



# Kunsang Gar Wisdom Program

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# Kunsang Gar Wisdom

Our mental difficulties and painful feelings arise, but are temporary. They are dependent upon causes and conditions which do not exist in our original nature. There are methods by which they can all be eliminated. Among the different methods for dispelling problems, those belonging to the traditional learning system of Kunsang Gar Wisdom can be summarized in three categories: Foundation Wisdom, Mental Development, and Quintessential Wisdom.

One thing to understand from the outset is that these teachings and meditations, although rooted in traditional Buddhist traditions, are secular; you need not forego your religion or philosophy in order to benefit from Kunsang Gar Wisdom. All three categories of Kunsang Gar Wisdom may be practiced

in addition to, and on the basis of, your current spiritual path's view and conduct. It may be practiced by anyone in accordance with their own disposition and inclinations.

## **Why Study Kunsang Gar Wisdom?**

We human beings are not just physical bodies. We are alive with conscious minds and feelings which manifest through the subtle psychic channels and energies in our bodies. Therefore, our happiness can only come from within; profound happiness does not come from outside ourselves. Modern day neuroscience recognizes that turning one's attention inward in meditation is a primary facilitator of happiness. If we become too distracted, we can't apply ourselves properly to introspective meditation. Making a living, family, and so on is important but, alone, cannot bring true peace. For example, being wealthy does not ensure happiness.

But meditation is about more than creating a happy mind; the ultimate purpose of practicing Kunsang Gar Wisdom is to prepare for death, to have happiness in your daily life, and to attain liberation or enlightenment.

When we get sick, we feel somewhat relieved if we have insurance. But there's no guarantee that we won't experience an accident or have some calamity befall us. We see that natural disasters, disease, mechanical failures, and so forth strike at any time. Kunsang Gar Wisdom and practice provides the long term insurance we need, but one must start creating this safety net from this moment onwards. If you prepare now, you'll have assurance at the time of death. When we die and our consciousness leaves our body, it is like losing one's home. Our consciousness remains clear and perceptive. It is the practice which gives you confidence, assurance and ability at that time. Your practice depends on your understanding, and Kunsang Gar Wisdom helps develop that knowledge.

Kunsang Gar Wisdom also reveals methods by which we can dispel problems and suffering in our daily life. It is a method to dissolve mental pain, fear, anger, discouragement, or whatever problems we experience in our relations with family or friends, at work, in the environment and so forth. Clearing away the difficulties you encounter in daily life is a natural result of practice.

This wisdom also clearly and extensively reveals the methods by which the ultimate state of existence is

attained. The Buddhas have taught many paths to enlightenment; and it is guaranteed that any part of this wisdom will benefit you. Eventually, as the instructions are put into practice, step by step, your wisdom expands, the meaning becomes clear, and you become fulfilled and satisfied.

Within the teachings of Kunsang Gar, we make prayers for the future and believe in the results of practice; but we don't believe the veracity of the practice is based on faith and prayers alone. The wisdom taught here is similar to scientific research; it is a reasoned path that seeks the truth. Even more importantly, many people over the centuries have exhibited extraordinary signs of realization from the practice. For example, there are accounts of how, in uninterrupted succession, the twenty-four lineage gurus of the Zhang Zhung oral instruction lineage, and more recently Shardza Rinpoche and many of his disciples, manifested the extraordinary signs of rainbow body. According to tradition, the ultimate purpose of these instructions is to attain the highest, unexcelled state of realization. There are different paths of instruction that yield this result, but vary in the amount of time and effort required. Here, many practitioners have attained realization through the ultimate perspective of

Dzogchen instructions, and have provided clear proof that this practice is a path by which Buddhahood may be attained within a single lifetime.

## **What is Kunsang Gar Wisdom?**

### **Foundation Wisdom**

Similar to when you build a house, the first thing you do is build a solid foundation. Foundation Wisdom includes the following:

- what human beings are and how we take birth in this sphere of existence
- the different values of human and animal life
- how we change as the world changes
- whether or not we cease to exist after death
- what sort of thinking we should do for the long term
- whether we have only one body or if there are other aspects to attainment
- whether we have a mind that is different from plants
- what methods are there for improving it

- what sort of methods exist to dispel suffering
- whether the innate nature of human beings is love and compassion
- how to increase realization of love and compassion
- and teachings on outer and inner preliminary practices, mind training, the twelve links of interdependent origination, the four noble truths, the nature of samsara and nirvana.

These are the considerations relevant to those seeking spiritual wisdom in our modern age.

## **Mental Development**

Practices for mental development include a framework or structure for understanding the Natural Mind.

One must develop the common wish to develop a mind of compassion, wishing to free all beings from suffering, and loving or wishing to conjoin them with happiness. When a person has reached a high degree of familiarity with the mind, we train the mind in a practice called ‘Tonglen’, in which we take suffering or defeat upon oneself, and give relief or victory to others. Ultimately, this is a way of training your mind to expand



the altruistic wish to benefit living beings and society by considering others to be more important than oneself, to prevent war, attacks on innocent people, and many such problems of our day.

According to Buddhism, the basis for seeking an understanding of ultimate truth is the view of interdependence. We investigate these truths by alternating the scientific method of investigation with the meditative experience of direct observation.

Some of the other aspects of mental development are:

- the non-inherent existence of things
- seeing things as lacking a self-existent nature that doesn't depend on any cause or condition
- emptiness as taught in the Prajnaparamita Sutra, the stages of meditation, the presentation of the five paths, and emptiness as explained in the Vehicle of the Perfections, appearing in the aspect of a Goddess
- teachings on the practice of the Great Mother of the Sphere, Sherab-jama which is the ultimate nature of Buddha mind
- Maha madhyamaka, the Great Middle Way

- Mahamudra, the Great Seal.

In connection with the tantric view, all beings are primordially enlightened. There is:

- an introduction to the unfabricated true nature of mind, the sole foundation for the Tantric view
- how to be free from extreme views of deception, obscuration, and deviation
- how to purify ordinary appearances and grasping with three types of Tantric samadhis or meditative absorptions
- training the mind in the Generation and Completion stages of Tantra (which by means of the three samadhis, purify the desire realm birth, death, and bardo, by visualizing and seeing them as the three enlightened bodies, or kayas, of a Buddha).

The Six Yogas, the method paths of secret mantra coming from Mother Tantra, has four categories:

- taking the channels, winds, and drops on the method path of the syllables
- improving the practice of clear light mind by means of taking dreams on the path
- taking death on the path, which shows the path

to take during death and the intermediate state (bardo), ushering and welcoming us to liberation and happiness in future lives, including the path of propulsion or transference—Phowa, which escorts you to abodes of bliss and Buddhahood by a forceful method

- taking frightening places on the path; the practice of Chod gives more courage to practice.

These are important path practices and methods for mental development.

### **Quintessential Wisdom**

The third category of Kunsang Gar Wisdom is Quintessential Wisdom. This is the teaching of Pure Dzogchen, considered to be the very peak of the nine vehicles. This involves introduction to the true nature of your mind and training in the practices of Trechod, Cutting Through to Primordial Purity, and Thögel, Direct Crossing or Spontaneous Presence. This is the basis of the previously mentioned Tantric view, the singular base of primordial enlightenment. This is not just a realization of the tantric system, but a door to this special quality spontaneously present within us. On the basis of actual practice, not simply believing,

one develops definite realization or direct experience.

The Pure Dzogchen view acts as the antidote to ignorance and automatically and naturally liberates ignorance directly. The instruction enables us to practice the primordial Enlightened Buddha Mind, Samantabhadra, directly. It becomes the antidote to ignorance and delusions in a very expedient way. It is the swiftest path to attaining the resultant state. Its view is without prejudice, unbiased; its meditation is the great equanimity. Its conduct involves nothing to adopt or abandon; and its result is the absence of hopes and fears; it has such incredible special qualities!

First, one must begin with identifying mind, then identifying the mind's true nature. Then you reveal your wisdom mind through the three great stages of meditative practice: Thun-gom or Session Meditation, Ngang-gom or Meditation Carried into Activity, and Long-gom or Vast Expanse Meditation. Pure Dzogchen or Natural Mind meditation is an extremely powerful practice for transcending conceptual thought and automatically dispelling problems of daily life and bringing benefit into being. Through this practice, many have attained the wondrous result of rainbow body in one lifetime. Since this is what really brings the

greatest benefit to practitioners like ourselves, it is our principal practice.

The sources of the Wisdom taught at Kunsang Gar are Tibetan Buddhist teachings practiced by people traditionally and in present day. Part of it comes from the nine vehicles of Bon Zhang Zhung, the ancient knowledge of Tibet taught by its founder Shenrab Miwo. The remaining part comes from India, from the teachings of Buddhism's founder Shakyamuni Buddha, and its scriptural tradition of commentaries by the masters of Nalanda Monastery that spread throughout Tibet. Although these two scriptural traditions have different histories, the subject matter of both is included in the three categories of Kunsang Gar Wisdom.

For more information on how Kunsang Gar  
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We also seek to engage in dialogue with practitioners of other religions, such as Judaism, Christianity, Native American traditions, and others, as a way of fostering mutual respect and harmony. We recognize that the same core values of loving kindness, compassion, and wisdom underlie all true spirituality. Whatever types of good advice are conducive to peace and happiness, regardless of origin, we will embrace in order to benefit others. This is the main purpose to which we adhere.