

# Lama Lena: Pure Dzogchen

[Lama Lena]: Good morning. Today, I promised you real Dzogchen.

Context is everything. Real Dzogchen exists. Does not exist. Neither exists nor does not exist. Nor does it both exist and not exist. In the context of Guru Yoga and Bodhicitta. Those are not two different things.

Guru Yoga is refuge. Refuge is inseparable from Bodhicitta. When you take refuge in primordial Buddhahood, Kuntuzangpo, Kuntuzangmo, you are taking refuge in all Buddhas of the four times. This is Guru Yoga. You are taking refuge in the spiritual friend who holds the door open and shows you where to go. You are taking refuge in Buddhahood. And in all those who have seen the true nature of reality. And all those who will have seen, will see, did see, are seeing. Because time and space, which are totally interwoven, are a construct of mind. Like all phenomena: functional around here, but no more really real than anything else.

In that context, your teacher and all teachers of the lineage. Not just one lineage, but all the lineages which point there. All the methods. All the 84,000 teachings of 84,000 Buddhas. That have, will, are, and will have. Beyond tense. Arising in, as, with primordial Buddhahood, Kuntuzangpo, Kuntuzangmo.

This includes all your teachers. Even the one who taught you to speak a language. To read and write a language. Because these are useful in finding and following a lineage. It all comes to the same point. All your teachers, all the teachers throughout time and space, arise from sentient beings, do they not?

All beings that walk and fly and crawl and swim and burrow and sit. In this and every reality. In all dimensions. Beyond the limitations of time and space. Somewhen in the infinite now, which is this now right here and now. And everywhere and every when. All beings recognize, actualize their innate, natural state of Buddhahood.

The love you feel for your parents. For your teachers. All beings are not other than your parents and your teachers. Every one of them. The fleas that bug you. The lice in your hair. The mice in your walls, the cockroaches under your cabinets. The birds in the yard. The fish in the sea. The worms in the earth. All of these have been, will have been, are your parents. Your teachers. Your lovers. Your babies.

Knowing this unequivocally, without question: this context of Guru Yoga and Bodhicitta exists. Does not exist. Neither exists nor does not exist. Both exists and does not exist. None of these. Yes.

Completion stage, Dzogchen. It simply is. Understanding that all is's and isn't's aren't. All the teeny tiny now. They're the same now. This now.

You have distractions. They're slightly different. They use different words. They have different names for each of you. "I'm not good enough." "I need to be perfect." "Someday I'll get there." Those are distractions. Path of accumulation involves doing. Visualization.

The trackless path across the sky exists only in each and every now. Not to be acquired. Not to be attained, not to be worked up to, not to become good enough for.

It simply is. Utterly simple. Don't make something out of it. Stop trying. Relax. Neither attained nor not attained. Nor to be attained, nor not to be attained.

Not like something. All form is not separate from this. Consider this with your perceptions, your thoughts and your feelings. All of it is not made of anything other than this. Consider this with your perceptions, your thoughts, and your feelings. Rest in the context of Bodhicitta. Of Guru Yoga — they're the same thing.

Your feelings are not separate from this. Consider this with your perceptions, your thoughts, your feelings. You. The perceiver. The one who sees, hears, smells, tastes, feels. You are not other than what you see, what you hear, what you smell, what you taste, what you feel. Consider this with your perceptions, your thoughts, and your feelings.

The thinker of your thoughts is not other than the thoughts you are thinking. Consider this with your perceptions, thoughts, and feelings. Do not create separation when there is none. Do not make up a dichotomy, a duality: separating the thinker from the thought, the feeler from the feeling, the perceiver from the perception.

There ain't nobody in there doing nothing. Only perceptions arising as thoughts. Labeled and named. Feelings about the stories of the thoughts. This entire blah-blah of dance. Do not separate it from the natural state. Do not reject it. Shove it away. Try to get away from it.

Ever see a cat with a plastic bag caught on it? Running about the house trying to get away from the monster chasing it and rustling behind it. Dharma practitioners.

Stop trying to fix it. The big instinct of Homo sapiens with all those little fingers. Fix it, clean it, move it. Get a new one. Improve things. That's what your to-do list is about. Improving your environment. And there's no end to it.

Stop trying to get it perfect, or your values of what you think perfect is. Relax. Let go of your assumptions of better and worse. Improvement and disimprovement. Put that down. We're not going anywhere.

There is an old cartoon of two monks sitting on the side of a hill. A young one slightly behind an old one. And the young one says to the old one, "Master, are we there yet?" Yeah, we're here.

Let go. For just a little while, stop trying to fix yourself and your environment. Relax. Let go of what you think will be better than this. Leave it. Being as it appears, as appearance. Thoughts, feelings, perceptions, dancing. Grab one. Look. My hand is empty. You try it. Not made of anything. Not going anywhere. Leave them be.

Seeking entertainment. We entertain ourselves with angst. We set up an image of what would be better than this. And we strive for it, never reaching it, never achieving satisfaction. Let go.

And all this as it is, isn't even. Do you feel pity for the bird that fell from the sky in your dream last night? Were you that bird? Bodhicitta is not pity. Nor is it pride nor humbleness. It is not even certainty. It is unshakable because it is unborn and undying. It does not come and go. It is continuously moving, dancing. And yet no thing moves.

Now. In this now. Don't do anything. Notice the doer of the not doing. Gaze into your own eyes. No one in there. Neither in trance rejecting samsara, nor not in trance pursuing will-o'-the-wisps. Neither of these extremes — the middle way. Completely ordinary, here and now, nothing to it. Thoughts, feelings, and perceptions dance forever. Single thing. Dancing. Relax. Cease your pursuit of happiness and perfection. Stop fighting confusion. No difference. Beyond words and deeds. In the ineffable now of this now, here and now. Pervading everywhere and every when. Where movement and stillness are inseparate. Just this, and it ain't nothing special. Completely ordinary.

Are there questions?

[Moderador]: If one has an active kundalini and is experiencing a gradual daily purification and transformation, would it be wise to take up a daily Dzogchen practice?

[Lama Lena]: In the context of pure Dzogchen, there is no such thing as taking up an absorption practice, or putting down a Dzogchen practice. However, I believe you are speaking in the context of Tantra. You would be better off with a tantric practice, as such things exist there.

[Moderador]: Even though I contemplate your teachings, I get bothered by adversities. How do we deal with them?

[Lama Lena]: Yesterday's teaching: Tara. Adversities are problems; yes, you're having problems. Tara is effective for problems. It's okay — path of accumulation — if your problems are still bothering you rather than entertaining you. If you feel bothered by them, and that feeling bothers you: Tara. Ever so simple. From the context of pure Dzogchen, it's all ever so simple.

[Moderador]: If anger dissipates under awareness, does happiness do too?

[Lama Lena]: Yup. You see, you are trapped. In wanting your anger to dissipate and wanting to achieve, acquire your happiness. You're doing one of those push-pull things. You will get a brief respite from anger, then it's gonna push back. You will attain a brief come-and-go experience of happiness, and it's gonna run away again. That's how the push-pull stuff works. Grab it — it runs. Run away from it — it chases you.

I'm always puzzled by people who, upon experiencing fear and anxiety, run away from the thing that frightens them and causes anxiety, because that just makes it worse.

When I was a small child, this was brought to my attention by a friend of my mother's who suffered from agoraphobia and was afraid to leave her house alone. So she always went with someone. After a while, she became afraid to leave her house at all. So she didn't. After a time, only her bedroom felt safe. So she remained in there and people visited her there. She had a little table and chairs and would have tea in there with people, but she didn't like leaving her bedroom because she felt anxious outside of it. After a while, only the bed was her safe place. And she became bedridden due to anxiety. After a while, she was hospitalized.

I watched this happen over a period of a year or two. As a child, I was good friends with her daughter, the same age as me — Amy. We must have been eight, nine, ten. That age. I had a crush on Amy. I think it was mutual, but hard to say in those days, in those times.

But I watched this happen and it pointed out to me clearly, along with a few other experiences, that running from things that scare you doesn't work. Running from things you dislike only works temporarily, and then the bounce-back's a motherfucker.

Instead, notice your liking and disliking. And using your perceptions, thoughts, and feelings, one by one and then all together, examine: who is experiencing the experience of dislike? And how is that experience constructed? It's obviously a composite because it comes and goes — it's put together. Examine it with your perceptions, your thoughts, and your feelings. Rather than run.

[Moderador]: Someone mentions you spoke yesterday of various realities appearing through the state of the Central Channel. They want to expand on the question of seeing different realities but not being able to communicate them, and ending up being seen as crazy.

[Lama Lena]: My first teacher, my refuge teacher, Lama Thubten Yeshe. When the subject of whether or not there really was a real reality, whether there was one reality or two realities — a made-up reality and a real reality — this is all Madhyamaka. He was Gelugpa, so Madhyamaka was part of what we were training in. When the question of whether or not there was a real reality out there came up, he almost inevitably laughed so hard he nearly fell off his throne. He was a damn good teacher.

Every single individual entity — that's in quotes because those aren't real either — perceives and is an echo of that perception. More than perception: thoughts, feelings, perceptions are all interwoven there. A specific, unique reality for them. Their reality. It's not the same as anyone else's.

However, each species — Homo sapiens, guppy, horse — each species altogether perceives certain aspects of it. Your reality and a guppy's reality and a water bear's reality are not the same reality. Just as the water bear's reality is limited to a small tuft of moss and immortality — you can't kill a water bear — your reality is limited to certain wavelengths of light and sound. Those things which only reflect in ultraviolet or infrared, you can't see them with your eyes. Those limitations are limitations of Homo sapiens channel patterns.

You are not limited to being a Homo sapiens in the dream time. Those beautiful image-poetry of sonar that the whales sing — and what they've got taped and stepped down to our hearing range doesn't even begin.

You perceive the world through your channels. You see through the ones that come out your eyes. You hear through the ones that come out your ears. You touch

from the ones that come out your skin. If you change the channel pattern, you change the sensations of the sense organs. Even which sense organs one can have.

Demons. Gods. They certainly exist. Most of them are remarkably uninterested in you. Or me. They all have their own agenda. And the difference between a god and a demon is only whether or not you like their agenda. I tend to avoid involvement with them, for the most part. Although I will say some of my best friends throughout time and space have been entities. I don't know if they think of themselves as gods or demons. They're just them. Nothing special.

You can't see water bears without a microscope — they're too tiny. There are things that are too big too. And things that just don't reflect the right kind of light.

I suspect that in society, sanity is simply a matter of knowing who to talk with about what. I don't talk with the local shopkeeper about the things hovering around the ceiling — why would I? It's not their interest. They won't put you away as long as you don't frighten the horses.

[Moderador]: If everything is connected, then what will happen to the so-called Pure Lands or Buddha Lands upon the entropic heat death of the universe?

[Lama Lena]: Oh, are you believing in that? That reality is the same as the Garden of Eden. The Big Bang. It's a theory. It's made of thought. What do you mean, what will happen to them?

In the ancient Indian way, Brahma breathes in and creates the universe. And he exhales and destroys it. And he breathes in again and creates the universe. And he exhales and destroys it. Even should this universe experience an entropic heat death — which would mean that all movement ceases — at that point, since movement is all that's holding time in place, time also ceases. Without time, it doesn't happen.

Yeah, and I'm the kid who once proved that God was a blackboard eraser, because he wasn't a pumpkin, in my debating class in seventh grade. One of the reasons they were pissed off at me.

[Moderador]: Is it normal that time stops?

[Lama Lena]: You might be stopping. I do not know what you mean. By "time stops," is it an experience you're having? A theory you subscribe to?

[Moderador]: Questions about letting go. One person asked: "What does 'let go' mean? If I could let go, I would, but does 'let go' mean do nothing? But doing keeps happening anyway." And someone else asked if the apparent difficulty in completely relaxing is simply a matter of habit.

[Lama Lena]: Second question, yes. First question I'm thinking about. How does one let go is what I hear it as. By stopping resisting. If you try to not do, you'll do a not-doing. That's not not-doing. Allow the doings to occur. Find the doer. If you can find who lets go and who doesn't, it makes it easier.

To truly not do, find the doer of the deeds. And while allowing both doing and resting to arise, note how the doer is formed and changed by the doing and resting. By the actions of doing and resting. And the web of perceptions, thoughts, and feelings that make up the illusion of a doer. Watch how they slip and slide on each other, completely changing the doer according to the deed.

To practice Dzogchen is not Dzogchen. It's the doorway. It's appropriate. One goes through a doorway to enter a room or to exit it. The doorway into not-doing is to exhaust the doing. Therefore, as doings arise, as deeds to be done arise, permit them to occur. If resting arises, permit that to occur. Without holding preference for one or the other.

[Moderador]: How do you tell the difference between running away from a problem and exercising common sense?

[Lama Lena]: Depends on the problem. There's no one answer to that for all possible problems. If you have a problem, neither running away from it, ignoring it, nor running towards it are always the answer. It really depends on the problem. Your problem appears. In general, most problems appear to be outside of one. Financial problems. Medical problems. Interpersonal problems.

If it is simply an easily-fixed-by-thought problem — such as you notice that it's street-sweeping day and you are parked on the wrong side of the street — this is a problem. Go move the car. Now it's not a problem.

If it is not such an easily solved problem, let it sit for a day or so and see if a solution arises. If it doesn't, use magic. Or Dzogchen. Let it be a problem. What is the word "problem" referring to? Something you don't like. "I don't like this, but I do like this." This is not equanimity. This is chasing and running from.

How do I know which problems to up and solve, and which ones to leave alone? Hey, there's wisdom. There's no right answer. You will solve the ones you do solve. And you will not solve the ones you don't solve. The solver is not other than the

problem. Interwoven, interconnected, all things. You cannot separate the person with the problem from the problem they're having. Having that problem, thinking you have that problem, perceiving your problem, and feeling bad about your problem is all reforming you as that.

So you relax. And you do what you do. Ain't nobody in there doing that. It just happened. Remember, we're in the context of Dzogchen today. Not of Kyerim.

[Moderador]: How does one overcome sinking back to the comfort of the ordinary distracted mind?

[Lama Lena]: By practice, one allows the undistracted mind to become ordinary. Besides, what the fuck are those distractions made of anyway? Can you show me one? Can you juggle them? They're generally made of perceptions, thoughts, and feelings, which ain't no thing whatsoever.

And why do you want to get away from distraction and be undistracted? You're trying to improve yourself. Kyerim. Path of accomplishment. You're asking me how to accomplish not being distracted. Wrong question. The question is how to take the distractions the same as the non-distractions.

Being distracted. Not being distracted. Being distracted. Not being distracted. Nothing moved. Confusion arises as wisdom. No separation. It does not come and go. It cannot be distracted. It's not an "it." It's there whether you're thinking about it or not. There whether you're perceiving it or not. There if you can feel it or not. So why have a preference for thinking about it, perceiving it, or feeling it, since that does not affect it one whit.

[Moderador]: How does a Dzogchenpa benefit beings?

[Lama Lena]: Naturally. Without forcing. This arises. It is very hard to actually benefit a being on purpose. For in every attempt, there is what you think, perceive, or feel would be of benefit to that being. And so one ends up dragging little old ladies across the street, whether they wanted to go or not. Like a good Boy Scout. In Dzogchen, that's not necessary.

[Moderador]: Why are we even here in the context of pure Dzogchen? Why were we born in ignorance, in this realm?

[Lama Lena]: There's no word in Tibetan for "why." It's cultural. In Tibetan you can say "kare" — for what reason. "Did you go to town yesterday?" "I went to buy vegetables. I went to go to the post office." You can say that. But you cannot say, "Why is there a sky?"

What makes you think there's a reason? That goes together with somebody steering the ship, and things happen the way they're supposed to. Really? They happen the way they happen. Sometimes you like it, sometimes you don't like it. Both liking and not liking are feeling. Made of the same thing as all the other feelings. Let them be.

[Moderador]: What was the long story about Rinpoche that you wanted us to ask you about from the end of an earlier session?

[Lama Lena]: How Rinpoche convinced me that I couldn't think my way out of problems. Because I was always quite intelligent as a youth, before my brain began to rot, and before senility kicked in a bit. And I believed that I was smart enough to think my way out of anything.

I had just moved, built my new little cave. Way up on the top, behind, not near any other caves. I wanted the solitude there. The cave Rinpoche had lent me had been in an area with many, many caves, so it was always lots of people around. Well — two or three yogis sometimes. It felt like lots of people. I'm kind of reclusive.

So I built my new little cave. And I built it in such a way that no one but me fit inside it at once. It contained a gomtri — a meditation seat — and a stove that I could reach from the gomtri to make fire. And an altar that I could reach from the gomtri. And a couple of pots and pans hanging on the wall, and a window right there in front of the gomtri. Big window, no screens or anything, or glass, just a wooden shutter that opened. And a door over there. And it was about this high. I could reach both walls. So I couldn't have guests in it. It was too small. Nobody else would fit in. I had to sit outside on the stoop. I'd come outside and visit with people. Then I could go inside when I was done with them.

I was delighted with my new cave. I built it myself, out of stones and mud. The fireplace was made by another yogini who lived up there, Lamo, who I believe just recently died. She was older than me — she was in her thirties then — to my early, early twenties. She showed me how to build that. And then I added a stovepipe, having researched them. No, we didn't have internet then. I'd actually gotten to a library in Delhi and looked up stovepipes. And gotten someone in the West to look it up for me in a Western library and send me the plans and how it worked. In a letter. That's how we did things then.

Because I had a stovepipe, my cave was not full of smoke. The smoke went out. And it was fairly dry, although mushrooms did grow under my gomtri in monsoon time, but monsoon is monsoon — nothing's dry in monsoon.

So there I was, settled in my tiny little dwelling. All my privacy. And one night, something. And here was my problem: I didn't know what it was. I did not know if this was a man or a demon. It was skinny and black. That could be a person or a demon. It had long claws. That could be a person who hadn't been cutting their fingernails. Scraggly teeth — yeah, could be either one. Red eyes — yeah, could be either one.

It came by and it wanted to have sex with me. I was not attracted to it, whatever it was. So I told it to fuck off. It did not. It scabbled on my door. I used to sleep with my door and window open. I closed my door and window because it kept trying to get in. And it scabbled all night on my door and kept me awake.

So the next day, in the daytime, I went down to Rinpoche and I said: "There is something trying to have sex with me up there." Then there was a small pause while Rinpoche had to stop laughing. He thought it was the funniest thing he'd heard. I said, "I do not know if it's a man or a demon. If it's a demon, well, there are certain ceremonies I know how to do that'll deal with that. And if it's a man, I'll punch it in the gut and it'll go away. But I need to know which. How can I tell?"

Rinpoche fell off his throne laughing again.

So here we have something that wants to have sex with me. Hey, I'm like twenty-two, twenty-three. I'm a young, blonde, skinny thing. Lots of things wanted to have sex with me in those days. Some of them I was attracted to, but this one I wasn't. I did not want to have sex with it. I'm very stubborn.

Rinpoche finally, when he stopped laughing at the story, said, "I don't know if that's a man or a demon. Sorry, can't help you there. Of course, you could behave like a girl and move down near other people. Most women are afraid to live alone up there."

He knew my buttons. I don't behave like a girl. Ever. That was really firm — a stubborn belief system in those days. Staunch feminist. Ain't gonna do that. So that was out of the picture for me.

So for the next few nights this thing was coming, scabbling around my cave, and I wasn't getting enough sleep. Now, admittedly, I had been raped a couple of times in my life prior to then. A little PTSD involved in this. Hard to say. But I wasn't relaxing enough to sleep.

And every day I was down seeing Rinpoche, my teacher, and Lama Kunzang, my other teacher, and Lamke. Some offered to stay with me and guard me and sleep in sleeping bags. No, no — that's girl stuff. No, I just need you to help me figure out

what this is so I can figure out what to do about it.

And Rinpoche kept giving me pure Dzogchen. Every time I asked him for a teaching to help with this, he just gave me pure Dzogchen. Okay. Sit and do trekchö.

Well, I did learn one very interesting thing. When a woman is sitting in trekchö in full lotus, although she can be bothered, she can't be raped.

It did get in. I left my doors and windows open. I wasn't gonna do the girl thing and protect myself. I was just gonna tough it out and sit in trekchö. And it got in and it poked at me and it tried to move me, and it tried to undo my clothes and roll me over. And it couldn't, because I was sitting there in a full lotus — left foot up on the right thigh, right foot up on the left thigh, hands in the lap — trying to stay in trekchö. I wasn't relaxed enough to be terribly successful in that moment.

Finally, it must have been a week without sleep. I was getting grouchy. I was making mistakes in Rinpoche's letters. All my other things I did in the daytime for Rinpoche — I was kind of a mess through lack of sleep for about ten days.

Rinpoche finally took pity on me. "Okay, you're not getting Dzogchen. Let's go back a step. I'm going to give you a Yidam practice. I'm gonna give you my Yidam: Purba."

So he taught me Purba. And the rest of the day I remained in the sadhana. And that night I remained in the sadhana and it didn't come. I remained awake in the sadhana. And the next night, as I started to doze off from the sadhana, it turned up again. And I remained in the sadhana. And it came in. And I was Dorje Purba. And I struck it in the heart with my phurba. And it screamed and leaped, flew backwards over the bushes outside my cave. And I never saw it again. And I never did find out what the fuck that was.

That was my Yidam retreat. Short but intense.

That was the story of how I learned that it is possible to deal with things. I didn't think I would strike it with my phurba. I wasn't even there. Dorje Purba. I was Purba. That happened — there was no doing. And that's how Rinpoche pointed out to me that you can't think your way out of everything. There are other possibilities for dealing with a problem. He was a damn good teacher. Incredibly kind, not always nice. But kind.

[Moderador]: Some people are interpreting "don't have a doing" as "do nothing," and they ask what happens to creativity and work.

[Lama Lena]: No, no, no, no. Doing nothing is a doing. You are doing nothing. That's not it. Doing something is a doing — you are doing something. I did not do the striking it with my Purba in the heart. I did not plan to do that. I did not think to do that. I was not even specifically present as "I." It did itself. You cannot just do it. It's like wiggling your ears. Can you wiggle your ears? It's really hard to find the muscle that wiggles your ears. Once you find it, it's easy. But finding it the first time is really hard.

Finding the not-doing is really hard. The methods involve exhausting the doing. The one that is mostly safe for you to attempt on your own is the burning blue vajra. I have taught that before. It exhausts you. You can also try for a very temporary experience of not-doing: chopping a cord of wood, and then doing a whole bunch of Sudoku puzzles, until both your body and brain are utterly exhausted. And then instead of resting — just stop. See what happens. Do not confuse doing nothing with not doing something. They're not the same thing at all.

Let's take a five-minute bathroom break. And I will come back.

We've pretty much exhausted all that can be said about pure Dzogchen, and are moving into the circling approach, the many approaches, the pointing that come before that. So we're talking the Kyerim of Dzogchen.

[Moderador]: As a Dzogchen practitioner, is Kyerim necessary? Asking because I stink at it and usually give it a pass.

[Lama Lena]: What on earth do you think Kyerim is? Kyerim is the entire how-to. Kyerim is the body position that helps. Kyerim is how to relax all the doings of Dharma. Yes, it's necessary. You have to go from where you are to where you're going — that's Kyerim. Dzogchen.

[Moderador]: What is the optimal way that one can perfect just being?

[Lama Lena]: It depends on the pattern you are currently in. You go from where you are to where you're going until you notice that you're there. There isn't an optimal way for all people. To practice as you are. Without judging where you are. Without the constant "are we there yet?" "Am I doing it right?" Allowing those thoughts to arise and vanish as they do — that would be optimal if you can do it. But if you can't, if your thoughts bother you, and you can't see that the waves are just the ocean — they've never been other than the ocean; you cannot take the waves out of the ocean; you cannot have the ocean without its waves and its tides — optimal for you is a personal question. I'd have to know who you are to answer that. Where you are. What's stuck.

[Moderador]: Is finding one's own existence tedious normal?

[Lama Lena]: Yes, frequently. And finding it scary. And finding it fun. And finding it all sorts of feelings. Perfectly normal. Feeling too normal. Tedious, bored — that is a feeling. It's made of the same thing as all the other feelings.

[Moderador]: When watching thoughts during trekchö, I do not distinguish this from discursive thinking. Please clarify the difference.

[Lama Lena]: Discursive thinking is when you stick them together into a thought chain, into a sentence of belief. Namtok. The nam are the little-bitty, smaller-than-an-atom, without even the substance of an atom. Kind of like quarks. Single thought bits. They have neither substance. They do not occupy space. Nor do they have duration — they do not occupy time. What sticks them together is the sticky part. Gluons. That stick them together into something that makes sense.

When you are resting in stillness — which is not real trekchö, it's shiné — the thoughts are not stuck together, becoming discursiveness. In real trekchö, they are neither stuck together nor not stuck together. Thinking is not disturbed by meditation, and meditation is not disturbed by thinking. Sorry — "practice" is the wrong word. Gom. Meditation.

Since it is inherent in all phenomena, including the phenomena of thought, thoughts cannot interfere with it whether they stick together or don't. They are discursive when they stick together. We like things to make sense, and so we stick them together. In trekchö, they are not stuck together. And yet, in the arising of Bodhicitta and the vitality of life, it may happen that some of them stick together, enabling speech or activity, but this arises not as discursive thoughts discussing themselves — not as namtok. It has the innate manifestation through time and space of all Buddhas.

Thoughts? Whether stuck together as discursive thoughts — namtok — or simply the nam, they never are anything. And gluons are a mind-made thing. Theory of particle physics. They do not actually exist. They are a function, not a particle. Go read quantum physics — it's fun.

Whether thinking or still — no difference. Whatever feelings arise — one taste. The perceptions are the perceiver. You — a figment of your own imagination.

[Moderador]: It seems not-doing in this context is harder on the meditation cushion than while going about daily activities.

[Lama Lena]: If not-doing is hard, you're doing it. By its nature, to not do is effortless. It's simply the habit of effort. Get over it.

[Moderador]: What is the purpose of something like Ngöndro or other preliminaries for something like Dzogchen?

[Lama Lena]: Removes obscurations. From the pattern that thinks it's you. Your channel pattern. Your energy channels. They pick up lint. Gunk. Like pots hanging in the kitchen over the stove. That weird, sticky, greasy, gunky thing that adheres to them if you don't use them or wash them for a few weeks. Yeah, that stuff. The purpose of Ngöndro is to remove that.

Rushen in Dzogchen is a Ngöndro. Interruption of body — outer rushen of body. Rushen of speech. Rushen of mind. These are Dzogchen Ngöndros.

In Tantra, because of the risks of climbing that mountain, roped together with your teacher and students — if one falls, you're likely to knock everybody off — it is generally insisted, for safety reasons, that Ngöndro be done first.

In Dzogchen, which lacks paradigms, one generally prescribes Rushen — bits of Ngöndro, this one or that one — to an individual, specific to where they happen to be stuck. It is not done first, but in the process of practice. However, for those teachers who grew up in a monastery, and some that didn't but began practicing while young, whether practicing Dzogchen or Kyerim, path of actualization or path of accumulation, an ordinary Ngöndro and an extraordinary Ngöndro are done first. That is suitable for the young.

If you get a student who's coming to Dzogchen at seventy, it is not always reasonable to run them through an extraordinary Ngöndro. They may not have time. If you get a student who's coming to you at seventeen, they probably have way too much energy and hormones and stuff raging in there. Give them a Ngöndro to do. It'll tire them out. Like that.

[Moderador]: There was a question about your own path to Dzogchen. How did you find it in your own life?

[Lama Lena]: Rinpoche had been teaching me Dzogchen from the very beginning. Actually, he tried first with Mahamudra. I could not sit still enough for shiné. He ran me through a couple of Ngöndros. No shiné. No lhakthong. Couldn't get it to work. So he began teaching me Dzogchen. Couldn't get that to work either.

But due to happenstance, circumstance, patterns, and the way they unfolded, I ended up as his translator. For some years, traveling with him all over the world

and translating his teachings. Since the teachings seemed to be working on people, I must have done it well enough. But I did not truly understand what I was translating.

I really didn't have the real trekchö. I struggled and I practiced and I did this and that. But it wasn't working. Somewhere after about twenty years of traveling with him and teaching and trying, I realized I wasn't getting it. I realized I wasn't going to get it. I gave up. Stopped trying. I accepted that I was not going to get enlightenment in this life. No gold ring from the merry-go-round. I accepted it and decided I would simply be the best translator I could for my teacher, in service. And maybe in another life, in another time, in another universe, I'd actually understand and transcend understanding of Dzogchen.

And so I relaxed and stopped striving and stopped trying to fix it and get it. Get anywhere.

And at some point after some years, I noticed. And it was everywhere. Including here. And I didn't have to get anything.

Bodhicitta is the context. And Guru Yoga. No separation there. Of Dzogchen. And without the totality of that context, you will not perceive the totality of Dzogchen. And no words that I can say to you will bring it clearer, because it is beyond all words and concepts. And all I'm really doing talking to you about it is maybe inspiring you to try harder — which won't work.

Now. Right now. In this here. This now. Without progress. Without driving. Without getting somewhere, or anywhere to get, or anyone to get there. Nothing special. Nothing woo-woo with lights going in and lights going out and shimmering sparkle everywhere. Those are words and concepts. Images that point, not what is being pointed at.

Utterly ordinary. Just as it is. Nothing to improve. Nothing to dissolve. Nothing to get. Nothing to get rid of.

All the methods dance. As an analogy, a symbol. Transparent. Phenomena moving. Not moving. The dichotomy of doing and not-doing. Let go. Trekchö. The real one doesn't come and go. It's not a practice. Simply the state of being alive. Throughout time and space. Life. Love. Bodhicitta. Empty. Not solid. Transparent. Confusion. Wisdom. No separation. Relax.

Bodhicitta and Guru Yoga. For as long as there is a doer and a done, in the indescribable, ineffable dance of phenomena, it is in no way other than all Buddhas of the four times, Kuntuzangpo, Kuntuzangmo.

Only symbols. Beyond the symbols. It's all symbols. Do not look for a state of mind — that would limit. Do not call it "it," for that is also a limit, and it isn't not.

Do not make something out of it to grasp, attain, or worship. Do not make something out of it to abandon, escape from, or purify. When they say "all-perfect," Samantabhadra, they do not mean what you think would be perfect.

Look beyond the this-is, this-isn't. Without excluding them. Without focusing on them. Without focusing beyond them. That perfection of self you strive for — you'll never catch your tail. You'll never escape from the paper bag hot on your hind foot. Stop running. Don't even insist on being. Complete in all the now. Born undying.

Yes. Just this. Your path.