
THE TRUE POTENTIAL OF

The Mind

Primordial Wisdom in the Age of
Scientific and Technological Breakthroughs

A retreat with

Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche

8 & 9 December 2022



The

Primordial W
Science and Tech

A ret

M

CONTENTS

ABOUT YONGEY MINGYUR RINPOCHE	2
ABOUT THE RETREAT	4
INTRODUCTION	7
DAY ONE	9
Motivation	11
Awareness	12
Meditation	14
Breathing Meditation	14
Technology	17
Q&A Session	19
DAY TWO	22
Practice	23
Sensation Meditation	23
Sleeping Meditation	24
Open Awareness Meditation	26
Q&A Session	26
CONCLUSION	32
SUMMARY	34



*About
Yongey
Mingyur
Rinpoche*

The retreat was led by Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche, who possesses a rare ability to present ancient Indian and Tibetan wisdom in a fresh, engaging manner. Mingyur Rinpoche is a world-renowned meditation teacher with personal experience of anxiety and panic attacks, which he suffered from throughout his childhood and into his teenage years, when he learned to transform his panic through meditation. From childhood, he became interested in contemporary science through conversations with scientists on research projects that study the effects of meditation on the brain and the mind.

Mingyur Rinpoche's first book, *The Joy of Living: Unlocking the Secret and Science of Happiness*, debuted on the New York Times bestseller list and has been translated into over twenty languages. His second book, *Joyful Wisdom: Embracing Change and Finding Freedom*, explores how difficult emotions and challenging life situations can be used as steppingstones to discover joy and freedom. In his most recent book, *In Love with the World*, Mingyur Rinpoche shares how his meditation practice sustained him when he left his monastery to wander through India and the powerfully transformative insights he gained from the near-death experience he had at the beginning of his journey. Rinpoche's other books include *Turning Confusion into Clarity: A Guide to the Foundation Practices of Tibetan Buddhism* and an illustrated children's book entitled: *Ziji: The Puppy that Learned to Meditate*.





*About
The
Retreat*

Everyday we come across news about modern gadgets being improved upon or breakthroughs in science and technology. The world has undergone a drastic change since the advent of the internet in our lives. On many levels, these developments have eased the nature of work in various sectors including communication, entertainment, healthcare and transportation. However, although we are enjoying the positive effects of many of these breakthroughs, we are also experiencing the brunt of unintended consequences. It is important to note that consciously or unconsciously, we are at the receiving end of these ‘developments’.

Whatever our pursuits may be, at the end of the day, we are individuals confined in the mind that we possess. This mind is exposed to various kinds of experiences throughout the day, with technology enabling most of these experiences. The modern-day dilemma of getting hooked to smartphones, be it a child or an adult, can be quite severe in many cases. Then, there are other concerns created by Artificial Intelligence taking over the freedom of humanity or the emergence of Cryptocurrency in the world of finance. The major rift created by such technological breakthroughs in our lives is a major cause of concern when we think about the nature and quality of life that we all want to strive for.

How can we gain control of our ‘mind’ in the midst of transient and unpredictable habits, thoughts and emotions ushered in by scientific and technological breakthroughs? How can we manage our thinking and decision-making processes to achieve mental stability and experience satisfaction at the end of the day? Since our mind plays a crucial part in decision-making, how can we ensure that our mind is sharp and alert enough to face any challenge? These are the questions that the retreat will seek to address.



CENTRE FOR
ESCALATION
OF PEACE | CEP

pallovan
Pillay & Pappan
LEARNING TO LEARN
Pallovan Learning Systems



INDIA
INTERNATIONAL
CENTRE | IIC

NALANDA
FOUNDATION

THE TRUE POTENTIAL OF

The Mind

Primordial Wisdom in the Age of
Scientific and Technological Breakthroughs

A session with

Yongey Rinpoche

28 & 29 November 2018 | National Centre, New Delhi





Introduction

Ritinjali and the Centre for Escalation of Peace, in collaboration with Nalanda Foundation, India International Centre and Pallavan Learning Systems organised a Retreat with Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche on the theme ‘THE TRUE POTENTIAL OF THE MIND: Primordial Wisdom in the Age of Scientific and Technological Breakthroughs’. The retreat was held at the India International Centre on 8th and 9th December 2022. The retreat was attended by about 135 participants in-person and 120 online participants from 46 different countries.





Day One

Shyam Saran, President, India International Centre & Trustee, Centre for Escalation of Peace gave the opening address and thanked the Rinpoche for providing his valuable time and wisdom for this retreat. Shyam Saran noted that Mingyur Rinpoche is a world-renowned meditation teacher who possesses a rare ability to present the ancient Indian and Tibetan wisdom in a fresh, engaging manner. With personal experience of anxiety and panic attacks, which he suffered from throughout his childhood and into his teenage years, Rinpoche learned to transform his panic into a positive force through meditation. It was mentioned that Rinpoche has written many books, including the New York Times Bestseller, *The Joy of Living: Unlocking the Secret and Science of Happiness*.

Rinpoche began by talking about four important factors to keep in mind. These are intention/motivation, view, meditation, and application. He asked the participants to make a list of people, animals, and inanimate objects they care about with the intention that the learnings from this retreat may bring happiness to them. Participants also made this list to transform themselves for the benefit of others and to bring merit and change into society.

Rinpoche defined motivation as meaning and purpose and said it gives us energy and can be either good or bad. He said that people go to war because they want to change the world, not themselves. But if we transform ourselves, then the world will change, as we are all interconnected. Regarding meditation, he said we should show others and not forcefully teach them.



Motivation

Rinpoche asked whether technology is good or bad, and the audience raised their hands for both options. Rinpoche said that it is good as we can learn online, e.g. the mic can help us hear clearly, but it is also bad because it creates cravings and can be harmful to sleep. He emphasized that the real answer depends on the motivation and purpose with which we use technology like the phone. It is good to learn, grow, and develop compassion and wisdom but bad to scam, create violence, division, and fake news. If there is a positive intention, the action following it will also be the same. This is not just with the phone but with anything in life, like working in schools or hospitals, except for harmful things like making drugs or guns.

Rinpoche said the meaning of life is to help yourself and others. We are interdependent, so if we help others, they will help us and it's a win-win. The causes of happiness include developing compassion, loving kindness, virtues, etc.

Rinpoche went over the five aggregates - matter, feeling, consciousness, perception, and mental activity. He said that Francisco Varela told him when Rinpoche was 10 years old that the brain can feel everything but the brain itself does not have feeling and that scientists spoke about the Affect Behaviour Cognition (ABC) at the Mind & Life Conference in Dharamsala in 2010.

Rinpoche went over the three layers of the mind - thinking, feeling, and habitual behaviour. He used the example of exercise which is generally considered to be a good habit. There are times when we feel like exercising and there are times when we don't, but by doing it regularly, we form a habit. He mentioned that habitual behaviour often happens at the unconscious level and is the hardest to change, while thinking or cognitive behaviour is easier. He said the view works from the thinking level.

Rinpoche said we can transform ourselves when we combine intention/motivation, view, meditation, and application together. He spoke about his visit to the USA in 1998 and how back then neuroscientists believed that meditation couldn't help change the brain. They believed that the baseline would not change. For example, if



you win the lottery, you will be happy and then return to the baseline within two years. He mentioned that studies show that it is five years in the case of marriages. However, in 2002, scientists at the University of Wisconsin did MRI scans on expert meditators – those that have meditated for 1000+ hours. Rinpoche shared his own experience of being there, where he was asked to meditate on an object, compassion, open awareness (no particular focus), and visualization. After three hours a day in the MRI machine for three days results showed his gamma readings to be 700, while the normal level is 100.

In 2003 the focus was neuroplasticity. It was discovered that the base level is not fixed and can change. Then came neurogenesis, where it was discovered that genes can change. Even new neural pathways can be created, making new connections. Rinpoche said that now it is clear that everyone has the potential to transform themselves via the aforementioned intention/motivation, view, meditation, and application.

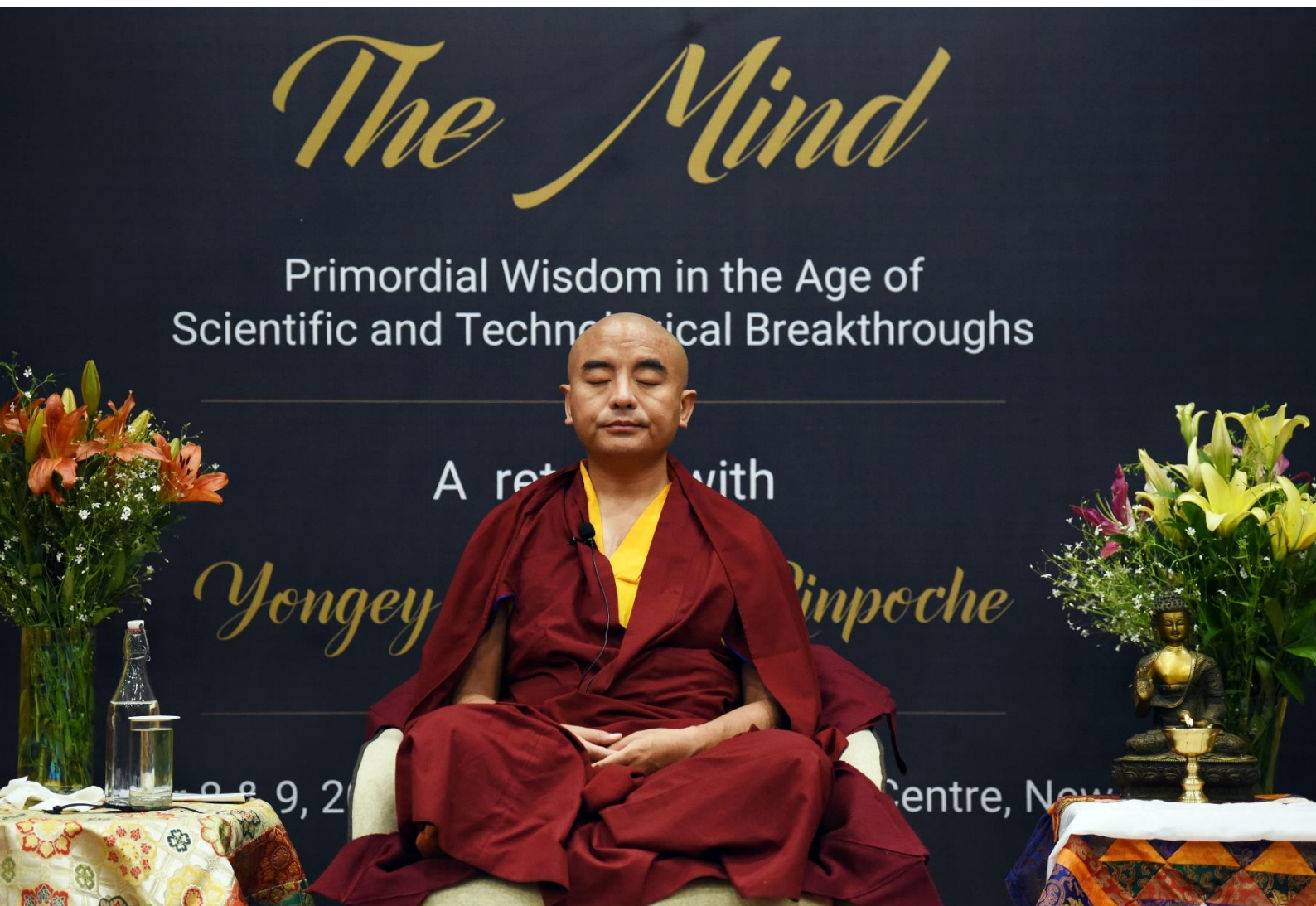
Awareness

Rinpoche then explained the view (perspective) and seeing the nature of reality as it is. Wisdom begins with the view. He asked the participants to recognise awareness. That it is awake, clear, knowing, and has a presence beyond concepts and suffering. Rinpoche connected this to the Buddha nature which is the basic innate quality. He used the analogy of the sky for awareness, which has clouds or pollution, but the problem is we don't realize the pure nature of the sky or awareness through these clouds or pollution, and only see stress and problems. This contradicts the view.

Rinpoche mentioned that he had panic attacks at the age of seven or eight and used this method to transform them. He said to first see the object. If there is no cloud there, then there can be no sky. He raised his hand and asked the audience if they could see it. When they said yes, Rinpoche said that this seeing is awareness. Rinpoche mentioned that when you're too close to the object that is a problem.



He said that awareness is with us all the time; it's just that we don't see it. Rinpoche said if we are aware then we don't have to do anything with our thoughts. He asked the audience how many think they recognise awareness, how many think that they don't recognise awareness, and how many are not sure? After receiving the responses, Rinpoche said that the audience had all passed the test. If you know you don't recognise awareness, then that is awareness in itself.



Meditation

Rinpoche said having the view transforms your meditation practice; otherwise, it can be quite narrow. For example, while breathing we see the cloud, but this helps us connect to the sky (awareness). He spoke about object-oriented meditation, which can have any focal point. Rinpoche also taught breathing, sound, mental recitation meditation, and took participants through the steps and simple practices. Rinpoche said if thoughts come, that's okay to let them come. As long as we still remember to breathe there's no problem.

He took the audience through the daal-chawal (lentil-rice, a staple Indian dish) meditation, where the audience had to go for one minute without thinking about daal-chawal. He said the important thing is to always come back to the breath and remember awareness. If daal-chawal doesn't come to mind that's wonderful, and if it does that's also wonderful. The practice was first done with eyes open, then closed. He also mentioned that the type of breathing (whether deep or shallow) doesn't matter.

Breathing Meditation

Rinpoche set the intention with the audience to benefit others and started with a breathing meditation. He then did a sound meditation and said for this we need some sound around and if awareness comes and goes from the stimulus that is okay. The group also did a mental recitation or mantra meditation. Rinpoche said if done out loud it is easier for the mind to wander, so do it in the head to remain with the words. He went over the meditation posture.

Rinpoche asked the audience that if the essence of meditation is awareness, which we have twenty-four hours a day, why is it that we don't say we are meditating twenty-four hours a day? The audience broke up into smaller groups and discussed this. Some of the answers that came up included that we don't recognize our own awareness twenty-four hours a day. The mind illuminates itself and the area around



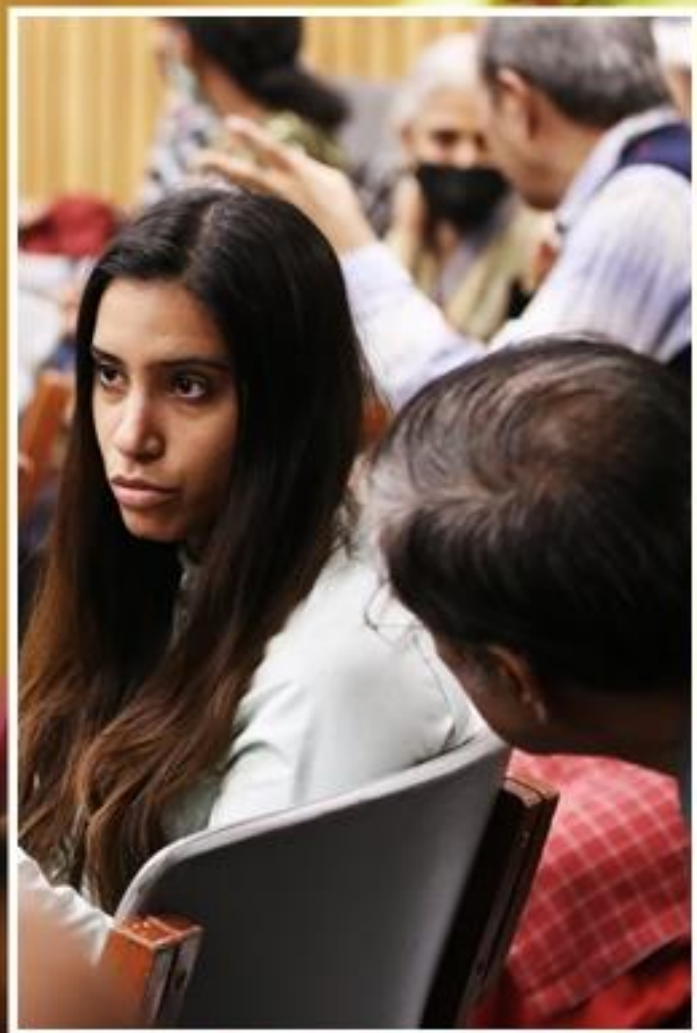
itself, so it is important to both be aware of things around and aware of the awareness itself. He used the example of a man who has a watch but treats it like a bracelet and doesn't know it can tell the time. This man loses his job for being late, becomes homeless, and his life is turned upside down. When his friend tells him it is a watch, he gets another job and is happy. So, when we fully recognize this nature of ours and are aware of our awareness, we can transform our minds and become the Buddha.

Rinpoche then said that through the breath you can get wisdom, love and compassion, and awareness. Awareness is what is mentioned above and helps let go of craving or aversion without having the sense of being lost. Love and compassion include self-love, being okay with not being okay, and not exaggerating the situation we are in. Wisdom means knowing reality as it is, without denial, and helps us connect with awareness. These helps transform the three poisons: ignorance, attachment, and aversion.

Rinpoche asked the audience how they can learn about love through the breath. With another breakout group session, some answers came up. When you are with your breath, everything becomes open. You may not judge others, and this is the beginning of kindness. Another answer was that focusing on the breath helps let go of hatred.

Rinpoche asked a member of the audience for a mala and used this as an example to show no matter how much you grasp at it some beads will always stick out. If we are aware, we can turn our hand the other way around and hold the mala in this relaxed way so nothing sticks out. The first is the craving way of looking at things, while the second is the wisdom way.





Technology

Rinpoche said the audience can use reminders and meditation apps. This way they don't need to worry about keeping time and the device measures how much they meditate. He said you can focus on your breath, do mental recitations, or focus on music or sounds around you while on the phone to integrate meditation.

Rinpoche said that new pathways are formed when you meditate during exercise, as that's when there is the most neuroplasticity. He said like you brush your teeth for a little bit every day and this helps your health, a little bit of meditation every day is good for mental hygiene.

Rinpoche talked about how sometimes the brain says no but the hand goes towards the phone, and you say five minutes but before you know it it's five hours you've been on the device because a habit has been formed.

He gave tips on sleep, including no caffeine after 1 p.m., no screens two hours before bed, and keeping the room cool and not very bright. Rinpoche also said not to think you need to sleep as soon as you hit the bed. Otherwise craving and aversion will kick in and the opposite will happen.

Rinpoche talked about how often in the West meditation is done to "bliss out" and for peace, but this is in fact a by-product and not the essence. The essence of meditation is awareness; whether there is peace or not doesn't matter.





Q&A Session

Q. How do you meditate on the cushion and in everyday life?

A. Formal full-time dedication, informal which can be applied anytime, anywhere.

Q. How to work with anxiety?

A. Can't and no need but remember awareness, if you try to control more comes... daal-chawal meditation. There will be panic of panic stronger than panic. That's how the mind works. So free, let it be, free yourself with the breath, that's an important skill.

Q. How to manage time and laziness with meditation?

A. Little bit every day, even if you don't like it, make a habit - no phone these 5 mins a day, plus for informal meditation use a habit trigger, e.g., a flower on the desk means mediation, then change to the trigger being a stone otherwise you will be so mesmerised by the flower that you will forget to practise.

Q. How to deal with burnout?

A. Burnout occurs if you don't do your own practice. How can one person change the world? So, we must do whatever we can on our own level, that is very important. Remember the breath in order to not feel overwhelmed

Q. How do I deal with difficult people in the workplace and transfer practice to this?

A. Sometimes you have to be there, but you can change your own mind. It doesn't mean always saying others are right. Compassionate wisdom without wisdom will not help the world. Motivation is important not hatred; this can enhance and magnify others' good qualities.

Q. How long does it take to break a habit?

A. 21 days in the beginning. However, knowing this and doing it are two different things.



Q. Is it possible to be afraid of meditation and wisdom?

A. Yes. There is a fear of genuine happiness and going beyond the normal egoistic mind. Recognition is a good sign. Sometimes a sign of understanding emptiness is fear, which is a good thing. Continued practice is what is required.

Q. How do I understand new generation thoughts?

A. Do not control thoughts but listen and become friends with them. Let go of your own borders and guide in a friendly manner but keep in line so not to do illegal things. The new generation is very smart. Try and find balance.

Q. How to free self from traumatic experiences?

A. Appreciation and gratitude practices are important. Go into feeling itself and when ready write what you are feeling in the moment.

Q. I want to help people and practice love and compassion but sometimes they misunderstand, and receivers don't want it and say 'just pray for me.'

A. How can you help directly? Find balance, there is no universal answer. Middle way. View, meditation, and action. Sometimes we can't help others who don't want to receive. That's also okay.

Q. If one closes one's eyes then the mind wanders, so why close them?

A. Depends on the person; whatever works for you.

Q. How to overcome anxiety and depression?

A. Through this, plus body and non-conceptual meditation (which we are going to talk about in Day Two). On Day One let it come and be with the breath. A major cause of panic is ignorance which makes it a permanent unitary, independent self. Awareness makes it like shaving foam. The problem looks solid but inside it is not.

Q. How to bring teachings to children?

A. Be creative. Each year their capacity and how they learn change. Engage young children with movement, e.g., bring your hand close to your nose and out while breathing, make a game, and let the kid ring the gong. Or imagine a dinosaur or stone



on your belly and observe the breathing. Make stories, don't say sit down, etc., otherwise it will create long-term resistance.

Q. How to get rid of addictions like alcohol?

A. Intention/motivation, view, meditation, and application

Q. Is it okay to kill mosquitoes or not?

A. Not good to kill. Use cream, fan, etc.

Q. If someone is poor, should one give them a room in your home?

A. Help according to your capacity.

Q. Should one give money to the person at the stop light if they say it's to pay a medical bill?

A. Use your wisdom mind.





Day Two

Practice

Rinpoche began by telling the audience they can start by practicing any meditation technique from day one. He then went over the three layers of the mind again. The cognitive level changes if there is a shift in perspective, while the feeling level always goes up and down. To change habitual tendencies, you need to deepen awareness. The basis of dukkha is the unconscious mind. Rinpoche also spoke about how the volition or imprint can change with awareness. He used the analogy that to get to Lhasa you need to go up and down hills, but you are still making your way there. It is the same with meditation practice. Up is bliss, clarity, and non-conceptual experience while down is agitation and dullness. Regardless, you are making your way. Like when a river is clear you see fish and when it is not you see mud.

Sensation Meditation

Rinpoche then spoke about technique and how to connect with the sky (awareness). He mentioned it is important to let things be and have 'okayness'. To be okay with not being okay. Otherwise, you will focus on small negativities which seem bigger than they actually are. If you think you need to get rid of your panic and can't, then you have a problem. But you don't need to. All you need is awareness, which is beyond panic, negativity, suffering, mental defilement, and bad karma.

He said knowing how to connect with awareness is important for meditation. The steps include treating the breath, sound, or mental recitation as the object or cloud to connect with awareness or the sky. This was the first step discussed on day one. The second step is to turn and face inward, as real nirvana is when you see your innate quality - the view (cognitive) and practice (application). Rinpoche spoke about insight meditation - seeing the body, feeling, etc. Here participants also did a sensation meditation.

Rinpoche spoke about how in daily life you should eliminate bad action and do good action, but on the cushion just awareness is important. If you see the river, it means



you are out of the river; if you see the junk in your mind that means you are out of the junk. This is the beginning of freedom and liberation. Awareness is bigger than unpleasant sensations.

Rinpoche had a one-on-one with a participant who had attended Rinpoche's teachings previously, and the two of them explained horizontal and vertical liberation. Horizontal liberation is when you look at the sensation and can't find it. You are in a non-conceptual state, between the past and the future. There is still awareness, it is not lost, and there is no need to create or look for sensation, but to just be with the gap. While in vertical liberation, you find a sensation and seeing this means you are not in it. For example, you can see the cloud which means you are not inside the cloud and can possibly connect with the sky. So, the two liberations include not finding a sensation and being with it and finding a sensation and being with it. Both lead to liberation. Seeing is okay and not seeing is okay. So this makes meditation easier.

Rinpoche led a sensation meditation with the above as instructions. He mentioned that the practice can go up and down like the stock market. But the only reason business is possible in the world is because of this fluctuation. He said people are actually looking for sensation which is inside but think it is outside. Rinpoche emphasised that bringing the mind to the body is very important.

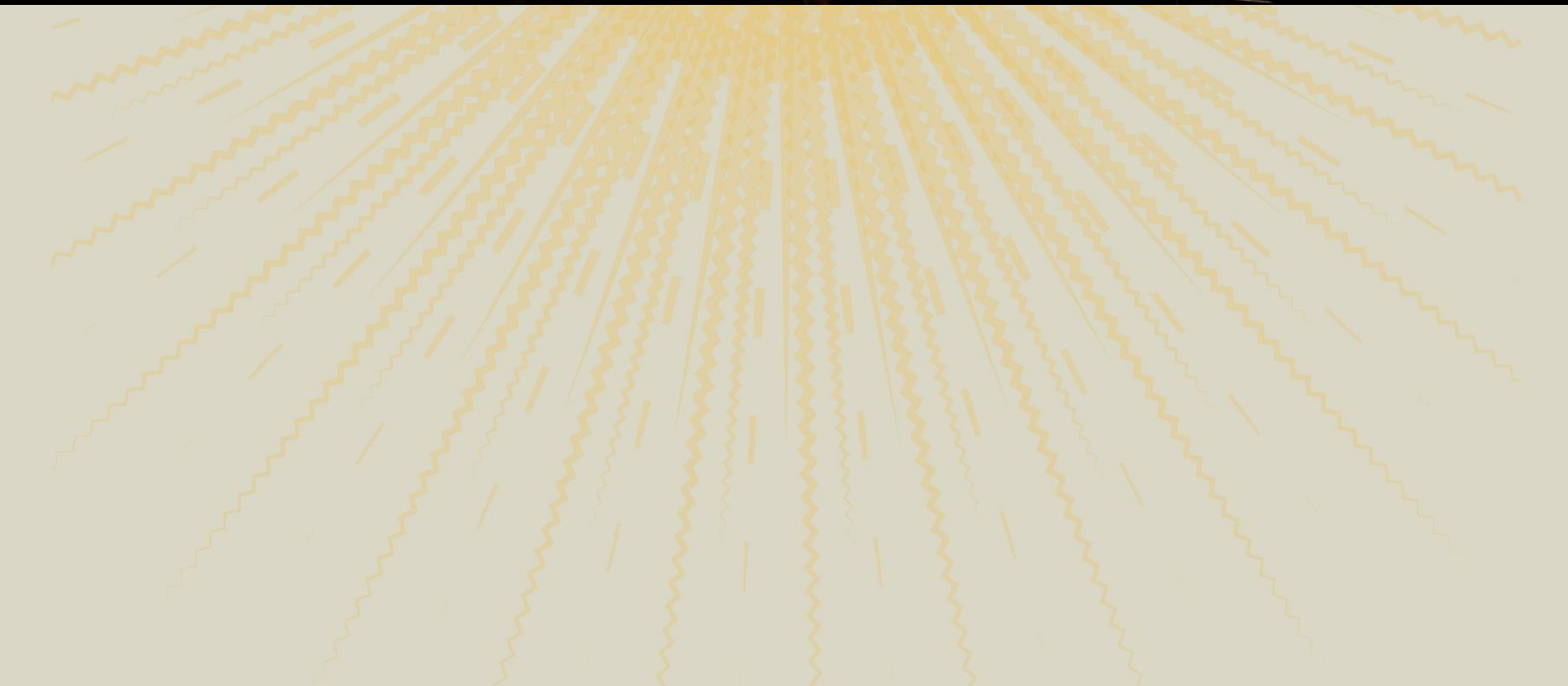
Sleeping Meditation

Rinpoche took the audience through the sleeping meditation, for which you need to be tired. Here sleep is the object of meditation. If you sleep off while meditating and don't have a dream or wake up in the meditative state then that shows the meditation was successful, or with restful sleep. Whether you sleep or not doesn't matter, as long as you are aware.

Rinpoche then asked when you 'buy' awareness how is it that you get compassion and wisdom free? Participants split up into groups and came up with the answer that awareness is the truth, and you can be with it as it is.



He also led a meditation on difficult emotions and how you can find this in your body, with sensations, stories, words, images, and beliefs. Rinpoche mentioned that next time he will speak about thought meditation and the concept of emptiness.



Open Awareness Meditation

Rinpoche said this is non-conceptual, like being with the sky itself. So far, we have been with the cloud. This is the third and final level of this retreat. He then said that the participants have done this already and non-meditation is the best meditation. He mentioned that there is no need to focus on any particular thing or object. Let the mind be as it is, clear, knowing, and luminous. There is a sense of being present, uncontrived, letting things come and go, not getting lost, not being bothered, and the nature of awareness or sky doesn't change. Rinpoche mentioned he has taught many techniques but at the end of the day awareness is key.

Q&A Session

Q. What is your opinion on increasing levels of suicide? Is it a mental weakness or something else?

A. Intention, hope, or purpose is important in life to live long, e.g., helping dogs. If there is a wall there are lots of ways to get past, first throw the backpack across then have motivation. There needs to be a sense of purpose in life. Normally if there are ten qualities, one negative and nine positive, you ignore the positive and see the negative. There is innate goodness, but it lies hidden.

Q. How to be happy?

A. Real happiness. Awareness, love and compassion, wisdom + intention. If the weather is warm, and you sweat outside and you think you're going to die. However, inside the sauna you feel fully alive. Heat inside the sauna is happiness outside it is suffering. Real happiness is inside, not outside. Dukkha is a hollow feeling. Fill in with 5 C's. If you help others, you feel satisfied. An egoistic mind even if successful at a deeper level will find something that will be missing. This is the real meaning of how to be happy.

Q. Is it okay to combine methods?

A. If there is more awareness then fine, otherwise choose one.



Q. Sleepy during meditation?

A. Walking meditation can be a solution in formal practice.

Q. How do you deal with perfectionism and the judging mind?

A. Find balance, try to do the best in whatever you do in life. Use your capacity and own wisdom. Middle way.

Q. What is a conceptual image?

A. Conceptual image is solid grasping, while non-conceptual is not fixed.

Q. If we see our face for too long then colours change?

A. That's normal. Science is at an objective level. Here colour is the perception of your own mind. Not just that but also the entire universe is like that. When you see the true nature of reality you see it as it is.

Q. What is the difference between loving kindness and compassion?

A. Level one awareness. Done. Level two is this. Loving kindness wishes others to be happy, it looks for positive aspects. Compassion looks for freedom from negative aspects, wishes to alleviate pain.

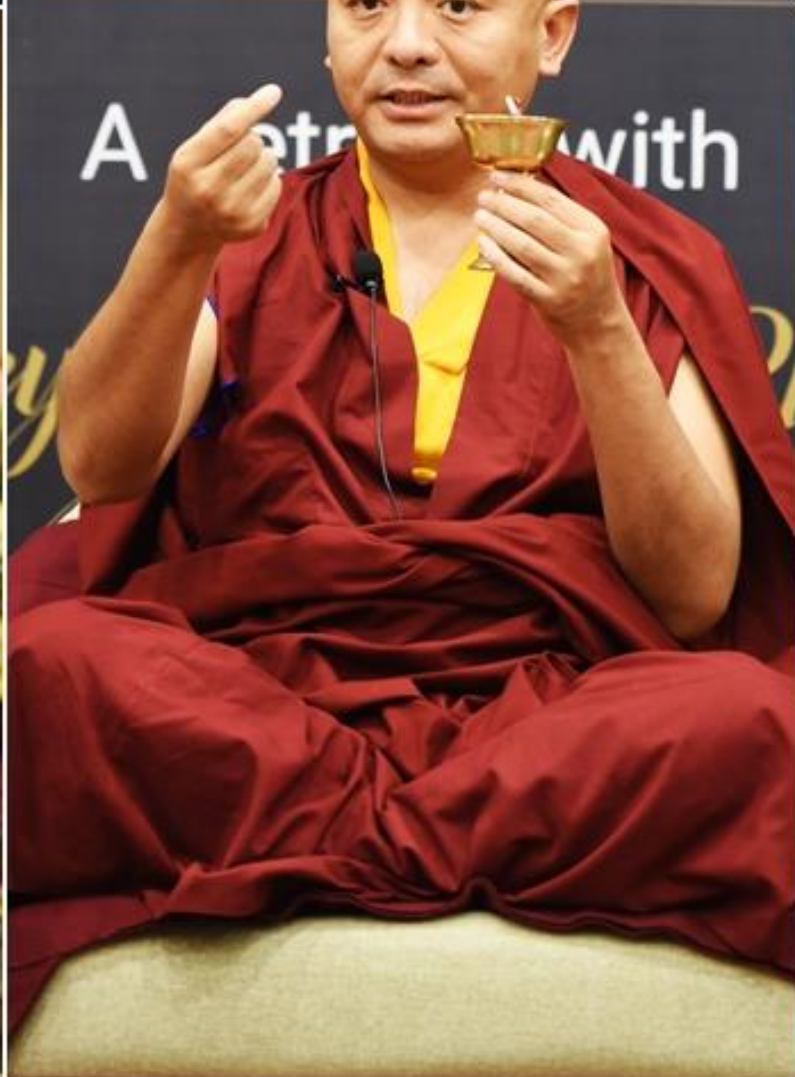
Q. What is gross and subtle sensation?

A. Subtle sensation is throughout the arm even when you sleep, and it helps feel the temperature. Gross sensation is like vibration. Gross is what you usually feel, pain, massage to relieve, if you raise your arm for a long time, and joy.

Q. Do deities have no independent existence?

A. They don't. But emptiness is not nothingness, but fullness. Form is emptiness and emptiness is form. Normally you say exist or not, two boxes, but true nature is in between.





Q. How do you make an effort?

A. Practice and develop through inspiration and sense of meaning. Plus know the benefits and work at the habitual level. Also be creative.

Q. How do you know if you are meditating if you don't use an object of meditation?

A. Open awareness has no specific object. It doesn't mean one is lost. It is completely natural.

Q. I tend to yawn during breathing meditation but am tingling and awake when Bodhicitta and emptiness. So, should I stop breathing meditation?

A.. It is okay to have a little dullness, otherwise engage. Need balance.

Q. Habit and effort are continuous and motivated. Meditation helps the quality of life. If circumstances keep changing, is it double effort or should one stay with practice? After meditation don't know if it is helpful?

A. Don't work with the most intense habit. Try an easy one first, e.g., initially work with anger not panic. Do it every day then use it in other problems.

Q. How to get out of habitual thinking by using any object? As most of the time we are in the head, so how to be with your awareness most of the time?

A. It is impossible to do it for a long time, but it can be done for a short time and repeated for a longer duration and with more concentration. Drop by drop a container is full of water. Start small and go from there, find balance. For example, every day read 10 pages of a big book.

Q. How to bring awareness and wisdom of breath?

A. Knowing the breath is the beginning to develop wisdom. Do not control or change it just be as it is. Truth of reality sees, as there is no change or control and eventually goes beyond.

Q. How do you recognize the nature of the mind?

A. Step by step, you can misunderstand the best practice, so do not teach now.



Q. Impermanence but attached to people in life, is happiness a precursor or by products of happiness?

A. Real happiness contentment is beyond grasping. Intention view etc. detachment, okay with everything.

Q. How to be aware of the mind while completing tasks?

A. For a short time watch your breath for a few seconds, e.g., while drinking water, the sensation while saying 'hello, good morning'. Not while driving a car otherwise, you will have an accident!

Q. How to have kindness and compassion in relationships and not give and take or use each other?

A. Balance it like you drink water from a glass. If too tight, break away. Look for okay not perfect. Importantly everything changes. Acceptance and openness are important. Do not be focused on the result.

Q. Advice for scientists? Inside happiness?

A. Yes, many scientists are researching now. Being in the mind is not easy to understand and difficult to change from thinking to being.

Q. Is there a dark side to meditation?

A. Yes, if you receive the wrong instructions.

Q. How to uplift yourself when low?

A. Aerobic exercise and meditation. Plus, therapy – that is not a sign of weakness.







Conclusion

Kabir Saxena, Trustee, Nalanda Foundation made the closing remarks. He said this is a rare teaching to receive because of the ease in which it was explained and the level of sophistication. He also said there is a responsibility for participants now that they have received it. He dedicated the merit gathered to the staff who organised the programme and thanked the five organisations behind it. As a parting thought Rinpoche said the most important thing now is to practise, grow and transform yourselves, and help others.





Summary

Ritinjali and Centre for Escalation of Peace in collaboration with Nalanda Foundation, India International Centre and Pallavan Learning Systems organized a Retreat with Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche on the theme ‘THE TRUE POTENTIAL OF THE MIND: Primordial Wisdom in the Age of Scientific and Technological Breakthroughs’. The retreat was held at the India International Centre on 8th and 9th December 2022. The retreat was attended by about 135 participants in-person and 120 online participants from 46 different countries.

Shyam Saran gave the opening address and thanked the Rinpoche for providing his valuable time and wisdom for this retreat. Shyam Saran noted that Mingyur Rinpoche is a world-renowned meditation teacher who possesses a rare ability to present the ancient Indian and Tibetan wisdom in a fresh, engaging manner. With personal experience of anxiety and panic attacks, which he suffered from throughout his childhood and into his teenage years, Rinpoche learned to transform his panic into a positive force through meditation. It was mentioned that Rinpoche has written many books, including the New York Times Bestseller, *The Joy of Living: Unlocking the Secret and Science of Happiness*.

Mingyur Rinpoche began the retreat by discussing various basic concepts in meditation. Then, reiterating the theme of the retreat, he talked about numerous issues relevant to the times we live in, marked by rapid and complex scientific and technological breakthroughs. Discussing the smartphone, perhaps the most ubiquitous technological gadget today, he noted that it can be a good source of knowledge and communication but can also lead to numerous mental and physical complications. He remarked that smartphones are not inherently good or bad; how we use them and what our intentions are dictate whether they are useful or harmful.

Rinpoche discussed the concept of the true potential of the mind with his insightful discourse on the process of meditation and mindful practices. With myriad analogies and anecdotes, Rinpoche explained that meditation is an appreciation towards awareness. He explained that our mind is like a butter lamp - Bright and Self Luminous. One can achieve a state of self-luminosity through meditation. Rinpoche also cited that the ancient method of meditation is a recognized method of self-care grounded in scientific evidence. So, allowing oneself to indulge in meditation



practices assures an eventual Nirvana, a state of peace and clarity. Rinpoche also guided the audience through several types of meditation practices which included the Breathing Method, Sound Method, Mental Recitation, Sensation Method, and Sleeping Method.

Rinpoche mentioned that the four important factors in transforming our mind include: Intention (motivation), View (mindset), Meditation (technique), and Application (ongoing habit). Developing the intention and motivation to transform our mind is the first step. Then, we need to inculcate the right view (mindset) or perspective of seeing the nature of reality as it is. Then, we need to know the various techniques of meditation and apply them on a regular basis to master the process. According to Rinpoche, when combined, these four factors can unlock the true potential of our mind.

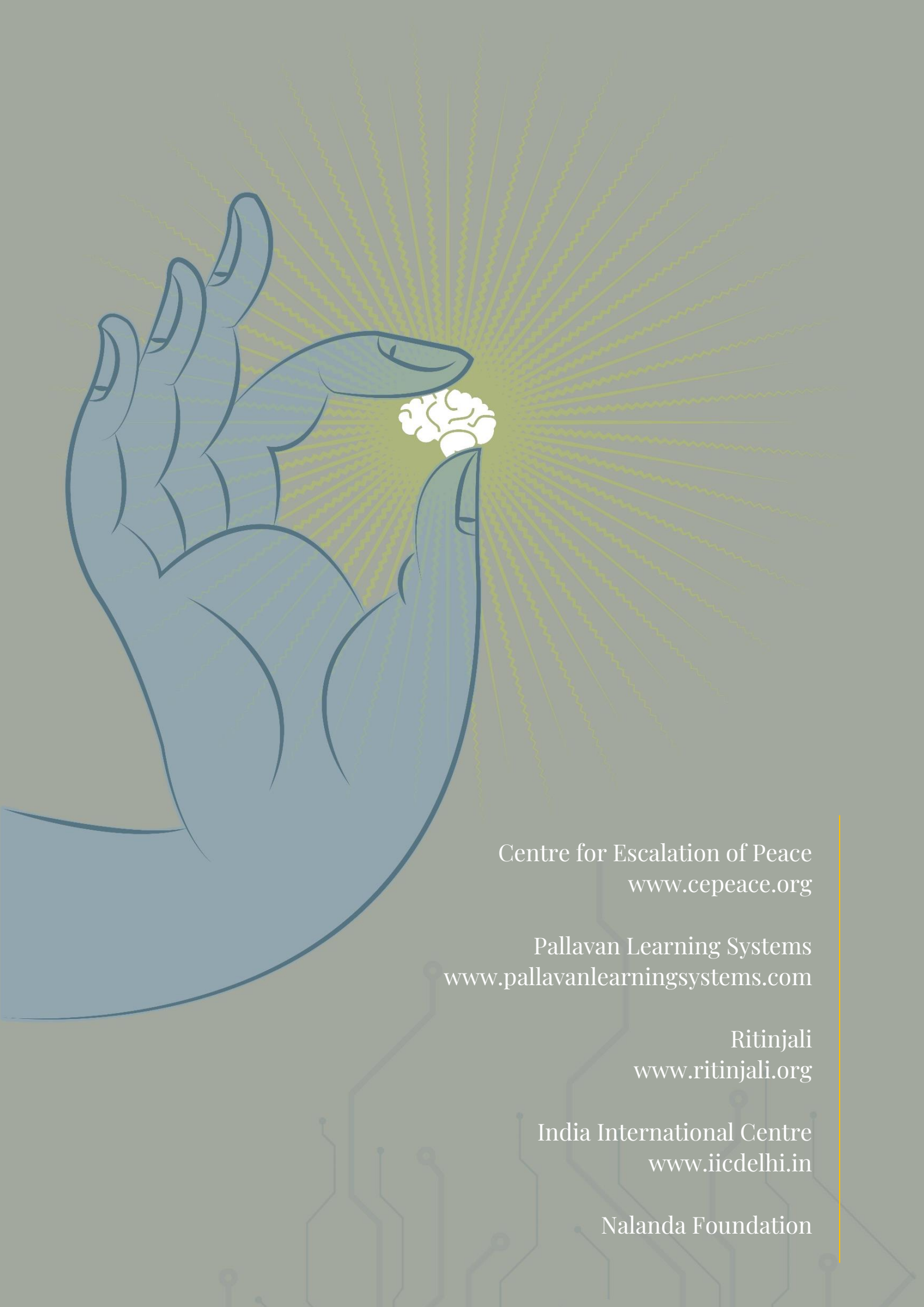
Rinpoche mentioned that our mind has three layers/levels – Feeling (emotional level), Concept (intellectual level), and Volition (habitual level). Working on an intellectual level can help us change our view (mindset). Similarly, we can work on the emotional level through meditation and work on the habitual level through regular application. It is important to note that the habitual level resides in the unconscious level and takes the longest to change.

One of the main ideas that came out of the retreat was the recognition that primordial wisdom cannot be taken for granted; instead, primordial knowledge is more significant than ever in this complex, ever-changing world. The need for loving kindness, compassion, and acceptance has never been more important and it can be achieved through proper meditation and mindful exercises.

On both days, Rinpoche answered questions posed by the audience. Many of these questions revolved around specific meditation techniques, mental and emotional wellness, and the relationship between meditation and technology.







Centre for Escalation of Peace
www.cepeace.org

Pallavan Learning Systems
www.pallavanlearningsystems.com

Ritinjali
www.ritinjali.org

India International Centre
www.iicdelhi.in

Nalanda Foundation