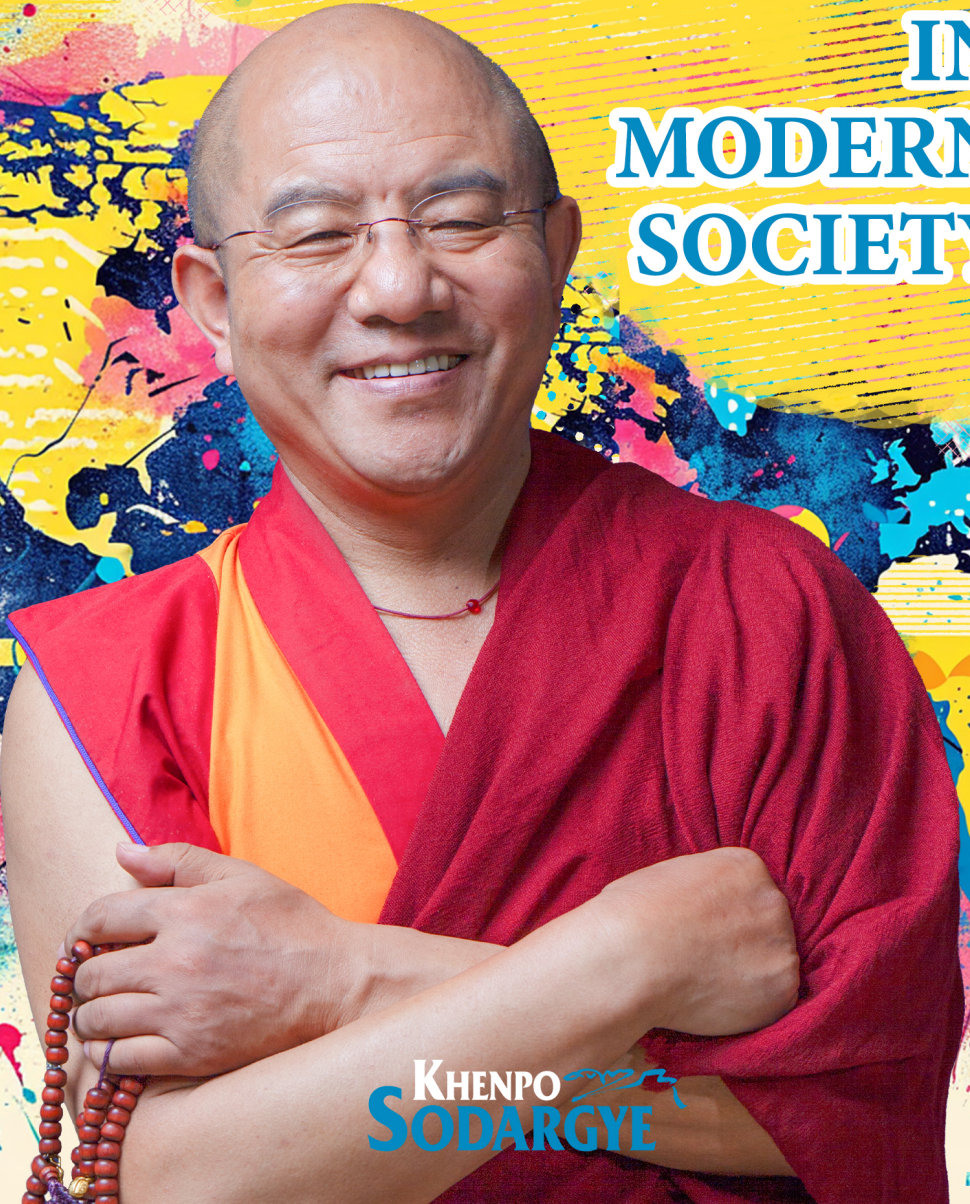


KHENPO'S  
TALKS

INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MANAGEMENT

# MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION IN MODERN SOCIETY



KHENPO  
SODARGYE

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# **Mindfulness and Meditation in Modern Society**

International University of Management, Windhoek, Namibia

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**Khenpo Sodargye**

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**W**hen we let our minds rest naturally, our mental disturbances and afflictions, such as fear, naturally dissolve, and we perceive the purity of mind. When our mind is pure, we begin to perceive the world around us with purity and clarity as well.



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# KHENPO SODARGYE RINPOCHE

## FINDING CALM AMIDST SOCIAL TURMOIL

It gives me great joy to exchange ideas and share the dharma in different settings. Over the years, I have had the opportunity to visit many universities, companies, organizations, and monasteries to share teachings on the dharma. I also regularly visit prisons to teach meditation and spend time with children at orphanages.

Through these experiences, I have come to feel that regardless of our identity or skin color, we all share a fundamental need for a calm and peaceful mind. With inner peace, we are better equipped to navigate even the most difficult circumstances with ease and resilience. On the other hand, when our minds are restless or agitated, even minor challenges can feel overwhelming, and in extreme cases, this distress can lead to irreversible consequences, such as suicide.

Before coming to Africa, I traveled through Europe and witnessed widespread public discontent expressed through protests in several countries. In Germany, for example, citizens took to

the streets to protest Chancellor Angela Merkel's decision to accept such a large number of refugees from countries such as Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq. In France, Air France employees, supported by unions, staged strikes to protest layoffs and salary reductions. Also in the UK, junior doctors protested in London because they were unhappy about proposed changes to their contracts, which they believed would mean longer hours and less pay.

Later, I came to Africa, with my first stop in South Africa. When I visited the University of Cape Town, students there were protesting rising tuition fees. When I traveled to Lesotho later, I came across drivers gathered outside government offices in Maseru, protesting that South African drivers were taking away their business. It felt like everywhere I went, there was some kind of protest happening. Of course, none of these demonstrations were directed at me; rather, people were taking to the streets to make their voices heard.

I arrived in Namibia yesterday and have not heard of any protests here so far. I really hope there will not be any before I leave; otherwise, this whole trip of mine will be marked by the memory of "protests." My next destination is Japan, and I

have heard that public demonstrations sometimes occur there as well.

Of course, it is understandable why people protest. Social injustices and other objective issues can sometimes lead to widespread dissatisfaction, prompting people to voice their concerns and demands through demonstrations. This is quite common in democratic societies and is often seen as an expression of freedom.

However, not everyone participates in protests for the same reason. Some people may be influenced by personal desires or feelings of dissatisfaction, while others might be motivated by resentment or a sense of imbalance. It is fair to say that emotions like greed and anger are powerful forces in our world that can cause conflicts and unrest.

Seeing these turbulences and challenges in society, I feel motivated to do what I can, in my own small way, to help others find more peace within themselves, adjust their mindset, and hopefully bring some benefit to society.

I became a monk in 1985 and have now been practicing Buddhism for 30 years. Throughout this journey, I have felt at ease and free-spirited, rarely troubled by worry or suffering. My

path to monastic life began after I graduated from a teacher's college. When I made this decision, many of my classmates pitied my choice and expressed their concern, saying things like, "You may starve in the future," or "It is so pitiful to become a monk."

However, when we had a class reunion in 2006, twenty years after graduation, we each took a moment to reflect on our lives. Many of my classmates had faced tears and hardships from divorce, family issues, and other life challenges. Only my life had been peaceful and untroubled.

Among regions and communities that are unfamiliar with Buddhism, people's reactions to monastic life can vary: some admire it, some doubt it, and others may criticize or gossip about it. But regardless of our identity and nationality, as long as we cultivate a peaceful and balanced mind, we can enjoy a happy life.



## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MEDITATION AND TECHNIQUES ACROSS TRADITIONS

Today, my talk will include two parts. First, I will briefly introduce some Buddhist meditation methods for calming the mind. Second, I will share some reflections and suggestions drawn from my recent experiences in Africa.

Before introducing specific meditation techniques, let us first consider why meditation is so valuable. Many of us face various forms of stress and pressure in our daily lives—whether from work, family, relationships, or other sources. To effectively cope with these challenges, we need to cultivate a deep sense of calm and tranquility in both body and mind. Only in this way can we live a healthy, balanced, and fulfilling life.

The significance of meditation for mental well-being is now increasingly recognized around the world. During my visits to universities in the United States, Canada, and Europe, I have noticed that many institutions have established meditation societies or centers dedicated to the study of the mind. This development reflects a growing awareness that, while science has made tremendous progress in explaining the physical world, including its structures, functions, and classifications, it often

struggles to understand and address the problems of the mind or human consciousness. In many ways, the inner workings of the mind remain a vast frontier, still largely uncharted by current scientific methods. For this reason, understanding the mind through meditation is more vital now than ever before.

Different religious traditions have developed their own unique approaches to meditation. For example, in Sufism—the mystical dimension of Islam—there are meditation practices such as mindful breathing, reciting prayers, and stilling the mind. The Bahá'í Faith, which has a strong presence in Africa, also emphasizes meditation and prayer as a means of connecting with the divine. Christianity, too, offers its own forms of meditation, such as contemplative prayer with icons of Jesus, the Virgin Mary, or the saints, as a means to experience the love of God.

Buddhism, of course, encompasses a wide variety of meditation techniques across its different traditions: Theravada Buddhism, Han Buddhism, and Tibetan Buddhism. Many of these techniques are adopted by many university meditation societies today.

In Theravada Buddhism, which is widely practiced in countries such as Thailand and Sri Lanka, one of the central practices is the Four Applications of Mindfulness. By applying close

mindfulness to the body, feelings, mind, and phenomena, practitioners gradually come to understand the true nature of the self.

Tibetan Buddhism offers a practice known as the Nine Ways of Resting the Mind. This is a progressive method designed to cultivate mental stillness. Through nine distinct stages, practitioners are finally able to rest the mind on its object naturally and maintain this state effortlessly.

In the Chan school of Han Buddhism, many practitioners have realized the nature of mind through Chan meditation. A notable meditation technique is called “investigating huatou.” The huatou is a question that you ask yourself as a way to practice. By persistently investigating a short question, such as “Who am I?”, practitioners may experience a sudden insight into the true nature of the self.

## THE METHODS TO RECOGNIZING OUR TRUE SELVES

Regardless of the meditation method we choose to still the mind, the key is to understand and recognize our true selves. Just because of a lack of understanding of the self, people often carry unresolved emotions such as anger within themselves. With anger, various conflicts arise, whether it is between tribes, neighbors, parents, or children. When we are able to calm our minds and recognize our true nature, many of life's problems like these can be readily resolved.

How should we understand our true nature? There are two main approaches. The first is through analytical investigation—using wisdom to examine what this “I” actually is. On the surface, what we call “I” appears to be a combination of the physical body and consciousness. To sustain the body, we need various material conditions in life; to satisfy the mind, we seek spiritual fulfillment, faith, and the pursuit of inner beauty.

But what exactly is this “I”? Is it the body, or is it the mind? If it is the body, which part is it—the upper, lower, or middle? If it is the mind, then where is this mind located? Through persistent investigation, we begin to see that this “I” is merely a label or a

construct. It does not truly exist as a solid, separate entity. And everything is empty in its essence. With this realization, much of our distress and suffering naturally falls away.

The second approach is to allow the mind to rest naturally. When the mind becomes still and undisturbed, its true nature reveals itself. However, when our minds are constantly agitated by thoughts and emotions, it becomes difficult to recognize our true selves. The more we cling to our thoughts, the more suffering we experience.

It is often said that our mind is like a camel—the tighter we try to grip the reins, the more it resists and struggles. But if we let go and allow it to relax, it will gradually become calm and gentle on its own. Just as if we leave muddy water undisturbed, it will slowly become clear. In the same way, when we let our minds rest naturally, our mental disturbances and afflictions, such as fear, naturally dissolve, and we perceive the purity of mind. When our mind is pure, we begin to perceive the world around us with purity and clarity as well.

Throughout history, many individuals who once struggled with restless minds, anxiety, or emotional turmoil have discovered profound inner peace and awakened to the true nature of the mind through meditation. These moments of awakening have

completely transformed their lives. From that point forward, regardless of where they lived or what they did, their hearts have remained filled with joy.

This state is not reserved for a select few—it is available to anyone who is dedicated to practicing meditation. When we attain this state, we uncover a treasure within our own minds, one far more valuable than any material wealth we might seek in the world today.

## THE “WALNUTS” IN LIFE

In our lives, we seek many forms of wisdom, but it is crucial to discern which are truly valuable and essential for our well-being. Let me share a story that illustrates this point:

In a quiet mountain valley, there lived an old Chan master. Among his disciples was a young monk who was exceptionally diligent. Every day, he busied himself with alms rounds, cleaning, and various chores, working from dawn until dusk. While his efforts seemed commendable, he was struggling inwardly.

One day, the disciple could no longer contain his frustration. He went to his master and asked, “I am busy and tired every day, but my practice does not seem to be progressing. Why is that?”

The old Chan master asked him to bring a bowl, and then instructed him to fill it with walnuts. The young disciple quickly filled the bowl with a dozen or so walnuts, reaching the brim.

“Is it full?” the master asked.

“Yes,” replied the disciple. “If I add any more, they will fall out.”

The master said, "Alright, now fill it with some rice."

As the disciple poured rice into the gaps between the walnuts, he began to realize something: "Oh, so the bowl was not actually full just now."

The master asked again, "Is it full now?"

"Yes, now it is full," the disciple replied.

The master then said, "Now, pour in some water." The disciple poured water into the bowl, filling even the smallest gaps.

"Is it full this time?" the master asked. The disciple hesitated, unsure how to answer.

The old master smiled and said, "Go get a spoonful of salt." The disciple did so, and the master dissolved the salt in the water. Not a drop overflowed.

At this point, the old master asked, "What does this show?"

"I understand," replied the young disciple. "It means that if you try hard enough, you can always find time for more things."

The old master shook his head gently. "That is not what I was trying to teach you."

He emptied the bowl and held it up. "Let us try it the other way around." He first put in the salt, then poured in water. When the bowl was full, he tried to add rice, but the water overflowed. Then, when he tried to add the walnuts, there was no room left.

The master looked at the disciple and asked, "Can you fit the walnuts in now?"

In that moment, the young disciple understood: life is like an empty bowl. If we fill it first with trivial things, there will be no room for what is truly important.

So, what are the "walnuts" in our lives? I believe that meditation is one of them. When we cultivate a balanced mindset through meditation, we can remain happy regardless of the challenges we face at work, at home, or in any other aspect of life.



## CONSISTENT EFFORT IS THE KEY TO PRACTICING MEDITATION

When practicing meditation, it is essential to maintain consistent effort and engage in long-term practice. Just as with any meaningful pursuit, it is difficult to achieve significant results in a short period of time. When we first begin to meditate, the mind often resists settling down. As soon as we try to calm it, we may find our attention jumping from one idea to another. Some people may feel discouraged by this and worry that they are failing at meditation, but in reality, this is a completely normal experience.

Meditation is a gradual process. At first, our minds are like a rushing mountain stream—turbulent and constantly in motion. With continued practice, the turbulence begins to subside, like water flowing over level ground. Over time, the mind becomes even more peaceful, like the calm surface of the ocean. Through persistent effort, the mind can eventually become completely still and undisturbed, like the vast, open sky.

At this stage, we are able to maintain this state of stillness for as long as we wish. Even when great changes or challenges arise in our lives, our minds remain steady and unmoved.

With continued practice, the benefits of meditation become increasingly evident; however, the most crucial thing is to persist and not give up during this process.

This principle is well illustrated by the story of Akinori Kimura, a Japanese apple grower. When his wife developed severe skin inflammation from chemical fertilizers, and after reading a book on natural farming, Kimura decided to grow apple trees without any chemical fertilizers or pesticides, which was considered impossible at the time.

Kimura's journey was anything but easy. For years, his apple trees suffered from pests and disease, and many nearly died. Despite repeated setbacks and failures, Kimura refused to give up. He continued to experiment, learn from nature, and persevere in his efforts.

After eight years of struggle, Kimura finally witnessed a breakthrough. His apple trees began to blossom and bear fruit—apples that were not only free of chemicals and exceptionally delicious, but also remarkably resistant to oxidation and spoilage. Word of his success spread quickly, and his apples became highly sought after, celebrated for their natural flavor and remarkable quality.

Kimura's story serves as a powerful reminder that spiritual practice, like his journey in natural farming, requires patience, perseverance, and dedication. Progress may be slow and filled with challenges, but with dedication, the results can be truly extraordinary.

## REFLECTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR AFRICA'S YOUTH

Now, based on my observations during my time in Africa, I would like to share some thoughts and suggestions with you. While I am not certain that all of them are entirely appropriate, I offer them sincerely for your consideration.

Although my stay in Africa has been relatively brief, I have noticed that there are still significant gaps in areas such as living standards, healthcare, and housing compared to many other parts of the world. Addressing these challenges and working toward positive change to transform the future of African nations is essential.

However, this cannot be achieved solely by relying on international aid, government policies, or certain organizations. Nor is it realistic to expect that a single visitor like myself can shoulder such responsibility. The most crucial step in making meaningful transformations, among other necessary actions, is to first identify the root causes of these issues.

One of the root causes may be the presence of misconceptions and insufficient connection with the outside world. During my time here, I have had the opportunity to interact with many

local people, and I have been deeply impressed by their warmth, openness, and gentle nature. At the same time, I have observed that certain misconceptions or outdated perspectives persist within some communities. Furthermore, there are significant gaps between some African nations and the rest of the world, particularly in terms of engagement with the international community and progress in development. It would be highly beneficial for teachers and students present to focus on bridging these gaps and addressing these misconceptions.

For example, I have recently learned that the average life expectancy in some African countries remains relatively low. In certain nations, it is only in the forties or fifties, and in some cases, it can be as low as the thirties. Some of the main reasons for this are poverty and the high rates of diseases, especially HIV, which can lead to AIDS. Unfortunately, in some areas, there is a dangerous misconception that transmitting HIV to others can cure the infected person. This belief is not only incorrect but also extremely harmful.

The challenge of HIV infection is not unique to Africa; it is a concern in many other parts of the world, including Tibetan regions. In recent years, we have encouraged Tibetan students and teachers to share knowledge about HIV, including effective

prevention methods, with local communities. However, here in Africa, there is a pressing need for greater support—and expansion of educational and outreach programs—focused on HIV prevention.

According to the UNAIDS reports, in 2013, about 25 million people in sub-Saharan Africa were living with HIV/AIDS, representing nearly two-thirds of all cases worldwide. That same year, the region saw an estimated 1.5 million new HIV infections, including 210,000 among children. Tragically, 1.1 million people died from AIDS-related causes in 2013.

In 2014, sub-Saharan Africa recorded about 1.4 million new HIV infections, accounting for 66% of the global total. Around 190,000 of these cases occurred in children. Without continued and strengthened efforts, the impact of HIV/AIDS will remain devastating across the African continent.

That is why I sincerely hope that schools and teachers here in Africa will actively engage with local communities, including tribes and villages, to share accurate information and address misconceptions about HIV. By increasing awareness and challenging outdated beliefs, we can work together to build a

healthier future for all. Every life is valuable, and by working together, we can help ensure that no one is left without support.

My second suggestion relates to the education of children. Improving education is never an easy task, but it is essential to strive to ensure that every child has access to proper education.

During my visits to several schools here, I noticed that many children, especially girls, drop out of school prematurely. Many girls often enter marriage or unions before the age of 18. According to a 2014 UNICEF report, more than 700 million women alive today were married before they turned 18, and more than one in three were married before the age of 15.

This challenge is not unique to Africa—countries in South Asia, such as Nepal and India, face similar issues. The World Health Organization reported in the same year that in low- and middle-income countries, over 30% of girls are married before they turn 18, and about 14% before they reach 15.

Such traditional practices have a direct and devastating impact on girls' education. Generally speaking, our values and worldview continue to develop well beyond adulthood, often

evolving throughout early and middle adulthood. Some researchers suggest that the period between approximately 20 and 40 years of age is particularly crucial for personal growth, identity formation, and the accumulation of life experiences.

I understand that you may not readily accept these perspectives for the time being. But I sincerely hope that, in the future, every child will recognize the importance of education and pursue their learning to the fullest extent possible. By doing so, they can acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to make meaningful contributions to their families, communities, and nations.

Before I conclude, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the chancellor and the teachers present today for making this exchange possible. I encourage local teachers and students to approach different religions and traditions with open minds, and to welcome new knowledge and ideas from around the world with a spirit of openness and inclusivity. Some old beliefs may need to be re-examined, but that does not mean we should discard the valuable traditions that have shaped us. I sincerely hope that intellectuals in Africa will pay close attention to these issues and help lead the way forward. Thank you all.

## QUESTION AND ANSWER

**QUESTION 1** My question is: How can you get out of your mind, or can the mind get out of you?

**KHENPO SODARGYE** This question touches on the relationship between the body and mind. It is important to understand that the mind exists independently of the physical body. It continues from past lives into this life, and from this life into future lives. Many scientists are now exploring this topic, and I have also written several books on the subject.

If we look at our life experiences, we observe that each individual's habits and preferences are different from those of others. When we leave our bodies at the end of this life, according to the habits we have developed during our lifetime, our consciousnesses will continue to take rebirth as humans, animals, or other forms of life. This is understood from the perspective of the cycle of rebirth.

I have heard that many African spiritual traditions practice ancestor worship, as they believe that the spirits of deceased family members transition to the ancestral realm and continue to

influence the lives of the living. Likewise, just as we follow in the footsteps of our ancestors, after we pass away, our consciousness will also persist. Only that the state of our consciousness at that time is different from the state of our consciousness in this life.

From the perspective of meditation, when we meditate, our minds can become calm and settled. But when disturbed by thoughts and emotions, the mind wanders from one object to another, and then returns to a state of stillness when thoughts and emotions subside. It is somewhat akin to the dreaming mind: in a dream, the mind wanders about, creating various experiences, but it is pacified upon waking. But in Buddhism, this wandering, dreaming mind is seen as a confused state of consciousness.

**QUESTION 2** My question is, how much influence do external disturbances have on the mind?

**KHENPO SODARGYE** How much external disturbances affect our minds really depends on how much we have trained our minds. Through sustained practice, we can actually reach a point where even big disruptions do not bother us much.

For example, my teacher, His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche, demonstrated extraordinary meditative concentration from an early age. In the 1950s, during a period of great social unrest in the Tibetan regions, gunfire was commonplace. While he was studying and meditating, bullets would sometimes land nearby, strike trees, or hit the caves around him. Despite these dangers, he always remained completely calm and undisturbed.

This shows that with a well-trained mind or high level of meditative attainment, even major external disturbances—such as gunfire—can have minimal effect on us. On the other hand, if our minds are not well-trained, even minor noises, like the sound of cars at night, can make it difficult for us to sleep. Noisy neighbors or voices in the next room at a hotel might easily disturb or even irritate us. All of these reactions are closely related to the state of our own minds.

**QUESTION 3** In your opinion, what are the effective approaches to addressing the issues Africa faces in areas such as education and HIV/AIDS prevention? Is it possible to cultivate a shared sense of responsibility, where the problems of others become our own, and we work together to solve them?

**KHENPO SODARGYE** I understand that these issues are difficult to resolve in a short period of time. In some countries, leaders or governments may have held back certain advanced ideas from the general public in order to preserve traditional customs. This could be one reason why these issues are not easily solved.

However, if the younger generation and those who have received a good education in Africa begin to shift their mindset, embrace new ideas, and share them with others, gradual progress can happen. They can start by introducing these ideas within small circles, which can then be shared with larger communities.

Many significant changes in the world have originated from small-scale efforts like these. And today, unlike in the past, it is much easier to bring about change. Many countries have gradually developed over time, evolving from tribal and village-based societies into more globalized cultures.

African countries have the same potential for transformation. Although change may not occur within two or three years, if strong efforts are made at every level—within each nation and tribe—eventually there will be a shift in mindset, from national leaders to local communities. Once people adopt the right perspectives, these longstanding problems can be fundamentally

addressed. Therefore, it is crucial for young people to work hard and take initiative.

I have heard that African people are very kind, but at the same time, they may be perceived as less industrious compared to some other regions, such as Asia. If this is true, then even if businesses are established in Africa, they may still be dominated by people from other countries or ethnic groups in the future. If the younger generation begins to work diligently now, even if they do not see immediate results, the next generation will surely benefit. That is why it is so important to make an effort today.

**QUESTION 4** There are so many religions in the world, but why do so many people still commit suicide, get divorced, steal, or suffer from depression?

**KHENPO SODARGYE** Let me answer your question with a story. Once, a soap maker met a Chan master. He said to the master, “Buddhism has existed for more than two thousand years, yet people still commit evil deeds like stealing and harming each other. What impact has Buddhism really had?” The Chan master remained silent.

After a while, they passed by a group of children playing in the mud. The Chan master turned to the soap maker and said, “You claim that soap can make people clean, but look at these children—they are still covered in mud, even though soap has existed for thousands of years.”

The soap maker replied, “Master, unless people actually use the soap, it cannot make them clean.”

“Exactly,” said the Chan master. “Soap cannot cleanse anyone unless it is used. In the same way, Buddhist teachings cannot change people unless they are truly practiced in daily life.” Upon hearing this, the soap maker suddenly understood.

**QUESTION 5** What is the purpose of human existence in this world?

**KHENPO SODARGYE** Each of us may have a different answer to this question. For some people, the purpose of life is simply to survive—to avoid hunger and illness, and to get through each day. For others, it is not just about their own survival; they hope to bring hope and strength to those around them, helping others to live better lives as well. There are also those who seek something deeper—they aspire to transcend the cycle

of birth and death and to discover a greater and more profound meaning to life itself.

**QUESTION 6** Can meditation remove negative thoughts from the mind?

**KHENPO SODARGYE** In my own experience, meditation has brought about significant changes in my mind. When I was a student, I had a terrible temper and often got into fights with my classmates. I would often feel irritated or restless. For example, if I heard cars outside at night when I was trying to sleep, the noise would make me feel annoyed and agitated. However, after I began practicing meditation, my feelings of anger and resentment toward others gradually disappeared. Now, no matter where I am, as long as I have a place to rest at night, even if it is noisy outside, I no longer feel disturbed or distressed.

This transformation made me realize just how powerful meditation can be. I sincerely hope that everyone—especially those struggling with inner turmoil or involved in domestic or social violence—can have access to meditation, a kind of “miracle medicine” for the mind. Although not everyone may have the opportunity to experience it, I still hope that as many people as possible can benefit from this kind of spiritual richness. That is

why I often travel around to teach meditation, sharing it with others out of good intentions and without any conditions.

**QUESTION 7** I have studied Buddhism for many years and sometimes practice meditation, but as soon as I step out of my room and interact with people like taxi drivers, all my old habits and negative emotions come flooding back. What can I do?

**KHENPO SODARGYE** Persistent effort in meditation is essential. Think of it like learning to fly a plane—it takes many years of dedicated training to become a pilot. In the same way, our minds have long been accustomed to wandering freely and being undisciplined, so it is quite challenging to suddenly make it calm and still. It would be like expecting to turn a spoiled, mischievous child into a well-behaved student who follows the rules overnight. So, this is simply part of the process.

However, if you continue meditating, you will notice gradual changes. For example, you might still find yourself arguing with a taxi driver, but the intensity of your reaction will likely decrease over time. At first, you might become very angry, even to the point of wanting to fight. But with ongoing practice, the next time you are in a similar situation, your anger will be less intense and will dissipate more quickly. This is a sign

of progress. Any genuine transformation of the mind occurs gradually; it requires time and effort. That is why continued practice is so important.

**QUESTION 8** I once read a book that claims meditation can lead to supernatural experiences, such as changing your body temperature. Is this really possible, and have you had any similar experiences in your own meditation practice?

**KHENPO SODARGYE** I can share some experiences from my own meditation practice. One is that I used to be very afraid of death, but now I am much less so. I have come to understand that birth and death are natural parts of the cycle of life. I consider this shift in perspective to be a meaningful sign of progress in my practice.

I have also noticed some changes in my physical sensations. I wear almost the same clothes throughout the year. In winter, it gets very cold at our academy, but I do not feel particularly cold when I am teaching there. And when I travel to hot cities in the summer, I still wear the same clothes I wear in winter, and I do not feel hot either. However, this might simply be a matter of getting used to the weather, rather than a direct result of meditation.

But the most significant change I have experienced is in my attitude toward others. Whether someone is an enemy or a stranger, I have been able to treat everyone with love and kindness. And I have continued to make steady progress in this aspect.

I have shared some of my meditation experiences with you, so I would now like to ask: do you meditate? How is your progress? Would you be willing to share your experience with me as well? (Audience laughs)

**QUESTION 9** What benefits does meditation bring to work and daily life?

**KHENPO SODARGYE** You might have read stories of Steve Jobs, the founder of Apple. It is said that Jobs maintained a regular meditation practice throughout his life and often attended meditation retreats. This helped him sharpen his focus and work more efficiently, and allowed him to keep his mind free from external distractions and influences.

In everyday life, many people find that meditation brings a kind of inner strength or positive energy that benefits their family and friends, making those around them feel happier.

More importantly, people who meditate regularly often bring a sense of calm and peace to others—not just through what they say, but also through their smile, their presence, and even their gaze. In Buddhism, this strength or energy is referred to as “blessings.” This is one of the greatest merits or benefits of meditation.

For example, a woman once told me that when her husband meditates, even if she argues with him or even hits him, he remains completely calm and unmoved. So, meditation does have a unique power.

**QUESTION 10** Could you please recite some prayers for us and guide us in a short meditation?

**KHENPO SODARGYE** Certainly. (Khenpo recited prayers in Tibetan...)

Now, let us take a few moments to meditate together. Please sit comfortably and keep your body still. Observe your state of mind. If distracting thoughts arise, notice them and bring your attention back, allowing your mind to settle once again...

## Dedication

May the merit resulting from this piece of work contribute  
in the greatest possible measure to the long life of all great  
masters, to the flourishing of the Buddhadharma,  
and to the welfare of all sentient beings.

It is always our wish to present a work of the highest quality to the readers so that anyone who reads this text would find inspiration. So we would very much appreciate your comments, feedback or suggestions for how this text might be improved and made more valuable. You are also greatly welcomed if you want to make a contribution to any of our other projects of translation. Please email us at: *translation@khenposodargye.org*

