

Purifying the Mind -  
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Central teaching

- Buddhism is an inner path**  
Nangpa means an inner person. The Buddha's teaching is directed toward subduing and transforming one's own mind.
- Purification is possible
  - Negativities and obscurations are conditioned
  - They arise dependently through causes and conditions
  - They are impermanent and can change
  - They are empty of inherent existence
  - No negativity is beyond purification when the antidotes are applied
- The nature of mind is clear and knowing
  - Clear light is the mind's fundamental nature
  - Delusions and karmic imprints are adventitious stains
  - Buddha-nature is the capacity for awakening
  - Do not mistake temporary affliction for the whole person
- Two activities gather all Dharma practice
  - Purify negativities and obscurations
  - Accumulate merit and wisdom

Motivation: what makes an action Dharma

- Motivation shapes every action of body, speech and mind
- Worldly motivation
  - Can produce temporary happiness and favourable samsaric results
  - Does not by itself produce liberation
- Three principal aspects transform ordinary virtue
  - Renunciation
  - Bodhicitta
  - Correct view of emptiness
- Pure action
  - Begins with a motivation beyond worldly concern
  - Is performed for the welfare of others
  - Is sealed with wisdom
  - Ends with dedication to liberation and enlightenment

Preparing the mind through breathing

- Purpose
  - Release memories of the past
  - Release anxiety about the future
  - Return body and mind to the present
  - Balance the energies that support the mind
- Breath and mind analogy  
The breath is like a horse and the mind like its rider. As the breath settles, the mind can settle.
- Three rounds
  - 1. Settling
    - Follow the natural in-breath and out-breath
    - Attend lightly to the sound of breathing
    - Keep the body upright, open and relaxed
  - 2. Purification
    - Visualise breath and awareness reaching the navel region
    - Imagine the body and nervous system being refreshed
    - Breathe out sickness, emotional pain, disturbed energy and karmic imprints
    - Let negativities dissolve into emptiness
  - 3. Concentration
    - Choose a virtuous object
    - Possible objects: Buddha image, Buddha's eyes, mantra, compassion or love
    - Maintain vivid clarity
    - Maintain one-pointed placement
    - Remain relaxed and serviceable
- Practise gently
  - Do not turn counting into another distraction
  - Pause when strained or restless
- A short effective session is better than a long forced session

Contemplating awakened qualities

- Holy images
  - Not merely material objects
  - Reminders and manifestations of enlightened qualities
  - Inspire the same qualities within us
- Ten perfections
  - Moral discipline
  - Generosity
  - Material giving
  - Life, love, compassion, inspiration and Dharma
  - Patience
  - Joyous effort
  - Concentration as serviceability
- Wisdom that realises selflessness  
Directly realises that persons and phenomena do not exist independently or inherently. By completely eliminating the ignorance that apprehends them falsely, this perfected wisdom culminates in the dharmakaya.
- Skilful means  
the enlightened ability to teach and guide each person in the way best suited to their needs, capacity, karma and disposition.
- Aspiration
- Power
- Exalted wisdom  
the awakened wisdom that directly and perfectly understands reality (particularly emptiness) as well as what will genuinely benefit each being
- Buddhas benefit beings tirelessly and without bias
- Beings must be guided according to their karma and disposition

Appreciating precious human life

- Use intelligence, speech and technology for Dharma rather than harm
- One peaceful person makes the world safer
- Peace in one's body, speech and mind contributes to world peace
- Difficulties do not make a Dharma life meaningless
- The present moment remains an opportunity for virtue, wisdom and compassion

What is purified

- Ten non-virtues
  - Three of body
    - Killing or taking life
    - Stealing—taking what has not been freely given
    - Sexual misconduct
  - Four of speech
    - Lying or deliberately deceiving
    - Divisive speech—causing disharmony between people
    - Harsh or hurtful speech
    - Idle or meaningless speech, including harmful gossip
  - Three of mind
    - Covetousness—strongly wanting to possess what belongs to another
    - Ill will—wishing harm or misfortune upon someone
    - Wrong views—particularly denying karma, its consequences, or other fundamental truths that guide ethical conduct
- Levels of obscuration
  - Non-virtuous karma
    - Causes suffering and unfortunate rebirth
    - Obstructs fortunate rebirth
  - Afflictive and karmic obscurations
    - Bind beings within the six realms
    - Obstruct liberation or nirvana
  - Cognitive obscurations
    - Obstruct omniscience
    - Obstruct full Buddhahood
- All contaminated karma
  - Non-virtuous karma
  - Virtuous samsaric karma
  - Neutral karma
  - All remain contaminated when accompanied by ignorance and inherent-existence grasping
- General and targeted antidotes
  - Every genuine Dharma practice generally subdues the mind
  - Particular afflictions require particular antidotes

Why karmic transformation is possible

- Karmic potentials continue as imprints in the mental continuum
- The physical body is like a guesthouse; the mind is like its guest
- Imprints can be weakened, neutralised, purified or transformed
- Poison can become medicine under different conditions
- Understanding anger can open into compassion
- Understanding ignorance can open into wisdom
- When ignorance is replaced, wisdom can manifest

Emptiness and the purification of conceptual obscuration

- The person exists dependently
  - Upon causes and conditions
  - Upon parts
  - Upon the aggregates
  - Upon mental designation
- The person cannot be found as an independent entity
  - Not within the body
  - Not within the mind
- Conventional existence remains functional
  - Like a reflection
  - Like a dream
  - Like a mirage
  - Like a magical illusion
- Daily-life recollection  
An illusion-like person is performing an illusion-like action.
- Two modes of meditation
  - Analytical meditation investigates how things exist
  - Calm placement rests in the conclusion
- Stages of realisation
  - Correct conceptual understanding prepares the path
  - Direct non-conceptual realisation distinguishes an arya bodhisattva
  - Bodhicitta is indispensable but does not alone remove conceptual appearance

Training in Śamatha

- Purpose
  - Make body and mind serviceable
  - Support direct insight into emptiness
- Main obstacles
  - Laziness
  - Distraction
- Main remedies
  - Mindfulness keeps the chosen object
  - Introspective awareness notices when it is lost
- Practical guidance
  - Choose a suitable object and remain with it
  - Do not continually change objects
  - Do not force the mind
  - Practise when the body and mind are receptive
  - Reflect on the benefits of serenity
  - Support blocked practice with purification and merit
- Three higher trainings
  - Ethical discipline leads to concentration
  - Concentration leads to wisdom
  - Śamatha united with emptiness produces vipashyana
- Ethics must be embodied in daily life

Recognising and purifying afflictions

- Afflictions are like thieves  
They steal inner peace and virtue. Their gross and subtle forms must first be recognised.
- Root afflictions
  - Ignorance
  - Attachment
  - Anger
  - Pride
  - Afflicted doubt
  - Afflicted views
- Anger as impatience
  - More than shouting or hostility
  - An unsettled inability to remain in the present
  - Can contaminate even a virtuous wish for rapid attainment
  - Direct antidote: patience
  - Supporting antidotes: compassion and present-moment awareness
  - Lama Zopa Rinpoche as an example of complete presence
  - Habituate patience until it arises spontaneously
- Attachment and grasping
  - Liking, valuing and caring are not necessarily attachment
  - Attachment begins when appreciation becomes fixation
  - Detachment is not indifference or rejection
  - Release self-centred expectation and permanent-satisfaction fantasies
  - Appreciate people, health, Dharma and possessions without grasping
  - Antidotes: impermanence, reflection on the body's components and wisdom
  - Respect the body as a precious but temporary vehicle
- Pride
  - Antidotes: humility and respect
  - Respect oneself without belittling others
  - Every being has Buddha-potential
  - Other beings make generosity, patience, compassion and bodhicitta possible
- Afflicted doubt
  - Antidotes: study, investigation and open-mindedness
  - Distinguish Dharma from non-Dharma
  - Distinguish temporary benefit, liberation and Mahayana enlightenment
  - Take examined understanding into meditation and life

Seven-step practical method

1. Identify what is to be purified
  - Learn its definition
  - Notice gross and subtle forms
  - Observe how it arises personally
2. Understand its disadvantages
  - Disturbs body and mind
  - Harms relationships
  - Obstructs virtue
  - Perpetuates suffering
3. Apply the particular antidote
  - Anger: patience and compassion
  - Attachment: non-grasping, impermanence and wisdom
  - Pride: humility and respect
  - Doubt: study and reasoned investigation
  - Ignorance: dependent arising and emptiness
4. Support the antidote
  - Ethical discipline
  - Concentration
5. Purify and accumulate merit
  - Four opponent powers
  - Vajrasattva practice
  - Offerings
  - Seven-limb practice
6. Meditate repeatedly
  - Use analytical meditation
  - Use calm placement
  - Continue until the antidote becomes habitual and spontaneous
7. Dedicate the merit
  - Beyond the concerns of this life
  - To liberation
  - To the enlightenment of all beings

Dedication

- Peace and happiness throughout the world
- Freedom from war, disaster, illness and hardship
- Care for ourselves and those close to us
- Become like wish-fulfilling jewels for the world
- Begin with peace, virtue and happiness in our own body, speech and mind
- Extend that peace, virtue and happiness to all beings