

Raise Bodhicitta to benefit countless suffering sentient beings. We continue with the teachings of Patrul Rinpoche, instructions to oneself. At the moment His Holiness Lama Achuk Rinpoche is busy teaching these teachings of Patrul Rinpoche. Patrul Rinpoche's teacher was Jigmey Gyalwai Nyugu and through following the instructions of his teacher, Jigme Gyalwai Nyugu, was able to realize the essence of the teachings. Then, after realizing these pith instructions, he taught and one can get a sense of his realization when you read his book, "The Words of My Perfect Teacher".

And why? Because he followed the teachings of Jigmey Gyalwai Nyugu according to the teachings and corresponding with the teachings. He spoke about 'the three things that we should remain attentive to: First, our benevolent Guru. Second, the compassionate Buddha. Third, our own mindfulness and awareness.' These we should never ever forget.

Our mind should never ever part from these instructions. Practice this again and again, practise this continuously. If we do, then with all of these instructions that Patrul Rinpoche is giving to us, 'the instructions to oneself', we will be able to realize perfectly.

The next verse is,
'There are three things that we should hold in grateful remembrance.
First, the masters who confer the precepts,
Second, the dharma that shows the path, and
Third, the precepts and vows.'

In these teachings, he always uses four sentences to convey the point of view. He is saying, these are things that we should continuously be aware of, like our breath which should never stop. If we don't hold these continuously in our mind stream, it may be difficult not only to attain enlightenment, but we may also encounter many difficulties. Like our body, if we give it the right nutrients we may be able to live for a long time, and that we may also live healthily. If we don't maintain these instructions, what may happen is that our practice may deteriorate or regress. Alternatively, it may be that our practice doesn't improve.

So there are three things that we must always hold in grateful remembrance. They must never leave our mind stream. The first is the masters who bestow to us the precepts, bodhicitta vows or Vajrayana precepts, including all those teachers who teach us the Dharma or offer pith instructions to us, that bestow blessings or transmit empowerments for us. And of course, those teachers that give us our monastic vows. Without precepts and vows, it is very difficult to attain liberation. Never forget these teachers, always pray to them. Have great respect towards and make vast offerings to these great teachers.

Currently there are many problems in mainland China and Tibet. Why? Because empowerments are being given and these empowerments are very auspicious. However, the students don't understand the empowerments and not understanding them, could cause problems. Before receiving an empowerment, it is better to know the teacher and to understand the requirements thereof, and thereafter, to comply with the requirements of the empowerment. In doing this, we can properly receive the respective empowerment. There are cases where people have received many empowerments. The problem is, they are not able to maintain the practices relating to the empowerment afterwards.

To break the vows or discontinue the practice may give rise to negative karma. Therefore, before receiving an empowerment, first understand the requirements thereof. This is to understand what? The teacher, the teacher's lineage, the teacher's enlightened compassion, and to know what the requirements are for receiving the empowerment. In future, if you receive an empowerment, don't be lazy about it, don't be negative about it, nor ignorant about it. Once we understand the empowerment and the requirements of the empowerment, then we must

comply with those requirements, just like we would with any precepts or vows. The actual practice of the empowerment is maintaining the precepts and vows. In certain circumstances there might be different texts or words to describe them.

This year, His Holiness Asang Rinpoche will be giving an empowerment and I hope that everybody prays to him and requests from him the requirements of the empowerment. We really should do this before every empowerment we receive. If we don't know the teacher that is giving the empowerment, it might not actually be leading us to the path to liberation. It may actually cause harm or obstacles for us.

It's not that there's a problem with the empowerment or that there's a problem with the teacher giving the empowerment. It is just that the practices in the secret Vajrayana are very strict and serious. So in receiving the empowerment of the secret Vajrayana, it is very important that at least we have the vows and precepts as our foundation. It is important that we all understand this.

The second point, the Dharma that shows the path towards liberation, the foundation for entering into the Dharma, was given to us by Buddha. Irrespective of whether it is Hinayana, Mahayana or Vajrayana, we must respect all of the teachings of Buddhism with equanimity.

All Buddhism is showing us the path to liberation. Naturally, there may be differences in the temporary benefits of the different teachings and we may all have different levels of understanding, however in reality it is all the Buddha Dharma.

There might be that there is a different levels of realization of the different students. It is important that we have great respect in the Dharma. By following these teachings we can reduce our karma, we can move closer and closer to attaining liberation. How are those who abandon Buddhism, that stop practicing the Dharma, going to attain liberation?

The problems that we experience on the path to liberation are not problems caused by other people, these are the problems that we have created and caused ourselves. In Buddhism there are teachings for the different levels of students. The important thing is how much we ourselves are able to absorb and put into practice. It is important that we follow the teachings that our teacher has given us according to the level of our own practice.