernment? You do not generate it simply by wishing for it. You can't accomplish discernment simply by thinking: "I wish to be extremely wise," or "I wish to possess great discernment." You have to approach it methodically by cultivating wisdom in three stages, which are called the "three types of discernment." These three stages are hearing, contemplating, and meditating.

From Cultivating True Compassion, p. 36

September 16

The function of prajna is not really to increase your inspiration or motivation to do things. Its function is to make you understand what the actual nature of things is so that you can be free from your illusory way of apprehending and experiencing things.

*From Commentary on the
Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 288*

September 17

It is very important to understand the actual way of being of the klesha-mind. Since its essence is neutral, this is precisely why, in spite of grasping at a self, it is possible to temporarily accumulate what is called 'defiled virtue' from the ultimate point of view. However, the klesha-mind has to be abandoned, because grasping at a self is the root of all mental afflictions—all of which, in turn, must obviously be abandoned. Abandoning the afflictions coincides with the abandonment of grasping at a self.

*From Everyday Consciousness
and Buddha-Awakening, p. 34*

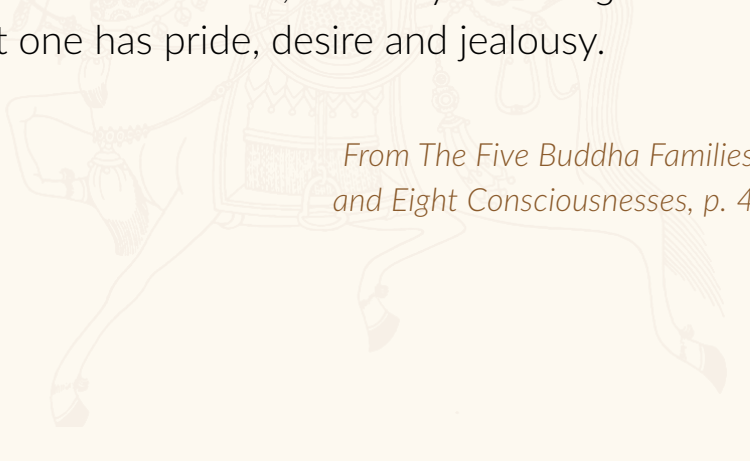
September 18

Though the klesha-mind is characterized as the 'mind endowed with afflictions', it does not include all of the mental afflictions. Desirous attachment, anger, dullness, or similar afflictions are not referred to here, but only those that are included in the category of 'holding on to a self'. These can be divided into two kinds: holding on to the self of the person and holding on to the self of phenomena.

*From Everyday Consciousness
and Buddha-Awakening, p. 32*

September 19

Ignorance is the root of the negative emotions, so that, for example, it is only out of ignorance that one is angry. One only acts aggressively towards others because one does not know that anger will only bring pain and sorrow to oneself and others. Likewise, it is only due to ignorance that one has pride, desire and jealousy.



*From The Five Buddha Families
and Eight Consciousnesses, p. 4*

September 20

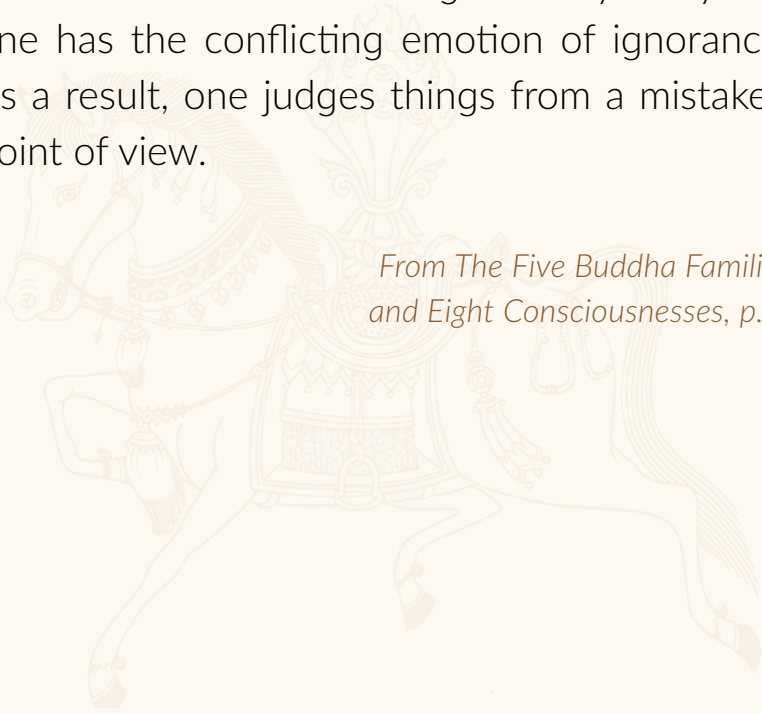
The main afflictions are greed, aversion, delusion, pride, and jealousy, which the Buddha described as the five poisons. When they occur, they create pain in our minds and suffering in our bodies. They lead us to do things that harm ourselves and others, which will bring us bad results. We lose control over ourselves to the afflictions, which necessarily creates many difficulties and suffering for ourselves and others.

From Vivid Awareness, p. 182

September 21

When one cannot see things as they really are, one has the conflicting emotion of ignorance. As a result, one judges things from a mistaken point of view.

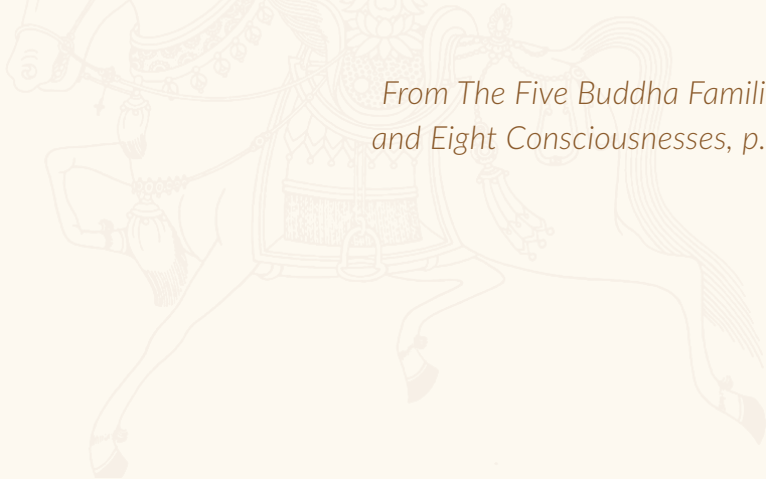
*From The Five Buddha Families
and Eight Consciousnesses, p. 9*



September 22

When one is attached to things, one is never satisfied and always craves for more and better things. One is continuously engaged in achieving and acquiring the mind's desires and only experiences loss and dissatisfaction in one's life.

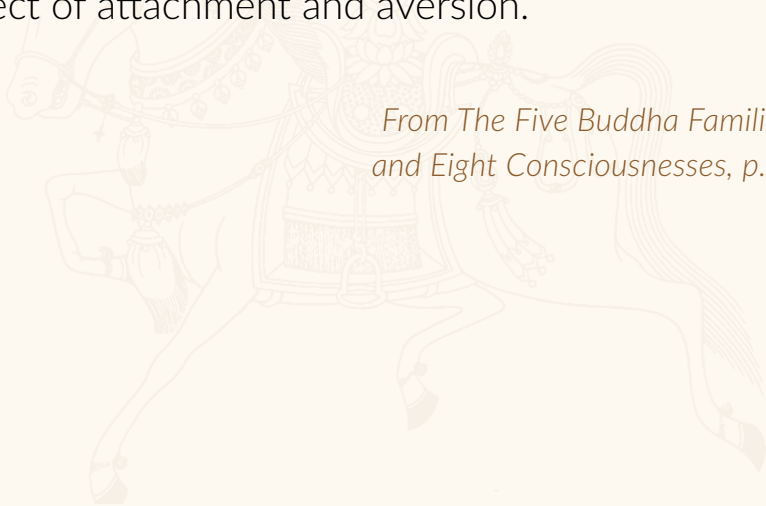
*From The Five Buddha Families
and Eight Consciousnesses, p. 3*



September 23

Attachment and aversion are negative emotions that arise from not understanding the nature of things as they are and as they appear. It is due to ignorance that mind accepts and rejects object of attachment and aversion.

*From The Five Buddha Families
and Eight Consciousnesses, p. 7*



September 24

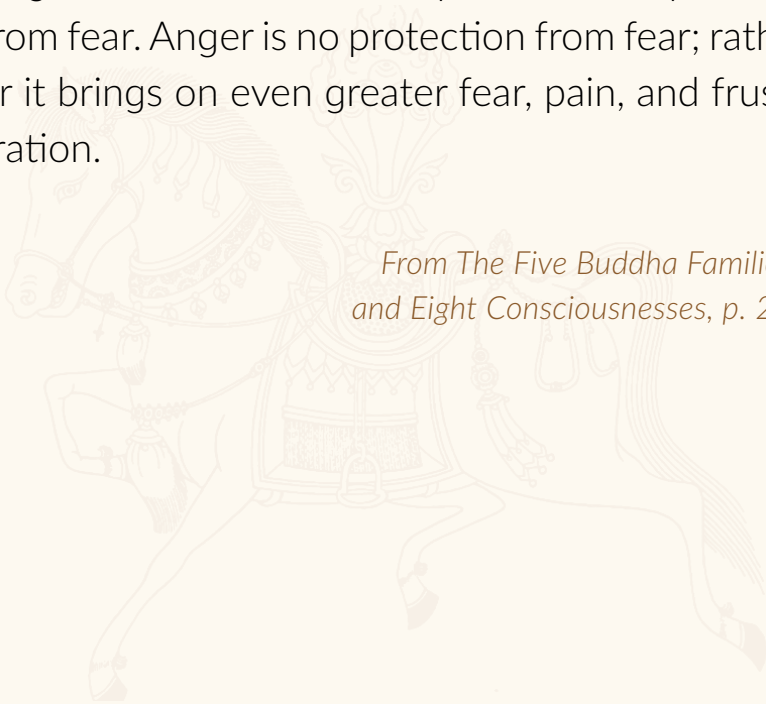
There is nothing wrong with enjoying what is happy and pleasant; the experience of happiness is not wrong. What is wrong is being involved and attached to those things, because that attachment will bring forth suffering. What we have to eliminate is attachment, which can be done by realizing that the nature of samsara is suffering.

*From Commentary on the
Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 75*

September 25

Anger isn't a solution to prevent and protect from fear. Anger is no protection from fear; rather it brings on even greater fear, pain, and frustration.

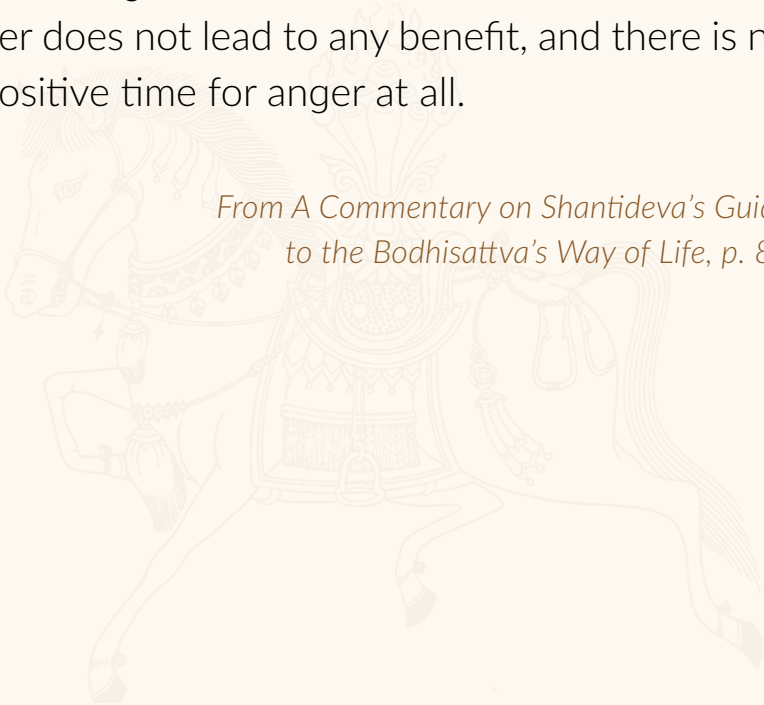
*From The Five Buddha Families
and Eight Consciousnesses, p. 20*



September 26

Can't anger be used for beneficial means? Anger does not lead to any benefit, and there is no positive time for anger at all.

*From A Commentary on Shantideva's Guide
to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life, p. 83*



September 27

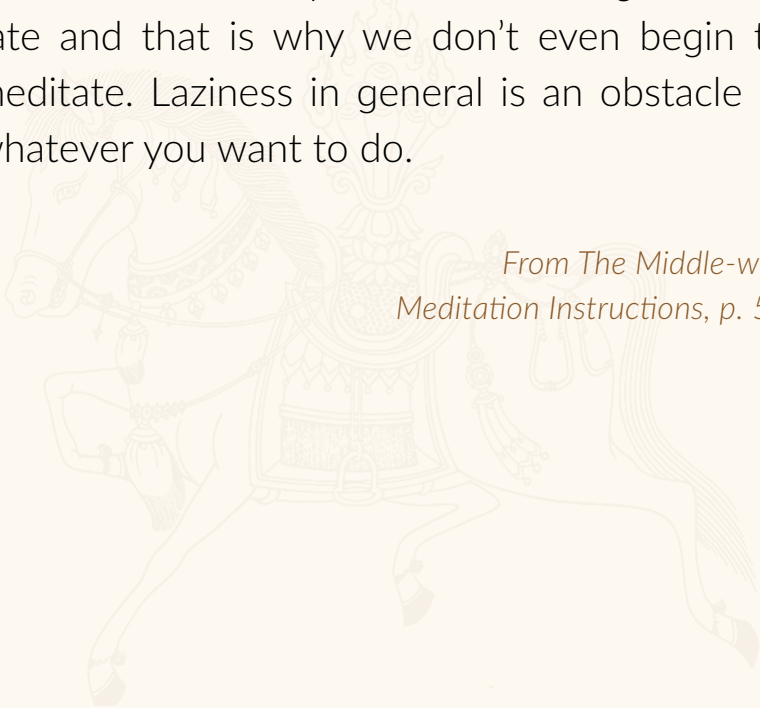
The obstacle to diligence is laziness. There are three kinds of laziness. The first is being attached to doing what is unwholesome. The second kind is feeling no inclination to engage in spiritual practice. The third kind of laziness is feeling that we are not able to actually accomplish anything by thinking, “someone like me cannot reach anything as great as enlightenment.”

*From A Commentary on Shantideva's Guide
to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life, p. 86*

September 28

Laziness is what stops us from wanting to meditate and that is why we don't even begin to meditate. Laziness in general is an obstacle in whatever you want to do.

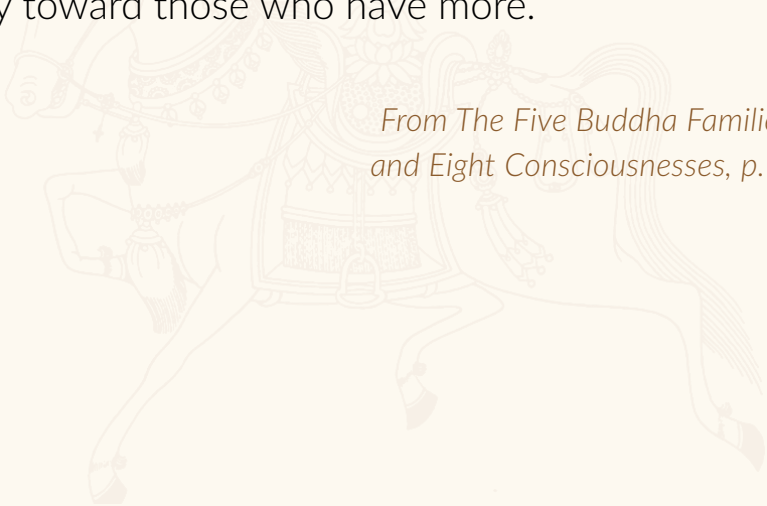
*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instructions, p. 54*



September 29

Jealousy prevents and impedes an individual from accomplishing his or her own well-being, and as a result he or she experiences more suffering and continues developing further jealousy toward those who have more.

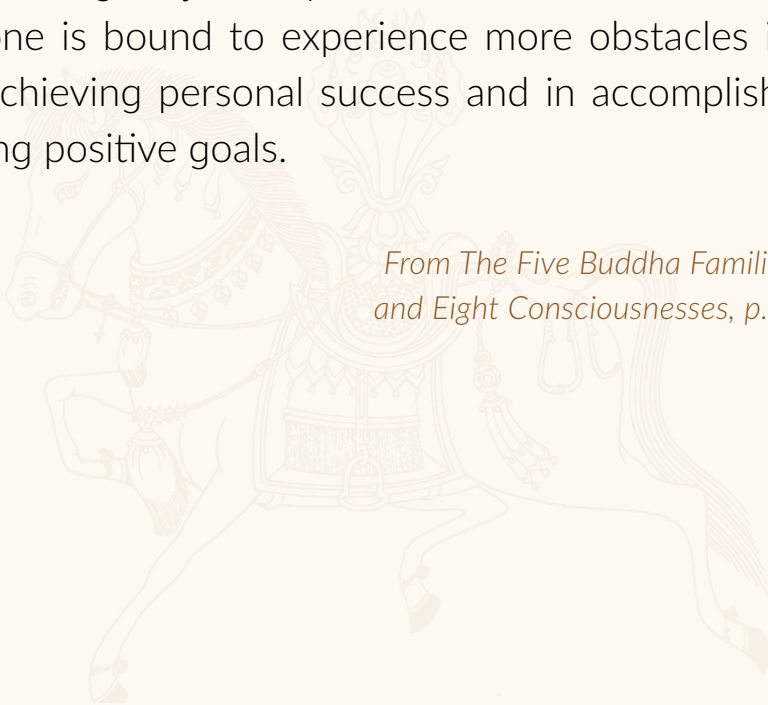
*From The Five Buddha Families
and Eight Consciousnesses, p. 4*



September 30

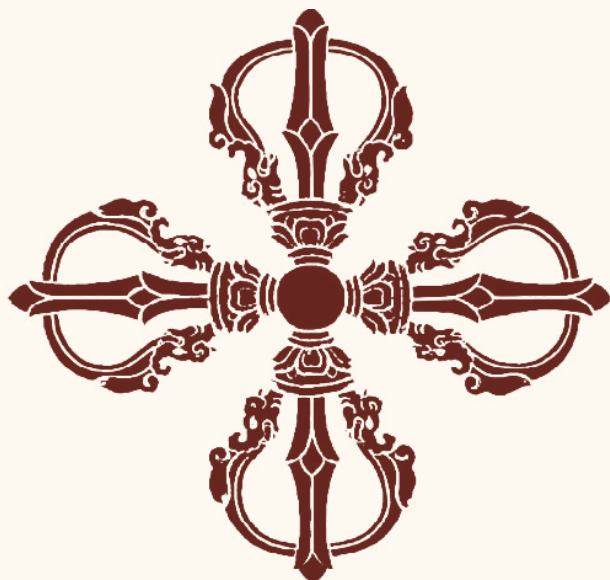
As long as jealousy determines one's attitude, one is bound to experience more obstacles in achieving personal success and in accomplishing positive goals.

*From The Five Buddha Families
and Eight Consciousnesses, p. 4*



October

THE IMPORTANCE OF
DHARMA PRACTICE



October 1

Dharma practice makes a person calm and peaceful. We are often caught up in the sway of the afflictions. Ignorance, anger, jealousy, and desire not only cause mental suffering, they are also unhealthy for our bodies. The key to solving these problems lies in practicing the dharma.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners, p. 23*

October 2

We shouldn't feel that there is one moment for receiving teachings and another moment for practice, and that these two situations are totally different. Whatever we learn, we have to try to put into practice.



*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instructions, p. 76*

October 3

To practice we need to know the actual methods of practice, the way that we should practice, and the result that comes from practicing. This makes it necessary to study texts. But studying by itself is not enough; we need also to join study with the actual practice of meditation. If we study only when we really need the benefit from our study, we won't gain benefit. We have to practice as well as study.

From On Buddha Essence, p. 141-142

October 4

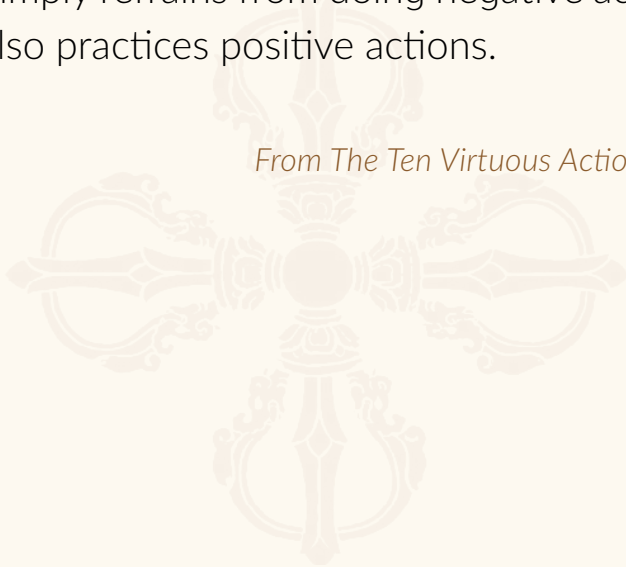
When we apply ourselves wholeheartedly and practice with one-pointed perseverance, then results will appear quite quickly. If we only practice a reasonable amount, then we will attain a comparable amount of progress; even if we only practice a little bit, we will have some result.

From Crystal Clear, p. 139

October 5

The simple practice of good conduct is when one realizes the faults of doing negative actions and simply refrains from doing negative actions, but also practices positive actions.

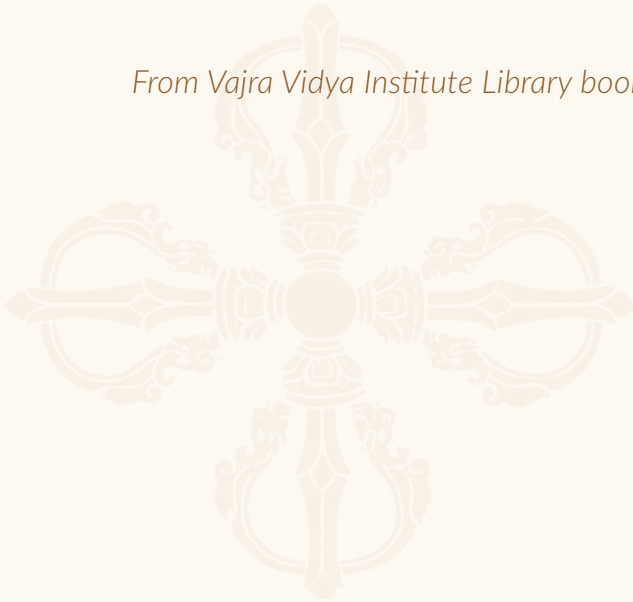
From The Ten Virtuous Actions, p. 2



October 6

Dharma should be practiced in everything we do, at all times and in all our actions.

From Vajra Vidya Institute Library book mark.



October 7

We might not immediately be able to do everything according to the dharma, but at least with the correct attitude, little by little things will improve so that in the future all our actions will be completely in line with the dharma.

*From The Four Ordinary Foundations
of Buddhist Practice, p. 3*

October 8

The main problem for our practice is laziness. If we don't examine ourselves to find if there is anything wrong, we will quickly fall under the power of laziness and won't do anything to remedy our difficulties.

*From The Four Ordinary Foundations
of Buddhist Practice, p. 19*

October 9

If we know a lot of dharma but don't practice, it is not very beneficial.

From Looking Directly at Mind, p. 7



October 10

It is not sufficient just to generate the motivation. We must actually put it into practice.

From Essential Practice, p. 19



October 11

Inspiration and a strong wish to practice are important. If you have those, the difficulties will pass.

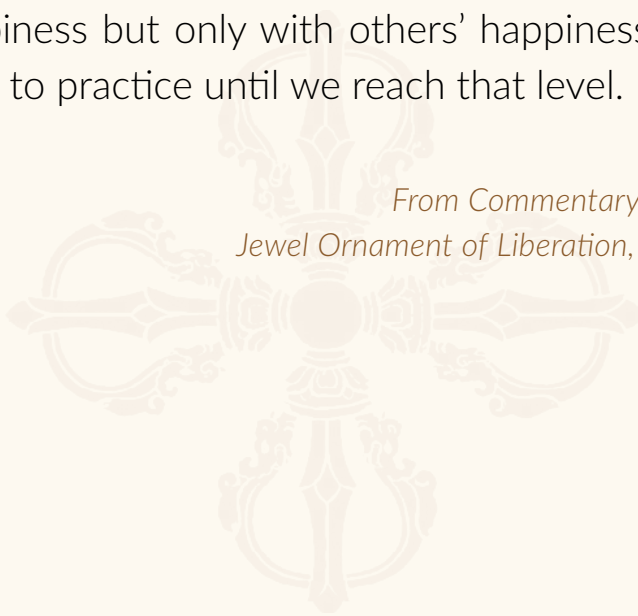
From Essential Practice, p. 53



October 12

Loving-kindness is perfected when we no longer speak about or are concerned with our own happiness but only with others' happiness. We have to practice until we reach that level.

*From Commentary on the
Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 101*



October 13

Don't take your time getting around to Dharma practice. Do it right now.

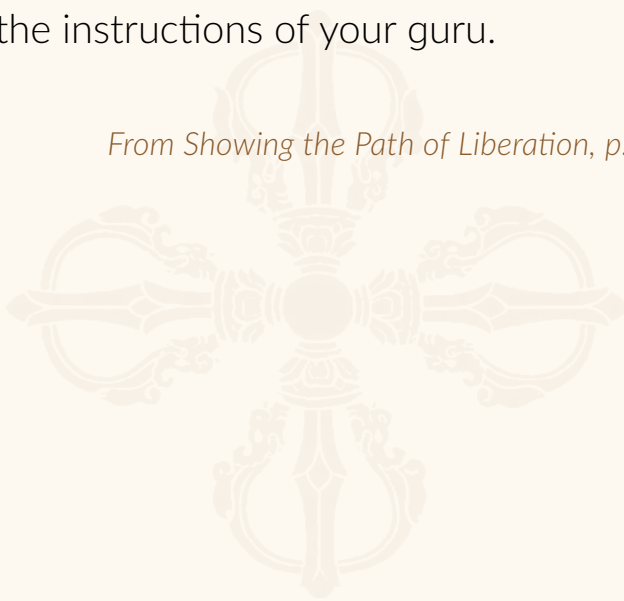
From Advice from a Yogi, p. 57



October 14

The instructions of your guru are all important.
So, it is always very important to practice only
with the instructions of your guru.

From Showing the Path of Liberation, p. 50-51



October 15

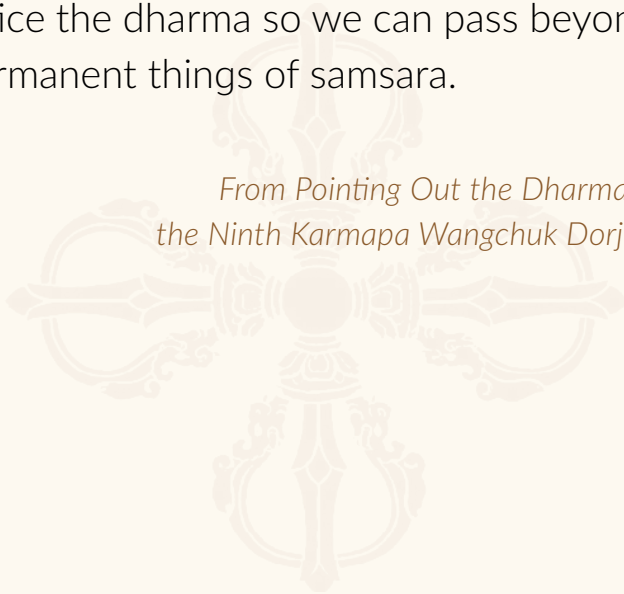
Even if you are unable to study the big commentaries, it does not follow that one cannot learn about meditation and its practice. There are very short discussions on the nature of meditation which you can read in order to gain an idea of how to practice.

From Showing the Path of Liberation, p. 51

October 16

The lifetime of human beings is very short. In that short lifetime, it is extremely important to practice the dharma so we can pass beyond the impermanent things of samsara.

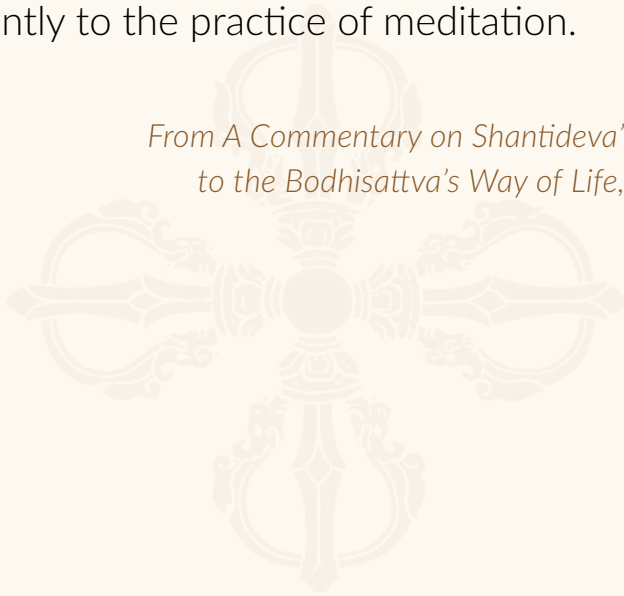
*From Pointing Out the Dharmakaya of
the Ninth Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje, p. 12*



October 17

In order not to come under the power of disturbing emotions, we need to apply ourselves diligently to the practice of meditation.

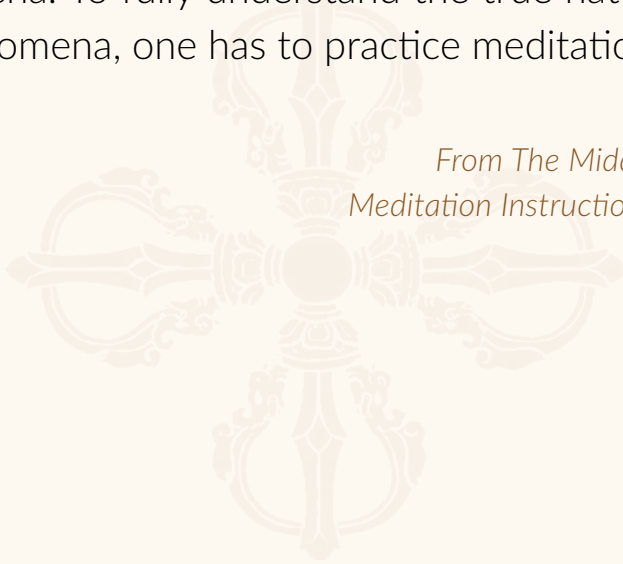
*From A Commentary on Shantideva's Guide
to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life, p. 101*



October 18

The reason for practicing dharma is to develop an understanding of the actual nature of phenomena. To fully understand the true nature of phenomena, one has to practice meditation.

*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instructions, p. 5*



October 19

A practice which is based on self-concern will not give a great result, whereas whatever is based on the pure bodhichitta intention will give very great results. That is why the view of bodhichitta is said to be so vast.



*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instructions, p. 28*

October 20

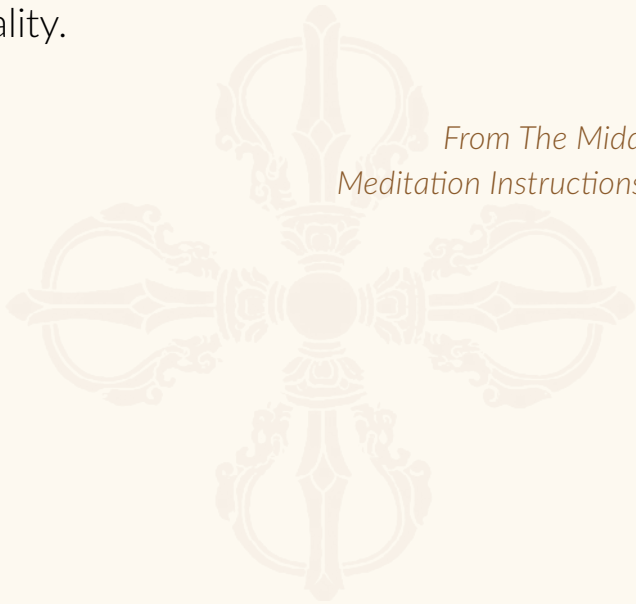
Normally, when we receive teachings, it's beneficial to think about them over and over again, and even retake these teachings until we have much more understanding of them. But when it comes to meditation, the most important thing is not to hear more about it or think about it, but to experience it with practice.

*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instructions, p. 73*

October 21

We should really make an effort to put teachings into practice, not let it just be words but an actuality.

*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instructions, p. 77*



October 22

At all times we must act in a way that it is beneficial for ourselves and for others. If we don't make any effort to practice, then we are not going to find any improvement in our mind. To improve ourselves we need to practice.



*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instructions, p. 75*

October 23

To eliminate the suffering of samsara, it's necessary sometimes to undergo difficulties and hardships in the practice of the dharma. But the purpose of that practice is not to experience suffering but to be able to gain freedom from suffering.

From On Buddha Essence, p. 12

October 24

In the yidam practice of the Vajrayana we usually meditate by visualizing ourselves in the form of a deity or yidam. In mind training practice, we just see ourselves in our ordinary form, but on the crown of our head we visualize our root guru who is the source of all our blessings.

From The Seven Points of Mind Training, p. 11

October 25

We have attained the precious human birth and have come into contact with the dharma, so we have all the most important elements necessary to practice. Out of all the things we can do with our life, practice is the most important because it alone has a lasting benefit.

From The Seven Points of Mind Training, p. 69

October 26

Dharma is not only for the monastic. In order to make dharma connections with laypeople as well, a school is very necessary. I think that dharma and education are not contradictory. You can study well while practicing the dharma, and practice dharma well while studying. They are not exclusive of each other. Many people think that if you study, you have to give up dharma, or if you practice dharma, you have to give up education, but it is not like that. I thought that if it were possible to do the two together, lay boys and girls could also make a good connection to the dharma and receive a good education.

From An interview with Very Venerable Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, Vairochana Magazine Vol 2 Issue 8. p. 39

October 27

The world is extremely huge, and I don't think we can say that we can help everyone. But I do think that the dharma will help those people who practice it.

From An interview with Very Venerable Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, Vairochana Magazine Vol 2 Issue 8. p. 39



October 28

I believe that it is important to talk about the dharma. We should study thoroughly so that we are able to tell more people about it in the future. Dharma practice makes a person calm and peaceful. We are often caught up in the sway of the afflictions. Ignorance, anger, jealousy, and desire not only cause mental suffering, they are also unhealthy for our bodies. The key to solving these problems lies in practicing the dharma.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners, p. 23*

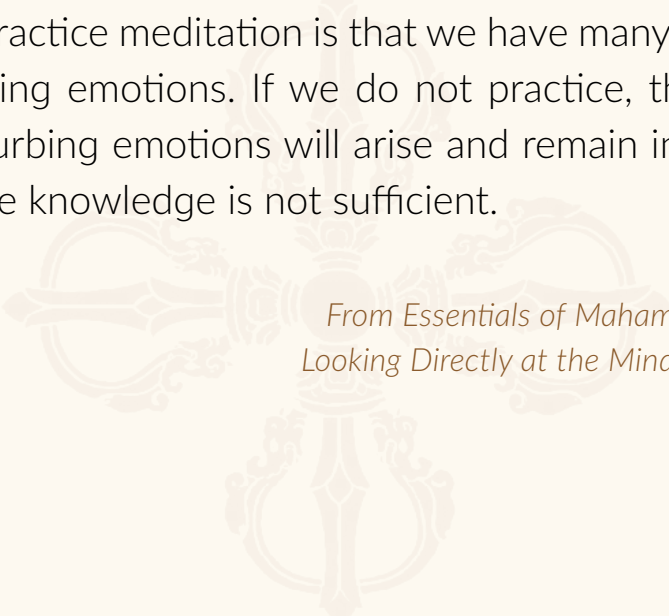
October 29

The only thing that benefits this life is the dharma. If we practice well in this life, it will help us to obtain a rebirth in the higher realms, allowing us to encounter the dharma once again, or we can take rebirth in a pure realm. All of this depends on being diligent in our practice.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners, p. 36*

October 30

If we know a lot of dharma but don't practice, it will not be very beneficial. The reason we need to practice meditation is that we have many disturbing emotions. If we do not practice, these disturbing emotions will arise and remain in us. Mere knowledge is not sufficient.



*From Essentials of Mahamudra:
Looking Directly at the Mind, p. 7*

October 31

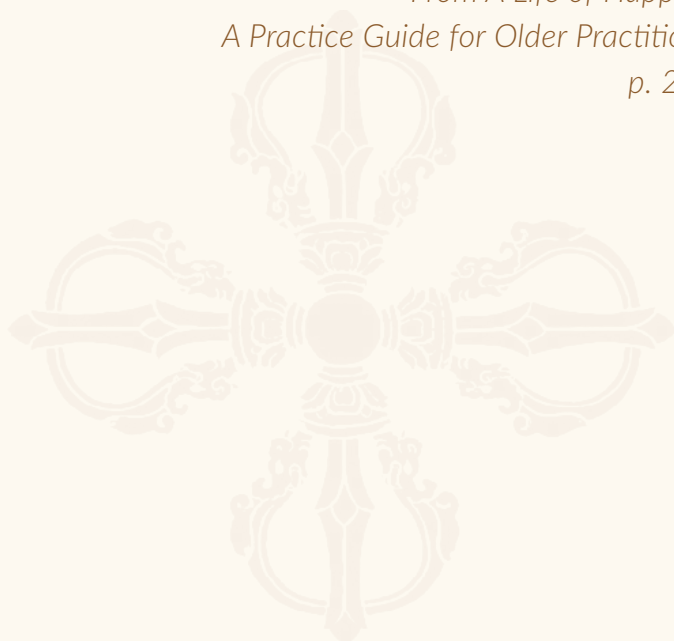
How should we practice the dharma? The Buddha once gave an essential teaching:

Commit not a single unwholesome action,
Cultivate a wealth of virtue,
Tame completely this mind of ours,
This is the Buddha's teaching.

This verse mentions three key points. The first is to abandon nonvirtue, and the second is to accumulate virtue, as much as possible. The third is to tame our mind and not be disturbed by the afflictions. The essence of dharma is to abandon the ten non-virtues and adopt the ten virtues; the root of this is taming one's own mind. Therefore, we need to constantly check our minds to see whether there is anger, jealousy, pride and

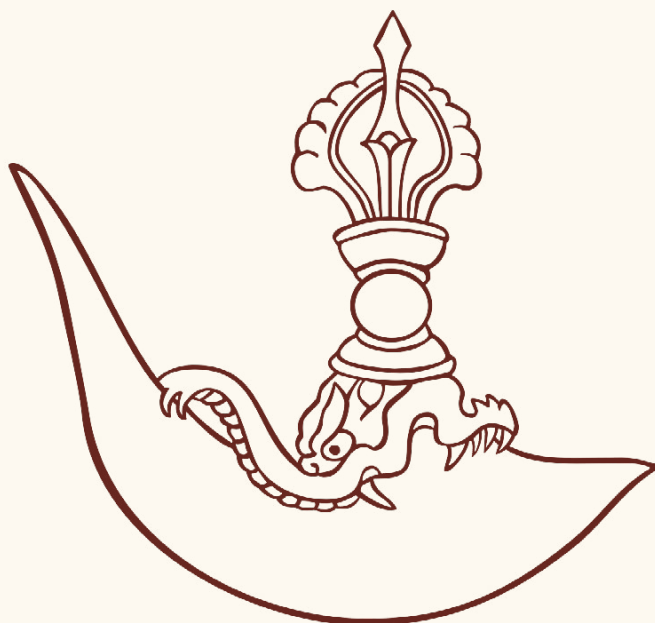
so forth. In order to do so, we need to be endowed with awareness, mindfulness, and carefulness.

*From A Life of Happiness.
A Practice Guide for Older Practitioners,
p. 23-24*



November

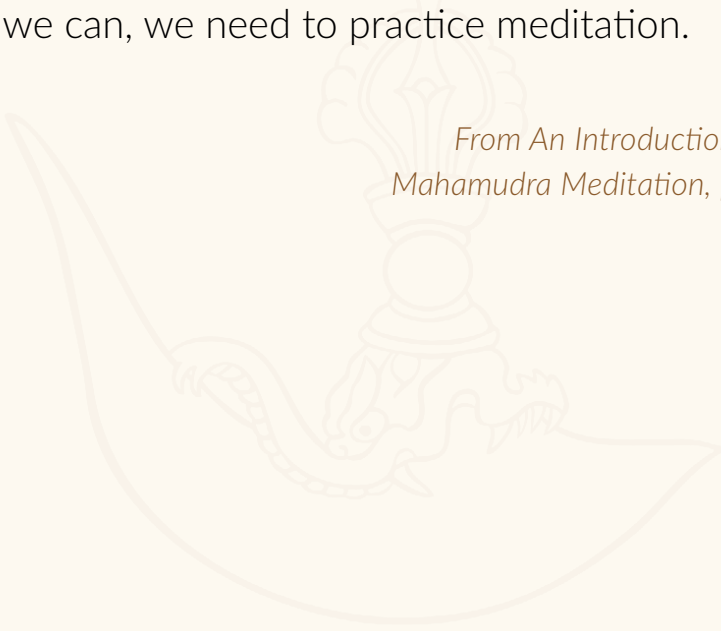
MEDITATION



November 1

The bottom line of our lives is that we must treat ourselves well. To really treat ourselves as well as we can, we need to practice meditation.

*From An Introduction to
Mahamudra Meditation, p. 7*



November 2

We have to begin meditation with shamatha because normally our mind is not at rest. It is agitated by regret, misery, anxiety, and all kinds of thoughts which disturb us. So the first thing we need to do is to calm our mind down so that it develops a healthy stability.

*From An Introduction to
Mahamudra Meditation, p. 11*

November 3

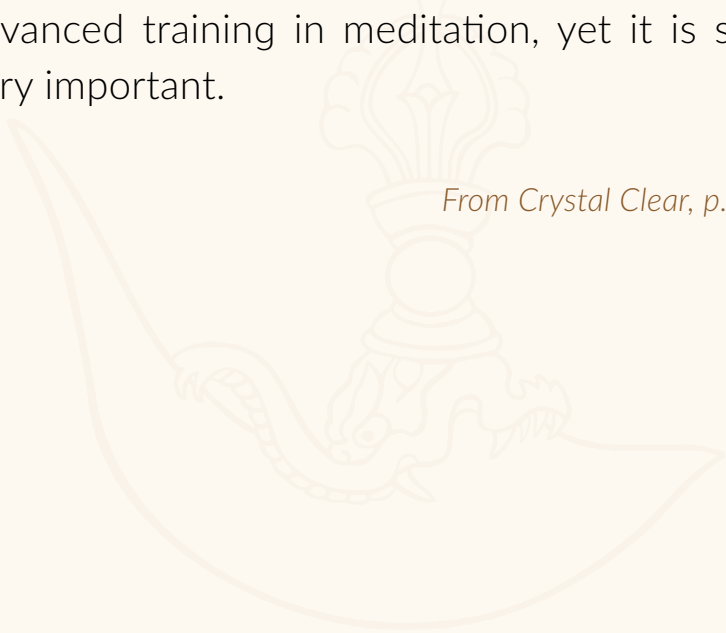
The function of shamatha is to develop mental stability or stillness. The function of vipashyana or insight is to look at the nature of the mind and, by doing so, to see the nature of phenomena.

*From An Introduction to
Mahamudra Meditation, p. 28*

November 4

This training in shamatha, in being calm, is known as a beginner's practice and not as an advanced training in meditation, yet it is still very important.

From Crystal Clear, p. 45



November 5

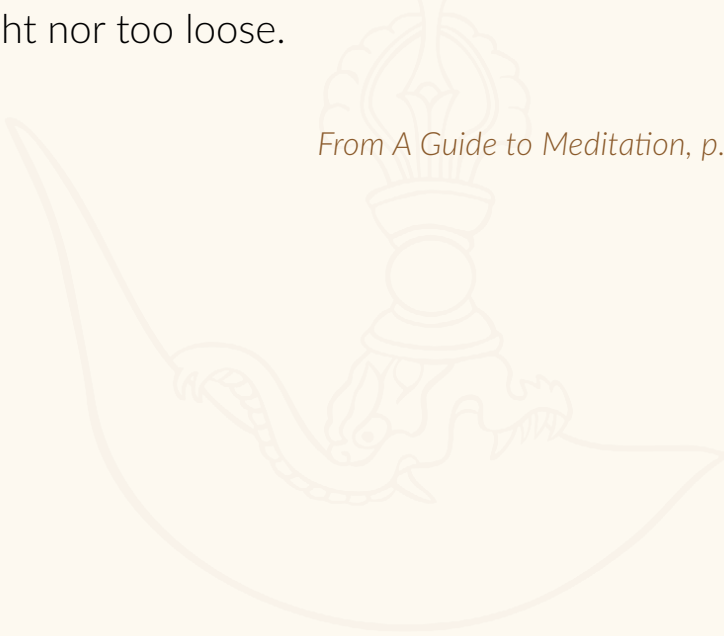
We must avoid following thoughts in our meditation, because meditation is simply leaving things just as they are, without being too relaxed or too tense.

From A Guide to Meditation, p. 10

November 6

When we meditate, the mind should maintain the right amount of mindfulness: neither too tight nor too loose.

From A Guide to Meditation, p. 11



November 7

Through meditation we will first gain some mental tranquility, which leads to having fewer thoughts. With fewer thoughts, we will have fewer negative thoughts, leading to fewer defilements.

From A Guide to Meditation, p. 13

November 8

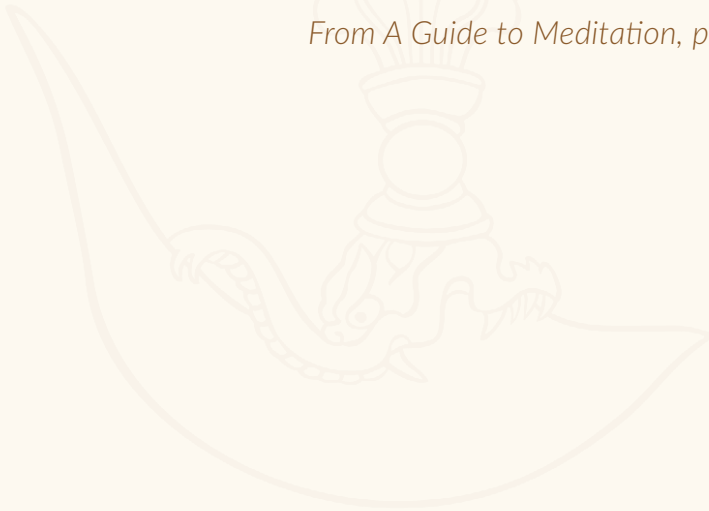
To develop strong insight meditation, we must first develop strong tranquility meditation. Without tranquility meditation, the mind just goes everywhere and we are not able to control it. Once we have developed tranquility meditation, we are able to use the mind in controlled way.

From A Guide to Meditation, p. 13

November 9

Meditation will also bring a very great feeling of happiness because little by little, we will be able to gain control over our thoughts and feelings.

From A Guide to Meditation, p. 16.



November 10

Although we might occasionally be able to act in a positive, wholesome manner, we won't be able to keep this up for very long if we haven't really turned our mind to the dharma. To turn our mind to the dharma, we need to meditate on the four ways of turning the mind away from samsara.

*From The Four Ordinary Foundations
of Buddhist Practice, p. 53*

November 11

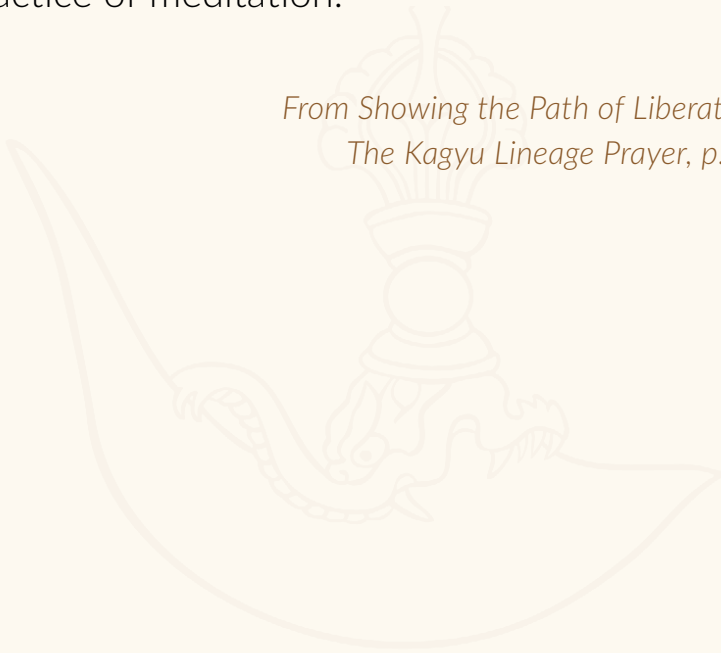
Meditation on impermanence is useful at all stages of one's practice. It's useful when one has just entered the practice of dharma because it turns one's mind to the dharma very quickly. But it is also useful when one is already practicing and comes under the influence of laziness, by renewing one's wish to practice.

*From The Four Ordinary Foundations
of Buddhist Practice, p. 39*

November 12

The leaving of the mind just as it is, is the actual practice of meditation.

*From Showing the Path of Liberation:
The Kagyu Lineage Prayer, p. 12*



November 13

The two main obstacles to meditation are sluggishness and excitement. Sluggishness is when our meditation becomes very heavy, very unclear, very thick, and full of torpor. This drowsiness feels heavy and there is a lack of clarity. That's the first obstacle to meditation. The second obstacle is excitement when our mind is overstimulated. We have many thoughts of the past or the present currents of thoughts are so strong that our mind just can't settle down.

*From The Three Vehicles of
Buddhist Practice, p. 95*

November 14

When we are able to bring meditation into post meditation through this practice of mindfulness, then work and meditation cease to be contrary to one another.

*From Looking Directly at Mind:
The Moonlight of Mahamudra, p. 9*

November 15

We might believe that shamatha and vipashyana are very ordinary meditations because teachers talk about them all the time, but shamatha and vipashyana are actually extremely important, valuable, and extraordinary meditations.

From Looking Directly at Mind, p. 11

November 16

When we practice meditation, clear mindfulness may come along, but later we might find that our mindfulness decreases and then we are not observing the object of observation. At that point, a very strong heaviness or dullness of mind has come about, with no clarity in our meditation. Some may think that this is very good shamatha practice, but it's not. If this heaviness is not cleared away, then good meditation doesn't happen.

From Looking Directly at Mind, p. 113

November 17

The principal method for abandoning what needs to be abandoned and developing what needs to be cultivated is meditation. And having mindfulness and awareness is the proof of realization. In the practice of meditation there is the meditation session and also the post meditation session that arises from the meditation session. One maintains the continuum of mindfulness and awareness through both the meditation and post meditation sessions. In that way they will benefit each other mutually.

From Looking Directly at Mind, p. 261

November 18

If we learn to meditate on the breath, which is always moving, it will be very helpful to learn to control our thoughts. There are very many different techniques of breathing meditation, such as counting the breath, following the breath, and so on. All of these techniques are intended to bring us to the point that we learn to control our mind. When we gain control over our mind, it doesn't get carried away.

*From Commentary on the
Jewel Ornament of Liberation, p. 259*

November 19

The difference between shamatha and vipashyana is not great; it is only a slight shift. When we practice shamatha, our mind rests naturally in a state that is free from a great deal of thought and conceptuality. We are able to reduce disturbing emotions through shamatha, but we are not able to eradicate them. With vipashyana, the quality of luminosity is enhanced, and we realize the mind's lack of any inherent nature. Through the realization of this state of luminosity and emptiness, we are able to abandon delusion at the root.

From Essentials of Mahamudra, p. 119

November 20

The source of these two aspects of awakening the removal of the mental afflictions and the natural flourishing of good qualities is the practice of meditation.

*From An Introduction to
Mahamudra Meditation, p. 4*

November 21

In the practice of meditation, from among the fifty-one mental events, we employ the positive mental events of mindfulness and awareness. We maintain mindfulness and awareness throughout meditation: We do not forget the meditation, and we remain aware of what is occurring.

*From An Ocean of
the Ultimate Meaning, p. 24*

November 22

The practice of shamatha is of great benefit both for stabilizing the mind and for increasing insight meditation. Therefore, it is very important to practice shamatha meditation.

*From An Ocean of
the Ultimate Meaning, p. 40*

November 23

Sometimes our meditation goes well, and sometimes it doesn't. At times, thoughts, kleshas, and mental negativities arise so that one is unable to develop stability of mind. This indicates that one needs to meditate on impermanence.

*From An Ocean of
the Ultimate Meaning, p. 48*

November 24

It is impermanence that first inspires one to enter into the dharma, that encourages one to continue with the dharma, and that finally assists one in attaining the ultimate result. Contemplating impermanence may seem unpleasant, but in the long term it's beneficial, as it will arouse your diligence to continue with meditation. Therefore, it's very beneficial to meditate on impermanence.

*From An Ocean of
the Ultimate Meaning, p. 48*

November 25

One should also meditate on the four ways of turning the mind away from samsara. These are the contemplations of impermanence, the difficulty of obtaining this precious human existence, the inevitability of karma, and samsara as a source of suffering. These meditations will encourage you to continue with practice.

*From An Ocean of
the Ultimate Meaning, p. 48*

November 26

Sometimes in practicing shamatha and vipashyana it can seem to us that there really isn't much difference between the two. It can be difficult to discriminate between them. But the state of shamatha is something that is able to overcome but not eliminate the defilements. One can't gain a special experience in the state of shamatha meditation. That insight is what is gained through the practice of vipashyana, of looking at the mind in stillness.

*From An Ocean of
the Ultimate Meaning, p. 80*

November 27

When we start meditation, it is important to do many short sessions rather than a few long sessions of meditation. So, we try to meditate very sharply for a short while and then stop. Then we have a break and do another meditation session. Each time is short, sharp, and clear and it feels like a pleasant experience. If one tries to meditate too long, it becomes exhausting and the association of tiredness with meditation is not going to help. That's one of the reasons for doing short sessions at first. Also, thinking of meditation as a pleasant experience makes us very keen to do it again. If we see the benefits of sitting just for a little while and having this moment of clarity and precision, then we appreciate it and want to do it again and again to perfect it.

From The Three Vehicles of Buddhist Practice, p. 98

November 28

It is far more beneficial to meditate for just one day than it is to listen to teachings and analyze them for eons and eons. It is also far more important to meditate for a short period of time than to engage in vast virtuous and beneficial activity for a very long time.

From Essentials of Mahamudra, p. 8

November 29

If we don't combine meditation and post meditation, meditation will be one thing and work will be something else, and they will fight with each other. We will feel that we can't work when we meditate and we can't meditate when we work. But if we bring this practice of mindfulness and no distraction of mind into all of our actions, work and meditation will go together. In fact, we will find that meditation and post meditation begin to stimulate one another: the more we practice meditation in our actions, the easier our meditation on the cushion will be.

From Essentials of Mahamudra, p. 9

November 30

Our main problem is that we have many thoughts. In this case it is appropriate to meditate on the inhalation and exhalation of the breath. This meditation is not directed to any single disturbing emotion but to all of them and to the thoughts that we experience endlessly. By meditating on the breath, our thoughts decrease. This is the best-known meditation and the one that most of us do.

From Essentials of Mahamudra, p. 33

December

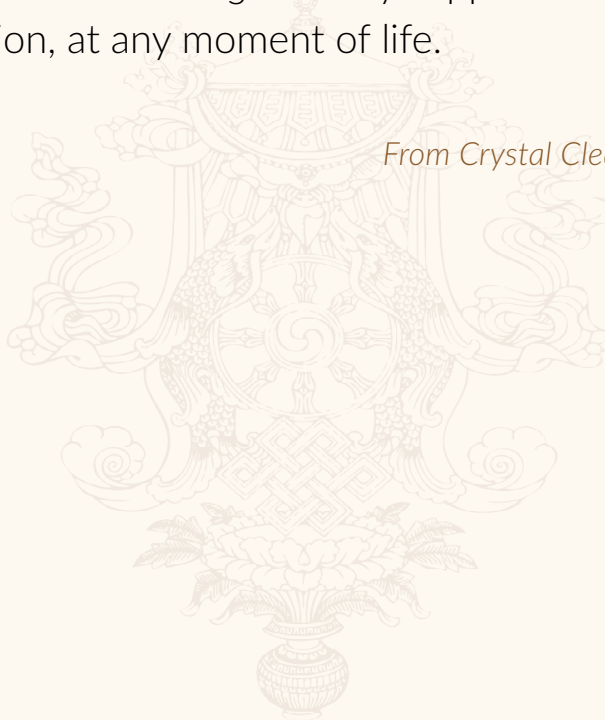
MAHAMUDRA



December 1

Mahamudra training is always applicable in any situation, at any moment of life.

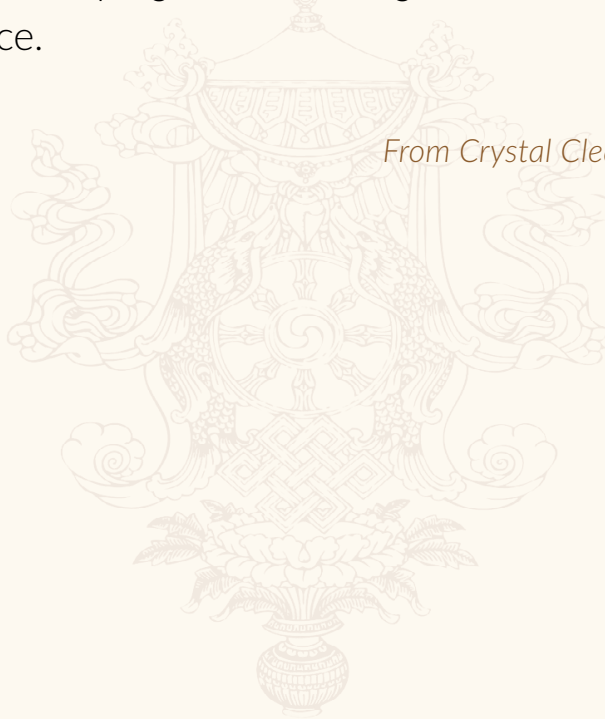
From Crystal Clear, p. 22



December 2

After all, helping others is the goal of mahamudra practice.

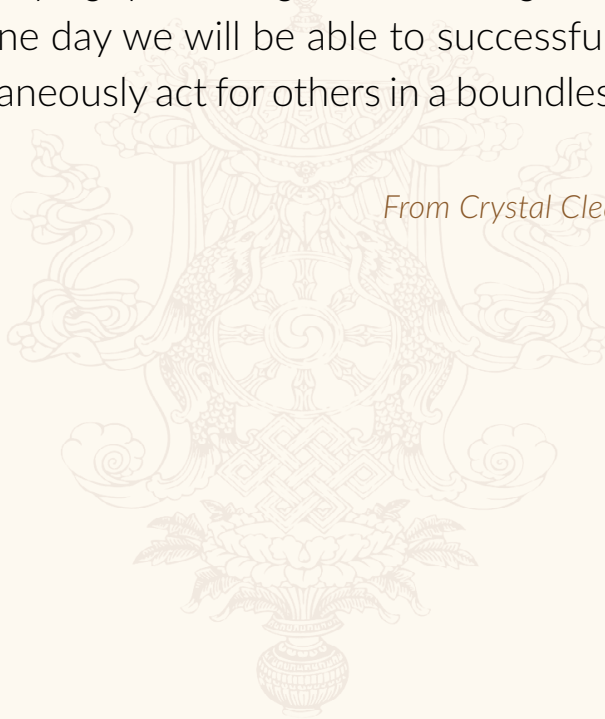
From Crystal Clear, p. 13



December 3

By studying, practicing, and realizing mahamudra, one day we will be able to successfully and spontaneously act for others in a boundless way.

From Crystal Clear, p. 13



December 4

To tame one's mind requires training in samadhi during both the meditation state and daily activities.

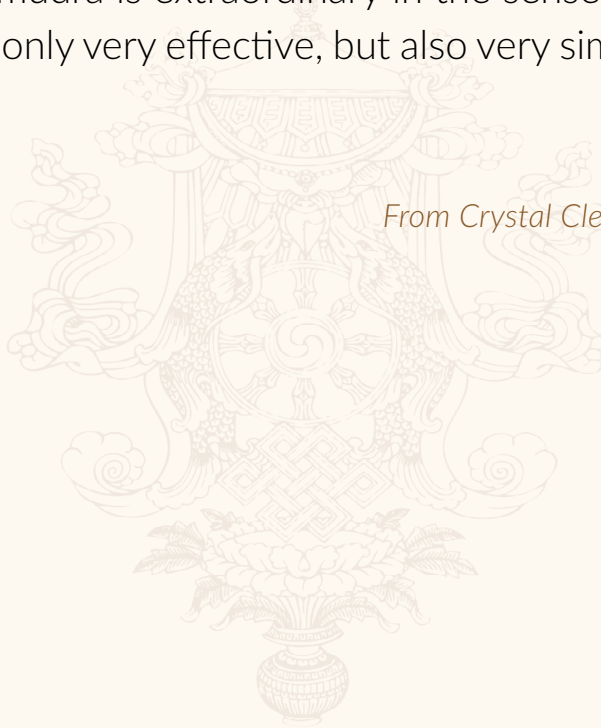
From Crystal Clear, p. 13



December 5

Mahamudra is extraordinary in the sense that it is not only very effective, but also very simple to apply.

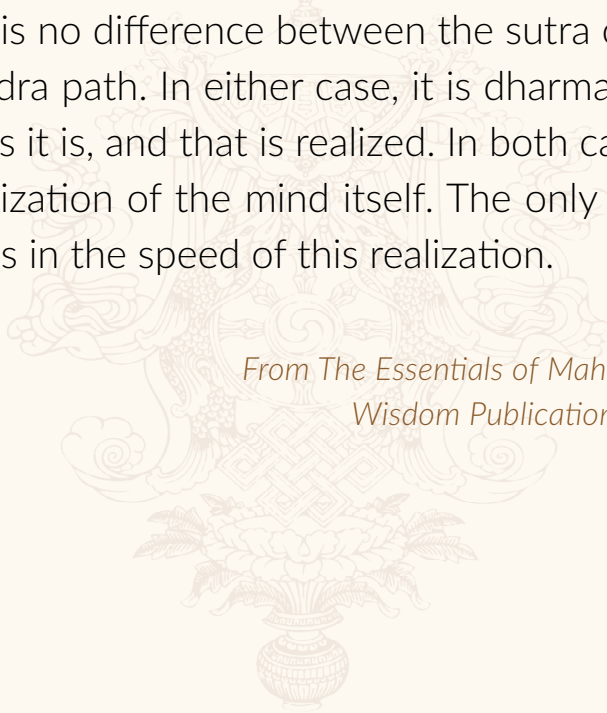
From Crystal Clear, p. 19



December 6

When we talk about realization of mind as it is, there is no difference between the sutra or mahamudra path. In either case, it is dharmata, reality as it is, and that is realized. In both cases, it is realization of the mind itself. The only difference is in the speed of this realization.

*From The Essentials of Mahamudra,
Wisdom Publications, p. 47*



December 7

Training in mahamudra is both easy to apply and extremely beneficial.

From Crystal Clear, p. 116



December 8

One of the best things about mahamudra practice is that it is peaceful and gentle and there isn't great danger of making terrible mistakes or creating a practice situation that can harm us.

From Looking Directly at Mind, p. 2



December 9

Training in mahamudra is both easy to apply and extremely beneficial.

From Crystal Clear, p. 116



December 10

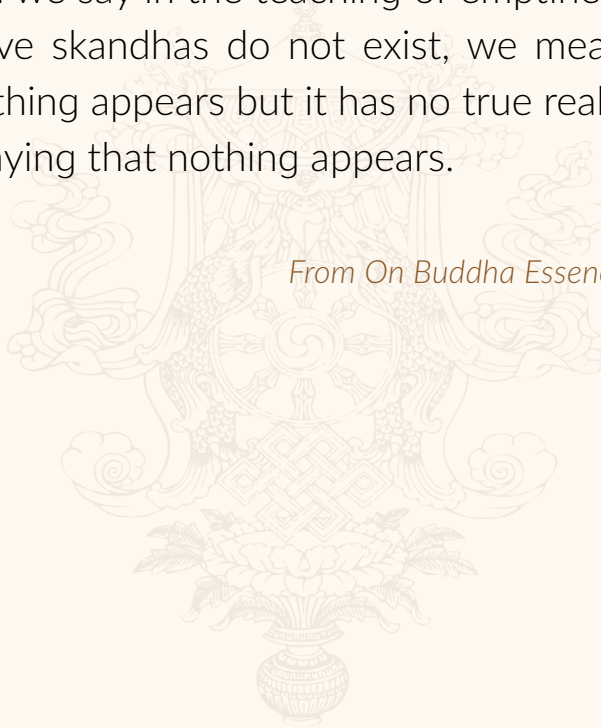
The practice of mahamudra is free from such dangers and such complications because it is simply a matter of looking at our mind, recognizing its nature, and remaining within that recognition. The Mahamudra instructions are distinctive and penetrate right to the point. If they are followed, there is no risk to body and mind.

From Looking Directly at Mind, p. 2

December 11

When we say in the teaching of emptiness that the five skandhas do not exist, we mean that something appears but it has no true reality. It's not saying that nothing appears.

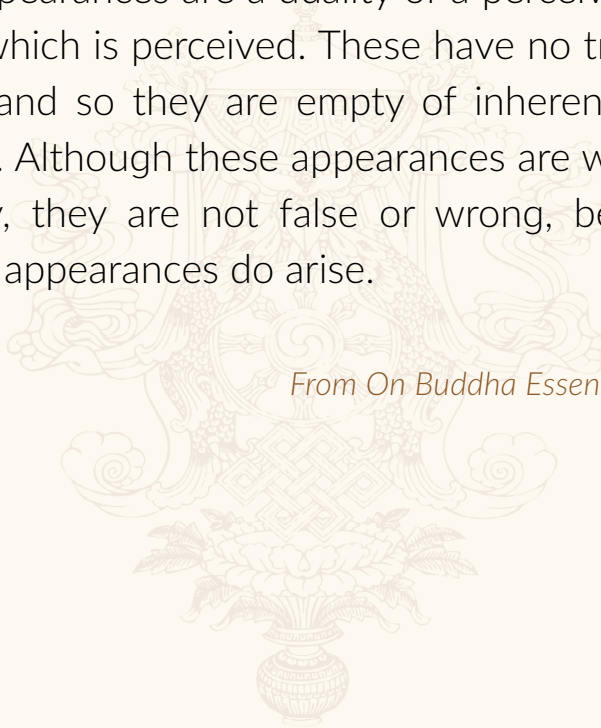
From On Buddha Essence, p. 42



December 12

All appearances are a duality of a perceiver and that which is perceived. These have no true reality, and so they are empty of inherent existence. Although these appearances are without reality, they are not false or wrong, because these appearances do arise.

From On Buddha Essence, p. 46



December 13

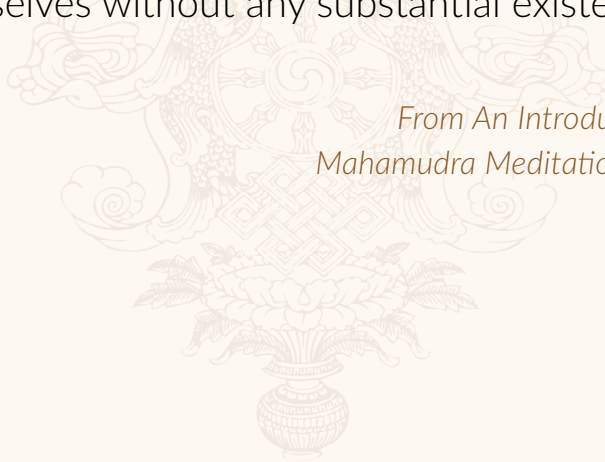
Do cyclic existence and nirvana both exist from the start? Cyclic existence and nirvana are both present from time without beginning. Nirvana is present as the factor that is true. Cyclic existence is present as the factor that is mistaken. They differ in that one is true and the other is not, but they do not differ in regard to time.

From Essential Practice, p. 73

December 14

Emptiness usually brings to mind an image of nothingness, which we think of as an undesirable state. But in fact, emptiness does not mean nothingness. It means that all of these appearances which we cling to and fixate on are in themselves without any substantial existence.

*From An Introduction to
Mahamudra Meditation, p. 31*



December 15

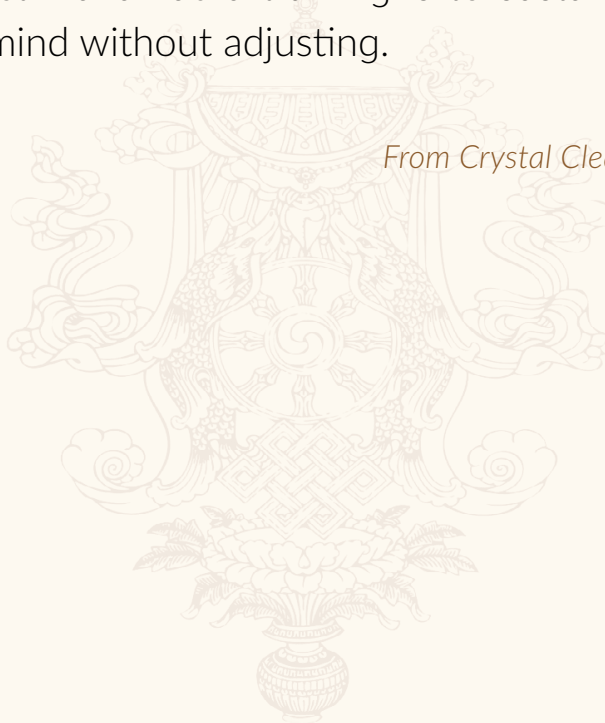
In this lifetime, we have not been able to meet the Buddha who turned the wheel of dharma, but, through the kindness of our gurus, whom we have met and seen, we may still be able to attain realization. From this point of view, our personal gurus are kinder than all the thousand buddhas of this kalpa, whom we have not been able to see.

From Showing the Path of Liberation, p. 50

December 16

Correct mahamudra training is to sustain ordinary mind without adjusting.

From Crystal Clear, p. 97



December 17

In connection with meditation, there are two different ways to integrate one's meditation with the path. One is to integrate logical reasoning with one's path. The other aspect is to integrate direct understanding with the path. Actually, the best meditation is a combination of both these methods.

*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instructions, p. 59–60*

December 18

If you don't examine things with enough intelligence, you can't stick to what you have understood to be the truth. You can't stick to it because you don't have enough critical sense to know that what you understood in the first place was right. That is why you need to examine things properly, in a discerning way, in order to get the kind of certainty that cannot change and the certainty that what you know actually is the truth.



*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instructions, p. 39*

December 19

The actual subject matter of Middle-way meditation is the meditation on emptiness that lets us realize the true nature of all things. Before we actually practice the meditation on emptiness, we have to practice compassion and bodhichitta. It is necessary to have this right kind of attitude and to develop it sufficiently so that the meditation on emptiness will come naturally to us.

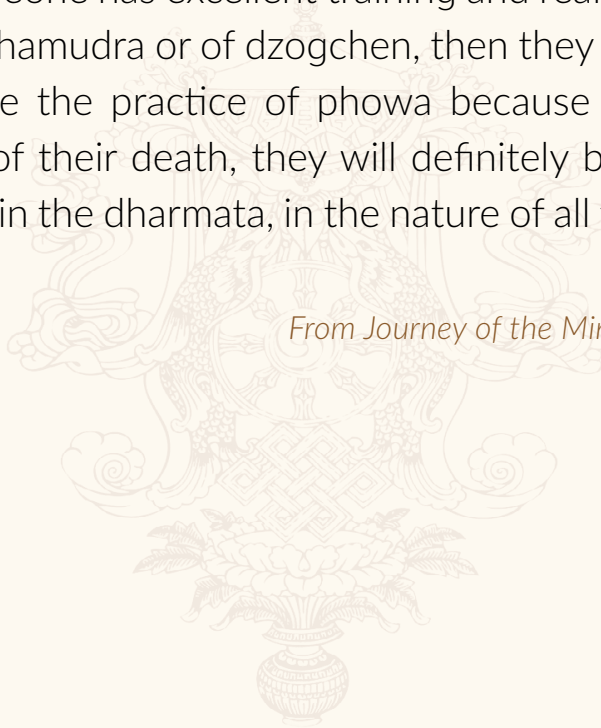


*From The Middle-way
Meditation Instruction, p. 29*

December 20

If someone has excellent training and realization of mahamudra or of dzogchen, then they do not require the practice of phowa because at the time of their death, they will definitely be liberated in the dharmata, in the nature of all things.

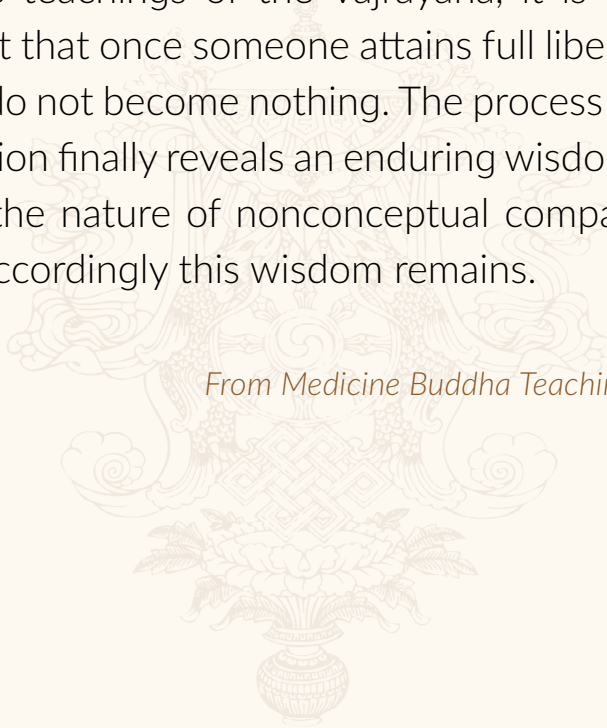
From Journey of the Mind, p. 44



December 21

In the teachings of the Vajrayana, it is clearly taught that once someone attains full liberation, they do not become nothing. The process of purification finally reveals an enduring wisdom that is of the nature of nonconceptual compassion, and accordingly this wisdom remains.

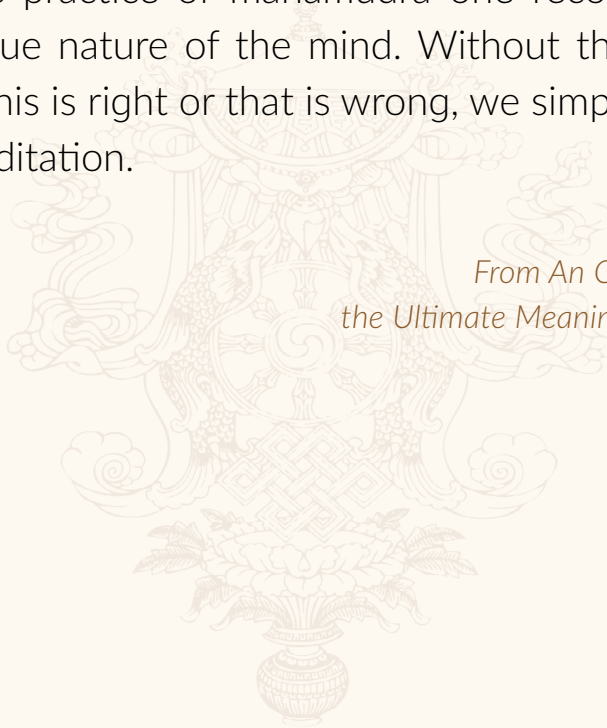
From Medicine Buddha Teachings, p. 9



December 22

In the practice of mahamudra one recognizes the true nature of the mind. Without thinking that this is right or that is wrong, we simply rest in meditation.

*From An Ocean of
the Ultimate Meaning, p. 94*



December 23

The main meditation is composed of shamatha, or tranquility meditation, and vipashyana, or insight meditation. Happy and unhappy thoughts arise continuously in the mind. When we examine them, we see that the majority of our thoughts are unhappy. Therefore, reducing the number of thoughts is beneficial. Through the practice of shamatha we can make the mind more peaceful and stable.

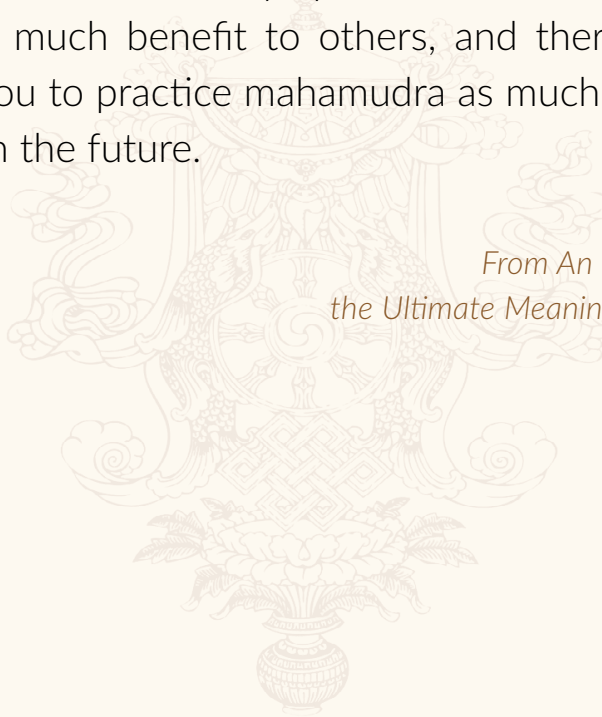


*From An Ocean of
the Ultimate Meaning, p. 13*

December 24

Mahamudra is a very special method that can bring much benefit to others, and therefore I ask you to practice mahamudra as much as you can in the future.

*From An Ocean of
the Ultimate Meaning, p. 180*



December 25

The mahamudra system teaches that devotion and trust in our root teacher, combined with our accumulation of merit and purification of obscurations, makes it possible for samadhi, the unique view of mahamudra, to dawn within our stream of being. Without trust and faith in our root master there is no realization of the samadhi of mahamudra. This is the special principle of mahamudra.

From The King of Samadhi, p. 16

December 26

What is most important in the mahamudra instructions is that they are mind instructions: they tell us how to look at our mind, see what it is like, and see where it is. The instructions on dzogchen also give mind instructions, telling us how to look at the mind and see what it is like. In both the mahamudra and dzogchen traditions, what is most important is meditating on the mind, and both explain the reasons why we should meditate on the mind and the benefits of doing so.



From Vivid Awareness, p. 93

December 27

There are many great Buddhist traditions, and of these the teachings of mahamudra are particularly helpful in these modern times. The reason I think that the mahamudra teachings are especially relevant and beneficial today is that we find ourselves in situations that are quite similar to those in which the great practitioners of mahamudra found themselves many centuries ago.

From Essentials of Mahamudra, p. 1

December 28

When practicing mahamudra, if we have connected with a qualified root guru it is extremely important to supplicate him from the core of our heart while imagining him in our own heart center. What is the purpose of supplicating the root guru with utmost faith and devotion? It is to receive the blessings. By receiving the blessings, we can give rise to realization.

From The King of Samadhi, p. 140

December 29

The best way to describe the mind as apparent and yet empty at the same time is through the example of a dream. When you dream of an elephant, does an elephant appear to your mind? Indeed, it appears very clearly. Is there an elephant there? No. This appearance of an elephant in a dream is a union of appearance and emptiness. It appears, yet it does not exist. It does not exist, yet it appears. It is the same with all external phenomena.

From Essentials of Mahamudra, p. 29

December 30

Q: Could you please explain the main differences between dzogchen and mahamudra?

A: There are differences in the lineage of transmission and in the skillful methods of these two meditations. But if we are speaking of exactly what they are, there is no difference: both are practices leading to recognizing mind as it is.

From Essentials of Mahamudra, p. 9

December 31

Whatever our ignorance and whatever our many varieties of confused appearances may be, if the true nature of phenomena is realized, then all our confusion can be removed, because ultimately it is false. In other words, realization of reality's truth overcomes all possible misperceptions about the nature of reality.

From A Song for the King, p. 33

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Glossary

Absolute bodhichitta (Tib. *don dam byang chub kyi sems*).

See bodhichitta

Afflictions (Tib. *nyon mongs pa*; Skt. *kleshas*). The mental events of desire, aversion, ignorance, pride, stinginess, envy, and so forth that motivate actions that perpetuate samsaric suffering.

Aggregates, five (Tib. *phung po nga*; Skt. *skandha*). Literally, "heaps." The constituents that form the physical and mental basis for projecting the idea of a self. The first is form, which includes all matter that is composed of atoms. The second is feeling—pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral physical and mental feelings. The third, conception, refers to the ideas we have about things. The fourth, formation, includes all the other mental factors such as contact, memory, faith and other virtuous factors, anger and other unvirtuous factors, and so forth. The fifth is consciousness, which is the mere awareness of the essence of an object.

Awareness (Tib. *shes bzhin*; Skt. *samprajana*). The quality of knowing what is happening in your body, speech, or mind at any given moment. Awareness is also used as a synonym for cognition or mind (Tib. *rig pa*; Skt. *buddhi*).

Bardo (Skt. *antarabhava*). Tibetan for “Intermediate state”: The intermediate state between the end of one life and rebirth into another. Bardo can also be divided into six different levels; the bardo of birth, dreams, meditation, the moment before death, the bardo of dharmata and the bardo of becoming.

Blessings (Tib. *byin rlaps*). One's root guru and lineage are said to be the source of blessings. The Tibetan word literally means the power to change one's mind: the guru and lineage teach either verbally or symbolically in ways that affect the student and change how they think and perceive the world.

Bodhichitta (Tib. *byang chub kyi sems*). Literally, the altruistic wish to awaken. There are two kinds of bodhichitta: absolute bodhichitta, which is completely awakened mind that sees the emptiness of phenomena, and relative bodhichitta, which is the aspiration to practice the six paramitas and free all beings from the suffering of samsara. There are

also two kinds of relative bodhichitta, aspirational bodhichitta and engaged bodhichitta.

Bodhisattva (Tib. *byang chub sems dpa*). A being who has taken the vow to achieve buddhahood for the sake of all beings.

Bodhisattva levels (Tib. *byang chub sems dpa'i sa*; Skt. *bhumi*). The levels or stages a bodhisattva goes through to reach enlightenment. These consist of ten levels in the sutra tradition and thirteen levels in the tantra tradition.

Buddhahood (Tib. *sangs rgyas*). The perfect and complete enlightenment of dwelling in neither samsara nor nirvana. Expression of the realization of perfect enlightenment, which characterizes a Buddha. The attainment of Buddhahood is the birthright of all beings. According to the teachings of Buddha, every sentient being has, or better, is already Buddha nature. Thus Buddhahood cannot be "attained." It is much more a matter of experiencing the primordial perfection and realizing it in everyday life.

Calm abiding (Tib. *zhi gnas*). See Shamatha

Carefulness (Tib. *bag yod*; Skt. *apramada*). The quality of valuing karmic cause and effect so greatly that one is care-

ful to avoid misdeeds and practice virtue to the greatest extent possible.

Channels and energies (Tib. *rtsa rlung*; Skt. *nadi-vayu*). The network of channels or meridians in the body and the various different types of energy that flow through them. In advanced tantric practice, there are exercises that control the movements of the energies, but they should only be practiced with the proper transmission and guidance from a qualified guru.

Compassion (Tib. *snying rje*; Skt. *karuna*). The wish that beings be free of suffering and its causes. In Mahayana Buddhism, the highest compassion is the completely unbiased wish to bring all beings to permanent freedom from suffering, liberation.

Completion stage (Tib. *rdzogs rim*). In tantric meditation, there are two stages: the creation and the completion stage. The completion stage is a method of tantric meditation in which one dissolves the visualization and then rests in the intrinsic awareness of mind.

Creation stage (Tib. *bskyed rim*). In the Vajrayana there are two stages of meditation: the creation and the completion

stage. In this stage the visualization of the deity is built up and maintained.

Cyclic existence. See **samsara**

Defilements (Tib. *nyön mong*; Skt. *klesha*). Another word for the emotional obscurations (in contrast to intellectual obscurations), which are also translated as "afflictions" or "disturbing emotions." The three main kleshas are passion or attachment, aggression or anger; and ignorance or delusion. The five kleshas are the three above plus pride and envy or jealousy.

Dharma (Tib. *chos*). This has two main meanings. In its widest sense it means all that can be known or all the kind of phenomena. In this text, the term is a buddha's or other noble being's realization of the nature of the truth, the expression of that in words, and by extension, the teachings of Buddhism.

Dharmadhatu (Tib. *chos kyi dbyings*). The all-encompassing space which is unoriginated and beginningless out of which all phenomena arise.

Dharmata (Tib. *chos nyid*). The true nature of phenomena, not phenomena as it appears to us. It is a synonym for

“suchness,” “the true nature of things,” and “things as-they-are.”

Dharma protectors (Tib. *chö kyong*; Skt. *dharmapala*). Bodhisattvas or local spirits who take a wrathful form in order better remove obstacles and accomplish the activity of the practitioners who invoke their aid.

Diligence (Tib. *brtson grus*; Skt. *virya*). Enthusiasm for the practice of virtue.

Dzogchen (Skt. *mahasandhi*; *atiyoga*). Tibetan for “Great Perfection.” A method of meditating on the nature of mind that is most commonly associated with the Tibetan Nyingma tradition.

Emptiness (Tib. *stong pa nyid*; Skt. *shunyata*). Also translated as voidness. The Buddha taught in the second turning of the wheel of dharma that all external phenomena and all internal phenomena or concept of self or “I” have no real existence and therefore are “empty.”

Faith (Tib. *dad pa*; Skt. *adhimukti*). The sincere, pure quality of cognition that is free of afflictions. There are three types, sincere faith such as the feeling of respect or wonder one feels when seeing an image of a buddha or bodhisat-

tva, the faith of longing that is the strong wish to become like the buddhas and bodhisattvas oneself, and the faith of conviction that comes from knowing through study and experience.

Five skandhas. See aggregates

Foundation Vehicle (Skt. *hinayana*). The first set of teachings of the Buddha which emphasize the Four Noble Truths and the careful examination of mind and its confusion. It is also known as the Theravada path and is practiced mainly in Thailand, Burma, and Cambodia etc.

Four ordinary foundations (Tib. *thun mong gi sngon gro bzhi*). Also called the four thoughts that turn the mind towards the Dharma, are often done before any main practice. They are reflections on the precious human birth, impermanence and the inevitability of death, karma and its effects, and the pervasiveness of suffering in samsara. Four foundations of meditation, Four Common Preliminaries

Gampopa (1079-1153). One of the main lineage holders of the Kagyu lineage in Tibet. A student of Milarepa, he established the first Kagyu monastery and is known for writing the Jewel Ornament of Liberation.

Kadampa. One of the major schools in Tibet. It was founded by Atisha (993-1054).

Jnana (Tib. *Ye shes*). The Tibetan literally means “primordial awareness.” The wisdom that sees the nature of phenomena as it is without any thought or conceptual overlay.

Kagyu (Tib. *bka’ brgyud*). One of the four major schools of Buddhism in Tibet. It was founded by Marpa in the 11th century and then transmitted to Marpa, Gampopa, and other great masters to the present day. The other three main schools are the Nyingma, the Sakya, and the Gelugpa schools.

Kalpa (Tib. *bskal pa*). A great kalpa, which corresponds to a cycle of formation and destruction of a universe, is divided into eighty intermediate kalpas. An intermediate kalpa is composed of one small kalpa during which the span of life, etc., increases and one small kalpa during which it decreases.

Karma (Tib. *las*). Literally “action.” The unerring law of cause and effect, e.g., positive actions bring happiness and negative actions bring suffering. The actions of each sen-

tient being are the causes that create the conditions for rebirth and the circumstances in that lifetime.

Lama (Tib. *bla ma*; Skt. *guru*). A teacher in the Tibetan tradition who has reached realization. La means nobody above himself or herself in spiritual experience and ma means expressing compassion like a mother. Lama is also a title given to a practitioner who has completed some extended training.

Lojong (Tib. *blo sbyong*). A practice of training (sbyong) the mind (blo) and cultivating relative and absolute bodhichitta with the use of short phrases, or slogans, as taught by Atisha in his Seven-Point Mind Training and other eminent Kadam masters. Later, numerous lojong teachings were written by masters of all schools.

Luminosity (Tib. *od gsal*). Sometimes also translated as clarity. The clear and knowing inherent quality of mind which has the aspects of being manifest itself and of being able to know other phenomena. It is inseparable from the emptiness that is the nature of mind.

Mahamudra (Tib. *phyag rgya chen po*). Literally the "great seal," meaning that all phenomena are sealed by the pri-

mordially perfect true nature. This form of meditation is traced back to Saraha (10th century) and was passed down in the Kagyu school through Marpa. This meditative transmission emphasizes perceiving mind directly rather than through rational analysis. It also refers to the experience of the practitioner where one attains the union of emptiness and luminosity and also perceives the non-duality of the phenomenal world and emptiness.

Mahasiddha (Tib. *grub thop chen po*). A practitioner who has a great deal of realization. *Maha* means great and *siddha* refers to an accomplished practitioner. These were particularly Vajrayana practitioners who lived in India between the eighth and twelfth century and practiced tantra.

Mani mantra. The mantra of Avalokitesvara, om maṇi padme hūṃ.

Mahayana (Tib. *theg pa chen po*). Literally the "great vehicle." The teachings for bodhisattvas that explain the path to attain Buddhahood. They emphasize compassion, bodhicitta, and emptiness.

Marpa (1012-1097). The founder of the Kagyu lineage, who was known for making three trips to India and bringing

back many tantric practices, including the Six Yogas of Naropa, the Guhyasamaja, and the Chakrasamvara practices. His teacher was Naropa.

Meditate (Tib. *sgom pa*). Literally to habituate one's mind. It involves letting the mind rest on an object of contemplation or reflection or within the realization of the actual nature.

Mental consciousness (Tib. *yid kyi rnam she*). Often counted as the sixth consciousness, following the five sensory consciousnesses. This is the consciousness in which all thinking occurs.

Mental factors (Tib. *sems byung*; Skt. *caitasika*). The factors accompanying every cognition that apprehended the features of the object (in contrast to mind or consciousness, which is mere awareness of the essence of the object). This includes the basic aspects of cognition such as contact, feeling, conception, memory and so forth as well as virtuous factors such as faith, detachment, and equanimity, the root defilements such as desire, anger, and pride, and the secondary defilements such as resentment, dishonesty, harmfulness.

Merit (Tib. *bsod nams*; Skt. *punya*). Good karma, the energy generated by positive actions of body, speech and mind.

Middle Way (Tib. *dbu ma'i lam*; Skt. *Madhyamika*). The teaching on emptiness first expounded by Nagarjuna and considered to be the basis of the Secret Mantrayana. "Middle" means that it is beyond any extremes of existence or nonexistence, eternalism or nihilism.

Milarepa (1040-1123). Tibet's great yogi and poet, whose biography and spiritual songs are among the best loved works in Tibetan Buddhism. One of the foremost disciples of Marpa, he is among the great masters at the origin of the Kagyupa school.

Mindfulness (Tib. *dran pa*; Skt. *smṛti*). The ability to recall what one should do or not do, or alternatively, the ability to remember the instructions of the teacher.

Mind training (Tib. *blo sbyong*). A practice changing one's behaviour based on a set of aphorisms. It was brought to Tibet from Sumatra by Atisha in the twelfth century and systemized by Chekhawa.

Nirvana (Tib. *mya ngen las das pa*). Sanskrit for "extinguished": The state of liberation from samsara, where all suffering and afflictions have been extinguished.

Negative emotions (Tib. *nyon mongs pa*; Skt. *klesa*). See defilements.

Paramita (Tib. *pha rol tu phyin pa*). Sanskrit for "transcendences": There are six paramitas or six activities that form the practice of the bodhisattva path: generosity, ethical discipline, patience, diligence, concentration, and wisdom. It is said that the first five paramitas are all meant to accomplish the sixth, the perfection of wisdom. Paramita literally means "gone to the other shore," having transcended samsara and attained nirvana.

Phowa (Tib. *'pho ba*). A ritual performed at the moment of death, either by a lama or by a dying practitioner, for the transference of consciousness to a buddha field where enlightenment will ultimately be attained. In its quintessential form, it consists in merging with the Guru's enlightened mind at the time of death. One may also train in phowa during one's lifetime, combined with a longevity practice, to be fully applied at the time of death.

Prajna (Tib. *shes rab*). The Sanskrit means perfect knowledge. The ability to distinguish what is dharma and should be done from what is not dharma and should be given up.

Principle of cause and effect (Tib. *las rgyu 'bras*). Literally action, cause and fruit. Process by which every action produces a corresponding effect. See karma.

Refuge: 1. (Tib. *skyabs yul*). the object in which one takes refuge. 2 (Tib. *skyabs 'gro*). the practice of taking refuge.

Relative bodhichitta. See bodhichitta

Relative truth (Tib. *kun rdzob bden pa*; Skt. *samvriti satya*). the apparent truth perceived and taken as real by the deluded mind.

Samadhi (Tib. *ting nge dzin*). Also called "meditative absorption" or "one-pointed meditation" and is the highest form of meditation in which the mind remains in meditation without any distraction.

Samsara (Tib. *khor ba*). Conditioned existence which is ordinary suffering in life which occurs because one still possesses passion, aggression, and ignorance. It is contrasted to nirvana.

Seven branch prayer (Tib. *yen lak bdün pa*; Skt. *saptanga*).

A complete method to accumulate merits through seven practices: 1) Prostrating to the three jewels. 2) The making of offerings which are associated with body, speech, and mind. 3) Confessing negative actions and thus purifying unvirtuous habits. 4) Rejoicing in the virtue of others. 5) Requesting the buddhas to always teach by turning the wheel of Dharma. 6) Supplicating the buddhas not to pass into nirvana, but to keep coming back to the world. 7) Dedicating all one's positive activities to all sentient beings.

Shamatha (Tib. *zhi gnas*). Sanskrit for tranquility meditation or calm abiding. A type of meditation that trains the mind in resting without being distracted by thoughts or the appearances of external things. (Tib. *she nay*). Synonym for calm abiding.

Six paramitas. See Paramita

Spiritual friend (Tib. *dge ba'i gshes gnyen*, Skt. *kalyanamitra*). A synonym for spiritual teacher.

Sutra (Tib. *mdo*). The exoteric teachings of the Buddha that primarily emphasize acting upon the causes of gathering merit, practicing discipline, and meditating in order to achieve

the result of liberation or omniscience. The sutras are viewed as the Buddha's recorded words, although they were not actually written down until many years after his parinirvana. They are usually in the form of dialogues between the Buddha and his disciples. These are often contrasted with the tantras which are the Buddha's Vajrayana teachings and the shastras which are commentaries on the words of the Buddha.

Tonglen (Tib. *gtong len*). A meditation practice promulgated by Atisha in which the practitioner mentally takes upon themselves the negative conditions of others and sends out all that is positive to others.

Vajrayana (Tib. *rdo rje theg pa*). The teachings that emphasize taking the result as the path by meditating directly upon one's own buddha nature. Also called Secret Mantrayana. The Vajrayana is said to be meant for individuals of the sharpest faculties, since it is very profound, and to be endowed with many skillful means to reach enlightenment swiftly and with ease.

Vinaya (Tib. *dul ba*). The section of the Buddha's teaching (Tripitaka) that deals with discipline and in particular with the vows of monastic ordination.

Vipashyana (Tib. *lhag mthong*). Sanskrit for "insight meditation." Meditation whose primary aim is to see the nature of reality, realizing the right view.

Yidam (Skt. *ishtadevata*). A deity representing enlightenment, in a male or female, peaceful or wrathful form corresponding to one's individual nature. A tantric deity that embodies qualities of Buddhahood and is practiced in the Vajrayana.

Wisdom (Tib. *shes rab*; Skt. *prajna*). the ability to distinguish dharma from nondharma. It also can refer to the ability to distinguish emptiness.

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