

**Discovering the Relaxed Mind:
An Immersion in a Seven-Step Method for Deepening Meditation Practice
Taught by Dza Kilung Rinpoche**

Talk One: Basic Sitting Meditation

DZA KILUNG RINPOCHE: Good evening. Thank you, Shambhala Publications, for bringing us together here this weekend. Also, thanks to all of you for making time to come here to sit with us and sit with me.

I would like to give a little bit of the background of *The Relaxed Mind: A Seven-Step Method for Deepening Meditation Practice*, as it's called. I have been in the West, Europe, and different parts of the world in the last couple decades. Before that, I was in Tibet, India, and other Himalayan regions. Coming to the West was like coming to some other world. It's quite different for us Tibetans. I grew up in the mountains like a nomad—in the middle of nowhere, basically. I started to share my dharma and whatever else I felt would be useful to people.

When I came to the US and other parts of the modern world, there were so many people of all varieties—of different ages and different traditions—who showed strong interest in Buddhist meditation and practices. I was quite amazed. I wasn't expecting that Buddhism would be in so many different parts of the world. I know there are some historical places, like India and Burma and those parts.

Then I met so many meditators and practitioners who had received a great amount of teachings from such wonderful teachers—even teachers that many Tibetan people wish to receive teachings from, but they haven't got the chance or opportunity. But many Westerners got a chance to receive teachings and in such different ways.

So seeing and hearing all of this, I was amazed. It's kind of a dream, you know?

At some point, I actually wasn't sure what to teach. I thought, "Maybe people already get everything. Maybe they receive enough dharma and Buddhism." But over time, I got a little closer to people who had received teachings and practices from different traditions, perspectives, and teachers over the years. And I saw that there was still a struggle for some practitioners who didn't quite know how to put together the teachings and practices as a package, to make them doable and appealing in everyday life. So I got to thinking deeply about how I could facilitate my time to be helpful to these people. In a way, they had lots of teachings and didn't need any more. Maybe I could focus on supporting that, to bring a sense of refreshing or a sense of action.

So I've had a different focus since then. I had close groups of practitioners that I focused on helping their meditation and practice, and the *Relaxed Mind* book is actually based on these people. We

worked together closely for six or seven years, and I felt from experience what was working, what was not working, and what they could try. So I believe these seven meditations and this book will be useful in practice.

Shambhala Publications invited me here to go through these meditations one by one. We will explore and feel this together. This evening, we'll start with the first meditation. I'm sure people are familiar with the mindfulness tradition and meditation, such as the four applications of mindfulness: body, sensation, mind, and phenomena. Here I try to introduce it without going into too much detail or structure. I notice that Westerners are already very intellectual and very much like everything to be systematic, and I feel that people need a little break from that, to relax and say, "OK, there's no need for everything to be systematic or for everything to fit into a calendar. Some things we can do in a relaxed way, and it could still happen beautifully." So that is my idea.

Even with the tradition of *shamatha* and *vipashyana*—although there is a flavor of that meditation in here—I don't go into the traditional systematic approach. It's simplified: something that is doable, that we can work with without having to remember the figures or something like that. Maybe some of you will find this style quite boring and flat, but we'll see. [Laughter]

In the first meditation, we're laying the foundation and joining the mind and body. So we're basically working on body.

The second meditation is calm abiding, which people are familiar with—but as I said, I try to share a more relaxed way of focusing.

The third meditation is refined basic sitting meditation, as I call it. This is arriving at clarity, or just letting be.

And fourth is insight meditation, or *vipashyana*. But again, we'll try not to be lost with the formula, the form, or the structure. We'll try to experience the depth of one's experience level.

The fifth is called open heart-mind meditation. This is weaving the internal and external, the world and phenomena, more widely. There's a purpose for why we meditate. Meditation is a kind of taming our mind, in a way, but what are we taming our mind for, for what kind of focus? We tame it for peace, loving-kindness, and genuine humanity. We train our mind for something useful.

The sixth meditation is called pure mind meditation, where we experience our pure and enlightened nature as much as possible. In our samsaric world, every day, everywhere we go, our mind always sees problems, no matter what the situation is. Even if the situation is very good, there's still some kind of judgment or unhappiness. So this meditation is to really try to open our heart and mind, and to

feel the pure nature of our genuine humanity and the true nature of phenomena. It's really difficult to open to looking this way. It's not like it just happens if we say, "Oh, I wish."

The seventh and final meditation is nonconceptual meditation. Maybe this is something that sounds impossible: nonconcept. Our mind has such a strong tendency for different ideas and different thoughts that it carries out every minute, every second of our life. How can we change or be nonconceptualizing? But it is possible, when we are willing. Experiencing this nonconceptualizing meditation helps. We get more freedom. Mind is freer and less engaged in thoughts and fixation. Therefore, this final meditation is almost the resolution of the other six meditations. We're bringing them to this level; then they're more relaxed.

These meditations are also connected with the applications of mindfulness: body feelings et cetera—the ones I mentioned in the beginning. That's a more analytical approach.

To begin with, we have to have a cushion. How many of you have a cushion at home? It looks like many of you have a cushion at home, and some of you don't. I was making a half joke, but I'm also half serious. If we're interested in exploring meditation, I think it's a good idea to get a cushion at home. Put it somewhere—next to your bed or in a corner. It has a message. It has a dedicated purpose. You bought it for what? You bought it for sitting. *[Laughter]* You see it, even though sometimes you don't like to see it. That's OK. Other times it's appealing to see it. Buddhists have this philosophy of relative and absolute methods, different ways to begin and stay on the path. This is one of these relative ideas, in a way, but sometimes they are powerful.

Once you have a cushion, then you have to find out how to sit. There are many sitting positions taught in different meditation traditions. I have a few simple things I can demonstrate. Sometimes we have body habits that we've developed, like leaning a certain way. We might feel like that is the only way we can be comfortable. But we can try different ways of positioning the body. In basic meditation, we take what's called the seven-point posture of Vairochana. I know you grew up with chairs. In my childhood, we didn't have chairs. It makes a big difference; we had to bend our knees to sit, and you don't have to. Training can make a difference because your body can get used to different things. I think it helps to bring some flexibility to working with the physical body. You might think, "Oh, I'm past the point of body training." In that case, maybe you're right. But maybe you still try. Sometimes seniors have flexible bodies, and sometimes a teenager's body is not that flexible. You never really know. But if you have a body that allows you to try different sitting postures, I think it's a good idea.

One thing is the cross-legged position, which you see in *thangka* images, where the Buddha is in full lotus. Maybe it looks too rigid, or maybe it looks too pleasant. It depends on what angle you're

looking from, what experience you are looking through. But I'll try to sit like that so you can see—that may be helpful. If you want to try it, it's like this [*crosses legs in chair*]. This is basically crossed legs. If you can sit like this for even a few minutes, it helps to loosen your tendons. It's kind of a yoga exercise. If you want to stay like this for a long period, of course that's also fine—but sometimes it's more helpful to take turns with the left and then the right, and then to also sit another way. So you could try this as a yoga posture, as well as a meditation posture. In the seven-point posture of Buddha Vairochana, the spine is lined up straight, not leaning back or to the side. Then your arms are just natural, not too tight and not tensed. Maybe when you meditate, you think, "Oh, I really want to be like a Buddha," and you tense your energy and your tendons and everything. That's not going to bring any relaxation. [*Laughter*] You have to respect and relax your body.

Next, the two hands are put like this [*places hands together, palms up*]. It doesn't matter if the left or right one is on top. Just this will bring really amazing warm energy. If your body has been a little bit cold, or you feel like you need to warm up, just put your hands in this position to sit, and it starts to warm up your whole system.

Your neck can be bent forward a little bit. Traditionally, it is recommended that the eye gaze is a little bit downwards, maybe to the tip of the nose or something like that. The tongue is lightly tacked to the roof of mouth, and then the mouth is slightly open and breathable—not too big, not too tight—which helps to balance the air circulation so that your mouth isn't too dry and also not drooling.

I know sitting like this is not possible for many people on a physical level. There's also half lotus, which is what this is called [*demonstrates half lotus*]. This is very doable. Maybe you can do this.

Or another, very common way to sit is like this [*demonstrates a simple cross-legged position*]. This is also OK. This is quite easy.

When you do this, sometimes your leg or knees feel too heavy pressing down, so you could also use pillows or something to hold them up. Generally speaking, this is comfortable, but if the legs are pressing, we can raise them up a little. Because of that, there is a thing in the Tibetan tradition called a meditation belt. We have a picture in the book. You can use something like that to go all the way around your back, and then tie a knot—you can decide how tight—and this will actually hold your legs up instead of pillows. And not only that, your back can also lean over the belt for support. There are several more, but I think it's not necessary that we go over all of them.

Generally, in terms of the body, this meditation posture really could help. It could help strengthen the mind and strengthen the energy in the body. When we sit very well, we sit comfortably. Many of you may only be comfortable in a chair. If that's the case, you can just take a chair. But then

maybe in the chair, you find that your body can still be straight up and comfortable. You can sit like that. It's also OK.

We may think, "Well, maybe working with the body and how to sit is not as real as meditation." But it is. I feel it's so important. This is fundamental. So important. It's almost like you are studying music, how to hold the instrument in the right way. In the very beginning we struggle with how to hold it perfectly, and it takes some time and practice to get used to it. Then, once we've passed the stressful, difficult part, it becomes very natural and normal for us to train. This is similar, and we can try to be skillful about our sitting position, whichever we choose.

You may try different sitting positions at different times. Which one is really comfortable? Which one makes you feel physically comfortable? Also, you need to think about which one supports your meditation energetically. Think about it a little, and try different approaches. If your body is flexible, and you can sit on either a chair or a cushion, you may try both to see what is more beneficial for achieving this relaxation and energy. So now we've discussed our outer preparations, and maybe that's enough—there's so many different ways you can sit. People sometimes kneel with a short little bench below the thighs. The body is lifted up by the bench and not put on the heels, so the feet are not pressed. That is another way.

In this modern world, you have so many choices—sometimes too many, and you cannot decide. They all look good; they all look kind of fun. But you have to choose one or a couple, whatever works for you. When we go back to the ancient world, to the time of Buddha or even just a century ago, you can imagine that they didn't have all of these fancy *zabuton* cushions shaped like moons and all this. [Laughter] I think it's the modern practitioners' intelligence that gives rise to these new things continuously. There may be new things still to come. I think an important part of the preparation to meditate is including our body and even our cushion.

Now we are experiencing relaxation in the body. We can start to really meditate. Sometimes we think meditation means we control our thoughts and say, "Don't think that way; think this way. I don't like you to think that way. This is meditation time. I like you to think this way." There are so many things going on our mind. But generally speaking, we'll try to feel like, "OK, this is meditation. This is practice. There's no need to pass judgment about everything." Try to start meditation with the outline of relaxed base. We're OK to feel relaxed. Now it's experiencing relaxation with the body.

Maybe your body has some aches and pains, and it's difficult to experience relaxation. Some people have chronic diseases and certain things. Maybe it's a little difficult to take the mind's attention in because it always goes to a certain part of the body where there's pain or some difficulty. Maybe it

always goes there. But this is a very important time to not get attached or hang on tightly to the feeling of the mind focused on a certain part of the body because of some problem or because it's just used to it. This time we'll try to allow our mind to really broaden and open while, at the same time, we feel more throughout the body. We scan our body with our thoughts and awareness.

We don't do this one by one or on just a particular part of the body. It's better if you don't focus on a particular part of the body. Try to open your mind up, to really feel the whole body, feel your whole being resting as the body is resting. The mind is resting. Now the body starts to feel at rest. There's not a focus of resting like on acupuncture points, but in a very big, open way, you feel the whole body. It will experience something different. The quality of body, the sensations, the energy, and the relaxation allow the parts of the body to start to communicate. When you look and scan through the body in relaxed way, you could eventually feel the mind and body joining. They come together and work at the same time. In that moment, you don't necessarily have to have something special, like a separate object to focus on. The object is the body and mind itself. You are able to open your mind and feel your whole body. That is this first part of meditation: to experience and try to further develop this connection between mind and body.

When your body starts to relax in a deep way, the mind naturally rests more easily. It's almost like when we go to a park or out in nature, where there are less distractions and it's a more inspiring environment. Immediately, we can tell that it's easy for our mind and everything to be calm. This is very much the same, where the environment of body becomes more relaxed and allows for more complete resting. The mind experiences that. Then the connection experience is kind of intercircling.

So please, can someone be a time keeper? The problem is I may not look at you. [*Laughter*] I also have to look at the schedule. How many of you have been to meditation classes or done meditation practice before? OK. How many of you are trying this for the first time? Good. As I am talking, we are meditating.

Sometimes when we say the word "meditation," people automatically go to "mind." Meditate means mind, and we work with that. In a way, that is a major part. It's important. But there are many things that we need to work on along with that. Meditation is a kind of mental training—something to train the mind in a different, dynamic view that perceives relaxation in different ways. But we also have speech and body, and sometimes we also say we have a spirit. In some way, this practice is physical, so we are talking about the physical body and its actions and reactions and how that makes meditation different. Likewise, with speech, sometimes we've been joining mind and body in meditation, but there's

still mental chatting going on. We're not saying that we want to meditate on speech, but it's actually important to think of it that way: "I want to meditate on body, on speech, and on mind."

Meditating on speech is when we say, "I want to lessen this mental chatting and be less talkative in my mind. I want to relax this verbal thinking and speech. I don't need to say anything. I don't need to try hard to say something that will make others happy or make myself happy. I don't have that responsibility. That judgment can relax and be free. I can relieve myself of the pressure to mentally talk." We can let that tension go and actually have a kind of aspiration, feeling that, "OK, I'll lessen my mental chatting. I want to experience my speech in the state of meditation." This is still a part of the body, and it's helpful.

Therefore, as a reminder for us, we'll do this three-syllable chant together, which is OM AH HUM. We'll say that before we meditate. Mainly, these three syllables have a quality of enlightened energy of body, speech, and mind. An aspect of meditation is that we are trying to bring a positive experience into our body and mind so that we can be of benefit to self and others and become better humans and better listeners, with genuine hearts. According to that, we are trying to calm our mind and body, and our intention is very much an enlightened intention, to benefit all beings.

When we say these three syllables—OM AH HUM—OM is connecting to body, AH is connecting to speech, HUM is connecting to heart-mind. So when we say these three, we're trying to say, "OK, now we're totally ready to meditate. We're ready to rest our body, speech, and mind." It's just like when we are in a situation by ourselves, and we take a long exhale or inhale, and it feels quite good. It feels a little refreshing. The long chanting of these three syllables is like that. We take a big exhale and inhale and have some readiness for meditation. So we'll say that together.

Remember that your position, how your body is when you sit, makes a difference. You cannot neglect your body. It's very important to be kind and gentle and not too harsh on your body.

[chanting] OM AH HUM.

It's fine, as we mentioned, for your eye gaze to be a little bit downward. If it's more comfortable to gaze a little bit upwards or straight forward, that's also fine. Likewise, it doesn't matter if you have your eyes closed or open. The most important thing is to do whatever is comfortable and feels inspiring and restful. That's more important.

I may say some words during the meditation to support you and to remind you how to stay and connect with your body in a restful way. Open to feel your whole body.

Feel relaxed in your body.

Lose all the tension and tightness in your body.

You're meditating on the body. Let's relax with all the senses, energies, and whatever else you are experiencing within the body. Just feel comfortable. Make sure your body is not rigid. Be very relaxed. Loosen your shoulders, necks, and arms, to feel totally at rest and at ease in the body.

You may feel spacious and relaxed in your body. Just allow whatever you experience.

Feel relaxed with your body. Being relaxed with your body is meditation.

Be confident and relaxed with your body. Feel the deep connection between mind and body.

Make sure that you are not neglecting your body. Fully connected, you are resting in the body.

Make sure your body is resting. When your body is relaxed, energy flows beautifully, your mind experiences relaxation.

Feel relaxed. Loosen your body and your mind. Don't focus on the body too tightly.

Make sure your whole body is resting, experiencing relaxation. Just feel free and relaxed.

Feel the relaxed energy of your body.

Let's take a few long breaths, exhale and inhale. [*Breathes*] We can have a little question-and-answer session here, so if you have any questions, they're welcome.

STUDENT 1: If you find yourself starting to nod off or getting tired while you're meditating—all of a sudden you have a drop—what is your suggestion on how to . . . ?

DZA KILUNG RINPOCHE: In each of the seven meditations, the recommendation is a little different. Generally speaking, early on, when you're meditating, contemplating, experiencing, and relaxing in your body, sometimes your energy suddenly drops because you're going for too long a stretch. The best thing is to intentionally break it into pieces and refresh after short periods. Even if you notice you're doing well, let your intention arise to snap into a sense of freshness. Refresh and break the meditation. Whether it has been a very good or difficult experience, just break there, and then try not to bring that, what you have been experiencing, into the current moment of meditation. Just let the next experience arise.

STUDENT 1: Thank you.

DZA KILUNG RINPOCHE: You're welcome. Any more questions?

STUDENT 2: My question is, in your studies and your opinion, what is more important to focus on before or after meditation: enlightenment or becoming a Buddha?

DZA KILUNG RINPOCHE: I guess it's different for different people. We can be inspired by who the Buddha was—if what he did for people is really appealing to us and we admire his qualities. We can be inspired that he was human just like us, that someone can have an awakened state of mind and have such a helpful impact for sentient beings. So you could think, “That’s why I would like to become a Buddha: to be of benefit to all beings. That’s why I do meditation.” Or you could think, “I would just like to be a helpful person, a helpful human. I’m not sure if I’ll become enlightened or not, but it doesn’t matter. Whatever I try in this world and this lifetime, I would like to be very useful—good for me and my serenity and good for people. That’s something that I aspire to, so therefore I do this practice of meditation.” Does that answer your question?

STUDENT 2: Yes, thank you.

DZA KILUNG RINPOCHE: Oh, good. Sometimes our mind is resting, and there are fewer questions. So maybe people are experiencing relaxation in mind and body.

STUDENT 3: I want to ask a question about physical pain when meditating. If you’re experiencing physical pain in your body, should you move into the sensation during the meditation practice?

DZA KILUNG RINPOCHE: We talked about this one earlier. The best thing is to try not to focus the mind on visualization or doing anything for the pain. When there’s tension and your focus is on the pain, try to open wider and feel the whole body and atmosphere in a bigger picture. So rather than a precise way of looking, it’s more like relaxing in the atmosphere of your own energy, your body—and that is actually very powerful. This meditation of relaxing in the body could be really healing when your body hurts or feels rigid. When there’s something wrong, we often target that or get frustrated with that. The mind’s attention goes over there, and with this motion of mind, there is something energetically that tightens up. So relaxing the whole body is kind of loosening up all this tension. That’s why it’s helpful for the whole body to relax.

STUDENT 4: If you’re going to meditate once a day, would you recommend the morning, afternoon, or evening?

DZA KILUNG RINPOCHE: I think it's very personal, in a way, because some people are morning people, and some people are not morning people. You also have to consider how you engage with family, people, work, and everything else. Basically, do whatever is appealing and makes sense. You can try the morning, evening, and afternoon, to see what your body likes the most.

In general, they say that in the morning, our minds are fresher, supposedly, because our daily routines haven't started yet. We've gotten a good night's sleep; hopefully we've had good dreams; and we've woken up and had a good breakfast, so there's nothing to complain about in that moment. The mind is more likely to feel like, "Oh, I can relax further and be more open. There's not much going on."

Sometimes later in the day there are many things we've already gone through. Then it's like, "Oh, I'm meditating, but this is arising. This comes up again and again. I feel like I have to turn that off." We might feel an urge to push a button, to turn off. But we keep going, and the time just goes. Maybe you have a half an hour, but you spend most of it discussing and turning off, and then, you think, "Okay, I'm finally here," as the time is almost over. So I think we have to just check with ourselves and see what is most important.

One aspect I really like about morning meditation is that it's before we go into our phenomena and difficulties. The mind is empowered with a clearer way of thinking, and we can feel relaxation and the depth of our own humanity. That view of our energy helps to hold us on the path. That is a general way of looking at meditation. So in that case, you can try morning.

STUDENT 4: Thank you.

DZA KILUNG RINPOCHE: You're welcome. There is a question back there.

STUDENT 5: It was really wonderful to have you reminding us to be in our bodies. What I'm hoping to take away is the experience of being in my body, so that when I sit, I can remind myself to be in my body. But I'm also wondering if you have any suggestions—because I know how my mind is, and there will come a time when I'll be saying, with my mind, "You must relax your body," and my mind will, in trying to tell my body to relax, be the problem. Do you have any suggestions?

DZA KILUNG RINPOCHE: Your mind becomes like . . . What do you call it . . . ?

STUDENT 5: A slave driver.

DZA KILUNG RINPOCHE: Yeah, it says, “Body, you be relaxed. I have to go somewhere to think a little bit. [Laughter] But don’t move until I come back.” Mind wants to be busy. I think that is why we try to merge mind into body, instead of trying to be judgmental. Mind is being judgmental of the body. Of course, we have to start with a little bit of judging ourselves, conceptualizing, and saying, “OK, I have to sit on this cushion. I have to meditate on my body, experiencing relaxation.” That’s what we do, but from there, it becomes more naturally allowed. We don’t do so much programming. Then there’s potential for body and mind to cooperate more, when there’s a sense of resting.

STUDENT 5: Thank you.

DZA KILUNG RINPOCHE: You’re welcome.

STUDENT 6: Rinpoche, I have an eighty-six-year-old relative who has had a long life of negativity and is now filled with a lot of fear about getting old and dying, and is also interested in meditation. He tried it, but quickly determined that he couldn’t do it. He was just like, “I just can’t do this meditation thing.” Any words of advice or counsel for someone like that, in that station in life, with a long history of negativity and almost self-hatred, who really wants to change, tries meditation, but quickly determines that he “just can’t do it”?

DZA KILUNG RINPOCHE: Does he have any favorite hobby or something that he goes to for companionship or when he’s having difficulty? Like music, or anything like that. Does he have something like that?

STUDENT 6: Yeah, maybe just reading. He goes for refuge in reading spiritual books. He’s kind of a spiritual shopper, always looking for the truth but not willing to stop to do the work.

DZA KILUNG RINPOCHE: Well, I think maybe you could suggest to him that, instead of trying to get rid of this self-hatred or this negative experience, maybe he can try to say, “OK, I accept it,” and let it come, but at the same time, also let it go, without getting wrapped up in it. And don’t be afraid of that, and also don’t be attached to being afraid. So it’s like, you know this is coming, almost like a tsunami: you can see it coming. But try to say, “OK, I’m going to be safe. I just stand up. I’m not going to run away. I want to just

let it pass through," instead of what usually happens when it comes, which is that they want to get rid of all of this energy. When that happens, there's a tortured feeling when it comes.

So this attitude of acceptance and letting go really changes the experience. There's the potential that he is willing to really look at his experience. Maybe at first, it's a negative, and it's difficult to think of letting it happen. But try to let it happen, without engaging with what is happening and without making a judgment and expressing the fear/anxiety around it. Letting it pass through. Maybe that is something you could try to suggest.

STUDENT 6: Thank you.

STUDENT 7: Rinpoche, if you're doing this meditation and it seems to be going pretty good, and then you're noticing some really strong emotion arise, like—

[Cell phone says: "I didn't quite get that." Laughter]

OK, I'll try again. *[Laughter]*

DZA KILUNG RINPOCHE: Siri is talkative. *[Laughter]*

STUDENT 7: This really strong emotion arises, and you're observing yourself. Your anxiety is rising about it, and you get to a point where you're hearing the message to be calm and relax, and you really want to scream. You're just escalating into an emotional state, and you just want to let it out. Do you have anything to suggest or say about that?

DZA KILUNG RINPOCHE: I think what you're saying is you have this experience of pressure and stress while doing the meditation, and then it feels like you really want to scream or whatever. So your question is, when you have that kind of feeling, what should you do?

STUDENT 7: Yeah.

DZA KILUNG RINPOCHE: Well, I think it's a bit similar to my answer for the gentleman, in response to his question about difficulties. Instead of trying to escape from that feeling, you try to understand or try to let it be, without turning away or engaging it immediately. Try to pull back a little without running far away, to just take a second to be.

Take a breath, to let it go, and say, “OK, I’m not going to be controlled by this feeling. This is my own mind. These are my own mental images. I want to be with this mind, in the experience of resting and relaxing. I want to be more calm and restful.” You just say, “This is a mental image. This is phenomena coming from my own mind; therefore, I don’t need to respond or be afraid of this.”

Just let it come and let it go. Maybe that’s better, because if you are meditating with a group and you suddenly stand up and shout or scream, that’s not really . . .

Understanding and not being afraid of this difficulty is, I think, important. Sometimes we humans like to pretend there are no problems. What do you call this in English? We say you “hide your head in the sand.” It’s like we think there are no problems in the phenomenal world. But it depends. If we’re open enough, if we’re aware enough, if we’re big and spacious enough, then maybe the phenomena can be there. Everything is reflected through that. But just saying that we have no problems doesn’t make it true. Even in doing the meditation, there is a lot of turbulence that comes up. It’s important to be allowing, to understand, and to try to be a little bit more relaxed in kindness. Be kind to yourself, feel compassion, and feel open to whatever is arising. I think this open-heartedness, having some special energy, could help transform these energies into positivity, into goodness.

STUDENT 7: Thank you.

DZA KILUNG RINPOCHE: I’m not sure I answered you, but it’s something like that . . .

I often remind people of the dedication of meditation and also, at the beginning of meditation, of having good intention in terms of why we meditate. Of course, we meditate to reduce our different levels of suffering and difficulties, and also that of others. We are taming our wild mind into something useful, something beneficial, to soften others. And that has a quality of *bodhichitta*, it’s called—awake awareness or compassion—which is, in Buddhist teachings, very essential, very important.

Those of you who are not really Buddhist practitioners, who are maybe just starting to connect with meditation, maybe don’t have this background, but that’s OK. We still start with intention—the intention: “May my meditation be of benefit to self and others (whatever that means).” It’s not only for my own benefit. When I become a really good-hearted person with a good temperament, does that affect anyone around me? Family, friend, society, everything? The answer is yes; it does affect all of those things. This is a quality or energy that helps all beings—or more beings, at least. Therefore, we start our meditation with a good intention, and then also, finally, after the meditation session, we dedicate.

Again, dedication at the end and inspiration in the beginning. If you do know verses, that's fine, but if you don't know them, it's no problem. All mind intention is powerful. There is a dynamic energy with this conclusion, these prayers by heart. These energies are not so visible to the rough eye, but the energy is measurable, and when we look closely in different ways, then, yes, we can see there are these energies that help. Therefore, we'll dedicate this energy.

It's a beautiful evening because all of you have made the effort to come here and sit together and share this experience. You would imagine that a room full of people would be a very intense situation and that we would empower each other to intensify. Yes, there is that effect. But everyone here is really calming-oriented—there's relaxing and resting, and we're experiencing that atmosphere here. It's valuable. It's very beautiful. So we'll send this energy out and dedicate it to more than our group, to all beings in this world, particularly those beings who are experiencing tightness, limitation, anxiety, anger, and who are hurting others. May all those become peaceful and harmonious and balanced. Thank you.