

*Quotes
From
The Precious One*



Eighth Garchen Rinpoche, Konchoq Gyaltzen

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English translation by Ina Dhargye



The 8th Kyabje Garchen Triptrul Rinpoche

Quotes From The Precious One
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Drikung Dharma Surya Center

FOREWORD & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book is a collection of insightful quotes, inspirational sayings and heartfelt advices from His Eminence Garchen Rinpoche – a Tibetan lama of the Drikung Kagyu Lineage, a highly accomplished and realized yogi, a skillful teacher, and the beloved Guru of many of us – whom I dearly call “Apala”. The current 8th Garchen Rinpoche was the incarnation of a 12th century highly realized yogi named Gar Chodingpa, one of the heart disciples of the famed Jigten Sumgon, Kyobpa Rinpoche – founder of the Drikung Kagyu lineage that traces back to the great translator-yogi, Marpa Lotsawa, and the greatest poet-yogi of Tibet, Milarepa. Garchen Rinpoche, well-known for his vast realization, kindness and compassion, is highly revered not only by masters and disciples of his own lineage but also masters and disciples of other traditions.

The book contains 108 exceptional insights and wisdom on the essence teachings of the Buddha, addressing the Thirty-Seven Practices of Bodhisattvas, the infallible law of karma, and the ultimate practices of the relative Bodhicitta and the absolute Bodhicitta. It is hoped that these quotes of love and wisdom can spread far and wide with the sole wish to bring peace and happiness into the world and to benefit all sentient beings without exception. Each quote is illustrated with a special photo of Garchen Rinpoche - just that we always remember vividly and diligently follow the wonderful qualities, enlightened activities, profound teachings and direct instructions of our Guru.

This book is not possible without the unconditional support from many Dharma teachers, brothers, sisters, translators, friends and Centers around the world that have graciously shared these special words and photos of Garchen Rinpoche through various media channels and social networks. Special Thanks go to Ina Dhargye for translating and transcribing Rinpoche's quotes and making them available to everyone.

Our deepest gratitude goes to Garchen Rinpoche for all of the precious teachings especially the examples and experience of his life that he has been providing and sharing with all of us.

May I never be separated from the precious Bodhicitta. May I always follow in the footsteps of the Precious One to benefit all beings and to help eliminate the sufferings for as long as space endures and for as long as living beings remain.

With Prayers and Love,

Quang

Drikung Dharma Surya Center
Centreville, Virginia, U.S.A.
November 2013



Gar Quote No. 1

My dear friends: in my first message, I would like to extend a warm Tashi Delek to all of you in this mandala. From lifetime to lifetime, our minds have been connected and thus I see you like family. What has kept our minds connected from lifetime to lifetime is the spiritual bond of love. These 'reminders of loving kindness and compassion' should encourage us again and again to make an effort to cultivate love for one another. As all our minds are connected, we can help each other through cultivating love. Thus, if more people in this world are able to give rise to love, peace and happiness will increase. I have great love for all sentient beings; for this reason, I trust that spreading the word of love will contribute to the peace and happiness of this world.

My single prayer is: 'May all sentient beings have happiness, and love—the cause of happiness. May all sentient beings be free from suffering, and self-grasping—the cause of suffering.' In Tibetan, the word for 'kindness and love' is 'jamtse' (byams brtse). In Tibetan U-Me script, this can be written in a single line; for me, this is a sign of this word's preciousness. Today, I am offering to you all my kindness and love. I hope you will keep this dear to your heart, as this is the essence of all happiness in this and future lives. It is the essence of the Buddha's teachings. If you have love in your heart, even those who hate you will eventually be your friends. Your actual enemies are hatred and jealousy in particular. Outer enemies are a temporary illusion arising from a deluded thought. This thought is impermanent. Thoughts come and go. Thus if you do not let go of love, the anger in others will eventually diminish.

If you love others, you wish for their happiness. As our minds are one, if you love others, it will pervade their mind and they will thus feel happy. Love is the only cause of happiness. Its nature is all-pervasive like space. Love is the sunlight of the mind.

Furthermore, I am deeply sad to hear about the earthquake disaster in Japan, and also in New Zealand, Tibet, and other places last year. Although many beings have lost their lives, their minds really can never die. And as our minds are connected, we can benefit them by cultivating love and compassion and reciting the Mani mantra (OM MANI PADME HUNG). If we are able to pervade their minds with love, they will awaken from the dream of self-grasping and suffering.



Gar Quote No. 2

The first step to eliminate suffering is to give up clinging to this life. From the day we are born to our mothers, until the day we die, this entire life is like last night's dream. After we have died, we awaken in the Bardo—the intermediate state after death. Then this entire lifetime will seem just like a dream; the human world will become a fading memory. It is like waking up from a dream. At this point, if we have failed to eliminate self-grasping, frightening appearances will manifest—compared to which, this human world appears as a pure land. Milarepa knew what would happen if he failed to purify self-grasping, and thus he had the courage to dedicate his entire life to practice, undaunted by hardship. Thus, whenever you encounter difficulty, consider: "this life is like a dream, before too long it will come to an end, and when it comes to an end, I must be prepared."

In order to secure happiness beyond this life, it is important to understand the causes of happiness.

In order to avoid causes of suffering, we must give up self-cherishing attitudes and cultivate an altruistic mind that seeks the benefit of others. The jewel of Bodhichitta is the only protection at the time of death. The essence of this is found in the 37 Bodhisattva Practices—it contains a remedy for any kind of suffering, an answer to all questions. Although the Buddha's teachings are vast, the Buddha himself summarized: "perfectly tame your own mind, this is the Buddha's teaching."

Although most of us live like kings and queens, still we are very skilled in finding a way to suffer—nothing is ever good enough. The rich suffer from their possessions, the poor suffer from a lack of possessions. Milarepa lived in a cave without food and drink and he was the happiest person in the world. The truth is that we can only find happiness in our mind. If the mind has a habit of grasping at suffering, it will create suffering and perceive everything as an enemy and a threat. If one does not grasp inside the mind, even an actual difficult circumstance, like an illness, is not perceived as suffering. Truly understanding karma will enable us to tolerate our present circumstances and will teach us how to abandon suffering in the future.

Karma can be explained very easily—love is the cause of happiness; self-grasping is the cause of suffering. Therefore, in the 37 Bodhisattva Practices it says: "all suffering without exception comes from wishing for one's own happiness. The perfect Buddhas arise from the altruistic mind.



Gar Quote No. 3

This quote is taken from a teaching on refuge that Rinpoche gave in Lapchi in one of Milarepa's caves to a few retreatants.

"Gampopa said, "If we do not practice Dharma in accordance with the Dharma, then Dharma itself will become the cause for falling into the lower realms." What are the so-called Three Jewels? The outer Buddha refers to all the Buddhas of the three times. The outer Dharma consists of the 84,000 heaps of Dharma teachings, yet they are included within loving kindness and compassion. Sangha refers to a person who has cultivated loving kindness and compassion, a good-hearted person. Having been liberated from one's own suffering, rooted in self-grasping, one is able to show the path of liberation to others. This is the Sangha.

Having received the refuge vow, the Three Jewels are also contained within your own mindstream. These are called the inner Three Jewels. The inner Buddha is your mindful-awareness and alertness. The inner Dharma is to never let go of loving kindness and compassion, the altruistic mind.

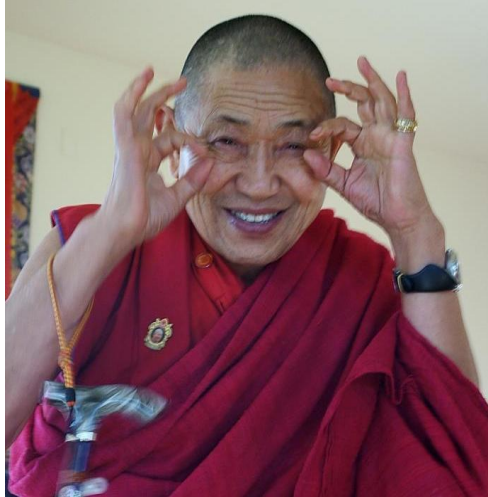
What is the benefit of an altruistic mind? It will destroy self-grasping. When self-grasping collapses; on their very ground, all sentient beings are Buddhas. Lord Buddha said: "The Buddha is within all sentient beings. Yet they are obscured by adventitious stains." What are these adventitious stains? All thoughts and afflictive emotions are contained within a single turn of mind; the root of all sentient beings of the three realms is self-grasping. In reality self-grasping is a mental fixation, a thought grasping at a reality. Tilopa said, "Son! You are not fettered by the appearances; you are fettered by grasping at them." Once all grasping is cleared away, there is nothing that can obscure the mind. Even if thoughts arise, they will not obscure the mind, if you do not grasp at them. If you grasp at them, you will be hurt like being pricked with a thorn, you will become obscured. This is called 'fettered.' We are not fettered by the extent of thoughts that arise, as long as we do not grasp at them. All you practitioners, retreatants, mountain hermits, know this, yet listen to the advice of me, a man with experience. I have gathered many experiences of suffering and difficulties in this lifetime. It is said, "An elder sick person is the best doctor."



Gar Quote No. 4

We must separate the inner mind from the outer conduct. The inner mind realizes that all phenomena of samsara and nirvana lack inherent existence. The outer universe and inner sentient beings lack inherent existence, as they are compounds. If we grasp at the truth of whatever arises within the mind—pleasure, suffering, thoughts and afflictive emotions—we will accumulate karma. If we recognize afflictive emotions and unwholesome thoughts as they arise, this mindful-awareness is the Buddha. All Buddhas abide within the mindstreams of sentient beings. The thoughts are delusions and lack inherent existence—they come and go—yet innate awareness always remains unchangingly.

Thus do not pay attention to the thoughts, but see the awareness that recognizes them. When awareness holds its own with stability, afflictive emotions, pleasure, and suffering will disappear, and your mind will become very clear. If you grasp at the truth of thoughts, your mind will be obscured. Obscurations come from grasping at the truth of thoughts. While understanding that things lack inherent existence and are like a dream, in your activities you should accomplish the benefit of others entirely and abandon harm toward others entirely. Be in harmony with everyone, accomplish the causes of benefit and happiness for all sentient beings, and try to make them joyful and happy.



Gar Quote No. 5

There are two major systems in this world, the mundane and spiritual. These two systems are like two eyes, thus it is important to know them both. It is important to know the essence of these systems. Some people in this world refuse all spirituality, they only believe in the improvement of science. This is slightly mistaken. We do need science but at the same time must not neglect our mind. And even within different belief systems there is disagreement. To me, all religions are necessary and good. I also am very fond of science. I like to have two eyes wide open.

A person who is only concerned with this lifetime is like someone roaming around aimlessly in a pathless desert not knowing where to go. A person that understands karma, cause and effect, is like someone walking on a road, knowing where to go and knowing where they are, but they still have to walk around mountains and face other difficulties. A person with bodhichitta is like someone going on a train. One goes straight through the mountain and is not obstructed by any obstacles on the way. One also reaches the destination faster. A person with love in their hearts can easily sever the flow of afflictions. If one has bodhisattva one becomes very powerful in accomplishing great activities that bring benefit to others. As love will destroy self-grasping, wisdom will naturally dawn and thus one will unmistakably know what to adopt and what to discard. Going with the train is like cultivating relative bodhicitta. When self-grasping has diminished and one sees the nature of mind, one realized ultimate bodhicitta, emptiness. This is like going in an airplane. The airplane moves above the clouds, the clouds are like thoughts and the space above is the expanse of dharmakaya. The airplane of clear knowing awareness moves through the dharmakaya space unobstructedly. It sees the entire world and also the clouds below, but as it overrides the clouds it is not bothered by the clouds, the rain, and the storms.

Similarly, when one realizes the nature of mind, one is no longer affected in any way by the clouds of desire and hatred. Awareness is above these clouds. As the dharmakaya is like space, it is unchanging. Space does not come or go; space always is as it is. Realizing this there is no fear of death; space does not die nor is it born. The phenomena of samsara and nirvana are like clouds; they arise momentarily, but are as they are, compounds. They are impermanent, subject to disintegration, coming and going. Moving above these clouds one will not grasp at their substantial reality and thus will not cling to thoughts of desire or hatred. To see this nature even for just an instant is mahamudra. You will never gain anything new. Awareness is like fire--in the beginning it is like a spark, in the end a blazing fire. But fire is always fire. You are not creating a great mind that you do not yet possess. To see it for just a brief instant is still seeing it, but of course it must be habituated. Only when we preserve this nature continuously will we achieve the state of great happiness and peace where there is no more suffering.



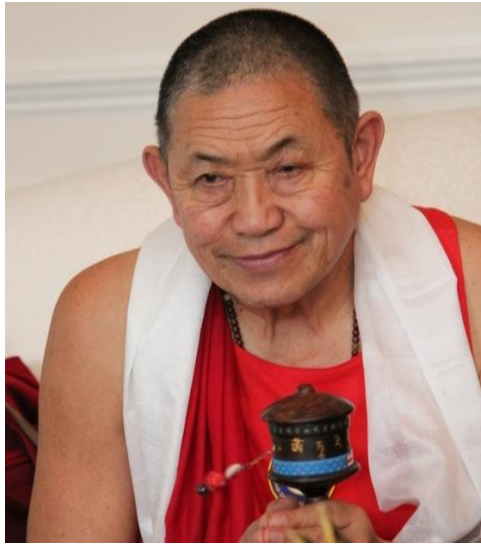
Gar Quote No. 6

Jealousy and pride can be tricky and are difficult to recognize; they sometimes manifest as a subtle feeling of dislike. For instance, when someone tells you how great you are, you feel good about it. But then the person continues, "You are great, but he is still better." Then a feeling of discomfort arises. When others are praised, we do not like to hear about it. When these subtle thoughts of jealousy and pride remain unrecognized, they grow into overwhelming emotions that cling to one's own happiness and to hostility toward others. The root of all this is the grasping at a self. Because we strongly believe in this self, we feel alarmed by everything that threatens it. When others criticize us, we get angry.

In fact, when others blame you, they cannot add a fault to you that you do not possess. When others praise you, you are not becoming a greater person because of that. Whatever others say about you does not affect your faults and qualities. Only you can see whether you have this fault or not. If you do not have the fault for which you have been accused, there is no need to be upset, since criticism does not make you have the fault. If you do have that fault for which you have been accused, then the person pointing it out to you becomes your kind teacher helping you to improve. Dzogchen Patrül Rinpoche said, "Never look at your own qualities, but never look at others' faults. Always look at your own faults, but never look at others' faults."

It is important to recognize each and every subtle arising of jealousy and pride. This requires a great deal of diligence in mindfulness, as these emotions in particular are very difficult to identify. Whenever such a thought arises you must apply a method to abandon it. Ideally you eliminate it through recognition: if you have trained your mind in mindful-awareness you will see the thought the moment it arises and recognize its empty nature. If you recognize this, this thought is rendered powerless. It will not affect you in one or the other way. If your mindfulness is not yet strong enough you can apply the bodhisattva approach, considering that the other person is your mother, your best friend, your child, and therefore give rise to love and compassion for them.

And if this is too difficult in a certain circumstance, you can apply the pratimoksha approach, and that is to contemplate the faults of this emotion, understanding that as a result of acting on such an emotion you will fall into the lower realms. You should apply one of these three approaches according to your mental capacity in the moment of affliction. You have to practice according to your capacity, just like a child must wear children's clothes and an adult wears adult's clothes. A child in an adult's cloak would be troubled. In brief, Lord Buddha summarized, "Perfectly tame your own mind; this is the Buddha's teaching."



Gar Quote No. 7

Effortful compassion arises due to cultivating the thought, "All sentient beings have been my parents in a past life." It is habituated through perceiving everyone that one encounters as family. For instance, you see an older person as your mother or father, a younger person as your child, a same-aged person as your brother or sister. You cultivate this until great love for all beings has taken birth. Effortful compassion requires an object of compassion.

Effortless compassion arises when you rest within the nature of mind. How? When you see your own true nature, it is very blissful, great joy. Then you understand from personal experience that such sublime happiness actually exists, yet limitless sentient beings have not seen this. Whoever has not experienced this nature suffers greatly. Ordinarily we think that some people have great happiness and not many problems--rich people, for example.

Despite the fact that rich people sometimes suffer even more, everyone, to put it briefly, who has not seen the nature of mind suffers. When you realize that, by seeing true happiness immense compassion arises. Effortless compassion does not require an object of compassion. In order for such compassion to arise, you must first experience the nature of mind -- how thoughts and afflictions dissolve into the unmoving space of timeless awareness without rejecting or accepting.

This is a very happy nature. Seeing this, naturally, effortlessly compassion arises for all those who have not been able to see this before. If one has not seen the naturally blissful nature of mind, one is bound to suffer. I bow to the great treasure of unconditioned love, Chenrezig!



Gar Quote No. 8

A thought Rinpoche recorded during the Yamantaka Drubchen in Los Angeles a few days ago.

In prison, Khenpo Münsel Rinpoche taught me this: "The extent of your realization will be known when you encounter difficult circumstances. You will not know the extent of your realization when things go well." When you find yourself in a troublesome situation, when you are in great pain, when an intense emotion arises, only then will you know where you are at with practice.

He added: "Adverse circumstances will reveal your hidden faults." If you are able to hold awareness unwaveringly during such a time, and thus if you are not carried away by the force of the emotion, it is a sign that you have gained experience in practice.

If you were to practice mindful-awareness with great diligence for just a month, if you were to recognize even the slightest thought and not allow your mind to wander off into delusion for that time, even in such a short time you would witness great changes.

Fierce afflictions would not faze you so much anymore, because you would have gained personal experience in observing the illusory play. There is in fact just one remedy necessary--mindful awareness. It is the single sufficient remedy that transforms difficulties inside and out.



Gar Quote No. 9

To me in this world there are only two types of beings: my benefactors of love and my benefactors of patience. The majority is my benefactors of love; they are very kind and help me. Some try to cause harm and create obstacles; these are my benefactors of patience.

The kindness of each benefactor is equal, and thus my love for them is equal. Maybe my benefactors of patience are even kinder to me, as they allow me to practice the perfection of patience. I am thus very grateful to all those who do not like me and make me tame my anger. At the same time, I feel great compassion for their sorrow, but as they allow me to practice patience and my anger and jealousy to gradually diminish, they are my teachers.

Thus, in the end, when I attain enlightenment and all my anger and jealousy are no more, it is due to their kindness. For this reason, I love them greatly.



Gar Quote No. 10

There is pure love and impure love. The difference lies in possessiveness or release. Pure love is the root of lasting happiness. Impure love creates only suffering. Impure love that is tainted by the ego and possessiveness leads to jealousy, then anger and finally separation. Pure love free from possessiveness leads to harmony and peace and may even transform a negative companion. A relationship then becomes a bodhisattva activity.

Someone, who has understood the nature of mind, will even take on a negative companion, as one has understood that negative emotions are temporary; they come and go. That disturbing person's mind and one's own mind essentially are the same. What stays throughout lifetimes as the seed for happiness is pure love. Thus, when one truly understands the nature of mind, samaya-commitments cannot be broken. Even if it happens that one quarrels, this temporary occurrence never moves the ever-prevailing love.

If one does not understand the nature of mind, one will cling and try to possess. We then are nice to those who are nice to us, but not nice to those who are not nice to us. This love is impermanent; it cannot last.

Pure love will always last. And my love for you will always last.



Gar Quote No. 11

There are many thoughts of ignorance such as dullness, fogginess, discouragement, laziness, depression, or irritation without reason. In particular, if we are lazy we will not accomplish anything, neither in a worldly sense nor in dharma. The supreme antidote is mindful-awareness, it will overcome all negativities. These thoughts are fleeting, they will not last, and they come and go.

Awareness always remains and recognizes them. If you maintain mindfulness you will know with certainty what to do and what not to do. Thus clear awareness is most important; it is your inner Buddha. This awareness cannot be seen, it is empty, and yet it has great vividness. It doesn't come or go, it always is as it is, like space.

Remain free from distraction then nothing will obscure this awareness, thoughts have no essence as they will not last. They come and go like waves on water.



Gar Quote No. 12

It is said, “If you would like to know what you did in past lives, look at your present body,” and “if you would like to know where you will go next, look at your present actions.”

If you give rise to jealousy and hatred due to self-grasping, you will be a samara sentient being wandering down to the hell realm, hungry spirit realm, or animal realm. Where you go is up to you. It is your choice. It is up to you whether you will go up into the pure lands of the Buddha’s or down into samara states. When your own mind is purified, you will become a Buddha. If you do not purify your mind, you will be a sentient being. Where you go will be determined by your present actions.

In “The Thirty-Seven Bodhisattva Practices”, it is said, “The Subduer said that all the unbearable suffering of the three lower realms is the fruition of wrongdoing. Therefore, never committing negative deeds, even at peril to one’s life, is the Bodhisattvas’ practice.



Gar Quote No. 13

One day each of us will die; there is no one in this world that does not have to die. There is no benefit in being attached to this lifetime, because it will be left behind. As it is said in "The Thirty-Seven Bodhisattva Practices," "Consciousness, the guest, will cast aside the guest-house of the body." So, we can ask ourselves, "Does it really not matter whether I am prepared for death, or does it matter somewhat? Why would I want to receive Phowa instructions?" If you receive Phowa instructions you receive a method to attain freedom. The body has nine openings through which the consciousness can leave after death. Only one of them leads to freedom--the opening at the crown. When we receive Phowa instructions, we learn how to transfer our consciousness through the crown.

If we do not know this, we will be tossed around by afflictions such as hatred, desire, ignorance, jealousy, etc., and thus, we will lack independence, we will be overpowered by the afflictions. Being controlled by the afflictions will cause the consciousness to leave through one of the eight impure openings of the body, which will lead to birth in samara existence. The Buddha said, "Independence is happiness; dependency is suffering.

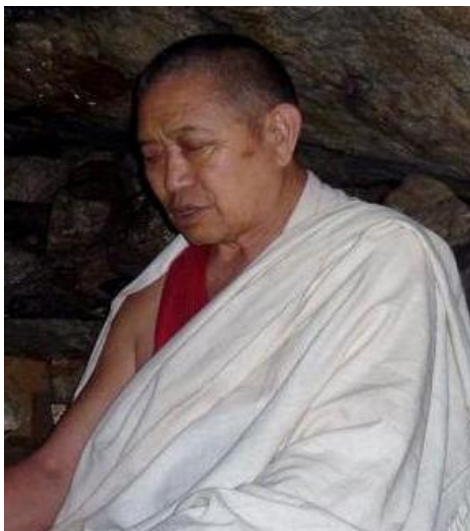


Gar Quote No. 14

An ordinary person believes in the appearing world as real and the dream state as unreal, whereas the Buddhas have seen this world to be illusory just like a dream. The Buddhas say that in the Bardo after death we will perceive delusive manifestations, that the three lower realms are an illusion, and so forth. So then one might think, "If it is just like an unreal dream, then it can't be that bad." That is a quite mistaken understanding. Although illusory by nature, a dream will be experienced as a reality for as long as the dream lasts. This lifetime is like a dream, but until the karma of this life comes to an end, we will perceive this lifetime as real; we will not awaken from the dream of this life. For instance, if you have a nightmare, you will experience it as a reality for as long as you dream; you will not just wake up at will. When we die, we awaken from the dream of this life, and this life becomes a fading memory.

None of it is left behind, and soon we find ourselves grasping at a new reality, the bardo state. If you understand this life to be like a dream, you will understand that everything within it -- happiness, wealth, and pleasure, pain, and suffering--is impermanent and will not last. You will thus not be so overwhelmed by different circumstances. You will stay focused and not be carried away by indulgence in pleasure, and you will not be much affected by difficult circumstances.

Our life is like an oil lamp. The oil is the karma and the fire is this life. As long as there is oil, there is fire. Our life lasts until the karma for this life comes to an end. Then we will move on, controlled by the karmic imprints stored in our mind continuum.



Gar Quote No. 15

Eat little food in the evening, and contemplate death and impermanence before you go to sleep. The dreams of an ordinary person are the manifestations of virtuous and non-virtuous imprints laid down within the mind. When the wind energies enter the impure channels of afflictions, we experience a nightmare. Nightmares are the self-light of negative emotions. Positive dreams are awakening of virtuous thoughts. In order to recognize the dream state, you must first gain stability of awareness during the day.

First, you must be able to overcome all thoughts and emotions of the daytime; then, eventually you will be able to recognize them when you dream. In the beginning, you will be able to recognize coarse thoughts such as fear during the dream state, and later on also the thoughts in more subtle dreams. Through this, as ignorance diminishes, your sleep will at first become lighter.

Ordinary sleep is a state of deep ignorance; it is an affliction. Thus, instead of asking, "Did you sleep well last night?" you should ask, "How much time did you waste sleeping last night?" Of course, we must sleep enough to maintain a healthy body, but there should certainly be a limit. I suggest no more than five to six hours a night, since you all have to work. Try to fall asleep with great clarity, and eventually through habituation, you will never fall into a state of ignorance, but rather will sustain clear awareness.



Gar Quote No. 16

How has samsara arisen? The illusory self-clings to its own happiness. Ordinary beings are only concerned about their worldly affairs. In order to overcome this attachment, we must first recognize the suffering nature of samsara. For this reason, the Buddha first taught, "Recognize suffering and then abandon the origin of suffering." Even though we experience all sorts of pleasures as human beings, this samsaric happiness is like eating a delicious meal mixed with poison. Having recognized suffering, we will yearn to become free from it. How do we do that? We practice the Dharma and liberate our mind from the causes of suffering. This is difficult because we are attached to worldly life; we think that one day it is going to make us happy. If this would be ultimately true, then there would be nothing wrong with being attached, but unfortunately clinging attachment can only lead to suffering.

When we pass from this life, we will not be able to bring with us even the slightest thing or person, no matter how much we want to. There is no other way than to leave this guest-house of the body. The only things that will follow us are the karmic traces stored within our mind-continuum. For this reason, it is so important to recognize suffering and eliminate its causes before it is too late.



Gar Quote No. 17

The Om Ah Hung Vajra Recitation, Part 1:

What do the Om, Ah, and Hung syllables represent? Om represents the vajra of form, the union of appearance and emptiness. Ah represents the vajra of speech, the union of sound and emptiness. Hung represents the vajra of mind, the union of clear awareness and emptiness. These are called "the three secrets." When there is no grasping to perceived form, this is the union of appearance and emptiness. Forms continue to appear and are seen, yet there is no grasping at their reality. When there is no grasping at perceived sounds, this is the union of sound and emptiness. Sounds continue to be heard, yet there is no grasping at their reality. If the mind neither grasps at sights nor sounds, it will naturally rest within the union of awareness and emptiness and thus will not grasp at mental arisings either. The three vajras are contained within the vajra of the mind.

Thus the Om, Ah, and Hung syllables mark the forehead, throat, and heart of all deities—while deities appear in myriad forms, the essence of their body, speech, and mind is the same.



Gar Quote No. 18

The Om Ah Hung Vajra Recitation, Part 2:

Sometimes people ask, "Are we 'one' or 'the same'?" Well, we are neither. Is there "one" space, or are different spaces "the same"? Space is neither "one" nor "the same," and so is the nature of mind. Trying to figure it out by labeling it "one" or "the same" is just another mental fixation. Likewise, there are neither one nor many Buddhas. You can't say there is only one, as there are limitless Buddhas, yet you can't say there are many, as their essence is a single ground -- emptiness and compassion abiding like space. Thus, do not grasp at singularity or multiplicity.

Whatever appears is empty of self nature, like a rainbow in the sky. They lack inherent existence, as they are compounds and thus impermanent. The nature of mind of all beings always remains like space; it is uncompounded. While their bodies appear diversely, the mind of all beings has the same essence.

There is only one such thing called "mind," just as there is only one such thing called "water," although water manifests in different ways -- as oceans, rivers, rain, drops, etc. If everyone were to practice OM AH HUNG, their mindfulness would have the same essence without the slightest difference in quality or size.



Gar Quote No. 19

The actual practice of the Om Ah Hung Vajra Recitation:

As a formal meditation session, it is best to do this practice in the morning at dawn, but you should actually do it throughout the day. You can do this practice whenever you breathe, and you always breathe, don't you? When you inhale the air, think "OM." You do not have to visualize it or say it out loud; just think "OM." When the wind reaches the navel, think "AH," and when you exhale the wind, think "HUNG."

The main focus is on the AH at the navel. AH has the nature of fire and is heat. When you inhale the wind, think that the wind dissolves into the AH at the navel. The quintessence of the wind is kept, and the stale air is always exhaled. In formal meditation sessions, as you inhale, think that you are pressing down the upper winds and simultaneously draw up the lower winds by gently contracting the anus. This "union of the upper and lower winds" forms an egg-shaped sphere at the navel center. Hold your breath for a short time and observe the nature of mind.

Do not retain the wind too long, only as much as is comfortable. Again exhale and think "HUNG." In your daily activities, there is no need to hold the breath; you can just breathe naturally and think "OM AH HUNG." The main focus is always on the fire at the navel, and eventually warmth will arise. This warmth in fact is already there, but ordinary beings do not recognize it. This practice is an excellent method to sustain mindfulness; it is a method to unite the mind with the winds. If we lack mindfulness, the winds and mind go separate ways and we become deluded.



Gar Quote No. 20

The actual practice of the Om Ah Hung Vajra Recitation:

Of all the chakras in the body, the navel is the most important one. Our human body first formed from the navel through which we were connected to our mothers. The navel chakra is the royal seat of all winds in the body, and in particular the wind pertaining to the fire element. The fire at the navel is Vajrayogini and everyone has it; beings only do not recognize it.

The navel chakra is the most stabilizing, grounding chakra; therefore, it is advisable to direct all visualizations to the navel chakra. By focusing on the navel chakra, the winds move down, and thus the mind settles. Sometimes, when focusing on visualizations at the heart center, as the winds enter the heart chakra, it could lead to emotional imbalance and mental instability.

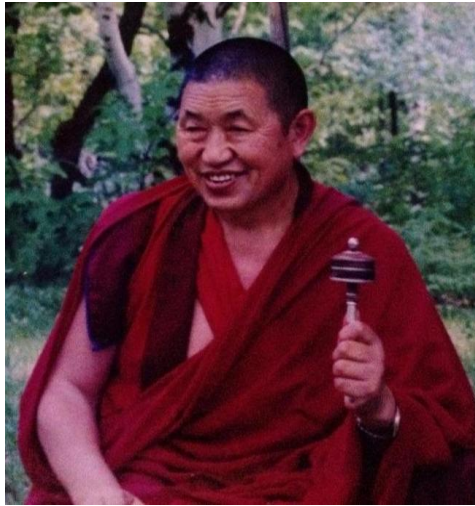
Focusing on the navel center is thus more secure.



Gar Quote No. 21

When you meditate, just rest and watch the nature of your mind. There will be a space where past thoughts have ceased and future thoughts have not yet arisen, and that space is completely empty of all fixations. If you recognize this space, simply continue to remain within it.

One cannot say this moment of emptiness has been seen, nor can one say it has not been seen. But the one who thinks, "I have seen it," this is the one to be recognized. And the one who thinks, "I have not seen it," is also the one to be recognized. It is the one who performs all the actions. This is the one that you must recognize as the nature of your mind. This nature is beyond coming and going, it always remains like space. Thoughts come and go, so do not hold on to them, but pay attention to what always remains, no matter what comes and goes around it.



Gar Quote No. 22

If we engage in the practice of refuge but we don't have the arising of authentic love, it will bring very little benefit. Whenever we even think about our spiritual guide we should have the arising of so much love and devotion that tears come to our eyes. Whenever we have this kind of strong authentic devotion it is considered a sign of heat, heat generated in the mind that is powerful enough to melt the ice of this mind that is fixed through the habits of negative emotions.

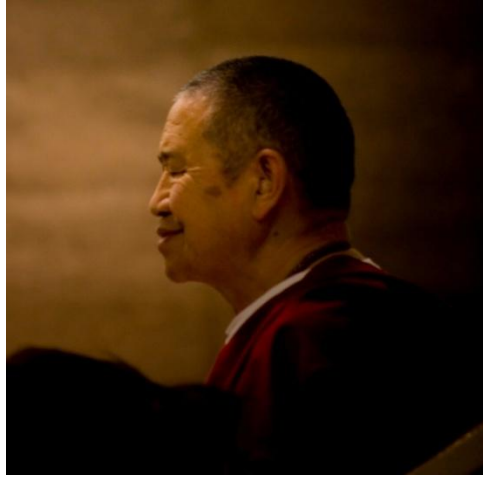
Thus we should meditate on loving-kindness, devotion, and compassion again and again until this sign of tears arises. In Dzogchen teachings it is said that to have this kind of authentic arising of devotion, so much so that one begins to cry, at that moment one can catch a glimpse into the true nature of the mind. We should make effort then to practice compassion until we actually reach the point of tears.



Gar Quote No. 23

How you overcome ordinary thoughts? You must maintain mindfulness and not grasp at whatever arises. No matter which emotion or thought arises, there is only one antidote; mindful awareness. No matter what arises, continue to remain within the natural state of mind. Neither think, 'it exists, OR 'this is how it is,' nor think, 'it doesn't exist,' OR 'this is not how it is.' Let go of all beliefs and do not hold on to anything. Only by seeing the space like unconfined nature of mind you will be able to destroy negative thoughts.

In the true nature of mind, there is no existence or non-existence, no this or that, no truth or untruth, no good or bad, no right or wrong. All worldly affairs seem futile when you rest in this nature that abides like the expanse of space transcending time.



Gar Quote No. 24

In the morning, you should reflect on the difficulty to obtain a precious human birth; in the evening, you should reflect on death and impermanence, and throughout the day, you should reflect on karma, cause and effect, and act according to the 37 Bodhisattva Practices.

Meditate in shorter but more frequent sessions to ensure the good quality of your meditation. It is best to just observe the nature of mind, the ordinary bare mind, and preserve it. When thoughts appear neither reject nor accept them. Do not try to stop thoughts, allow them to arise, but recognize their arising and do not pursue them. The goal is not to have no thoughts but for thoughts to arise and yet be rendered powerless. You must habituate this. Then later when negative thoughts and emotions arise, you will not fall under their power. The energy of these thoughts may arise but will not affect you in one or the other way.

Sometimes in meditation, there will be a time when there are actually no thoughts. In that instant, you will know that this is the true nature of your mind - the mind that abides like space, vivid and empty, open, not grasping at anything. This alert awareness must be upheld throughout all activities.

So do not try to stop thoughts, just relax into the nature of awareness. Whenever you meditate, our minds will be together. If you understand this you will not feel tired of meditation.



Gar Quote No. 25

Bodhicitta is not a practice that fits here or there. Bodhicitta is everything. Bodhicitta is the preliminary, it is also the actual practice, and it is also the result in the end. Thus, you should cultivate bodhicitta day and night, continuously. When you wake up at night, do not think of yourself, remember sentient beings, and remember their suffering. Whoever has not realized the nature of mind, reality itself, suffers. Whether they are rich, poor, beautiful, powerful, smart, or not, if they have not realized how things really are, they are bound to suffer. Do not forget their suffering and give rise to the courageous resolve not to leave them behind but to engage in activities that will help them become free of suffering.

Through bodhicitta, you will realize that there is no self, self-grasping will be destroyed, for when you think of others you do not think about yourself.

Ultimately 'self' and 'other' are but thoughts. When we understand that we are not separate from others, we begin to fathom the preciousness of compassion, of bodhicitta.



Gar Quote No. 26

In order to form a positive imprint in your mindstream, you should always recite a deity's mantra such as the Amitabha mantra, or play a mantra CD in your home. Think that your yidam deity always abides above your crown. Think, 'when I die it is important that my consciousness leaves through the crown and merges with Amitabha.' If you habituate this throughout your life, then even if you die suddenly, for instance in a car accident, your consciousness will merge with the yidam deity above your crown due to the habitual pattern formed when you were alive. Then you will be liberated doubtlessly even if you do not have the time to practice Phowa.

Thus it is important that you repeatedly remember this for as long as you are alive.



Gar Quote No. 27

In the past, you have taken on countless lives, you have assumed innumerable bodies. There is no benefit in knowing what you were in a past life. It is important to prepare for the future, to strive for enlightenment. From the ultimate perspective, past lifetimes are, in fact, illusions. On the relative level, we talk about numbers and different lifetimes, but in fact there is only a single continuum of mind, that is beyond birth and death. From the perspective of mind itself, there is no past life, no present life, no future life, and no bardo. Past lives are illusions, unreal, so do not ponder over illusions. You don't have to know about them, as they only belong to the relative level, not the ultimate truth.

What is important for you now is to destroy self-grasping and to see the nature of mind. Do not think about the past or the future. Do not even think about the present; do not cling to any thought. Look at your mind right now. Look at the pure natural state as it is.

Only hold on to bodhicitta, love and compassion, and nothing else, day and night. Always purify your mind by sustaining awareness of the natural state.



Gar Quote No. 28

Do not worry about enlightenment; the Buddha is within your mind already, ready to be seen. But because we cannot turn inward and are constantly distracted, we fail to recognize the Buddha. When past thoughts have ceased and future thoughts not yet arisen, in this space between fixations, you can glimpse the nature of mind abiding like space; this is the Buddha. If you remain within this nature continuously, you are enlightened.

Whenever you stop to grasp, there is no cause of samsara. Whenever you begin to grasp, you have again created the cause of samsara. The Buddha is actually not somewhere far away. The Buddha is always ready to be seen. If you do not give up the fixation to a self, but try to escape from samsara by secluding your body, you will still not be liberated. If you give up the fixation to a self, while continuing to live in the world, you will be liberated.

In particular, when difficulties and suffering arise, do not grasp at them, let these thoughts dissolve into space. Even if there is an external so-called problem, the mind does not need to grasp. People who do not understand this sometimes commit suicide, unable to bear even the slightest problem. The Buddha is nowhere apart from your own mind.



Gar Quote No. 29

Verse 32 of the Bodhisattva Practices: "If, influenced by disturbing emotions, one points out another bodhisattva's faults, oneself is diminished. Therefore, not speaking about the faults of those who have entered the Great Vehicle is the bodhisattvas' practice."

In his Prayer to be Reborn in Dewachen, Chagme Rinpoche says that the fault of denigrating a bodhisattva is worse than any of the five deeds with immediate result. Since we do not know who is and who is not a bodhisattva, we must be extremely careful. Thus, the swift path of Vajrayana teaches us to train in pure view, to recognize the buddha nature in all beings, the nature which transcends gender, race, culture and social status. In fact, tantra teaches that we must even see the four elements as deities. A bodhisattva, one who acts for the welfare of sentient beings, places loving kindness, compassion, faith, and respect into the mind streams of many sentient beings. If someone denigrates such a bodhisattva, all those beings will turn away from devotion, and this becomes the cause for their plunge into the lower realms. It is important that you practice free from any bias, do not engage in separation while pretending to be a dharma practitioner.

The mind that thinks they are not good is a dirty mind. As long as you have negative thoughts in your mind, no matter how much you attempt to be pure, you cannot become pure. It is said that everything that appears and exists is all-encompassing purity, and also that within every sentient being dwells the buddha. The Secret Mantra Vajrayana teaches that the external universe is an immeasurable palace, and all the internal sentient beings are dakas and dakinis. This is how it truly is in reality. When you understand this, your mind becomes like space, very blissful and happy. But if you hold a biased view of attachment and aversion, your mind is miserable and your will slander others. The faults or qualities other traditions may have are irrelevant, what causes harm is your own negative thought. For instance, if one gives rise to strong faith in a dog's tooth, relics will emerge from it. The dog's tooth is impure, but relics will emerge if your own mind is pure.

We have to purify our own minds. We should not insult each other, but rather uphold the Buddha Dharma. The Buddha Dharma is love and compassion, and whoever possesses love and compassion upholds the Buddha Dharma. Whoever does not possess love and compassion does not uphold the Buddha Dharma. In the Buddha Dharma, there is no hatred or jealousy, and if we are in the grip of hatred and jealousy, we do not uphold the Dharma. It is because of such bias that we denigrate and criticize bodhisattvas. In the Seven Verses of Protection of Tara, Lord Jigten Sumgon says, "deceived by errant dogma" actually, it is not the dogma that is bad, but rather one's misunderstanding of it, it is bad. It is through negative thoughts about others that you are "deceived." We practitioners must clean our minds and cultivate pure view free from any bias, thinking that everyone is a buddha, all sentient beings are our parents. When your practice has developed, you will not denigrate anyone, much less a bodhisattva. If one fails to benefit beings in this way, and instead transmits thoughts of attachment, aversion, pride, and misconception, one will be plunged into hell. This is a sign that a spiritual master doesn't have cultivated true wisdom. Yet for us, we must be compassionate toward all, especially toward those with inferior wisdom.



Gar Quote No. 30

During H.E. Garchen Rinpoche's recent visit at Jangchubling in Dehra Dun, India, His Holiness Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang Rinpoche clarified the meaning of White Tara's seven eyes. As students have asked about this again and again, Rinpoche would like to pass on the explanation on White Tara's seven eyes in this quote:

White Tara's seven eyes represent the Three Gates of Complete Emancipation and the Four Immeasurables. The Three Gates of Complete Emancipation are: wishlessness, signlessness--all phenomena lack inherently existing characteristics such as color and shape, and emptiness--the enlightened mind that realizes the empty nature of the former two.

In order to attain the Three Gates of Complete Emancipation, one must cultivate the Four Immeasurables--immeasurable love, immeasurable compassion, immeasurable joy, and immeasurable equanimity. The Four Immeasurables are thus the cause of the Three Gates of Complete Emancipation.



Gar Quote No. 31

Apart from sustaining mindfulness throughout the day and night, there is no other clear light yoga. It begins with being able to sustain mindfulness throughout the day. When your mind is very clear and sharp during the day, eventually it will carry through the night. When you fall asleep continuing to sustain mindfulness, in a union of clear awareness and emptiness, you will first recognize the dream state. This recognition is called "recognizing the luminosity of the dream." Then eventually, through consistent mindfulness, even the dream state will disappear, and you will rest in clarity naturally; awareness will remain. Eventually, clear awareness will even remain during the deep sleep state. It is like the illumination of a lamp flame. There are no thoughts, and there is a subtle feeling of your sleep's rest. This is accomplished when you sustain clear awareness continuously--remain free from the slightest distraction--throughout day and night.

Finally, in deep sleep, you will recognize the clear light of deep sleep. What we call clear light is your ability to outshine thoughts and emotions or feelings with clear awareness. These thoughts, while arising, dissolve without having affected you or leaving a trace behind. A beginning practitioner will sustain mindfulness sometimes, and then will again become unmindful. This must first be overcome during the day. You must first be able to destroy whatever habitual thoughts arise, then habituate sustaining clear awareness. Then when you go to sleep, uphold mindfulness by falling asleep practicing the OM AH HUNG Vajra Recitation. At times, you might remember the OM AH HUNG during the dream state, and eventually mindfulness will remain even in the deep sleep state.



Gar Quote No. 32

A person who has seen the nature of mind as it is and has gained stability in abiding in it, as they watch their mind they see the empty essence like space, unidentifiable. The nature of mind cannot be described; it is like space. Milarepa said, "When there is no difference between space and mind, that is the perfected dharmakaya." The empty space-like essence is the quality of dharmakaya. Then, there is a vivid clear awareness that knows its empty space-like essence. The nature of clarity is emptiness; the nature of emptiness is clarity. They are not separate, they are non-distinct, they are the union of clarity and emptiness.

The qualities of the samboghakaya arise from the nature, which is clear awareness. From the union of clarity and emptiness shines the natural radiance of compassion pervading all the reaches of space. It pervades wherever emptiness pervades. We thus say that the buddhas' compassion pervades everywhere. The all-pervasive compassion is the nirmanakaya.



Gar Quote No. 33

There is no greater negativity than committing suicide--one creates a very powerful cause of intense suffering by taking one's own life.

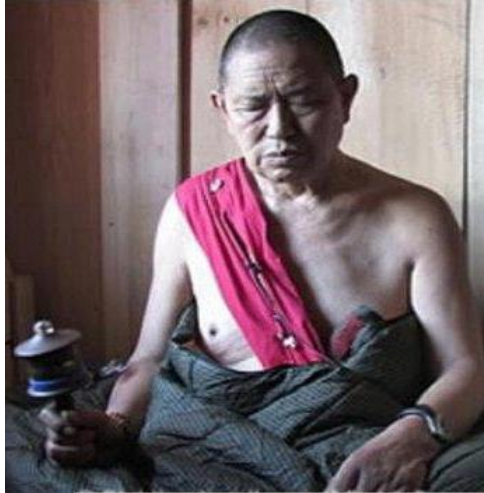
You must understand that all suffering has its seat in the self-grasping mind. When trying to exchange your body, it does not result in exchanging your mind--you cannot escape from your mind. Committing suicide leads to even greater suffering than you experience now; you will not be able to just erase your suffering.

You have your karma and your lifespan. You must allow your karma to play itself out and not bring an end to your life prematurely. Moreover, by killing one's body you are killing billions of life-forms living within your body, and you acquire the negative karma of that.

You should rather transform your mind. When you are suffering, practice tonglen; take on the suffering of others and think that by you experiencing suffering they will be released. All suffering is temporary; so is conditional happiness. The mind must gain stability in being unmoved by impermanent circumstances. It is never too late to begin to practice. We have wandered in samsara since beginningless time, and at some point we must begin to practice.

Don't worry about how much time you have wasted for eons in the past--begin to practice now and you will die free of regrets. What you do from now on is more important. When you feel sick in your body, send your mind out into space; do not fixate on the body. Separate the mind from the body and rest in space. You can also visualize Tara in space and recite her mantra. I personally have many pains, but if I do not fixate on them, if I send my mind out into space and meditate, I do not feel them. Only when I begin to think about them do I again feel the pain.

You should moreover think that your own suffering is quite small compared to the suffering of so many other sentient beings. For example, I was kept in prison for twenty years, and you could call this a problem, but not one time did I think about when I would be released. I just practiced Tara day by day, and let alone not thinking of suicide, I was actually quite happy in my mind. If you want to become free of suffering, you must change your mind, not your body. Pray to Tara all the time and recite her mantra, so you never forget about her. Then I can also help you, as I am always practicing Tara. Whenever you experience pain and difficulty, think of Tara single-pointedly.



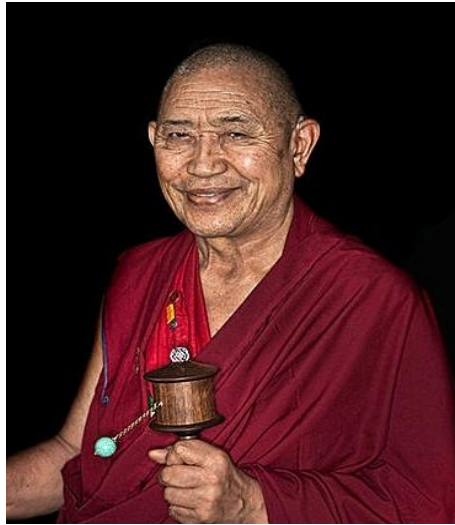
Gar Quote No. 34

Meditation means to first recognize and then habituate to the nature of mind. First, you must understand the basic nature of mind. This mind is a single ground within which we are one. Once you have recognized the nature of mind, you must always sustain it, uphold it, without falling into distraction. To habituate this present awareness is meditation. No matter what external condition may arise, happiness or suffering, you should never stray from this clear awareness that recognizes everything that arises.

You should practice mindful awareness in all your activities; this is the perfect conduct. The view, the meditation, and the conduct are all mind, the single ground. There are many thoughts that always arise, but thoughts are impermanent; they come and go. The mind from which they arise, however, abides like space; it never comes and goes. It is always there, it has always been there, and it will always be there. It is like space, or a vast ocean, or a mirror. It never goes anywhere, just like space. Therefore, do not cling to the temporary thoughts. No matter how much you cling to them, you cannot actually hold on to them, as they are impermanent by nature. Rather, observe that which never goes away, the clear knowing awareness that recognizes all the thoughts arising. This awareness is the buddha within you; it is your true nature.

Whatever thoughts arise, negative thoughts, sadness, afflictive emotions, do not follow them but continue to observe with mindfulness. When this mindfulness is sustained, arising thoughts will naturally dissipate without the need to abandon them. This awareness must be upheld, not only in meditation sessions, but also during all your activities. No matter what you experience, happiness or suffering, it does not affect your awareness; it always is as it is. This nature is buddha nature, and every being has it.

In addition, you should read "The Ganges Mahamudra" by Tilopa every day; this will support your meditation. You should also read "The Thirty-Seven Bodhisattva Practices" every day; this will support your conduct. What is most important is to cultivate bodhicitta, love and compassion, in all your activities. Without compassion, you will never understand the nature of mind. Without compassion, the mind is like dirty water. The water is cloudy, and you are unable to see its true clear nature. If you give rise to compassion, then you will understand the nature of mind very easily.



Gar Quote No. 35

We suffer without choice. We do not want to suffer and we try everything to be happy but suffering happens regardless of our wishes, and we can't do anything about it. Why is this so? It is because we have already created the causes for suffering in the past. But, where are those causes of suffering? They are within your mind right now; it is the self-centered mind and all the negative emotions that come from it. If you recognize this, you will understand that you are responsible for your suffering and that there is no one else to blame. Understanding this, you will be able to tolerate difficulties and avoid more suffering in the future. If you want to be happy you must know the causes for happiness. The Buddha said, "I can show you the path to liberation, but liberation depends on yourself." Whether you are a Buddhist or not, whether you practice any religion or not, you have a mind, and temporarily all causes for happiness and suffering are within this mind.

The only cause of happiness is love and the only cause of suffering is self-grasping. If you just understand this, you have understood the workings of karma, cause and effect, perfectly. 'All suffering without exception comes from wishing for one's own happiness. The perfect Buddhas arise from the altruistic mind.' Whether you follow any religion or not, the true nature of your mind is wisdom awareness and that is the actual Buddha.

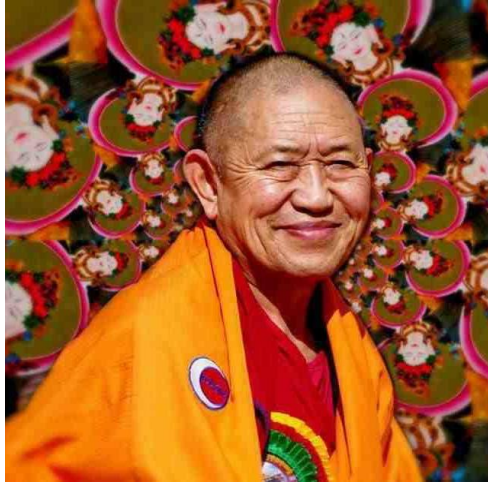
The Buddha said: "The Buddha is within all beings. Beings are only obscured by temporary stains." Whenever you let go of the false belief in a self, you will see your true nature, emptiness-compassion. Every being sees the Buddha when they see what they really are, their true nature.



Gar Quote No. 36

What I am sharing with you are not the words of a great scholar but the words of an old father with a lot of experience. I have experienced great external hardships, having spent twenty years confined in a labor camp. You could call this 'a problem.' However, inside I truly did not experience suffering; moreover, I consider my time in prison as a very beneficial time. As a boy, before I was arrested, I had faith in the Dharma but lacking practical experience, my faith was somewhat depthless. In prison, I had the opportunity to actually practice, taking external hardships onto the path with patient forbearance. Not a single time did I hope to become free from prison, I lived day by day, free of hopes and fears, sending compassion to beings, relying on Tara, praying to her secretly. Having thus applied the Dharma and seen the results of practice, I gained confidence in the validity of the Dharma and my faith became deep and irreversible.

Then I thought that it would benefit others to share these experiences, and as I travel to teach, I am only sharing my heart advice based on my own experiences. It is important to gain personal experience in order to really understand the Dharma. It is important to ask: What is true happiness? Is it external or internal? Even if one is very rich and has everything one could wish for, if there is hatred in one's family, one experiences hell-like suffering. If one is poor but shares love and kindness with one's family, one experiences a pure land. Happiness can only arise from within the mind, happiness is not at all related to the external world. When the mind is disturbed, one finds suffering anywhere, even in a positive circumstance. If the mind is at peace and filled with love, one finds happiness even while surrounded by a seemingly difficult outer circumstance. "All suffering without exception comes from wishing for one's own happiness.



Gar Quote No. 37

When you give rise to a wish to help others, your wisdom will increase. Conversely, when you maintain mindful awareness, your wish to benefit others will increase. In the beginning, train your mind in the Samanatha of love. Through continuous practice, you will gain personal experience and you will see the effects of practice. To apply the practice again and again is the only method to be happy. If you do not abandon the wish for your own happiness and the negative emotions coming from this wish, you will never find true happiness. If you do not abandon the causes of suffering, you will have no choice but to suffer and there is nothing you can do about it. Karma is nothing that the Buddha had just invented. With his all-knowing wisdom, the Buddha saw how things really are and with his compassion he showed this to us. He simply showed us that the very nature of compassion and kindness is happiness, and that the very nature of ego-grasping is suffering.

The stronger our ego-grasping, the less we are able to care for others. All that the Buddha taught in the three vehicles, the Pratimoksha- Bodhisattva- and Vajrayana-vehicles, is a method to give rise to bodhicitta. These methods must be put into practice and then you must persevere in practice, but you cannot expect immediate results. Your practice is for the sake of many future lifetimes.

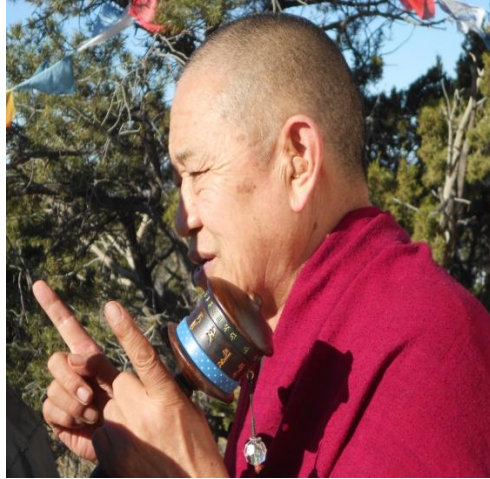
The Buddha said, "If you would like to know where you will go next, look at your present actions." You will only be able to practice the true dharma if you trust in karma, cause and effect, and understand the preciousness of patient forbearance and love. If you do not have this as a basis, all other practice will bear not meaningful results.



Gar Quote No. 38

The view of Vajrayana is extremely difficult to realize. Because it seems obscure, some feel safer calling themselves followers of the Hinayana path and are not interested in the Vajrayana path. This is a legitimate aspiration. However, the view of Vajrayana is actually not so obscure and difficult to understand. Vajrayana explains how things really are. For instance, imagine a big glacier. Someone who does not understand Vajrayana will think, "This is a mountain of ice." Someone who understands Vajrayana will think, "This appears to be a mountain of ice; however, the nature of ice is water. It is not always an ice mountain; once it melts it turns into water." If you only understand this principle, you understand the view of Vajrayana. Vajrayana says that although the six realms appear, the appearance is temporary. In reality, all sentient beings possess Buddha nature, the potential to attain enlightenment.

In the mind, various thoughts arise temporarily. They are not who we really are; they come and they go and constantly change. Now you are angry; the next moment you love. All these thoughts are momentary. But there is a ground of all beings, there is a conscious awareness that is always there. It never comes and goes; it is always there unchangingly. It doesn't die and isn't born. There is an underlying eternal conscious awareness. You have never separated from it and you never will, for this is who you really are. When you see this nature, your true nature, you see the true meaning of Vajrayana.



Gar Quote No. 39

The 37 Bodhisattva Practices Series, Verse 1

“At this time when the difficult-to-gain ship of leisure and fortune has been obtained, ceaselessly hearing, pondering, and meditating day and night in order to liberate oneself and others from the ocean of cyclic existence is the bodhisattvas’ practice.”

Many people do not consider the preliminaries very important, thinking that because they have read a book they already understand the eighteen leisures and fortunes and don't have to concern themselves with them any longer. They rather move on the 'real and more profound' practices. According to Lord Jigten Sumgon, the preliminaries are most profound. You will only become free from the cycle of existence, the ocean of suffering, if your whole heart wants to become free, otherwise no matter what other advanced practices you may engage in, they will not free you from suffering and in fact, they may even reinforce the ego. In the beginning, you must understand the preciousness of this human incarnation and how difficult it is to obtain. Normally we ask others, 'how did you sleep last night?' And when they respond, 'I slept well,' we say, 'that's really good.' If we didn't get enough sleep, we feel sorry for ourselves.

This is a sign that the thought of the precious human life has not yet fully dawned in our mind. If it would have dawned in our mind, we would feel sorry for every minute we wasted sleeping. We would not be sluggish and grouchy in the morning, but upon awakening, we would remember the precious human life and feel a sense of urgency to get out of bed. Thus, in the morning, it is important to remember the precious human life. You may wonder how to do your daily tasks without sleep. You do not need to abandon sleep, but you should practice moderation and discipline. Furthermore, if you practice for instance the Om Ah Hung Vajra Recitation as you fall asleep, your sleep will become virtuous. Every time you awake in the middle of the night, you should remember sentient beings and recite a few Mani mantras for them. This human life is the fruition of myriad virtues accumulated throughout countless lifetimes.

It is a one-time opportunity and we shouldn't expect to obtain such a precious opportunity again in the future. Knowing how precious this human life is, one would not waste one's time with meaningless activities. Moreover, one will always be joyful even if things seem to go wrong, if one becomes a beggar, is without friends and family, or without wealth. Let alone becoming depressed, one would be happy, knowing that one possesses a precious human body, the ship that can bring one beyond the ocean of suffering. In fact, one will know that worldly pleasures will only bring one's own ruin in the future. This human life is very powerful, for humans are endowed with intelligence and the six elements. It is the crossroad between going up or down. If we know how to use this human existence well, we can attain enlightenment in a single life. If we waste this human existence and engage in negative deeds, it will propel us into the lower realms for countless eons.



Gar Quote No. 40

The transformation that occurs when the afflictive emotions are subdued with sharp discriminating awareness is the arising of the wrathful deities.

The actual nature of the afflictive emotions is primordial wisdom, thus the five poisons are the five wisdoms. Through the power of awareness, the afflictive emotions collapse and this collapsing is revealing of their true nature, primordial wisdom. This collapsing or transformation is the wrathful deity. The wrathful deities are infuriated with compassion, they are not angry. They are like a mother taming a mischievous child. The mother loves the child and becomes infuriated in order to help her child.

The wrathful deities arise with intense compassion taming the very coarse afflictive emotions of sentient beings. Their compassion is even more intense than the compassion of peaceful deities.



Gar Quote No. 41

The 37 Bodhisattva Practices Series, Verse 2

"The mind of attachment to loved ones wavers like water. The mind of hatred of enemies burns like fire. The mind of ignorance which forgets what to adopt and what to discard is greatly obscured. Abandoning one's homeland is the bodhisattvas' practice."

The root cause of samsara is the attachment to the false idea of a self. Due to attachment, we take birth in the six realms of samsara again and again. Although one may live in this world, if one is not attached, one does not wander in samsara. In our homeland, we meet the adversaries whom we dislike, and we are attached to our families and friends. If we abandon our homeland and go to a different place, we are not attached to the people there, we see them all as the same. However, if we do not understand the detriment of attachment and aversion, we will again hate our opponents and cling to our friends, even if we move to a different place. Again, we become attached to those people who treat us well and we dislike those who are unkind to us. Thus, it is important to recognize the fault of attachment and aversion. If you are able to recognize their fault, there is no need to abandon your homeland.

Consider what happens when only a subtle emotion of attachment or aversion arises. For example, when you are describing a certain person to others, if he is your friend, you will only mention his good qualities; but if you dislike him, you will only point out his faults and not mention his good qualities. Tainted by attachment and aversion, we cannot see how things really are. When we think about situations that are less emotionally charged, we come to understand that true intelligence arises within a mind of equanimity, a mind that remains uncolored by attachment or aversion. If you are mindful and recognize your mental arisings, for example, in conversation you will immediately recognize when you are tempted to say something negative about someone just because you don't like them very much.

Attachment and love can easily be confused. Love means to feel sincere love and a wish for the other's happiness, without any sense of ownership and a wish for one's own happiness. Even someone who generally understands karma, temporarily dismisses it when an intense emotion of anger or desire arises. Some are overwhelmed by the emotion and blindly engage in negative deeds. Others commit evil deeds knowingly but are incapable to resist due to the force of the passion. This is what the verse means by "the mind of ignorance which forgets what to adopt and what to discard." Tilopa said to Naropa: "Son, it is not the appearances that fetter you, it is the grasping at those appearances that fetters the mind.



Gar Quote No. 42

The 37 Bodhisattva Practices Series, Verse 3

"When harmful places are abandoned, disturbing emotions gradually diminish. Without distraction, virtuous endeavors naturally increase. Being clear-minded, definite understanding of the Dharma arises. Resorting to secluded places is the bodhisattvas' practice."

Resorting to secluded places' refers to the isolation of body, speech and mind; not only the body. The whole purpose of secluding the body and speech is in fact only to seclude the mind. Secluding the mind means not to fall under the power of thoughts and emotions. Only secluding the body and speech while the mind still clings to thoughts and emotions, it is pointless. We seclude the body by traveling to isolated places, and we seclude the speech by remaining in silence. We do this in order to create an environment in which the mind is not constantly distracted by various sensory attractions. This is often misunderstood and people remove themselves from society in order to live in a hermitage to do retreat. But it only becomes a retreat if we are able to seclude our minds by not falling under the power of our own fixations. Some people never seclude themselves from the world but are still able to sustain awareness and do not fall under the power of their thoughts. The latter is the one who is actually in retreat.

However, for beginning practitioners, a place in isolation is conducive for practice because the mind is not sufficiently subdued in order to be able to withstand or resist the distractions and entertainments of the world. In an isolated place, such entertainments are lacking and thus the wild and restless mind will find it easier to calm down. Since at such a place one is not faced with outer distractions, it is easier to turn inward and watch the mind. By doing so, the wish to practice virtue will increase. When the mind is calm and stable it is easier to cultivate compassion, patience and the other perfections. A harmful place is a place that leads to the increase of our negative thoughts and emotions. This can be any place, a mundane place or a hermitage. If, in a mundane place, one is able to control one's mind and not fall under the power of thoughts, it is not a harmful place.

In fact, yogis whose minds are stable should travel to mundane places of distraction in order to test their accomplishment. In brief, a harmful place is a place that leads to the increase of negativity and fixation, and a beneficial place is a place where one does not grasp at whatever arises. Since most people have to work and cannot seclude themselves to isolated places, you can also isolate yourself for short periods of time, for example a week, or for the weekend, or even just for a day or a few hours. As you gain a living experience by practicing in such a way as much as you can, you will find that often the places we enjoy ourselves at are harmful places, and as your patience increases you will find that your enemies can be an enhancement to your practice. From the perspective of the Dharma, friend and enemies sometimes change roles.



Gar Quote No. 43

The 37 Bodhisattva Practices Series, Verse 4

"Long-associated companions will part from each other. Wealth and possessions obtained with effort will be left behind. Consciousness, the guest, will cast aside the guest-house of the body. Letting go of this life is the Bodhisattvas' practice."

From the day we are born to our mothers until the day we die, this entire life, is like a dream. Ordinary people think that last night's dream is unreal, but this life is the reality. This is a great mistake. This life and last night's dream have the same nature. When we experience them, they constitute a reality, a real experience, yet they are illusory by nature. After we have died, the consciousness awakens in the bardo. Then it is like awakening from the dream of life. Life will seem unreal all of a sudden, everything that appeared to us in this world in this life, will be gone, like last night's dream, and become a fading memory. Then the bardo, while illusory by nature, becomes our reality. For as long as we dream, the dream is an actual personal experience. Only when we awaken from the dream we realize that it was just a dream.

Or, even if we recognize that we are in a dream, for as long as the karma to experience this dream lasts, we will continue to experience the illusory suffering and happiness of our dream. When we dream, the imprints that are stored in our mind, become activated and manifest in the form of our dream perceptions. Also, the perceptions of this life are nothing but the projections of our own karma, afflictive emotions, and mental imprints. The visions of the bardo have the same nature, they are the projections of our own mind. Although in the bardo we lack the aggregate of form (a physical body), all the other aggregates (feeling, cognition, formatives, and consciousness) are still there. The consciousness still clings to the notion of a self and thus experiences fear and terror. You cannot control the appearances of the bardo, it will seem just as real as this life. Lord Jigten Sumgon said, "I am a yogi who realizes this life, the next life, and the bardo to be one."

Thus, see the futility of clinging to the concerns of this life!



Gar Quote No. 44

The 37 Bodhisattva Practices Series, Verse 5

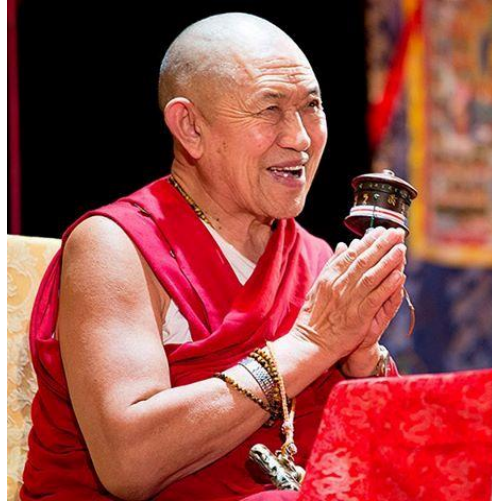
"When evil companions are associated with, the three poisons increase, the activities of listening, pondering and meditation decline, and love and compassion are extinguished. Abandoning evil companions is the Bodhisattvas' practice."

One may think that evil companions are those mean people who hate us. But this is not necessarily the case. From the perspective of the Pratimoksha path, an evil companion is someone who prevents us from practicing the Dharma. If we do not practice, the three poisons, desire, hatred and ignorance increase. A loving friend may be someone preventing your from practice, and a troublemaker may help you to practice. Furthermore, it is better to have a troublesome friend who believes in karma, than a skillful benefactor who does not believe in karma. However, a beginning practitioner, whose practice is not yet stable, might be influenced in a negative way by such a companion, for instance, they might begin drinking and smoking, or deny karma. As such negative influence leads to the increase of negative karma, it is better to avoid such companions. A bodhisattva practices patience and love, thus there is no one to be abandoned.

Those who are troublesome are benefactors of patience, and those who are loving are benefactors of love. If one is able to sustain stability in patience and love, there is no need to abandon troublesome people.

A bodhisattva will not be influenced negatively, and by keeping the troublesome person company, the latter may even change and become a better person. Even if we are a beginning practitioner, we might end up in a relationship that we cannot abandon, even though our practice is not yet stable. Due to karmic forces, people meet and are bound to live together. So what can we do? We have to generate awareness and abandon rather the afflictive emotions than the companion. The true evil companion to be abandoned is self-grasping. If we do not abandon this evil companion, we will always encounter obstacles. Abandoning evil companions does not mean to abandon our friends who are annoying, thinking, "we always fight, we better break up." This would be a mistake and by doing that we will meet unharmonious friends again and again. We are holders of the bodhisattva vows. We promised to cultivate love, compassion, and bodhicitta for everyone, so we cannot say "everyone except him."

Still, we must not accept wrong views. Whatever someone with wrong views, desire, anger, or sectarianism says, you should not listen to it. In brief, we have to purify our mind; if we follow thoughts of desire and aversion, our love, kindness and compassion vanish.



Gar Quote No. 45

The 37 Bodhisattva Practices Series, Verse 6

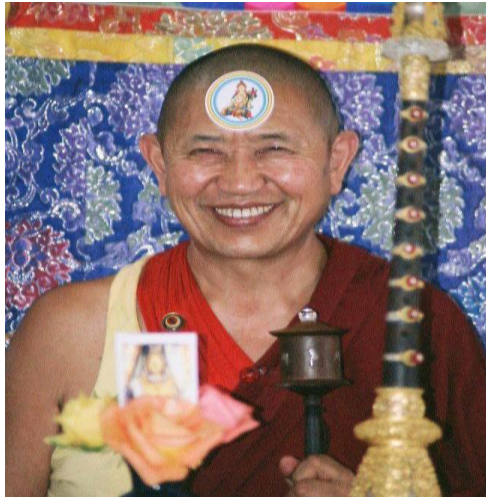
"When sublime spiritual friends are relied upon, one's faults are exhausted and one's qualities increase like the waxing moon. Holding sublime spiritual friends even more dear than one's own body is the Bodhisattvas' practice."

Why is the spiritual teacher more important than one's own body? The body is impermanent and we will cast it aside, like a guest leaving a guest-house. But if we understand just one word of our guru, and practice accordingly, we will experience happiness in all future lives. When the teacher only introduces us to karma, cause and effect, it is like receiving two wide-open eyes, the knowledge that knows what to do and what to give up. Simply by being introduced to karma, we are shown to path to create happiness in all future lives. Therefore, even if someone were to offer us millions of dollars, it could not compare to the value of receiving a single line of teachings from our guru. In fact, money may easily be used to create even more suffering. The cause of all suffering is the self-centered mind, and all the negative emotions. When you recognize this, your faults will be exhausted.

When you recognize that the only cause of happiness is a pure and loving mind, your qualities will increase like the waxing moon. The path to such recognition is given to us by our spiritual teacher. For this reason, he is more precious than one's own body.

What does it mean to hold the spiritual teacher dear? Holding his body dear only leads to trouble; what we must hold dear are his words or instructions. Holding his words dear means to listen properly and then apply them to one's own mind, put them into practice. First we must understand the teachings, and then we must personally experience what we have learned. We experience the teachings by reflecting and meditating on them until a feeling of certainty arises. For instance, the teacher explains to us the preciousness of love. An intellectual understanding is already a great merit. However, an intellectual understanding will not dispel the root of our suffering, our negative emotions. It certainly helps, but in order to truly pass beyond suffering, we must practice, gain a living experience. When we gain a personal experience, we will directly see how love is so precious. Knowing this, based on experiencing it directly, one will not let go of it at any cost.

Not letting go of love, we will habituate to it to the point when it becomes effortless and always remains naturally. Then we have created perfect peace and happiness and have finally passed beyond suffering. The root cause is the kindness of our teacher.



Gar Quote No. 46

The 37 Bodhisattva Practices Series, Verse 7

"What worldly gods, themselves also bound in the prison of cyclic existence, are able to protect others? Therefore, when refuge is sought, taking refuge in the undecieving Triple Gem is the bodhisattvas' practice."

The reason why we should not seek refuge in worldly gods is because they, themselves, are not yet liberated from suffering. They may be very powerful and magnificent, but this is only the temporary ripening of various karmas. Because they themselves have not eliminated the actual cause of suffering, the afflictive emotions, they cannot provide us with ultimate protection from suffering. Only someone who has transcended suffering can protect us from suffering. The Buddha is the one who has achieved lasting peace and happiness and is free of all suffering and all causes of suffering. Therefore, the Buddha has the ability to help us to become ultimately free of suffering. The method to become free of suffering is the Dharma, the teachings of the Buddha. If we follow the prescription of the Buddha, we will become just like the Buddha ourselves. Although the Dharma consists of 84,000 teachings, they have a single essence - bodhicitta.

In order to progress along the path of Dharma, we need to rely on a companion, someone who has walked the path and thus possesses the ability to guide us on the path. This companion is the Sangha. Having taken refuge in the Three Jewels will protect us from suffering because the Three Jewels teach us what to do and what not to do. If we practice accordingly we will be protected, in this sense we are actually protecting ourselves.

Ultimately, thus, we rely on the inner Three Jewels. When we understand that the Three Jewels are actually complete within our own mind, we will become free of suffering. The inner Buddha is your own mindful awareness, the inner Dharma is love and compassion, and if you practice their union, your mind is the Sangha. Since taking refuge means to ultimately take refuge in compassion, we will be protected from suffering. The essence of the Mahayana refuge vow is to think: "I shall not forsake bodhicitta, even at the cost of my life.

From this time onwards, until attaining the heart of enlightenment, I shall remain inseparable from wisdom and compassion.



Gar Quote No. 47

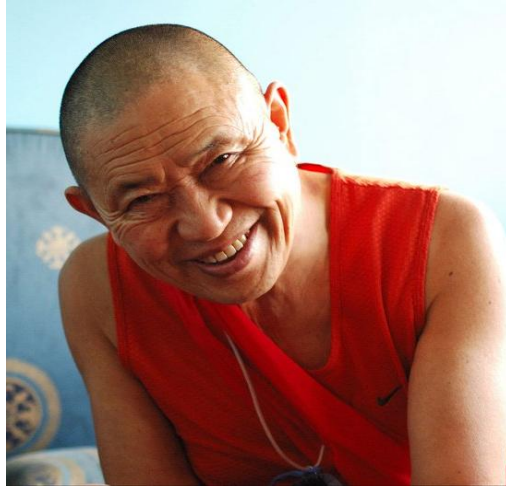
The 37 Bodhisattva Practices Series, Verse 8

"The Subduer said that all the unbearable suffering of the three lower realms is the fruition of wrongdoing. Therefore, never committing negative deeds, even at peril to one's life, is the bodhisattvas' practice."

All the unbearable suffering of the lower realms is created by our afflictive emotions. The Buddha did not invent or create a certain belief, but rather, having realized how things really are, the Buddha compassionately explained what causes suffering and what causes happiness. He taught, "If you wish to be happy, this is what you need to do. If you wish to avoid suffering, this is what you must give up." "The very nature of hatred is hell. The very nature of love is the pure land." Hell is not a place someone sends you to in order to punish you. It is just the nature of hatred to produce hell, or the nature of hatred is hell. This is just how things are. Sometimes people doubt the reality of hell. Even Buddhists sometimes think "it is just a state of mind. If it's just mind then it's not real, so it can't be that bad." However, while it is true that hell does not inherently exist, neither does this human life! If you experience this life as a reality, hell will be experienced in the same way. For as long as there is negative karma, for as long as there is self-grasping, suffering is a real experience. Only when one attains enlightenment and realizes emptiness, one realizes that the realms, including the pure lands do not inherently exist.

In addition, we can see the suffering of all realms in our world. There are humans who experience the suffering of hell and hungry spirits. What is the cause of all suffering? The cause of all suffering is self-grasping and the afflictive emotions arising from it. Thus, you should observe your own mind and if you find that you possess afflictive emotions such as anger, the result will certainly ripen in the future. Milarepa said, "The root of the lower realms is hatred, therefore practice patience even at the cost of your life." When you understand the suffering resulting from hatred, you will naturally wish to abandon it. If you do not understand this you may even mistakenly justify anger. From hatred arises hell, from greed appear the hungry spirits and from ignorance the animals. For instance, some people are unaware and destroy their life by drinking alcohol and taking drugs. This creates a propensity of ignorance leading to birth as an animal.

There is outer and inner karma. Outer karma refers to our external activities. One may think, "I am not killing, or stealing, I'm not doing anything wrong." But what is more important is the inner karma. Even if one is not engaging in negative deeds externally, if one fails to give rise to compassion and only thinks about oneself, negative thoughts will accumulate in the mind like snowflakes falling continuously day and night. If we keep following the afflictive emotions, we will not find freedom for countless eons. That is only due to the actions we have committed based on this body. Karma, cause and effect, is infallible.



Gar Quote No. 48

The 37 Bodhisattva Practices Series, Verse 9

"The pleasure of the three realms is as fleeting as a dewdrop on the tip of a blade of grass, vanishing in a single moment. Striving for the supreme state of never-changing liberation is the bodhisattvas' practice."

The three existences are the human's on the earth, the gods above, and the nagas below. All beings in these realms are attached to the pleasures of sensory enjoyments. We are not liberated because we are attached to samsara, because we think that we can actually find true happiness by finding gratification for our senses. We can understand rather easily that hatred is the cause of suffering, and we are ready to give up this negative emotion. It is much more difficult for us to realize that the actual cause of still wandering in samsara is our mistaken belief that we will, in the end, find some happiness here. It is thus more difficult to recognize our desire for samsaric bliss.

We are not free from suffering, because we can't let go of it. But no matter how hard we try, even if we get what we were striving for, it will not last. When we die, we are forced to let it all go. What will stay, however, are the negative imprints, the karmas that we created in order to obtain worldly pleasures. Everything is impermanent, changing moment by moment; nothing lasts, like a dewdrop on the tip of a blade of grass. To cling to the permanence of things is extremely ignorant. Patrul Rinpoche said, "The attachment to sights is like a moth attracted to a fire flame. The attachment to sound is like a deer enchanted by the hunter's flute. The attachment to taste is like a fish taking a baited hook. The attachment to touch is like an elephant mired in a swamp. The attachment to smell is like a bee flying into a carnivorous flower." For example, the elephant finds it very blissful to be in the cool mud, but he is so heavy that he easily becomes mired in the swamp and will die there if he can't get out. Likewise, we think that samsara is pleasurable.

In the beginning we enjoy ourselves, in the middle we experience misery, and in the end we will find no liberation, like an elephant sinking in a swamp. In the beginning, we are convinced that obtaining our object of desire will bring us satisfaction. When we get it, it becomes the cause of suffering. If the good qualities and the faults of an action are equal, or if the faults are predominant, you should not engage in the action. This is how you should consider before partaking of something pleasurable. For example, if you consider carefully, you will not drink alcohol excessively. There is nothing wrong with drinking only a little bit of alcohol, it can be medicinal. But if you drink excessively and get drunk, then eventually you will drink yourself to death. If you are honest, the pleasures of this life, many times are the cause of much suffering.



Gar Quote No. 49

The 37 Bodhisattva Practices Series, Verse 10

"When mothers who have been kind to one since beginningless time are suffering, what's the use of one's own happiness? Therefore, generating the mind of enlightenment in order to liberate limitless sentient beings is the bodhisattvas' practice."

Since time without beginning, we have taken birth in cyclic existence, over and over again. In all these incalculable past lives, we have had parents. If we were to pile up the bones of all our past bodies, it would be greater than Mount Meru. If we were to gather all the tears we cried, it would fill up a limitless ocean. Since we incarnated infinitely, there is not a single being who has not been our parent in a past life. At that time, they cared for us with great love and sacrificed their lives for our sake. Just like our present parents, they have committed many negative deeds in order to protect us. As a result of these negative deeds, they now suffer in samsara endlessly. How could we turn our backs at them and leave them alone? Because they are our mothers, and thus very dear to our heart, we want them to be happy.

The wish for the happiness of others is love. If you love someone, you cannot bear to see them suffer. This is compassion. We wish for all others to be free from suffering. The root of suffering is the self-clinging mind. Although sentient beings are limitless, self-clinging is the single root of all suffering. If you give rise to love and compassion for all sentient beings, your mind will become vast and all-pervasive. When love pervades all beings, self-grasping diminishes. In this way, you accomplish the dual purpose of others and yourself. Ultimately, there is a single ground within which all beings are one. Because we are connected to all beings on the ultimate level, we can pervade them with love. They can actually receive our love. For instance, a dog or a cat will naturally come close to a person with great love, and they will run away if one is very angry. This is a sign that of the single ground. In addition, when you think of others, you do not think about a self. If you are self-centered, your mind becomes narrow, like a block of ice. But when you let go and send out love to others, you will notice how your mind expands. The mind becomes open and spacious, like a vast ocean or the sky.

Bodhicitta is the preliminary practice, bodhicitta is the main practice, and bodhicitta is also the result. Therefore, be courageous and do not abandon even a single sentient being for as long as samsara exists.



Gar Quote No. 50

The 37 Bodhisattva Practices Series, Verse 11

"All suffering without exception comes from wishing for one's own happiness. The perfect buddhas arise from the altruistic mind. Therefore, completely exchanging one's own happiness for the suffering of others is the bodhisattvas' practice."

All the buddhas of the past, present, and future arise from bodhicitta. In the beginning, the Buddha Shakyamuni was an ordinary being like us. Having given rise to bodhicitta, the Buddha then accumulated merit throughout three endless eons, and finally attained complete enlightenment. What we call merit is nothing else than love and compassion for sentient beings. If we practice virtue with compassion for all beings, it is called merit. If we practice virtue without compassion, it is not called merit. If we truly love others, we will easily exchange our own happiness for their suffering. Some people are naturally very compassionate, this is due to the merit they have accumulated in the past. We are compassionate because we love others. If we would not love them, we would not care about them. But if you love others and see that they experience endless suffering, an unbearable feeling will overcome you. You cannot bear to see them suffer, you want to do anything to free them from suffering. This is compassion. The root of all the endless suffering is self-clinging. The only thing that destroys self-clinging is love. Thus, what those beings need is love and compassion. If love permeates their mind, their negative karma and suffering will melt away. For example, if all the people in a war-zone would give rise to love all of a sudden, their suffering would end. Their hatred and jealousy will disappear right there. Thus, their negative karma would become purified.

Bodhicitta is the most powerful way to purify negative karma and dispel suffering. When negative karma and obscurations become purified, they melt away like snow melting in the sun. If the snow mountain is very large, you will not notice that some snow has melted, nevertheless, change happens moment by moment. If you really understand the pain that is created by self-clinging, if you really trust that striving for your own happiness is the cause of suffering and has never brought you happiness since beginningless time in samsara, you will be able to generate the inner strength to transform your mind. If you really understand the extent of the wealth of merit gained from bodhicitta, it will be easy and joyful to benefit others. For example, we believe that we are tired because we work too much. In reality, we are resentful because our payment is not good enough. Imagine someone were to tell you: "I will offer you 10 million dollars if you work for me today." Would you be too tired to do it? Most likely you would be at your best behavior that day. The merit gained from giving rise to bodhicitta is a far greater wealth than 10 million dollars. Understanding the benefits of bodhicitta, bodhisattvas are tireless. When you see how your love touches others, it will become your happiness to give your happiness to others.

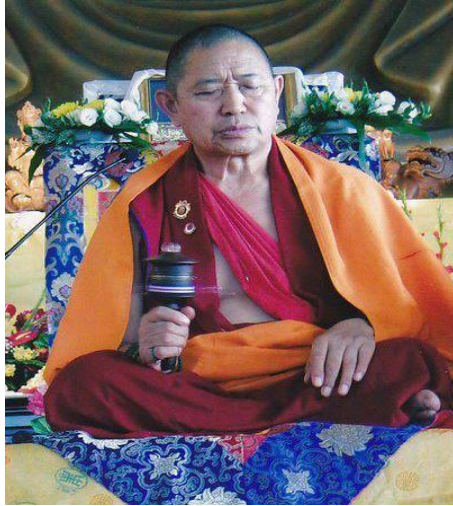


Gar Quote No. 51

Why are we reciting the Buddha Amitabha's mantra? What is the purpose of mantra recitation? There is a great merit from reciting the Amidewa mantra with faith and devotion, but it is of even greater benefit to truly understand its purpose. Since beginningless time in samsara, we have habituated to a belief in a concrete reality, we cling to the inherently true existence of all appearances. This fixation has formed a deep imprint in our mind which compels us to follow our habitual patterns of destructive thoughts such as anger, jealousy, and so forth. These emotions are the cause of great suffering for our body and mind. Even though we cannot see these afflictions, their energy is extremely powerful and the feeling may overwhelm us so much that we cannot bear it. These powerful emotions are our habitual imprints, and when they arise, we cannot let them go.

When we practice the deity, we purify these imprints. By visualizing the deity, such as Amitabha, our habitual imprints with regard to our body are purified. By reciting the mantra, our habitual imprints with regard to our speech are purified. At least for the time when we actually practice, our mind will feel peaceful and happy. The ice-block of self-grasping will melt a bit. In the Amitabha sadhana it says: "The Dharma wheel of unceasing compassion will always turn."

Even though sentient beings are obscured by self-grasping, they possess Buddha-nature which is an unceasing continuum. This nature is wisdom awareness and since it is unceasing there is no one who does not possess at least some compassion. Even if beings have not developed vast bodhicitta, they all possess love at least to some degree. Thus, whoever has a mind naturally possesses an unbroken continuum of wisdom and compassion. Since mind itself cannot perish, it is impossible for this continuum of wisdom and compassion to degenerate. If you understand that all sentient beings have the potential to attain enlightenment, you have understood the essence of Vajrayana.



Gar Quote No. 52

Sentient beings believe in a subject-object duality, they think that they themselves are separate from the others out there. When you directly experience the natural state, all these ideas and fixations fall apart. When the thinking of self and others falls apart, when one doesn't cling to the habitual discursive thoughts, one realizes that the nature of mind is actually like space.

There is no separation or duality in space. Separation is only a mental construct. When these mental fabrications collapse, one will know the endless space-like nature of mind. There is a sense of ease and peace. Knowing that sentient beings have not realized this reality, one maintains unconditioned compassion. Abiding in the natural state of mind is a most peaceful and joyous state. But sentient beings have not seen their own true nature, with confused minds the endlessly suffer in illusory samsara. This is a great pity, thus the compassion of those who know reality naturally prevails.



Gar Quote No. 53

It is the mind of a Bodhisattva, only caring about others is bodhicitta. This mind is the essence of all deities. If you practice any deity with this mind, you will be very close to the deity and receive blessings. What we call blessings is actually nothing but love. The mind that is free of selfishness and only cares about others is a bodhisattvas mind, such limitless love is relative bodhicitta.

A Buddha has not only perfected relative bodhicitta but also ultimate bodhicitta, i.e., a Buddha mind has fully realized that all duality is delusion and that in fact there are no self and others. There are different levels of bodhisattvas, there are ten stages or bhumis a bodhisattva progresses through on the path. The enlightened mind is beyond all paths, there is no more training, it is complete awakening.



Gar Quote No. 54

You do not have to keep visualising all the time during mantra recitation. In the beginning, when we recite the visualisation for the mantra recitation, you should generate the visualisation as explained in the text. Then, you begin reciting the mantra with this visualisation. When your mind then becomes clear and calm, you do not have to visualise anything. You can just sustain this state of clarity and tranquillity as you recite the mantra. If distracting thoughts or emotions again arise, you should come back to the visualisation to help you mind return to focus. When there are no thoughts you can just rest in the empty natural state of mind, abide free from fixation, not separating self and others.

There are three types of uninterrupted-ness when we recite the mantra. There are uninterrupted offerings to the Buddhas; uninterrupted purification of obscurations of sentient beings, and uninterrupted attainment of siddhis or attainments. The siddhi is basically the increase of love and compassion; if love and compassion increase, wisdom increases and one attains Enlightenment. Due to compassion, one temporarily experiences the seven qualities of the higher realms, the happiness of the higher realms and many other benefits that come from mantra recitation.*

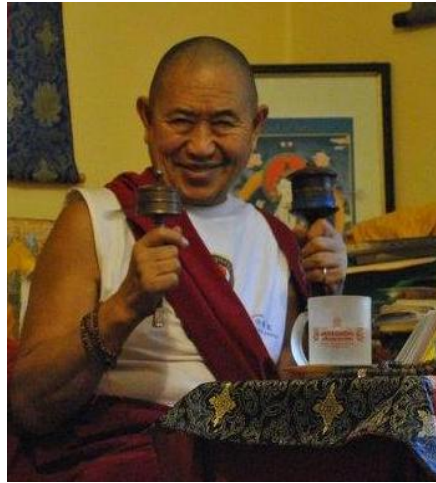
** Better family lineage; attractive physical features; long life; good health; good fortune; wealth; good wisdom**



Gar Quote No. 55

You must train the mind like a muscle. If you want to train your body, you must practice exercise regularly. Likewise, if you want to train your mind, you must practice meditation on a day to day basis. You will not be able to carry a heavy load with weak muscles. Training is a gradual process. You must persistently and constantly train your mind on a day to day basis if you wish to overcome difficulties and become stronger. Every time you recognize a thought, your mindfulness has become that much stronger. Slowly you will gain in inner strength. In the beginning, it is not easy to overcome very powerful emotions. If the emotions are too overwhelming and you are unable to overcome them with mindfulness, you must apply a different method. You should then think of a deity, like Tara, immediately without allowing yourself to indulge in the bad feeling. In the beginning, you do recognize the emotions but they still won't go away. That is because your mindfulness is not strong enough. Therefore, you must train the mind in all circumstances, not only when you encounter problems. You should train the mind first by recognizing the less intense thoughts. And if you train consistently with diligence, then eventually you will be able to overcome even more powerful thoughts. And later, no thought or emotion can trouble you anymore. Everything becomes the same. Then, even though the body is in samsara, the mind is liberated. You have to make an effort to liberate your mind rather than your body.

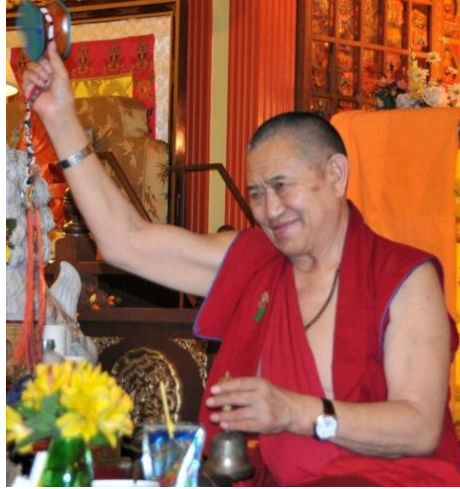
*"Consciousness the guest, will cast aside the guesthouse of the body." (37 Bodhisattva Practices)
When your mental grasping diminishes, you will see how everything is so fleeting and doesn't truly exist. This life is like a dream. Nothing ever stay, suffering and happiness come and go. You must be able to let go of your fixation to the things that cannot last. Thoughts of desire and attachment are the delusion of a confused mind. Best is if you need nothing.*



Gar Quote No. 56

The prayer wheel has the same benefits of mantra garlands. It becomes an offering to the Buddhas and purifies the obscurations of sentient beings. If you spin it your entire life with faith, it is taught that you will not require any other Phowa apart from placing your prayerwheel at your crown above your pillow. This will pull up the consciousness and is thus a Phowa in itself. Moreover, whoever sees the prayerwheel will not be born in the lower realms. However, many mantras are contained in the prayer wheel radiate outside with each rotation and make offerings to the Buddhas and shower a rain of love upon all beings in the six realms, thus melting their self-grasping and increasing their love. The mantra accomplishes uninterrupted offering to the Buddha, uninterrupted purifications of obscurations in sentient beings and uninterrupted attainment of siddhis. By spinning the prayer wheel, you practice virtues of body, speech, and mind simultaneously; physical virtues by holding and spinning the wheel, verbal virtues as you send our mantras, and mental virtues as you sustain mindful awareness and are not distracted as you spin the wheel. It also includes prostration, mantra recitation, and meditation. By spinning the prayer wheel, you will naturally benefit those who are alive and those who have deceased. There is no separate visualization that you need to practice.

Disciples or practitioners have different aspirations and inclinations. You can practice according to your inclinations. For some practitioners, they prefer to practice the method with the winds and some others prefer the visualization. Some even think “Nothing works for me. I’m not good at any of that.” Then they grow tired and then they don’t want to practice. But actually to cultivate faith is most important. If you just cultivate unchanging faith, that is the best method. For example, we have mentioned the benefits of the prayer wheel. It is taught if you have a prayer wheel and your entire life you have great faith into your prayer wheel, then when you die and you have the prayer wheel above your crown on your pillow and someone tells you “The prayer wheel is there [by your crown]” and you hear that, you know it’s there, then your consciousness will go there and that becomes a phowa practice. It serves the function of a phowa practice. It really has that power. I have personal experience with that. I am really someone with a lot of suffering experiences. For example, one time in Tibet, we had a car accident. And during the accident, not in the slightest thought about “I could be hurt.” I didn’t think that. I was just wanting to hold my prayer wheel - protect my prayer wheel. Then, nothing happened [that is, no one died or was hurt in the car accident]. I really felt “this is really very powerful - it is really true what the Buddha has said.” Such is the power of faith. If you just understand the power of a dharma wheel, a prayer wheel. So, wherever you focus your attention, your consciousness will go there. That is the great quality of faith. Therefore, there is no need to grow tired of practice.



Gar Quote No. 57

Do not think much about demons, spirits and the like. In reality, there are no gods and demons. A god is compassion and a demon is self-grasping. From self-grasping, the negative emotions arise, and they are the cause of all suffering, for others and yourself. This is the actual demon, there is no other demon apart from that. If you want to eliminate that demon, you have to cultivate love and compassion.

Ultimately, gods and demons are the same, as all beings have a single ground of mind. If from this mind temporarily self-grasping arises, you can label it a demon. It is very important to understand the levels of becoming a bodhisattva. For this, you must first understand the suffering nature of samsara. Everything in samsara has the nature of suffering, only when one realizes the nature of mind, attains enlightenment, one will be free from suffering. If you want to be free from suffering, you must be free from self-grasping, as all suffering comes from wishing for one's own happiness. The only way to be free from self-grasping is to cultivate compassion. This is the root of all happiness.

It is most important that you develop love for all beings. If you have cultivated love, you will have the power to overcome suffering. Even if you experience some temporary suffering circumstance, you will understand that this is the result of your own actions of self-grasping and you are now purifying this negative karma. If you now cultivate bodhicitta, you will not suffer again in the future. So if you experience some suffering now, you must understand that this is the result of your own actions, and is not caused by anyone else. If you understand this, you will accept your suffering and avoid negative actions to avoid future suffering.

For example, the cause of the hell realms is anger, the cause of the hungry spirit realm is greed, each of the six negative emotions is the seed for the six realms of samsara. If you find these seeds inside your mind, you must work hard to eliminate them each and every day through sustaining mindfulness. You must recognize the emotions upon arising and see its fault. Then, you must sustain mindfulness and not fall under the power of the emotion, not act out on it. Then gradually, the negative emotions will disappear. Always remember this. This is the root of all practice.



Gar Quote No. 58

The practice of the six perfections is really the foundation of the Mahayana. The first is generosity, which is a supreme method for clearing away self-clinging. If we possess something that is very precious, then we tend to think “I own this thing, this is mine,” and we think this again and again. This reinforces the concept, and as time goes on we really become attached. In fact, we become so attached that we wouldn’t be willing to give it away to anyone else. Because of grasping at the notion of self, we to cling to that object. We find that we are bound by these objects. If we have one hundred dollars, we want one thousand dollars. The tighter we hold, the more it binds us. If we have one thousand dollars, then we want ten thousands, then we have to have one hundred thousands, and so on. Again, the tighter we hold, the more we are bound.

When we offer the mandala, we make an offering to all enlightened beings, and this mental offering becomes an antidote to the thought, “this is mine, I own this.” Slowly, it begins to free our minds from the bondage of self-clinging. We have this tendency as well to cling to our own bodies, thinking that this form is mine. If we make effort to think that the body is like another being’s home, somebody else’s house, then there is no reason whatsoever for us to be attached to it. This is another method for training the mind in order to purify self-grasping.

There is no need to assemble all the prescribed offering substances. You should assemble whatever you can such as flowers, water bowls, a statue or picture, and so forth, and the rest you can visualise. It is important to understand the meaning behind making these offerings. The point is to overcome ego-clinging. When we practice making offerings, we are practicing to give away what is precious to us, thus we release attachment. Ordinarily we are attached to the sense pleasures, for this reason we offer them. The deity actually has no need or desire for these sense pleasures, but offering them releases our own attachment and we accumulate great merit. As a result of having made offerings, we will experience the result that is similar to the cause in future lifetimes, for example a beautiful complexion, or a long life span, and finally it serves as the cause for attaining awakening.



Gar Quote No. 59

Sometimes, people have great attachment to their guru, and they love their guru very much. Then, they always must be together, close with their guru. They think that when they are close to their guru, when he is physically present, then their practice is benefited, improves - but when they are separated, their practice declines. So they don't want to separate. Then, when the guru leaves, they think, 'Now we are separated.'

That is when one only fixates on the body. But actually, if we cultivate love and faith and trust in the guru, the mind will always be together. Most important is such a loving and altruistic mind. The guru has that mind, and if the disciple also has that mind there is no distance. The mindfulness and the altruism of the disciple and the guru are exactly the same. Their mind is the same, just like electricity, or light, in this world. There is only one such thing called light, just like the mind. Every mind is the same. And therefore, there actually is no distance between masters and disciples. The mind can be very close at all times.

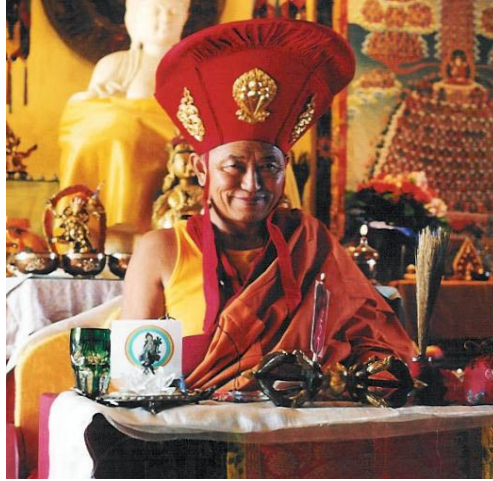
On the other hand, if the student lacks faith and trust, compassion, love for the guru, then even if they are together all the time, it will be of no benefit. They will still argue and there will be no benefit from that. So, in many cases, it is actually better to be, physically, more far away from the guru.



Gar Quote No. 60

The root of Vajrayana practice is the samaya. Many of my senior disciples know about that, but there may be some new disciples, and so the samaya, the root of samaya or the actual samaya, is love, and that love is a bond that keeps us connected throughout many lifetimes. That is a bond between disciples and disciples, and lamas and disciples, and so forth. If we do not let this bond pass, if we do not interrupt this bond of love, which is the samaya, then from lifetime to lifetime in the future, we will meet again and benefit and help each other. For others, if we cut that samaya, that bond of love with each other, then we can only harm each other in the future. And so, the samaya between disciple and disciple and disciple and lama is very precious and important. It is necessary that we observe this samaya and not allow it to be interrupted - also because throughout all time, we have had this positive samaya.

That is why in this lifetime, sharing the connection of practicing the Vajrayana together, and in order to benefit each other again and again in the future, it is important that all of us observe our samaya, that we do not give rise to anger and jealousy toward each other. And, as it is taught in the tantras, if we observe our samaya, then we will obtain the highest siddhis within seven lifetimes.



Gar Quote No. 61

When you receive an empowerment, you take refuge as part of the empowerment process, and it is important to understand what refuge is. One takes refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha, but what does this mean? Refuge is an introduction to the fact that your own mind is the Buddha. You are not taking refuge in an outer Buddha or deity.

You have wisdom mind, the knowing mind. Everyone has this, and you are introduced to this. That is the Buddha. If you have compassion, and everybody has compassion to some extent, then you have the Dharma. If you practice love, patience, and the mindfulness that holds this love and patience, then you are the Sangha. Taking refuge is not taking some obscure vow. We are just introduced to how we are and how everyone is, because everyone has a mind.

Regarding receiving an empowerment as a blessing rather than with samayas, the blessing and the samaya are exactly the same. You must deeply aspire to have love for everyone and abandon hatred and jealousy toward everyone. If you do not have this aspiration, there is no point in receiving the empowerment, because you will not receive the blessing.



Gar Quote No. 62

The meaning of Mahamudra was explained by the Buddha to be inexpressible, beyond expression in terms of being beyond conception and description. It is beyond existence and non-existence, and it cannot be given any name. It simply is a union of awareness and emptiness. You must look at the one who thinks, "I must see Mahamudra." And, when you look at that one, there is nothing to be seen whatsoever.

It is just like, for example, if I try to find myself. I could circumambulate the entire planet looking for myself, and then finally, someone asks me, 'What are you looking for?' And I say, 'I am looking for Konchok Gyaltsen, I am looking everywhere.' And then they say, 'But that's you!' And then finally, I see that I have always been there. It is me. So even if you circumambulate the entire world, you cannot find the meaning of Mahamudra. The one inside who thinks, 'I must see Mahamudra', is the one you need to look at. And when you look at that one, you will see nothing. It will become like the expanse of space, free from any duality of something to be seen or someone to see.



Gar Quote No. 63

When you meditate, you must observe your mind. Don't focus so much on the movement of the body, but focus on the mind. When all kinds of thoughts arise - attachment, anger, or virtuous and non-virtuous thoughts - there is an awareness that precedes these thoughts, and that awareness you must recognize. The thoughts do not yet disappear, but there is an awareness that recognizes these thoughts. That you must recognize. That is what you must develop.

As for the thoughts - you have to just let them go, throw them away like garbage. You must develop stable awareness that recognizes all mental arisings. Then, when that eventually becomes stable - all those thoughts, afflictive emotions, and suffering - you will be able to overcome, eliminate, though this awareness. If the awareness is not very powerful, you will still cling to the happiness that you want, but your mindfulness will not be able to overcome the suffering that you do not want. So, you must habituate this mindfulness that recognizes, that sees all the thoughts that appear, and eventually through sustaining mindfulness, you will be able to overcome all conceptuality and suffering.



Gar Quote No. 64

The body is not the 'me'; the body is impermanent, it is a compound and therefore we can't find the 'me' in the body. We may then think that the 'me' is the mind, so you should look inside your own mind and try to find the 'I', the 'me' in the mind. When you look inside your own mind, there is no 'I' to be found there, but there is the love that you have for your friend. Then, a very strange feeling will arise. You will think: when mind watches mind and looks at the love that is naturally there, although you cannot see it, there is a pervasive love. It is just like space but you can't obtain it, you can't find it. It has no form. When you look at the feeling of love that you have for that friend, your love and his love are the same.

Hence, we are actually non-dual, we are not separate. You love that person and that person loves you. This love is the same. Our bodies will be destroyed but there is only one mind. Our minds are one, just like there is only one thing called water in the world. When we understand this, we will understand the non-duality of subject and object of self and others. This is how we should first meditate: thinking of two people and realizing that we are actually one. Although our bodies appear as two, our mind is actually one. If we meditate in this way, we can understand our true nature.



Gar Quote No. 65

In Buddhism, one practices a union of compassion and wisdom. And through the lineages of the great old masters, we obtain the qualities of compassion and wisdom. When we think with devotion of a past great teacher who has great wisdom and compassion, his/her qualities will be transmitted to our minds through the power of the unbroken lineage. That is because although the bodies of the old masters have died, their minds have never died. Their minds continue to remain pervasive as space. Thus whoever thinks of their great qualities with devotion will access their minds. Thus, our lineage is called the “practice lineage of blessings.” This is something that scientists have not discovered. It is the meaning of 'Secret Mantra,' or 'Vajrayana Buddhism,' which teaches that depending on devotion one can receive the blessings and qualities of the guru. It is not called “Secret Mantra” because it is something that one tries to keep from others, but it is called 'Secret' because it is difficult to realize. If one does not engage in its practice it cannot be realized.



Gar Quote No. 66

Even though you have received many empowerments, if you understand the nature of the deity, you understand that it is sufficient to only practice a single deity. By practicing a single deity genuinely, you are accomplishing the essence of all deities. In fact, it is better to focus on the practice of just one deity, because then it will be easier to habituate to the deity to the point where you will not forget about the deity. To accomplish the deity means to never forget about the deity, it means that the deity always remains in your mind, it never separates from you. As it is always in your mind, you become the deity. If you never separate from the deity, you will also remember the deity in the Bardo after death, upon which you will attain enlightenment into the samboghakaya form of the deity.

Sometimes, people worry about receiving too many empowerments because they think that they cannot keep all the samayas. Actually, if you practice the root samaya of love, compassion and mindfulness, you are keeping all samayas of all deities, even if you only recite the mantra of one deity. In order to understand this, you must understand the essence of the deity. If you think that the deities are all separate, there will be a conflict. Actually, the power of one wisdom deity is contained within all deities. Various deities appear in order to suit the various thoughts and inclinations of sentient beings, but actually their nature is one and the same. The nature of all deities is bodhicitta. Therefore, if you practice bodhicitta and mindfulness, and only recite the mantra of one deity, you are keeping all your samayas. If you do not practice bodhicitta and mindfulness, no matter how many different mantras you recite, you are not keeping your samayas. That is because bodhicitta is the very life-energy of the deity. Without bodhicitta, the deity is like a dead body.

However, it is necessary to practice at least one deity on a daily basis. In the various empowerment texts, it is mentioned in the section of repeating the samaya that one must recite the mantra of that deity, but this must be mentioned in each sadhana because in old days the masters would only receive this one empowerment and then practice this for the rest of their lives. For this reason, it must be mentioned in each empowerment text. But for us, since we receive so many empowerments nowadays, it is crucial to understand the meaning and essence of the empowerment. It is said: "In the expanse of primordial wisdom, all the Buddhas are one.



Gar Quote No. 67

When we have practiced the two-fold accumulation - when we separate from self-centeredness - then naturally the mind's enlightened qualities will be actualized and revealed.

In reality, the antidote to the self-centered mind is loving-kindness and compassion. Accumulating merit removes all mental obscurations, and its result is the achievement of wisdom, primordial awareness. So, the cause is accumulating merit, which is an antidote to the self-grasping mind and the afflictive emotions.

There is both a conceptual and non-conceptual accumulation. Guru Rinpoche said that 'although the view is as high as the sky, the conduct must be as fine as flour.' We must refrain from causing any harm towards any sentient being, and we must engage in actions that benefit sentient beings. This is the conduct of the six paramitas. So, that is first, the conceptual accumulation.

Then, the non-conceptual or ultimate accumulation is realizing the meaning, the union, of the two truths. First, one must cultivate the conceptual truth of love and compassion for all sentient beings - and with that mind, even if you recite only a single Om Mani Padme Hum, it will pervade all sentient beings; the merit is inconceivable. Then, when you meditate on the view, the nature of your mind, you will realize the ultimate truth, the union of emptiness and compassion.

Milarepa said that apart from realizing the union of the two truths, or emptiness and compassion, there is no separate accomplishment of the non-dual purpose of self and others.

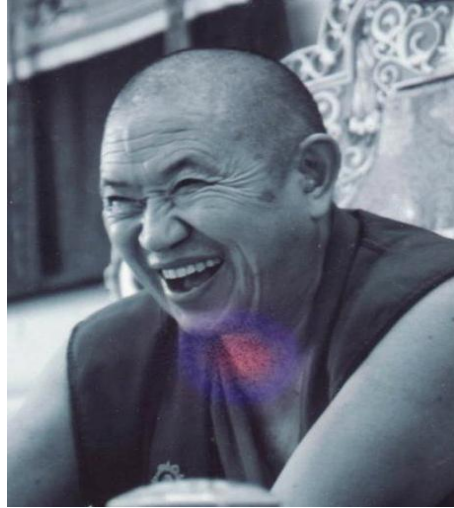


Gar Quote No. 68

We should make an effort to recognize whatever thoughts arise in the mind and to contemplate their fruition. For example, if I am truly a Mahamudra practitioner, then when a negative emotion like anger arises, I will recognize it at that moment. I will also recognize that it has the power to cause a lower rebirth. It is necessary not only to understand this intellectually, but to put it into practice through our own vigilant mindful awareness.

For example, if you are shopping in a store, you will see many delightful things, clothing and shoes and objects of desire. The mind is attracted to these things. If we don't recognize that attachment arising in the mind, then we can purchase all kinds of things. We obtain many objects thinking this will cause happiness. But in fact, by not recognizing the negative emotions and instead acting upon them, we may think we are accumulating objects, but what we are really accumulating is causes of suffering for the future.

If on the other hand, we follow the advice of Milarepa, who said to recognize attachment when meeting desirable circumstances - if at the moment of the negative emotions' arising, we turn the mind inward upon itself, then we will see that there is no reason to act upon a spontaneous arising of desire.



Gar Quote No. 69

The essence of practice is really in mind itself, it is accumulating virtue in the mind. When we hold to the commitment that we have made to liberate beings, we continuously act on their behalf. We don't act in order to benefit just ourselves in anyway. Not even with the smallest pore of our skin, do we wish to bring benefit to ourselves alone. In fact, we take the vast mind that says - even if I need to take rebirth in the three lower realms, that is fine. Everything I do is for the benefit of others.

When we have this kind of mindset, then all of our activities of body, speech, and mind become virtuous. We should recall again and again the qualities of generating bodhicitta, that it establishes us on the path, that it becomes a cause for us to purify negativities and accumulate virtue, and we should rejoice accordingly.



Gar Quote No. 70

In order to meditate properly - that is, in a manner that actually produces the state of complete awakening we call enlightenment - the one indispensable ingredient required that you cannot do away with is bodhicitta, which is the mind of awakening, the altruistic aspiration to liberate all sentient beings in enlightenment, the mindset of the awakened warriors, the bodhisattvas. In fact, that is what you need your mind stream to be permeated with most desperately; that is your most desperate need, especially in terms of practice and proper meditation. Bodhicitta, the precious mind of awakening, the mindset of the enlightened warriors, is the root teaching of the 84,000 sets of teachings and practices that comprise the Buddhadharma.

Without bodhicitta, whatever practice you engage in is grounded in ego-grasping, self-cherishing, and is a fabrication of the ego mind. That is why bodhicitta is absolutely indispensable, and that is why meditation is not just awareness, or knowledge, or the knowingness that cognizes emptiness. It is also passionately loving and compassionate toward all sentient beings.



Gar Quote No. 71

When we take refuge in the Triple Gem, the actual refuge, we should have a clear understanding of the qualities of the Triple Gem, the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Although the enlightened buddhas have vast qualities, today I will describe them only in the briefest way. Whenever we take refuge in the Triple Gem, we should be aware that the virtue we accumulate from saying even one mantra, for example, is multiplied 100-fold by the power of their blessings.

In regards to the first refuge, the Buddha, there are three principal qualities. First is wisdom - when the state of full enlightenment is attained, one has a clear and complete knowledge and understanding of all phenomena of samsara and nirvana. This becomes the basis to bring immeasurable benefit to beings. The second principal quality of the Buddha is a very loving kind of compassion towards all sentient beings. Having established this wisdom, one sees the suffering of all beings without exception. On this basis, one develops loving compassion towards all beings. The wish for them to be completely free from suffering, this feeling towards beings is so strong that it is said to be like that of a mother towards her only child. The third quality is enlightened activity. In order to bring about the happiness and freedom from suffering on sentient beings, a fully enlightened Buddha, through his or her own enlightened activities, manifests limitless nirmanakaya emanations until all samsara is emptied.

The second refuge is that of the Dharma. Now, all sentient beings encounter various problems, difficulties, suffering and so forth. The Dharma is the method, spoken by the Buddha himself, about how to liberate oneself from these sufferings. These are the clear methods for practice. If one is sick, one relies upon a doctor and takes medicine that is prescribed in order to clear away the sickness. So it is with the Dharma teachings -they are like a medicine that clears away the illness in the mind, which is the suffering of beings. Therefore, we take refuge in the Dharma as the method of liberating all beings from the suffering of samsara.

With regard to the third object of refuge, the Sangha, whenever we hear those Dharma teachings, when we generate faith and belief in them, authentic respect for them, then we become practitioners of this teaching - we become the Sangha. The Tibetan word for Sangha is "gendum," which means those who are gathering or accumulating virtue. This includes not only disciples of the Dharma teachings, but also our spiritual friends, our guides and masters. This is a brief explanation of the outer Three Jewels - Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.

When taking refuge, we are really cultivating the foundation, the cause of attaining Buddhahood. Beyond taking refuge, we must cultivate mindful awareness of the nature of mind. Whenever we do this, we are really practicing the Dharma taught by the Buddha. When this mindful awareness is combined with loving-kindness and compassion for beings, then our practice is complete. At that time, one becomes the third jewel, the Sangha.



Gar Quote No. 72

We must understand that Buddha nature and its wisdom are inherent in our minds. It is extensively explained by many great scholars and masters, but it is very simple. It is just that awareness that engages in all these activities, worldly or dharmic. It is the one who thinks 'I must do this, do that, go here or there,' or 'the scientists building planes and improving the world doing this and that'. It is just that awareness engaging in all these activities and doing all these things that we must recognize.

If we ride the horse of self-grasping and merge the mind with self-grasping, we will only go down further and further into samsara - we will have to continue wandering in samsara. But if we ride the horse of loving-kindness and compassion, we will go more and more through the enlightened qualities of the Buddha: the nirmanakaya, then the sambhogakaya, then the dharmakaya - we will go up to complete enlightenment.

Another example is like a big tree. The lower part, the roots, represents the lower realms and self-grasping, the pain of self-grasping. If there is self-grasping, we will always abide at the lower part of the tree. But if we give rise to the altruistic mind, then we go up to the higher parts of the tree - the branches, the foliage, the leaves, the flowers and fruits and so on. There is still just one tree, one single ground, but if we abide at the bottom, we experience great suffering and great difficulty from the self-grasping mind, but if we go up, we bring about the benefit of others and our own happiness. The basis, the ground, is a single one - Buddha nature.



Gar Quote No. 73

A hundred scholars and a thousand yogis can say all they want to say about the nature of mind. But all can be summed up by this teaching of Jigme Lingpa. The mind should never be separated from loving kindness and compassion. Loving kindness and compassion should never be separated from emptiness. And mindful awareness should never be separated from emptiness. These are the key teachings.



Gar Quote No. 74

Understanding karma, I was not overwhelmed by suffering in the war. I was able to tolerate and create happiness for the future. Through understanding karma, I have attained independence and am now happy at all times. It is most important to understand that karma is within the mind. The Buddha said, 'Perfectly tame your own mind. This is the Buddha's teachings.' The Buddha did not say, 'Perfectly tame others' minds.' We must purify our own mind. When you purify your mind, you must begin with those who surround your every day, your family, friends, etc.

I have great hopes that all of you will take this to heart and give rise to kindness and compassion for each other. Give rise to love for your parents, your teachers, and your country, and then expand this love for all sentient beings. In the future, when we die, even if we have accumulated millions of dollars, it will be useless. At that point, only a mind of love will be important. This mind will stay with us throughout all lifetimes. Therefore, it is my great hope that you hold on to this mind of love.

Although I cannot be with you today physically, my mind is with you. I pray that all of you will give rise to love and a kind heart. We are engaging in a Nyungne retreat here in Arizona for the sake of the peace and happiness of this world, so that beings may live in harmony free of warfare, and so that all beings will give rise to a mind of love and compassion and thus be free of all suffering.



Gar Quote No. 75

When bodhisattvas are in the state of view and meditation, they engage in the six paramitas to benefit others. When such a being is absolutely in the state of self-awareness, there is no fixation whatsoever. That is the paramita of generosity. In that state, there is no attachment at all. That is the paramita of moral ethics. Being in that state, there is no fear. That is patience. In the state of self-awareness, there is no effort – making no effort at all, but simply being in the state of self-awareness is the paramita of diligence. The self-awareness, being in its own nature is the paramita of meditative concentration. Naturally occurring wisdom, which is timeless, is the paramita of wisdom.



Gar Quote No. 76

Relative bodhicitta is based on the understanding of cause and effect and karma. Absolute bodhicitta is based on seeing the nature of afflictive emotions. When you see their nature is emptiness, that is absolute bodhicitta. Then, you are beyond these concepts. Cause, effect and karma do not affect absolute bodhicitta because absolute bodhicitta is beyond concept. But until you have realized absolute bodhicitta, you must believe in cause, effect, and karma. Until then, you should practice virtuous actions. The unity of absolute and relative bodhicitta will happen when you understand emptiness as the nature of the mind. At this time, you will develop great compassion for those who have not seen it. So at that point, relative and absolute bodhicitta unite.

When you practice absolute bodhicitta, you meditate on the nature of your own mind. Milarepa has said that this nature is our ordinary mind. Tilopa says when you look at the mind there is nothing to be seen. This may be a familiar teaching to you, but those new to the dharma may not have heard it. For beginners, when you meditate you should not chase after your thoughts, just recognize them. Through practicing in this way, experience develops and you get a glimpse of the nature of mind.

If you have trust in your teacher, when you look at the nature of your own mind, you can also think of him or her, or remember the kindness of Milarepa. Then [that] devotion and the practice of recognizing the mind can work together. Especially in Kagyu, devotion is emphasized. Having devotion to the guru, you will gain enlightenment in this life. There are two teachers, the outer teacher and recognizing the mind. The combination of these two teachers is the best teacher.



Gar Quote No. 77

Garchen Rinpoche's commentary on "especially those enemies who hate me" prayer

Whenever we recite this prayer from our prayer book, we should contemplate the nature of these so-called enemies or obstructors, beings who do harm. We should ask - where do they really come from? If we had not created the cause in our former lifetimes by our negative actions, then there is no way we could experience the present fruition of people doing harm to us.

If we recognize this, if we understand that we owe these beings a karmic debt, then instead of having aversion towards them, we can recognize them as being even more kind than our own parents [because they afford us the opportunity to purify our negative karma and to practice patience]. We can cultivate a willingness to offer them even our own body, our very life essence to those who give us this opportunity to purify our negativities and obscurations. So, as we read this prayer, we should make great effort to recognize those beings we would ordinarily consider enemies to be our kind parents. Not only are these beings who do harm really kind to us in the present, but they are also kind in the future and especially at our time of death. If we have the habit of perceiving beings to be enemies, if we have the habit of thinking that people are doing harm to us, then in the future and especially at the time of death, all phenomena that appears in the mind will be seen as enemies.

The Buddha himself taught that the real enemy is anger itself, which is conquered through practicing patience. Therefore, when we pray in this way, we generate patience and eventually loving-kindness and bodhicitta towards them. This is the foundation for practicing patience and realizing Mahamudra.



Gar Quote No. 78

The Difference Between Faith (Tepa) and Devotion (Mogu). Tepa is actually love - loving your lama, liking your lama, and trusting your lama, etc. This is the experience of Tepa. Mogu is when you see the wonderful qualities of your lama and generate a great deal of respect for him or her to such an extent that you will never forget anything the lama teaches you. When you have so much trust, love and devotion to the lama, you will always remember his or her words. Tepa and Mogu may seem to be similar, yet they are different.

First, we have Tepa, and out of this, we are able to generate Mogu. We have Tepa - faith, trust, and respect - for all lamas. Mogu, however, we have for just a few. Tepa basically means liking someone, but it is much more than that. You like someone because that person is not ordinary. That person is full of blessings; there is something holy and sacred about that person. When you are struck with this kind of feeling toward a sublime being to the extent that even the bodily hairs stand on end, when you have that kind of Tepa. There is a mind-to-mind connection with your root lama and the previously arisen Tepa is now transformed into Mogu. Tears come to your eyes. This is not like the Tepa in the earlier days, but rather there is mind merging with mind.

[Translated by Tashi Jamyangling]



Gar Quote No. 79

The Buddha taught 84,000 different teachings, but the root of all those teachings, when one finds the essence, is the mind of awakening, bodhicitta. Bodhicitta is the cause of all our happiness. It is love and compassion. No matter who explains the teachings, initially, it is most important for us to have the correct intention, to have the vast mind of awakening. Then, we apply the method which is vast and comes to the ultimate meaning of Vajrayana. We must first give rise to bodhicitta; we must engage in true bodhicitta. In the end, we must dedicate our virtues with a mind of bodhicitta for the sake of all sentient beings, so that they may attain happiness in the beginning, in the middle and in the end. This is the main point that I'm making here - we need to cultivate love and compassion.

So, whenever we engage in explaining, listening to, or meditating and practicing dharma teachings - when it comes to the first one, explaining the dharma teachings, the lama who explains the dharma teachings must have first the intention to benefit all mother sentient beings vast like the sky. He or she must have the wish for them to be happy and free from all suffering, and only with this intention must explain the dharma teachings. If that intention is lacking, if that teacher only explains the dharma out of self-cherishing, then the dharma teachings that he or she is explaining will be of no benefit.

Then for the one who is listening to the teachings, one also must investigate one's own intention. It should be for the benefit of all sentient beings, that they may be free from suffering and that they may have happiness. If one wishes only for one's own happiness, if one listens to the teachings with a self-clinging attitude, if one cannot separate from self-clinging, then one will not achieve the happiness one wishes for.

Therefore, one should have the intention to benefit all sentient beings. We should put our enemies, harm-doers, first and foremost, cultivate compassion and bodhicitta for them in the beginning. Then when we meditate, when we meditate and visualize our Yidam deity or when we recite mantra, we must do so never being separated from bodhicitta. If we never separate from bodhicitta as we engage in deity practice, then we will accomplish the true deity.



Gar Quote No. 80

When we generate relative bodhicitta, if we experience great compassion for one single being, then we should dedicate that merit by thinking - may I experience compassion like this for all sentient beings without exception. When we make this kind of dedication and aspiration without doubt, it will come to fruition. We will experience the increase of compassion, and so it is true with the sharing of all merit and all dedications. If we experience happiness, then at that moment, we pray for all sentient beings without exception to experience this kind of happiness.

Particularly, when we have an insight into the nature of mind, when we have glimpsed the meaning of Mahamudra, we should not hold on to the merit of that meditation for ourselves. Rather we should dedicate that completely for the sake of all sentient beings by wishing that they too should have this glimpse of the nature of their own minds.

Whenever we are meditating on the profound meaning of Mahamudra, occasionally we will see so clearly a glimpse of the nature of mind. From that experience, we might think - now I have seen it, now I really have it, I have no doubt, no hesitation whatsoever in this glimpse of Mahamudra. Now, there is a great room for error when we have this kind of thought. When we have the notion that MY view is the supreme view, then this is the place from which we can fall down, a place from which we can make a mistake. We must guard against clinging to this view.



Gar Quote No. 81

There are immense benefits in practicing and hearing the dharma. You don't have to feel discouraged because of lack of improvement in your practice, because there are many layers of obscuration. Just as deep snow takes a long time to melt, those with thick obscurations will see improvement slowly. So don't feel discouraged.

The teaching of the Buddha is that the nature of mind contains the seed of enlightenment. All sentient beings, even the smallest insect, are equal in that regard. But insects must endure more suffering as a result of their negative karma. There are special means for saving beings like insects, through mantra and blessing pills that will liberate them from their suffering. Even though the nature of mind carries the seed of enlightenment, we have many sufferings. Enlightened beings like Shakyamuni Buddha are liberated from suffering. The qualities of buddhas are vast - like space or the ocean. We are obscured, like a cloudy sky, and enlightened beings are un-obscured, like space. There are few enlightened beings and many who are ordinary. Enlightened beings [are those who] have realized the equality of samsara and nirvana. They have realized the inseparability of appearance and emptiness. But ordinary beings have not realized this. Once they understand impermanence and that the mind cannot be found, they will have no attachment to phenomena. When they have no attachment, they will be freed from samsara.

In reality, the basic mind of ordinary beings and buddhas are equal. It is like water colored with different colors. Despite the colors, it is all water. Similarly, the minds of ordinary beings and buddhas are the same. But because we search all the time for happiness in this life and [seek] to avoid suffering, we are bound by afflictive emotions. That is how ordinary beings and buddhas are different. The deluded minds of ordinary beings see the unreal as real. It is like a jaundiced person who sees a white conch shell as yellow. The deluded mind sees phenomena as existent, concrete, and permanent. Even though there is no self in form, the deluded mind grasps at form as a self. There are different levels of people. Some have practiced the dharma in previous lives. When they hear the teachings, they immediately have confidence in them, because their obscurations are few. Others do not have such confidence, because their obscurations are thick. Some scientists are brilliant, but they cannot see the nature of mind. Only an enlightened being like Shakyamuni Buddha can really understand the nature of mind.

There are many jewels in this world, but only the dharma is the Wish-fulfilling Jewel - it can remove the root of suffering. That is why the dharma is regarded as the incomparable jewel. The three refuges are Buddha, dharma, and sangha. Buddhas were once like us, but through their practice, they have become a refuge to all beings and show the way to attain enlightenment. The essence of all the methods for attaining enlightenment is relative and ultimate bodhicitta. The refuge [that is] the Buddha are the enlightened beings of the past, present, and future. Their teachings are the dharma. And those who hear and practice this teaching are the sangha. In order for the sangha to be enlightened, they have to understand the nature of mind. The teacher represents all three refuges, because the teacher's mind is Buddha, his teaching is Dharma, and his form is Sangha.



Gar Quote No. 82

When you understand the genuine teaching of the Buddha, it will remove your suffering because from the teachings you understand the truths of impermanence and suffering. With this understanding, a mother will see her own child is impermanent and must eventually die. If the child suddenly dies, the mother will be aware that this is just how things are. But if the mother thinks of the child as permanently existing and the child dies, the mother will suffer greatly. The reason we do not understand our own mind is because of so many layers of obscuration. When a child is born, attachment and obscurations are born at the same time in the mind of the mother.

You have to look at the nature of obscurations and eliminate them, whether they are greed, anger, or ignorance. It is very important to know how obscurations develop. If you don't know this, you can't dispel them. I spoke of the analogy of the child and its mother. First, the mother likes the child, which is one layer, then the mother sees the child as beautiful, which is a second layer, then as intelligent which is a third layer. It is like being bound by a rope. If the child dies because of impermanence, the mother will suffer greatly. If you know how obscuration develops, you can immediately look at the nature of the obscuration when it appears. Our minds are like ice that is frozen by the cold of the afflictive emotions. In order to melt it, we need sunlight, which is the cultivation of bodhicitta. Ordinarily, if your enemy harms you, you will feel anger. This is like cold freezing water into ice. In a situation like this, it is important to be mindful and to cultivate bodhicitta.

If you can make the distinction between thoughts and mind, within that moment you can be enlightened. If you see the nature of mind and remain in that awareness, you are enlightened. But when thoughts appear and you fail to recognize their nature, you become ordinary. So ordinary beings and enlightened beings are only separated by one moment. So first, you must know the nature of your own mind.



Gar Quote No. 83

The practice of recognizing the mind will weaken your afflictive emotions, strengthen your compassion and [your] devotion to your teachers and lead you to see the nature of your own mind. Progress in your practice depends on devotion. With great devotion, there will be great progress. If you see your teacher as enlightened, you will receive the blessings of an enlightened being. If you see him or her as an ordinary being, you will get the blessing of an ordinary being. If your teacher does a negative action and you only see him or her as enlightened, you can only receive blessings.

The mind of the teacher and the mind of enlightened beings are connected, even if the teacher is not fully enlightened. It is like electricity and a wire. When the connection is made, there is light. The teacher and the student are also connected like that. So, it is important to practice with devotion to the teacher. It is also important to make practice a habit. You should practice at all times by working with emotions. You should graduate from observing the smaller emotions when you are relaxed, to observing stronger emotions. When you have succeeded in doing this, your ability to see the nature of mind will be like a raging fire and emotion will be like grass which only feeds it. Naropa said that once you are well trained, you will not grasp after appearances. Good or bad things will happen but they will pass you by.

Obscuration has no form that you can see. Still, there are countless layers of obscuration. All these layers are removed by confidence in the law of cause and effect and by practice and devotion to the root guru. These will dispel obscurations no matter how strong. Obscurations will lessen and the nature of the mind, which is like a clear diamond, will shine forth. Then, there needs no effort to see it. It will shine effortlessly. Reading the life story of Milarepa will lessen your obscurations - so will the practice of Chenrezig, or chanting the mantra of the guru.



Gar Quote No. 84

Until now, our life has been like watching a movie which increases our obscurations. Chenrezig's practice is like watching a movie which decreases them. When they are gone, there will be enlightenment. Until now, we have not practiced mindfulness. That is the basis of our obscurations and how our perceptions have become deluded. Now is the time to be mindful of our thoughts and how they arise so that our afflictive emotions will lessen. In that way, mindfulness is like a strong fire.

Even though you have received this method, through past habitual tendencies, you cannot dispel your emotions. To do so, you should put more effort into your practice. But in the practice of absolute bodhicitta, you cannot make an effort, except by strengthening your devotion. When looking at the mind, the mind must remain natural. You cannot apply effort. But, when practicing relative bodhicitta, you can apply effort by generating compassion. From now on, you must make a decision that the nature of your own mind is enlightenment. In order for this nature to appear, you must apply effort in practicing relative bodhicitta. It is like an antidote for your obscurations. It is like warmth which melts the ice of your obscurations.

The great Jigten Sumgon, who is like the Buddha, said the only way to understand absolute bodhicitta is to practice relative bodhicitta. You start with the person who you love the most and then expand that love to your friends, those you feel indifferent to, then to your enemies and finally all sentient beings. If you practice relative bodhicitta, it will liberate you from the suffering of the bardo, because when you practice relative bodhicitta all beings become like your mother and there is no way you will gather afflictive emotions. In that way, you will not fear the bardo state. You will see all beings in the bardo as your mother.

If instead of practicing compassion, you have anger, it will lead you to hell. When you are angry, you will never be happy. It will even influence your dreams and you will have nightmares. If you have anger in the bardo, you will also have bad experiences. When I was young, I was very short tempered and I had horrible dreams. But my root teacher taught me compassion and I no longer have bad dreams. If you practice detachment, it will be easier to keep it in the intermediate state. If you are mindful and do not follow your attachments now, when you are in the bardo and see your future parents, you will not be attached to them and not be reborn in this world. The mind is like a flowing stream. It will not stay in a cup but will go where it will go. If you do not practice well, your mind will flow away. When the glass of your body is broken, it will go where it will, just as water would land where it spills.

I have said many things but there are two main points. First, you have to see all beings as your beloved. This has an immense benefit, like a wish fulfilling jewel. This is the practice of relative bodhicitta. The second point is absolute bodhicitta. You have to be aware of the nature of mind, no matter how many thoughts arise. You should not be distracted by thoughts, but be mindful.



Gar Quote No. 85

For those of us who really want to accomplish the meaning of Mahamudra, we need to understand that daily, constantly, we have thoughts of self-clinging arising in the mind, thoughts conditioned by self-clinging. Even when drinking a glass of water, we think 'oh, this water is mine.' This is 'my' water in 'my' glass and 'I' am drinking. This constantly reinforces this habit. As a result, our self-clinging is like a huge mountain.

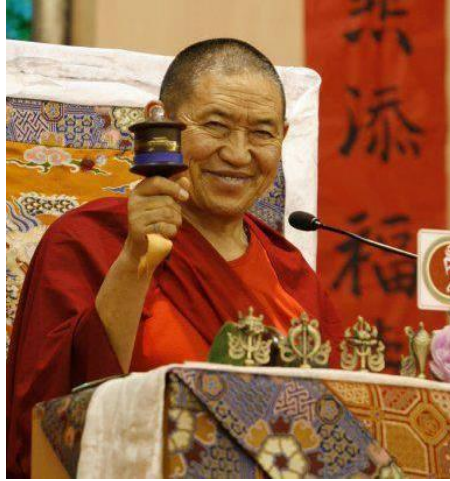
If we can create the positive habit of making offerings of all our enjoyments throughout the day to the enlightened ones, then each time we do that, it is like removing one grain of sand from the mountain of self-clinging. If we do this continuously again and again, then one day that mountain will be flattened. If, on the other hand, we don't make mental offerings, then this concept of self continues to grow. So my great hope is that you will all continuously practice offering throughout the day. This is my great personal instruction to you.



Gar Quote No. 86

When you realize that your own mind and the mind of the guru are one, then you have uncontrived devotion. First, we give rise to devotion by thinking of the guru's qualities, even to the point where tears come to our eyes. However, we do not grasp at this thought, but instead rest in the natural state. Within mahamudra, our mind, the mind of the guru, and the mind of the Buddha are one.

The deity's mind and the guru's mind are inseparable. When you practice the deity and recite the mantra, you should not think about different qualities. The essence of the deity, bodhicitta, is the guru. The mind is the lama; the body is the yidam; and the speech—the mantra recitation—is the dakini.



Gar Quote No. 87

Whether you have a family life, work, or are in retreat, you must practice the 37 Bodhisattva Practices. If you maintain awareness during all worldly activities, they will become a practice of the six paramitas. Remain inseparable from compassion, and in particular, practice patience. If you are able to do that, there is no need to put your body through hardships. These days we cannot endure the hardships Milarepa endured, but we can train our minds nevertheless. If you make an effort to practice, it will lead to enlightenment, either in the first, second, or third bardo or within several lifetimes.

It is most important to cultivate a wish to help others. If you cannot generate an altruistic mind, even extensive retreat will be of not much benefit. Conversely, if you do cultivate an altruistic mind and patience, even engaging in mundane activities will become dharma practice. Longchen Rabjam said: "When mental arisings settle in their natural state, there is no need to abandon samsara." When emotions and thoughts are rendered powerless, there is no need to abandon the mundane world. When the cause of enlightenment is practiced, it will result in enlightenment, even if one does not isolate one's body from the mundane world.

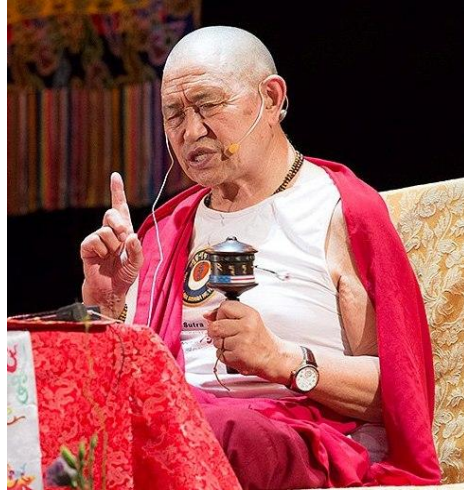


Gar Quote No. 88

Although the quality of unconditioned compassion is inborn to our nature, temporarily our buddha nature is like a frozen block of ice. Its nature is always like pure water; it has neither turned into a rock nor has it ever become defiled. Nevertheless, due to the condition of self--grasping - which is like cold weather - it has frozen into a block of ice. Ice has the quality of water, but it must be actualized by melting. We melt the ice of self--grasping by cultivating the warmth of compassion. When the ice is melted and becomes flowing water, we realize the actual quality of water, the vast oceanic dharmakaya within which all buddhas are one.

We all have love, but due to self--grasping, it manifests as attachment. We love, or are attached to, those beings that are pleasing to us. We feel compassion for them because we love them. But because we cling to a self, this love is not all embracing, but is biased through the ego's wishes. However, we can utilize this biased love and consider that all sentient beings have been our kind mothers. How does this love feel as the limitation of bias collapses? It is very natural. Everyone is the same; there is a compassion for all beings, even if they are not in your field of vision. When this is eventually habituated, it will become effortless. However, if we allow it to be interrupted by the ego, if we get jealous and angry, then the mind becomes narrow again. If you really love someone, no matter how troublesome they are, you will always love them and thus will tolerate their temporary moods. When you love others, your mind is very relaxed and happy. When you get angry, your mind becomes unhappy and narrow like a block of ice.

The very nature of love is happiness. That is what it is. The very nature of self--centered emotions is suffering.



Gar Quote No. 89

When you lose your patience, you should recognize this and feel regret. Every time you should make the commitment that next time you are going to do better and that I will not lose patience again. Then you might not lose it the next time, but eventually you will lose it again. It is a training of habituation. You will not be able to miraculously stop being impatient without any training. The pith instruction is habituation, perseverance. If you persevere in practice, your practice will definitely improve, and in the end you will never lose your patience. It is just like learning anything. It may be difficult in the beginning, but if we keep doing it over and over again, it becomes easy. It is a slow process, and you have to persist even if you fail in the beginning. No matter how often you fall, you must get up and do it again. As your patience increases, you can take a vow: "No matter how much they provoke me, I shall not get angry." This is the essence of the bodhisattva vows.

But patience does not only apply to anger, it must be practiced with all emotions. When desire arises, you must not give in, but forbear; when jealousy arises, you must forbear, etc. If you are able to be patient with all thoughts and emotions, you will not fall under their power again. If you lack patience, you will again and again fall under the power of these emotions. Diligent forbearance is mindful awareness.



Gar Quote No. 90

Dealing with Difficult People

Do not think about things like that. There is no benefit in grasping and thinking about it. You have to let it go. Everything follows the law of karma naturally, there is nothing we can change about it by thinking about it much. If your family members treat you bad in this life, it is the result or karmic creditor of your own past actions. We are responsible for our own karma, we ourselves have created the causes for all our experiences. Enemies, obstructors, mischievous relatives, etc., are only conditions but not the cause. Moreover, the past is gone, it doesn't exist any longer, we cannot change the past, we have to let it go, so do not think about this. What is more important is that which is actually in your hands, the future. Thus you should rather give rise to love and compassion in order to ensure a happy future. If you think about others' faults you will only get angry and resentful. Think about their qualities and stop thinking about their faults, then love will arise. If you can't stop the thoughts, think of Tara and recite her mantra.

The Buddha said, "Perfectly tame your own mind, this is the Buddha's teaching." The Buddha did not say, "Perfectly tame someone else's mind." You have to purify your own mind. If you cling to these thoughts of resentment and frustration again and again, you form a habit, and this habit will manifest before you in the Bardo in the form of a delusive perception which is the projection of your own mind, just like a TV show. This is what creates hell, it is the projections of one's own anger and resentment. Let go of it and make an effort to cultivate love. The only thing you should hold on to is love. Then you have no fear when you die, you will be born in the higher realms and slowly attain enlightenment. So do not worry about the faults of others, rather purify your own faults.



Gar Quote No. 91

If we want to put into practice the Dharma teachings, the most important thing to do is to cultivate compassion. When we have the thought—how can I benefit this other person—then we are practicing the Dharma. Then, wherever we go we can continue to accumulate virtue, we can continue to accumulate compassion. Ordinary beings spend all of their time trying to accumulate wealth and possessions and so forth. But if we can realize that cultivating compassion brings benefit to oneself and others, then instead of making effort for the aims of this life, we will continuously seek to accumulate a vast store of compassion. Even if we can generate compassion for just one insect, this itself will have a very vast fruition.

All the suffering of sentient beings and all the compassion of the Buddhas are interrelated. When I was visiting Swayambhu, a stupa in Kathmandu, there is a place where many beggars gather. Onetime, when I was circumambulating the stupa, I saw a dog with a huge sore in his body that was infected with maggots. Everyone who walked by this dog and saw his suffering generated great compassion. One couldn't help but feel compassion at seeing this dog. Immediately, I thought of the story of Asanga who encountered just such a dog and generated great compassion.

I realized that this dog was really a bodhisattva emanation who came to this place to be a basis for people to generate authentic compassion. Whenever I think of this dog, again and again I feel compassion, and I imagine it is the same for all the people who were there that day. We should think that those who endure suffering are actually very kind to us, because they give us a basis for generating compassion, for increasing compassion.



Gar Quote No. 92

In this world, there are two systems, the mundane and the spiritual systems. The ultimate goal of these is the same. Everyone wants to be happy and no one wants to suffer. If you wish to be happy, you must understand the causes of happiness. In the mundane life, we strive after outer pleasure, and yet, without choice, we always encounter suffering. That is because we only recognize the already ripened results and not the cause.

The religions in this world have emerged as people recognized that all the suffering in the world has its causes, rather than the results, that must be destroyed. Religious practitioners seek methods to eliminate the causes of suffering which are found only in one's own mind. Buddhist practitioners practice this, based on the understanding of karma, because if we do not prevent the cause, we will not be able to prevent the results. For instance, some people in this world never suffer much, because they have not created the causes of suffering in the past lives. Others suffer all the time without choice even though they strive for happiness and that is because they did not avoid the causes of suffering.

Possessing both systems is like possessing two open eyes. It is important to understand that the ultimate goal of both systems is the same, as they both wish to bring about the well-being and happiness of beings. The various religions develop their own tradition in order to bring about the inner peace and happiness of the mind. Thus, if everyone practices their own religion well, it will become the benefit of all.

The Buddha realized that the cause of well-being and happiness of all beings is love and compassion, and he called it the precious bodhicitta. Bodhicitta is the state of mind that is totally free from selfishness, and that only and at all times cares for the happiness of others. If we do not prevent the causes of suffering from arising, there is no way we can create happiness.



Gar Quote No. 93

The practice of ethics and morality is connected to the practice of generosity. As Buddhist we have all taken various vows and commitments, and every time we make effort to uphold these vows we make offerings to the Three Jewels. Whenever we abandon harming beings and cultivate benefitting beings, this too is making offerings to the Three Jewels.

Even if we are making one single prostration we should think not that we are accomplishing our own benefit or that we are accumulating merit for ourselves by doing this. But rather we should think that there are countless sentient beings who continue to wander in samsara through the force of their negative actions. These beings have no faith in the Dharma teachings, and thus they are bound, they lack freedom. It is for their sake that I make this prostration. When we prostrate with this mindset, then this too is the offering of the body.

Second is the offering, or generosity, or speech. If we recite even on mantra we should do so for the purpose of all beings. With each recitation of the mantra OM MANI PADME HUNG, for example, one emanation body of Chenrezig issues for the benefit of sentient beings. Therefore, when we have the mind of loving-kindness and compassion and we recite even one mantra for the purpose of sentient beings, then that becomes the offering of speech.

Also whenever we speak words that are beneficial or uplifting to others, or when we, through our own speech, bring together people who are in conflict, when we meditate for people, these are also the offerings of speech.

Of all kinds of offering we can make, bodhicitta is supreme.



Gar Quote No. 94

If you receive empowerment, it's about bodhicitta. If you receive teachings, it's about bodhicitta. If you practice teachings, it's about bodhicitta.

Everything comes down to bodhicitta. The essence of practice is about bodhicitta. When you sit down to do your practice, what you practice is bodhicitta.

If you are truly my student, then you will not generate hatred and anger even toward a person who comes to kill me. If you do, then I will have failed as your teacher! If it is his karma to kill and my karma to die, so be it, but as Garchen Rinpoche's student, you must not lose your bodhicitta and must continue to develop love and compassion for this person. If someone for whom you care as lovingly as a child ends up wronging you, harming you, hurting you, beating you, or abusing you, it does not matter, you resolutely must not forsake your bodhicitta! Your body is what you will shed at the end of this life, but the equanimous love in your mindstream is what you want to protect and bring with you throughout lifetimes.



Gar Quote No. 95

Even if we are not able to study all the different scriptures and teachings, we must understand the essence of the spiritual path...And that is to bring about happiness. True happiness only arises from within the mind. How do we obtain this happiness of the mind? Do we obtain this happiness through money or wealth or friends? All of these are external and none of these can bring peace and happiness of the mind. It is only the mind itself that can generate that happiness.

So everyone in this world must apply the methods to create ultimate happiness. Understanding these spiritual paths, we begin to learn to tolerate the sufferings that we experience at present, and through understanding the workings of cause and effect.

So personally I am not a person that has any great qualities and by no means a great special master at all. But I have the quality of understanding the nature of suffering and having cultivated a tolerance to overcome suffering.



Gar Quote No. 96

Bodhisattva in Tibetan is jangchub sempa. The first syllable, jang, refers to the purification of all obscurations - that is to say the purification of thoughts like "I want peace and happiness for myself." The second, chub, refers to the accumulation of wonderful enlightened qualities. Whenever we renounce this thought that I myself want to obtain peace and happiness, then we take on the intention, the wish, to bring benefit to all sentient beings. If we have the thought of obtaining our own peace and happiness, then that thought itself, paradoxically, is the very cause of suffering. When on the other hand, we take on the commitment to bring benefit to all sentient beings, then we are willing to take on the suffering of all sentient beings. Paradoxically, by taking on others' suffering, we establish the very cause of happiness. That is, in this way, we accomplish the purpose of ourselves as well.

The third, sem, just means mind. The last, pa, means like a fearless person, a warrior. When one has habituated the wish to accomplish others' benefit, to the point that one even could enter the hell realms in order to alleviate the suffering of those beings, one has the noble mind of this fearless warrior. To put these together is the meaning of bodhisattva.

A bodhisattva who possesses great compassion will never forsake sentient beings, even if they wander in hell forever. Hell beings are not hell beings by nature. Beings wander endlessly in samsara; sentient beings will not come to an end very soon. Even if we cannot actually free them all, we must never give up the aspiration. That is the tireless courage of bodhisattvas.



Gar Quote No. 97

Khenpo Munsel's Pith Tonglen instructions given to Garchen Rinpoche

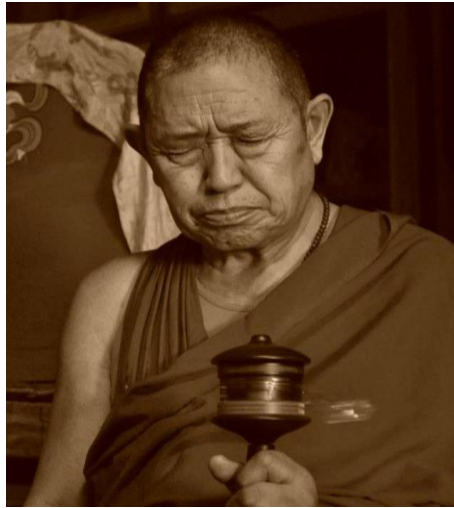
Khenpo Munsel gave me many special oral instructions on tong-len that weren't in the text. In tong-len, generally, we say that we are sending happiness out to others and taking others' suffering in. But for the actual meaning of tong-len, you have to understand the inseparability of self and other. The ground of our minds is the same. We understand this from the View.

In this context, even if there are many different types of suffering, there is only one thing called "suffering". There is only one suffering, he taught. If there is really only one suffering, then at this time when you, yourself, have great suffering, you should think, "The minds of the sentient beings of the three realms and my mind have the same ground." However, the essence of the suffering of the sentient beings of the three realms and the essence of our own suffering is the same. If you see them to be the same, if you see them as being non-dual, and then meditate on that suffering, in the mind's natural state, that suffering goes away. At that moment, you have been able to lessen the suffering of all sentient beings of the three realms, all at once.

The "len" of tong-len means "taking." First, take in this way. "Tong" means "giving." If you understand your mind's nature, then you recognize the essence of whatever suffering and afflictive emotions there may be to be emptiness.

When suffering does not harm you anymore, the mind has great bliss. If at that time, you meditate, making self and others inseparable, then that bliss can diminish the self-grasping of all sentient beings. It can lessen the self-grasping. The happiness that is being given is the bliss that comes from the practice of giving and taking.

This is how you should practice. This is very special. Others don't explain it this way.



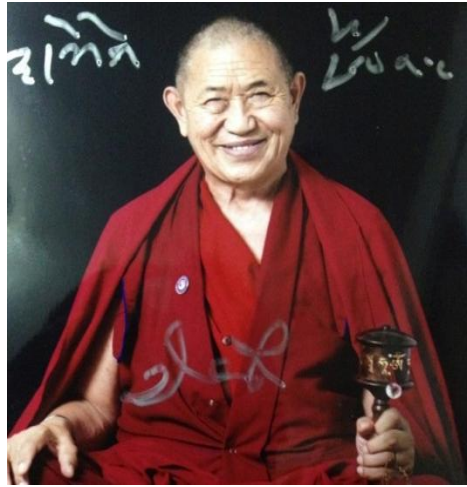
Gar Quote No. 98

Many people have received all of these instructions on practicing calm abiding, special insight, Mahamudra and so forth. They think, "I really need to hurry up and get on with this. I will do Samanatha for a little while, but then soon I need to integrate the practice of insight." Actually, the best way of practicing is, if you are a beginner, to just leave behind instructions on special insight for the beginning. Just focus on calm abiding for a period of one month, or one year. Just say, "I am going to focus on pacifying my thoughts." This is the best way to progress. Do this for many months and get some stabilization. If you have any direct experience of meditation realization, then go to the guru with that experience to seek further instruction in the way of progress.

Now, in the beginning, when we are trying to stabilize this calm abiding meditation, at first thoughts will arise one after the next, like a very powerful waterfall. But then after stabilizing, we find that mind flows more like a river, like the Ganges according to Lord Tilopa. It flows along its course in a slow and steady manner, which is to say fewer and fewer thought forms arise in the mind

Whenever we have many thoughts arising in the mind, many negative emotions or thoughts of any type, it is necessary for us to cut through them, penetrate them and catch a glimpse of the mind free of thoughts. If the mind and body are tense, then it seems that thoughts follow one after the net. When we can relax a bit, it becomes easier to pierce through these thoughts that arise in the mind. The important thing is at first to recognize the thoughts that arise in the mind, and secondly to make effort to cut through them.

Whenever we are trying to stabilize this kind of meditation, we can also work with our breath energy. It is said that mind and the subtle energies of the winds are mixed; the wind energy is like the horse and the mind is like its rider. That is to say all types of thought forms and so forth are mounted on the subtle wind energies. Then we can stabilize these wind energies by the mental recitation of the syllables OM AH HUNG in conjunction with the breath. We breathe in through the nostrils mentally reciting OM, briefly hold the breath at the navel mentally reciting AH, and exhale through the mouth mentally reciting HUNG. This will help to stabilize the wind energies and pacify the many thoughts that arise in the mind. Until we reach the state where we can sit down and engage in a very stable, clear one-pointed meditation at will, then we need to practice in this way.



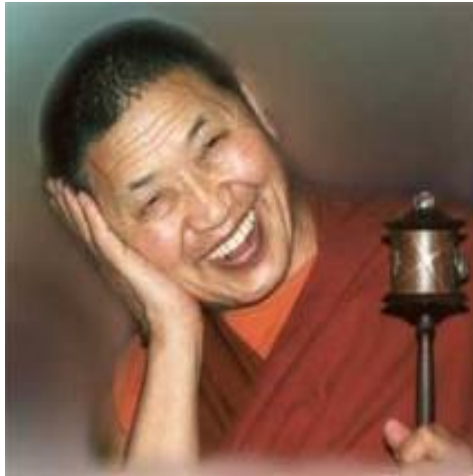
Gar Quote No. 99

As Buddhist practitioners who have generated bodhicitta, it is necessary for us to develop great impartial compassion. We should think that among all sentient beings there is not one who has at one time or another not been one of my kind parents. Through being ignorant of mind's nature, through simply not seeing the natural state of mind, beings are deluded by ignorance. That creates the causes of suffering and wandering in cyclic existence. When contemplating in this way, compassion will naturally increase. Thus we should make effort to think of our kind mothers, all sentient beings, in this way again and again. Eventually our compassion will become so great that it is really an inconceivable kind of compassion that totally pervades all space. It is said that there are as many sentient beings as there are particles of dust in space. They are countless. If we extend this feeling of compassion to all the infinite sentient beings, then without doubt, we will have an inconceivable or pervading compassion.

All of these infinite sentient beings, without exception, experience great suffering. Even those in the higher realms, although they experience great bliss and happiness, they are still subject to suffering, because their bliss is fleeting, impermanent. Even in our worldly realm, if somebody is blessed with wealth and enjoyments of various kinds, they still experience suffering. Conversely, if one lacks wealth, one is still subject to suffering. When we deeply contemplate the situation of the beings of the six realms of existence, and we recognize that birth in any of the six realms is the very nature of suffering, then without doubt, we will be able to generate compassion.

When we contemplate the suffering of beings, our minds naturally turn to a method for liberation from suffering. Without the precious Dharma teachings, we don't have any method to accomplish that purpose. It is only through the kindness of the Buddha who manifests as our kind teachers and spiritual guides that we can understand, that we can hear the teachings on how to cultivate the two aspects of bodhicitta, which is the supreme method for liberation from suffering. Having heard the teachings on cultivating bodhicitta, we develop a strong resolve to liberate all sentient beings from suffering without the thought of our own happiness or benefit for ourselves.

In the text that elaborates the conduct of the bodhisattvas, it says, "like the supreme qualities of gold, which has been transmuted from a base metal, this unclean body is transformed into a body of a conqueror, a Buddha." In order to transform one's own form into something more valuable than a priceless jewel, one should stabilize well this thing called bodhicitta. We, Buddhists, we speak a great deal about suffering, and this in fact is the teaching of the Buddha himself. The reason for speaking of this in such great detail is to show beings their present situation, beings who ordinarily would be unaware of their present situation. For example, if you are sick and you don't really recognize the gravity of your sickness, you don't recognize it as suffering, and so you don't take your medicine. So, it is for beings who don't recognize the suffering of samsara. This is a meditation that brings benefit to oneself and all others as well.



Gar Quote No. 100

Loving kindness: it decreases our self-grasping and the mind becomes naturally expansive. If you have loving kindness, you have understood the essence of the Dharma. It gives you the joy of liberation and lasts throughout your future lives until you are able to achieve enlightenment.

When we have developed loving kindness, we have achieved the priceless. If you develop it in your mind-stream, you are the richest person. Money and wealth are not reliable because it can collapse at any moment. If you have developed it in your heart, it gives you a lot of happiness. This is how I survived in prison. Loving kindness is the most precious thing.



Gar Quote No. 101

When we want to begin the practice of Mahamudra, first it is necessary to start with the practice of tranquil abiding. We can meditate on tranquil abiding in two ways - with a support to our meditation and without a support. For people who are just beginning the practice of tranquil abiding, it is very helpful to meditate with a support, such as the form of a particular deity. If we have a picture of a deity and we look at it very carefully, we study its ornaments and attributes and so forth, habituate the mind to it, then we close our eyes and see the deity in our mind's eye. The mind will not rest on this object; in fact, it will waiver. In the beginning, it will go all over the place, and it will be very difficult to stabilize this meditation with support.

Many people when having this kind of experience will easily become discouraged when seeing just how many thought forms are arising, one after the next like an unbroken chain in their mind-stream. People become discouraged and tired doing their meditation practice.

At that time, we should realize that we aren't suddenly thinking more thoughts, but having started to meditate, we are simply recognizing the state of our mind. Not having cultivated this kind of awareness in the past, we have let our thoughts run unchecked. We have been unaware of the state of our minds.

Now through the practice of meditation, we are becoming aware of our thought forms. For example, there are many dust particles in a room. If the room is dark, we are not aware of them, but if a ray of sunlight shines in the window, then we see the countless particles of dust. It's not that those particles exist because suddenly we see them, they were there all along. So it is with thought forms. They were present all along, and through the illuminating power of calm abiding, we become aware of them.

It's like if you go for a walk and your face is dirty, but you don't know it. When you go home and look in a mirror, you recognize—oh, I have this dirt all over my face. This is a matter of direct experience. So it is with meditation practice. We shouldn't get discouraged when we finally become aware, we should just wash our face.



Gar Quote No. 102

When a realized master gives an introduction to the nature of mind, and the disciple recognizes or looks directly at the nature of mind, then this initial recognition becomes a cause of future recognition of negative emotions of attachment, aversion, and so forth. For example, if someone makes you angry and you have received this introduction to the nature of mind, at the moment the anger arises you look at the anger itself, you turn mind inward upon itself. You see that the source of that anger is not other than mind, and the emotion itself dissipates.

Generally, when we get angry at someone, we remember that interaction, and the next time we see them we remember it again, and each time we see them, we reinforce the habit of that anger. So, from the initial negative emotion of anger arises the karmic propensity through repeated recollection of that negative emotion. But, when from the very start, we recognize mind's nature in the arising of that anger, the negative emotion itself dissipates. Then, there is no basis for that karmic propensity to be created or reinforced. Initially, once we have received the introduction to the nature of mind, the sign that we are putting it into practice is to begin to purify these karmic propensities.

Tilopa said that merely to see the natural mind, merely to catch a glimpse of Mahamudra one time purifies the negative activity of many eons. Just like the sun breaking through the clouds in the sky, although our minds are very obscured by habits of negative emotions, to catch just a glimpse of the nature of mind completely clears those negativities away in that moment.

Prostrations are an antidote to pride. Whenever we think—oh! I have particularly good qualities of such and such and I have understanding and knowledge, this reinforces our self-clinging to the extent that we are not really able to see the good qualities of others. This is truly the definition of pride. Whenever we come into contact with other teachers, lamas, scholars and so forth of the Dharma, then it is very important that we make effort to offer respect to them, particularly through the practice of prostrations. We should think of these masters as being the embodiment of the perfect accumulation of good qualities and accordingly show respect through the practice of prostrations. Even if these are beings with few qualities, it doesn't matter. We should continually purify our own view of them, show respect to them as great beings. What will happen as a result of doing this is that we ourselves will take on the qualities in those to whom we are prostrating, and our habit of pride will be purified. Thus, it is very important for us to show respect to others. This is truly the offering of mental prostrations.



Gar Quote No. 103

Many people have the habit of recalling past sufferings, things that have gone wrong in their lifetime: playing this over and over again in the mind, recalling them again and again, thinking of things another person has said about them. We should realize that these circumstances are not isolated to this present lifetime, but that we have experienced other such negative circumstances for countless lifetimes in the past. They are nothing more than the condition of negative karma. They are over now, and there is nothing that can be done to change them.

Regarding thoughts of the future, many people are involved in making mental plans for what they will do. Instead of engaging in these kinds of thoughts, we should recognize that the future is nothing more than the fruition of my karma or merit and so forth. I myself have no great power to influence the circumstances of the future. One should also leave behind these kinds of thoughts.

We will experience periods of time when thoughts are not arising in the mind. At that time we should not be attached to the non-arising, but just remain in that state. Even in that state of calm abiding, other thought forms will begin to arise. They will arise naturally; they are nothing to be suppressed. Yet, at the same time we need to recognize them the moment they do arise.

Our general tendency is that the moment a thought arises we are attracted to it. We cling to it, we are attached to it. Then that thought gives rise to another, and another, and another after that. Within the practice of calm abiding we need to rest in the nature of mind, but when thoughts arise we should not hold onto them, not engage them, but just completely leave them behind. By doing that again and again over a period of time, these thoughts that make our mind waver will decrease. We will attain a degree of stability in our practice of tranquil abiding.



Gar Quote No. 104

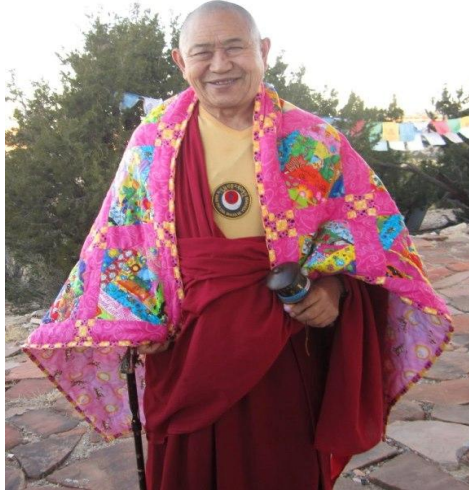
We should recognize that generally speaking our wealth, food, enjoyments and so forth become a cause for the mind to be bound. Of course, if the mind is not bound, then there is no harm in enjoying the things of this world, and even of the perfectly pure god realm.

But for those of us who still have this attachment and grasping, we need to engage in the practice of offering. Whatever is pleasurable to us, whatever is enjoyable, we should make a habit of mentally offering to the enlightened beings. By doing this, the ties that are normally created by pleasurable circumstances are unbound, they are undone. These are skillful means taught by the Great Compassionate One.

Whatever is pleasurable to us, whatever is beautiful to our mind, we should get into the habit of offering and offering and offering to the Three Jewels. If we see beautiful jewels, ornaments, or different kinds of clothing, food, flowers, water, whatever we have or mentally envision, [we should offer them]. When we continuously make offerings of all our enjoyments, this becomes the cause of purifying our habit of clinging.

We speak of the paramita of generosity, is the practice of making offerings of physical things. Whenever we make offerings to the Three Jewels, this becomes a cause of loosening the ties of grasping that bind our minds. I believe Milarepa said that a lack of grasping is actually the true paramita of generosity.

For practicing Mahamudra, the greatest support is the cultivation of mindful awareness. If we have mindful awareness throughout all our activities, then whatever we see that is beautiful, such as flowers or so forth, at the moment we see them there might be an initial thought of—oh! I want that. Yet, if we have mindful awareness, there will be an immediate recognition of the arising of attachment. At the moment of that recognition, we can transform the negative emotion by making a mental offering to all the Buddhas. If we discipline ourselves in this way with vigilant mindful awareness, moment by moment, then everything that we do will become virtuous, will become meritorious. Without that kind of awareness, the mind will continue to become more and more bound by our clinging.



Gar Quote No. 105

The Buddha said that when we give rise to bodhicitta, then we will accomplish the dual purpose of self and others simultaneously. How will that be accomplished? When asked what your own purpose is, what you want to accomplish, you would answer “I do not want to suffer.” Your purpose is freedom from suffering. Then what is the root of your suffering? The root of your suffering is the self-grasping mind. If you give rise to the altruistic mind, then that is the antidote for the self-centered mind.

If you give rise to an altruistic mind with great love for others, then your own self-grasping and that of others will simultaneously diminish, so in this way, you are helping yourself and also others. The two self-graspings will simultaneously collapse as there is no difference between self and others. It is just like the sun shining on two ice blocks; they melt together.

If you realize that, then you realize the preciousness of bodhicitta. It is said that through the altruistic mind the dual purpose of self and others is spontaneously and simultaneously accomplished.

Regarding bodhicitta, Lord Jigten Sumgon [founder of the Drikung lineage] said in one of his many Vajra songs, “If the steed of love and compassion does not run for the benefit of others, it will not be rewarded in the assembly of gods and humans.”

The altruistic mind is likened here to the steed or the excellent horse. If you just let it sit and don’t run with it then it will be of no benefit; it runs through cultivating the practice of the six paramitas. When you give rise to bodhicitta, your conduct must become the practice of the six paramitas. Then it doesn’t matter what activity you engage in - whether worldly or Dharmic activity - all your activities become a practice of the six paramitas.

Milarepa said regarding the qualities of bodhicitta, “in whatever you do practice the Dharma perfectly. There is no other skillful means than that.



Gar Quote No. 106

When you feel tired, you should not force yourself to meditate upon something. When you meditate, you should just rest in the natural state. The nature of mind is the conscious awareness that recognizes all mental arisings. This conscious mind is like pure water. The mental arisings are like earth. If your awareness is weak the water mixes with the earth and becomes muddy. This muddy mind is unbearable and people therefore commit suicide. Your awareness must prevail with clarity, then you will not cling to the mental arisings. If you just leave them be they are like a pebble in water, if you cling to them they are like earth making your mind cloudy.

Thus, do not cling to your thoughts, do not grasp at their reality. This life is like a dream. Do not believe in its reality. Preserve the conscious knowing awareness and let go of thoughts, then they will not affect you. Habituate the natural state. At times, pray to Tara and recite her mantra. Tara should appear in your mind, then ordinary fixations will subside. If the thoughts do not mix with your mind, they are not harmful even if they arise. If you do not grasp at them they are rendered powerless. If you grasp at them, they will wear you out. The actual mind cannot be tired, the fixation to thoughts make you weary.

Your body is not real. It is a compounded phenomenon, a creation of your own imprints/habitual patterns, so it is created by the mind. Our clinging to physical comfort and aversion toward physical discomfort is a delusion of the mind. After we have died, there is no body, yet we experience more intense suffering in the Bardo. If we are able to let go of our thoughts of attachment and aversion, we will not experience such painful delusions in the Bardo. Therefore, we must contemplate that this life is like a dream again and again. If, in this life, we are able to recognize the empty nature of the afflictive emotions we will also be able to recognize the empty nature of the Bardo. However, if we give way to the afflictive emotions and accumulate negative karma which leave an imprint in the mind, the frightening appearances of the Bardo will seem to be real. This is the point of meditation.



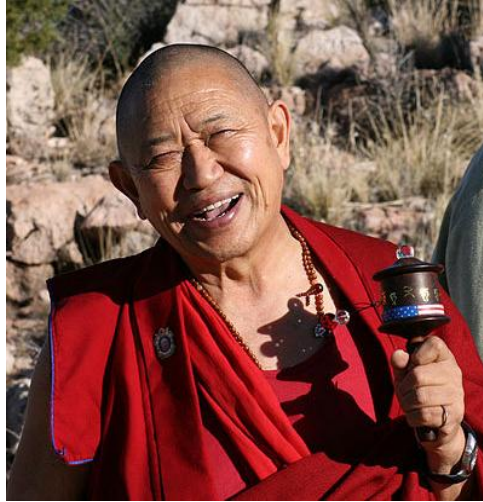
Gar Quote No. 107

Why is it that we must practice Mahamudra following the guru yoga practice? Before we have gained realization, in order to gain realization, we must first and foremost cultivate devotion to the guru - uncontrived devotion -realizing that the mindfulness of the guru and my own mindfulness are an inseparable union. Only through realizing that our own mind and the mind of the guru are a union will the blessings of the guru enter our mind. Some recognize this mindfulness, some do not recognize this mindfulness, but when we think of devotion to our own root guru, then through this devotion itself, we will recognize that our own mindfulness and the guru's mindfulness actually are a union. So most important is the meditation of devotion.

From the perspective of practice, the essence of this mindfulness is emptiness and its nature is clarity, but if you look for it you cannot find it. This mindfulness is the same nature as the mindfulness of the guru, and if you have an unchanging faith and devotion to your root guru, then the form of the root guru will appear in your mind, and you will remember the guru's instructions. It is just like ordinarily when you love a person, you cannot forget about them, they will always appear in your mind. In the same way, the guru will appear in your mind, and each time the guru appears, you will remember the guru's instructions.

This is an easier way of practice for beginning practitioners -to recognize that this mindfulness is the mindfulness of the guru, or in Dzogchen terms, it is said that it is mindful presence remembering the guru. So this mindful presence or mindfulness represents the guru.

Also, each and every day, you can take a commitment to remember the guru; for example, "today I am going to remember the guru ten times," then the next day fifteen times, and then twenty times. You increase your commitment to remember the guru, and eventually through that your mind will truly become inseparable from the guru. If you lack mindfulness, then also the guru will not arise within your mind - that is a unique instruction.



Gar Quote No. 108

The mind of Great Love, when directed to the Buddhas is called devotion, when directed to all sentient beings without exception is called compassion. Drubwang Rinpoche always raised his hand and said, 'May all sentient beings benefit', and truly there is no aspiration greater than this.

It doesn't matter whether one calls oneself a Buddhist or not a Buddhist. The Dharma is love. When you see how your love touches others, it will become your happiness to give your happiness away.

What is called 'blessings' is nothing more but love.

If you are self-centered, your mind becomes narrow, like a block of ice. But when you let go and send out love to others, you will notice how your mind expands. The mind becomes open and spacious, like a vast ocean or the sky.

When you give rise to love for sentient beings, then we are exactly the same. Ultimately, self and other are just thoughts. When we see that, we are not separate from others, we begin to fathom the preciousness of compassion, of bodhicitta.

Love is the only cause of happiness. Its nature is all-pervasive like space. Love is the sunlight of the mind.



OM AH GURU RATNA DWAZA MAHAMUDRA SIDDHI PHA LA HUNG





Drikung Dharma Surya Center

Long Life Prayer for Garchen Rinpoche

*PHAK-PE YÜL-NA AR-YA-DE-VA ZHE/
The one known in the Holy Land as Aryadeva,*

*DO-KHAM CHOK-SU GAR-GYI RIK-SU TRÜL/
Emanated into the Gar clan of Eastern Tibet as ChÖdingpa*

*JIK-TEN-GÖN-PO THUK-SE CHÖ-DING-PA/
The heart son of Jikten Gönpo*

*PEL-DEN GAR-CHEN KU-TSE KAL-GYAR-TEN/
May the life of glorious Garchen remain steadfast for a hundred aeons!*

*NYIG-DÜ GYAL-TEN NYAK-TRE NE-KAB DIR/
In this age of strife when the Victor's teaching faces hardship*

*THU-TOB DOR-JE TA-BÜ TÜL ZHUK-KYI/
through his powerful, vajra-like conduct,*

*RI-ME TEN-PE KHUR-CHI DAG-GIR ZHE/
He takes on himself the heavy responsibility of the unbiased teaching.*

*TEN-PE-NYI-MA GAR-CHEN ZHAP-TEN SÖL//
May Garchen, the Sun of the Teachings, live long!*



DRIKUNG

DRIKUNG DHARMA SURYA CENTER

KAGYU