

# Garchen Rinpoche

## On the Six Dharmas of Naropa

Taught near the Boudhanath Stupa in Nepal in August 2012,  
Right after Garchen Rinpoche's Retreat in Lapchi

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## Background

In terms of formal *Six Dharmas of Naropa* practice, I have merely practiced abbreviated versions of Jigten Sumgön tummo instructions. Traditionally, one practices *Five-fold Mahamudra* including Chakrasamvara, then Vajrayogini, and then the *Six Dharmas of Naropa*. One and a half years into my planned three year retreat, the Chinese armies invaded and interrupted my practices. Thus, I have mainly practiced the concise instructions contained in Jigten Sumgön's *Profound Dharma*, focusing just on the navel. The main Lama I received transmissions from concerning the Six Dharmas of Naropa is Chime Dorje, though I did not receive extensive instructions. Generally, unless one has received extensive instructions on Vajrayogini, one does not proceed to the *Six Dharmas of Naropa*. After finishing *Five-fold Mahamudra*, one begins Vajravarahi practice. One did not even look at the teachings of the *Six Dharmas* before this. They were hidden deeply. These days everyone can look at everything. There are texts printed everywhere. Back in the day, however, you were not allowed to see those texts. Without doing Vajravarahi, you were not allowed to practice the *Six Dharmas*.

Chime Dorje, who passed away in 1959, was a student of the masters of Katsel Monastery, who practiced the *Six Dharmas of Naropa* for thirteen years in retreat. He was a real siddha. He could actually place his feet in solid stone. You can see this just like you can see Milarepa's footprints. We have some of these footprints around Gargön Monastery. Even his horse was able to leave footprints in rock. He practiced in retreat for thirteen years under the guidance of the previous Garchen Rinpoche, Trinley Yonkyab. He would never wear animal skins or fur. All the other Tibetans were wearing leather and fur, but he would never wear anything but cotton, summer, winter, spring, or fall. He also never ate any meat at all, whatsoever. He only taught a few people the *Six Dharmas of Naropa*, mostly just retreatants. He would tell most people to recite the *Mani* mantra, meditate on cause and effect, and cultivate bodhichitta. He would give them teachings on the *Thirty-Seven Practices of the Bodhisattvas*. He wouldn't just teach the *Six Dharmas of Naropa* everywhere.

I received some instructions in the *Profound Dharma* tradition of Jigten Sumgön about meditating upon fire at the region of the navel. There are some special instructions in Jigten Sumgön's tradition called the *Three Dharmas*, the *Ten Dharmas*, the *Three Instructions*, and so forth. I also received some special instruction on working with the subtle essences from my father. My first real teacher of the subtle channels and energies was my father. Then, I received teachings that were very beneficial from Chime Dorje. These teachings explained the vast qualities of tummo fire. When I received the Vajravarahi empowerment, we had to swallow fire. This was the secret tummo empowerment. When it came to me to swallow fire, I was extremely frightened. What would happen if I ate fire? They only do this in rare circumstances these days, just a little candle flame. You take it in your mouth. This is called the fire empowerment of tummo.

My father, who passed in 1963, taught me some instructions on tummo. At the level four finger widths below the navel, one was to unite the subtle energies, mind, and subtle essences together as one. It is key to combine them with the mind. If you just do the vase breath, but you do not unite the mind with the breath, you do not know what you are doing. To unite the mind with the subtle essences of the body, the breath is a friend. If you control your breath, you will control the subtle essences. You will realize that the mind is in control. For instance, if you meditate upon a white *Hum* syllable. Wherever you visualize the white *Hum*, the mind follows. Thus, you can control your energies.

My father practiced in the Barom Kagyü tradition. He spent many years in retreat. He was always in retreat. He had another wife. My mother just kind of happened into his life. He later became my teacher. His Lama was Barwai Dorje. The first Barwai Dorje was also the Lama of the previous Garchen Rinpoche, Trinley Yongkyab. They had a very deep connection.

Thus, in this life, I have only formally been in retreat for one and a half years, but wherever I go, my mind is in meditation. For instance, there was a period where I did not sleep at all laying down for ten years. I went without sleeping normally for ten years straight. During the day, I went all kinds of places and did things, but at night I would meditate uninterruptedly. How much time do we waste sleeping every night? All I wore was a thin skirt, and I sat up with my meditation belt. Later, my doctor told me that I had to sleep laying down for at least five hours every night so that blood would circulate properly.

In terms of teaching the *Six Dharmas*, I have given reading transmissions. To all my students in retreat, I also give tummo meditation instruction. There are differences in the faith of my students from different areas, but their capacities are the same. Some people from some countries have more experience with different traditions. Those who have trained in pranayama in the past, for instance, find it easy to understand teachings on tummo. Those who have done practices like Zen, for example, can understand calm abiding more easily.

The most important thing for students to have is bodhichitta. To really cultivate enlightenment, you have to have a lot of bodhichitta. To gain vast wisdom, you have to have bodhichitta. If you just try to cultivate wisdom without a lot of love, it doesn't work. That type of wisdom does not become deep and profound. On the other hand when you cultivate love, compassion, and bodhichitta, then wisdom becomes extremely deep and profound.

## Tummo Fire Meditation

The essence of tummo fire is heat. The essence of heat is bliss. The essence of bliss is the essence of mind. Milarepa taught:

Inside the womb of the mother, emptiness dwells.  
Inside emptiness, bliss dwells.  
Inside bliss, clarity dwells.

So first there is bliss. Inside bliss you find emptiness. When you realize the emptiness inside of bliss. There is clarity. This clarity or inner illumination is non-conceptual. In this sense, there is bliss, clarity, and non-conceptuality.

When we normally have bliss, we do not recognize the essence of that bliss. Ordinary people think that bliss only comes from others. For us yogins, we have bliss through relying on skillful methods. When we halt the stream of conceptual thoughts in our minds, there is natural bliss. For example, when wind blows clouds from the sky. You can see the open sky. For true bliss, you have to stop the stream of conceptual thoughts about desire. When thoughts cease, the nature of the mind itself is bliss.

Ordinary people think that bliss comes from someone else. For instance a girl might think that bliss comes from a boy. A boy might think that bliss comes from a girl. Thinking like that, all kinds of things like attachments and jealousies arise. When we practice and let go of conceptual attachments, we realize that the mind itself, freed from concepts, is bliss. It is the same bliss that we think comes from outside of ourselves. When we realize this, we realize great bliss, the great bliss of the body of reality, the dharmakaya. The ultimate body all reality arises as great bliss, when it is free from concepts.

It says in Chakrasamvara instructions that through the experience of conditioned ordinary bliss, we can come to realize unconditioned non-conceptual bliss. This great bliss is not limited to the conditioned body. Whenever we meditate upon the nature of the mind, we can experience this unconditioned bliss. When you reach this point, you have control and freedom over happiness. At this point you need no one else.

First to train, however, you can bring about the experience of great bliss in your body, while you are in union with someone else. Then, in your mind you can recognize, "Oh, this is what powerful conditioned bliss feels like." When you look at the essence of that, you see that such bliss arises simultaneously with emptiness. Thus, it becomes an introduction to the experience of unconditioned non-conceptual bliss. This is what the practice of sexual union is all about.

The essence of tummo meditation is focusing on fiery heat. One doesn't just meditate on this in an ordinary way. This body of ours came from our mother and father. When we were growing in our mother's womb, her energy and life-force entered us through our navels, making it a very special place. It is said that through the white essence we received from our fathers, we gave rise to the afflictive emotion of aversion and this generated our bones. Through the red essence we received from our mothers, we gave rise to desire and this generated our blood and flesh. When we meditate on a fire inside our body, it allows the subtle winds of the body and mind to gather there. When we unite the energy of fire from our minds with the breath of the body, they become friends very quickly. This causes heat to quickly grow. For instance, if you have a little fire and you blow upon it, it blazes up. In this way, through meditating on fire united with the breath, you can generate heat very quickly and you don't need to get warmed up by any outer source. Heat comes from within.

The place of meditation is at the navel. This place is the sacred place in our body where we received the energy of our mothers. This is why we meditate on Vajravarahi at the place of the navel. In *Milarepa's Guru Yoga* we meditate on her in the form of the seed syllable *Hri*, surrounded by the syllables of the four dakini mothers, *Ha, Ri, Ni, Sa*. In the context of tummo practice, we meditate on Vajravarahi in the form of a blazing *A* stroke at or below the navel. The blessing of our mother truly abides in our precious human bodies. You can see the sign of that blessing in the form of your navel. When we hold our breath there, using the method of the vase breath, the breath unites with our mind at this place in our body. Heat is ignited. This is the essence of the meditation of tummo.

Heat is generated in the body. Heat is necessary to live. It is part of our life-force. When heat wanes, our life wanes. Longevity is heat. It is fire. Our life-force is really heat. When our consciousness separates from the heat in our bodies, we die. Death in the body occurs when we lose this heat of our life-force. So, one benefit of mixing consciousness with heat in the body is longevity. Also, when you have heat, there is bliss. When you have bliss, there is clarity. When you have clarity, there is non-conceptual realization.

If ordinary practitioners just think about heat, but do not use it to recognize bliss, clarity, and non-conceptuality, all they will get is just a little heat. One of the accomplishments of tummo practice is heat. This is not just a Buddhist thing. In other spiritual traditions that work with the breath and pranayama, they have such accomplishments. They can also accomplish all sorts of magical powers like being able to fly through the air and such. These are accomplishments that you can likewise gain through tummo practice.

For us, in the vajrayana Buddhist tradition, we seek the supreme accomplishment. Thus, first we give rise to heat. This allows the mind abide steadily at that point in the body. Thus, the subtle bindus or sexual energies increase. From this, bliss is generated. Then, one looks into the essence of that bliss. One sees that the essence of that is emptiness. Looking into the essence of emptiness, one sees the clarity or luminosity of the mind. That clarity or luminosity is the innate awareness of the nature of the mind. This luminosity is self-knowing self-awareness. It is also called the primordial wisdom of self-awareness.

This is not just a mere conceptual clarity or luminosity in the mind. Sometimes we have the feeling that our minds are clear or bright. That is not just what is going on here. Here we are talking about a clarity or luminosity of knowing the nature of the mind itself. If we do not recognize the innate energy of self-knowing awareness, we will not understand that it is non-dual. The goal is non-dual primordial wisdom. We think of things as self and other, male and female. Yet, ultimately the empty nature of the mind has a luminosity to it. That luminosity is non-dual self-awareness. In realizing non-dual primordial wisdom, we travel beyond concepts of self and other. When you investigate the essence of awareness, you find that it is like the nature of space. Milarepa said:

There is no difference between space and mind in the ultimate body of reality.

When you realize that the mind is like space and you open your eyes, you see that all reality is open like space. Concepts of a body of flesh and blood, pop like a bubble. What we think we are is really just our minds. We think, "You have your mind and I have my mind." However, we don't see that the nature of our minds is the same. When we realize that our own minds are like space and we also realize that the minds of others are like space, there is no duality between us. Space does not have duality.

We can divide space, for example, between the space outside and the space inside a vase, but space cannot be ultimately separated. When you realize this, you can understand non-dual primordial wisdom. When we are caught up in discursive thoughts, we cannot see this. When we abide in non-dual primordial wisdom, all our afflictive emotions and discursive thoughts become inseparable from primordial wisdom itself. Everything becomes primordial wisdom. When all becomes primordial wisdom, even if we have a strong emotion of anger for instance, we see that it exists in the space-like nature of the mind. Recognizing the essence of the afflictive emotion of anger to be the expanse of primordial wisdom and thus seeing the nature of mind, it is gone. Afflictive emotions and primordial wisdom are non-dual. There is no difference. Milarepa taught this.

When we have concepts of self and others, we see afflictive emotions and primordial wisdoms as separate. Jigten Sumgön taught that the uninterrupted stream of discursive thoughts is ultimately an uninterrupted stream of primordial wisdom. When we realize non-dual primordial wisdom, we recognize the essence of all thoughts as primordial wisdom. It is like water and food. There is water used in all our food. If we make tea, grow vegetables, make bread, and so forth, water is always part of our food process. There is no food that is not connected to water at all. So what is this essence of the water that is part of all the food for thoughts in our minds? If we look into our minds, we see there is a consciousness. When we recognize its true nature as it is, it is primordial wisdom, innate awareness. There are many terms for this. This recognition of the uninterrupted nature of the mindstream is the mind of all Buddhas. This stream of water is not recognized by sentient beings, and they mistake appearances as being real.

Jigten Sumgön taught that Buddhas have never been liberated. When you understand the innate state of primordial wisdom, everything arises as Buddhahood. This is realizing the heart of the Buddha's teachings. Whatever appears to the mind is ultimately Buddhahood, it can only be temporarily obscured. Even though water might appear to be contaminated, even when you urinate on the ground, there is still ultimately pure water in there.

If you can understand this, then you understand that only temporary obscurations prevent us from realizing our true ultimate nature. These temporary obscurations are discursive thoughts. These never end, until you realize that they have no essence. When you realize this, you think, "All this time my thoughts are ultimately the dharmakaya in essence." This is what the Kagyü Gurus teach. This is also explained in the Dzogchen teachings. Discursive thoughts are the dharmakaya.

This is not something to just realize in words. By saying it out loud, discursive thoughts still have their delusional power. Yet when this is inwardly realized, you realize that discursive thoughts have no true ground to be born in. Just because there is a puddle of urine in the dirt, doesn't mean that water can be ultimately corrupted. Jigten Sumgön taught that the uninterrupted stream of thoughts is primordial wisdom. One must realize that thoughts ultimately abide in the nature of the mind. If the ground of mind is the dharmakaya, then you realize that thoughts have no where else to go. They cannot ultimately leave the dharmakaya.

If you do not understand this and you cling to substantial things as being real, then the pure water of the nature of the mind becomes like ice. This is the ice of thinking, "I exist and you exist. We are separate." If you say nice things to me, I think, "What a nice thing to say. You are such a good person." If you say bad things to me, I think, "How could you say such terrible things. There is something wrong with you."

Thus, we get angry and such, when we cling to things as being real. Clinging to discursive thoughts, we experience the ice-like state of samsara. When we understand how things truly are, then even if someone says mean things to you, you look at that person and think, "This person is just temporarily obscured through not recognizing the true nature of reality, and thus said some mean things." When we recognize the true nature of reality, we cannot be harmed, no matter what people say or do. No matter how frozen others become in afflictive emotions, we never need to become ice as well. When you reach this state, you are part of the noble bodhisattva sangha.

To reach a realization of the ultimate way things are is the ultimate point of tummo practice. You first cultivate heat. Heat leads to bliss. Seeing the essence of bliss, you see emptiness. In emptiness you realize the empty luminosity of the nature of mind.

## Luminosity of Deep Sleep

First, to meditate in the state of deep sleep, you need to have a very clear intention. In the daytime you should reflect, this is the same as a dream. We normally think that the appearances of the daytime are substantial and real, while we simultaneously think that the appearances of dreams are false delusions. That is a mistake. Really, when we die, we will travel from this life, and it will be the same as if traveling from one dream to the next. This life and dreams are the same. We should contemplate this. When we have trained to the point that we always recognize this in our waking state, then when we are inside dreams, we can recognize them thinking, “Oh, this is a dream.” When we dissolve this state into the nature of mind, it is practicing the luminosity of subtle sleep.

For the practice of the luminosity of deep sleep, one looks into the deepest regions of sleep. This is the state of sleep between dreams. If you are aware, you experience a non-conceptual state like a cloudless sky. To do so, you must wake up again and again during sleep with the intention of abiding in a state of the non-conceptual recognition of the nature of mind in the state of deep sleep. Thus, eventually, in the state of deep sleep you will come to have what can be described as a luminous experience. It is an experience of the mind as a vast open cloudless expanse.

Some people experience some fear at this point, others do not. It is important to recognize the vast openness of the nature of mind and not be afraid. For most people, deep sleep is a time of ignorance and unawareness, but if you are aware, the nature of mind in this state is not obscured, and there is a luminous awareness without even the slightest of discursive thoughts. You don't have to do anything, but rest in this state of the non-conceptual recognition of the luminous nature of mind during the time of deep sleep.

To help in the process of this recognition, it is good to not have a heavy dinner and eat earlier in the day. Then, fall to sleep in a position like the posture of the sleeping lion. If you train again and again to recognize the luminous nature of the mind as it appears in deep sleep, you will slowly gain some understanding. This will not come easily. It takes a lot of work to stabilize this recognition and realization. If you gain such understanding in this life, then you will be liberated into the nature of mind at the time of death and not need to travel through the other bardos. This is because the process of sleep and death are ultimately the same. They are exactly the same. In both, raw consciousness itself, freed from all conceptual characteristics, arises as naked luminosity.

This is the realization of the fourth of the four joys, coemergent joy. This is the realization of the fourth empowerment. This is the ultimate nature of the four states of waking, dreaming, deep sleep, and union. This is the realization of the four yogas of mahamudra, which include one-pointedness, beyond elaboration, one taste, and non-meditation. Realizing the fourth yoga of mahamudra, non-meditation, is the same as realizing the fourth of the four joys, coemergent joy. All these different systems of explanation are interwoven. Some people do not like to hear this, as they want to keep their individual systems separate.

Jigme Lingpa taught:

The four empowerments, the four joys, and the four stages of visions in the great perfection are all the same. Do not tell this to others [lest they develop wrong views].

## Practice of Dreams

An approachable way to practice meditation in the dream state is to begin by falling asleep with the vajra recitation of the syllables *Om ah hum*. Breath in with *Om*, hold with *Ah*, and breath out with the sound of *Hum*. The syllables *Om ah hum*, represent the enlightened body, speech, and mind of all the Buddhas. Remembering these syllables sharpens awareness. If you can carry the recitation of the syllables into the state of your dreams, you are creating mindful awareness in your dreams. Then, you will be able to recognize that you are dreaming. Some people have lucid dreams, recognizing that they are dreaming inside of dreams, even though they do not meditate. Even though they might be able to recognize that they are dreaming, still, they have concepts about the dreams and can experience fears and nightmares. To truly be a master of dreams, you have to do the practices of transforming dreams and creating magical emanations in dreams. For instance, inside dreams, when you recognize that you are dreaming, think, “I am not afraid. I will even travel through fire.” Thus, you can walk through great flames without dying. You can fly off into the sky from mountain tops and so forth. This kind of training is essential for being able to master the various appearances that arise in the bardo state after death.

When you have truly trained in the *Six Dharmas of Naropa* and have mastered practices like the illusory body, it is possible that you can reach a state where you cannot be harmed by fire even in this life. All things that might harm you are recognized to be illusions, and they have no power over your body. Terrifying things do not even appear in the bardo for such a realized being. If there are no afflictive emotions, there are no outer disturbances in reality. However, now for ourselves, terrifying things do appear. These appear because we have self-clinging. If we have no self-clinging, such experiences decline. Our habitual patterns are what create the experiences of this life. Mastering the subtle luminosity of the night, then we can transform reality into the realms of the dakinis and so forth. To really master the luminosity of deep sleep, you really need a tremendous amount of diligence.

On the other hand, my teacher Khenpo Münsel said it was easy. You just fall asleep abiding directly in the space between conceptual thoughts in your mind. When asleep, by maintaining awareness without conceptual fabrication, you abide in luminosity itself and later awaken in the same state of non-dual awareness. This purifies the first bardo of death. This instruction actually works. However, this is not the same as slowly falling asleep, thinking, “Oh, here we go, I’m settling into sleep. Now I’m sleeping and so forth.” To follow Khenpo Münsel’s instructions, you must let go of all conceptual thoughts completely.

## Illusory Body

The practice of the illusory body is very similar to the practice of dreams. When we are dreaming and when we are awake, we actually see things in the same way. In a dream we say, “Oh, there is a person standing over there in this room.” When we are awake, we say the same thing, “Look, there is a person standing over there in this room.” All the appearances of this life come from our mind. We think we have to work and we run all around, but really we are just making ourselves busy in our own minds. There is nothing that is really moving. All these appearances are just inside our minds. The practice of the illusory body is recognizing that all appearances come from the mind. The words *illusory body* mean that although things appear, those appearances are illusions. There is nothing real about appearances. We feel that such appearances are real, but that feeling is also an illusion.

Reality is like a movie. We see people talking, having emotions, doing things, but the reality of the movie doesn't really exist. We have these examples of illusions, like the reflection of the moon in water, rainbows, and so forth. We really see a reflection of the moon in water. We see rainbows and think, “Oh, how beautiful these are.” Nevertheless, these appearances are nothing that we can hold on to. This is the nature of all the bardo states we move through, including this life. They are dreams. There is nothing that we can hold on to. For one with such realization, there is no fear at the time of death or in the bardo. When we recognize this, we realize that our minds and these bodies of ours are different. We are just like travelers who are staying at a certain hotel for a little while. While we are here in this life, we can use the opportunity of this precious human birth in a meaningful way, but we don't have to be attached to our material body or material things.

Some people think that when we talk about everything just being the mind, this is referring to how we are just the collection of our mundane thoughts, our ordinary consciousness. This is not a good understanding. The ultimate nature of our consciousness transcends coming and going. It is vast like space itself. Thoughts are just like reflections in a mirror, waves upon an ocean. They arise and disappear, again and again.

If our minds become confused, we might get stuck on a thought like, “Oh, I have to go to India.” This is incorrect. Everything is inside our mind. Our minds pervade everything and encompass India as well. India is inside our mind. There is really no other place to go to. Whatever we think of appears in our mind. The India we wish to go to in our thoughts is India. There is no traveler that actually goes to India.

Whatever we think of is inside our mind. This is something we gradually come to realize. Everything is an illusion that arises from the mind, based on our mental patterns. We have to have the pattern in our mind first to experience the outer appearances of such. For instance, we might think in our minds, “I like America. I want to go to America.” Based on the strength of this pattern, we end up in the American experience. It happened to me. It starts with the pattern of thoughts in our mind.

The mind has what is called mirror-like primordial wisdom. Whatever we place in it appears. When we experience experiences, we see them outwardly. We should recognize them to be ultimately appearing from within our own minds. When we see them outwardly, we error in confusion. We lose our minds. If you understand mirror-like primordial wisdom, then you understand that whatever appears outwardly to us is really inside our mind. That is the understanding of mirror-like primordial wisdom. If you see a face in the mirror, the face does not come from anyone else but you. The mirror does not contain any faces inside it. The face is yours not the mirror's. Mirrors are not full of different faces. For the practice of the illusory body, you must understand mirror-like primordial wisdom. Everything you see is an illusion that appears from within. There is nothing else outside of us that we can grasp on to. Concepts of self and others are illusions appearing within the mind.

## Transference and the Bardo

In the practice of phowa, or transference of consciousness, you transfer your consciousness from the body at the time of death. This is taking the process of death under control. It is said that there are nine gateways from which consciousness can leave the body at the time of death. If you have great anger, consciousness leaves from the anus. If you have great desire, consciousness leaves from the sexual organ. If you have great ignorance, consciousness leaves from the navel. These are the three gateways to the experiences of the hell, hungry ghost, and animal realms. In such circumstances, you are not taking any control over the process of where you go at the time of death. You are like a vessel tossed this way and that way in a turbulent ocean. In the practice of transference, when you plant the stake of awareness, you have control to travel wherever you wish at the time of death. The practice of transference is about freedom and controlling your own destiny. To do this you focus the mind inside the body. For instance, you can meditate that your consciousness is in the form of the syllable *Hum* and send that syllable through your crown to the pure realms at the time of death. When you realize the empty nature of the mind, you realize that you have complete control over it.

When you do not realize how things truly are, outer experiences overpower you. The power of afflictive emotions propel you into various forms of birth. When you realize the nature of mind, your mind becomes like liquid quicksilver, or liquid mercury. No matter where it lands, even in the dirt, it does not mix with the dirt. When your mind becomes like quicksilver through realizing the true nature of reality, the contaminants of afflictive emotions cannot stick to it.

For beings who do not see how things truly are, their minds are like water. If you mix water and dirt, you get mud. When you see nice food, for instance, and think, "I need that food," your mind goes into that food. You lose your mind to the food. On the other hand if your awareness is powerful, the thought, "delicious food," might pass through your mind, however, you retain the power of your mind. You don't get addicted to the food and think, "I need it again, and again, and again." When you have the power of awareness in dreams, you know that all reality in dreams is a dream. In the daytime, it is the same. It is all a dream. After you die, there will be no difference between this life and a dream of the past. What is the benefit of understanding this? You have to be careful.

Some people say, “Oh, hell doesn’t exist. Pure realms do not exist. It is just the mind. Due to afflictive emotions, the pain and torment of hell appears. There is nothing that truly exists or to be worried about in terms of hell.” Yet, such people when confronted with even slightly difficult experiences in this life, get completely distraught and upset. This is a sign of a complete misunderstanding.

Even now, things are not truly established in reality. Even now, things are a dream. In the future, the dreams of hell and the dreams of pure realms are true possibilities. Pure realms are not truly existing, there are not any truly existing Buddhas and such. However, the same can be said for this realm. Not even an atom of it ultimately exists, and yet, we experience it all the same. If we recognize it to be an illusion, but still apparent, then we understand how the experiences of pure realms and the lower realms exist. We should think of pure realms and the lower realms as illusory destinations, just like the countries we visit in this life, and purchase our tickets accordingly. When you understand the nature of hell and how the experience of it arises from negative actions, you would be very wise to avoid such actions. You can say again and again, “Hell doesn’t exist.” However, can you really rely on that? If you repeat a falsehood, does it make it so? It is easy to say that the mind doesn’t exist. It is easy to say that hell doesn’t exist, but what happens when we get angry? What happens when someone steals your boyfriend or girlfriend? Can you say you feel no jealousy? Can you say you feel no anger? Anger and pain are hell itself. So hell doesn’t exist?

Love is the pure realm. When a couple lives together in love, shares the same home, shares the same meals, sleeps together and such, is it not a pure realm? Even though such a couple might not have any money, they can still experience a pure realm of love. How quickly, if they are not careful, can it turn into hell? Anger and jealousy are the seeds of hell. If you understand this, then you hold your own nose rope and can always lead yourself to the pure realms of love, no matter what others do. While both are ultimately illusions, the experience of hell and pure realms are real. Pure realms are the natural expressions of enlightenment itself, the sambhogakaya. They are real.

## Trülkhor Yogic Exercises

The trülkhor yogic exercises are really beneficial. You can use them to help move the tummo fire, increase and spread the subtle bindus, and so forth. The key with the yogic exercises is to unite them with the physical sensations of heat and bliss, along with the power of mind. Some people just do the exercises without uniting them with the experiences of heat or bliss. This really isn’t the point, and isn’t really that beneficial. Some people, for instance, do the practices of the blazing and dripping visualizations of tummo, but don’t have much experience with heat or bliss. The yogic exercises are more for when the experiences of heat and bliss become real. Then, they are very beneficial.

If you can properly apply the key points of the yogic exercises in an elaborate way, it is as beneficial as the work you put into it. However, if you do not know how to really apply these, there really isn't so much of a benefit. This has to do with the karma of individuals who practice. For instance, when bliss arises, as a tummo practitioner, you should really apply the key points of blazing and dripping. You let the bliss descend and then you draw the bliss back up. In this process, the yogic exercises can be very helpful.

Some people don't have a lot of physical bliss. Their channels are kind of empty and lonely in this regard. To help out, though, you should hold the breath below the navel. By doing so, the subtle energy and heat will eventually fill up all the subtle channels down there. It is important to hold the breath in and not out. Holding the breath out can be very dangerous, even though it might seem like a quick way to experience something. So then, for some people, when they train in the breath and the visualizations of the channels and the chakras, eventually their bodies begin to feel very blissful. At such time, then through training in the bindu exercises, the body becomes quickly filled with the bliss of the bindus. This is the appropriate way to practice. First, you must give rise to the experiences. Then, you can effectively utilize the yogic exercises to enhance your practice.

I personally don't do too many yogic exercises these days. I mostly focus on heat. If your visualizations and breathing are very clear, and you possess a perfect view, then it could be the case that the bindus will naturally travel in the right ways.

## Six Dharmas of Naropa, Secrecy, and the Modern World

The infinite varieties of experience modern world do not necessarily need to become distractions that limit our practice. Attachments to such experiences can be overcome. In the past, there were many other difficulties in life. Now, it is not acceptable to think, "The modern world has so many distractions I can not practice." This way of thinking is an obstacle. It is crucial to have a motivation of bodhichitta. If you practice with a motivation of selfishness, then your practice will fail. All realities are born from conditions, therefore it is critical to have the proper motivation.

I think it is great if more people sincerely practice such teachings like the *Six Dharmas of Naropa*. Other teachers don't always say this. Some people say that such teachings should be kept secret. However, it really isn't possible to keep such things secret these days. The experience of these practices is extremely profound. The point should not be to stop the profound experience and realization of these teachings. Some people who try to stop the spread of mahamudra and teachings like these *Six Dharmas* say things like, "It is wrong to say discursive thoughts are the dharmakaya." Yet they miss the ultimate meaning of these teachings and thus impoverish themselves. In my own view, I think the more people can truly practice these profound teachings, the better.

Though there are reasons to keep some of the teachings secret, these days it is not possible to do so. Everything is being published in Tibetan, both digitally and in print. Translations are available everywhere. These teachings should not be kept from sincere practitioners. At the same time, we should be careful about promoting these teachings to just be intellectually discussed as mere philosophical ideas. Ultimately, if these teachings are spread everywhere, there is no fault. It is a great thing if these teachings can be spread and practiced.

Some individuals think that translations should be kept secret. There is some history behind it. In secret mantra, there are the outer secret things, the inner secret things, the mantras, the substances, and so forth. There are reasons for secrecy. For instance, in the lower vehicles, urine is looked at as bad. In secret mantra it is a profound nectar. If you give your urine to people outside of secret mantra practice, they will think you are crazy. Yet they are the ones that are ignorant. Urine can be used as fertilizer. It can be a medicine. When purified it is pure water, which can be used in all sorts of wonderful ways. People have all sorts of concepts about what is pure and what is impure. It is just their clinging.

So when you are practicing secret mantra, it is good to be generally secret about your own personal practices, mantras, substances, implements, companions, and so forth. On the other hand, the texts can be translated and made widely available. It is extremely important, however, that the process of translation is taken with the utmost care. If things are mistranslated now, such errors might endure for generations and centuries. If one word is mistranslated, this can change the entire meaning of something and lead to errors in practice. On the other hand, if things can be accurately translated, then there is a great deal of merit in this. So there is great benefit, and yet, there are also high stakes.

If people of this world, including scientists and so forth, look into these kinds of instructions, gradually they will come to realize that the essence of the Buddha's teachings is pointing out how reality truly is. The more they look into our experience of reality, the more they will ultimately find that the essence of the Buddha's teachings was pointing directly to deeper understandings of reality all along.

We have to be careful, though, with blindly adopting outer spiritual and religious belief systems. Religions can easily get too mixed up with cultural patterns that have nothing to do with helping beings. Religions can actually support terrible things like oppressing women, and treating them and others like servants or slaves. Religions can justify treating others in ways that make them experience hell. We have to be very careful with our religious belief systems. We have to take care of each other. We have to take care of everyone. We have to make sure that we take care of women and others that have been traditionally mistreated in the past, not repeating the same mistakes.

In the future, I think it will be beneficial for scientists to be able to study the methods of the *Six Dharmas of Naropa*, including the subtle practices of tummo, breathing techniques, and the associated yogic exercises. The key for such studies will be to focus on the inner results, not to just look at outer signs. When scientists develop ways to analyze the flow of energy throughout the body and the streams of thoughts in the mind, then they will start to see some of the benefits of tummo and so forth. Through the practices of things like phowa, or transference, there are changes that occur on very subtle levels, as the subtle channels open up, and so on. These can be seen.

By analyzing the effects of doing the breathing techniques and visualizations involved in tummo and the like, they will come to understand how beneficial these practices can be for the mind and body. There are a lot of applications that can benefit many people. Such practices naturally lead people to become kind and wise. When we reroute the energies that normally flow unbalanced through our gross impure channels and redirect them into the pure central channel in our bodies, we begin to have the power to control our minds. When energies flow unbalanced in our bodies, afflictive emotions control us. When we direct our energy into the pure central channel, harmful afflictive emotions, like anger, swiftly disappear. If scientists look into this, it will be great. These practices can benefit everyone.

I have shared what I know here. I don't think there are many mistakes in what I said. I am not a great practitioner with a lot of experience, but you can share this with everyone if you wish. I have love towards everyone, even people who might not like me. I still love them. Love can conquer everything. No matter how many afflictive emotions and problems arise in the world, we must always be steadfast in our love.