

Dharma Toolkit Series

The Nine Attitudes of Guru Devotion with Geshe Tenzin Zopa

Transcript

The Buddhist Center Thubten Norbu Ling - March 2023

Calling the Guru from Afar

Brief Version

La ma khyen
Guru, think of me.
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Guru, think of me.
La ma khyen
Guru, think of me.

Ma rig mün sel päl dän la ma
Magnificently glorious Guru, dispelling the darkness of ignorance;
Thar päi lam tön päl dän la ma
Magnificently glorious Guru, revealing the path of liberation;
Khor wäi chu dröl päl dän la ma
Magnificently glorious Guru, liberating from the waters of samsara;
Dug ngäi nä sel päl dän la ma
Magnificently glorious Guru, eliminating the diseases of the five poisons;
Yi zhin nor bu päl dän la ma
Magnificently glorious Guru, the wish-granting jewel,
Kye la söl deb jin gyi lob shig
I beseech you, please bless me.
Mi tag chhi wa nying nä dren pa
Magnificently glorious Guru, please bless me
Päl dän la mä jin gyi lob shig
To remember impermanence and death from my heart.
Gö me lo na gyu la kye pa
Magnificently glorious Guru, please bless me
Päl dän la mä jin gyi lob shig
To generate the thought of no-need in my mind.
En par tse chig drub la nä pa
Magnificently glorious Guru, please bless me
Päl dän la mä jin gyi lob shig
To abide one-pointedly in practice in isolated places.
Drub la bar chhä gang yang me pa
Magnificently glorious Guru, please bless me
Päl dän la mä jin gyi lob shig
To not have any hindrances to my practice.
Thrül me nä lug ta wa tog pa
Magnificently glorious Guru, please bless me
Päl dän la mä jin gyi lob shig
To realize, without error, the view of the fundamental nature of reality.
Kyen ngän tham chä drog su chhar wa
Magnificently glorious Guru, please bless me
Päl dän la mä jin gyi lob shig
So that all bad conditions appear as a support.
Dag zhän dön nyi lhün gyi drub pa
Magnificently glorious Guru, please bless me
Päl dän la mä jin gyi lob shig
To accomplish effortlessly the two works of self and others.

Da ta nyur du jin gyi lob shig
Please bless me now, quickly.
Nyur wa nyur du jin gyi lob shig
Please bless me quickly, very quickly.
Dän thog dir ru jin gyi lob shig
Please bless me on this very cushion.
Thün thog dir ru jin gyi lob shig
Please bless me in this very session.

Päl dän la mäi nam par thar pa la
May I not give rise to heresy for even a second
Kä chig tsam yang log ta mi kye shing
In regard to the actions of the glorious guru.
Chi dzä leg par thong wäi mö gü kyi
May I see whatever actions are done as the stainless [actions of a buddha].
La mäi jin lab sem la jug par shog
With this devotion, may I receive the guru's blessings in my heart.

Päl dän tsa wäi la ma rin po chhe
Magnificent and precious root guru,
Dag gi nying khar pä däi teng zhug la
Please abide on the lotus and moon at my heart,
Ka drin chhen pöi go nä je zung te
Guide me with your great kindness,
Ku sung thug kyi ngö drub tsäl du söi
And grant me the realizations of your holy body, speech, and mind

Session 1 – 03/02/2023

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5FOIg0dfZXE>



Hello, tashi delek everyone here and everyone in the Zoom too.

I am very very happy to be at TNL. It was an aspiration for a long time. From the resident teacher, Geshela, Geshe Thubten Sherab, for whom I have a great respect and our seniors, and off course there is the blessing of Lama Yeshe and Lama Thubten Rinpoche. So, the mandala of this center is blessed by Rinpoche, and the sincere connection and request made by Venerable Dondrup, the re.... committees and the students. So finally my karma ripened. So I'm here and am very very happy to be here, so thank you.

The essential practices of Guru devotion, Guru Yoga and Guru-disciple relationship: why do we need a Guru?

So the topic for tonight, there are 3 more sessions, is the practice of Guru Devotion and is about the disciple - Guru relationship. The practice and the topic of Guru devotion, even just to discuss is not easy. It is a tough subject, but it is one of the most essential and most important subject, whether we like to discuss or not, whether we like to practice or not. Guru devotion, the practice of Guru Yoga devotion is a must, if our spiritual goal is to actualize liberation from Samsara.

If our spiritual goal is enlightenment, then without learning about this subject, we cannot progress on any path, how altruistic it may sound, no way that we can receive the blessing. The Buddha, Dharma, the Dharma knowledge and Dharma practice, are not like normal academic universal knowledge and practice. Dharma knowledge and practice count very much by the blessing. It is not just knowing. So, you must learn about the teachings on Guru Yoga, teachings on Guru Devotion and you must practice as I mentioned before. Without this, there is no foundation to settle the rest of the gradual path to enlightenment.

Then especially in some cultures, we have this idea of equanimity, being equal: "I don't have to bow down to anybody, I don't have to obey anybody's order. Myself alone is my boss, no one else". If anyone has that kind of culture, then the practice and the teachings on Guru devotion become especially harder. But at the same time, whoever comes into the Buddhist path, whichever culture, background you come from, the moment you show interest to learn about Buddha, Dharma, then in one way, I believe everyone carries this open mind, this very fine ground in your heart, that there is some sense of readiness to adopt the teachings given on Guru Devotion and the teachings on Guru Devotion practice. So, from that point of view, in one way, it is maybe not so that difficult.

But still, sometimes, even in a monastery, when we have some Dharma teaching courses, off course very much came there to learn about Buddhist teachings, but at the same time, they do find that: «I'm not ready to learn about Guru devotion". Because they are not ready to hear something for which they need to lower the ego. The ego is maybe a bit influenced by some kind of "I'm the supreme. I cannot obey to anybody else", that kind of ideas, it happens. So even, if we come to pursue the Dharma, we do find unreadiness for this teaching. But whatever it is, one day, you have to break this shell, otherwise you can't move forward, even if you may know a great deal about wisdom of emptiness.

Then everybody would appreciate the practice of great love, great compassion, ...and also this practice of exotic kind of tantric practices. Many people have this view of magical, exotic, super supernatural tantric practices. So, people are kind of quite easily fond of Tantra. The moment they hear about Tantra, people just get excited. So, whether we want to deepen our development of the common path, such as love, compassion and wisdom of selflessness, or want to engage on the uncommon path, which is the Tantra, the root is still served by the practice of Guru Yoga, and the practice of Guru Devotion.

Also, sometimes we approach this teaching after we hear, from here and there, that this Guru Yoga practice is something that is too difficult. Rather approach it with a sense of our conventional way of understanding, that just like any knowledge, we need to rely on a teacher. Isn't it? Even somebody who want to become a carpenter needs to rely on a teacher, on a qualified teacher to be a good, qualified carpenter. Even to know how to bake a good cake, we have to rely on a good teacher, that could be your mother, that could be your grandma, ... When you are a child you have, somewhere, somehow, to be educated directly, or indirectly, you have to learn from somebody. You know we hardly have this spontaneous knowledge. Even to drive, we need to learn from somebody, even to wear clothes, we have to learn from somebody. Our mother, father, when we were babies, they kept training ourselves how to wear clothes, then eventually we learnt how to wear clothes.

So now, even for those conventional qualifications and conventional perfections, we needed to be trained, needed to learn from someone who learnt before than us. There is no question, no doubt about the fact that we need to rely on a qualified teacher to travel through an unknown path, unknow knowledge, unexperienced path, an unexperienced journey. You know the roadmap, the GPS towards liberation enlightenment. Besides Buddha, no one really invented that. There is no GPS that we can purchase from any shops, any supermarket or department in the whole world. Not even an American scientist is able to produce it.

So, the GPS towards enlightenment is very much what the Buddhas have discovered through their own journey. They have discovered all the path, and the Gurus are the manifestations of the Buddhas. The Gurus are the closest persons who can interpret correctly the path, who can be the GPS and put us on the right track. Therefore, the Guru is most needed in our life. And from this point of view, then, it is not difficult to rely on someone whom you can relate as a teacher, a mentor, a Guru.

What are the differences between teacher-student relationship and Guru-disciple relationship?

It is not just a teacher; it is a Guru. There are differences in our spiritual understanding. When someone becomes a Guru to you, the responsibility increases. The relationship with a teacher, is not as advanced as the relationship you establish with someone as Guru and disciple.

Teacher and student relationship, contrary to Guru and disciple, is based just on learning knowledge, without the Guru-disciple commitment. There is a special way to establish the Guru-disciple commitment. The teacher-student commitment is based on the teacher's responsibility to pass down the knowledge. The student needs to learn and off course, offers respect, which we would do to anyone who teaches us any knowledge. Even for Dharma teaching, it is very much similar: someone qualified in the teachings taught you the knowledge. You appreciate and respect that. So, the relationship can be at that level.

But then when a spiritual teacher becomes a spiritual Guru, or that the teacher who taught the Dharma becomes a spiritual Guru to you, then the relationship lies on the disciple's side. Off course it lies on both sides. But when you commit to someone as "I am that person's disciple and that person is my Guru", it lies on the student's heart. The responsibility to make that commitment is on the student and not the Guru's side.

How to establish the Guru-disciple relationship?

Off course there are many processes involved and so much to discuss about this. Here, to give just a little overview: based on Buddha's teaching, there are ways for a student to find a teacher that is qualified to be a Guru. There are qualifications that need to be examined. I will discuss about those in details later. Once you find that quality in the teacher, then you submit yourself as a disciple, accepting that teacher as your Guru. It is not from the Guru's side.

There are very rare possibilities that the Guru may choose the disciple. The Guru may say "ok among here this person is my disciple" or "you'll be my disciple". It's quite rare but possible. But it is mainly from the student side. You are accepting that teacher as your Guru. The way to do that, off course, is by making that commitment in your heart, on the basis of a certain degree of faith, and certainty, a conviction, that this teacher has the capability to fulfill the journey that you pursue, the liberation. This teacher has the qualification to condition my spiritual path.

This teacher is so inspiring. This teacher is able to inspire me to stay steadfast in the path, to develop my journey towards liberation, to inspire me to renounce samsara and its causes, to inspire me to learn the Dharma, to inspire me to cultivate the Dharma, causes me, conditions me to actualize the path all the way up to enlightenment. So, when you commit on the basis of that faith and conviction towards that teacher, accepting him or her in that sense, you establish Guru disciple relationship with that person.

From that teacher's side, there may be the possibility that he is the actual Buddha emanating in an ordinary human form to fulfill the relationship. Or that teacher may be just an ordinary person, like you. But it must be someone who is knowledgeable in the teachings, someone who is well disciplined in morality, someone who is compassionate. The actions of that person's body, speech and mind are so inspiring to your heart, so inspiring to your practice, that it is the reason why you establish, why you make this commitment, more intense than just teacher-student relationship.

There are many other ways than the earlier mentioned. There are a few ways to establish Guru disciple relationship through receiving teachings. Having that basic sense of faith and conviction, in that person, that teacher, you receive teachings and explanations, you receive talks on the Dharma path, you receive advice, guidance. That guidance, that teaching, may be one word or thousands of words (on the basis of the earlier mentioned conditions), and that establishes the Guru-disciple relationship.

Then, the other way is receiving oral transmissions: transmission of mantras, oral transmissions of any Buddha's teachings, treaties. Through that, you establish the Guru-disciple relationship. Then through receiving initiation: tantric initiation like Chenrezig initiation, or any kind of initiation...

When you receive initiations (on the basis of the condition mentioned), even before you establish the relationship, it is as if you had stamped your relationship with this person as Guru-disciple relationship.

Then, the other way is receiving vows: refuge vows, Bodhisattva vows, five lay vows, Tantric vows, monks' vows, nuns vows...When you receive them from that Abbott, then you establish the Guru-disciple relationship.

The Guru in relation to your precepts is called your "Vinaya Guru", the Guru in relation to Mahayanic practices 'Mahayanic Guru', the Guru in relation to Tantra "Tantric Guru". There are three different kinds of Gurus. The basic qualifications are the same, but then there are specific qualifications that define differences among those three types of Gurus. So, you can have a Vinaya Guru, and a Mahayanic Guru, and a Mahayanic Tantric Guru, a Vajrayana Guru...

Now who is that Guru?

Yes, he's my teacher. But "my Guru" is someone who is so precious, who exactly is he? besides just teaching me, who exactly is he? We talk about someone who is so great, unbelievable, one of the most important persons. Who really is? or how this person is so special? Besides just giving you all the benefits of the teachings? So, I have some answers here.

There is usually this prayer we chant during food offering. I think you are familiar with it "Lama Sangye Lama Cho". Who really is this Guru? You may all have different Gurus, or maybe you have not yet found someone to relate as your Guru. It is important to know. As I have mentioned before, it does not matter from the Guru side whether it is actually an enlightened Buddha or not, he may just be an ordinary human being like you, but still carrying all the benefits that you need to receive.

So, in the prayer it is said:

The Guru is Buddha

The Guru is Dharma

The Guru is also Sangha

The Guru is the creator of all happiness.

To all the Gurus I make this offering or to all the Guru I prostrate, or I supplicate.

The Guru is Buddha

So, the Guru to whom you regard as your spiritual Guru is Buddha. Your Guru is your Buddha. It is a Buddha you know, and not just your Buddha, it's Buddha.

Let's see, so this is a big thing. The Guru who manifested, the Guru to whom you are learning from, or just having meal together, traveling in the car, having coffee together, having chit chat, maybe sometimes even argue, or scolding or praises, or ignoring you, or being very very caring or whatever...that person to whom you have chosen as your Guru, to whom that you have established the relationship as Guru-disciple, that Guru is Buddha, not your Buddha, it is a Buddha. So, think about it. This one is a big meditation. Buddha you see. For you, if you cultivate perfect Guru devotion practice, even if from Guru's side, he or she may be an ordinary person like you, he or she has the entire power, the entire capability to give the entire blessings than someone who is actually a Buddha.

Because of that reason Guru is a Buddha. Buddha, meaning someone who carries all the skillful methods and tools. Buddha means omniscient, knowing all your capabilities. So from the Guru's side, if actually he or she is not really a Buddha, this omniscient capability can be actualized by the disciple, when you relate to that Guru as a Buddha, to that Guru with a perfect Guru Yoga practice, perfect Guru devotion practice.

Every single method to deal with you, because of you carrying this Guru devotion practice, Guru Yoga practice purely, you receive entire Buddha's benefits. And if you don't carry a pure Guru yoga practice, even though that human aspect of the Guru happens to be actually a Buddha, a real Buddha, you cannot receive the benefits of the Buddha. So, it is very much about the disciple, the disciple plays a major role and this is good to know.

The Guru is Dharma

So, Guru is the Dharma. The Guru is the absolute Dharma because the Guru is the Buddha. Guru is also carrying the quality of the Dharmakaya. He or she is the Dharmakaya, the absolute Dharma of the wisdom of the ultimate nature, the wisdom knowing the ultimate nature of all phenomena, that is the direct antidote of all the flaws that we have. So, Guru's existence is in Dharmakaya. Guru's physical existence is like Nirmanakaya. Guru's revealing the teaching is the revealing of the wisdom of emptiness and that is the way how the Guru is Buddha. The Guru is the Dharma that is directly antidote to your flaws, and that is how through guiding you on the path by revealing the correct Dharma you will be able to get liberated.

Guru is also Sangha

Guru is also Sangha. Guru is carrying the wisdom knowing the ultimate nature, so the person becomes Sangha. So, if the Guru is actually an enlightened one, off course no question. Even if the Guru is not actually enlightened one, if it's an ordinary person, I think the Guru still has to carry the knowledge to teach us, isn't? So, the knowledge, the essence of the Dharma is the wisdom realizing the ultimate truth of everything you know, the entire existence, the wisdom of emptiness. The basic knowledge that Guru needs to have is correctly being able to guide you on the knowledge wisdom of emptiness. Therefore, he or she has to have at least the correct knowledge on the wisdom of emptiness, and because of that the Guru is also Sangha.

The Guru is the creator of all happiness

The Guru, by inspiring the disciple to cultivate the virtues, to cultivate the Dharma, accumulates merits. The disciple, through engaging in virtues, inspired to engage in virtues, creates merits and the merits are the causes of our happiness.

Guru teaches us the Dharma, the correct Dharma. Then by engaging in the practice, we develop the path, and the path will deliver us, the everlasting happiness of liberation and enlightenment. So, because of that, the Guru is the creator of all our happiness.

If we didn't meet the Guru, then we would live our life worldly concerned. We may think "before I found my Guru I was practicing virtues". One may think like that "I'm already accumulating merits, so in order to accumulate merits, not necessarily the existence of Guru is required". We may think like that. But you know, in this lifetime, whatever virtuous imprints we carry, whatever good human being values that we carry, is by the blessings of the Guru from the past lifetimes. So, if we have a certain degree of clairvoyance or omniscience, then we know that the imprints of the virtues accumulated throughout our lifetimes, the main causes and conditions is the Guru. And it can be in many different types of manifestations, but it has to be the Guru. So therefore, the Guru is the creator to all happiness.

Then we can also understand from the Lama Chopa Guru Puja text:

***You are the guru, you are the yidam,
You are the dakini and dharma protector.
From now until enlightenment
I shall seek no other refuge than you.
In this life, the bardo, and all future lives,
Hold me with your hook of compassion,
Free me from the fears of samsara and nirvana, grant all attainments,
Be my constant companion, and guard me from interferences.***

(LC 53)

From here you can understand who really your Guru is.

Your Guru, who really is he?

"You are the Guru". So now you relate to your Guru whoever he is. "You are the Yidam". The Yidam is the meditational deity. So, the Guru is not different from the Yidam. If your meditational deity is Tara, then your Guru is not different than Tara. That is who your Guru is and that conviction we need to have.

"You are the Dakini and the Dharma protector". You are the Bodhisattvas, the Dakas and Dakinis. You are those angels in Buddha's realms, you are not different than them. You are also a Dharma protector, such as Palden Lhamo, such as Six-armed Mahakala, Chenrezig, the Dharma protectors, you are not different. You are Palden Lhamo. You are Dharma protector.

"From now until enlightenment, I shall seek no other refuge than you". Because you are the Buddha, you are the Yidam, you are the Dakas, Dakinis, you are the Dharma protector, you are the one source of combination of all the enlightened qualities. Then your ultimate object of refuge is your Guru.

So, we need to come to a point that you are taking refuge in the Guru. You see for some people it is not easy, maybe easier to take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha. But in the actual most profound practice on the spiritual path, you are not seeking any refuge other than the Guru. You seek refuge not only for temporary refuge, when you are in a fear. But you seek refuge in this life, the Bardo and all future lives. So, the relationship that you have with this Guru, whether you have found him or her just a few days ago, or you're going to find in the future, that Guru, is your object of your refuge. He or she is going to protect you throughout this life, even in the intermediate state after this life, and all the future lifetimes, until we have actualized enlightenment.

He or she may come in so many different manifestations, may come in different forms of Gurus, different form of teachers. The Guru to whom you already established the relationship may manifest in a different person, in other persons, it will manifest in many different forms. You see sometimes to protect you, he will manifest in a particular spot, manifests in the Yidam's form, the meditational deity's form, manifest in a different teacher, female, male, sangha, lay, and even manifests in the atmosphere, like flowers, he can manifest in infinite forms, in infinite ways, even in the manifestations of thoughts, ideas.

So, as long as we have this knowledge, then you are able to remain inseparable from the Guru in all experiences. You are able to remain inseparable from the Guru forever. During good times, bad times, happy, unhappy, virtuous, non-virtuous, everything you are able to interpret as the Guru's skillful means to guide you, so it's again a big conversation.

How Guru will guide us when negative emotion arises, when positive emotions arise. Just an example: when negative emotions arise, if you have this steady Guru devotion, then you immediately say, "this is Guru saying I should not have this emotion in me". Anger is about to arise, immediately you recognize the flow of anger, the limitation of anger, then immediately "this is a manifestation of the Guru for me to recognize the faults of anger and to apply the antidote and overcome". Normally we get hijacked by the negative emotion, we get carried away by the emotions. But when you have this strong Guru devotion and practice mindfulness in Guru Yoga practice, then everything, all the negativities are for you like a thief stealing your valuable things and now Guru is saying: "ok I help you and now you chase the anger away like that". So now, when positive thoughts arise, then this is also Guru's manifestation to get inspired to rejoice, to intensify our habituations of those positive emotions.

Similar goes when you meet some difficult people, say that difficult person is the manifestation of Guru to really train you on the practice of the Bodhisattva: patience. Without perfecting in the practice of patience you cannot become Buddha, isn't it? So now Guru manifests in this difficult person. This is how being in the Guru Yoga practice, being in the Guru devotion practice. When someone praises you, when your heart is inseparable from Guru Yoga practice, then instead of boosting your ego, you humble yourself. You rejoice, you are thankful. You look into yourself "do I have all the qualities that someone just praised then Guru asked me to rejoice it and increase it". If someone is falsely praising you, then Guru is asking you to develop all the qualities that you don't have. You see everything that you see, everything that you do, what you hear, what you feel you interpret as the teachings of the Guru. And that is how Guru guides you and that is how Guru manifests sometimes as a Yidam, sometimes as a Protector, sometimes as Daka Dakinis, manifests as your Hero, Heroines. Right there, right in the struggle, you know, he or she appears in that form and corrects you and guides you. Something like that.

"Hold me with your hook of compassion, free me from the fears of Samsara and Nirvana and grant all attainments. Be my constant companion and guard me from interferences."

So, supplication to the Guru to remain.

LAMA, what does it mean?

So, LA MA. two words: LA...MA. The first two letters, you can interpret as the supreme. No more supreme, no greater than that. Now, there is MA. People hardly know, they may interpret this, but the MA, you can understand as the mother. Mother, the creator of all, the creator of your life. The main creator of your life is your mother. So, the Lama is the main creator, he is like a mother that would give birth to all the qualities, all the higher qualities, all the happiness up to the enlightened qualities. That is why is MA. In Prajnaparamita Sutra, the Wisdom Sutra, is called as MA, mother. It is given the title of Mother, because all the Dharma is born from it, all the enlightened qualities, enlightenment itself is born from there. From the wisdom of emptiness, all existence is actualized from there including enlightenment. In similar way, Lama or someone to whom you relate as your teacher, your Guru is not only supreme in his qualities and knowledge, but also in the benefit to you and he serves as a mother giving birth to all your qualities, your enlightenment like that.

GE WA: Teacher of the virtue. Your Guru is the teacher of the virtue. So, understand like that.

Why do we need to rely on the Guru?

So, the importance on relying on the Guru. There are some quotations. Maybe I can interpret from there. So, there is a Sutra called **Nam.....** It says you must regard the Guru who is supreme among all the Tathagatas, he is superior to all the Tathagatas, all the Buddha. All the Buddhas have immeasurable skillfulness and immeasurable compassion, but without the condition of Lama or Guru, then we, sentient beings, we'll never receive the blessings of the Buddha.

There is the reason why. That is the reason how important it is to rely on the Guru, how important it is to have your Guru in your life. So, without a Guru, without the reach of the Guru, even if Buddha has all the tools to benefit you, Buddha himself cannot reach you. So true, isn't it?

You know numberless Buddhas came to existence and there are 84,000 teachings of the Dharma out there. That human being, the Guru, lives among you. If he didn't reveal the Dharma, if he didn't inspire us, we wouldn't have connected with the Buddha's teaching, that's true, isn't it? Buddha also didn't actualize Buddhahood without relying on a Guru. So therefore, this is why you must regard and see your Lama, your Guru as superior to all the Tathagatas, all the Buddhas. Due to this reason, you must rely on the Guru.

Without realizations on Guru devotion, no realizations on the rest of the path

"The foundation of all good qualities". As wrote Lama Tsongkhapa in the Great Lam Rim, the Middle Length Lam Rim, the small Lam Rim, the first chapter that introduces the teaching to the disciples on Guru devotion, the very first chapter of the Lam Rim is on Guru devotion. From there you can see the importance of Guru devotion practices as a basis of all your blessings, all your knowledge. As said in the small Lam Rim, the foundation of all good qualities:

The foundation of all good qualities is the perfect Guru and relying upon that correctly serves as the root to the path.

Then as it is said in the Lam Rim, all along the Gradual Path we need Guru devotion to actualize realizations: realization on the small scope path, middle scope path, higher scope path, like altruism, Bodhicitta, emptiness including Tantra. Without actualizing realizations on Guru devotion, none of the rest of the Lam Rim realizations will be obtained. It is that much serious, that much essential. Unbelievable, I think we have one session to talk about how to actualize Lam Rim, the gradual Lam Rim (*cf. Saturday workshop 03/13/2023 - Thubten Norbu Ling YouTube: How to approach the study and practice of the Lamrim*). Anyway, in short, without realizations on Guru devotion, no realizations on the rest of the path.

Therefore, the Kadampa masters emphasize that when you do Lam Rim meditation, put effort, even if it takes much time, much effort, on the first chapter on Guru devotion. It worths doing so, worths spending time there, worths giving enough time, even if it takes your whole life, it is worthy. The moment you actualize realizations on Guru devotion, the rest of the path on Small capable beings, middle capable beings, higher capable beings, including Bodhicitta, emptiness, including Tantra, comes without effort. The realization arises without effort, you see.

When you don't have realizations on Guru devotion, then the rest of the path will be delayed, it will take a long, long time to come to your way. One of the reasons is, in order to actualize the spiritual path as a realization, it requires tremendous purification of the impure basis, tremendous purification of our defilements, our karma, our delusions. It requires tremendous unbelievable merits in order to digest those blessings on the path.

So, Guru is the greatest object, the most powerful object for us to purify our karma through relating practices in thoughts and actions. Through relating practices in thought and action it accumulates merits which is the greatest and the swiftest way. The topic we are supposed to discuss is the Nine attitudes of Guru devotion, so those are the practices, the tools of practices to generate extensive merits and effective swift purification of negativities. Because of that, when you have a glimpse of meditation on the rest of the Lam Rim path, you just develop the realizations so easily you see.

The Guru is kinder than all the Buddhas

Another reason why you need to rely on Guru is the reasoning that the Guru is kinder than all the Buddhas. There is a prayer, also in Lama Chopa, in Guru Puja:

To those untamed by countless past Buddhas, the unruly transmigratory beings of this degenerated age who are difficult to subdue you accurately show the good way of those gone to bliss. Compassionate refuge savior I make request to you

Maybe some of you are manifestations of the Buddha, we are, obviously me, these very very deep samsaric persons. This samsaric being is the example that none of the Buddhas even trained me in the past. All Buddhas have given up on me. All Buddhas thought "this one is too stubborn", true, no way, numberless Buddhas came, Tenzin Zopa is just kicked out, all the time. No one was able to make me be inspired to listen to the Dharma, no question about becoming a monk, no question about dedicating the rest of my life to practice, no question about having a Guru and try to practice Yoga, no no no, never happened before, you know it is like all Buddhas tried their best to be my Guru, but it didn't happen. I was too powerful in Samsara.

So even Shakyamuni Buddha, when he came 2500 years ago, I must have been, what is the most common animal in Santa Fe? A coyote, I must have been one of the coyotes in Santa Fe desert haha, also very far away from Thubten Norbu Ling, not even nearby you know. Now I see outside there are

big prayer flags, if I had seen prayer flags at least my karma would have ripened, but I was so far in the desert, so it didn't. So, Shakyamuni Buddha also didn't manage with me.

So, the Gurus, like my late Guru Geshe Lama Konchog, Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche, these Gurus were able to tame me, at least put some rope on the nose, even if I was like that (*Geshela is putting his hand on his nose to explain he was resisting*). So can you imagine how much effort the Guru has to put, to accumulate those resources from beginningless lifetimes to make me be able to just start the initial journey in this life, but they did it. So, from that point of view, then the Guru is unbelievably kinder than Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, kinder than all the past Buddhas. So, this is the reason why the Guru is kinder than all the past Buddhas.

Then Guru is kinder than Shakyamuni Buddha

When the sun of the Muni sets because of the time, you enact the deeds of a Conqueror, for the many transmigratory beings who lack a refuge savior, compassionate refuge savior I make requests to you

This is talking about your Guru, your human Guru, whoever that may be. He is the one that delivers all the benefit that Shakyamuni Buddha would deliver to you, but you were not fortunate enough to be there when Shakyamuni Buddha was doing that. Therefore, the human Guru who can be so ordinary to you, has the tools to communicate with you, to be with you, to guide you.

The Guru brings all the blessings of the teachings to you

Then there is one quotation of the Tantric Treaty called **....**:

Without the Lama none of the higher knowledge would be able to develop in you

and then there is the Sutra giving the reason called **....**

Like the boat, even great the boat is, if the captain, the sailor is not there then you can't utilise the boat to cross the ocean

So, there is a great amount of Dharma out there. The Guru does not just teach the words, the main thing is to transmit the blessings of the Dharma. The main thing is about that, not the teaching. The teaching can be just one word, it can be a thousand words, but the main thing is to be able to practice the Guru yoga, to practice the Guru devotion. That brings the blessings to you, to have somebody with whom to establish this relationship serves as the board captain to you to help you to cross the ocean.

The example of the magnifying glass: with a magnifying glass, you are able to put fire to dry grass. Otherwise, no matter how strong the sun is out there, no matter how the entire universe is filled with the bright and strong sun, without that magnifying glass, we cannot burn, we cannot lit the fire. No matter how many great Buddhas, Lamas and holy beings are out there, if you don't have someone to

relate as your Guru, then you cannot lit the meritorious fire that is in you, you cannot ripen the path towards enlightenment within you, so in a similar way, it goes with the Buddha's blessings.

How to build a mature Guru-disciple relationship (topics of the next three sessions)

There is a lot to say. The time is finishing so if you have questions, we can do a questions and answers time, otherwise we will continue another time. The next session I want to talk a little bit about how to cultivate the Guru devotion through thoughts and practice. There are teachings from various Sutras, Tantra, commentaries, which emphasize why and how to cultivate those practices in thoughts and in actions.

Then we will talk about the Guru's qualities we should look for, if we want to find a Guru, then what are the quality the qualities of the student, to not have just the Guru carrying all the qualities in the relationship. On the student side, we also need to have basic qualities, without that we cannot receive full of benefits.

As ordinary beings, even though we are relating to an enlightened Guru, due to our impure mind, impure views, we may view mistakenly the Guru, or harass the Guru, and there are heavy karmas out there. There is a teaching to talk about that and how to overcome that, methods to protect us not to go through that kind of karma, etc...

And there also practice of making supplications to your living Guru to be never separated from him or her, and also to continuously receive blessings etc....

And also, off course we will talk about the nine attitudes of Guru Devotion, hopefully we can get it done in the three upcoming sessions.

Questions and answers

Question: I'm sure you will probably address this in the next three sessions, but my question is how do you recognize the Guru, is it an internal emotional state, is it external analytical analysis, is it a combination of both?

Geshela's answer: I think whatever you said, it has element of all. There are many many ways. I think the most important thing, the initial, the basis, is having a sense of faith towards that teacher, having a sense of conviction on the teacher, being inspired in virtue like: "that teacher is inspiring me". Then you can establish the Guru disciple relationship and to make the commitment from your side. For that it relies very much on yourself. When you make the decision that "ok that person, from now on, is my Guru". So then, there you establish the relationship, even without the Guru knowing. You know the Gurus Buddhas, it is sure they would know, but on the Guru side, if he is not an enlightened one, but an ordinary person, he may not know, she may not know, but you have established Guru-disciple relationship with that person. Then, the other ways is through initiations, through oral transmissions, through receiving vows, through receiving commentaries. So, you establish the relationship on the basis of the earlier foundational qualities.

Then, there are emotional reactions from your side: the moment you see the person, you never met the person before, you never receive any teachings, the moment you saw the person, you just knew that "this is my Guru", because he just touches your heart with so much inspiration, full of transformation, full of blessings. Even without having conversation, it also happens but this is quite risky, if we are too emotional, then sometimes, there is danger, because it can be just that at that specific moment you are too positive and that positive energy just happened to make you take the decision and later when you are calmer, neutral, from your high spirit. Then you start to find flaws,

you start to have unsteadiness of your commitment, because you had that emotion when you establish the relationship, so for that reason, you have to be careful.

Then there are also mutual emotions from both the Guru and disciple side. The Guru also has that kind of spontaneous connection, the disciple also has that kind of spontaneous connection and you set the Guru disciple relationship. But that is also quite tricky, sometimes there is an involvement of possible attachment, or you know hallucinational views may be possible.

Then sometimes there is no emotion from you but there is from the Guru side, you can be chosen and that also depends on the qualification of the Guru. Sometimes the Guru may choose based on their emotions and that may be also possibility of attachment involved, you never know.

An example of His Holiness the Dalai Lama or Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche, if they point their finger to someone and say "okay I'm your Guru" then I think there is no doubt, it is going to be safe, but if someone, just not well established, well-known or well-established teacher, suddenly pops up and say "you're my disciple" then maybe you never know how real that is.

So, the best way to establish Guru disciple relationship, which all the lineage masters would emphasize, is learn from the teacher the Dharma as long as possible, even if it takes 12 years, even if it takes a whole life it doesn't matter you learn. Off course in one way, it is so urgent to find the teacher, to find the Guru because it is so meritorious, but in another way once you establish the Guru disciple relationship, if any flaw comes, the karma is also very heavy. So therefore, first you learn from the teacher and also you try to spend as much time as possible through teaching events. Then you will also see the rest of the other qualities like moral ethics, etc....

So you need to rely on the teacher who is an inspiration to you, your Dharma inspiration to your path. That made someone needs to have higher knowledge, qualified knowledge in the Dharma learning, also need to have a moral ethics, as someone practice moral ethics, so the higher the more morality precept observed is better. The moral ethics are the boundaries from making non virtuous or making mistakes, taking advantages of the disciples, etc....

In Tibet maybe these days, people don't really talk about that, because there are more non-ordained teachers than ordained teachers, then there are many teachers who gave up their precepts. There are many like that in the world. So, you hardly hear but in Tibet, in early time, even during the Nalanda tradition, in Nalanda ancient time, someone needed to be Sangha, because it is the most strict vows. Even in the Lam Rim, you can see Geshe Dromtönpa and Geshe Potowa discussing about the importance of having a teacher with as many vows as possible, someone starting from refuge all the way up to the Bodhisattvas, Tantra and Sangha vows, and the more the vows the better. But these days it's very difficult to talk about that.

So good moral discipline, good knowledge in Dharma, best is complete knowledge in Dharma because once you rely on someone as Guru, the Guru needs to guide through all the stages of the path until enlightenment, the commitment is up to enlightenment. So then if the Guru knows only certain part and don't know certain part, for example the Guru knows only Sutra part, but doesn't know tantra, then you are stuck somewhere, if you didn't manage to find other a Guru who can provide all the necessary teachings. Then you are half-way stuck, so then it is good to have Guru who have complete knowledge of all the path, and as much as precepts as possible vows as possible and compassionate. If someone has compassion to you, then that person will never take advantage on you or never harm you. You know if there is no compassion, even with higher knowledge, but no compassion, there can make mistakes.

Question: Geshela is it alright if we have more than one Guru?

Geshela's answer: Yes, this again depends on individuals. So, you can have one Guru, you can have many Gurus. That depends on whether you are able to keep up with your faith and conviction and Guru Yoga practice. Also, if you can keep up with all the different advices. Because if you have too many, and all the different teachers give you different guidance, then you have to follow everything. So if you can manage that, all the commitments that each Guru gives you, you are able to practice, then well done. You can have many.

Atisha had 507 Gurus but then again, if you look into Lam Rim, Geshe Dromtönpa and Geshe Potowa were discussing about that. Geshe Potowa was saying, "I can't have too many Gurus, I have five, I can't have more than that," and then Geshe Dromtönpa was saying "I can manage I can have more". So, these are all teachings for us. It depends on individuals, you can have many, you can have more but some Kadampa masters emphasizing it is good to have lesser. Some Kadampa masters, they stick with one deity, one Guru, they stick with one very steady main path, and they steadfast/surpass their enlightenment. But if you are a lineage holder let's say, you are holding lineage of transmissions, initiations, vows, then some teachers may not have this lineage, like this particular transmission. Then sometimes you may too depend on many teachers to get all the lineages but if you are only taking care of yourself, of your practice then sometimes lesser may be better.

Question:as someone without a Guru I can't help but feel very discouraged almost to not have this magnifying glass so I understand that maybe not the karma hasn't ripened yet but I'm wondering can you recommend any practice I can do to find a Guru?

Geshela's answer: So maybe recite Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's name mantra, then make offerings to Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, like to all the holy objects here, you can make prostrations, you can make flowers offerings, then you make aspirations to meet a Guru as perfected as Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, as Lama Tsongkhapa like that. You can also recite LamaTsongkhapa name mantra, you can also do some Vajrasattva mantra recitation and prostrations is also a very good practice.

Thank you.

Session 2 – 03/11/2023

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yLzFip8yOhM&t=4805s>



So, today's subject is on the Guru Yoga practice and on the teaching on Guru devotion, on how to rely on Guru in relation to a guru-disciple relationship in thoughts and in the practice: in actions. And there are specific guidelines that we can follow such as the Nine attitudes, the advice on relying on the Guru through the Nine attitudes.

So, in last session, I talked about who really the Guru is, you know the Guru that we have, the spiritual teacher we have and even if you don't have a spiritual teacher, a spiritual Guru, then in the future, when you will, then who's that Guru going to be. How to say, the Guru that to whom you are going to establish a Guru-disciple relationship, what exactly Guru means.

So, I went through some quotations, in the Sutras and the commentaries. The Guru is the Buddha, the Guru is also the meditational deity, the Guru is the Dakas and Dakinis, and Guru is the reason or the creator of all our higher qualities and happiness. So today, before going into the discussion on those specific practices, you know how to rely on that Guru such as relying through thoughts and actions, I thought it would be good to first discuss about the qualities.

The qualities of a qualified Guru

Those of you who already have Guru, if you already have found your spiritual Guru, then try to see those qualities in that Guru, try to interpret from the deeds of the Guru that those qualities are present, that way you can establish this stable conviction that Guru is absolutely the Buddha, is absolutely the meditational deity, that Guru is qualified as a spiritual guide.

Then, for those who have not yet found your spiritual teacher, then it is beneficial to know these qualities, so that you can search on the basis of these qualifications that I will mention. So that is why I thought it would be beneficial to discuss those qualities.

Three different kinds of Gurus

So, there are three different kinds of Guru in relation to three different kind of practice.

The first one is a Vinaya Guru: the Guru who provides individual liberation vows, such as Refuge vows, lay vows, and ordination vows. So, this kind of Guru you can call as a Vinaya Guru. So, he or she has also 10 qualities. The basic qualities are similar to the 10 qualities of the other Gurus.

The second one is the Mahayanic Guru, the Guru that provides the Bodhisattvas precepts, the Guru that offers the transmission, commentaries and pit instructions on the stages of the Mahayanic path in the training of altruistic Dharma, altruistic path of Bodhicitta, the altruistic attitude of training in Bodhicitta and altruistic wisdom training in emptiness. So, the Mahayanic Guru also has the ten qualities.

Then the third one is the Vajra Guru or the Tantric Guru who provides the entry or permission to practice Tantra, which is the initiation. He or she provides initiations, who provides the Tantric vows on the basis of the earlier Bodhisattvas vows, and the liberation vows of Refuge, because the highest yoga tantric vows has to be established on the basis of Bodhisattvas vows. The Bodhisattvas vows and Tantric vows have to be established on the basis of Refuge vows. So, someone who offers the initiation, who offers the transmissions of the Tantric treaties, Tantric lineages, such as Guru Yoga practices, so these are for the Tantric Guru and it also has ten qualities.

The qualities of the Mahayanic teacher

So here, as a majority of us, or all of us, our main body practice is the Mahayanic path, whose main body practices is great compassion or altruistic Dharma. Then I think it will be more favorable to discuss the quality in relation to the Mahayanic teacher. These qualities are stated in the Maitreya Buddha's Ornament of the Mahayana Sutra. This Sutra is the base where we learn about the qualities. So it says like this:

Rely on a Mahayana teacher who is disciplined first one, then serene, then thoroughly pacified, then has good quality surpassing those of the student, then he's energetic, then has a wealth of scriptural knowledge, then possess loving concern, then has thoroughly knowledge of reality, then has a skill in instructing the disciple, then has abandoned dispiritedness.

The Guru has to be disciplined

So first one, is the discipline. The teacher's main quality: the teacher has to be disciplined, disciplined as a result of his or her mastery of training in the higher discipline of moral self-control. So, someone who has practiced from the three higher trainings of the Buddha, Dharma, who has mastered in higher training of morality. So that is the first quality.

So how the teacher becomes disciplined? It is due to living in the practice of the first higher training, the practice of morality. Someone who observes as a Mahayanic teacher, pure Refuge precepts, who observes pure lay vows precepts, such as five lay vows, going in Refuge in Buddha, Dharma, Sangha,

strictly following Buddha as your teacher, strictly following Dharma as your guide, he or she is strictly being among the influence of the sangha community. So that is what I mean by living in the training of the first higher training.

Then on top of that, the practice of the five lay vows, because as a Guru, he or she may be ordained Sangha, he or she may be lay practitioners also. So as ordained sangha, the individual liberation sangha vows will over right the five lay vows. But if the Guru is a lay person, then someone who is practicing the five lay vows, such as no killing, no stealing, no lying, no sexual misconduct, no intoxication, is a basic requirement. The teacher should train in and already had achieved realizations, meaning the impact of those trainings.

Then if it is a Sangha, then the teacher should be someone who is living in the novice vows, who renounced any worldly concern, whose attitude is of someone who renounced the worldly kind of fashionable lifestyle, who also carries a renounced name. The identity you carry is your practice. Whatever Dharma name you have received during the pre-ordination, you train to live up to that name. Like myself "Tenzin Zopa", "Zopa" means patience. I am a very impatient person. So, I have to remind myself to live up to it and be more and more patient. So if I go out of my mind and become very violent then I would actually break the precept. Then, if the Guru is an ordained novice sangha, there are 36 precepts to be practiced, on top of the pre-novice precepts. If the Guru is fully ordained sangha, then there are 253 vows to be practiced in life. You have to be mindful not to transgress them. Then even if you transgress, you have to immediately without a delay purify them.

On top of that, as a Mahayanic Guru, the teacher must be someone who lives in the Bodhisattva vows. There are 18 root vows to be practiced and 46 secondary practices. So, if the teacher is living in that training, then he or she has already gain a certain degree of impact to his or her life, and a certain transformation is already bringing some impact in it. These are the qualities called "discipline", of someone who is always "disciplined".

So, if the teacher possesses all these qualities of discipline, then even if the teacher doesn't speak much, doesn't interpret the teaching much, and you are just relating to that teacher who becomes your role model, your inspiration in your practice. As the spiritual Guru is defined by being an inspirational figure for your path, then it is someone who always inspires you to keep up with your path. And someone who is undisciplined, how would he or she inspire you, isn't it?

So off course the best is when the Guru's first quality is to be the actual Buddha; if not, at least a higher Bodhisattva; if not, at least an ordinary Bodhisattva; if not, at least living in that training seriously and guarding your three doors on the basis of those morality. So, if the teacher behaves worse than us, then for a student, it's very obvious how that teacher could be qualified to rely on him or her as a teacher, isn't?

So, it's a big responsibility. Sometimes nowadays, you just go through a few months of course, and you have this intelligent training through your school, it's very easy to understand the teaching. Then after, that immediately you become a Guru. There are numberless Gurus out there. It is so easy to become a Guru. In fact, it is not easy to claim yourself as a Guru, or to accept yourself as the Guru of somebody, because in order to be a Guru, you need to have those basic qualities and need to carry the responsibility of someone's enlightenment, someone's liberation. Shakyamuni Buddha, Lama Tsongkhapa, all the masters have emphasized that before subduing others, you need to be subdued. Without subduing yourself you have no tools to subdue others. So spiritual Gurus' job is to cause and condition the disciples' untamed mind to subdue and liberate them that way.

The Guru has to be serene

Now the second one is “serene” which means mental quiescence developed from his or her training in higher concentration. So the second one is someone who is living in the higher training practice of concentration, best who has already perfected it like the Buddha; if not then someone who has achieved Shamata; if not someone who he’s training in that; if not at least someone that who is always being mindful in what to be adopted, what to be abandoned, someone who is always being mindful and introspective, always examining his or her mind to have a certain capability of guarding the three doors by overpowering negative emotions and negative doings through your body, speech and mind. At least we need that much of control from the teacher’s mind.

So, from the disciple’s side, of course as we discuss in the last session, we should regard the teacher as the Buddha, whether the Guru is actually Buddha or not. But from the Guru’s side, he or she still needs to carry a minimum of qualifications, to be able to control their emotions, able to control their hearts. At least, whenever negative emotions arise, such as anger, if the Guru is still an ordinary being, he must at least timely be able to apply the antidote, and not to express the anger in violence through harsh word, harmful physical gesture disturbing yourself emotionally. So you need to have a certain control, you need to have a certain ability to control that. In order to achieve that level, you need to live in the practice of training in concentration.

The Guru needs to be thoroughly pacified

Third one is “thoroughly pacified”, meaning the pacification of all delusions and obstacles, from his training in higher wisdom. So very much, someone who is living in the practice of emptiness, selflessness, wisdom of selflessness and wisdom of emptiness.

So again someone who practices it as a Buddha; if not at least a Bodhisattva; if not at least someone who realized direct wisdom of emptiness; if not at least a conceptual realization on emptiness. If not at least someone who really takes the essence of his Dharma practices in emptiness, able to understand emptiness, to pursue realizations on emptiness, and day to day who uses the tools of the wisdom of emptiness, through learning, then being less grasping especially in relation to self-centered attitudes, the grasping in relation to hallucinated views of an inherent idea of existence of self and phenomena.

So, there are practices like being mindful during the meditation session, being mindful meditating on everything like a dream, the space-like emptiness meditation, someone at least training himself or herself in emptiness, remaining in absorption state of meditation, in the idea of space-like emptiness meditation. Then during the post-meditation session, train himself or herself to see everything like a dream, everything is like an illusion: whatever you see, whatever you hear, everything... try to learn to interpret them like that. Then whatever good things come in one’s way, whatever inconvenience comes in one’s way, not to get disturbed immediately, affected and controlled by these negative emotions, and become therefore a very disturbed Guru. Not like that, so you cannot become a disturbed Guru because something went wrong, cannot become a (*video freezes*) [...], very kind of state.

That comes from the benefit of living in the training of the third higher training, the wisdom: so, as I mentioned before, someone who regularly does space-like meditation and absorption meditation. Then during his or her activities, train in mindful of dreamlike or ilusionlike training of the mind.

This is not just about a Guru, one day, each and every one of the disciples will become Guru. One day, each and every one of us will become Buddha. So, we also need to train like that.

So, if you already have a Guru and the Guru is so dramatic, then it is quite hard for you to learn something, when the Guru is like complete jumping, dancing, when something goes wrong, he or she completely gets upset and angry. Since you are already regarding that person as your Guru, then you have to interpret that it is a teaching for you not to behave like that. You still need to see the teacher like that, the teacher as your Guru: therefore, this is just illustrations, manifestations, from the Guru in this aspect to teach us.

But then for those of us who have not yet find a Guru and who are still looking for your Guru, you need to observe those qualities in that particular teacher to whom you are learning and trying to establish Guru disciple relationship. If you see this kind of quality, then you have to question yourself, whether you're ready to establish a Guru-disciple connection with this person, or not. So, in short, the Guru needs to carry the qualities that are free from temperamental.

The Guru needs to be more knowledgeable than us

Then the fourth one is "more knowledge than the disciple". Of course, if the Guru doesn't carry more knowledge than you, then if you want to learn, to progress on your path, then how is it possible, isn't?

So, if the objective of your spiritual path is just to take liberation precepts and that's it, you have no interest to learn any of the other part of the Dharma, then as long as that teacher has the lineage, has the practice, and has the capability to offer the Vinaya precepts that is good enough.

But if your objective of training in the spiritual path is for full enlightenment, for the purpose of full liberation, then the teacher really needs to carry the qualities of all the three Guru's qualities: the Vinaya Guru's qualities, the Mahayanic Guru's qualities, and Tantric Guru's qualities.

Because in order to actualize full enlightenment one needs to train. It is just a matter of time, whether in this life or future lifetimes, one needs to train in all these precepts. So even in this life, in order to swiften your path, in order to achieve enlightenment through gathering all the precepts that exist in Buddha's practice; that including the precepts of sangha, like the monks and nuns, then just relying on the lay teachers is not good enough, isn't it? In order to provide the sangha vows, the teacher has to be sangha.

So, given the opportunity to take all those precepts, enlightenment is possible within one lifetime, but knowing that life is so short, the time to practice is so limited, and you want to practice whatever practice is out there, you want to gather all the precepts: because the more the precepts you practice, the greater the precepts you practice, it really make your practice more concentrated, right you see? So due to that reason then, it is best to choose the Guru who carries all the qualifications of the three types of Gurus, qualifications that I mentioned before in relation to Vinaya, Mahayana, Tantra, like that.

Then, since your main body practice is Mahayana, then definitely you need someone that knows how to teach all the stages of the higher capable beings' path and not only that, someone who also have a knowledge of the earlier middle and small capable beings' path. Without the complete knowledge of the Lam Rim, someone will not be able to guide us through the stages of the path, isn't it? Then, without entering into the resultant path of the Tantra, again enlightenment cannot be achieved. So, whether you will practice Tantra now or later, one day you have to practice and the relation that you set with the Guru is not just for this life, the relationship once you set it is forever, so due to that reason, then if someone also carries the qualifications of Tantra that would be the best.

The Guru needs to be enthusiastic, perseverant and joyful in teaching us

Then the fifth one is “enthusiastic, perseverance and joy in teaching.” So, if you relate to a teacher who doesn’t like to teach you, then there is no point isn’t it? So, you need to find a teacher who always has the perseverance, who always enjoys teaching and who always dare to clear your doubts on the path, who always guides you.

A great example is His Holiness the Dalai Lama, even at this age, he’s always teaching. Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche, even with his health condition, Rinpoche is almost teaching all the time and sometimes students run away because of too many teachings, students just cannot bear because of too many hours of teachings. But the teacher will teach you 24 hours, your teacher teaches non-stop, and the teacher doesn’t mind repeating certain important points such as teachings on emptiness, such as teachings on renunciation, such as teachings on Bodhicitta, numberless times you know. It’s not like “ok I already taught renunciation yesterday and today I’m only paid to teach for Bodhicitta not renunciation”. The teachers, the Rinpoche, they don’t do that you see. You don’t mind repeating thousand times, they don’t say “ok you only pay for one hour to teach I already teach for one hour stop” and go. You don’t do that, you teach beyond hours, beyond the day beyond the night, it’s unbelievable, isn’t it? So, these are the unbelievable great great qualities of the Guru. We are so fortunate to have such Gurus.

Like, when we are studying in the monasteries, because we have few teachers, some teachers they keep repeating the same thing again and again, and teach for long hours, we don’t really like that kind of teachers, we want that kind of teachers that would teach little, short and bye bye. But then, the thing about it is, it’s our attitude which is wrong.

Again, as a student we need to have the merits to be able to appreciate that kind of teacher. Without many merits, we won’t appreciate a teacher who teaches so much that you get tired. You want to go to rock and roll disco dancing or you want to go to a long-winded teacher of the Dharma, I am sure you want to go rock and roll? I won’t go to the long-winded Dharma teaching. Even if you pay so much money to go to the club, most people will still choose to go there. Even if you offer Dharma for free, people won’t get interested to listen. The more the profound you teach, the more authentic you teach, and less people are interested. So, it is a play of merits.

Even here for me, if I make full of jokes, I also start to a rock and roll a bit, I think this house would be completely full, I think the entire Santa Fe people would come, maybe from outskirts, people would drive a long way to watch Tenzin Zopa dancing, Tenzin Zopa singing, but Tenzin Zopa is being very authentic, very serious about teaching. No no no, I have to think twice whether I should attend the teaching or not. So therefore, having a Guru like His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche. Like Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche is unbelievably rare. It’s like rarer than all the thousand fortunate Buddhas. The way Rinpoche puts effort to teach to the disciples is because teaching is the only way to liberate sentient beings. You know all the Buddhas come in our way, but they can’t wash away our sins, they cannot transfer their realizations onto us, the only way is through teaching, teaching the correct Dharma. So enthusiastic, perseverance and joy in teaching.

The Guru needs to have Dharma scriptural knowledge

Then number 6 is “the treasury of scriptural knowledge”. Someone needs to have scriptural knowledge because Buddha’s teachings are so profound. Just learning whatever knowledge that you get through your intelligence is not good enough. You may have a very smart brain, smart mind to interpret in so many ways, that’s not good enough. We need to have an exact understanding of the exact intention of the past great Masters, such as teaching on renunciation, teachings on Bodhicitta, teachings on emptiness. We need to have an exact understanding in relation to the intention, the

correct right intention of those teachings, like Lama Tsongkhapa did, like Nagarjuna, like Shakyamuni Buddha. All the commentaries of the great Indian Pandits bring about teachings on emptiness, teachings on Lam Rim, the correct interpretation of the Buddha's intention on those teachings. Then later the Tibetan great Masters like Lama Tsongkhapa with his teachings on the Lam Rim, his commentary commented exactly the intention of the great past Indian Pandits like Nagarjuna, and the Buddha etc...

Such as our present Gurus like His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche...whatever they teach, they teach it in accordance with the intent of this past great Masters, all the way up to the Buddha. So, for Dharma knowledge just being intelligent is not good enough. The Dharma path is the path that already has been examined by someone traveling into it. That someone actualized that path and revealed that experience in the writing. It's that word interpretation we need to cultivate. Therefore, when we go to receive teachings, we are not actually going to get new words, a new kind of ideas, it is more about blessings, more about authenticity. That's the way the realizations come about. Therefore, the teacher has to go through rigorous study.

The Guru needs to have insights on the wisdom of emptiness

Then number seven quality insight into the understanding of emptiness. Because the essence of the Dharma is teachings on emptiness, realizing Dharma is realizing the wisdom of emptiness. The purpose of Dharma is to subdue our mind by overcoming delusions and that can be done only with the correct antidote. The correct antidote to overcome delusion is the wisdom of emptiness. The result of practicing the Dharma is to achieve Dharmakaya, the state of full enlightenment. To achieve the state of Dharmakaya, you need to have the right cause for that, because the wrong cause won't produce the expected result. So you need the right cause: the right cause of the Dharmakaya has to be the earlier mentioned, the wisdom of emptiness. That wisdom of emptiness is only developed through correct applications of the analysis, such as the reasoning of the king of reasoning, such as the reasoning of interdependent arising as a meaning of emptiness etc...

So, due to that reason, the teacher may know many many knowledges, but if the teacher doesn't know correct knowledge on emptiness, then he can't lead us to the path. Therefore, specifically mentioned here: the teacher needs to have a qualification on the correct knowledge on emptiness: best if someone already realized it; if not at least someone who has a correct, exact understanding of the intention, the emptiness understanding, such as Nagarjuna's, such as Buddha's intention of that.

The Guru needs to be skillful in teaching the Dharma

Then, skilled in presenting the teaching. The Guru, as a teacher, knows that whatever teaching you teach to the disciple, the ultimate goal is to make the student to understand emptiness: he has to find all the different tunes to lead the disciples there. So, that is what you mean by skillfulness. Skillfulness doesn't mean we're teaching all sort of things, but my ultimate purpose is to make sure my student will realize emptiness and to do that you have to plan the process. This is the journey. I will lead, I will teach the student like this. Therefore, not like a normal teacher who comes and goes and once a while teaches, you also need a Guru lifelong dependence. So, you need somebody who in fact regards you as a disciple, so that the Guru can be able to be skillful, can plan, can have a planning for you, have a direction for you.

The Guru needs to be compassionate

Then has the quality of compassion. If the Guru is not actually an enlightened being, is just an ordinary qualified scholar and practitioner, then there is the possibility of making mistakes, of taking

advantages in you. This is possible you see. So, if that someone, besides being qualified in moral discipline, has on top of that a qualification of compassion, great compassion, then he will never hurt the disciple, never harm the disciple, he or she will only be the cause to liberate the disciple from any harm, any suffering. The heart of compassion is never wanting sentient beings to feel suffering. It is never wanting to cause and condition any suffering you see. So when the teacher carries this qualification, then the teacher has an absolute unconditional love towards us. He only wishes and causes and conditions our own happiness.

The Guru is never discouraged

The last one is no reluctant to teach and work for his disciple regardless their level of intelligence. So, from the teacher's side, whatever background the student comes from, whatever level of intelligence, whatever manners the disciple comes in your way: it may be very lazy manner, very disturbing manner, etc., the teacher never gives up on the student. The teacher always carries the skillful means to take care of his disciple and nurtures the disciple.

Sometimes, in the monasteries, these teachers adopt a student, most of time those students are really young children. Initially the child doesn't have faith, doesn't understand what a teacher is and the child still carries a child's innocent mind. He just wants to play, just wants to mess up with things. But the teacher's way of taking care of the child is really like the most loving parent, the most loving mother. How the most loving mother will take care: they have a plan for this little boy or girl. Then gradually the teacher is going to be more and more tough and more and more giving advanced teachings. They will guide. Then if the student messes up, the teacher will never give up on the student. So basically, the student turns out to be the worst person in the whole universe, the teacher still holds you as the dearest in his or her heart. That kind of relation is that will be established from the Guru's side.

The importance of knowing those ten qualities and to take our time

So therefore, it is so beneficial for us to know these ten qualities and try to experience that. It worths giving your time, to study from that person to study initially regarding the teacher just as a normal teacher, not as a Guru, and engage in the teacher's activities. It can be projects, it can be any activities, like volunteering. Then from there, you not only know the aspect of the teacher on the throne or facing towards you, but you start to also see the real human side, the real nature of that person, because all these qualities need to be carried as a person's nature, not just as a make-up.

When you teach you teach all the flowery wonderful things. In front of the student, you behave like a Buddha. But the moment the student goes away you become like Mara; you behave like a monster. You cannot do that. So, you need to spend time with this teacher. There are serious practitioner, serious motivated practitioners, they even dedicated over twelve years, some even twenty, thirty years and are still learning, but haven't established Guru-disciple relationship yet. Because sometimes, it could be your mistake, it could be the teacher's mistake, it could be your limitation or it could be limitation from the teacher, somehow, it is still difficult to get fully inspired. So, it takes time. The best platform is to study, to take time to study with that person, then get involved in activities.

So, in the great Lam Rim by Lama Tsongkhapa, interpreting to the Maitreya's presentation of the qualities, it is said like this:

Thus, Maitreya says that the student must rely on a teacher who has these ten qualities. It is said that those who have not disciplined themselves have no basis for disciplining others. Therefore,

Guru who intends to discipline others 'mind must first have disciplined their own. How should they have been disciplined, it is not helpful for them to have done just any practice and then have the result designated as good qualities of knowledge. They need a way to discipline the mind that accord with the general teachings of the Conqueror.

So, when we talk about “morality”, “discipline”, “concentration”, there’s so many terms, so many interpretations in the world people use. Even “meditation” nowadays, they use so many different interpretations. So, here the qualities the teacher has to have, are the one in accordance to what the Buddha has mentioned, the omniscient who knows exactly what is beneficial for us.

So, the three higher trainings are the main qualifications that the Guru has to be, that the Guru needs to have. The best is if he or she has perfected those three higher trainings, if not someone who is living in the three higher trainings. The three higher trainings are the main practice Buddha defined in this 84.000 teachings, three baskets of teachings to be learnt, three higher trainings to be practiced:

So therefore Maitreya indicated them with this three terms: discipline, serene and thoroughly pacified.

So, these are the practices of the three higher trainings.

With respect to what Maitreya said discipline refers to training in ethical discipline.

Again, there is a reason for saying that because ethical discipline can refer to so many things. In Buddhist content, ethical discipline, is very in relation to these three discipline precepts like individual liberation, Bodhisattva, Tantric precepts as I mentioned before.

Then also it says like this:

Even if one does not have all the ten qualities but have seven, six, five or even three qualities.

...So, in today’s time, it is so difficult to even from the object, the teacher’s side. In today’s time, it is not easy to find a teacher who carries these complete perfected ten qualities, it is not easy, it is a very degenerated time. Then the main reason for that, is the degeneration of our own merits, our own karma, our own time, as mentioned before, it would require a lot of merits to meet perfect Guru, qualified Guru. So due to that, it is so difficult to find such a qualified Guru with the full qualifications.

So, sometimes the Guru may be actually the Buddha but then, due to the obscurations that we carry, the thickening imprints or misperceptions and impure perceptions; by the distractions of negative emotions, like ego, sometimes all that block us to see through those good qualities in others. Sometimes due to the influence of always hearing negative things about others, always seeing the negative about others, overthinking negative thoughts about others, when we open our ears, open

our eyes, when we relate to others, you always look for false, always see the false so easily or project false on others easily.

The basic three qualities of the Guru in our degenerated time

So, due to that reason it's so difficult for us to really see vividly those ten qualities. So, in such time, and situations like in our time, at least we look for minimum those three qualities. So, the three qualities as mentioned earlier: disciplined, serene and thoroughly pacified. You can also interpret the three qualities of someone who carries good knowledge, then good discipline and is compassionate; someone who is a very ethical person, a very ethical disciplined person; then someone knowledgeable about the teachings; then someone whose nature is compassionate. So minimum we have to look for that, before we establish someone as Guru, we need to really see these basic three qualities as sustainable in that person. Then it is safe to establish Guru-disciple relationship.

The student needs to be non-partisan, intelligent and diligent

So now, even if we find such a qualified Guru but then as a student we don't carry basic qualifications, again we cannot receive the full benefit of having a qualified Guru. So therefore, the Aryadeva's four hundred stanzas emphasizes these three qualities. It says like this:

It is said that one who is non-partisan, intelligent, and diligent is a vessel for listening to the teachings. The good qualities of the instructor do not appear otherwise no due those of the fellow listeners.

So, even if the teacher appears to be the real Buddha but we don't carry those basic three qualities, then we won't receive the benefits of Buddha. We won't receive the benefit of finding a perfect Guru.

The student needs to be non-partisan

So, among the three qualities, the first one is nonpartisan. So, there may be many interpretations in different commentaries. What I understand by nonpartisan it means you have a clear motivation, clear objective about your spiritual journey, your spiritual path : the purpose of learning Buddha, Dharma, the purpose of adopting Buddha's teachings as your path, of becoming a Buddhist, becoming a spiritual practitioner practice in Buddha's teaching is solely for absolute liberation, nothing to do with any worldly concern, nothing to do with: " I want to have a long-life, therefore I want to practice Buddhism". Not because I want to practice Buddhism because I want to be rich.

There are many who practice Buddhism because they want to be rich, and they practice those powerful mantras and wealth deities. Their life, their spirituality is to be rich. Then they eventually get into big troubles. Some practice for long-life: then you recite long-life mantras, you ask the teachers to initiate you with all the long-life deities and you never learn the rest of the teachings and of course you know, one day, you cannot sustain. So anyway, in short being non-partisan means you don't practice for any worldly purpose.

Even in some cases, surprisingly, there are some who relate to a certain Guru like a partner, like a companion, someone to talk to, they say this person is so easy to talk to, so maybe he or she can be my Guru, so that I can talk to her or him all the time, whenever I am stressful I can give a call, or I can see him or her and chat and then I will be happy, so it's my Guru like that. There are some they didn't really understand the proper teachings on Tantra. Then they establish the relation to a certain person so-called as a Daka or Dakini, then "I am the Daka, Dakini" so it's kind like choosing a partner, that kind of mistake also happens. And some they relate too, they choose the person as their Guru because he

or she is very pretty, very handsome, like an Idol; then some because this Guru is just too funny, they always make me laugh, so I feel so happy to be around this person, that also happens.

Then some they say, this Guru always talks very high, and sometimes also going into space out, maybe, we don't know, maybe the Guru is taking drugs, who knows? That's so called labeling that Guru "I am in bliss", maybe, who knows? he may be intoxicated you never know. Sometimes I hear that even in the West, you know the Westerners are very smart people but sometimes they're so easy to get deluded. You will come so easily just because a lot of music is happening, a lot of space out is happening, so "it's perfect this is it, I found my perfect Guru". That also happens, and I heard some Gurus have a large group of followers also because of that. So, these are worldly concerns. It's just a few examples. There can be many many examples, real life examples, but these are to give some ideas. So, these are not being non-partisan, nothing to do with all this.

The purpose of the relation to the Guru is only to cause me to understand all my flaws as flawed, by providing the guidance and teachings, you'll see. Especially to know all the delusions in me as a delusion, the ignorant in me as ignorant, and providing the right correct antidote to that. Then its whole purpose is to purify the entire samsara, entire negative actions of body, speech and mind, its purpose is to progress on all the stages of the path, developing your heart, all the altruism, altruistic attitude, wisdom, to abide in an absolute state of full enlightenment, absolute liberation.

And for that, even at the cost of my life, I must be able to devote to this person in the practice of nine attitude that we're going to discuss. Even if that person that I regard him as a Guru happens for me to seem behaving like a street dog, I will still take that as a teaching to subdue my ego, subdue my delusions and progress on my path. Even if that Guru totally abandoned me, I would regard that as the best teaching for me to overcome my samsara and actualize full liberation. So in short, you need to have the mind of non-partisan, meaning your purpose is liberation from entire ocean of samsaric existence and its causes karma and delusions, nothing to do with any form of worldly concern in relation to your Guru, in relation to the Dharma, in relation to be in the sangha community, and you have a clear heart that "I will never be distracted by any worldly concerns, worldly matters, worldliness of behavior, when I'm in Sangha community".

Even someone in the sangha community spits on me, chases me away, I don't mind because my purpose is not about having a comfortable moment when you come to the sangha community, it's not just about having a higher seat or earlier reception, is nothing to do with that. It's all about purification of my samsara and accumulation of causes for enlightenment, you see. So, then you get the immune system in your being, you are not affected by any worldly adversities, any worldly concerns that arise in you, or any worldly adversities that come from outside, in the pursue of Dharma, in the practice of following the Guru, in the being in the community of the sangha. Your mind is so clear you always see everything so meaningful whenever you're around Guru, whatever happens, whenever you are learning Dharma, whatever happens, even if all the Maras, all the obstacles fall onto you, you have such a clear mind, that you stick, to stay put on the practice. All your friends come against you, nothing bothers, you stay foot on the practice, so when you have this non-partisan mind.

Otherwise, you know, coming into Dharma center can be even more complicated than going into the worst corporate world, it can be a lot of politics you know. Why in the Dharma center, why in the Dharma sangha community it is all about politics, because of blablabla, because of not carrying this quality of non-partisan, because of that. Then you're busy with worldly concerns instead, you don't have this focus on your spiritual practice.

Then in relation to the Guru, sometimes you say "oh today Guru didn't talk to me, this is my Guru, but he talks to other people not me". You get upset: "tomorrow I don't want to go to school, I don't want to go to the class" like a little kid, you are so moody at home you bang your cup, like "Guru didn't talk to me today", or the whole "Guru didn't send me an email". Oh, my goodness, nowadays it is worse, because everybody is on facebook. Guru is also on facebook, Guru is also on whatsapp. So, in the past, ok fine, maybe the letter must be lost on the way, or maybe after a few years later, maybe you've changed the address, fine. But nowadays, you can't run away and the whatsapp number will follow you anywhere you go, same with emails, and now with wi-fi everywhere you also can't have an excuse because wi-fi is everywhere.

So, if you don't have a non-partisan mind, then you start you'll be a very moody student, you get upset so easily, no email upset, no whatsapp upset, that's it and then what? The Guru didn't go for coffee together we get upset. So, it's become like that, so it's like that, so it's a very serious one. This is a very serious one, because in the world, even in the world of Buddhism, many things are happening like that, many things happen like that. Therefore, especially once you've established Guru-disciple relationship, then through your body, speech and mind, any negativity when you relate to the Guru, or harass the Guru, then it's a heavy obstacle on the progress of our path, heavy obstacle you see. So therefore, from the very beginning you know, we need to make sure that all these qualities are intact like that.

The student needs to be intelligent

Then also of course also you need to be intelligent. So, intelligent here means you have a clear mind of what needs to be adopted and what needs to be abandoned. So, what needs to be adopted is the Dharma. What needs to be abandoned is anything to do with any worldly concerns. So basic intelligence, anything to do with worldly concerns, anything to do with this life, this very life concern, anything to do with the samsara, everything has to be renounced. Anything to with antidote to subdue our mind and develop our heart has to be adopted, which is the Dharma. It is the teaching which is the practice.

So therefore, when you go to your Dharma Sangha communities, you don't go there for your positions, you don't go there for people to know you, or to find a partner there, you know, or to fight. It's not for that you see, to go to the Dharma center is to acquire practice, inspiration, Dharma you see. Then also in our heart, even if the Guru is not around with us in person, then watch our mind, at least, have a basic intelligence to what needs to be adopted, among the thoughts that come in your way you know what to be abandoned. So, when any kind of negative emotion arises, then you guard your heart, you overcome them by applying the antidote: the teaching that the Guru taught to you. Whatever virtuous thought arises, then do not just let it come, but try to hold on to it and improve that to develop it through your practice. Then that leads to the third qualification: diligent.

The student needs to be diligent

Diligent. As a student we need to work very hard. We need to work harder than the Guru, because the Guru already did the homework, the Guru already passed the exam. So the disciple, the student, ourselves, we need to do homework. We need to study hard; we need to practice hard.

So sometimes, if you're living with the Guru, he may be sleeping. Then you may say "if the Guru sleeps so much, Guru is always partying, always talking, always relaxing, I should be relaxing too". No no. On the disciple's side, we have to understand the Guru is already perfected with all the qualities. Now me, I am not perfected. So, I need to practice, I need to work hard, I need to do more homework.

You know in a monastery, sometimes, we little monks, we do like this, you know when we see the Guru is relaxing a little bit, everybody is so happy. You know: "Guru he's relaxing, now the whole day we should relax too". We say like that you know. Especially after this summer retreat, we go for picnic like at Kopan, we go for a picnic with all the Gurus, everybody, Rinpoche, and all the others, the Abbot, all the senior teachers, everybody go there. So, they also wear hats, they start to play balls, and they relax, you know like that. Then we see like that "ok today I can be so wild, because Guru is just relaxing, today all-day Gurus are playing and relaxing that means as a student, you know, I should give holiday to myself, or during the upcoming two-three days I should be also in holiday".

So, diligent: we really have to work hard, especially here, you can understand "diligent" in relation to the Guru Yoga practice, in relation to relating to the Guru. So especially, with our requests to the Guru to teach [so one thing in relation to Dharma teachings, if you reveal the Dharma without any request, there are certain negative consequences]: as students, we need to be diligent in requesting the Guru to teach. You may even need to request thousand times, you know the more you request, the longer you request, then after the Guru decided to reveal even one single word is like such a powerful blessing to you. Then diligent in obeying the instruction of the teacher. If the teacher asks, gives certain homeworks, then be diligent in practicing that, and diligent in practicing in a sustainable sustained way, not just practice sometimes and sometimes not, have a sustainable practice like that. So this is the student quality.

Questions and answers

Question: *before a meal or before you eat anything you're meant to offer to your Guru first, what if your eating is left-over or something unattractive, are we still meant to offer?*

Geshela's answer: So, you can offer everything in the sense of nectar. Then whether it's a leftover or the first portion of the food, by substance, it is pure or impure you know. Do everything in the respect of understanding your Guru as a Buddha, or your Guru as a deity, and then you offer this offering as a nectar. Then you receive the benefits of offering nectar, you know offering the best, even if it may just a little, even if it may be a level one, even if it may be just water. But then without having that understanding, just simply offer it's ok, but very limited merit: at least you offer, it is already good, better than nothing you see. Many times, we don't even remember to offer, so that's one thing.

Another thing is that the leftover may be left over to you, but it is on conventional nature of that particular portion, it is the first portion for its own moment of existence. So therefore, whether it's leftover or the first portion is very much an imputation of your mind. It is very much labeled, designated by your mind. So therefore, simply you think of the Guru and whenever, whatever you wish to offer, even that leftover of food it may be, offer, it is still beneficial.

Thirdly, you can offer the leftover to the inner Guru. When you start to eat the leftover, before consuming it, you can do it with the understanding of what is going into your stomach is offered to the Guru, who is residing in the central chakra of your heart, as if you are delivering the offering this way, so you can also do like that. If sometimes you forget to offer before you eat, and then while you're eating, you suddenly remember that you wished to offer the food, then that time you can offer to your inner Guru. Thank you.

Question: *you mentioned the qualities of the teachers, so the teacher has to be disciplined, thoroughly pacified, and then towards the end there was one where the teacher has to have wisdom, or wisdom realizing emptiness, which he or she has gained by different methods of focusing on emptiness, like the king of reasoning and so forth and so on. So, my question is I always have a hard time differentiating between what is thoroughly pacified and the wisdom realizing it seems*

like thoroughly pacified, you still have to do the king of reasoning and all those methods, right, so what's the difference between that one and the last one, where you have wisdom?

Geshela's answer: so, I think that thoroughly pacified is referring to the direct realization on emptiness, so even the conceptual obstructions are overcome. When there's just a wisdom of emptiness, not necessarily it can be direct wisdom realizing emptiness. It can be a conceptual realization, which means conceptually realizing the wisdom of emptiness and also realizing the wisdom of selflessness, but not necessarily the absolute emptiness.

So as far as concerned with the teaching of the qualities of the teacher, the best is someone who has fully realized emptiness directly; if not at least conceptual realization; if not at least, has a correct understanding of what it means "wisdom of emptiness", you know all the tools, how to realize selfless in a person, selfless of phenomena, then lives in the training which is the third training of the wisdom, lives in the training, doing meditation and during meditation overcome this thickening of the self-grasping, the ignorant. Then during the post-meditation, he or she is always mindful in the idea of illusion-like, so meaning the teacher carries the qualities of less grasping to things, he or she is very pacified, totally pacified. When someone has so much grasping, he's not pacified. Thank you.

Question: it's just sort of a technical thing. When you had mentioned the importance of the teacher being in the Sangha for all three steps, what's your point of view on people like Thubten Jinpa or the Karmapa a few years ago who disrobed to marry his childhood sweetheart, are they legitimate Gurus at this point or what?

Geshela's answer: So, as I mentioned at the beginning, it depends very much on individuals, of what you are acquiring from the Guru. If your purpose is, if you wish to receive the benefit of the entire vehicles of the Dharma, then one of the vehicles of the Dharma practice is living in the practice of individual liberation vows. So individual liberation vows such as refuge and lay vows, that can be granted by a lay practitioner, but as far as it concerns the Sangha vows, they only can be granted by someone who is a Sangha. So, if your objective is also to become Sangha, then your Guru should be Sangha, otherwise how to give you Sangha vows? If your objective has nothing to do with Sangha, you just want to practice Bodhisattva practices, Tantric practices, then that someone not necessarily has to be Sangha. Thank you.

Question (from zoom): if someone already has a Guru but find out there is a mistake from all the common quality, then how to live without creating negative karma for students disciples?

Geshela's answer: I don't know if I hear everything or not, but maybe if you are talking about after establishing the reliance on the Guru, that Guru makes a mistake, then how the student should rely? So, for that student, that Guru's mistake is not a mistake. It has to be turned into a training of your mind, by educating your mind in seeing this is as a projection of your unpurified mind. The mistake that you projected on the Guru, this mistake in fact is the teaching, the emanated teaching from the Guru, the teaching to not indulge us in such a mistake and you still have to train to see the Guru as a Buddha. So that's tough but that's the practice.

So therefore, afterwards you regard as someone as your Guru, there is a saying: if Guru gives you a good slap, a good hitting, that's one of the best initiations that I have received. Then if the Guru suddenly scolds you loudly, suddenly manifests to be so angry and scolds you, then from the student's side, you should see that as the most powerful dispelling mantra dedicated to me to overcome very serious life obstacles. So that's the practice, so that's why, we have to carry these three qualities of the student, and also have to choose the Guru after a good observation as I discussed before. But if you have already chosen, then you're too late. If you happen to meet a Guru who is actually a Buddha,

this is good luck for you, if you didn't meet a Guru who is a Buddha, then if someone is behaving worse than you, also good luck for you. Thank you.

Session 3 – 03/16/2023

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Onf-juH8d0>



So, the first session I was emphasizing mainly the definition of what really represents the Guru. Then, the second session was about the definition and the purpose of reliance on the Guru to establish the basis where you can practice the Guru yoga and be able to receive the maximum benefit out of it, laying out the qualities of the Guru and qualities of the disciple. Then, different ways to establish the relationship Guru disciple relationship.

How to relate to the Guru in practice: in thoughts and actions

So, on the basis of these then now we can discuss even more serious teachings in relation to the Guru yoga practice or the Guru devotion which is how to relate the Guru in the practice in thoughts and actions. So that is the main homework that we need to cultivate in order to receive all the benefits of having a qualified Guru and having a qualified teacher.

All the blessings and progress on the path by actualizing the path within our continuum all the way up to achieving a resultant Guru Buddhahood start and happen through the practice of relating in thoughts and actions to the Guru. Even at the beginning, from just having faith and conviction up to practice the way how all the past Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, our Gurus, and all these successful practitioners, such as those of the Mahasiddhas, all of them have actualized the benefits, including one lifetime enlightenment, all that can only be done when we have the preconditions.

Otherwise, it's so hard to practice the way how you should cultivate according to the teachings, accordingly how the past Buddhas and our Gurus have practiced and succeeded in the path. Just directly learning how to relate in thoughts and how to relate in action doesn't work with us. Maybe in good times, you may find fantastic, but in tough times you will give up, you can easily give up, easily misunderstood, misinterpret and you may find incapable to live in such a practice.

So, the precondition to cultivate this practice is out most important, not just finding a qualified Guru, yourself also have to be qualified student. Remember the Aryadeva's four hundred stanzas, the three qualifications: the student has to be non-partisan, have the basic wisdom to know how to differentiate what is truly good for you, and what is truly not good for you. Even though your sensual mind may feel "this is nice, wonderful". But even it may be so hard at that time, when you engage in the practice, you have the basic wisdom that has the potential to bring great ultimate benefit. On the basis of such knowing, then you stay put in the practice.

You know our emotions, the emotional and our normal mind, our normal sensual mind way of making decisions: what to be adopted and what to be abandoned, is based on pleases the sensual mind at that time, what sensually pleases it at that time, what emotional pleases it at that time. And we think "this is good for me; this is beneficial for me ". And if another time, sensually, emotionally something is not pleasing to you, that it is a hardship for you, then usually you give up.

So, when you practice any form of Dharma practices, when you're engaging in the practice, mostly it's unpleasant, honestly, mostly it's quite nasty outwardly, even inwardly it's very hard, not easy. We may think the moment you start to practice Dharma, everything is "wow wow wow", but it is not such a thing: everything is unbelievable, I've never expected this such miserable. I didn't know that practicing the Dharma can be so miserable.

But then those ripened students say, "oh this miserable is the doorway to liberation, this hardship is the doorway to liberation, this hardship is the doorway to purifications of all the faults". Then your determination, your perseverance is so steadfast. So similar goes with this Guru yoga practice. When you find your Guru, you find all the qualities before you commit yourself to the Guru. Everything is like perfect portrait the Gurus you know Buddha's best quality in the texts. You describe even the statue of the Buddha, the Buddha's quality, you admire this statue, it is the best in everything, even there's a big diamond rock put outside out there and after you're hearing all the qualifications of the statue, all the Buddha's quality in it, you will choose this statue rather than the big mountain diamond.

So, when we first meet the Guru, it sounds like that. It's like so exciting so wonderful. But when you really start to engage into the actual cultivation of the Guru devotion in thoughts and actions, then you struggle: sometimes Guru intendedly displays the role of antidote to purify our thickening stubborn negativities. we learn that from Milarepa's life story, if you read the Kadampa Masters and the 80 Mahasiddhas of India, learn their biographies, every one of them when they relate to the Guru went through an unbelievable nasty time, like Tilopa relating to Naropa. Can you imagine he heard so much about Naropa, his unbelievable qualities, but then when he first meets him and establishes the Guru disciple relationship, he is this nasty fisherman. Milarepa met Marpa before hearing about his unbelievable glorious qualifications, and the first time Milarepa saw Marpa, he is someone who is like a householder heavy drinking man and a very inconsiderate teacher.

Then, maybe you may think "ok maybe I haven't seen yet all the other good qualities, abundance of good qualities" when you establish the Guru disciple relationship. We all know how much Milarepa went through tough times. So therefore, as I mentioned before, be non-partisan. Your purpose is full enlightenment, your purpose of relating to the Guru, is to purify your negativities and pursue enlightenment by accumulating merits. With a qualified Guru seen as the Buddha, you develop that pure view, this pure thought and develop that until that spontaneously arises, and arises even the Guru manifests to behave like a street dog, behave like the nastiest person in your life, but you are still able to see the perfect enlightened Guru and every display of the actions of the Guru as a powerful teaching to you.

Then when you commit your action, you are ready to engage, in any form of actions, you understand everything deeply, not just emotionally, but deeply understood it's a tool of purification or purification tool for accumulation of merits, like how Milarepa committed to build nine stories building, that his Guru Marpa instructed, for the purpose of his purification. He never gave up and same as he did, we have to come to that point. We may think that Milarepa was able to do this way, that in our time, the Guru has to be more lenient, but it does not work like that. The Guru has to do the Guru's job, same way it was done in ancient time, it has to be done now, and in the future as long as it's pursuing enlightenment, the student also has to catch up with the practice, with what Milarepa's practiced. We have no choice because there's no kind of discount enlightenment that we can buy or bonus enlightenment or discount enlightenment, discount path, so the enlightenment in the same thing. Then we go through the text.

How to relate to the Guru in thoughts

So how to cultivate the Guru devotion in practice: the first point is how to cultivate the Guru devotion in thoughts.

So not like many other teachings where you can give your own thoughts about them, the teaching on convincing of the existence of Hell Realms, the suffering of Hell Realms and Hungry Ghosts Realms, the existence of other realms including of numberless sentient beings.... Many teachings really have to depend on the Omniscient one's words, not on "what I think", "this is what I feel", "I have a certain experience"; certain teachings are like this. Here, it is quite important to relate to those quotations and that's the reason I try to base the teachings on some of the quotations to illustrate this teaching.

So, in the Tantra bestowing the initiation of Vajrapani, it is said:

if you would ask Lord of the Secrets how disciples should view Master. Then I would answer that they should view them just as they view the Bhagavan

So, this is what we need to cultivate in thoughts. We should view the Guru just as we would view the Buddha. If the disciple views their Master in this way, they will always cultivate virtues. So, there's a benefit to you. It's not kind of asking us to practice a certain culture, certain someone's view, an ordinary someone as ordinary and to view him or her at such a high level, not like that. Because ultimately for your own sake of benefit you should view that, you should cultivate in your heart that way and the benefit in your heart is you will never be separated from cultivation of virtues. Then it continues, it says:

they will become Buddha and benefit the entire world because of viewing your Guru as a Buddha then you will achieve all the Buddha's qualities and how Buddha benefit the whole world of sentient beings and yourself will eventually and those capabilities

Then the Tantra similar from the same text it says:

Keep the Master's good qualities in mind, never sees up on their faults

This is how we should cultivate our thoughts. Only good qualities. Even if the Guru is in actual fact just an ordinary person, happen to be just an ordinary person, not an actual Buddha, and at the same time he or she may not possess so many glorious qualities, maybe behaving very humble, very ordinary, nothing as much shining as those Buddha's qualities, and even there may be just one quality, the quality of just being able to teach you, the qualities of just being out there as someone that I can relate as a Guru. Even if it's just that much you should focus with a sense of being fortunate, sense of gratitude, sense of blessing, and regard those qualities as the qualities of the Buddha, and through

them you try to magnify in your understanding even that humanity, even that quietness, even not displaying those outshining kind of qualities. Those are in fact the qualities of the Buddha, you know the quality of humanity, the qualities of overcoming self-importance, which are the Buddha's qualities, qualities of understanding that is a skillful means for that Guru to relate to you so easy.

By this Guru being glorified, you know, shining out with all the Buddha's qualities, I may not have any opportunity to be so close. So, because of that humanity, because of that ordinariness, because of behaving very much like myself, that's why he or she is so accessible, so close. I don't have to squeeze between thousands of students, I can just easily meet him or her, easily can talk to her or him, and you just magnify from that one quality then regard the rest of the other qualities, even in those certain teaching when him or her aren't able to answer you as a student, I'm regarding him or her as my Buddha. But when I ask questions, he or she cannot even answer my question, even that, you need to have the ability to see as a teaching to you, such as the Guru's silence is asking me to be your own therapist, be your own Guru. You cannot depend all the time on my presence I may, we all lies in impermanent nature, I may disappear in any moment. It's like training you to be self-sufficient, guiding yourself, be independent, be a matured student, you try to understand like that.

So, if you start to interpret from the quality point of view, you can interpret everything as Buddha's qualities, everything as a Buddha's teachings. Therefore, this can be done when the student carries these three kinds of qualities: wisdom, effort, non-partisan. You have those qualities, then you are going to do that. Otherwise, it is so easy to see faults. "Never see upon their faults".

So now we are talking about someone who has already established Guru-disciple relationship. This is not in a trial period. You already established Guru disciple relationship. We have to relate to ourselves, after now, we may have so many different Gurus, some of you may have established Guru disciple relationships without even learning the teaching and just heard about Guru-disciple relationship and with that excitement, maybe you already established Guru disciple relationship with someone, and now, your job, is to practice just like that. There's no go back to say, "ok no no no I want to be in a trial period". It's too late.

But there's only benefit if you're able to develop this practice from now on, even if you establish Guru disciple relationship without proper preparation before. You know they are many people in Buddhist world, they have received initiations without even having basic Buddhist knowledge, even without knowing what really the Guru is. By recommendations of your friend, you are put into an initiation, mandala zone and receive initiation and say this is your Guru, and even at the end of the initiation the Guru pronounced "whatever I say you have to listen", so I will listen correctly what you order to me and you even repeated that, committed to that.

But then, if you practice correctly in thoughts and actions, then even if it happens that you establish Guru-disciple relationship with someone who is mistaken, you will still receive the benefit, for your training you still receive the benefit. Then if the Guru is misbehaving, because in fact the Guru is not qualified, then, even the Lam-Rim teaching teaches us to physically stay distant. And then if the person teaches us wrong teachings you stay distant, you try to not listen to the teachings, but you continue to relate through the practice, through thoughts and actions: like in action, you are still being respectful for your own benefit, still seeing in Buddha for your own benefit, but physically staying distant. You know even interaction, even for the teaching since you know very clearly that it's wrong teachings, you stay distant. Even in those circumstances, never see faults for your own benefit.

So, it's very tricky, very hard to practice very carefully in this area. So even if you have an unqualified Guru, because of your Guru yoga practice, you still receive the benefit of relating to an actual Buddha, to a Guru who is actually a Buddha. So therefore "never see upon their faults".

Keeping their good quality in mind you reach attainments, seeing upon their faults you will not

You see, so not even for a moment, have a negative thought about the Guru, or not even for a moment, do not even reflect on one false of the Guru, not even for a moment you know. We have to put effort, so the imprint becomes so strong so that, you won't even have a dream seeing false in the Guru. When we are awake, our awareness is awake, then surely never to see false. Even for one moment, even for one fault. You want to do that because that will harm you: there will be obstacle to progress on our path. If we see quality that will condition our progress on the path.

How the Guru is at our side from life to life up to enlightenment

Then The Ten teachings Sutra says:

Develop the following ideas with respect to your teacher. I have wandered for a long time through cycling existence and they search for me

If Guru hadn't come to existence in our life, we would continue to wander in cycling existence. For eons we have been wandered lost. At this very moment, we meet the Dharma, have some sense of interest in accumulating virtues, abstaining from committing non-virtues. In fact, all are the blessings driven from the Guru, whether you have already met the Guru or not, there is a karmic link, there's karma, it's committed from the past lifetime: its influence even benefiting in some way to us. So whatever goodness we have to understand that this is the Guru's, the impact that comes from the existing.

I have been asleep having been obscured by delusion for a long time and they wake me, they pull me out of the depth of oceans of existence. I have entered a bad path, and they reveal the good path to me. They released me from being bound in the prison of this life. I have been worn out by illness for long time.

The illness of compounded suffering, the contamination of karma and delusions, and the Guru played the role of the doctor to diagnose our sickness. The ignorant and the delusions will never claim they are a disease to us. Our ignorant mind, our deluded mind, our obscured mind always glorifies the mind of ignorance, the idea of ignorance, the idea of delusion. Even after meeting the Dharma, there are so many times when it is so obvious that we really so easily follow the demand of ignorance, the demand of delusion, like attachment, so easily convinced, when attachment arises, it's like everything makes sense, and make feel nice, and convinces you, and you fulfill the urge of the attachment, you serve accordingly the demand of attachment like that you know.

How the Guru is blessing us constantly

So, the only antidote is the Dharm, whether is the path of attitude, whether is the path of wisdom, which is revealed by the Guru in this area of Shakyamuni Buddha, revealed by Guru Shakyamuni Buddha. Then when we meet a human Guru in person, that Guru revealed the path and that catches all the misleading guides of the delusions and ignorance and provides us all the cure of the antidotes. Then by constantly living in the antidote, cultivating antidote, we can see we come up to a quite a progress in a healthy living as a healthy being isn't? Comparing to sometimes in our life when comparing to now after meeting the Guru, after meeting the teaching you see much progress isn't? You become truly much healthier, healthier in the virtue, so much closer to liberation, getting so further away from the control of karma and delusions, isn't it? We have come to a position where we are just spending time to finish up the past definite karmic result only, we're almost not committing any negative conditions to complete indefinite karma to be a definite karma for us to continue to remain in cycling existence for a long time isn't it? We are in fact working very hard to complete all the indefinite virtuous karma to be a definite virtuous karma.

You know the way we behave, the way we practice day-to-day is very much in that position now and that is due to the Guru, Guru revealing, Guru diagnosing our sickness and Guru providing the medicine and Guru also acting as a nurse to remind us of timely to make sure that we take the medicine timely. So that's like all of us trying our best to do our daily commitments properly timely. At least try not to forget in the morning tea set correct motivation, then in the daytime, try to stay as much as close to the altruistic motivation we set in the morning, and at the end of the day, to do some purification practice and try to do some dedication.

It's very much like taking that medicine three times a day and Gurus are the one that through the teachings, through their living examples, the moment we think of them, the moment we hear their teachings, the moment just to have the awareness "I have Guru in my life" you know make sure that you take the medicine timely, isn't it? You really make sure you take the medicine timely and in case you forget to take the one session of medicine, then sometimes Guru would give two doses next time and if you forget to do today Vajrasattva practice tomorrow you say double. It's like take double pill.

Then like Guru has opened so many clinics, you don't have to go to the hospital all the time. Guru's main mandala monastery, you don't have to go all the time there. This center is the clinic. Just nearby you, you can go many times. Then Guru sends many nurses to make sure the medicine is taken effectively, Guru send us like a nurse to go around the different centers and repeat the teachings, it is very much like that. Then here so many senior practitioners who lead teachings and meditations, act on behalf of the Guru. It is like assigned qualified doctors in different local clinics making sure you take your medicine timely. So this is all play of the Guru's blessings.

They are the rain clouds that put out my blazing fire of attachment and the light

So true, is it? Even meeting a Guru and the teachings, still our desire grasping is so strong. Can you imagine if we didn't meet the Guru, if we didn't meet the teachings, how grasping that we may be. Completely overwhelmed, grasping of attachment, grasping of the ego, grasping of aversion, grasping of materialism, grasping of grasping, you know completely living in the hallucinated permanent grasping of life. Because of you meeting the Guru, how renounced you become, all these are like the

Guru is like a rain cloud that put out a blazing fire of our attachment. So, we need to cultivate that in our thoughts, we need to meditate on that, so this is how we relate to our Guru in thoughts. These are the correct thinking.

Also, The array of stalks Sutra says:

Youthful Sudana, the teachers are those who protect me from all miserable Realms. They cause me to know the sameness of the phenomena

The Guru is the first person in our conventional life, our spiritual Guru is the first person who provides us refuge, or even lay precepts or any precepts you see. Just offering the very foundational individual liberation precept of refuge protects us from falling in the three lower Realms. So if we learn about the suffering of the three Lower Realms, and the Guru have provided that protection through their lineage blessings, we understand how unbelievable it is: I mean what can be kinder than that. If we end up in the three lower Realms that will prolong us being in Samsara longer time. The more you stay in the negative realm, the more intense committing of the negative karma you do. And the longer we stay stocked in the Lower Realm and the further, the lower you go to the Lower Realm like that.

So, while achieving this precious human rebirth, Guru provides us the Refuge, making sure that we can steadily continue our journey to liberation, higher to higher stages of reincarnation and all the way up to liberation and enlightenment. From that point of view, unbelievable, kind, compassionate, loving, caring, for our own well-being. So that's our Guru is.

They cause me to know the sameness of phenomena

through the teachings of conventional and ultimate reality, Guru makes us understand the absolute truth of existence on self and phenomena and cause us to purify even the root of the entire miserable Realm which is the ignorance. So, Guru causes that.

They showed me the path that leads to happiness and those that lead to unhappiness

Even in this life, if you follow exactly the Guru's instructions, without any doubt, completely submitting yourself 100% to your Guru, that's the starting point of true happiness and that's the starting point of accumulating long-term future happiness, lasting happiness, including the happiness of Liberation and enlightenment, and that's again so true. Assign Buddha to be your guide and give us the guideline of the Dharma and then provide us the community of Sangha, just that make us so secured, so protected, specially protected from the karma, you know negative karma, negative karmic creations, so this is what happens. Everything exists in interdependent causes and conditions. All the happiness come along with accumulation of virtues, all the suffering is the result of non-virtue, so the Guru's actions in our life is all about creation of virtues which means immediate experience when you engage in virtue, it is beneficial. The ultimate benefit, it brings happiness, it brings true happiness, including liberation.

They instruct me in the deeds of always auspicious

always auspicious in virtue.

They revealed me the path to the city of omniscience

like in the Lam-Rim, entire teachings, gradual path to enlightenment, the path that we never traveled before and the path that many people, entire human beings in this cyclic existence have never traveled before. So, the Guru revealed the unknown path that Guru has traveled, the Guru has experienced. And can you imagine, even in our ordinary life, if we are lost in a very miserable place and someone provides us a direction and lead us, not just providing ladders (or leaders?), you know even just providing a good GPS that would already be so helpful you know. Then somehow on top of that, says I will sit beside you to lead you all the way up to your destination, so Guru offers that. So, revealing the unknown path and the perfected path and it's the path to omniscience, path to all the happiness, what can be kinder than that, providing such blessing, isn't?

They guide to the state of omniscience, they cause me to enter the oceans of realities sphere. They showed me the sea of past, present and future phenomena and they revealed me the cycle of noble beings assembled. The teachers increase all my virtues, remembering this you will weep

In the Sutra it said you relate to your Guru with this kind of thoughts cultivation and it's without any choice you know, you will weep because you are so heart-touched, so we need to express that from there from your heart, so this is just a word for us to now give us an idea, but then to translate to your own individual relation to your Guru, very much the same meaning but then maybe different ways the Guru must have affected you, you cultivate that and then you will have tears, pure tears of heart-touched, and deeply you will start to feel closeness to your Guru like that.

Then the great Indian master Padampa Sangye:

see the Guru greater than the Buddha

If you see the Guru even greater than the Buddha or in another word, see the Guru kinder than the Buddha, it actually means that seeing the Guru kinder than the Buddha and relate in devotion then the blessing will actualize within this lifetime.

Then Lama Tsongkhapa's Song of the spiritual experience says:

The root of creating well and auspicious conditions for all the excellence of this and future life is to rely properly with effort both in thoughts and actions upon the sublime spiritual mentor who revealed the path. Seeing this we should never forsake him even at the cost of life and please him

with offerings of implementing his words 'teachings. I a yogi have practiced in this manner you who aspire for liberation too should do likewise.

Lama Tsongkhapa teaches us like that his realizations in one lifetime enlightenment. Lama Tsongkhapa actualized full enlightenment in the intermediate state, the Sambhogakaya form, before taking the reincarnation. Within one lifetime, he actualized all the stages of the path, the root because of his Guru devotion practice. So, if we wish to achieve the benefit of spirituality like Lama Tsongkhapa did, then we should practice like Lama Tsongkhapa practiced in relation to his Guru. So, on top of the teaching the Guru teaches, the pit instruction that we receive, the initiation the commitment that we receive, then commentaries and transmissions that he provides, we cultivate the Guru yoga in the practice of inseparable from learning, contemplation and meditation and diligent in developing yourself in that way.

So, then Lama Tsongkhapa mentioned in the Foundation of all good qualities:

The foundation of all good qualities is the kind and venerable Guru. Correct devotion to him is the root of the path. By clearly seeing this and applying great effort, bless me to rely upon him with great respect

So, understand, have full conviction the root of all the qualities of enlightenment is the Guru yoga practice.

Then Kadampa Geshe Potowa said

if you don't have respect in thoughts and actions to Guru, then even you rely on Buddha there's no benefit

Even if you stay close to Buddha there is no benefit, even if you relate to Buddha there is no benefit, you create such as negative karma like Devadata and there are many other examples. Like Devadata, we all know from the Buddha's story he is one of the closest monks to the Buddha, living with the historical Buddha. But then due to his obscuration and ego, mainly his ego, he sees only false in the Buddha. And he tried to do everything opposite to what Buddha does, what Buddha says, and he regarded, claimed and he pronounced everywhere that Buddha is a cheater, liar. So, whenever Buddha teaches, whenever he travels, when he talked to the villagers, he is loving kindness compassion. But for Devadata, all the teachings are a skillful way to cheat the villagers, to receive offerings, to receive respect, so regarded him as a cheater. Even when Buddha put salt in this food then he makes sure to do everything the opposite of what Buddha does because everything he does is mistake, so he tried to eat without salt, but he complains so much. So, then he was unable to protect from his past karma and he reborn in the Lower Realm. So even if he was with Buddha, he was one of the closest persons to the Buddha and, he reborn in the Lower Realm. So, this is what he meant.

So, in all scriptures, directly or indirectly you will see the importance of relying on the Guru, the false of not relying on the Guru, the advantages of relying on the Guru and disturbances of not relying on the Guru, then all the benefit that for you in relating to the Guru correctly in thoughts and actions, all

the quotations that I emphasized before, clearly you can see this is not something your Guru makes up when your Guru teaches the teaching on Guru devotion to the students.

It's not like the teaching saying that you should respect, like you should obey my order, you should regard me as a Buddha, you should serve me, it doesn't mean that. It is the pure teaching of the Buddha in all Sutras and Tantras, all the treaties of the Buddha in collections to the teachings and he emphasizes that and that seriously cultivate the practice by the Indian Great Masters. Then this tradition traveled to Tibet, and Tibetan Great Masters cultivated seriously like Kadampa Masters who are the evidence in achieving the benefit, and who are also the evidence that none of the earlier Masters Kadamapas lived their life without depending on the Guru or not having Guru. All have their Guru, all followed the instructions, the Mahasiddhas' intense commitments of retreats, it's a direct instruction of the Guru, all the Kadampa Masters' such an advanced and intense very strict practice is instructions of the Guru, following the instructions of the Guru.

Then after today like His Holiness the Dalai Lama, like Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche, we have the direct examples that we can witness through our own naked eyes, you know we can feel it, we can be the witness, a live example of Guru devotion practice, Guru yoga practice. You know when Rinpoche meets his Gurus, you know there's this one time in Buddha in Kathmandu, in the circumambulation area he suddenly bumped up with one of his Gurus from whom he received initiations. Then that day it was drizzling and those of you who went there you it is very dusty then little drizzling you know it can be very muddy, but the moment he saw his Guru right there he made a long prostration. You know like many of us like myself first I would be concerned about getting my robes dirty or maybe I need to put a carpet first then only after I prostrate but for him the moment, he saw that's it he saw the Buddha in the Guru right there he prostrated.

Then, there are many times at the airport he bumped up with the Guru, a certain Guru from whom he received, to whom he regards as a Guru and he received one transmission, not even initiation, just one transmission, but he regarded this person as a Guru then right there suddenly in front of everybody, people would be shocked and whatever what this people may think this is like crazy you know? But actually, it's the practice right there about it, you know long prostration. There are many more drastic practices, it is like so spontaneous and so intense and so perfect you know through a display throughout his life, and you see.

Then, when he is with his Guru the gesture the softness of his speech, the physical gesture of obedience, you know they can imagine the heart, you know the physical gesture, the gesture, the verbal, the speech, everything, illustration of what he's thinking in his mind, isn't it, so much gentleness, so much kind of like it's not because of he's so scared of the Guru, he's seeing the glow of the Buddha in that person whom he regards as a Guru and he does not even dare to have a direct eye contact, you know because of his pure view. And he does not do that just you know like with His Holiness, he does that to all the Gurus, Rinpoche as a lineage holder, he has so many Gurus, because some Gurus holds only certain lineage, some Gurus also other lineage. So, in order for him to have all the lineages to pass according to the needs of the disciple, himself needs to put effort to receive so many lineages, so they may be so many Gurus. But whoever he sees as a Guru, you know, even the reincarnation of the Gurus, when those Gurus already passed away, he offers the same respect, so see exactly like the Buddha and offer the respect both from body and speech and heart no question.

So, these are great examples especially in the West, we have this culture of sitting on the same cushion, this is a culture in the West, nothing wrong with that, but if you are practicing Buddha's teachings then they have to be put into practice for our own benefit. So, this practice has been derived since Buddha's time, even when you look to every Thangka drawing you see the central Buddha and

their attendants how they sit, even the size makes the Guru bigger, the main Buddha bigger than the following other buddhas are smaller or the attendants are smaller, or the Dakas and Dakinis are smaller. And all the Mahasiddhas' drawings when you look at Lama Tsongkhapa's life stories, many of the illustrations are in relation to the teachings you will realize those small monks sitting down there etc... So even though we have a culture that we sit on the same seat but for the practice I think it would be so wonderful to adopt the traditional practice that you learn to sit lower than the Guru because from that respect you receive the benefit of enlightenment, purification, accumulation of merits, so even Guru says sit together you know, it's not that you are not following his advice, because here you are showing your respect in action, you still insist to sit lower.

Then, prostration, you bow down to the Guru. Then, when you talk to him, you really try to show the gesture of be a bit in obedience you know like if you happen to talk to so powerful person you won't do like that isn't it? So here, the power is not about conventional power, it's about enlightened quality, enlightened beings. Then food: everything like served first, then offer praises, or at least showing so much gesture, physically and verbally, the expression of how much you regard the person, so these are very beneficial to adopt this culture, very very beneficial you know, immense of benefit.

And we have this culture of being very straightforward which is good but then in relation to Guru disciple if the Guru says ok now you come and debate with him then you debate like hell. But if the Guru didn't really initiate that then, just listen and observe, digest, even though if discussion is so important, but when comes to actual Guru disciple relationship when you start to illustrate in your conversation, then you need to kind of be obedient, and let the Guru to initiate first, so it can be quite strange to this culture, but then when related to the practice this has its own charm, this has its own benefit. You practice that until you only have a word to say yes to everything.

I am not boasting myself, but I have one story. In front of me my Guru always criticized me, "this is not good enough", "you are not good enough", "not good in studying", "not good enough in practice", everything is not good enough. My late Guru Geshe Lama Konchog like he treated me like there's not even one day kind of like a kind word saying, "ok well-done boy", never, he always criticizes and find limitations and false in me. I feel like I didn't really kind of thinking wrong, but actually, when you think carefully, you are thinking wrong, you know, and when I am about to kind of question "you see you see what's going in your mind", then I thought "what? what's going on in my mind?". It's like you are just trying to be too Guru to me for what, like you start to think in a very very rebel way, but then later think quietly: yeah, you are kind of questioning and not there to say a word, but you see sometimes it happens, so he always catches you.

But when he talks to other people and I heard from other people the truth: he says "one thing good about Tenzin Zopa he only has a yes word, everything what I say just yes, whole life you only say yes. There's no other second word" and they say "that's one good thing about him, there's no second word other than yes to his honor". So, I asked this one nun to tell me about that and say, "of course he always praises you, he praises you so many times". I say, "are you sure you're not lying to me?" "Oh yeah he praises you so much" and then "there's one thing he made a very loud statement and again he only has a yes to all the others and that's good".

That's true my time with him is like complete 100% submission, as if I have no mind myself. I don't know how to make any decision like a as complete vegetable. I used to. I felt when my master passed away right there, I felt like exactly as if I have no mind to think what to do, what not to do, what is right, what is my life because I was too into just following the instructions, following the order, and like submitting completely like there's no fear, no worries of the past, no worries of the future. It's like the day that I met him which is around nine years old, like living together completely, then until the

last day, it is complete submission and throughout that journey I was always happy, I was so happy like almost like not as if there's no samsara for me, and even I encounter sometimes bullies or, sometimes you're sick you hurt but then you just feel like as if you're with the best doctor, why would I worry and you have the hundred per cent like kind of knowing that this doctor will surely pick you, so that kind of you know.

But then when he passed away, then yes I was like completely lost, blank, it's like whole world collapsed, but then of course you know with the conventional trainings out there, the provided teachings, learning from other teachers, then observing the Master, how he thinks how he does thing, then I mean I didn't like kind of let myself completely sink, completely carried away in that loss, so I tried to take care of myself, within half an hour I revived I become a conscious vegetable then felt the blessings. Then everything makes sense which I've never realized. Almost it didn't make sense to anything, like it means your own intellectual capability, that you didn't. Like they say you memorize than you memorize, you see. It is absolutely: wake up, you wake up you know, think like that I think like that, don't think like that, I don't think like that but then, from that onward everything makes sense, then the power of the blessing felt that time the intensity of the power.

Again, I'm not boasting myself but really there so many things that for a person like me are not possible at all. Even now when I look back certain things in life, it's not you who would achieve this, who will do that, and the blessings are so lively, not so imaginary and I find where this blessing is coming from. Like an example, some of you went to Kopan and there's a memorial stupa, Geshe Lama Konchog memorial stupa, initiated to build when I didn't even have 5 Nepali rupees in my pocket and when I initiated that, which is half an hour after I woke up from vegetable, I call it criticism, that you know even one my own family said "you don't even have a five rupee in your pocket and you want to do like this, how possible you're crazy" and even in the monastery, the seniors they think I lost my mind. Like an example, for you people for some other it's like so easy for you. For me, I never guides myself my own life, I never even know how to talk to people, no capability at all, zero, but then whatever you wish everything like kind of actualized accordingly, beyond your like, going beyond your time frame according to it happens. Then I would regard, I understood this is coming from submitting completely under the Guru's control, but that's how I feel.

But I also understood if you don't submit, or you submit but fifty fifty it's not good, you better prepare for your own capability fifty per cent. If, you want Guru to take care of you, for everything then you have to submit a hundred per cent, even at the cost of your life, completely. And then I think really, the blessing it's really actualized in real time like that. Just an example, I'm sure you all have much greater example, so I just share my small experience, small impact of what Guru means to your life when you submit like that.

The nine attitudes of Guru devotion so these are we will go through that ext next session. Those are very straightforward guidance and just do like that. But here before doing so how to rely on the Guru in actions. In Maitreya Ornament, the Mahayana Sutra says:

Rely on the teacher by way of respect, material things such as service and practice.

Respect of body, speech and mind. Material things if you are capable to offer material resources then support Guru's activities. And service of your time etc... Then practice, so the best is practice in thoughts and practice in actions. Especially practice in actions is living in developing yourself, living in the practice, like sadhana practices, ngondrö practices, Lam Rim meditation practices, Lam Rim study practices etc... So, living, dedicating your life in practice, like Milarepa:

I have no material offerings to offer to my Guru, the only offering that I have which is the best offering is my practice". So that's the best practice".

Developing your heart, actualizing as much as realizations on the path and the liberation, as much as dedicating your time to be in the service of elevating suffering sentient beings and that pleases the most you know the Guru and that's the best service. Those who are capable in teaching Dharma, teach, those who are capable in doing retreat, do retreat, those who are capable to do social work, do social work, those who are capable of taking care of their family member, take good care of your family members in the name of your Guru, be very loving like you'll be the ambassador, you'll be the reincarnation, you'll be the embodiment of the Guru. Like when you are taking care of your partner, if you are taking care of your family, or whatever you do, like you become the Guru and you behave like the Guru, you illustrate Guru's qualities. That's the best offering to the Guru.

Avagoshā's fifty verses on the Guru devotion practice, one other text that we should study:

What need is there to say much here, do whatever pleases your Guru, eliminate all that displease them, analyzing this, striving at it.

So, whatever pleases the Guru. What pleases the Guru? Pleases Guru by living in virtue, living in practice, by developing your path, the best, pleasing him by becoming enlightened, slightly lower than that at least achieve liberation, slightly lower than that at least the stages of the Arya path, then the stages of the ordinary Bodhisattvas' path and before that at least you become a good practitioner in this life. You know, my disciple who is really dedicating life in good practice is a good practitioner, at least earns that respect. So, if you are sangha then preserve the vows as pure as possible or be a good sangha, good monk or nun. So whatever Samaya has been given to you, practice that intact without any transgression as much as possible. Then most of all, illustrating the meaning of the Guru yoga practice in our words, in our actions when we are among people, means express the Dharma in your words, express the Dharma in your actions, meaning very peaceful, very compassionate, very respectful, very kind, very gentle, very subdued, living in the service.

Then again from the same text, it says:

Offering to your pledge Master constitute continuous offerings to all the Buddhas.

So, if you make offerings to the Guru you are offering to all the Buddhas. If you make to Buddha, not necessarily you're making offering to all the Buddhas or all the Gurus.

Offering to them is the collections of merits, merits are the cause of your happiness.

Merits are the causes for you to collect all the resources to be beneficial for the rest of the sentient beings.

From the collections of merits and sublime wisdom comes the supreme attainment.

Because of merits you actualize wisdom and method, from the wisdom and method, then enlightenment will be born.

Then Lama Tsongkhapa in the great Lam-Rim he says:

one who wishes for the inexhaustible offers to the Guru whatever is slightly appealing and whatever is very special.

So, even if it's slightly appealing, pleasing the Guru also offer. Even if you have a great special offering, also offer, meaning everything you offer.

Then furthermore, the student's perspective differs from the Guru's perspective the student must do this offering because the Guru are the supreme field through which the student accumulates the collections of merits and sublime wisdom, however the Guru must not take the gift into consideration.

Very important, this is very important. If the Guru is always being in consideration of material gifts that shows something is wrong. This is another very important point, from Guru's side it is like only focusing on your practice, never kind of expecting any kind of material gifts, here the teachings say, "however the Guru must not take the gift into consideration". So, if there's such a thing, like the Guru is so materialist, Guru is so happy when you make money offering, when you make a big material offering, but then there is no bothering about how much you practice then something is wrong you know. But then again it is your Guru, so you take that as a teaching, then physically you're distant but then still interpret that as a practice to you. So, this is how we should do.

Then Vajradhara's attainment:

Attainment follows proper reliance on the Master, thirdly please your Guru in all things.

Then Lam-Rim also says

in brief, you must strive to achieve what pleases your Guru and eliminate what displeases them as I mentioned before like that.

Kadampa Geshe Cherawa says:

we use the word Guru for whatever it pleases by the practice and doesn't give even the slightest consideration to material gifts. One who does the opposite is not suitable to be a Guru. For those we should wish to achieve liberation.

So, next session, we will do the Nine attitudes of Guru devotion and then if we have time, reason to overcome our impure view if Guru manifests mistakes. We'll discuss about that and also there's a practice request not to give rise to heresy in the Guru, then few examples of Guru devotional practitioners, then requesting prayers for blessings, etc...

Question: You mentioned eye contact, isn't it more respectful eye contact?

Geshela's answer: Yes, in our culture if you don't eye contact then it is very strange, isn't it? I think you can do eye contact, but you can do like this (gesture of bowing, head down). Not like (gesture of confidence back straight and hands on the hips). Guru is like that and you also like that (laughs). I think eye contact is ok, but you know like this, he's like up there but when you bow down then naturally you have to look up like that, this is just culturally like that but then if it's inconvenient then don't worry about it.

Question: when our Guru recites stuff, how can it come really good but when I recite it it doesn't feel the same?

Geshela's answer: then maybe if you want to feel the same way, then you practice Guru yoga by thinking yourself Guru inseparable, oneness, then you recite it, maybe you may feel the same thing, try it out.

Question: the West has a pedagogical tradition of dialogue, question and answer that goes back to the Ancient Greeks, you had talked about your relationship with the Lama of complete surrender and submission at what point in your training did you begin to question and analyze rigorously where is that allowed?

Geshela's answer: in the debate field, I become crazy with my classmates, with my other seniors until there was some time when they had to tie me on the tree because it's so wild and you know never giving up questioning and competing.

Question: but not during the teachings?

Geshela's answer: during the teachings I listened like this (gesture of bowing eyes closed). But then I go there and whatever question I have challenged with others then I clarify me from there and come back then I continued to listen

Question: did you ever have debate with your teachers?

Geshela's answer: yes, the teachers sometimes say, "ok come question, debate with me", then also you can become crazy there.

"Oh, that's great yes."

Geshela keeps going on: and then some Gurus, in Sera Monastery I have three main Gurus, there's two senior one. One Guru he doesn't prefer your question, so just listen obediently, another Guru, he loves you make questions, so almost the class all the time is more about discussions, questions and

answers, and of course we like the questions and answers. And when you ask to debate you really but of course we still try to control ourselves like the speech not so harsh, not so like not to pierce the ears loud but like sure he hears, then the gesture also more humble but still quite hard but not as aggressive as like you do with your classmates.

Question: there's a good YouTube video with Tenzin Gache and another Monk in English showing the Tibetan debate style if some of you don't know it it's look it up it's great to see

Geshela's answer: Yes, ok thank you.

Session 4 – 03/23/2023

[Dharma Toolkit: The Nine Attitudes of Guru Devotion with Geshe Zopa \(Session 4\) - YouTube](#)



The Nine attitudes on Guru devotion

So, tonight, the topic is Guru yoga or Guru devotion practice, advice on the guru devotion on the Nine attitude of Guru devotion. Today is the last session, so I will go through the text that Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche has compiled. So, there are Nine attitude on Guru devotion or the advice, or the guidance, or the practice, in relation to thoughts and actions in relation to Guru devotion practice or Guru yoga practice in thoughts and practice. It is very much the characteristics of the qualified disciple, the attitude, the nine attitude such as the practice of fifty verses on Guru devotion, on Guru yoga practice and the nine attitudes are the qualities or the characteristics of a ripened disciple, qualified disciple to the Guru. These are the quality that whoever aspire for genuine liberation from Samsara, genuine liberation from control of karma and delusions, worldly concerns.

Then these nine qualities that we need to develop. Without achieving sustainable qualities such as the nine attitudes we're going to discuss, we won't be able to receive maximum benefit of the Guru even if you happen to have a Guru who is actually enlightened Buddha. If we as a student carry these nine attitudes as our qualities, sustainable quality then even the Guru happen to be just one ordinary person, just very much ordinary like oneself, but then because of equipping this quality in the disciples, in yourself, you're able to receive all the benefits up to actualizing state of full enlightenment, the entire benefit just directly relying on the actual Buddha.

So, therefore of course such intense profound practice as a beginner like us who is very fragile in the sense of so easy to get misunderstanding, to get overpowered by our past habitual delusional imprints and environmental factors, so easy to degenerate these qualities, even if in case you have developed them, but it is so hard to carry as a sustainable practice. So therefore, this practice should be practiced in relation to a qualified Guru. These nine attitudes of practicing are practices in relation to having a

qualified Guru, the qualities that we have quite broadly discussed on the first and second and the third sessions, so those of you who have not attended the earlier sessions, then you can refer to those recordings.

Prepared students, ripened students

This practice of attitude should be cultivated on the basis of having all the preliminary criteria that we discuss before, otherwise for ordinary individuals to really have sustainable such attitude of practice is not easy. The obstacles are very advanced in our system especially delusional obstacles such as ego. Then on top of that we also do have certain cultural influence that which really to bring ourselves down to Earth to practice these practices sustainably, joyfully, and truthfully, it's not easy. These practices can be carried on sustainably when we are fully prepared with all the preparatory practices such like carrying basic students' qualifications like the three qualifications that Aryadeva have mentioned: non-partisan, basic wisdom, then joyous effort.

Then, there's a saying about finding a Guru : the Guru is not something that you have chosen like a dog meeting a fresh meat, like based on your emotions: you suddenly get emotional inspiration, emotional kind of aspirations liking then,, without any investigation without taking time to really check carefully whether you can really establish Guru disciple relationship on the basis of those basic qualifications in the Guru, as well as within oneself that is very regarded like dog meeting fresh meat. For a dog if you see fresh meat whether inside there is poison or not poison, it doesn't matter, it just grabs it, you know. So many of the cases when first time meeting spiritual path, there's also a lot of glorified advertisement of the Gurus, then you make a commitment, especially commitment or receiving initiations, receiving oral transmissions, receiving vows, precepts, ...

But then you are kind of like hooked or chained into the Guru disciple relationship. Then later, when the Guru, either from the Guru side behaves in the worldly way, or even the Guru doesn't behave in the worldly way, but then because of us being, students not ripened then we project our own flaws in the Guru, then you start to have a doubt, you start to degenerate your faith. Then the relationship starts to turn into sour and that's very sad and very obstructive for our spiritual growth.

The realizations depend on our devotion to the Guru

So, therefore, this Guru devotion practice is something that really needs to take time because it is one of the most important that we need to actualize and once you relate to the Guru then the path has to be carried on sustainably purely. Like Lam-Rim, there are stages of realizations on the Lam-Rim, including initial realizations on renunciation, eventually realization on the wisdom of emptiness, realization of Bodhicitta, including enlightenment; all those solely depend on how perfected the practice of Guru yoga that you have, the Guru devotion that you have. If the Guru devotion, the foundation, the basis the Guru devotion practice is intact, the rest of the realizations come by easily. If the Guru devotion practice is not pure, how much how hard work you invest, how smart you may be, how long time you practice it is so hard to gain realizations on the stages of the path.

There is no greater practice

So therefore, there is a saying, there's so many mantras, unbelievable powerful mantras abundance out there but there's no greater and there's no more powerful mantra than the supplications to your Guru. There's no more powerful mantra than the supplication to your Guru out there, even surpass the mantra of wisdom which is regarded as the unsurpassed mantra. But in comparison the supplication to the Guru is even more unsurpassed. Then Yogas, there are so many Yogas out there even Highest Yogic Tantric Yogas but there's no greater yoga than Guru yoga. There's no greater,

there's no more effective yoga out there in our spiritual practice. Then there's so many Buddhas out there which all are perfected in their skills, their blessings, their compassion, their wisdom. But the Guru's blessings, the channeling through the Guru, the receiving blessing is the supreme: nearest to you, most powerful and most effective, even in comparison the ten directions Buddhas skillful means and capabilities to grant blessings to us. So therefore, if our purpose of engaging in Buddhist practices is for liberation then we need to put effort in actualizing perfect Guru devotion practice, Guru yoga practice.

Inspiring stories about realized Masters who actualized realizations because of their devotion

There so many many stories, factual stories just practicing on the practice of Guru yoga actualize realizations within short period of time much easier. But there's one great master of course, Sakya Pandita, so he served his Guru, Venerable Drakpa Gyaltsen when Venerable Drakpa Gyaltsen was ill. By serving perfectly, by serving whole-heartedly, just that alone he saw in Guru Drakpa Gyaltsen the absolute Manjushri, he had a direct vision of Manjushri. Then all the knowledge of the five signs naturally actualized. Then there's one great Tibetan Master, when his tutor was ill then he became like the nurse taking care of the ill Guru, then without any hardships, he actualized direct realizations on emptiness.

So, then like Geshe Dromtönpa, the great Kadampa master, whose main Guru was Lama Atisha. So, when Lama Atisha in his old age he was sick and Geshe Dromtönpa the way he served like nurses, of course some nurses they really show unbelievable compassion in the way how they serve, but then some nurse as if even as a job the way they serve is unbelievable when someone is sick like that. So when Lama Atisha was so sick, so his feces, without control everywhere then Geshe Dromtönpa used his own bare hand to clean, even the gesture is like collecting relics and the way how he put the feces outside which is so much gesture of respect because seeing the qualities of the Buddha. Then the skillful means, the respect from body, speech and mind in the service. Then not only that throughout all the time when Geshe Dromtönpa was Lama Atisha.

Lama Atisha had so many great students, some are great scholars, great meditators...In fact Geshe Dromtönpa had no time to study, no time to meditate, he has to full time to take care of Atisha. Then also he needs to find all the resources to feed Atisha. So, he has to it's a very nomadic kind of life, so he has cows, he has to take care of cows, how to make clothes, etc... Then at same time, the rest of the chores that you need to do. So, there's one great meditator one of the Atisha's students, so he thought that among three of them, three kind of main disciples he could be in the state of highest realizations because he gets chance to meditate, the other one says, a meditator yes, he does meditation, but he didn't get chance to study much, I'm a scholar, so maybe my realization would be higher. So, Geshe Dromtönpa just didn't even think about realizations, he just did his job, just serving the Guru, so later Atisha through his clairvoyance realized such a mysterious thing is going on, so he called all these three disciples and Atisha said I need to mark your status or stages of your realizations so then Atisha said Geshe Dromtönpa was the number one, highest realizations on the path, then the second one is the scholar, and the third one is the meditator.

So, Geshe Dromtönpa achieved such a high level of realizations mainly because he gets opportunity to serve the Guru. He gets opportunity to serve both in thoughts and actions. That's his main sadhana, his main focus, because of that and the main reason is that there are so many purifications practices out there, such as Vajrasattva practices, 35 Buddhas of Confession practice, etc... But there are no greater purification practices than serving Guru that would purify our karma. So, Geshe Dromtönpa

because of serving the Guru purified the karma and that's how he actualized realizations and there are so many objects where you can accumulate merits such as Refuge fields, Lama Chöpa merits field...

All the Buddhas are the objects of merits fields. But then when you actualize your Guru as the central object of your merits field, then you accumulate merits, such as practices of seven limbs practices, etc... So, there's no greater object than the Guru where you can accumulate extensive merits, because of that that's how Geshe Dromtönpa achieved such a high level of realizations. Then there are so many other stories like how Naropa relates to his Guru, how Milarepa related to his Lama Marpa.

Whatever action in relation to the Guru creates auspiciousness or inauspiciousness.

Then even whatever action you relate to the Guru creates inauspicious or auspiciousness. If you relate to Guru in verbal, physical, thoughts, gestures with auspiciousness, then that creates so much more auspiciousness in your spiritual development. An example, when Milarepa offered Marpa empty copper basin because of offering empty create inauspiciousness, it creates inauspiciousness but then because of the offering made accumulated extensive merits, but then on top of that because the basin is so big, then Marpa banged the basin and make loud sound and create auspiciousness of that Milarepa is going to be extremely famous in his spiritual journey, and that will reach the fame with the blessings to numberless sentient beings. So, it's so true, in Tibet one of the greatest saying is like Milarepa how much he's reached out of his blessings through his inspiration.

So therefore, when we relate to the Guru, once you establish Guru-disciple relationship and that person naturally or automatically becomes so powerful to you, in relation to accumulating merits in relation to accumulating auspiciousness, so as a disciple we need to create that auspiciousness in relation to the Guru. So even in the visualizations when you do Guru yoga practice, when you do mandala offering practices, supplications you should as advanced as possible, as extensive as possible.

The text of the Nine attitudes...is itself a meditational guide for our Guru yoga practice.

So here, the advice to correctly follow the Virtuous friend with the thoughts and actions, the nine attitude of Guru devotion. So, in this text there's a refuge practice, so it is very much the text you can use for your meditational guide to first you train in your thoughts, then try to apply this practice into actions. So when you take this text as a form of guide to meditation then you start with the Refuge:

I request my kind perfect root Guru who is more extraordinary than all the Buddhas, please bless me to be able to follow you the qualified perfect Guru with great respect in all my lives. Realizing that correctly following you the kind perfect Guru, the foundation of all good qualities is the root of happiness and goodness I will follow you with great respect not forsaking you even at the cost of my life.

The correctly following in thoughts and actions to the Guru it serves as the root causes of the foundation to all the qualities all the way up to enlightenment and correctly relating to the Guru also serves as a root to all the happiness in one's life happiness and goodness in one's life.

Happiness comes from results of merits; suffering comes from negativities.

So, when you relate to Guru, your negativities start to purify that's how you begin to end the suffering. By relating to the Guru, you accumulate merits. That's how you create abundance of causes for your happiness. So, with the understanding of that then

I will follow with great respect not forsaking you even at the cost of my life.

So, you will never degenerate the pure relation, your relation to the Guru even at the cost of your life. So, the nine attitude, the first one:

Thinking of the importance of the qualified Guru, I will allow myself to enter under your control, may I be like an obedient son, acting exactly in accordance with the Guru's.

So here, as I mentioned at the beginning this practice has to be established on the basis of the preliminary practices such as actualizing your basic qualities, actualizing basic qualities of the Guru. So, this practice has to be practiced by qualified students to the qualified Guru. The practice is in relation to the qualified Guru to the qualified Guru. Then literally you can practice like this, then that's the greatest practice that you can claim, most powerful practice you can claim. So "after relying on the qualified Guru, I will allow myself to enter under your control". So that qualified disciple completely surrender yourself under the control of your Guru.

So now you see even this just word: "I will allow myself to enter under your control", it's a big word, it's not an easy practice to allow yourself under the control of someone. It's not an easy decision, isn't it? But you can make that decision if you carry these basic three qualifications as a student who found Guru who at least carries basic three qualifications, if possible, the ten, if not at least someone who is knowledgeable, someone who is ethical and someone who is compassionate, like what.

Maitreya emphasized in his Sutra that someone who is pacified, who carry the practice, someone who lives in the practice of three higher trainings: higher training in moral ethics, higher training in concentration, higher training in wisdom. So, if the Guru lives in the practice of moral ethics, then even if you completely submit yourself under his or her control you will never get harmed, you will get disappointed.

On top of that, if it's someone who has a certain degree of training in concentration that even the Guru in actual fact happen to be ordinary person and arises delusion but then with the antidote tools of concentration, able to control their minds, control their emotions, even they arise attachment but then they control their mind from expressing it even they may arise anger, but the control by expressing it, even they may arise some negative thoughts towards the student but then through the training in concentration they're able to control their body, speech and mind, causing harm to the student because they have this control of their emotions then they shape their minds, they shape their body, speech and mind to make sure that they only deliver beneficial deeds to your student.

Then on top of that, someone who is living in the practice of selflessness, emptiness, best realized, if not at least whose main meditation is on selflessness, on emptiness, so that way , you will do all the benefit to the disciple without any self-interest, without any expectations from the student, solely offers benefit, selflessly, or someone who is so compassionate, when someone is compassionate, when the teacher main body practice is compassion then will never have even thoughts of causing

inconvenient to the disciple, causing harm to the disciple isn't? Only want to elevate from suffering, in relation to that the Guru will put effort to offer whatever knowledge they have to the disciple.

Once this qualified disciple put yourself under the full control of your Guru then you should behave like this: "may I be like an obedient son acting exactly in accordance with the Guru's advice. So here example of obedient son how they would behave in relation to their father's guidance isn't? Similar way here the spiritual son, you will behave exactly like that in relation to your Guru, without any questioning, without any doubt, you follow exactly like the obedient son, you know how an obedient son would follow their father. So, in fact the intensity of the relation between spiritual son and spiritual father is numberless time greater than in comparison to even those who is most beloved child to the most beloved parent or most obedient son in relation to the kindest father, the strength of the spiritual father-son is beyond our imagination in our worldly example. Here when the student carries this basic qualification, the student understands the value of the teacher. This son's understanding of the value of the father is very much within this lifetime spread, but then spiritual son's understanding the value of the spiritual father is beyond this lifetime, it benefits all the way up to the benefit of enlightenment.

So therefore when you get into a very deep practice in this, when you really understand the Guru yoga practice, then whenever you think about your Guru, it's the most heart touching, even the tears will fall, and you know the goosebumps will stand up and it will never degenerate that affection, that kind of devotion, that trust, that kind of faith, that kind of conviction to your spiritual father. You will come into a time in life in your spiritual journey the closest relation among all the humans that come in your life will be your spiritual Guru. And we have to develop up to that stage.

And that is very much based on knowing the value of your spiritual teacher. Even the father, mother are unbelievably precious, but their benefit to us is very much within this very lifetime concern. But as far as it is concerned with the spiritual relation to your spiritual father is ever lifetime being your guide, ever lifetime being your parent, producing all the spiritual benefit all the way up to enlightenment.

Then when you're in difficult time, when the obstacles come in your way or in your path, along the journey, the first person that comes in your heart is your Guru, when you are happy the first person that comes into your heart it will be your Guru. And when you are sad the first person that comes to comfort you is your Guru and you will think of your Guru. So, that's so intense that now every moment, even when we are losing all our consciousness, losing our sensual consciousness, even when we go to the most difficult time in the death process, one thing that is so vividly present is memory of your Guru, thinking of your Guru and just because of that Guru protects us from all the harms by hallucinational disturbances throughout the death process.

Not only that during the clear light you see your Guru, but the absolute Guru also which is the Dharmakaya. You see you've been throughout the life that until that you see the absolute Guru by relying on the conventional Guru, now you're able to, the moment you see the clear light you see your absolute Guru which is the Dharmakaya. Then there because of the seeing Guru in Dharmakaya there when the clear-light arises that causes you to actualize your resultant Guru which is your yourself being in the state of Guru Buddha, you're self-actualizing the state of the Buddha, yourself becoming the Buddha and who causes that, your Guru is causing that so, in lifetime we have to develop so intense the connection until that you really achieve the Guru yoga, the definite Guru yoga even now, which is meaning that you absolutely see you are inseparable from your Guru.

You and Guru are just oneness. There's no element that you can separate. Your being your absolute heart, your Buddha nature which you carry is absolute Buddha, absolute Guru, that's your Guru. So, as I mentioned before, in every experience your Guru is the first person to come in to celebrate with you, come to rescue you when trouble comes. So, it will become like that after you really understand the full benefit, the full meaning of the Guru yoga practice, then eventually you become like that. It becomes natural to you like that and so beneficial that you will even bring the possibility of just that alone practice causing one lifetime enlightenment, and this is exactly what Milarepa have achieved, this is exactly what Lama Tsongkhapa have achieved, all the Kadampa Masters have achieved in one lifetime, have achieved enlightenment because of that.

"So, I may be like the obedient son acting exactly in accordance with the Guru's advice". So, what is the Guru's advice is to know your mind, Guru's advice is to know the real of yourself, know the real nature of your mind. The Guru's advice is to actualize the absolute, the most beneficial attitude and most beneficial wisdom, the attitude of altruism, the wisdom of emptiness and liberate yourself from all the flaws, that's Guru's advice, so in other words, Guru's advice is learn the Dharma, contemplate in Dharma, meditate on Dharma, and actualize the path, and actualize all the realizations on the stages of the path, are Guru's advice. So, Guru's advice is never to indulge in worldly concerns and always stay inseparable from developing yourself in practice of Dharma, that's Guru's advice. Guru's advice is always taking good care of yourself meaning Guru's advice is never to surrender yourself under the control of negative emotions, negativities. Guru's advice is always filling your heart with the virtue or the Dharma attitude and wisdom. Guru's advice is to be in the service of preservation of Dharma meaning actualizing realization in the path, be in the service of sentient beings, it means accumulate merits by being in the service of sentient beings. So correctly following that is like "being an obedient son".

Then second one is:

Even when Maras, evil friends and the like tried to split me from the Guru, may I be like a vajra inseparable forever.

So, Vajra is an example of indestructible, immovable, the hardest phenomena. So in the journey of our spiritual practice in particular in relation to the Guru, you know Guru yoga practice, the Guru disciple relationship can face so many obstacles on the way because the practice is so precious, being so precious, the Maras also will overlap, obstacles too will overlap, so obstacles like Maras, Maras here is very much talking about the negative emotions, the negative karmic influences like such that which manifests into spirits, spirit harms.

So, ego can be one of the worse Mara that may come in your way: like "how can I completely submit myself under the control of Guru" you know, so that's ego and that's ignorant and that's the Mara. Then when your emotional objective in relation to the Guru is not fulfilled you get upset, and that is the Mara, or you misunderstood the relationship with your Guru, you develop attachment, instead of inspiration, the spiritual devotion, but then you express the ordinary desirous attachment to the Guru, emotional attachment to the Guru, that's Mara, then jealousy that's Mara, when the Guru shows the manifestation of being more close giving more time to other disciples or showing some sense of ignoring you then more caring to other disciples you get jealousy, you get uneasy, that's the Mara. That will cause you to split from your Guru, that will cause you to break the Guru yoga Samaya, Guru devotion practice.

Evil friends, you never know who that may be, it could be your business partner, you know when you devote yourself to the Guru, you may say what can be more important than the money, why do you waste so much time with this funny people, a so-called Guru, they're wasting your time, rather you should focus on your business. That is possible, could be your partner, I saw even some circle of friends that after they met their partner, their Guru yoga practice degenerates terribly, and the partner obstructs being in the service of the Guru.

I remember there's one very wealthy practitioner, he has more than enough for himself, his wife and children, and the wealth it seems that you can enjoy a few lifetimes, even he doesn't work, so he was being very very generous, serving even materially to the Guru and he spent so much time in retreats and practices and he met a partner, initially sounds like also a very very good practitioner, but then the partner obstructs: "how can you offer all this money you know when then we may not have food to eat", can you imagine you know?

But the guy has enough wealth that can last enough for three lifetimes, maybe four lifetimes. But then now here the pressure is like if you'll be so generous like that, if you don't work hard, if you spend so much time doing retreat spending time with your Guru, then "I may not have enough food to eat". Then the partner was really getting into trouble, and you have to limit everything and just to please the partner, he has to limit everything.

Yes, you have to be balanced, it is understandable, but then this can be his obstacle in this very end and how long you're going to live, you know? how much time that you have? Time with such a precious Guru in your life? But then during this favorable time, your time is completely occupied with deep diving into more worldly way, so it's very hard, it also happens like that.

Then it may come in the form of even a spiritual friend, someone maybe they just talk about their Guru, and they don't talk about your Guru, maybe your Guru doesn't have any fame you know and don't have anything, even though he or she is your Buddha, but in the outside world he's nobody, but then someone is very glorified or even for the other person he or her Guru may be unbelievable, then you kind of shift your focus from your existent Guru to the new Guru, it also happens. Then worse than that people project flaws in your Guru and then when you hear and you get disturbed, your devotion degenerates, etc... All these are obstacles.

Then spirit. The spirit can come in a human form: they are human but then they have this negative spirit, negative mind, that tried to split you from your Guru. It also happens. Then some formless spirits when they see your path is developing, then they obstacle like meeting the Guru, having time with the Guru, receiving teachings from the Guru, etc... Then your ordinary mind starts to hijack your Guru yoga practice by thinking ok there's no purpose for me to relate from this person because this person I don't receive any teachings, I don't get chance to see him or her so I should give up rather than move on with a new Guru who can always be with me etc...

So, all these can be obstacles, try to split you from your Guru to whom you have already established Guru disciple relationship. In that kind of situation, these are just a few examples:

May I be like a Vajra inseparable forever.

Whatever kind of obstacles come in your way, for you, your Guru is your Buddha or your protector, your deity, meditational deity, your refuge. That relationship, no one can obstruct you. So, you carry that immune of vajra mind, indestructible vajra conviction and faith in relation to your Guru.

When the Guru gives me work, whatever the burden may I be like Earth, carrying it all.

So, even how hard it is, be like the Earth carrying it all, in the burden, the job, the commitment that may come on you from the Guru could be nasty one, conventionally looks like nasty, is unreasonable kind, or unimaginable in your capabilities, that may come in the practice as a homework by commitments, but that may come in some kind of assigning some kind of responsibilities, when you look at through your ordinary mind, it's like impossible that you have capability to achieve those paths, but as a ripened disciple when you receive such kind of instructions you just say yes and you do everything in your very best, without any sense of you are burdened, without any sense of you are pressured, without any sense of Guru is being inconsiderate, without any sense of thinking that "Guru didn't understand me. And Guru gave me such a task beyond my capability", not like that.

Whatever task was given to you, you just do it, and you just do in your very best and that's the best. So that kind of courageous heart that we need to develop, because whatever your homework or the duty that Guru gives to us is all our tools for us to purify our karma, accumulate merits, then there are many things the Guru can see, the capability in us that our ordinary mind whatever you know wouldn't be able to see them.

So, therefore, that kind of situation if you don't have a basic qualification then how you're going to handle it. It's not easy you know. So, these are very profound practice for beginner, you know, like me, no way, even in the thoughts, just to imagine practicing is so hard in actual action, not easy. So then one thing if we rely on a qualified Guru, and answer yourself as a ripened disciple, whatever work, whatever responsibility given to us all will be in fact if you examine logically, examine with a clear mind, for long-term benefit, you look at the task from bigger picture you will realize that it's all are the tools for your benefit, to purify accumulate merits, solely for the benefit of you alone and will never give you a task that something is non-virtuous, would never give a task that is for something not virtuous.

Because Guru are the highest in the skills and one of the basic qualifications of the Guru is compassion, so will never burden us with negative tasks, But if in case, maybe in case that you happen to rely on a Guru who is actually an ordinary being and then if there's any negative task that put onto you, even you know by examining logically or from the bigger picture and seeing there's a false then even in the Lam-Rim emphasizes that you can respectfully clarify it with your Guru. So, this is also very important. Guru will never burden us, or Guru will never give us a task which by nature is negative or by its circumstances is negative or by its circumstances bring negative results.

So without making a judgment, emotional judgment but deep thinking, logical thinking, that if you see any by nature is negative or by circumstances is negative, or by its cultivation it will bring negative results, then you can explain to the Guru, but with much respect, much respectful way, the words you use, the gesture you approach should be so respectful and not like some sense of against the Guru, you know fighting with the Guru. It's just simply, in the sense of due to limitations of my own mind due to ignorance I may didn't get the full picture, so just for the clarification then you consult the Guru.

You can do like that but as far as a qualified Guru will never give you any task which is by nature negative or by circumstances is negative.

Then the fourth one is:

When I follow the Guru, whatever suffering occurs, may I be like a mountain immovable.

When I follow the Guru then the job is to practice on the path and practicing on the path is not a pleasant one, practicing on the path can be quite harsh. Practicing the Dharma, you cannot expect to be so joyful, so happy, so pleasant, practicing Dharma can be sometimes harsher than those harsh experiences that we go through in Samsara, samsaric experiences, because of the purification is taking place. You know when we practice Dharma, and when the purification happens, when the heavy negative karma is purified, the processes can be very harsh, process can be very harsh.

So, there are some cases that by intense practice you may lose everything, you may lose all your wealth, you may lose all your family, all family will give up on you. So, you just want to do retreats, it's a "get out of my house", that may be also possible. There's even a danger of the health degenerations, because of intense practices, such kind of things also possible to occur well and many do occur like that.

But if this occurs when you are in the stage of matured practitioner, in a sustainable Guru yoga practice, then you will achieve benefit after benefit, from out of these experiences. But if you are not matured yet, then you may give up, and when you give up, because of not fully matured, as a student and not fully rely on a qualified teacher, then that is a real disaster, you really become a poor person, poor in worldly life and poor in practice, you have no cave to go, and you have no home to go.

If you may become like that, you haven't achieved illusory body, but you also don't have this proper human structured body, you see. Your heart will be totally empty, but then not emptiness. Your heart is like totally sink into complete lost but not in the wisdom of emptiness awaken. So therefore, you have to be extremely careful, so therefore at the beginning, as a beginner practitioner, you have to take very steady development in our spiritual practice and starting from this Guru devotion practice, you have to be very very steady.

Once you really engage into it, then you need to you really need to become like a vajra immovable, you really need to, even whatever suffering that comes in your way, really be like a mountain immovable. So, then there the most intensifying the suffering comes in your way and the more the intensify your practice the more the suffering comes in your way, you rejoice, you feel blissed, because you see the purification is so powerful, a powerful purification is taking place, it's not like imagining, is really purifying, you are really purifying.

When my late master, in the last stage of his life, was going through this complete desorption of his physical body, conventionally from our look it looks so painful and not only that throughout one whole year he went through this dying process, and every single day when the physical became more and more sick he became more and more joyful and he's singing song. Your whole life praying, aspiring may all sentient beings 'suffering ripen up on me, may all my happiness ripen on now. Now it is really happening, and this is truly Guru's blessings, you see, wow, you start to sing song you know those spiritual songs, you know, rejoicing songs, and you can see the glow in the face you can see the glow

around the Master you know, you see from your own eye, but physically is sick, getting more and more sick every single day, until the death, he died. It happened. So, this is what it means you know.

Otherwise, if we are not matured, then we say "I've been practicing whole life Dharma and say Dharma didn't, is not helping me. I thought Dharma will help me first of all not to die but I'm dying you know and secondly, I've been practicing Medicine Buddha whole life but then now I get sick, Medicine Buddha it seems like false", and immature practitioners do say like that. There are many Buddhist practitioners when they are in trouble, they give up Dharma, they give up Refuge, they give up Guru. Many.

This short period of my journey around the world interacting with so many spiritual practitioners and some are much more senior practitioners than me, in Westerner community, in Chinese community, in Tibetan community. The moment obstacles come struck in them, they give up Dharma, they give up Guru, they give up everything. There's one student who met the Gurus even before I was born but didn't carry these three student's qualifications: non-partisan remember? Remember the meaning of non-partisan means your very clear objective of your spirituality whether to do with Guru devotion or renunciation or Bodhicitta, emptiness, Sutra, Tantra, is absolutely only for liberation for the future lifetime benefit, nothing to do with worldly concern. Nothing to do with worldly concern. That's called non-partisan attitude. With that qualification you relate to the Guru, the Dharma, then when your business collapses you won't give up the Dharma, when you face a crisis, you won't give up the Dharma, otherwise you will give up.

Then when that person's business collapses, give up the Guru right there, or give up the Refuge, and has so many holy objects, all the holy objects discarded from the altar, you see, and has connection with so unbelievable living Gurus and close connection, close in the sense that a lot of interactions, more than many other students, and they also have been benefactors because of that also there are a lot of interactions with the Guru, even in the Dharma circle. Then they have so many initiations, but then when the business collapses right there, so Dharma doesn't work, Guru didn't work, all the holy objects did not work and literally everything given up, everything given up you know. I saw that.

And there are practitioners that they are, just recently I saw one woman who is very elderly age, whole life devoted Buddhist practitioner, very devoted, she has connection with Chinese Buddhists, Tibetan Buddhists even Theravada Buddhists, but suddenly got cancer, she said "Dharma doesn't make any sense so now I don't practice", saying "I don't believe in all this", it didn't help me. So scary isn't it, whole life, he's elderly age, all because of sickness, you know like that, and many had given up because of business collapses.

Even among my own students within this short period of lifetime, initially I can see when the business goes up their dedication goes up, when business goes a little bit obstacles comes the dedication goes down like that, like stock market, it is a very fast fluctuating, and very superstitious practice, the faith is very superstitious, the devotion is very superstitious, the conviction in the practice also very superstitious, and the superstitious is also very much worldly concerned, any spiritual practice that has the superstitious subject, the mind that which apprehending the Dharma is a superstitious mind, then everything is worldly.

So therefore, we really really need to come to a point that when the tragedy happens, the Guru, the Dharma, your practice highlights to you. When the glorious things happen to you, Guru, Dharma, all these things highlight to you. You need to be like that, when problem come in your way, then you start to look for some better solution other than a Guru, other than the Dharma, other than your practice, then already you see the limitations in your practice. But whenever good thing happens to you, you

start to celebrate out of Guru keeping in your heart, Dharma giving in the heart, so that meaning there's another dependence, the main dependence is other than your Guru, other than your spiritual practice.

So, on the journey you cannot expect everything will be pleasant, on our spiritual journey you cannot expect everything is pleasant and the relation to the Guru also cannot expect everything's planned you know. But if you relate to the Guru, with the ripened disciples' qualities, then yes everything is pleasant. Everything you see is beneficial, but then you relate emotionally then incorrectly, then relating to the Guru can be quite a suffering, especially if you develop attachment to your Guru, it can be the cause of unbelievable suffering, then especially emotional attachment to the Guru, that can be very very dangerous. Then in the lifetime if the Guru doesn't please your attachment, then you always get upset, intense upset, then if Guru also departs from you know physical existence, you really can torture yourself.

So, we have to relate to a Guru by seeing Guru in Dharmakaya, then that really establishes inseparable matured Guru yoga practice in us that which never separated. Guru's absence you need to interpret as a teaching to you, Guru's care you need to interpret it as Guru's teaching. Whatever action relates to you, whatever behavior the Guru relates to you, we need to interpret as a teaching. So, your purpose of relating to the Guru is to receive teachings only, you relate to the Guru is to receive teachings, receive Dharma, nothing more than that. Receive Dharma you know.

Buddha's purpose, purpose of Buddha came into existence to reveal the Dharma only, nothing more than that, reveal the Dharma and stay as your inspiration. Buddha's physical presence, as long as his Dharma teaching is available, whether his physical existence is present or not it doesn't matter. As long as we cultivate the Buddha's teaching then the purpose of Buddha's descending into this world is fulfilled.

Similar like that, Guru's purpose is to reveal the Dharma. As long as the Dharma is available to you, again the availability of the Dharma doesn't mean only talking, only reading texts, commentary, or initiation, your interpretation of the Dharma knowledge is in all actions of the Guru and that is the Dharma. So, until the Guru scolds you, instead of giving a Dharma teaching emptiness, Guru rather kind of like scolds you a bit harsh in his words you understand as a powerful mantra is recited to you to dispel your inner, outer, secret obstacles and actualize the wisdoms and merits.

An example, instead of Guru expressing so much care he slap you, you are able to have the interpretation that you have got the most powerful initiation, the Buddha is placed under my head, usually during initiation the vase is placed on our head, vajra is placed on our head, bell is placed on our head you know, but here the actual whole Buddha relics is placed on your heart or cheek, slap. Even that you interpret as initiation. These are a few examples are what it means to receive teaching all the time, so you interpret everything.

As far as it is concerned with learning Dharma wisdom, as long as you get a valid book you can read there then you can learn from qualified teachers, but the blessing, the channeling of the blessing of the Dharma is by you keeping intact the relation between you and Guru. So you cultivate the guru yoga practice with your Guru, then as far as concerned with the knowledge you know if you get the opportunity to learn from the Guru him or herself you learn it, if not you can learn from others, like Shakyamuni Buddha's teachings you learn from so many other teachers, so many books, but our Guru yoga practice with Shakyamuni Buddha is intact. So as long as the Refuge is intact with Shakyamuni Buddha overflowing of the nectar of blessings is always there, but we lose that but then we keep extracting knowledge from everywhere that won't be helpful.

Even if I have to perform very unpleasant task may I be like the servant of the king with the mind undisturbed.

So, we have to practice until like that you know, even if in case we need to perform unpleasant tasks like Geshe Dromtönpa when he took care of his sick Master, he even needed to clear feces with the hand, that's quite unpleasant isn't it? But because of his true practice you know it is privilege for him like that. So even in our lifetime if there's any unpleasant tasks that falls unto us through Guru, we should feel privileged as part of purification because of accumulation of merits, so don't get disturbed by our mind especially if you already established Guru-disciple relationship with someone.

Then if that Guru is someone who is actually not qualified, but you already established the practice, and for your own benefit of spiritual development from your side you'll never degenerate your faith, but then physically you distant from that person, because there's some harmfulness occurs but from your heart you still cannot make a negative judgment not to lose your faith and whatever those negative experiences that can come through, you know, you just regard as this is a purification practice. But in such a situation, physically, verbally communication you stay distant, but your devotion still stays intact and never to disturb your heart, or you know "unfortunately now I saw false in my Guru, so sad", not like that. You still try to train your heart to see that person as a Buddha to protect yourself from the negative impact, then physically and verbally you can distant. So, there's such an advice there.

Then having abandoned pride, holding myself lower than the Guru, may I be like a sweeper.

So, seeing yourself as a trainee as a samsaric being and having full conviction that the Guru is enlightened Buddha, then guiding you to liberate these oceans of samsaric existence, so in understanding of that, then you really regard as supreme and offer veneration through your body, speech and mind. So, when you see someone as a Buddha, you will never think "I'm smarter than anybody, I'm greater than you", than that person isn't it? So, there's a benefit of practicing like that, that helps to keep ourselves in humility. Because our ego may see limitation in the Guru, so in order not to happen that then just always regard yourself as lower as the Guru.

May I be like a rope, joyfully holding the Guru's work no matter how difficult or heavy a burden.

You know Guru's work will be always, fulfill all the Guru's activities to the benefit of sentient beings, in relation to the benefit of sentient beings, in relation to the preservation of the Dharma, in your very best and one of the best way to do that, is living yourself in the practice and if you have resources, if you're good in speaking, then use your talent to fulfill Guru's tasks. If you are in a physical skills [...pb with sound], energy, economically, whatever resources that you may have that can able to fulfill Guru's preservation of the Dharma and benefit of sentient beings, so this is what it means.

"No matter how difficult or heavy a burden". Like us here everyone, every each and every one of us, has our own different talent, like this very now we are serving our root Guru Shakyamuni Buddha. Like

myself my talent is I enjoy living in the vows, individual liberation vows, and learning Dharma and I studied to share the Dharma and now I enjoy sharing the Dharma and I should enjoy sharing the Dharma and I should rejoice to be able to share the Dharma and I should never retire, never give up, as long as I am able to you do it. And this is because I have no other capabilities no other resources that I can “be like a rope holding the Guru’s work”, I have no other capabilities and this little thing that I am capable I dedicate to entire rest of my life including keeping the vows purely, even that you use that, and practicing yourself.

So, each and every one of you has its own capabilities in many different ways then individually you have your own individual spiritual Gurus to whom you have established Guru-disciple relationship, where the Guru is really exists as object of your accumulation of merits, purification of karma, true liberator. Then whatever capability you have, you use them and that’s the greatest practice, that’s the best practice for accumulation of merits, purification of karma, and that’s the way how Guru liberates us out of this ocean of samsara, including enlightenment thesis the way like that...

And all the past disciples in relation with their Gurus have practiced like that, even in our time, our immediate Gurus, they practice like that in relation to their Gurus, such as my late Master, his Guru said you just go into the cave and meditate, you need to do that the rest of his life without even one moment of doubt, without concern of anything he just dedicated the rest of this life like that.

Even when the Guru criticizes, provokes or ignores me may I be like a dog never responding with anger.

If the Guru is really a qualified Guru, he will never do that, will never provoke or ignore, he will never do that, never, criticize you, never. If you see that, a Guru is behaving like that is your projection. You are relating through your ordinary mind. And sometimes in the world, in today’s modern Gurus, there are so many self-proclaimed Gurus, self-proclaimed realized emptiness practitioners, self-proclaimed Holinesses, self-proclaimed Lamas or Gurus, there are many of them out there in those degenerated times, then they see these teachings they didn’t go into deep meaning, they saw like that “oh in Tibet or in India, the Great Mahasidhas behave like that”, so that modern Guru also tries to behave like that with their disciples you know, they try to be like a wrestler, they want to do boxing with their disciple like that also happens.

And that’s not right because Guru is the inspirational spiritual example, figure of your spiritual path, the Buddhist path, Buddha Dharma, every Buddha Dharma teaching has to be infused with the element of compassion, peace and selfless, peace and selfless: right view and right attitude. If that element is not there it hasn’t qualified anything to do with Buddhist. If there is no element of peace, gentleness, kindness, compassion, in one word is peace and selfless. Attitude of peace, view of selfless is not there then it doesn’t qualify to be anything to do with Buddhist’s practice.

So, Guru is ultimate Dharmakaya, Guru is Buddha, Guru is the Dharma, Guru is the Sangha and Guru behaves violently, Guru behaves negatively, then that’s against the basic Buddhist’s principle. Because it’s one of the main qualities of the Guru is compassion, that’s minimum needed, so if you have compassion to your disciple how can you hurt your disciples, how can you be violent to your disciples, impossible, logically it doesn’t make sense isn’t it? No way you know. You have to illustrate the gentleness, the peacefulness, the compassionate. But if you don’t understand deep in the teachings.

Then in the past time some Gurus manifested like this and like that, that is to a very high level, the disciple is already like a Milarepa, and the Guru is like a Marpa, then there are certain unbelievable manifestations of roughness occurs. In today's time it's so difficult to get such a ripened disciple like Milarepa, if the disciple is too fragile and the Guru is not gentle, then how you are going to subdue the disciple, isn't it? Guru has to be gentle. Guru has to be so so so so so so gentle. So, this is my understanding with my thinking like that.

In today's time, Buddha's manifestations, Guru manifests into all sort of words in a worldly way, how possible to subdue disciples? How possible to benefit teaching? They say "oh in the past happen like that Mahasidhas have behaved like that, Marpa behaved like that, so also now behave like that". Things like that it doesn't work like that. If the Gurus cannot show the example of peace, compassion, selfless, then who is going to show? Oneself as a disciple desperate here (showing the heart) completely enveloped with a thick ignorance and delusions and karma, you need a light of inspiration who shows the antidote, but the antidote also is worse than your behavior and how disciple is going to be liberated isn't it?

So sometimes it's immature, they didn't really study the Dharma in depth, just saw the surface, heard some stories. Then you claim as your Guru, you claim as a spiritual practitioner then you just behave whatever you like, somehow you behave worse than the very rebellious worldly people. So that's totally contradictory to the Dharma. So, it is not Gurus or the practitioners to behave negatively, it is disciple's job to train our mind if in case of such improper misbehaviors, then it is our benefit, our students' job to train ourselves not to negatively interpret it.

You see from our side any negativity we see we take the responsibility, saying it is fault of my false view. If I see any negativities in the Guru, if I see any negativities in any good practitioner then you regard for your own benefit, for your own practice, you say "this is my own hallucination, this is my own delusion I project that" but that doesn't mean the practitioner or the Guru purposely should misbehave into the disciple so that the disciple can practice pure view, it is not like that but the people do misinterpret like that, so that's why this is also is important.

So this is the era sometimes this disqualified Guru, this self-proclaimed Guru may take advantage, "I should behave whatever I like, this is your job to have pure view, to see me as a Buddha", they may do like that, make a big mistake. So, this is not a teaching to the disciples, it's more a teaching to the Gurus, self-proclaimed Gurus. Self-proclaimed Gurus have to be careful especially in degenerated time. Even how hard it is you have to behave as subdued as possible, as kind as possible, as pure as possible. Even though Guru, in your room you're wild, but when you relate to the disciple you really have to be very subdued, you really have to pretend to be like Buddha, also you have to pretend, even if it's pretending, also you have to pretend, you cannot behave negatively in relation to the disciple. But then of course if it's a really like a disciple like Milarepa and Guru like Marpa meet, then even in today's time go ahead in, then it's ok, but for ordinary being like us, it doesn't work that way.

May I be like a ferry boat never upset at any time to come and go for the Guru.

So, in other words, you always make available to follow Guru's instructions, then again of the most important thing is keeping your commitments like such as daily commitment purely in your practice. So, each time that you go back to your commitments it's like Guru calling you, so every time you go there you achieve, you're fulfilled. Then conventionally the Guru may give you certain tasks, the Guru

may call for certain responsibility, then you're ready ever all the time. In short, always readiness in the practice, timely whenever you need to do retreat to help yourself to improve, you should do retreat, it means like Guru called you to do the retreat for the progress on your path, like if you have taken high yoga tantric initiation, then you do six-session Guru yoga, it's like 6 times a day, 3 times a day, 3 times at night, it's like each time timely you do, it's like the Guru is calling and when you forget all those tasks, it's like as if you were going away in Guru's order.

But then when any negative emotion arises, Guru always advises "guard your three doors" but then when anger arises, you let the anger to do whatever anger likes, and then you didn't be present when the Guru called you, you can also understand like that. So timely guarding your three doors, then sustaining your Dharma practice.

So, these are being in the present timely whenever Guru calls. Whatever Guru may give you, say ok: suddenly one ripened disciple, ripened Guru calls up and says, ok you should go and do retreat, then without any second hesitation you should go and Guru says "oh I want you to be right here just doing this particular course or this particular activity", without any that you should regard as a first priority and commit to yourself that much kind of commitment that you should practice.

That's it that's the Nine attitudes briefly.

Glorious and precious Root Guru, please bless me to be able to practice in this way from now on and in all my future lives may I be able to devote myself to the virtuous friend in this way.

So, this is a supplication that you're always going to do.

So, here Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche says:

If you recite these words aloud and mentally reflect on their meaning you will have the good fortune to be able to devote yourself correctly to the virtuous friend in life after life". So, you know you can recite this. There's also a tune if you want to recite this in Tibetan (Geshela chants in Tibetan). So, you can recite like that and meditate. Thank you. So "if with these Nine attitudes you serve and respect the virtuous friend, even if you do not practice intentionally, you will naturally develop excellent qualities within your mind stream and complete the extensive merits of virtue, thereby, quickly becoming a perfect complete Buddha.

Thank you. Any question?

Question? So Geshela you mentioned not to relate the Guru with attachment, could you explain a little bit more about that please?

Geshela's answer: so, if anything in relation to Guru concern of this life is attachment. If any ways that you relate to the Guru in the concern of your future lifetime benefit of liberation and enlightenment is inspiration. So, I can differentiate like that. Thank you. Good night. Take care.

Dedications

May all beings everywhere,
Plagued by sufferings of body and mind,
Obtain an ocean of happiness and joy
By virtue of my merits.
May no living creature suffer,
Commit evil, or ever fall ill.
May no one be afraid or belittled,
With a mind weighed down by depression.
May the blind see forms
And the deaf hear sounds.
May those whose bodies are worn with toil
Be restored on finding repose.
May the naked find clothing,
The hungry find food;
May the thirsty find water
And delicious drinks.
May the poor find wealth,
Those weak with sorrow find joy;
May the forlorn find hope,
Constant happiness, and prosperity.
May there be timely rains
And bountiful harvests.
May all medicines be effective
And wholesome prayers bear fruit.
May all who are sick and ill
Quickly be freed from their ailments.
Whatever diseases there are in the world,
May they never occur again.
May the frightened cease to be afraid,
And those bound be freed.
May the powerless find power,
And may people think of benefiting each other.
As long as space remains,
As long as transmigratory beings remain,
Until then may I too remain To dispel the suffering of transmigratory beings

Shantideva

The foundation of all good qualities is the perfect, kind and pure Guru,
Correct devotion to him is the root of the path,
By clearly seeing this and applying great effort,
Please bless me to rely upon Him with great respect

Lama Tsongkhapa

So, for all these reasons and many more, may Geshe Tenzin Zopa always have good health, a very long life, postpone his Parinirvana to turn the wheel of Dharma again and again for the benefit of all of us...Thank you for everything Geshela.

Transcriber: Venerable Tenzin Kunzang, any mistakes, errors, omissions are mine alone...please refer to the video links.

Care of Dharma Materials

Dharma materials contain the teachings of the Buddha and thus protect against lower rebirth and reveal the path to enlightenment. Therefore, they should be treated with respect. Printed Dharma materials, as well as phones, tablets, laptops, and hard drives containing Dharma, should be kept off the floor, beds, chairs, meditation cushions, and all other places where people sit or walk. Dharma materials should not be stepped over or put in places where the feet or buttocks will point at them. They should be covered or protected for transporting and kept in a high, clean place separate from more mundane materials. Other objects, including statues, stupas, ritual implements, malas, reading glasses, and so forth, should not be placed on top of Dharma books and devices containing Dharma materials. Avoid licking the fingers to turn the pages of Dharma texts. If it is necessary to dispose of printed Dharma materials, they should be burned rather than thrown in the trash. When burning Dharma texts, visualize that the letters transform into an A (ॐ) and the A absorbs into your heart. Imagine burning blank paper. As the paper burns, recite OM ĀḤ HŪḤ or the Heart Sutra, while meditating on emptiness. Lama Zopa Rinpoche recommends that images of holy beings, deities, and holy objects not be burned. Ideally, if undamaged, they should be put in a stupa. Otherwise, put them high up in a tree inside a well-sealed structure, something like a bird house, so that the images are protected from the weather and do not end up on the ground.