



# The Empty Mirror

Summer 2013 | June - August

## ADVICE ON SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

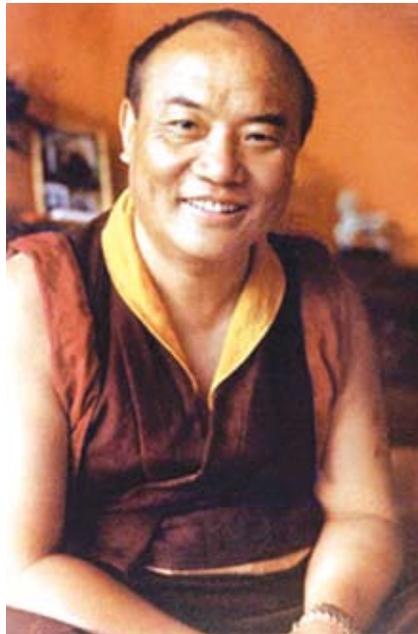
*by His Holiness the 16th Gyalwa Karmapa*

The practice of Dharma involves certain possibilities. How these potentials evolve into actual situations for the practitioner, and how much is possible within these situations depends on the capacity of individual beings. It depends upon the level of teachings that one is able to relate to, such as Mahayana or Hinayana. At this particular time in our lives, the practice of the Mahayana teaching is possible. It is absolutely precious and absolutely rare. Our concern for development and our sense of responsibility has placed us in a position to integrate the preciousness and rarity of the Mahayana teaching with our lives. Through it there is the possibility of the experience of no-returning back into Samsara and the experience of ultimate bliss that is self knowing and in which there are no doubts.

In the midst of the wanderings of our minds we might sometimes fall into thinking that whether one practices or not, the Dharma will always be available. If you have that kind of notion, it is a very serious mistake. Any brief moment, any time at all that one could use as an opportunity for Dharma practice, one must use. If one does not take this responsibility and offer sincere respect to the Mahayana and Vajrayana teachings, there is a definite possibility of causing harm to oneself as well as to those spiritual friends to whom one is linked. A lack of attention to the responsibilities of the Mahayana path constitutes a breaking of the Samaya principles, therefore, in whatever way one can hold to the teachings, one must sincerely do so.

If you think that the teaching is negligible, such a reality will manifest because of your attitude, to your great loss. The fact is that the teaching is very much hidden from you, so you cannot really make speculations about it. On the other hand, the validity of the teaching has been witnessed by its ageless effectiveness from the time of the Buddha to this day. This is something to dwell upon. You must sincerely realize the sacredness of the teachings, to the extent of understanding that there is actually nothing more important than the practice of the Dharma within this lifetime, and in lifetimes to come. In a simple mundane life situation, in the field of 'business' we know that the businessman develops a plan for a project, he knows what it will cost him, perhaps one million dollars, and every detail of the

project is regarded with the utmost care. Absolute importance is attached to such a project in the business world, and a great deal of energy is put into bringing it to a successful conclusion. The point is if one is going to expend such effort for a result of such a temporary nature, why not put at least as much effort into a project that is going to cause one's temporary as well as ultimate benefit? Whether you are receiving an empowerment or an explanation, if you are able to have or develop that sense of importance about the Dharma, then there is purpose in your relationship with the Mahayana teachings and there is going to be fulfillment, too. If there is a genuine commitment to the teaching, you will be able to develop direct and meaningful trust and confidence in the teachings and sincere compassion towards beings. A true understanding of the universality of the working of karma, the nature of cause and effect, will occur.



At this particular point you have the opportunity to receive the teachings. There are teachers, there are facilities. You have been receiving many levels of teachings, and it is important that you don't miss the point in terms of putting into practice what is taught. It is absolutely important. I am emphasizing today something you must have heard many times. And yet there is always the need for complete integration, for mindfulness and respect, for the treasuring of what one has understood, what one has received. There is the need of working towards the fulfillment of the teachings and the complete realization of the meaning. And toward that end the most important factor, once again, is the practice of bodhicitta, the Enlightened Mind, by which you will gradually tread the Vajrayana path. At every turn bodhicitta is indispensable. Unless the profound techniques of the Vajrayana are being supported by bodhicitta one will not necessarily make meaningful realizations. So, you see, that everything is actually rooted in the practice of bodhicitta, and to pursue with sincerity whatever enhances and supports the practice of bodhicitta creates favorable situations for its development.

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# DAILY LIFE, SIMPLE LIFE

*A Teaching by Lama Tempa Gyeltshen*

In our daily lives, we need information, we need information about training in Dharma. As Bodhisattva practitioners, we need to understand and apply the fundamental teachings constantly. We need to be always mindful of the teachings and practice them diligently in our daily living. We need to learn, then train and practice bodhicitta, compassion, loving kindness, the Ten Virtuous Actions, the Four Immeasurables and the Six Paramitas. That is what we need to learn, train in and practice in our lives.

The Ten Virtues are protecting life, generosity, maintaining moral conduct, speaking truthfully, seeking reconciliation with others, speaking gently, talking about worthwhile things, being content, benefitting others and giving up wrong views. Practicing the Ten Virtues will strengthen our practice of the Dharma.

The Four Immeasurables are infinite love, infinite compassion, infinite joy and infinite equanimity. If we practice and meditate on the Four Immeasurables, our wishes to benefit others will become deeper and more stable.

The Six Paramitas are transcendent perfections. They are generosity, moral conduct, patience, diligence, meditative concentration and transcendent wisdom. They cannot be separated from aspiring that the suffering of all beings comes to an end.

If we learn and practice these things, then our daily life will become comfortable and our attitude of benefitting others will improve. If our lives are positive, if our minds are positive, then we become fortunate. Learn, train and practice. These are all teachings you can use daily. Make your daily life a simple life. ♦

*Lama Tempa will give teachings on: **The 10 Virtuous Actions: Cultivating Loving-Kindness & Compassion, on Sunday, July 14, 2:00-5:00 p.m.***

*The Six Paramitas, a concise 10-part teaching given by H. E. Tai Situ Rinpoche at Palpung Institute, Sherab Ling, in 2003 may be viewed on YouTube ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com))*



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*You live in illusion and in  
the appearance of things.  
There is a reality, and you  
are that reality,  
but you don't know it.  
If you should ever wake up  
to that reality,  
you would realize that you  
are nothing, and being  
nothing, you are everything.  
That is all.*

**Khyabje Kalu Rinpoche**

## You Must Tame Your Own Mind

RETREATS & TEACHINGS  
WITH LAMA TEMPA

### RETREATS

#### AMITABHA RETREAT *with Sojong vows*

- Saturday, June 22 | 8:30 - 11:30 am
- Suggested donation: \$20  
(KTL members \$15)

### TEACHINGS

*With these teachings, I'll share my  
experience with you. **Lama Tempa***

#### SUKHAVATI NIRVANA

(Dewachen Zhing Khang)

*All of the qualities and the activity in this  
Pure Land will be described.*

(Translator, Georgiana Cook)

- Saturday, July 13 | 9:00 am - 12:00  
noon & 2:00 - 5:00 pm
- Suggested donation: \$20  
(KTL members \$15)

#### THE 10 VIRTUOUS ACTIONS: Cultivating Loving-Kindness & Compassion

*Like a seedling, these are to be nurtured for a  
truly meaningful life.*

(Translator, Georgiana Cook)

- Sunday, July 14 | 2:00 - 5:00 pm
- Suggested donation: \$10  
(KTL members \$5)

#### A MIND FREE FROM BIRTH AND DEATH

*Our body is like a shell, an empty husk.*

*Our mind is free from birth and death.*

*No birth, no death. How do we realize this  
with unmistakable certainty?*

(Translator, Georgiana Cook)

- Saturday, August 17 | 9:00 am - 12:00  
noon & 2:00 - 5:00 pm
- Suggested donation \$20  
(KTL members \$15)

#### A JOYFUL MIND

*"Always maintain only a joyful mind."*

Pith instructions on Mind Training:

Slogan #21.

(Translator, Georgiana Cook)

- Sunday, August 18 | 2:00 - 5:00 pm
- Suggested donation: \$10  
(KTL members \$5)

# PILGRIMAGE TO TSARI MOUNTAIN

*We look forward with much anticipation to the upcoming publication of Lama Rinchen's autobiographical book, **I Can See the Flea on Your Nose, but Not the Yak on My Own.***

*One of the most important sites to conduct a pilgrimage during one's lifetime is Tsari Mountain. In the following excerpt, we learn of Lama Rinchen's pilgrimage to the remote Himalayan border district in southeastern Tibet called Tsari and his setting out to circumambulate Dagpa Sheri, "Pure Crystal Mountain."*

Arriving in Lhasa, I first went to visit the Jowo Temple and the Potala Palace. The Potala Palace was the home of the Dalai Lama and also contained the offices of the government of Central Tibet. The Jowo Temple holds a golden Buddha statue of a youthful Shakyamuni Buddha, which was given to the King of Tibet several hundred years before as a dowry gift from the family of the Chinese princess he was marrying.

On my second day in Lhasa I heard that the holy Tsari Mountain was going to be opened soon for pilgrimage, something that happened only once every twelve years in those times. I had previously heard of Tsari Mountain, but did not know much about it. I researched what I could find in texts in the library at the Potala Palace, and discovered many wonderful things that were said about the mountain. Among those things was that Tsari Mountain contains the Pure Land of Vajrayogini. It said in the texts that Shakyamuni Buddha placed a large crystal stupa on the top of Tsari Mountain as a protection for his teachings in the snowy land of Tibet.

It was also said that when a person circumambulates the mountain, it is equal in merit to reciting one billion, 800 million Om Mani Padme Hung mantras. To put the recitation of that many mantras into perspective, I have heard of some very old people in Tibet who spent their entire lifetime, from youth to old age, constantly reciting Om Mani Padme Hung and they were able to accumulate one billion recitations. In the short lifetime that we have, it would be impossible for anyone to accumulate another 800 million recitations beyond what those people had diligently spent their entire lifetime doing. The texts I researched also said that if a person dies on the holy mountain, the emotional disturbances that have been obscuring the true nature of their mind will be completely purified. There are many holy mountains in Tibet, and two of them, Tsari Mountain and Mount Kailash, are considered to be particularly holy mountains. Mount Kailash seems to be more widely known than Tsari Mountain, and it is said to be the Pure Land of Chakrasamvara. Vajrayogini and Chakrasamvara also have a relationship with each other in some Vajrayana visualization practices.

Some may not know about the Pure Lands. The Pure Lands are called pure because they are free of physical and emotional suffering, and are inhabited by beings who have accomplished realization of the true nature of their mind while they were living just like us, as ordinary human beings. The Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in the Pure Lands have bodies of radiant light rather than physical bodies such as ours. The Pure Lands are places that ordinary people like us cannot see or experience with our ordinary worldly mind or senses. Only fully awakened beings can see or experience the Pure Lands and see the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who inhabit them. In each Pure Land, there are constant assemblies of spiritual teachings going on, teachings on many different levels, for the reason that all those who have gained freedom from Samsara-mind can continue to spiritually develop.

Once the beginning level of the Pure Lands is reached, those inhabiting them have no possibility of their mind falling back into Samsara-mind. The Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the Pure Lands can emanate physical manifestations that take birth in our world. That is how the many spiritual Masters enter our world in a human form with already spiritually developed minds.

As I read more and more about Tsari Mountain at the Potala library, it seemed that it was a deeply meaningful opportunity that had arisen, and I seriously began to wonder if I should try to go and circumambulate it. I had been in Lhasa only five days when I decided that I would circumambulate it, and set out alone and on foot for Tsari Mountain. In three days I came to Samye Monastery.

Samye Monastery was the first monastery built in Tibet. It was built in the eighth century by the great Indian Master, Padmasambhava, who brought Buddhism to Tibet. I entered the Monastery and said prayers and made offerings, and then continued on to Tsari Mountain, crossing the Tsangpo River in a yak-skin boat, and then climbed a trail up a mountain that led to Gampopa's monastery. ♦

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*Excerpt from **I Can See the Flea on Your Nose, but Not the Yak on My Own**, as told to Phil Dutcher.*



A MONTHLY FORUM

Q & A

ON THE PATH

OF AWAKENING

Join Lama Tempa and other members of the sangha on **July 3** and **August 7** for an informal discussion of the Dharma path and practice. Forum will be from 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm. "**Q & A On the Path of Awakening**" is a monthly forum, held the first Wednesday of every month, for Dharma students of all levels, including newcomers. It is an opportunity to ask questions of the resident lamas and seek guidance in a group setting, and a way to connect with other practitioners in support of each other's Dharma practice.

# PURIFICATION

by Lama Karma Rinchen

The aim of the path of enlightenment is to show methods that will purify the accumulation of the habits and tendencies of the mind. There are many methods to help us develop on the spiritual path. But there are no other methods that will bring us to the realization of full and complete enlightenment than the ones that purify the mind of all the accumulations.

We need to begin our journey on the spiritual path with an undoubted understanding that our karma is carried with us from life to life in the form of our habits and tendencies. We also need to have the undoubted understanding that our karma can be purified. If we are using methods of purification, then we are developing a perfect environment for spiritual growth.

If we keep our mind in a state of denial that we could have done negative things in this life or former ones, we have no chance to release the imprints that obscure our mind. We have to be brutally honest with our self, and give up all denial of our unenlightened state.

With the methods of the path, it is possible for us to discover, by our own selves, how we are at the mercy of our discursive thoughts. When we have a full realization of the power that we have given to our discursive thoughts, we will see how we unknowingly keep all of the conditions active that cause the problems and sufferings in our life.

When we have that realization, we are then open to doing the meditation work that is necessary to continue, and we will discover the full extent of our own true nature. With patience and diligence in our practice, we will develop to the levels of a Bodhisattva, and then we will be entirely free of the cycles of suffering.

If we sincerely do our Dharma practices on a daily basis, we will gradually cut down on our gossip, harsh speech and slanderous talking. We will begin to read Dharma texts, and our negative thoughts and attributes will become fewer and fewer. And if we find our mind still wanting to think and act negatively, there are still many methods that we can adopt to keep our mind occupied in a positive way. Always, whatever we do, we should do in a gradual and steady way.

Practicing Dharma and purifying the obscurations of our mind is a little bit like taking care of our house. If we want to keep our house looking nice, and if we clean and pick up a little every day, things will look pretty good all the time. If we only clean and pick up every few weeks, our place will always look messy.

It is the same with developing our Dharma practice and undertaking the purification of the obscurations of our mind. If we do some work on our practice every day, we will get our obscurations cleaned up a lot sooner. We will get some results if we make a daily effort. If we are diligent with our efforts, there is no doubt we will get results from our practice, and will begin to have more positive things happening for us.

When our body, or our clothes get dirty, we have obvious ways to clean them. We can shower our body, and we can put our clothes in the washing machine. These are fairly easy things to do. But if our mental body is dirty, we have to find some other methods that are effective. We can have the hope that things will get better for us, and we could even have those expectations for a thousand lifetimes or more, but not much will ever happen with a method of just wishing and hoping. Spiritual development just doesn't work like that.

We should understand the Dharma as a collection of methods and practices to purify the accumulations of habits and tendencies of the mind. Without taking bold steps to clear away our accumulations, there is no way to get to the wonderful results. Without sincere efforts at purification, Samsara will just go on and on for us, for this life and our future ones. ♦

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Excerpt from "The Story of All of Us Simply Said," by Lama Karma Rinchen  
Edited by Phillip C. Dutcher

***There are two things that have to be abandoned: evil actions and obscurations. If the actions of our body, speech, or mind cause harm to other beings, either directly or indirectly, these actions are negative or evil deeds. These actions have nothing to do with previous karma or previous habitual tendencies, but rather they are connected with present motivation....Obscurations, which are related to mind, also do not depend on karma, but depend on our habitual tendencies. From beginningless time, we have all been habituated with the negative emotions, attachment, aggression, and ignorance....These habitual tendencies are to be abandoned.***

Ven. Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche

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Excerpt from: Thrangu Rinpoche's 1985 Gampo Abbey seminar on "Monastic Discipline" and his teaching on the Pratimoksha Precepts.

For more: [www.gampoabbey.org/teachings](http://www.gampoabbey.org/teachings).

# THE ESSENCE OF BUDDHISM

*The essence of Buddhism is being able to distinguish what it is that we need to do from what it is that we need to give up. It is taking up virtue and giving up non-virtue. We need to identify what it is that will bring benefit to ourselves and others, and then we need to do that. We also need to identify what it is that will harm ourselves and others, and then we need to give that up. So you can condense it all into doing what is beneficial and giving up what is harmful. We need to know what the essence of dharma is, and then bring it into our lives.*

His Holiness the 17th Gyalwa Karmapa



## OUR TIME OF GREAT CHALLENGES



We are clearly living through a time of great challenges, and yet Mother Earth has witnessed the rise and fall of humanity's fortunes many times over. I recall that during the Cold War years someone once asked the Sixteenth Karmapa, a great Tibetan teacher, to comment on that time's worst-case scenario. His Holiness simply smiled and said, "The world has always been this way." We've endured through cycles of prosperity and poverty, peace and war, confidence and doubt. Life is a journey, and it is full of adventures. Some of these may be hard to appreciate in the beginning, but they all contribute to the richness and depth of our journey—they offer the knowledge and vision that can transform our dreams and aspirations into reality.

*Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche*

*Excerpt from the article, "Erring and Erring, We Walk the Unerring Path", page 50 Shambhala Sun | September 2009*

*For the full article on-line: [www.shambhalasun.com](http://www.shambhalasun.com)*

## Meditation and Puja Calendar

### Daily Meditation

6:00 - 7:00 am Tara Puja

5:30 - 6:00 pm Mahakala Puja

### Weekly Meditation

Sunday 10:00 am Chenrezig Puja

Monday 7:00 pm The Four Thoughts; Short Chenrezig practice; Mani mantra accumulation

Tuesday 7:00 pm Silent Meditation

Thursday 7:00 pm Basic Meditation

### Monthly Puja & Events Calendar

(7:00 pm unless noted otherwise)

#### June

Mon 3 Milarepa Tsok

Wed 5 Q & A @ KTL Forum

Sat 8 Tara Puja

Sun 9 Fire Puja (12:30 pm)

Sun 16 Medicine Buddha Puja

Tue 18 Guru Rinpoche Tsok

Sun 23 Amitabha Buddha Puja

Wed 26 HH 17th Karmapa's birthday

#### July

Tue 2 Milarepa Tsok

Wed 3 Q & A @ KTL Forum

Sun 7 Fire Puja (12:30 pm)

Mon 8 Tara Puja

Fri 12 Chökhör Düchen, First Turning of the Wheel

Tue 16 Medicine Buddha Puja

Thu 18 Guru Rinpoche Tsok

Mon 22 Amitabha Buddha Puja

#### August

Thu 1 Milarepa Tsok

Sun 4 Fire Puja (12:30 pm)

Tue 6 Tara Puja

Wed 7 Q & A @ KTL Forum

Wed 14 Medicine Buddha Puja

Fri 16 Guru Rinpoche Tsok

Wed 21 Amitabha Buddha Puja

Sat 31 Milarepa Tsok

#### September

Sun 1 Fire Puja (12:30 pm)

Wed 4 Q & A @ KTL Forum

Thu 5 Tara Puja

Fri 13 Medicine Buddha Puja

Sat 14 Guru Rinpoche Tsok

Thu 19 Amitabha Buddha Puja

Sun 29 Milarepa Tsok



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*Advice - continued from page 1*

ment of the Enlightened Attitude, a concern for the benefit and liberation of all beings. From the material point of view this country is very rich, which means life is busier for everyone than in other places in the world, and people are occupied by all kinds of mundane demands. Because of the overwhelming material concerns that surround one, the speed of life activity increases. One busy situation leads to another, and on and on. You are constantly busy. The truth of cyclic existence is very well manifested in your lives. To remedy this state of affairs one first needs to calm down the mind. Do not be completely absorbed by your surroundings. Develop some degree of stillness. Cultivate simple control of mind, tranquility. At least some openness of the mind needs to be developed. No matter who you are, everyone needs first to relate to basic meditation practices, meditation practices that are specifically designed to bring about the calmness of the minds of beings who are occupied in such constant, busy involvement. This is the first step in the practice of the Dharma, the Dharma that is so very important for oneself and for others.

If you could see and appreciate the truth of the Dharma, and in the light of that appreciation continue to practice, there is no doubt about

your being of tremendous benefit to the people you encounter and to this country especially. There would be no doubt about your ability to save beings from countless problems and conflicts. So the practice of the Dharma must be taken very seriously and done very sincerely. From beginningless time our shortcoming has been to fall back into Samsara. In the past, in the future and in the present, the mind has been in many ways very playful. But where the true nature of the mind is concerned, neither the color nor the shape nor the location of the mind nor its consciousness can be pinpointed.

The nature of mind goes beyond all such substantialities. This being so, in the meditation practice it is important neither to invite the future nor recollect the past, but to remain in the state of nowness. The nowness of the mind is the practice which should be developed by you all. ♦

*This teaching was given at Karma Triyana Dharmachakra by His Holiness the 16th Gyalwa Karmapa on Sunday, August 31, 1980. It first appeared in Densal Vol. 2. No. 3, Summer 1981 and is reprinted in The Empty Mirror with permission.*