

Chapter 1 : The Beauty and Limitations of Mahamudra | Anadi Teaching

There are two main types of meditation in the Mahamudra tradition: Mahamudra shamatha, or resting in the nature of mind, and Mahamudra vipashyana, or clear seeing. The focus of our attention is the mind itself, as opposed to anything external.

To get the most out of these instructions is to read each sentence as if it were embossed on the page in gold, which is how some of the early sacred texts were done. This is why individual instruction is so necessary. It is extremely important that before one actually begins to practice meditation, one seeks advice from a qualified meditation instructor. D Studying the Dharma We should begin by examining our mental disposition, which means turning our mind inwards and examining whether our attitude is pure or impure. Because we are just ordinary beings, sometimes our attitude will be pure and at other times it will be impure. There is nothing surprising about this. When we find our attitude is pure, we can rejoice and let it remain pure. If we change it, again and again, little by little our negative attitude will naturally become pure. To develop this disposition for enlightenment, we should think that whatever we are doing, we are doing it to help all beings reach Buddhahood. The Need for Meditation When we do a physical action, this action can have either a positive or a negative result. When we say something, it can be either good or bad. So with words and actions we can see tangible results, but with thoughts there is no concrete action expressed. The mind, however, determines all of our physical and verbal actions because whatever we do, there is thought behind it. When that thought is positive, the actions that follow are good; when that thought is negative, the actions that follow are negative. The starting point of changing what we do is to change the way we think. When we try to change a mental disposition, we must modify our habits. We can do this through meditation, that is, using our mind in a more concentrated, controlled way. What is troubling the mind can be removed with meditation so our mind can exist in its purity. If our mind is distracted, we can change it into an undistracted mind through meditation. We can change bad habits into good habits through meditation. Then when we manage to change our mental habits, we can change our physical actions and verbal behavior. Once we have changed these, we can reach the ultimate goal of our practice, Buddhahood. Faith and Devotion The one thing common to all meditation practice is having the right motivation of wanting to benefit all persons, not just ourselves. Besides this, we also need to have very strong devotion to our guru and all the gurus of our lineage. If we pray to them with really sincere devotion, we can receive their blessings which lead to a very quick growth of our meditation. It is said that the source of the growth of the four main and eight lesser schools of the Kagyu lineage was the blessings created by these persons praying to their gurus with true devotion. They received the blessings and were able to develop their meditation and understanding quickly. With the practice of meditation, we can actually get the mind to rest on, what we want it to rest on and the mind becomes clearer and more peaceful. The Vajrayana tradition footnote 1 - see below has developed a practice that makes it possible to go through this process much more quickly than other meditation practices. How is it possible that blessings are not felt by some? However, if we try to catch a ring with a hook, it is easy. In the same way, the compassion and the blessings of the Buddhas are there constantly, but there has to be something in beings that is open to receive the blessings. No matter how much compassion the Buddhas have, without devotion nothing will happen. It was composed by the guru of the seventh Karmapa. At this point he spontaneously composed the Dorje Chang prayer, and so this prayer has a great deal of blessing connected with it. When we say this prayer, fn 5 we should be aware of the meaning of the words. When we begin meditation, we should put our mind in the disposition of enlightenment so that the other conditions for true meditation will arise in us. In the vajrayana teachings, it is said real meditation will arise naturally if we receive the blessing of our guru and the gurus of the lineage. This is why we say the prayer to Dorje Chang, who is visualized in the space in front of us surrounded by the lamas of the lineage. If we cannot manage to visualize that many objects, we can just imagine the form of Dorje Chang, but think of him as a condensation of all the qualities and essence of the lamas of the lineage. The Dorje Chang prayer has four parts. The first part is to turn our mind away from samsara so that we can see its illusion and develop disgust with samsara and want to practice the dharma. The

second part is to cultivate devotion towards the lama and the dharma so we will be able to receive the blessings of the lamas and develop true meditation. The third part is that we pray to achieve peace of mind and not be distracted so we will develop true meditation. The fourth part is trying to understand that the essence of our thoughts is the dharmakaya. When we have understood this, we actually become Dorje Chang. After that we just remain in meditation. Whatever thought comes up, we just rest within the essence of that thought. When we imagine Dorje Chang, we think of him as being blue in color, with one face and two arms, holding a dorje and a bell. He is sitting in the vajra posture. We usually visualize him in front of us and if possible with all the gurus of the lineage around him. We imagine that the lamas are not in their ordinary form with a solid body with flesh and blood, because if we did, they would arouse ordinary thoughts in our mind. Having ordinary thoughts during this meditation is a sign that we do not have much devotion. So we visualize our guru in the form of Dorje Chang to develop a pure vision in us and to see him not as ordinary flesh and blood, but in a pure way. We know that it is our guru, but in the form of Dorje Chang. If we cannot visualize all of these lamas, we simply imagine Dorje Chang and think that he represents all the aspects of the three jewels. We try to feel as much genuine faith from the bottom of our heart. Feeling this we say the lineage prayer. At that particular moment we think we have received all the blessings of the body, speech, and mind of our guru and all the other gurus. We think we have received exactly the same qualities that they possess because our mind and their minds are now one. So all their qualities of complete freedom from obscurations and their complete realization are now ours; it is as if they had imprinted a picture of their enlightened qualities on us.

The Posture in Meditation There are two important points in meditation--the body and the mind. As far as the body is concerned, it is important to keep the body straight so that the subtle channels in the body will be straight, too. If these subtle channels are straight, then the subtle energies within these channels will circulate freely. It is said that the mind is like a horse riding the circulation of the subtle energies of the body. When it is riding this energy freely, it is relaxed and peaceful. There are many descriptions of good meditation posture and we will use the fivepoint description. The second point is that the throat should be slightly bent downwards like a hook. The third point is that the legs should be crossed in "patterns of latticework" which means that the legs should be kept in a crossed position. If one can put them in the full lotus posture, good. If not, simply cross them in the half lotus posture. The fourth point is the body should be "gathered together like chains. The way to do this is to join the hands, placing them the width of four fingers below the navel. In the same way, one should always maintain a certain amount of effort and alertness in the body and mind. The great teacher, Marpa, said that there are many different instructions on meditation posture, but he preferred this fivepoint posture saying that if one could keep the body in this posture, the subtle energy circulating in the body would be ideal and would actually circulate through the central channel of the body. The whole point is to develop a habit of meditation. If one meditates at first for too long, the mind just becomes more and more agitated and difficult to control. If one meditates for a short time and renews the session many times, then each time the mind will be fresh and clear and able to settle down more easily. So meditate again and again until the habit of meditation grows stronger. It is important to control the mind in meditation. The uncontrolled mind is very strong and dangerous like an angry elephant. Not only can it not be controlled, but the mind just goes its own way. If a very strong negative feeling of anger or desire arises, we are normally not able to control it. But it is our mind, so we can control it if we use the right tools of mindfulness and awareness. Awareness is knowing exactly what we are doing while we are doing it. Mindfulness is having control of our mind and not letting it run out of control. When meditating, we should not follow a thought about the past, we should not anticipate the future, and we should not be involved with thoughts of the present. Thoughts of the past are like what we did yesterday; thoughts of the future are like what we are planning to do tomorrow and thoughts of the present just pop up. We should just relax and leave them alone by not following them one way or another. So we should not follow any of these thoughts. If we manage to do this, we will find that the mind calms down quite naturally by itself.

General Obstacles to Meditation During meditation the mind must have the right tension. For example, if we have a cat and we lock the cat up in a room, the cat will go crazy. Not finding a way to get out, it will start running up and down, meowing, and tearing things apart. But if we leave the door open, the cat will go out and take a little walk and then just come back in and fall asleep in the room. So relax,

just let the mind go and think, "Whatever comes, it just comes and goes. If we use mindfulness and awareness properly in our meditation, our mind will become tranquil. There are two main obstacles to the tranquility of the mind. One is becoming too relaxed and the other is becoming too tense.

Chapter 2 : A Guide To Shamatha Meditation

In a short 20 minute teaching (followed by a brief guided meditation), H.E. Zasep Rinpoche introduces and clarifies the complex concepts of Vipashyana Mahamudra (Vipassana in Pali): literally.

Sometimes they will meet each other in the great Dharmadhatu. Its popularity in the West is quite puzzling, except that, at least superficially, it appears a suitable replacement for Christianity. Anyone entering the Tibetan path is required to perform countless preparatory practices, composed chiefly of prostrations, rites and chanting. Only then can he or she commence a truly constructive meditative practice. Indian Buddhism makes it complicated intellectually and Tibetan shamanism adds the convoluted magical and esoteric components. While mainstream Tibetan Buddhism is more a religion than a spiritual path, there are a few of their schools which have developed a very high level of understanding on the subjects of meditation and enlightenment. These higher teachings are very sophisticated. They possess excellent and very well articulated conceptual tools. Dzogchen is more of a sudden path, while Mahamudra is a gradual one. Do naught with the body but relax; Shut firm the mouth and silent remain; Empty your mind and think of naught. Like a hollow bamboo rest at ease your body. Giving not nor taking, put your mind at rest. Mahamudra is like a mind that clings to naught. Thus practicing, in time you will reach Buddhahood. The Void needs no reliance; Mahamudra rests on naught. Without making an effort, but remaining natural, One can break the yoke thus gaining liberation. If one looks for naught when staring into space; If with the mind one then observes the mind; One destroys distinctions and reaches Buddhahood. The clouds that wander through the sky have no roots, no home, Nor do the distinctive thoughts floating through the mind. Once the Self-mind is seen, Discrimination stops. In this way, it goes beyond more traditional vipassana, in which there is no clear link between insight into impermanence, suffering and no-self and actual self-realization. This is because the instructions given are different. In traditional vipassana, one aims at obtaining insight into the non-existence of self within our relative consciousness the five skandhas: The lower stages of meditation in Mahamudra are described as follows: Focusing first of all on the lower stages, we can see that, unlike Theravada Buddhism, vipassana in Mahamudra does not begin immediately after samatha – there are intermediary stages. The first question is: What is the difference between samatha and meditation with support? Samatha does use an object, but it is not meditation – it is concentration alone. In both cases, the observer focuses on an object in order to gain a stable point of reference. In samatha, the observer tries to glue itself to an object in a very coarse, primitive way, whereas in meditation with support, it maintains the continuity of focus on an object from a distance in order to open the space of meditation and establish a stable contrast to its own presence. Buddhism does not have the concept of pure subjectivity, so there is no clear explanation as to the meaning behind these practices. Nevertheless, they clearly intuitively recognize the need to evolve toward and develop our own subjectivity. The next step in Mahamudra is meditation without support. The question here is: Well, relatively speaking, one can, but the practice will be very limited. What is described on the path of Mahamudra resembles more of an initial attempt to abide in a condition independent of the pursuit of objects; in this case, attention resting in itself. In Mahamudra, awareness is awakened only after going through the process of contemplation or vipassana. As previously noted, the application of vipassana in Mahamudra is more positive than in traditional Theravada Buddhism. It is not used merely to affirm the three marks of existence suffering, impermanence and no self, but to gain direct insight into our pure nature. Its purpose is actually twofold: As a result of these insights, the base of awareness can open up, allowing one to move into the higher state of meditation without support: In our terminology, this represents moving from having developed a solidified sense of self as the observer without object, to abidance in conscious me. We will now look more deeply into the meditative contemplations of Mahamudra for a better understanding of the nature of vipassana in this tradition. As we will see, it is quite different to the traditional methods found in Theravada. The main difference is that the contemplative process aims at discovering the actual essence of the mind; it is not oriented toward getting fixated on impermanence, suffering and the absence of self. Still, it remains limited by the Buddhist concept of reality. One cannot say that no-self exists, as the concept of no-self is a negation of self, rather than an

affirmation of no-self. As self does not have an inherent existence, neither does no-self. However, in Mahamudra, as well as in Dzogchen and Zen, we can find affirmative descriptions of the ground of the mind. Perhaps the differences are just semantics, but because Buddhism is exceedingly attached to its semantics and intellectual perfectionism, we might infer some sense of a positive existence did seep through into its energy and philosophy. This does not mean, however, that you cease all attention as if you had fainted or fallen asleep. Rather, you must tie your attention to the post of mindfulness in order not to wander, and station alertness to be aware of any mental movement. Firmly tighten the hold of your mindfulness on that which has the essential nature of clarity and awareness, and behold it starkly. Whatever thoughts might arise, recognize them as being that and that. Alternatively, like a dueler, cut the thoughts off completely, wham-wham, as soon as they occur. Once you have completely cut these off and have settled your mind, then, without losing mindfulness, relax and loosen up. When you look at the nature of any thought that arises, it disappears by itself and an utter bareness dawns. Likewise, when you inspect when settled, you see a vivid, non-obstructive bareness and clarity. The first function of looking is simply getting acquainted with the environment of our own mind. There is no judgment in looking; there is no intention to label things as impermanent or as suffering. There is just a sense of wanting to know and directly see our phenomenal consciousness, to really become familiar with the mind in which we live our whole life, but take completely for granted. The second function of looking is to seek freedom from being ensnared by that mind, from being captive to our own thinking processes. Here, we contemplate the different ways our mind controls us and, by becoming more conscious, look for a means to break free from this bondage. This final stage of this understanding is true vipassana: It is interesting to see that neither samatha, nor meditation "either with support or without support" can awaken the base of awareness. These three levels of meditation all relate to the process of the observer growing into himself. At the third stage, meditation without support, the observer attempts something very foreign to its own nature "just to be. While this is a noble effort, the observer is unable to go beyond attention and, as such, will always remain confined to its own presence. What is the difference between the observer and attention? Therefore, for the observer to go beyond attention, it needs to realize its own deeper identity, which is conscious me. The awakening of conscious me is therefore achieved only indirectly through vipassana contemplation, which as it navigates through different modes of consciousness, finally stirs something in the constricted identity of the observer that inspires it to break free from the prison of attention and open the space of abidance. These four stages are: They beautifully represent the post-awakening process of integration between the nature of the mind and the world of appearances. The four yogas are as follows: One-pointedness After the essence of the mind has been awakened, one arrives at the condition of being anchored, or absorbed, in awareness or in consciousness, if it is awakened. This is called one-pointedness. Even though this term commonly implies concentration of attention, or mindfulness, it is here applied with a deeper meaning. Simplicity also called non-discrimination This stage represents a higher refinement of our relationship between the world of appearances and the mind. Here, one goes beyond the habit of looking at things or observing them, and allows everything to arise and disappear with no interference in their natural flow. This can be seen as the first level of suchness: One-taste At the stage of one-taste, the distinction between consciousness and the world of perception disappears, and the inner and the outer become one "one single taste of consciousness as it is. Non-meditation The final stage of the four yogas designates the stabilization of the ground of consciousness and its complete integration with the external world. No further practice is necessary, no effort need be applied. In non-meditation, one realizes the natural state, transcending the dichotomy of meditation and not-meditation, reality and illusion, samsara and nirvana. Here we have described a simplified model of spiritual unfoldment according to the path of Mahamudra. While it is both rich and profound, we can also see that this model is partial and incomplete. It almost goes without saying that Mahamudra lacks the understanding of the nature of me and of the soul. In these aspects it remains true to its Buddhist roots, but not true to the truth of reality. Mahamudra also lacks the very important distinction between awareness and consciousness. Awareness is shallower than consciousness; it is not unified with universal consciousness. Even though the level of detail in Mahamudra is very high, its descriptions are not precise enough to indicate which state the adept has realized: Our analysis assumes their contemplative

processes, beginning with gaining insight into the nature of the mind, culminate in the realization of awareness, rather than that of consciousness. This is because one cannot awaken consciousness through any technique or practice. However, this does not necessarily mean adepts of Mahamudra do not awaken to pure consciousness: The answer is yes and no. From the lower base of awareness, the realization of these yogas would be much more limited, and consequently, tainted and imperfect. And, in the later stages, particularly in respect to truly realizing the yoga of one-taste, the higher base of pure consciousness must be awakened. Our consciousness has to be in the state of absence, samadhi, in universal consciousness in order to embrace the inner and outer as one-taste, one existence. In truth, to experience one-taste from awareness would be no more than a pale imitation of real unity. However, in addition to being rather flat and one-dimensional, there are some important elements missing in its understanding of the relationship between consciousness and the mind.

Chapter 3 : Samatha and Vipashyana in the Mahamudra Perspective, Part 1

Spring 8-Week retreat on Shamatha, Vipashyana, and Mahamudra, based upon two texts: Panchen Lozang ChÃ¶kyi Gyaltzen's Highway of the Jinas: A Root Text on the Precious Geluk-KagyÃ¼ Mahamudra Tradition, and Karma ChagmÃ©'s Naked Awareness: Practical Teachings on the Union.

Vipashyana Meditation in the Mahamudra By Selflessness The function of Shamatha is to develop mental stability or stillness. The function of Vipashyana, or insight, is to look at the nature of your mind, and by doing so, to see the nature of phenomena or all things. The Buddha presented the nature of phenomena in the sutras by first presenting this nature as selflessness. Then he went on and presented it as emptiness. The reason he presented selflessness in the beginning is that, immersed in samsara, we have a lot of different kinds of suffering and we want to get rid of this suffering. But you cannot just abandon suffering. To get rid of suffering you need to abandon the cause of suffering. The cause of suffering is the kleshas, or mental afflictions, such as attachment, aversion and apathy. If you get rid of those mental afflictions you will automatically be free from suffering, which is the result. But you cannot directly abandon the mental afflictions either. You have to eliminate their cause, and the cause of the mental afflictions is the apprehension or a belief in a self. You can get rid of it however, by disproving it. Because the self does not exist, one can, by proving its non-existence, get rid of the apprehension of it. So the approach is to come to recognize selflessness, which will lead automatically to a relinquishment of the misapprehension of an existent self. And that is why the first thing the Buddha taught was selflessness. If you meditate on selflessness, you will definitely come to realize it, and that begins the path which will lead to the attainment of what is called arhatship. An arhat is literally someone who has defeated the enemy, and of course enemy means whatever you are afraid of. Here of course, enemy refers to samsara, kleshas and suffering. An arhat is therefore someone who has defeated the cause of suffering and therefore is victorious over suffering itself. So, the result of meditating upon selflessness, which here means primarily the selflessness of persons, is that you achieve a state free of any fear whatsoever, which is the state of arhatship. So there is great benefit in realizing the selflessness of persons. Now there are two ways to meditate upon this, because there are basically two aspects to the fixation on a personal self. There is no benefit in any of this identification with territory or possessions. It merely causes us suffering. But if you own an identical watch and it falls off your wrist, falls on the ground and breaks, you will feel suffering. Then on the basis of that, you come to recognize that even that self to which these things pertain or belong does not exist. You prove this to yourself basically by showing that there is no definite basis for this imputation, which simply means that what you call the self changes from minute to minute. If that is true, then the self must be your mind. In which case, on that day the self must be the body. Also the body is not a unit. You can break up the body. So, none of these things are the self. They all belong to the self. When you pursue this analysis exhaustively you discover that there is no self aside from it being an imputation based on all of these things taken together as an aggregate. All of this of course leads to all of the sufferings of samsara. If you realize that there is no self, you will have no fear and no suffering, and will be in a state of extreme tranquillity and happiness. But if you ask if this is enough, we would have to say no, because beyond that there is more to be realized. What is beyond that is called either the selflessness of things, or emptiness. And this was presented by the Buddha when he taught the Prajnaparamita. Emptiness usually brings to mind an image of nothingness, which we think of as somewhat awful, but in fact emptiness does not mean nothingness. It means that all of these appearances to which we cling, and on which we fixate, are in and of themselves without any substantial existence. In fact the problem we face with appearances and all of the suffering we experience as a result of appearances is not because of the appearances themselves, but because of our fixation upon them. It is our fixation upon appearances which turns appearances into our enemies. Because these appearances are just appearances, they are just what appears to us, so if we have no fixation on them they will not bring any suffering. Another analogy is the reflection of the moon in a body of water. One is not attached to possessing that image in the body of water because one recognizes it as insubstantial. In the same way all of the appearances that arise for us are empty in their nature. But failing to

recognize that and taking them as substantially existent, as they appear to be, we turn our own appearances or our own experiences into our enemies. But if you recognize appearances as being what they are, they will not harm you. It is recognizing that the nature of things is emptiness, and that if you recognize it, you can directly experience it. But emptiness can be directly realized through the practice of meditation, and it can be understood through logical analysis. For that reason the Buddha taught emptiness in two ways, which form the two paths. One is the path of the sutras, and the other is the path of tantra, or Vajrayana. In the sutra path one engages in inferential valid cognition or logical analysis in order to prove that emptiness is the nature of things. And by doing so one generates a conceptual certainty of this. In the Vajrayana approach on the other hand, through meditation one develops a direct experience of emptiness, which leads to the full realization of it. According to the sutras, emptiness means interdependence, which is simply that nothing exists independent of other things. Nagarjuna composed a great many treatises and in them are many proofs of emptiness, but the easiest to understand, the most all-encompassing is what is called the great argument of interdependence, which is simply that things exist only as interdependent appearances. A very simple example of this, which I use in order to explain it is of the physical imputations of long and short. Now, these things seem real to us. We can look at these [holding up a long and a short stick of incense] and tell the difference between a longer stick of incense and a shorter one. Therefore the greater length of the one and the lesser length of the other seem like they are characteristics inherent in the objects themselves. So when you look at these two sticks of incense, you would agree that one of them is long and the other one is short. But if I exchange the longer one for one that is even shorter than the one we were calling the short one, then the short one has become the long one. And the other one, which is even shorter than the formerly short one, is now the short one. The point of this is that all of our imputations about the substantial characteristics of things are relative to the appearance of substantial characteristics of other things. So long and short are relative imputations. They have no inherent existence, nor are they part of an inherent identity on the part of the objects themselves. This is true of many other concepts as well: All of these are relative imputations. These things do not exist in and of themselves. We create them with our mind. I would agree that my hand is what I would conventionally call my hand, and no doubt all of you can look at my hand and agree that it is my hand. You can do this with anything that you take to be an inherently unitary phenomenon. For example, my left hand, my right hand, my left foot, my right foot, my head and so on. None of these things have unitary existence. They are aggregates, a grouping of many things that we fixate on as a unit because of a concept that we have developed about that aggregate. But nevertheless, it is this fixation on aggregates as units that produces the sufferings of samsara and all of our fear. If you recognize the emptiness of these aggregates, there will be no fear or suffering. The Uncommon Instructions The realization of emptiness and selflessness is peace, which means it is a state of happiness beyond suffering or problems. But the cultivation of this conventionally involves the development and affirmation of a logical certainty that emptiness or selflessness is the nature of things. Now this is a conceptual certainty, it is not direct experience. However, if it is cultivated it will eventually lead to awakening, or Buddhahood. But because one is cultivating and attempting to strengthen a conceptual certainty, and because it is therefore somewhat indirect, it was taught by the Buddha that the path of the sutras takes three periods of innumerable aeons, during which one must ceaselessly gather the accumulations in order to attain Buddhahood. Now this was taught by the Buddha, but elsewhere the Buddha taught that the Vajrayana path can lead to that same Buddhahood in one lifetime in one body. Well, one might ask if Vajrayana can lead to Buddhahood in one lifetime, what is all this about gathering the accumulations for three periods of innumerable aeons? If we need to gather the accumulations for three periods of innumerable aeons, what is this business in Vajrayana about attaining Buddhahood in one lifetime in one body? In fact both are true. The reason that the path of the sutras takes so long is that there are no direct or practical instructions in the sutras for cultivating the direct experience of emptiness, whereas in the Vajrayana there are these uncommon instructions for direct experience. Would you please tell us which Buddha or bodhisattva, whose emanation you are? Because by doing so you will increase our devotion. But it also indicates a fundamental misunderstanding of the dharma, because I am not the emanation of a Buddha or bodhisattva. I began this path as an ordinary being. In fact I was sub-ordinary. I was an evildoer. Yet by meeting an authentic teacher,

Marpa, and receiving authentic instructions, those of Mahamudra and the Six Dharmas of Naropa, I was able to attain this result. The fact that I attained this is not due to my having been special from the beginning. It is due to the special qualities of the dharma that I practiced. So your asking this question indicates that you do not yet understand the power of dharma, because the instructions of Vajrayana can bring the state of Vajradhara in one life and one body.

Chapter 4 : Mahamudra: Meditation on Mental Activity – Study Buddhism

Vipassana corresponds with "ultimate Mahamudra" while Samatha helps us explore "relative Mahamudra." Shamatha is basically the practice of calming the mind through some form of single-pointed meditation—such as watching the breath.

Subscribe with your favorite podcast app or RSS reader: Podcast RSS Please support our work If you appreciate this website please give generously to provide us with the funds to keep it online, to support aspiring yogis, and for the other services provided by the Santa Barbara Institute. Donate to Santa Barbara Institute Give a gift to Alan Wallace 10 Apr Alan explains that as we go deeper into the practice of shamatha, it appears more clearly that the three qualities of relaxation, stability and vividness are not only sequential, but they also reinforce each other in a reciprocal manner. In a similar fashion we have also the three higher trainings of ethics, samadhi and wisdom and among them ethics is the foundation: The Buddha clearly said that the stronger your samadhi is, then the more powerful your wisdom can be, but if your samadhi is weak then your wisdom can be very sporadic, it cannot be sustained. The stronger your ethical foundation, the stronger your samadhi and the stronger the wisdom that can arise. If the Buddha gave us just one interview, he may offer the instructions he gave to Bahya, which allowed him to achieve arhathood right after he listened to this: In reference to the seen, there will be only the seen. In reference to the heard, only the heard. In reference to the sensed, only the sensed. In reference to the cognized, only the cognized. That is how you should train yourself. When for you there will be only the seen in reference to the seen, only the heard in reference to the heard, only the sensed in reference to the sensed, only the cognized in reference to the cognized, then, Bahiya, there is no you in terms of that. When there is no you in terms of that, there is no you there. When there is no you there, you are neither here nor yonder nor between the two. This, just this, is the end of suffering. You can sense them at a deeper level. The practice is simple: We sustain the stillness in the midst of the fluctuations of the coming and going of the breath. And then when we come off the cushion, we sustain that stillness as we go about all our tasks, and in the seen let there be just the seen, in the heard just the heard, in the tactilely sensed just the tactilely sensed, in the mentally perceived or cognized just being aware of what is coming up. And we might drop a question: When I observe them, do I observe them as something that is me? The awareness that is observing them, is that me? Am I to be found anywhere among these appearances and the awareness of the appearances? The meditation is on shamatha as a support for vipashyana silent, not recorded. Please contribute to make these, and future podcasts freely available. The deeper you go into the practice of shamatha the more clearly, evident it becomes that these three qualities of relaxation, stillness, and vividness are not only sequential and in a very meaningful way they are, but we first emphasize relaxation, out of that stillness, and out of that clarity. And as the mind becomes clearer and more and more vivid everything becomes more interesting. But in a similar fashion and in a broader context we have these three higher trainings of ethics, samadhi and wisdom. And once again ethics is the foundation. And so, and likewise for samadhi, Buddha was so clear that the stronger your samadhi, then the more powerful your wisdom can arise. If your samadhi is weak, your wisdom is going to be very sporadic, quite shallow actually, it cannot be sustained. This is the way it works. That the stronger ethical foundation, the stronger your samadhi, the stronger the samadhi, the stronger the wisdom can arise. And that is, as you develop your skills, your faculties of mindfulness, of introspection, of discerning awareness, this of course enables you to be far more, you can fine tune your ethics. Really become, you know, the ethics becomes very, very fine and then likewise as you develop your wisdom this can enhance the samadhi. And that is how we can nurture, nurture and support our practice of shamatha by delving into the realm of vipashyana, right. And especially in between sessions. For most of us, most of our twenty four hours of the day is spent in between sessions and not in formal session. Not many of you are probably yet at practicing formally thirteen hours a day. So until then, then we should be giving a lot of attention to how we can enhance and uplift, elevate, the whole quality of our awareness in every way. In terms of the heart, our discernment, our discerning mindfulness and so forth, in between sessions. Or after the retreat, which is kind of like during retreat, after retreat. Eight weeks - eternity. And it seems one of the most

potent. Because the person, it was a one on one. It was like you know the Buddha was not having a weekly interview, he just gave this person one interview. The person asked him three times for an interview. I want an interview. And then finally the Buddha said on the third time, he said he saw the time was ripe. And he said okay. And then he gave him this instruction. And here is what the Buddha said. Bahya you should train yourself thus. There will be only the seen, let there be just the seen. That is just focus on what reality is dishing up to you rather than conflating it with all your conceptions, your super impositions, your judgements, categorizations, associations and so forth and so on, all this stuff we throw on, consciously and unconsciously project upon reality. Be there, be quiet and see what reality is dishing up. So you should train yourself in reference to the seen, there will be only the seen. In reference to the heard only the heard. In referenced to the sensed, only the sensed. In reference to the cognized only the cognized. When for you there will be only the seen in reference to the seen. Only the heard in reference to the heard. Only the sensed in reference to the sensed. Only the cognized in reference to the cognized. There is no you in terms of that, there is no you, there is no you in terms of that. When there is no you there, you are neither here nor yonder, nor between the two. So the cognized of course includes awareness itself, not just the images and appearances arising to the mind. So within the whole field of appearances, and he highlights the visual, auditory, tactile, and the mental and then our awareness of them. You as an individual, you a person, you an ego, a self. Nowhere to be found in the appearances, nowhere to be found in the awareness of the appearances, therefore you see there is no evidence of your being there amidst the appearances, there is no evidence of you being here in the nature of awareness. When there is no you there and you are neither here nor yonder nor between the two, this, just this, is the end of suffering. Bahya heard that dharma talk that I just gave you and within a matter of moments he became an arhat. He went from ground zero to arhatship with one dharma talk. Would you like me to read it again? But that was his discourse. I find it truly breathtaking. Turn on the lights of awareness. So direct your attention sometimes to the visual domain. This is a nice place to do it, right. Direct your awareness to the auditory domain, in sounds let there be just sounds. And of course attend to the space of your mind. The thoughts, the images, but also the awareness, the awareness itself of course is also occurring in the domain of the mind. And in each case attend closely. And see if you can overcome our very very common cognitive imbalances of hyperactivity and deficit. Like that, we all know that very well. We all know that very well. See whether this shoe fits, whether this corresponds to your own experience on occasion. And we have all these projections, all this conceptual stuff that we project consciously or unconsciously. The actual appearances arising to our senses. Where a person has no ability, I met three people a long time ago, not recently. But three women who were schizophrenic and they had extremely limited ability to distinguish between what their mind was conjuring up and what reality was presenting to them. And none of them were happy. They were all actually desperately unhappy and had no sense of rest, no sense of peace, no sense of stillness whatsoever. The mind was constantly agitated, tumultuous, churning out. I sat up all night with one of them, literally all night, and she talked the whole time. So it was just a torrent of speech, but incoherent, very unhappy, and completely delusional. I think she received the treatment she needed. That was a long time ago.

Chapter 5 : Ohjelma - Mahamudra Enlightenment

We review and practice the three pillars of meditation: posture, relaxation, and breathing. Tibetan Buddhist Shamatha techniques # are taught and practiced as well. For more advanced practitioners, Tibetan Vipashyana and Mahamudra are presented.

As for the first, in general, there are many methods for developing samadhi, absorbed concentration. But, if you know one set of essential points, then hindrances and interferences will not come about and, parted from any faults regarding shamatha or vipashyana, boon experiences and stable realizations of primordial deep awareness will occur without any labor. By indicating the teachings for this through the gateway of the body posture of Vairochana, you will have a method for effortlessly developing absorbed concentration for the generation and complete stages of anuttarayoga tantra and the boon experiences of bliss, clarity and nonconceptuality. Therefore, since beginners need to rely on the essential points concerning the body posture, then concerning that: In order to make the energy-winds of the earth element remain in the central energy-channel, straighten your spine like a pointed tube. In order to induce the energy-winds of the water element into the central channel, clasp your hands together beneath your navel in the total absorption mudra-gesture, raising your shoulder blades back toward each other. To induce the energy-winds of the fire element into the central channel, keep your neck slightly bent like a hook. To induce the energy-winds of the wind element into the central channel, have your eyes neither wide-open nor shut, but gazing at a point straight ahead from the tip of your nose. Have your tongue and lips dropped down to their natural state or have your tongue touching against your upper palate. With your body held with the essential points of posture like that, then once the movement of conceptual thought has naturally purified itself away, many advantages such as nonconceptuality and so forth will dawn. But even just with your body held with those essential points of posture, your body and mind will pass into a blissful and tranquil state. Therefore, having made your body and mind be neither too tight nor too tense, first expel a little air and then set your breathing into unlabored exhaling and inhaling. Refresh your memory a bit about the preliminaries and then do not bring to mind past actions or think about doing something in the future or that you are doing something now. Without adopting or rejecting, set your mind into a state of normal awareness in the present moment – its real nature, fresh and clean, at ease, naturally simple, and which has neither been fashioned nor contrived. Through this, your mind will become serviceable and will develop absorbed concentration. Therefore, because these essential points of posture of the body and mind are the foundation stone for meditation, earnestly practice them. That is the first point for shamatha meditation. Focusing on a Visual Object Arrow down Arrow up If you are unable to settle your mind into that state, then, by focusing it, direct your manner of gaze externally at a stick, a pebble, a Buddha statue, the flame of a butter lamp, the sky, and so forth, whatever suits you. Without thinking at all about the color, shape, and so on of that basis for focus, rid yourself of both being either too overly tense or slipping into being carefree and loose. In other words, having set your mind , without the slightest meandering, on merely that which you have taken as the basis for your focus, cut off completely all rambling of other conceptual thoughts. Alternatively, focus on either the syllables white OM, red AH and blue HUM, or on white, red and blue drops, whichever suits you, drawn in front of you and in the essential nature of the enlightening body, speech and mind of all the Buddhas. In short, direct and set your mind single-pointedly on whatever type of visual object suits it and which is pleasurable for it to take. If you try to settle your mind on something your temperament cannot take at all and which is not at all in character of how you usually set your mind , then when you try to make your mind go there , it will stick your attention onto anything else that just comes up, without taking care about sending it to that object. Have your sessions be well-divided, with many short ones, and do not become discouraged about having to cut off distraction again and again and having to totally absorb your mind once more with clarity, lucidity and joy. It is important to train in all that. If it will be comfortable for your mind to take any one of these visual objects as its basis for focus, then do that. If you wish to take all of them in turn, this is permitted. But, if you have taken one and find that sufficient, do not feel that you have to go on to take them all, as if going through an alphabet primer. In short, having your mind

take whichever visual object suits it is the second point for shamatha meditation. Other Sensory Objects Arrow down Arrow up Once you have taken that visual object as your basis for focus, then take as well, in turn, a sound that is the object of your ears, a smell that is the object of your nose, a taste that is the object of your tongue, a physical sensation that is the object of your body, and so forth. As for the sound, smell and so on, for that, direct your mind at merely a distinct sound or a pronounced smell and hold it with the hook of your mindfulness, without meandering. Maintain your mind on whatever sensory object it is focusing on and, except for setting your mind into being dropped down to its natural state, do not scrutinize whether the sound, smell, taste or physical sensation is wonderful or terrible, intense or slight, and so forth. Break your sessions while your clarity is still comprehensive. In other words, take a rest at that point; do not let your clarity enter into a turbid state. In between sessions, in relation to everything, simply do not let the rope of your mindfulness break. Have the gaze of your eyes fall toward the tip of your nose and whether, physically, you are walking or sitting or, verbally, you are speaking or talking, do not do these too strongly or too excessively. Cut, as well, the stream of thoughts in your mind having signs of dualism. In other words, getting progressively into the habit of being totally absorbed is the third point for shamatha meditation. Eliminating Mental Dullness and Flightiness of Mind Arrow down Arrow up Furthermore, to eliminate such things as the faults of mental dullness and flightiness of mind, meditate that at the middle of your brow is a drop, merely the size of a pea, white, shiny, glistening, spherical and extremely lucid, and then direct your mind at it. On some occasions, direct your mind at a black, shiny, spherical drop, merely the size of a pea, at the edge of your meditation mat. When you have mental dullness, direct your faculty of knowing at the white one and have your way of gazing be into space. Have a fresh breeze blow on your body and splash yourself with running water. Have your clothes be thin and follow a light diet. Do not sit near a fire or in the sun. When your faculty of awareness is flighty "in other words, when your mind gets distracted to many things" direct your way of gazing and faculty of imagination at the black drop. As for your way of behaving, keep warm, do physical exercise, and follow a rich, heavy diet. When you have neither mental dullness nor flightiness of mind, direct your eyes and faculty of awareness at either a small blue drop or material object visualized at the edge of your shadow straight ahead. Break your sessions while your clarity is still comprehensive and then meditate again. In other words, make your sessions be short and numerous. Focusing on No Object Arrow down Arrow up As for directing your mind at no basis, look with staring eyes into space straight in front of you and then have them be without any focal object at which they are directed. Make your mental consciousness as well have not the slightest meandering, not thinking anything. Do not bring to mind anything concerning what qualities this state has or does not have, or what has passed or has not yet come. Having posted alertness merely as a spy to check, with great diligence, that your mindfulness does not meander, set your mind into a relaxed, soft, uncontrived, fresh and clean state. In other words, set it into not meandering for even an instant, like when inserting a thread through the eye of a needle; into not being turbulent, like an ocean parted from waves; into not exerting effort or trying to accomplish anything, like an eagle soaring through the heights; and part it from all hopes and worries. When there is no meandering from that state, conceptual thoughts will not come. But in the event of meandering occurring, then because conceptual thoughts will come rapidly afresh, one after the next, try to recognize them as soon as they arise. In other words, look right at them in a denuding manner and then set your mind as before. Similarly, no matter how your mind has been distracted by conceptual thoughts, recognize them and then, without doing any stopping or establishing of anything, or feeling happy or unhappy, set your mind on these thoughts themselves and look at them with the eye of discriminating awareness. Take the conceptual thoughts themselves as the basis for your mind to hold and then set it on them. Cultivating your mind not to fall into any state that is too tight or too loose is the fifth point for shamatha meditation. Count at first merely twenty-one rounds and then gradually up to a hundred. Direct your mind at your nostrils and, taking your breath for your count, do not let your mind meander to anything else whatsoever. When you are unable to hold it any longer, then, clearing it out, send it forth. Do like that again and again, not letting your mind meander to anything other than just that. If mental dullness or flightiness of mind occurs, earnestly practice the methods to eliminate them in progressive stages. If you have been unable to pull yourself by the rope through the ring in your nose into a settling of your mind on any of those enumerated objects for focus,

then take any other object for focus, whatever kind suits you. After all, the type of person you are is not at all certain. For some, each point that strikes them from a discourse brings about a settling of their minds in two or three tries. While for a few, even if they have meditated a lot, such a settling comes as something difficult to develop. But if you have nourished meditation without procrastination, it is impossible not to develop a settling of your mind. However, it is necessary to have an experienced guru, who, in harmony with the mental capacity of the disciple, serves to dispel your hindrances, to enhance your progress, and so forth. By having nourished your meditation in that way, the settling of your mind will first be like a steep mountain waterfall: Second, your coarse thoughts will set like the sun. Although occasionally some conceptual thoughts will suddenly arise, you have come to recognize them and, as soon as you do, they subside by themselves. The stream of your meditation flows on steadily like a mighty river. Finally, all your conceptual thoughts, both coarse and subtle, set like the sun and you pass utterly into a state of nonconceptuality. Since a tranquil, limpid, vividly transparent, crystal-clear, pristine settling of your mind into a state of bliss, clarity and nonconceptuality will occur, enhance your perseverance until you develop such a settling. Even after you have developed it, practice it without any break. That is the sixth point for shamatha meditation. Eliminating Mental Tightness and Looseness Arrow down Arrow up If you have not developed this third stage of settling the mind, you need to enhance your perseverance still more and then work through the gateway of tightening your mental hold , loosening it , and meditating turned away from having to do either. In regard to that, for tightening your mental hold if it is too loose, keep the essential points of body posture and way of gazing, and housebreak your faculty of awareness. In other words, tighten up your meditation with discipline. Do not let your mind get into meandering for even an instant. Be as if walking across a single-planked bridge. Do not let your mind get into meandering for even an instant and make your sessions short and numerous. For loosening your mental hold if it is too tight , take exercise and keep the appropriate way of gazing. Let it become soft and relaxed, and dropped down to its natural state. Tranquil, without exerting yourself or trying to accomplish anything, relax like a baby with a full stomach or a pile of straw when the rope binding it has been cut. Setting your mind in that condition , keep your mindfulness in the ever-present moment, without the slightest meandering from that state. Not meditating on anything other than that, set your mind in its natural mode. If your meditation sessions have been short, lengthen them slightly. Settle in a serene state of mind and, after it dissipates, take a rest. But even in between meditation sessions, maintain account of your mindfulness. When meditating while turned away from the necessity either to tighten or loosen your mental hold , there will be times when you have no meandering; and then conceptual thoughts will not come. Then one more will arise; a second will arise. When you have recognized them, do not even try to rid your mind of them, but also do not follow them out. Do not be happy if your mind is settled or unhappy if it is stirring. Without having any hopes or worries, such as worrying that your meditation will not happen or hoping that it will be good, take those very thoughts as the basis for your mind to hold. In other words, without purposely trying to accomplish a nonconceptual state from stopping your thoughts, take the thoughts themselves as your cognitive object.

Chapter 6 : OSHO Mahamudra Meditation - OSHO Meditation Colombia

Mahamudra meditation has two basic stages: the practices for attaining shamata and the practices for attaining vipashyana. Shamata is a serenely stilled and settled state of mind, focused in mahamudra on the conventional nature of mental activity.

Although stillness of mind or the state of nonthought generally is samatha, vipashyana does not depend exclusively upon this state of stillness. Let us explore, and put into practice, the meaning of these two terms and their related meditations in the perspective of Mahamudra. The terms samatha and vipashyana appear in most of the higher and lower vehicles. Samatha is one-pointed attention. Vipashyana is the individual discrimination of phenomena, correctly and exactly as they are. In terms of their function, the sutra continues: Samatha suppresses disturbing emotions, while Vipashyana is utterly purifying disturbing emotions. In this way, both are causes for nirvana. Samatha and vipashyana are of two kinds: To understand their meaning is vipashyana. Even though mundane people meditate on emptiness they are unable to avoid fixating upon it as concrete. From that, disturbing emotions again fully evolve just like practicing the samadhi of Lhagcho. Although these states include innumerable temporary qualities such as superknowledges and miraculous powers, they are useless in terms of reaching ultimate enlightenment unless they are embraced by vipashyana. The master Aryadeva describes how vipashyana is of the most vital importance: Some people achieve a certain measure of stillness but fail to bring forth the clarity of awareness, and become absorbed in the dull torpor of oblivious indifference. This brings no progress and leads one astray, as Padmasambhava said: Without bringing forth the natural strength of awareness, a numb and inert state of stillness will never yield any progress whatsoever. So it is crucial to bring forth the steady clarity of awareness. There are many meditators, but few who know how to meditate. It is truly important to utilize the vital points. The second dhyana, which is even more peaceful, has four features: The third dhyana, which is more peaceful still, has five features: The fourth dhyana, which is called the ultimate dhyana because it is yet more peaceful, has four features:

Chapter 7 : Zhyisil Chokyi Ghatsal - Teachings

On July 31, at Padma Samye Ling during the Self-Development Dzogchen Retreat on Tsele Natsok Rangdrol's Lamp of Mahamudra, Ven. Khenpo Tsewang Rinpoche gave extensive teachings on Vipashyana.

However the Bodhicitta vow is like a promissory pledge and not realistically meaningful unless it is accompanied by a plan or strategy for taking the path. He replied by saying we should start where we feel comfortable, in something that makes sense for us, which in the case of Bodhicitta, for most of us, can be the cultivation of the Four Immeasurables. Yangthang Rinpoche, great master and great adept, explained this phrase: It is very easy to lose sight of what could be, of possibilities, and this may be very depressing. But reality is comprised of actuality and also of possibilities. Loving Kindness

08 Insight into Impermanence, Dukkha and Non self by way of Settling the Mind in its Natural State 02 Apr Transcript available Alan starts with an announcement regarding the practice on Sundays which has no schedule. There will be a shift of the day off from Sunday to Saturday, starting next week, to allow us to do some shopping in the village nearby. Settling the mind in its natural state is taught as a practice to take the mind as the path until it dissolves into the substrate consciousness. Thanks to this profound practice, insight may arise into the nature of the mind. The practitioner may note that all phenomena

09 Balancing the Four Immeasurables, Meditation on Empathetic Joy and the Stages of Bodhicitta 02 Apr Transcript available Alan continues on the topic of the four immeasurables, now turning to the third one, Empathetic Joy. He explains that each of the four immeasurables serves as an antidote when another of the four immeasurables goes astray. First, loving-kindness turns into an antibody to empathetic joy, in case the latter becomes hedonic fixation. Alan adds that hedonia never turns well, it is all about acquiring, whereas loving kindness is all about a vision, a vision of what would truly makes us happy. He begins by making a crucial point: Unpleasant bodily and mental sensations nyam are bound to arise. Even though some

11 Equanimity and Taking the Bodhisattva vows 04 Apr Transcript available This afternoon we finish the cycle of four immeasurables by meditating on equanimity. Alan says that this is the grand finale, the indispensable basis for bodhicitta. Equanimity has different meanings in different contexts but in the context of our practice it means the even-heartedness when attending to other people, other sentient beings. As long as we attend to people as objects, some appear agreeable and others disagreeable. The practice is the full-body awareness of mindfulness of breathing. One has now stepped out of the realm of likes and dislikes and into the realm of evenly distributed warmth, kindness and compassion. One understanding of Dharma is as a way of viewing reality that brings forth a sustained well-being. This eudaimonia is genuine well-being that arises independently of pleasure or stimulation as occurs for hedonia which is ephemeral, thin or just a fleeting memory. As with all the Greats, we require a fundamental shift from aspiration to intention whereby the intention in this case requires taking responsibility

16 Balancing Faith, Intelligence, Enthusiasm, Samadhi and Mindfulness 07 Apr Transcript available Alan starts explaining that balance is a crucial theme in shamatha training where we cultivate relaxation without losing clarity, stability of attention without losing relaxation and vividness without losing stability. The balance of these three qualities can be applied to every activity in daily life, however there is no guarantee that it is meaningful. The belief in karma depends much on the culture, but a confidence in Buddha and other great adepts who replicated his discoveries also may arise due to study, reflection, and meditation. Regarding the balance between intelligence and faith, including belief, Alan quotes William James: This also happened towards animals. In a similar fashion we have also the three higher trainings of ethics, samadhi and wisdom and among them ethics is the foundation: The Buddha clearly said that the stronger you

21 Beyond the Four Greats: Lhag Sam , which expands on the momentum coming from these. He points out that this is actually not yet bodhicitta, because the aspiration to achieve enlightenment is missing. Recalling Padmasambhava, he reminds us the importance

22 Between Sessions View Reality Like a Dream 11 Apr Transcript available Alan addresses the theme of continuity which is essential for the path. In our shamatha practice we may often wonder if we are doing the practice right. Alan points out that the answer lies in whether we are staying in the ongoing flow of cognisance. As we move from coarse mind to subtle mind it is

crucial not to lose cognisance which is what happens when we fall asleep but to sustain the flow of knowing and not infuse it with a conceptual framework. This is continuity in the formal practice. The definition of bodhicitta may seem religious, esoteric, abstract. He begins by describing the state we often find ourselves in: When the suffering eventually passes, there is breath of relief, but soon after a nagâ€¦ 24 Taking Appearances and Awareness as the Path, Both During and Between Session 12 Apr Transcript available The Dharma talks have been so good so far that a bird found us in the field as we were walking over to the meditation hall. He followed us over and hung around outside the hall before the session thinking about coming in to join us. Alan continues his strategy of addressing Ultimate Bodhicitta in the morning and Relative Bodhicitta in the afternoons. What is Your Signal to Noise Ratio? Actually this is the beginning. We arouse bodhicitta until it arises spontaneously. It is the motivation that can satisfy our eternal longing, it is the core meeting the core. The surrounding peaceful Tuscan environment of ILTK and the graceful, kind and courteous staff are certainly conducive to practicing Dharma. Alan says that it brings him great satisfaction to obtain feedback from the ILTK Director that all participants are doing just that iâ€¦ 27 Resting in Awareness and Appearances on the Path to Convergence on Rigpa 13 Apr Transcript available Alan begins by commenting that all teachings and sequences of practice have the goal of converging on realising the ultimate nature of mind, rigpa. This includes cultivating loving-kindness up to relative bodhicitta and ultimate bodhicitta, which in Dzogchen practice is no different from rigpa. The practices of shamatha and the four applications of mindfulness and so on, are directed towards realising the empty nature of our own mind and then converging on realising rigpa. Alan comments that thâ€¦ 28 Shamatha and the Close Application of Mindfulness to the Body and Feelings 14 Apr Transcript available This morning Alan moves on to the four close applications of mindfulness, focusing on the body and feelings. Feelings are not included into the mental factors of the close application of mindfulness to the mind. Instead they are examined separately, since these are the ones we care about most. In the first of the four noble truths, the Buddha recommends to understandâ€¦ 29 The Central Role of Shamatha on the Buddhist Path 14 Apr Transcript available We begin the session with a review of a central practice in shamatha, mindfulness of breathing. Despite being so simple, mindfulness of breathing has its profundity validated, for instance, by being the practice the Buddha did both on the night of his awakening, and also at the time he entered his parinirvana. Alan went on to emphasize the importance of relaxation, namely in the body, with some comments about the key role that exploring, and developing the capacity to practice in shavasana, canâ€¦ 30 Using our Full Intelligence to Dispel the Suffering of Ignorance 15 Apr In order to explore the differences between shamatha and vipashyana, Alan begins explaining the meaning of the term bare attention coined by the great German scholar and practitioner named Nyanaponika Thera, the primary teacher of Bhikkhu Bodhi, one of the finest scholars and translators of Theravada Buddhism and the Pali Canon. Alan and Bhikkhu Bodhi never met but they have a long correspondence on the nature of mindfulness and its relationship to vipashyana. Bhikkhu Bodhi wrote to Alan: To understand the Dzogchen interpretation of where these appearances are coming from, we can start from scratch. Alan is drawing repeatedly from the most foundational teachings of the Buddha, as presented for example in the Pali Canon. The Shravakayana is infact the grounding, the foundation on which you can build a skyscraper touching the sky. And the sky is Dzogchen. There may be no intelligent life out there, or even life of any sort. But to not even try would be hugely disappointing. Part of what makes us human is our sense of curiosity and adventure, and even the act of looking is a valuable exercise. Alan instructs us to discern the origin of mental events, to observe where those mental events arise and manifest, and to determine where they dissolve. After the meditation we return to the theme of siddhis. But there is still a nagging thought - says Alan. In the introductory comments to the meditation, Alan mentions the two-fold division of Buddha-nature 1. One is already present, while the other is evolving, transforming the latter is a deliberate evolution or transformation towards enlightenment, this is the path. Alan explains however that each tradition have their own practice and developmental methods e. However, all traditions agree that access to the first dhyana shamatha is sufficâ€¦ 39 The Four Aspects of Taking the Mind as the Path 20 Apr Alan says we will now return to the central theme of balance, grounding our shamatha practice in relaxation and stability. We will later move to being aware of the sensations and movements of the body but attending to them from the perspective of stillness. Subsequently we will apply

this to the practice of taking the mind as the path. In this method, our practice of attending to the mind can energise or arouse leading to tightness, and therefore we need to maintain a sense of looseness in the

40 Analyzing Simple and Complex Negations in the Practice of Taking the Mind as the Path 21 Apr Alan explains that phenomena that arise to the mind can be affirmations or negations. The negations can be further divided into simple and complex negations. In the discourse of the Arhat Nagasena with the king, the discussion leads to the conclusion that a chariot is not to be found as an inherently existent object. This is an example of a simple negation. A treeless plane is an example of a complex negation: Alan emphasizes that the object of the

41 A Succinct Exploration of Shamatha 21 Apr Alan begins the session by frontloading the silent meditation session, and in the follow up of the morning session, asked us to investigate the distinctive qualities of space and awareness. To help us in that investigation, we brought forth the idea that space implies the quality of extension, unlike awareness. That being the case, these were the questions we were to contemplate: Use it or Lose it! When we are attending closely to the space of the mind, do we have a sense of just a sheer emptiness, nothing, and then something happens in it, or in that vacuity, is there something happening? And, considering the

44 The Defining Characteristics of Consciousness 24 Apr Transcript available Alan begins by unpacking the distinctive characteristics of consciousness, which help us identify it vs. Its characteristics are luminosity and cognisance. We then move to a silent meditation. This section explores the highest stages of Shamatha, including the Form realm and the Formless realm

46 Balancing on One Leg on a Telephone Pole 25 Apr Alan shares with us an image that came to him this morning, originating probably from a martial arts film. In this image a trainee in martial arts is told to stand one-legged on the top of a telephone pole. And to just stay there

Our practice is much more challenging - says Alan. If your shamatha is flaky your vipashyana will be flaky, too - he warns us. But what is the foundation of shamatha? To answer this, Alan refers to Padmasambhava. Prior to practicing shamatha one should settle the body

47 Balancing Earth and Wind 25 Apr Alan introduces the afternoon meditation by making a few comments about space. Our most primal space is the substrate. In dreamless non-lucid sleep, in anaesthesia and at the point of dying the substrate consciousness dissolves into the substrate. Even at this point, however, a sentient being still has consciousness, as opposed to e. The substrate is obscuring the deeper reality, i. It does not

48 Acquiring the Sign of the Mind:

Chapter 8 : Samatha and Vipashyana in the Mahamudra Perspective, Part 2

The lower stages of meditation in Mahamudra are described as follows: samatha, meditation with support, meditation without support and vipassana. The higher stages are then based on the 'Four Yogas of Mahamudra:' one-pointedness, simplicity, one-taste and non-meditation.

Etymology[edit] The semantic field of Tibetan shi and Sanskrit shama is "pacification", "the slowing or cooling down", "rest". According to Jamgon Kongtrul , the terms refer to "peace" and "pacification" of the mind and the thoughts. In fact the two are indivisible facets of the same process. Calm is the peaceful happiness born of meditation; insight is the clear understanding born of the same meditation. Calm leads to insight and insight leads to calm. Samatha is thought to be developed by samadhi "concentration" , which is thought to be the ability to rest the attention on a single object of perception. One of the principal techniques for this purpose is mindfulness of breathing Pali: Samatha meditation and jhana dhyana are often considered synonymous by modern Theravada, but the four jhanas involve a heightened awareness, instead of a narrowing of the mind. With the suppression of these hindrances, the meditative development of insight yields liberating wisdom. Five stages of joy: The three nimittas are the preparatory sign, the acquired sign and the counterpart sign. These are certain mental images, perceptions or sensations which indicate a further refinement of the state of meditative awareness. In the Theravada-tradition various understandings of samatha exist. In the last decade samatha in the Burmese tradition has been popularized in the west by Pa Auk Sayadaw. This tradition upholds the emphasis on samatha explicit in the commentarial tradition of the Visuddhimagga. Pa Auk Sayadaw presented this tradition through extensive retreats around the world until his retirement in The Thai Forest tradition deriving from Ajahn Mun and popularized by Ajahn Chah stresses the inseparability of samatha and vipassana, and the essential necessity of both practices. Dakpo Tashi Namgyal for example, defines samatha as: Whatever the object may be. Joy then gradually matures into tranquility, and equanimity arises out of that tranquility. A mind in samatha is the ideal instrument for achieving Insight and Awakening" [31] Nine mental abidings[edit] See also: Distractions, dullness of mind and other hindrances are common. According to B Alan Wallace, this is when you can maintain your attention on the meditation object for about a minute. Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche suggests that being able to maintain attention for breaths is a good benchmark for when we have reached this stage. In this stage the practitioner achieves the power of mindfulness. Nevertheless, this stage still contains subtle forms of excitation and dullness or laxity. By focusing on the future benefits of gaining Shamatha, the practitioner can uplift gzengs-bstod their mind and become more focused and clear. Alan Wallace this stage is achieved only after thousands of hours of rigorous training. Five faults and eight antidotes[edit] Main article: The five faults identify obstacles to meditation practice, and the eight antidotes are applied to overcome the five faults.

Chapter 9 : Mahamudra Shamatha Meditation – Study Buddhism

This meditation technique offers a powerful method to connect yourself with the cosmos and feel the immense strength rising out of this meeting.

Vipassana movement and Buddhist modernism The term vipassana is often conflated with the Vipassana movement, a movement which popularised the new vipassana teachings and practice. The movement has had a wide appeal due to being open and inclusive to different Buddhist and non-buddhist wisdom, poetry as well as science. It argues that the development of strong samatha can be disadvantageous, [39] a stance for which the Vipassana Movement has been criticised, especially in Sri Lanka. Goenka was a student of Ledi Sayadaw. Influential Tai teachers are Ajahn Chah and Buddhadasa. A well-known Asian female teacher is Dipa Ma. If the breath is long, to notice that the breath is long, if the breath is short, to notice that the breath is short. The first jhana consists in seeing these points and in the presence of vitakka and vicara. Phenomena reveal themselves as appearing and ceasing. In the second jhana, the practice seems effortless. Vitaka and vicara both disappear. In the third jhana, piti, the joy, disappears too: The fourth jhana arises, characterised by purity of mindfulness due to equanimity. The practice leads to direct knowledge. The comfort disappears because the dissolution of all phenomena is clearly visible. The practice will show every phenomenon as unstable, transient, disenchanting. The desire of freedom will take place. By considering the unique characteristics svalaksana and the general characteristics samanyalaksana of the body, sensation, the mind, and the dharmas. The general characteristics" signifies the fact that "All conditioned things are impermanent; all impure dharmas are suffering; and that all the dharmas are empty sunya and not-self anatmaka. The Prajnaparamita sutra in 8, lines states that the practice of insight is the non-appropriation of any dharmas, including the five aggregates: So too, a Bodhisattva coursing in perfect wisdom and developing as such, neither does nor even can stand in form, feeling, perception, impulse and consciousness Even so form, etc. Because of the nonbeing-ness of form, etc. And that is true of all dharmas. In the Sthaviravada [Lay people may have to experience various levels of insights to become fully enlightened. The Mahayana tradition emphasizes prajna, insight into sunyata, dharmata, the two truths doctrine, clarity and emptiness, or bliss and emptiness: In practice and understanding Zen is actually very close to the Theravada Forest Tradition even though its language and teachings are heavily influenced by Taoism and Confucianism. He should observe that all that had been conceived in the past was as hazy as a dream, that all that is being conceived in the future will be like clouds that rise up suddenly. He should also observe that the physical existences of all living beings in the world are impure and that among these various filthy things there is not a single one that can be sought after with joy. Calming is the essence of wisdom. And wisdom is the natural function of calming [i. It is like the light of the lamp. When the lamp exists, there is light. When there is no lamp, there is darkness. The lamp is the essence of light. The light is the natural function of the lamp. Although their names are different, in essence, they are fundamentally identical. According to Thrangu Rinpoche, when shamatha and vipashyana are combined, as in the mainstream tradition Madhyamaka approach of ancestors like Shantideva and Kamalashila, through samatha disturbing emotions are abandoned, which thus facilitates vipashyana, "clear seeing. After this initial recognition of vipashyana, the steadiness of shamatha is developed within that recognition. According to Thrangu Rinpoche, it is however also common in the direct approach to first develop enough shamatha to serve as a basis for vipashyana. This includes some methods of the other traditions, but also their own specific approaches. They place a greater emphasis on meditation on symbolic images.