

Everybody, pray to His Holiness Lama Achuk Rinpoche and everybody raise Bodhicitta. And to do this to benefit countless suffering sentient beings. Today we are carrying on with the instructions of Patrul Rinpoche, his “instructions to myself”. Often observe oneself and realise the impermanence of all worldly things, of all material things. The reality of birth, old age, sickness and death, this human life of ours is very precious. It's like a candle in the wind though, when the wind starts to blow, the candle may easily be blown out. We see in our world today that most people are pursuing good health, peace, wealth, fame and status. These are all impermanent and they have no real meaning.

On the other hand, there are very few people pursuing liberation. The most meaningful thing that we can do is raise Bodhicitta. Be just like Patrul Rinpoche and Langra Tampa every day, every moment, practicing for the benefit of sentient beings, meditating, reciting mantras, dedicating the merits.

Practicing like this is very important. We see all these people in these big cities. They are drinking, gambling, smoking, playing majang, taking drugs, all sorts of different things. Why are they doing this? All for their own selfish purposes. How will we be able to smile when we see beings doing this? Just like Langra Tampa, there is no way we are going to be able to smile if we understand the suffering of samsara. If we don't understand the suffering of samsara, then maybe we will be able to smile.

Impermanence and death is really quite scary. When death comes, it arrives without a sound. Death doesn't warn you beforehand that it is coming. It doesn't announce, “I am coming!!”. Just like this earthquake in Yushu, everybody was relaxing, enjoying themselves in their ignorant state. Then suddenly this impermanence struck and death arrived and how many people died? Not one of them thought, I am going to die today.

In an instant, in the time of a flash of lightning, death had arrived. So when we are sleeping, when we wake up, when we are listening to the Dharma, when we are by ourselves, when we are in a group of people, always be resting in the state of rigpa, in your Buddha nature. Don't be in a state of ignorance. When death arrives, don't be in a state of ignorance. Don't be too attached to this body of yours.

It is a tool for us to be able to practice. Don't be too attached to it. It doesn't matter how much we are attached to it, it is not going to improve our health. Health and peace of mind is always in a state of change. When we are suffering we won't always be in a state of suffering. Suffering changes and so does happiness. Happiness and suffering is always in a state of change. So don't be too attached.

Another point, as Patrul Rinpoche tells us now, in the 8th verse, “There are three places where one should not go. Where quarrels and fighting happen. Where large crowds get together and places of entertainment”. Place a lot of importance on this as a practitioner. How many people like to run all over the place, to this place, to that place, especially when there are a lot of people around. Places where our attention is distracted, where anger arises. This destroys our roots of merit. Being here at Yachen Gar is very auspicious. Often we can be at the river or at

the top of the mountain and we can see all of these monks, these nuns, and lay practitioners. They are meditating and resting in rigpa and this is really quite special.

Where will we see this in any city? Keep our body in the Seven Points of Vairocana posture and keep our body, speech and mind pure and be disciplined. Avoid these places that are noisy and full of crowds. We are here at Yachen Gar Monastery and this is very auspicious. Especially if we compare it to some of the people in the mainland where they may spend a lot of time in the bars. They go into the bar or a pub pursuing their own happiness. They go there and they drink and they drink so much that they get inebriated and then they pass out on the road or on the side of the road. They are inebriated to such a state that if a car had to drive over them, they might not even notice.

Within ignorance there is the suffering of ignorance. These days as well, think how many abortions there have there been? How many people have had abortions? How many people have got drunk, smoking, playing Majang? All of these harmful things that are going on in this world today. How fortunate we are to be here today in Yachen Gar and to be able to listen to the Dharma. That you can stay here in this pure place and practice your meditation. Where else are you able to find places like this? In these degenerate times where will you find such a pure place?

Learn to cherish what you have. Today in the 8th verse we are talking about the places that practitioners shouldn't go to. There are three places one should not go. The first place is where quarrels and fighting happen. And to keep our mind pure, keep our mind stable and to keep our mind in line with the Dharma. We must avoid places like bars, places where people gamble and places where people fight and quarrel. Don't let these ignorant seeds enter one's mind stream. We must definitely stay away from these places. As it says in the 37 Practices of a Bodhisattva, to leave behind your homeland and similar circumstances.

It is better to leave behind these big cities where all of these distractions are going on. Go to a place where it is quiet and where we can practice. To do this is really not easy. If we spend a lot of time in these places, drinking, gambling etc. If we spend our days in these places, then when is this ignorance of ours going to be purified? When is our karma going to be purified? When are we going to stop generating this karma? Now, you can see for yourself. Look at the environment that you are in. To be able to listen to the Dharma, to have met a teacher, a guru, is very special, is very rare. In this world of ours, there is nothing that we can't let go of. With respect to the outer appearances, we have already let go of all of these material concerns, all of the status, fame and material concerns. But, have we let go of the greed, the attachment that is still in our minds? This is the most important.

It's not important that we let go of all the external things like fame and money. What is most important is letting go of this attachment, desire and anger within our own mind streams. Yesterday, a student asked Rinpoche a question which Rinpoche thought was quite important. The student asked Rinpoche, "my attachment to your appearance, how can I purify this attachment?"

The student really considered this question in great detail as this is also a form of attachment. Rinpoche answered, “if you know Rigpa, then you can remove and be free of all attachments. In the state of Rigpa, in our Buddha nature, this attachment doesn't exist. It's only in our conceptual mind that we are attached to the appearances of our teachers or our gurus. When we have attachment, we have suffering.”

Practice with discipline. Don't run here, there, and everywhere. The second place that we should avoid is where large crowds gather. Where there are large crowds, then there's usually more slander and more negative talk taking place. Then unconsciously, unawares, we follow what is going on externally. The fact that one person is able to practice is really quite special and if we're running around all over the place, there is usually no chance for our mind to settle down and rest in meditation. Rinpoche was saying to the new students that had just arrived, that they are not aware of the fact that the most important thing is to maintain a calm mind.

If you don't have compassion in your mind or believe in your teacher yet, that's okay. What is very important and what Rinpoche wishes is that our mind may be purer, and be more innocent. In this way, it will be a lot easier to receive the blessings of the Buddha Dharma. However, if our mind is all over the place, all scattered, then this might be very difficult for the Dharma to enter into our mind stream. We might have a lot of knowledge, intellect. However, if the Buddha or the 84,000 dharmas were in front of us, we would still not be able to transform our mind. First, when students start, it's good to be more disciplined and more pure and don't run around and be all over the place. In addition, don't think about all kinds of things resulting in your mind being all over the place and don't speak about anybody, don't slander anybody.

When we start our practice, be like somebody who's dumb, who can't speak and practice with discipline. Now that we've arrived in Yachen Gar, we've given up or left these beautiful cities, the warmth of our house, our friends, our close ones, and all the years that we put so much effort into, like our occupation, we've let them go. We've come here to Yachen Gar. Why? In order to attain liberation. Now we know that we should be listening to the Dharma and practising with discipline. This is really so important.

As Patrul Rinpoche said over here, we should avoid those places with large crowds. We can see for ourselves, sometimes there are just two people and they're busy arguing, fighting, competing, sometimes about money. We see this with many people. Some people seem to like this and other people are watching and they're commenting, “oh, this person is right and that person is wrong” and then more and more people arrive and the crowd gathers and they start thinking, “oh, this person shouldn't be like this and that person shouldn't be like that.” As a result anger arises, jealousy arises. Avoid these places and maintain one's practice.

For instance, here in Yachen Gar, there are so many Khenpos and good practitioners, but we don't see them. Why? Because they're busy practicing, they're very disciplined in their practice. It isn't because we think that they're good that they're sitting in the room. It's because they don't want to be in touch with all of these external sources of distraction.

There are some people, as soon as they finish the teachings or finish listening to the teachings, they are here, there and everywhere, looking at this , at that. However, there's really nothing to

look at and there's nothing really to listen to here in Yachen Gar. What is so fascinating in this world? We've already seen through the material concerns of this world. We want to attain liberation. What is there in this world that we haven't seen, that we haven't thought of, that is so special?

The karma of some sentient beings, we really don't want to get involved in. Look in some of these cities, the amount of attachment and aversion that is going on is really quite frightening. If we spend time in these places and we don't practice diligently, it'll be obvious within our three doors, within our body speech and mind. When we watch television, we see all the things that happen in these big cities, it is really frightening. If we aren't an enlightened being, when we go to the cities, it really is difficult to attain liberation, because we ourselves wouldn't be able to escape this ignorant state of mind, spending our life, twenty four hours of the day, pursuing these attachments and aversions. It's not that we must go and reorganise all of these places, all of these cities.

What we must liberate, transform are defilements within our own mind. The best way to do this is to listen to the Buddha Dharma.