

## **A Brief Biography of Lord Jigten Sumgon and Commentary on the Bodhicitta Training as taught by HH Drikung Kabgyon Chetsang Rinpiche**

Lord Jigten Sumgon was seen to have extraordinary loving kindness and compassion even as a child. While on retreat, meditating in a cave for seven years he contracted leprosy. At that time in Tibet this was a terrible and hopeless disease so he prepared to leave his body by praying to Chenrezig. While doing so he compared his condition to that of other beings. In this way he developed great compassion for the suffering of others. By thinking of the condition of others he went into the samadhi of loving kindness that night. He felt the sickness leaving him in the form of serpents. By morning he attained the enlightenment and the Mahamudra state of Vajradhara. He later composed a song about his experience, but said it took three days because he thought people would be unable to believe anyone could attain enlightenment in one night.

He went on to cure innumerable people of leprosy and became so popular that he was called “the one who dreams away leprosy”. This took place early in his life and he called this period Loving Kindness with Unfavorable Conditions.” The remainder of his life was called “Pure Loving Kindness.”

Lord Jigten Sumgon’s teachings on bodhicitta gave several volumes of teachings on Bodhicitta. They were compiled by Sherab Che-nge Jungne. Of these there are mainly works called the “Great Instruction”. Generally, we know loving kindness as the wish for all sentient beings to be happy and compassion as the wish for all beings to be free from suffering, as in the Four Immeasurables.

Lord Jigten Sumgon’s teachings are summarized in two parts: how to recognize Bodhicitta and how to practice Bodhicitta.

It is important to know how to recognize Bodhicitta. In some traditions it starts with loving oneself, but in the Mahayana tradition, Bodhicitta is primarily directed towards loving others. We recognize it as a clear loving feeling. All

living beings have this feeling – that of a mother for her child, or a child for the mother. In Buddhahood, however, there is an absence of object. It is simply a joy to benefit others, to help.

To arouse Bodhicitta we see all beings as a small child, a baby, with a feeling of liking or loving, the desire to carry them in our arms, etc. Lord Jigten Sumgon says it is much more difficult to develop loving kindness than it is to develop compassion. If loving kindness arises relative to a loved one, it is considered impure loving kindness. If it arises for all beings, strangers, enemies, insects as it would for the most loveable small child, then it is pure.

How to practice of Loving Kindness has three parts: practice, accomplishment, and application.

**Practice:** The body in the seven point posture of meditation, with one's mouth a little bit smiling, legs crossed or in the lotus position, hands in the Touching the Earth Mudra as Buddha Shakyamuni. Usually one begins by contemplating the kindness of one's mother. Lord Jigten Sumgon predicted that in degenerate times this might be difficult. He stated that if in the future this is difficult, then use any other person who has benefited you greatly, such as a good friend or your spiritual teacher.

Because loving kindness is more difficult to fully realize than compassion, one should spend one to two weeks concentrating on recognizing the feeling of loving kindness. For the beginner who is going on the gradual path, raising a strong feeling takes an average of fifteen days. When the practice of loving kindness has been perfectly developed towards our mother, who has been most kind to us since our birth, taking care of us unselfishly, feeding us, we can then extend loving kindness to the people in our town or village. Then we extend it to all people south of Mt Meru then east west and north or the whole world. This one world is considered one unit or one world system. We then extend bodhicitta to 1000 worlds. This now becomes one world system, as we extend bodhicitta

again to 1000 to the third degree. This too is one unit or one world system. We now spread loving kindness to 3000 world systems. This is the sphere of influence of Buddha Sakyamuni the Three Great Thousand World Systems. We extend loving kindness to the innumerable infinite world systems of the east, south, west and north – below and above us; seeing all sentient beings of the 10 directions without exception as our mothers. We extend the heart felt wish for all beings boundless as the sky, with no boundary or limit to experience the four immeasurables. Beginning with our mother or loved one we gradually expand to include all sentient beings. If we cannot at first extend loving kindness to all beings, stop and begin again with the pure feeling of bodhicitta, and then, step by step, extend until we generate fully in all ten directions to all sentient beings.

**Accomplishment:** Having recognized Bodhicitta and practiced accordingly; go to a lonely place and sit in deep samadhi. By this meditation you will receive great power. To practice application, you then use this power to benefit all beings, overcoming disease war famine drought etc. If you see an area of the country with such unfavorable conditions, you sit in samadhi and develop love not only for the human beings of that area, but all living beings in that land. In this way unfavorable conditions are pacified. By wishing “In this area, may disease, war, famine be subdued” the conditions are pacified.

At the time the Buddha was leaving this world, through his miraculous powers all the weapons of Saravasti were turned into flowers. By witnessing this even a non-Buddhist attained enlightenment. Also once in Saravasti a great sickness was spreading and Ananda’s loving kindness subdued the disease. In Lord Jigten Sumgon’s instructions, it states that perhaps during the time of Guru Padmasambhava, the Mongols attacking Samaye Monastery were pacified by loving kindness. If you experience unfavorable conditions caused by spirits, demons or other curses, sit in meditation on loving kindness to ward off obstructers. In this way you can overcome your difficulties. There are many stories of the efficacy of loving kindness meditation. If you want to accomplish something for yourself and others in a certain direction, you can focus loving

kindness in that direction. Develop loving kindness for all beings in that direction, the humans, non humans spirits, etc. You can thus fulfill your purpose. One can overcome spirits, demons and non humans with loving kindness.

Loving kindness is also very important on such special occasions as when giving empowerments, teaching and consecrating statues. On these occasions you begin by meditating on loving kindness, extending it towards all beings – humans, non-humans, spirits and demons – of that area and then spread to all worlds. Again, to begin practicing, start with a small area and gradually spread loving kindness like the ripples caused like as a stone dropping in a pool of water. In this way your meditative concentration is not lost.

When consecrating new statues of a Buddha, sit in meditation on loving kindness, develop Samadhi of loving kindness, then sprinkle the statue with flowers. This is the best consecration. Similarly, when doing pujas, if you do pujas in a state of loving kindness, the auspicious conditions and wishes are fulfilled.

Loving kindness is especially important for spiritual teachers. When leading rituals, giving empowerments, loving kindness is indispensable. One cannot function without it. Even if you want to heal someone from sickness or make a tantra offering, you cannot do it without loving kindness. What small amounts of realization you possess, might be lost in the process without loving kindness.

You can see the blessing power of loving kindness in daily life. A physician who knows the four tantras but has not developed loving kindness cannot effectively heal. While someone who has less knowledge and cultivates loving kindness does heal. If a yogi wants to heal someone with a spirit or demon possessing them, and if the yogi does not have proper knowledge of loving kindness, he may become sick or possessed himself. It is the same way with tantric knowledge. If a practitioner tries to heal without loving kindness, someone else might become sick or possessed. It is also the case with yogis practicing in isolation in the mountains. Whether they have good karma or not,

experience demons or not, have their wishes fulfilled or not; all of this depends on their knowledge of loving kindness.

At the time of application of the power of application of loving kindness (giving empowerments, healing, consecrating statues) you should be very careful. While you are in Samadhi, if your state of meditation is disturbed by a negative thought or if a person disturbs you, your meditation becomes useless. While sitting in meditation on loving kindness with a view to apply, concentrate on that application specifically. If your attention shifts, for example from war to famine, then the famine might be relieved but your main aim was not accomplished. Or if, for example, a new statue is in front of you and your eyes shift to a statue in the distance, then that far statue is consecrated, not the one you intended. At the time of application, your body speech and mind should be controlled and disciplined. You should be in a state of mindfulness and awareness, not distracted for even a moment. Allow no negative thoughts to arise. In the case of a statue, never lose attention to the object, even as you are scattering flowers over it. In certain texts relating to consecration, it is said that the long ceremony or puja is only the outer ceremony of consecration. When a person is in the state of Mahamudra, watches or gazes at the statue, it is really consecrated. It is the same with the state of loving kindness. In developing this state there are infinite benefits for oneself and others. One achieves one's aims and goals as well.

The benefits of practicing loving kindness are often mentioned in the sutras. They are summarized by Nargajuna in his "Letter To a King". One is respected by humans and non-humans alike. One is protected by those beings and they will never harm you. Everyone is happy with you. Your mind is filled with joy. You will never be harmed by weapons or persons. Your fame will spread in all directions. After death you will be reborn in the highest realm of Bhrama. By practicing loving kindness, you accumulate much merit and wisdom, leading towards Buddhahood. If you practice generosity three times a day, for many days, you create much merit. But if you meditate even for a moment on loving kindness, the merit is seven times greater. By practicing loving kindness, one is

not attacked by demons or spirits nor does one experience such things as quarreling or fighting. Lord Jigten Sumgon was once in an area of Tibet when a crop was affected by frost and failed. He saw this and sat in loving kindness. Since that time, in an area that can be covered by a one person walking in a day, there has never again been a frost.

Loving kindness practice is very important for your private life as well. If you can sit in loving kindness Samadhi, you can spread peace and harmony to your whole family. It is a direct antidote to fear and hatred. Everything is interconnected. In society at large, loving kindness creates peace and harmony which overcomes war. Why are there so many unfavorable conditions? Our minds are functioning in the state opposite of loving kindness, with thoughts of fear, hatred and aggressiveness. Subdue the mind! If you consider Dharma practice, the main task is to subdue the mind in order to be free from samsara.

The main cause of enlightenment is Bodhicitta. The seed of enlightenment is Bodhicitta. Lord Jigten Sumgon states that enlightenment itself is the manifestation of Bodhicitta, or embodiment of Bodhicitta. Just as the manifestation of hatred is hell. Enlightenment is also dependent on loving kindness and compassion. In the words of Lord Phagmodrupa "Bodhicitta is like a plant. The earth and moisture that nourish it are loving kindness and compassion. Bodhicitta is the result." The essence of all Buddha's teachings are love compassion and Bodhicitta. If we practice these, there is no doubt we will achieve Buddhahood.

Sherab Che-nge Jungne, the main disciple and attendant of Lord Jigten Sumgon, compiled many of his teachings, often referred to as Gongchig or "One Thought". Shortly before leaving the world, he declared that the substance of all the teachings, are the relative and absolute levels of Bodhicitta; love, compassion and Bodhicitta.