Practicing Rigpa - Part 2

Guy Armstrong · Notable Dhamma Teachers — Guy Armstrong · 46:57

Tonight I'd like to talk about more aspects of working with the Rigpa practice as we've been doing over the last couple of days. The first thing I want to explore is the relationship with emotions, particularly difficult emotions.

Today, for the first time in the retreat, people started to share with me about some difficult emotions that were arising. I was quite happy to hear this, because I was getting worried that the retreat wasn't working. Unless it engages some difficult aspect of the mind, I don't feel that it's going deeply enough. One of the most observable characteristics of a proper retreat, in my view, is that it reaches down and brings us to some kind of edge, where we have to find new tools to relate with that edge. This seemed to start happening today, at least for some people, and so I was encouraged.

So what do we do in this practice when working with difficult emotions as they arise? This is from *The Flight of the Garuda*: "Without following thoughts, relax naturally and rest in the state of mind itself. Without a doubt, thoughts will vanish spontaneously."

Sometimes yes, sometimes no. It doesn't always work like that in practice.

This reminds me of a friend who was teaching a retreat in Burma for Westerners alongside a Burmese Sayadaw. It's something that happens every year in January—a couple of our friends go over and teach. It's a unique opportunity to hear Western teachers side-by-side with Burmese teachers, all in the Vipassana lineage.

Because it's in a Burmese monastery, there are translators around and people who help support the monastery. A number of them come to hear the Dharma talks. So one of the Burmese gentlemen came up to my friend after the retreat and said, "You know, I really enjoyed listening to your Dharma talks while I was on this retreat, because you described so eloquently how to work with anger, how to work with fear, how to work with judgment. It's very helpful. Our teachers don't talk to us about these things."

So my friend said, "Well, what do they tell you to do?"

The Burmese man said, "Well, the Sayadaw says, when anger arises, note it three times and it will go away."

My friend said, "That wouldn't work for Westerners."

He said, "It doesn't work for us either."

She then asked, "What do you do then?"

And he said, "Oh, well then we say, 'Oh, never mind.'"

Which is kind of beautiful. There's a kind of underlying equanimity in that response. The emotion's there. I applied what was supposed to be the antidote. It didn't go away. Oh, well, never mind. There's a great deal of acceptance underlying that.

With Rigpa practice also, we may have the intention to turn to Rigpa and see what the liberating influence will be, or if, as it's sometimes said in this tradition, the thought or the emotion will liberate itself. But that may not always happen.

We can feel discouraged at this point that emotions are coming and perhaps coming strongly. We may feel at times that they block our access to Rigpa or block our development. So I also wanted to read this from *The Flight of the Garuda*: "It is said in the teachings and life stories of the masters of the past, 'the more emotions and thoughts, the more Dharmakaya.' You should know that this is how it is."

The more emotions and thoughts, the more Dharmakaya. Dharmakaya refers to the emptiness aspect of mind. So they're saying that even if you struggle a lot in the beginning, that's what opens the door for the depth of Dharmakaya later.

So don't be concerned if emotions are coming. It's an integral part of what we're doing here and leads to the deepening of the practice. I've seen this time and time again in Vipassana retreats.

I remember very clearly the first Dzogchen retreat where something like this happened to me. We were a few days into the retreat, four or five days into a nine-day retreat up in Santa Rosa. I was doing my yogi job in the kitchen, washing pots or potatoes or something. I was by a sink.

I was trying to apply the Rigpa practice consistently and touch into the empty awareness, doing it fairly regularly. As I was there at the sink and practicing, I felt this kind of wave of energy start to come up. It hit my chest and made a kind of explosion there.

And it didn't have a lot of emotion with it, but it was just as though some bubble had come up and burst. Rinpoche talked today about the burp—it was a little bit just like this energy coming up from somewhere, coming up and then passing right through me.

Leading up to that moment, my mind had been quite calm and still. Then this energy arose, passed through, and it felt like a big release. There wasn't much emotion attached to it, just this sense of something substantial being let go.

For about the next day and a half, my mind was a complete whirlwind—racing into past and future, caught up in thoughts and plans, greed and aversion. I couldn't settle it, not through connecting with mind essence, not through sustaining mindfulness. The mind was just stirred up.

But having witnessed this pattern countless times, I really wasn't worried. I knew from Vipassana practice that this is simply part of the purification process that happens. When the heart and mind settle to a new level of peace and contentment, it opens the door for whatever else might be stored down there. You may have exhausted the karmic storehouse, but just on the slight chance that you haven't...

What opens the door to the karmic bank is this state of peace and calm. Why? Because the heart feels safe to release what it's been holding.

Sylvia Borstein, who is a good friend and frequent co-teacher, puts it like this: When they want to launch from Cape Kennedy, they don't launch when the sky is cloudy. They launch the spacecraft when the sky is clear.

Similarly, the heart wants to unload its burden when the skies are clear. So when the mind settles into some new level of peace, contentment, and happiness, then the heart says, "Okay, now you can hold this too." That's when the purification begins to come through.

When it comes through and we can be with it with that really accepting attitude—which Rinpoche exemplified with "hug and kiss"—when we don't resist it but really allow it into our awareness, it's that contact, that friendly contact, that allows it to arise and then pass out. That is the delete button for the karmic bank.

One of the beauties of intensive retreats is that they allow the mind to settle enough for this cycle to take place. I like to call this the cycle of purity—the increasing calm and peace—and purification—the release of the difficult stored contents of the heart and mind.

Practicing with that wave of energy and agitation that had been triggered in that retreat, I knew not to interfere with it very much. I knew not to worry about it, not to try to make it go away. So for a couple of days, I was simply in a whirlwind, and that was okay. That's just the way the mind was. After a couple of days, it settled again to a deeper level of peace because there was no longer so much underlying agitation in the mind or body.

These are the cycles that happen in retreat, and the opportunity is there for us to learn to relate to these difficult emotions in a wise way.

So what should we do when they come? There are really two approaches. I'd like to read again from The Flight of the Garuda, Song 13, to illustrate this:

"For beginners, when emotional thought states arise too powerfully, it is beneficial first to analyze and then to rest. These are the oral instructions, so keep them in your heart."

I take this as encouragement first to practice what you could call shamatha, or what you could call mindfulness, with the emotion directly. After doing that for a while, then to rest. In a way, I take this as an encouragement first to do what we would call Vipassana practice. After you've done that for a

while—after you've hugged and kissed—then you can rest because some of the charge is out.

In the way that we teach, we have a little formula for how to relate skillfully with an emotion. It's an acronym called RAIN, and it stands for four steps in relating to a difficult emotion using mindfulness.

The first is to recognize it. The second is to accept it. The third is to become interested in it, or investigate—this is the analytical piece. And the N is non-identify: Recognize, accept, be interested, non-identify.

Recognize means we know this emotion for what it is. Accept means we just open ourselves up and feel it completely. A good place to do that is in the body. If you feel a strong emotion, it's going to have an impact in the body somewhere.

Rinpoche has spoken extensively about the connection between the subtle body and our moods and emotions, noting how every emotional state manifests somewhere in our physical form. When you feel a strong emotion arising, allow your attention to settle where you sense it most powerfully in the body and ground yourself there. This grounding creates a bridge of connection—you'll feel the interplay between body and emotion flowing back and forth, each informing the other.

The third step is to become interested. This is our analytical piece, approached as part of that hug and kiss attitude—meeting our experience with genuine curiosity rather than resistance. What is fear, really? What is anger? How does this particular emotion express itself through the body and mind? What kinds of thought patterns does it generate? Here, we're not following the storyline or content of thoughts, but simply observing their patterns and textures.

Finally, we practice non-identification. We don't claim these emotions as "I" or "mine." This anger is not my personality; it's not who I am. I don't become "an angry person" simply because anger is present in this moment. We don't even need to say "my anger"—we need not own it at all. Instead, we recognize emotions as passing clouds: anger arises, persists for a while, and naturally dissolves away.

These steps allow us to cultivate wisdom and awareness around whatever emotions arise. We're making direct, intimate contact with these states while developing the capacity to hold them within mindfulness. Once we've established this spacious relationship with our emotional experience, we can return our attention to mind essence and perhaps find the rest that the Garuda song points toward. The sequence is clear: first analyze, relate, and become intimate with what's arising. Open to it with friendliness. Then see if this creates sufficient space for recognizing mind essence.

This completes what I wanted to share about relating with emotions. Remember that emotional work is an integral part of this practice. You now have two different approaches available—experiment with both and discover which serves you best in different situations.

The second topic I want to explore tonight concerns various techniques for that crucial first step of

looking. Rinpoche mentioned again this morning Tolku Urgyen Rinpoche's four-step method: look, see, rest, and liberate. He's also shared three or four different ways to approach the initial looking. As I mentioned yesterday, having a range of techniques proves invaluable. Different methods resonate with different practitioners, and even for the same person, different approaches work at different times. So explore them all and discover which ones create the strongest connection for you.

Rinpoche has already introduced Tolku Urgyen's way of looking, the instruction to "drop" or "let go," and the image of the hand withdrawing into the sleeve. Let me offer some additional techniques.

One approach that often resonates with Western practitioners is "aware of awareness." Essentially, this involves shifting attention away from fixation on objects toward recognizing the knowing mind itself—the very awareness that perceives. This phrase serves as a doorway, helping practitioners make that crucial turn inward. When you're ready, simply drop in this phrase rather than using any visual image or the word "drop," and follow wherever it leads you.

Another technique Rinpoche has mentioned—though perhaps not specifically in this context—involves drawing the eyes toward the back of the head. You cultivate the sensation that your eyes are naturally gravitating backward into the skull, creating that essential sense of pulling away from external fixation.

One subtle form of ego-clinging that commonly arises in the early stages of this practice deserves particular attention. As you settle into that open, empty awareness, there often remains a sense that someone is still looking. A participant mentioned this very issue in today's interview group—the persistent feeling of an observer, a watcher, someone who looks through the eyes and receives visual impressions, hears sounds, and so forth.

This is extra. The sense of "I am the looker, I am the watcher" is something extra. What's actually going on is an identification with the factor of cognizance. Cognizance is happening, but the ego is coming in and laying claim to it. "Oh, that's me. I'm not the body. I'm not the external phenomena. I'm not the thoughts and emotions. Oh, I see what I really am. I really am the one who's looking. I'm the observer."

In a way, this is not a bad intermediate step for the ego to take. Because normally what it's doing is running around and claiming sense impressions as "me" or "mine." It'll claim body, thoughts, and emotions as "me." It'll claim outer things as "mine." And either grab to bring forward or push away. So stepping to awareness can cut through that. If you say "I am awareness," then all this other stuff is just coming and going within you, and you don't have to get involved with it. Awareness doesn't get involved with its contents.

So identifying with awareness has an advantage, but it's not clear-seeing. As an intermediate step or strategy, that's okay. And as a phase of rigpa practice, don't worry about that. Don't worry if that comes in. But there is still a level of unclarity in that the "I" hasn't been seen through because, let's face it, awareness isn't yours or mine. It's not individual. Awareness is just awareness. It's part of Buddha nature, so it's

common to all of us. So the "I" is extra.

If you'd like to play around with looking at the "I," then here's another way to look: drop in a question like "Who is watching?" or "Who is looking?" If it feels like it's the thinker, then you could say "Who is thinking?" and see if that takes the emptiness a little bit further. See if that cuts through the identification just a little more.

Another way to say this is "looking at the looker." These two are almost synonymous. Who is looking? Or look at the looker. Or look at the thinker. Now hopefully when you do that—you go to look at the looker—what should you find? Nothing. Nothing. And then you're back in emptiness. You're back at a slightly more complete level of emptiness.

Just a few more. This is a phrase that Joseph Goldstein came up with and shared with me. I don't think he'd mind my sharing it. The phrase is "mind of no clinging." Mind of no clinging. So when you're ready to apply a technique to look, just say that phrase. Drop that phrase in and see what happens. The "mind" part connects with awareness. The "no clinging" part helps cut through fixation or grasping, so it opens up emptiness.

Here's one from the tradition: "Relax and rest loosely." This is from the Dzogchen tradition. Relax and rest loosely. I used this phrase a lot at one point in my practice and I found it really helpful because it's useful independent of conditions. If the mind is peaceful, you say "relax and rest loosely" and you're sort of there. If the mind's agitated and thoughts are up and emotions are up, you say "relax and rest loosely," and it sort of lets you disentangle a bit from it. So you can use it either way—if the mind's calm, if the mind's stirred up.

Another technique that Rinpoche mentioned briefly today is the syllable *phat*. This is a very traditional method in Dzogchen practice, meant to be applied especially when the yogi's mind is really preoccupied in thoughts. When conceptual thoughts are running and running and you can't find a way to step out of them, it's recommended to say *phat* in a very loud voice. If you're practicing somewhere in the wilderness, you can really shout it. It's said to cut through the chain of thoughts.

I was sitting in retreat one time with a different Dzogchen teacher, and he liked to have his class use the exclamation *phat* in a group format. We would be sitting all together, and the teacher would instruct us: "When I count to three, everybody shout at the top of your lungs, *phat*." The hall would be very still during our sitting meditation, and he would say, "One, two, three." And everybody would shout as loud as they could: "*Phat*!" The hall would just vibrate. It cut through a lot of conceptual thinking and was very effective.

One of my friends came to the retreat a day late and hadn't heard the initial instruction. She was sitting during an afternoon session when the teacher went, "One, two, three," and the whole room just erupted in "*Phat*!" I was sitting next to her and could hear her do this little whimper—she almost levitated off her

zafu because she was so shocked. But I'm sure it cut through her conceptualization too.

If you're sitting in a meditation hall, you could try just saying it to yourself, imagining you're saying it in a very loud voice. *Phat*—but don't actually shout it.

Someone asked today whether there always has to be this conscious technique applied to do the looking. Does it always have to be like that? Isn't that a subtle form of grasping, a form of effort and will? What Rinpoche said was that you only do that when you've fallen into distraction, and that means grasping is already present. So one more little bit of effort doesn't really matter.

What I've noticed is that over time, the tools to do the looking get more and more subtle. You just get used to this turning and connecting with mind essence over and over. At first, the tools I used were pretty big, but then over time they could get subtler and subtler because it didn't need much of a nudge to get back to that place. Finally, what I mostly do now is just a very subtle intention to see again. You could just call it the intention to look or the intention to see, and then I'm back. Over time, see if the movement of turning can get lighter.

Someone asked in a retreat once: "In my experience, different techniques lead to different experiences"—and you'll probably find this is somewhat true. Different methods of looking will lead to slightly different effects in the mind and body. They asked, "Which one is right?" The way I understand it is that when different techniques give different experiences, what you want to look for is the common denominator. Look at what they share. What they share over time will converge. All these techniques will converge on authentic rigpa over time. You can just feel free to use whichever ones strike your interest or seem effective for you. Try different ones at different times.

The next question is: what happens when we look? As I mentioned last night, I had a lot of questions in the beginning about whether what I saw was really rigpa or not. I went to Rinpoche with many questions trying to figure this out. I was basically asking him to confirm my experience: "Is it like this? Is it like that? Is this it?"

Is that it?" And he always refused to confirm my experience, just as he has here, because ultimately we have to figure it out for ourselves. He can't tell.

But some of the questions I used to hear were things like, "Oh, when I do the looking technique, I get a buzzing in my ears. Is that Rigpa?" Or "My body tingles. Is that what Rigpa really is?" You've probably heard similar questions and found your own.

The thing is that no particular phenomenon is Rigpa, because Rigpa is empty cognizance. It doesn't have a color or shape or form because it can go with anything. This is what Rinpoche meant when he said this afternoon that it's "a state beyond states." Another way of saying it is you can't really say that it's a state of mind, because it's more like a container for states of mind or a perspective on states of mind—that which holds states of mind.

So it can go with any state of mind. It can go with a buzzing in the ears or silence in the ears. It can go with a body that's light or heavy. Understanding this helped me not look to repeat an experience, because the outcome isn't supposed to be one particular way. There's no way to describe a particular state that's supposed to happen when you look. This let me know I didn't need to hang on to one memory that seemed to work, because the next time it might be different depending on what the state of my mind and body was at that point.

It's like clear water that doesn't have any flavor of its own, but you can add any flavor to it. It can go with anything, so it can reveal anything. If the mind is happy or sad or calm or agitated, Rigpa can be with all of that. It takes on the coloring of whatever the state of mind itself is.

Something else people often report when starting this practice—and I think Rinpoche alluded to this today—is feeling like a lot of energy is coming up as they turn and look or drop. "Is that Rigpa?" In that case, I'd say it's kind of a sign of letting go. It's probably the dropping that has released some of the holding. You know, that dead drop that he was talking about? Sometimes that will release things we've been holding for a while, and so strong energies can come up when we learn better how to let go. Those energies can come whether we're in Rigpa or not, because they're mostly a sign of the letting go.

So again, I'd say it might be a sign that Rigpa is happening, but it's not the thing itself. Over time, as more and more of the held energies get released, when one turns and looks, there's not so much of anything that comes up because there's been a release of what's been held, and there's not an infinite supply of stuff that has to be released. So the experience gets calmer and more ordinary.

The last thing I want to talk about are some near relatives of Rigpa. As we turn to Rigpa, there are often other states that come in that aren't Rigpa but that we might think are Rigpa in the beginning. Don't worry that these things come in—these are not bad things. As you continue to practice, your own understanding will clarify what's exactly Rigpa and what's not. These are just some of the things I went through in the clarification of the view.

One is having a line of subconscious chatter going on and not recognizing it as distraction or as chatter. Thoughts can come and go—if they're seen clearly, it's not a problem. But there can be this line of ongoing chatter, commentary, past, future, that I wasn't really aware of. When there's an ongoing chain, that's moved into discursive thinking, and that takes away a bit from the Rigpa. If that happens, you can turn, if you'd like, just turn the attention to the thoughts for a little while, which is a form of samatha or vipassana. Become aware of those and that will often take some of the frequency out of them. In other words, incorporate them into the awareness.

Another thing I fell into was, once I had looked and seen, then trying to prolong the Rigpa—trying to make it last longer. This is kind of a virtue in mindfulness practice. The first two factors of concentration, as we practice it, are connecting with the object and sustaining the attention on the object. So we're taught that it's wholesome to sustain that attention. But with Rigpa, it's not the right thing to do. If we are in the seeing

and then we move into the resting, but we try to make it last longer, we've fallen into fabrication and effort again.

This points to a subtle kind of effort that infiltrates our practice—one we may not notice and that we actually think is wholesome. I used to say something like, "just stay in Rigpa as long as you can," but that's completely the wrong way to express it. A much better way to say it is, "let it stay as long as it stays."

We're not actually involved with how long it stays. That depends on the current strength of Rigpa and our past practice—the accumulated force of our practice determines how long it remains. That's why Rinpoche has said repeatedly, "Don't worry about length, aim for short periods many times."

When he says short periods, he doesn't mean short sitting periods. He doesn't mean come in, sit for five minutes, then go out to walk, come back in for five minutes, go out to walk again. Sit for forty-five minutes—that's fine. But each time you go into Rigpa, don't worry if it doesn't stay long. Let it be a short experience, but let it be a really clear experience. Aim to have that recognition many times within, say, a forty-five minute sitting.

Don't mind how many times you look. When you've looked, seen, rested, and then failed to liberate—meaning distraction has come back in—don't hesitate to apply the technique of looking again. Do that many times, and don't worry how long it lasts.

Another thing I used to do was project that Rigpa was in front of me. Because there's talk of openness, spaciousness, emptiness, I'd project it out in front to get away from what didn't feel spacious—which was tension in my body. I'd look for it to be out there. But in doing that, I was trying to leave behind the body, and that's not helpful.

So check to see if you've taken the body with you when you move into Rigpa. Just take a look back and see if it's come along for the journey, or if you have an idea that Rigpa should only be in front and be a kind of disembodied experience. Then take a look at how Rinpoche sits when he's meditating or when he's teaching. It's not very different. He's very in his body—very grounded, very connected.

Once I got the idea that the body should come with me into Rigpa, then I made another kind of false move, because I had such a strong habit from Vipassana practice of mindfulness of body. So then I practiced what I might call "Rigpa of body"—which is a contradiction in terms. This is not the right way to do it.

But I felt very centered, very grounded. What I thought was Rigpa sustained itself for a long time, and I thought, "Wow, this is so easy now." But what I was actually doing was feeling my body. At that point there was a smooth, harmonious energy arising in the body that I was mistaking for ongoing empty awareness. But I'd actually localized it and fastened it onto an object.

So take a look at this relationship between space and body as you practice, and realize that Rigpa needs to encompass both. It does encompass both.

Because we use this word "empty" and "open" so much, Rigpa often gets identified with space and this quality of mind we call spaciousness. Once in retreat, somebody asked Rinpoche, "Is this practice basically about spaciousness?" You might think about how you would answer that.

Rinpoche's answer was, "No, spaciousness is not the key point. The key point is groundlessness."

Groundlessness, or emptiness. So sometimes the focus may be small. I think someone mentioned when they were working on their computer, or if you're doing your yogi job, the focus may come in. It may not be as panoramic as it is in the meditation hall, but that can be very natural. You can be with Rigpa even when the focus is naturally a little more narrow.

So the key point is groundlessness—which basically means emptiness, the insubstantiality of things.

Another place where I became caught was attributing a ground to my seat. I don't know if you've ever considered this, but the body does rest on something solid. Here, we're not using "ground" in the sense of ground, path, and fruition. We're using ground to mean solid—the antithesis of emptiness, the opposite of emptiness.

So emptiness and groundlessness are synonymous. What we take for ground is usually what we stand on or what we sit on, because that's what supports us physically and what we rest into. But this creates a false sense that there is some ultimate kind of ground—that the earth is an ultimate kind of ground. But it's not. It's not a ground for consciousness or cognizance. Cognizance doesn't have any ground. Cognizance doesn't have an up or a down. It doesn't have a bottom, and there's nothing that it rests on.

So it helped me to uncover another level of groundlessness when I looked at the hardness under my seat as just another sensation. Does that make sense? We don't associate rigpa just with space. We don't associate it just with the body.

Another trap I fell into was imagining that awareness was a separate destination apart from phenomena. Some of the phrasing leads us in this direction. There's this phrase often used in the tradition: "Rest in awareness"—as though awareness is its own destination.

For me, this seemed to be happening kind of out in front. I'd be sitting there and think, "Oh, that's awareness"—something stable, steady, ongoing, with nothing else there. That must be the empty awareness being pointed to. But there's another teaching in the tradition which says that three things are indivisible: emptiness, awareness, and phenomena.

So it's not accurate to think that you're going to find awareness someplace where there aren't phenomena. Awareness and phenomena are also inseparable. We really only know awareness through its illuminating of phenomena—at least in the beginning, until there's real depth in the knowing of rigpa.

I realized that what I was imagining was "awareness by itself" was actually the knowing of physical space. Just become aware that physical space is another object that can be known. You can pay attention to it

right now in this room. Think about the space between us.

Ajahn Sumedho said that for a period he was interested in the analogy between nirvana and space, so he did a lot of meditation on physical space. When he would talk to somebody—similar to a comment someone made yesterday about the gaze of the eyes—instead of focusing on the person or becoming aware of the person's body, he would become aware of the space between them and around them. So become aware that space is another phenomenon that can be known through consciousness.

Someone said toward the end of one retreat, "I've really enjoyed your teachings, Rinpoche, and I realize that for me the practice comes down to just being. That's what I've gotten out of this week—just being. And that's how I'm doing it."

Just being is good, but does it always have wisdom in it? Aren't babies pretty good at just being? Aren't cats and dogs pretty good at just being? But would we necessarily say that they were in rigpa? Not necessarily. So remember that the wisdom element is a really important component—this knowing of the empty cognizance.

I think that's all I wanted to talk about tonight. I'll close with another reading from *Flight of the Garuda*, translated by Stephen Batchelor. He hasn't done the whole book, but he's done little bits of it:

"Now come up close and listen. When you look carefully, you won't find the merest speck of real mind you can put your finger on and say, 'This is it.' And not finding anything is an incredible find."

Friends, to start with, mind doesn't emerge from anything. It's primordially empty. It isn't anywhere. It has no shape or color. In the beginning, mind is not created by causes and finally not destroyed by external conditions. It neither grows nor gets stuck. It's not empty or full. Infusing peace and pain alike, it shows no preference. Ceaselessly, it reveals itself as everything, so you can't say, "here it is." Not being fixed as something, it's beyond presence and absence. It neither comes nor goes, gets born nor dies.

Mind's nature is vivid as a flawless piece of crystal—intrinsically empty, naturally radiant, ceaselessly responsive. Stripped bare of samsaric error, mind itself is surely and always Buddha.

Let me read this one more time:

Now come up close and listen. When you look carefully, you won't find the merest speck of real mind you can put your finger on and say, "this is it." And not finding anything is an incredible find.

Friends, to start with, mind doesn't emerge from anything. It's primordially empty. There's nothing there to hold on to. In the beginning, mind itself is not created by causes, and finally, not destroyed by external conditions. It neither grows nor gets stuck. It's not empty or full. Infusing peace and pain alike, it shows no preference. Ceaselessly it reveals itself as everything, so you can't say, "here it is." Not being fixed as something, it's beyond presence and absence. It neither comes nor goes, gets born nor dies.

Mind's nature is vivid as a flawless piece of crystal—intrinsically empty, naturally radiant, ceaselessly responsive. Stripped bare of samsaric error, mind itself is surely and always Buddha.

Thank you for listening.

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