

Mahamudra Meditation & View

Zangthale

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Uncontrived

Natural

At ease

As it is

Completely clear

Completely relaxed

Completely spacious

At this Mahamudra level, there is a looking and not too much analyzing but seeing part, and then, what is called introduction or introducing.

The introducing part is not showing 'this' and saying 'this is it.'

It's showing a way of creating situations, circumstances, and then saying how to be there.

It's talking about the uncontrived, the natural state.

How do you do this? How do you come to that?

It is said that first, let your mind be at ease.

Let your mind be at ease.

It's a little bit experientially; you have to do it.

Let your mind be at ease.

Not expanding, not concentrating.

You don't try to expand and look at the different arisings, your thinking; nor are you trying to concentrate and make your mind settled and one.

Don't try to project out or in, but leave it completely as it is.

Here and completely relaxed. At ease and completely relaxed.

Be in its natural state; just be in this completely relaxed, at ease, spacious, natural way.

When you say spacious, you mean you get rid of all the inhibitions.

Not trying to do something, not trying 'not to do' something.

Not trying to look at, not trying not to look at.

Then the experience comes, if you can do that.

There is sometimes one moment of an experience which we call *zangthale*: completely relaxed, at ease, unbothered; you are aware; but you are not aware of any particular thing.

There is some clarity, there is a kind of awareness, but there is no identification.

There is no struggle.

This experience is something you cannot talk about. You can't say, 'It is like this, like that;' because the moment you say, 'Like this, like that,' it's then, another thing.

So, just be that way.

And that's the natural state. It's sometimes called the Dharmakaya state.

And in this state, there is complete clarity, there is complete relaxation, there is complete spaciousness.

But there is no tension, there is no binding.

It's a liberated state. That's the original state. That's why it's called the Dharmakaya.

To be able to recognize this and remain in this state is important because the more you can remain in that, the more you become clearer of what you actually are – not from an intellectual way of seeing.

When we say that ignorance is a distortion of seeing yourself, we are not talking from the intellectual point of view. When we say, 'Try to see yourself clearly, and 'Try to see yourself as you are,' it's not an intellectual way of seeing; because even if you can see intellectually and if it is correct, it doesn't matter.

It doesn't liberate you because it's just a concept.

If you say, 'I am an interdependent entity,' or if you say, 'I am emptiness' or 'I am selfless' – so what?

It's just intellectual jargon. It's just an identity.

If you say, 'I am totally self-existing' or 'I am empty in nature,' there is not much difference in our experience or way of reacting. There is no difference.

So therefore, when we are talking about really going deep to the root and seeing our true nature, we are talking about it seeing in an experiential way.

And when you try to see in an experiential way, it's seeing in an experiential way.

Getting through our concepts, getting through our emotions.

Getting through out ignorance, the dullness.

Then we see ourselves clearly.

That's the Buddha nature.

So, why we talk about uncontrivedness, why we talk about being natural, why we talk about relaxed, at ease and spacious – it's that otherwise, there is no way.

There is no way we can go though the concepts and habitual tendencies with our mind, with out concepts and things like that. We have to go through that.

The more we let ourselves be relaxed, at ease, spacious – I think these are the words.

Relaxed, at ease: Not trying or intense – at ease.

Spacious. It's not restricting; it's not putting pressure or putting under certain conditions.

Spacious. It's not in a room or a box. Limitless.

Completely free. Not, 'Is it right? Is it not right? It's good. It's not good.'

No constraints, no contriving.

Just being.

Just completely being and that experience – first you may have the experience of a little dullness. You get to that much, and then you see a kind of – not very

bright experience of this. That is when you have to get through that also. By being more relaxed, by being more free, by not being held up by anything. That's getting through the alaya.

And then you see the rigpa; but that rigpa is then bright.

I think we start with this. The brightness, or the stronger or clearer comes slowly, slowly.

If we can have a little bit of understanding of this, then all the arisings of happiness, unhappiness, different emotions, and fears are like bubbles, you will understand.

And at the bottom of that, in the root of that, there is complete calmness, complete peace.

When you understand this, then these bubbles, these waves on the top - you will understand, it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter because it's just the top.

The sea is always calm at the bottom.

And what happens on top, that doesn't matter because it's sea anyway. The waves are coming out of the sea and going into the sea. It doesn't harm the sea. All the arisings are like the bubbles, like the waves.

When you see this, then the deep peace, the deep confidence can come up.

And that's the important part.

I've been saying to people, "Just relax and be calm and be happy."

And they take it very badly, "How can you order me to be happy!? I'm not happy!"

Okay. What to do? I can't order anyone around.

I think it's very important to see the possibility that happiness, unhappiness, fear, and all these things – again – it's bad to say that this is your own creation.

People take it very badly, "No, it's not my own creation! You are really..." But it's a little bit (laughs) your own creation.

It's not like 'I am trying to be happy'; because if I try to be happy, I can't be happy.

That's not what I am saying with, "be happy."

If you resist, if you let this *striving to be happy* go away, then there is happiness, *at ease*, relaxation, and peace. That's what you can call happiness; because there is no unhappiness. There is a contentment and acceptance. You can't be happier – in a way – that kind of experience. It's okay.

It's a difficult thing to do. I want to be happy – okay - but the more I want to be happy the more I become unhappy - unless you know a way:

I want to be happy; therefore I don't go after happiness.

Therefore, I just relax in unhappiness; and thereby I get happiness.

When you do this meditation, whether there is happiness, unhappiness, negative or positive things, and whether there are too many thoughts and emotions, or turbulence or calmness – it doesn't matter – you just relax in that. You just be at ease in that. You just become spacious in that.

When you can do that, it's okay. Everything is okay. That's the idea. Everything – whatever comes, whatever is - **is** okay.

When the idea comes 'this is not okay,' or 'this is not right,' you relax in it. You say, "My reaction of saying 'this is not okay' is okay."

You don't say, "I should be saying everything is okay; and now this is coming which is not okay. I should not have this feeling of saying 'not okay!'" That's not the way. Is it clear?

When this feeling comes of 'it's not okay' I think, "So, it's not okay. Okay!"

This is the meditation technique. This is trying to introduce how to experience and go to the natural state. We are trying to be free, free from our emotions and impulses, free from our habitual tendencies, conditioning, and patterns. And these patterns are very heavy. Therefore we need to practice a lot.

But, how to practice?

This is how to practice.

This is how to practice.

It's not dealing with each 'for this, you have to do this,' 'for that, you have to do this' – it's one way. Sometime people talk about the *carpochitö*. It's one medicine for all diseases. Just one way. Whatever comes, the same method.

Just an understanding of this is very important. It gives a certain confidence of, 'Well, if I **did** practice, it would be okay.' (Laughter) 'That kind of experience can come. That kind of experience is not too difficult.'

Of course to have a real experience, you have to practice.

Practice is not 'practicing' too much. That's the problem. Practice is sometimes 'not practicing.' Practicing is 'not striving,' but **knowing** how to do it. It's a technique; it's the wisdom. It's the understanding.

That's the main thing.

I don't think I can say too much more on this topic.

And then, I have to mention this: How much progress we make. Of course, there will be lots of ups and downs, with sometimes lots of strong emotions. Sometimes, you don't want to meditate, or you want to meditate too much. It is necessary to have some diligence, a certain amount of commitment.

It's important to inspire yourself again and again; because it's very easy to lose the practice. It's very easy to **forget** the instructions. Sometimes I go to see my teachers and I get all the instructions and I get very clear, and I know, 'This is it. This is how to practice.' And after some time, I forget, "What was he saying?" It seemed quite okay, but you forget. It's very easy to forget: forget your instructions, forget how to do things, forget the whole thing. It's not easy.

Therefore, you need to inspire yourself a little, to bring back the inspiration and listen to the teachings, the instructions. Sometimes teachers recommend memorizing the whole instructions.

Once I went to see a great Dzogchen master with some questions about the practices.

He said, "Have you received these instructions?"

I said, "Yes, I have received these instructions."

He said, "Do you know this instruction by heart?"

I said, "No."

"First you go and memorize them!" It was about 150 stanzas.

I said, "Okay." (Laughs)

Dilgo Khyentse was never like that. He was gentle. He was too gentle, actually. He spoiled his students a little bit. He taught them whenever they wanted.

I said, "I really can't come in the daytime. Can you teach me in the morning?"

"Oh, yes. When can you come?"

"Any time in the early morning."

"Come at 4 o'clock." (Laughter)

I had to go a 4 o'clock in the morning many days because of my mistake.

(Laughs) Sometimes, 10 o'clock in the evening; because some instructions were very specific, he did not want to give them to everybody. But then, everybody would come in anyway. Then, he would not say that he would not give the instructions, he would just stop or talk about other things.

Anyway, the main thing is to remind yourself of the instructions, to get inspired. However, to get the experience, purification and accumulation are important conditions. The more positive things you do, the more other practices you do - that's why we are talking about doing Ngöndro and other positive things. Not necessarily just the dharma practice that you do in the temple - anything which is a positive deed, anything that you do with the inspiration of bodhicitta, anything that you do with compassion is, actually, a positive deed.

Then there is purification which is also compassion.

Compassionate work, doing something with bodhicitta and compassion - anything that would be purification and accumulation. Everywhere. The Buddha said it again and again. Sometimes we talk about making offerings, but Buddha said:

"Even to think that I would like to benefit other beings - one other being - is much more a positive deed than making all kinds of offerings for the five senses to all the Buddhas throughout space."

Therefore, if you have the intention of wanting to help **all** the beings, then that would be a very strong positive deed: This bodhicitta compassion is a very strong, positive deed.

Positive deeds and purification - they need to go together. Therefore, the view needs to be high, meditation has to be high; the action has to be low on the ground. We have to see the balance. In Mahamudra there's no good, no bad in the meditation. There's no right and no wrong, and, in a way, no positive or negative.

That's the meditation.

You take a positive or a negative arising in the same way. You just relax in that. That's okay.

But in **action**, you don't do the same. If you do a negative deed and say, "It's the same" or a positive deed and say, "The same," then you get not in a nice way. This is something which has to be taken care of. Although, there is nothing to accumulate and nothing to purify, in a way, in an ultimate sense. But since we are not at the ultimate level at the moment, there's lots to accumulate and purify.

In the Mahamudra state, you traditionally do the practice with the Guru Yoga. And the meditation, we do within the Guru Yoga. You mix the mind with the guru

mind. *Guru mind* is the ultimate enlightened mind, the inner guru which is represented by the outer guru and all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas – whatever. It's not necessary to be just one particular living guru. It depends on how much devotion and trust you have.

The more trust you have in yourself - thereby in the guru, in the teachings - the stronger the practice becomes. It's a way of just being. You need **to be** and this needs confidence: being in the mind of the guru, or relaxing, or sometimes mixing with the mind of the guru, some sense of devotion.

Devotion is used in Buddhist practice as a very strong medium, especially in Dzogchen and Mahamudra practices. It is a good medium because it is a clear, vibrant, and strong emotion, but not negative. Therefore, it's very suitable for relaxation and that's why it is recommended.

Once there was a practitioner who later became a great master. He was practicing and thought he had good experience, understanding and realization, so he went to see a siddha called Nanglongtito. Nanglongtito lived in a very remote area, sitting in a cave, a little bit like Milarepa, no one around except for hundreds of dogs. Whatever he had, the dogs just took it away. He was famous, but not many people went around because of the dogs. I think he liked it like that.

One day, the practitioner went to see this master, Nanglongtito, who did not talk very much. He sat before Nanglongtito and meditated. He wanted to show him his experience; and he thought he was doing his perfect demonstration. The siddha looked at him and was very disappointed. Nothing. So the practitioner was shocked, hurt you could say, sad, "I thought I was really good but this siddha is saying that I am no good!" But he had a great devotion for his teacher, and suddenly there arose in his mind a kind of devotion; he remembered his teachers. He didn't show off but went into a prayer; and he noticed the reaction of the siddha. When he looked back the siddha said, "That's it! That's it!" (Laughs)

Sometimes it's like that. It's very common, almost universal in all traditions - at least in Tibetan Buddhism - that we do these practices with Guru Yoga. That's why, in the Ngöndro, Guru Yoga is joined with these Mahamudra teachings. But it is not to say that you can't do it without the Guru Yoga. You can do it in whatever way.

I see very clearly that it is difficult for some people to do Ngöndro. First, it is difficult for them to understand exactly what is going on. Secondly, they think that it is very Tibetan. **Maybe** it's very much Tibetan, although Tibetans don't think it's Tibetan. But it's something strange, so therefore it is difficult.

At the level of Mahamudra, there's no difference. It's dealing with people's emotions and experiences. This is the way I see, the way it is. At that level, all people are exactly the same, the world over. There are differences but they are only at the first level; at the cultural, language, and intellectual levels. If you go a bit deeper than that, then, the way people react, the way people feel, the way people's emotions go, there is absolutely no difference. It's exactly the same all over the world. These practices are at that level.