

We carry on with these very precious teachings of Patrul Rinpoche, “Instructions to myself”. What we spoke about yesterday was that we shouldn't let a single thought go, not let a single thought develop. Now let's all give rise to bodhicitta and with bodhicitta we must learn these teachings of the “Instructions to myself” by Patrul Rinpoche. These teachings appear to be very simple, but in reality, unless we have a very good foundation in these teachings, in these verses, then it's going to be very difficult for us to be able to attain perfect liberation. We start here, step by step, we put this into practice. This is very important.

The sixth verse is the next verse in these instructions of Patrul Rinpoche to himself.

“There are three things which one should conceal,
the merits of oneself,
the faults of others, and one's plans for the future”.

These instructions are also very important. These days, many people speak very boldly and they propagate their strong points, their merits and they mostly avoid their negativities, the things that they have done wrong. They are quite eager to talk about the shortcomings of others, even about their friends, their fellow practitioners and even about their teachers. It doesn't matter how much Buddhism we have learnt, that you have read or how many teachings we have listened to, if we aren't able to put them into practice, it doesn't matter whether we have heard about equanimity, wisdom, emptiness, compassion. If we don't practice it, then the merits, these perfect merits are not going to be realised. It's very important that we implement these teachings in our practice so that we may be able to attain the realisations of the Dharma. This verse is a pith instruction which will help us to avoid creating obstacles to our practice.

Just applying this verse in our normal daily life in the material world can bring great benefits. No matter whether we are amongst fellow practitioners or if we are in a large public crowd, one definitely must not engage in talking about our merits. This Patrul Rinpoche achieved very well himself. He never spoke about his merits and this is what he is relaying to us over here. Don't propagate your merits amongst other people. Especially if we are practicing great perfection. This we really must place close attention to. It is very important to avoid propagating our merits, rather just practice. Even if we are experiencing hardships, a little pain and suffering, or discomfort while we are meditating or practicing, refrain from speaking to everybody about it. Do not go to other people saying “Oh I've got such and such a teacher. I'm doing such and such practices and I've heard these teachings, I've received these instructions, I'm busy learning and I've received x, y and z pith instructions”. If you have merits, avoid doing any of this.

If you have received pith instructions or merits, just carry on about your practice and gradually your merits will increase. It really is better to keep secret all the merits that you achieve within your Buddhist practice. Don't go telling everybody else about your merits.

As for one's faults, these we shouldn't keep a secret. These we should openly confess. By openly confessing them and bringing them into the open, we have a possibility of purifying them and being purified from their negative karma. Just like if you uproot a tree and put the

roots in direct sunlight. Doing this will kill the roots. This is the same principle with respect to our karma. If we repent our karma then it won't increase, it won't multiply.

Propagating or boasting about one's own merits is really quite silly. Why is this? Because, if we do this, our merits won't increase. The second reason is that if we boast or propagate our merits, it might give rise to anger within others. Or, within ourselves, we may become proud of our merits, or other people may become jealous. Hence, it is important not to propagate or boast about your merits.

We might say to people, I've been practicing for so many years, I've had this experience, that kind of feeling. Rather be like Patrul Rinpoche, like His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok, like His Holiness Lama Achuk Rinpoche. They never ever spoke about or propagated their merits. They always praised the merits of others. And as for the second line, 'there are three things one should conceal, the faults of others'.

This is also very important. There's one thing that many people like to do, and that is talk about the wrongs, the negativities, the faults of others. With respect to the great perfection, to speak about others' faults is really a great fault in oneself. And if you do speak about the faults of others, immediately repent. If at any time you've spoken about the faults of your teacher or your fellow practitioners, immediately repent, confess.

This again is also very important. Why we should repent, we've already spoken about, and we really should be very careful about who we talk about, because we don't really know who are bodhisattvas. All we see is the external appearance of others. Through just their appearance, are we able to see who is the reincarnation of a Buddha or a bodhisattva? So, to cheat other people is really something we shouldn't do. It is really unnecessary. When we first see somebody, maybe it's a fellow practitioner, right there and then, at that very moment, in the very first moment, that we don't discriminate. Equally, if we are meeting our teacher, our guru. (If we allow the initial discrimination,) then after that, attachment or aversion may arise.

Have you ever slandered your guru, maybe a fellow student or any sentient being? When we first meet our Guru, there is a moment where no karma arises, however, then the next thought arises, and then another thought follows and then we start to generate negative karma. We are the ones who are going to have to experience and endure the fruits of this negative karma in the future. The fruit might even be the suffering of the hell realms due to slandering a particular sentient being.

This is not positive karma we have been talking about. Positive karma is when we have perfect wisdom, when we've achieved the fruits of Buddhahood. For instance, Holiness Lama Achuk Rinpoche or His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok. They have clairvoyance and everything that they are doing, every single moment is proper, is correct. Unlike us ordinary practitioners, in the beginning we start very well, the first moment is very good and then all of a sudden we start to

discriminate. "It should be like this, it should be like that." And so, all of these discriminatory thoughts arise and all the judgments of others arise. What does this do? It generates a lot of negative karma.

Pay attention to this. The Secret Vajrayana is taught according to the level of the student. There are different types of Dharma. There's Dharma that points directly at the mind. There is the Dharma of liberation. There's the Dharma for when we are in the bardos. What gets taught to everybody just depends on each individual's level of practice and understanding. Hence, it is best that we must practice according to the step-by-step practices of the lineage. This is very important.

With respect to the preliminary practices, really establish a very good solid foundation in the outer preliminary practices. This foundation is based on practice, not just on theory. It doesn't really matter what aspirational plan we have, as long as it includes benefiting sentient beings and that it is meaningful towards sentient beings. Go out there and do it. You don't have to talk too much.

Acting in this way, we can truly avoid all sorts of obstacles and troubles. Just like these enlightened teachers, for instance, Patrul Rinpoche, he didn't talk a lot. He did a lot. Some practitioners talk all day, however, they don't do anything really. If this is the case, it really is quite a pity. It is really quite sad.

These great practitioners, their ability has been attained through the step-by-step practices. It's not due to some kind of reincarnation that they have. It's through their own meticulous practice. In any moment, for every moment, never give rise to a single negative thought. If we wish to attain liberation, however, we never observe our arising thoughts, then the reality is that we will never attain liberation. Just like these great teachers, for instance, Patrul Rinpoche, Mipham Rinpoche, Langri Tangpa, and his eight verses of mind training, how did they attain enlightenment? They all attained enlightenment through observing their arising thoughts.

The issue here is that many of us understand this. The question is whether or not we are able to do it. If we are not able to do it, it doesn't matter what teachings we have heard, what we have listened to, how profound the teachings are, we are not going to be able to attain liberation.

The merits and the great wisdom of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas has come about through putting the Dharma into practice, by realising these practices. It's through realising the practices that they have clairvoyance, boundless compassion and perfect wisdom.

This hasn't come about because they've seen it or because they've spoken about it. His Holiness Lama Achuk Rinpoche also said yesterday, these realisations come about through practice. It doesn't matter if you can recite the 84,000 different dharmas, even if the 84,000 dharmas appeared right in front of you, if you didn't have the realisation, What use, what help would this be to you?

This human life of ours is very short. Many people have many negative views or are lazy. Their minds are lost in ignorance and as a result, it's very difficult for them to give rise to faith, to belief in their Guru. It is also very difficult for them to increase this faith. However, their attachment, their aversion, their ignorance, they are increasing on a daily basis. And this really is quite a shame. It is quite a pity.

Think of the earthquake in Yushu. Within a few minutes, within an hour, over 10,000 people died. What were they busy doing for a long time before the earthquake occurred? They were planning, thinking, working hard in order to improve their material wellbeing, their material wealth, their fame, their status.

Mainly concerned with what they're going to achieve, what they're going to eat. The area of Yushu had been developing for quite a while. Then, within an instant, all of their wealth, all of their effort, even their lives, were just destroyed. Just look around. We see impermanence happening all the time.

We want to live for so long. How long are we realistically going to live? His Holiness Lama Achuk Rinpoche also spoke about this. Many of the practitioners, have been practicing for many years and still they don't know where they're going in their next life. They have no plan for this life. They don't know when they are going to attain liberation. Every day, they're just letting the days drift away lazily, not watching their arising thoughts.

They're running around, running here, there, everywhere, doing this, doing that. While doing this your smart car, your warm house, all the money that you have earned is diminishing, their value decreasing since you have come to Yachen Gar. You've abandoned all of these material concerns to come here and practice. If this is the case, why are you still carrying on all of these activities that really have no meaning? Why are you still spending your days being lazy, scattered, and still in an ignorant, unaware state of mind? His Holiness Lama Achuk Rinpoche says that these sentient beings today are really difficult to transform, to help, and to save. Most importantly, moment by moment, observe our arising thoughts.