

The Treasury of Blessings

Transcription Series

Teachings given by Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche



Part 5: Development Stage

[00:00:03] The four immeasurables are very important. The excellent preparation consists of refuge and developing the enlightened mind, and then in association with this, our practice text explicitly presents the four immeasurables. After the excellent preparation of refuge and bodhichitta, then follows the main part which is described as the main part free from reference point. In the context of the tantric teachings this main part of the practice is known as the experience of the wakefulness of the basic field beyond all conceptual constructs. It is the wisdom wakefulness that experiences the basic field of phenomena which is beyond all conceptual constructs. In the general teachings it is called the knowledge that realizes the absence of self. In the Middle Way it is described in the bodhisattva context as the profound emptiness which is beyond the four extremes and the eight constructs. This wakefulness of the basic field of phenomena beyond all conceptual constructs, in the Middle Way, is recognized as the view that is perfectly empty, open and empty. The view of the Middle Way is open emptiness. The view of the Mahamudra is sheer delight. And the view of the Great Perfection is raw nakedness.

[00:02:22] This is what we need to realize, this is what we need to practice. In order to arrive at this realization we need a lot of auspicious circumstances, a lot of things are required to make this happen. And we need to get rid of a lot of obstacles. Our objective then becomes to get all of those things together and to avoid all of those things that would prevent us from getting there. Before Rinpoche spoke about obstacles, something we often talk about in the Buddhist and spiritual context. There are certain things that can prevent us from gaining progress, that can

obstruct us on the path. Sometimes we speak of them and think of them as if they are some sort of demonic influence outside of ourselves. Some terrible, frightening thing that comes and makes trouble for us. We are trying to practice and then they come and make it impossible. Perhaps we even conjure up images of them with fangs and holding weapons in their hands trying to get at us.

[00:03:57] An obstacle is something that is a hindrance. It prevents us from moving ahead. And when does this happen? It happens when we ourselves lose the practice and what was the focus of practice. Rinpoche was talking about the qualities of insight, love and compassion, and making them the practice by allowing our being to become saturated with these qualities. Whenever this is not the case, whenever we lose sight of these qualities, it means that we got distracted. We know that this practice is really worthwhile, that to be saturated with the water of love and compassion through which there will also be perfect insight, is the key to the practice.

[00:04:51] If we get distracted and can't acknowledge the power of these qualities or allow them to express themselves then we have created in ourselves an obstacle. This right here is the obstacle. Or perhaps it was not that we got distracted but rather we just got too dull, we just got too drowsy and lazy to really be in that way and so we lost the practice. So an obstacle could be laziness, it could be procrastination, and it could be distraction. This is what the obstacle is. When we talk about hindrances and obstacles it really comes down to this....

[00:05:30] CNR English: In the teaching, one word is very important, very, very touching.

[00:05:37] It says that distraction is the obstacle of the demons, the demonic obstacle. Please think about that. Distraction is the demonic obstacle for practitioners.

[00:06:09.12] CNR English: We practitioners have an enemy. Our enemy is not outside of us, our enemy is inner mental poison. Selfishness, pride, jealousy, greed, and attachment. These are our enemy. We have no other enemy. Our enemy is within ourselves. We need to conquer this enemy. When we conquer this enemy, then we will be successful. Until then we are failures. We have demons. What is the demon? Distraction is the demon. Buddha mentioned the Kali Yuga time where there are so many distractions, where so many things will appear in this world. Now we have almost no choice. Everywhere there are objects of distraction. Before objects of distraction there was drama. Like Shakespeare. I saw Shakespeare once. I didn't understand much. For me the most fun wasn't watching who was on the stage. I enjoyed watching the audience. Everybody was looking at the stage and I was watching the audience. We all enjoyed the experience. The audience was mostly looking at the stage and enjoying themselves, but some were also looking at me looking at them and we were enjoying this. Maybe they thought I was a little cuckoo, but we all enjoyed ourselves.

[00:08:46] So distraction is the demonic influence for practitioners. The demonic obstacle is distraction. And there are so many distractions. Things that we could look at, things that we

could listen to, that we could smell, things that we could taste, and things that we could think of. Basically there is no end to what can catch our attention and what can carry us away. All sorts of ideas come up in the mind and then off we go. We are carried away by whatever little thing arises in the field of experience and this is distraction. However, for a practitioner this is the demon. This is the obstacle maker. Often we talk about the obstacle maker as a demon, the Mara. But this is what it is, it's right here within ourselves -- it's our own distraction.

[00:09:53] Rinpoche often thinks about the way that human beings are busy. When we see these things, hear, smell, and so on, and when we think so much, then we get really busy. We become so active, busy, and agitated from all this thinking. It particularly expresses itself in the face, in what goes on in the face. The human face is so busy. It's as if all the activities gather in this little sphere here, the face. We keep this very busy for some reason. Who knows why. Is it a god who made it like that? Is it the devil who condemned us to being this way? Or is it karma? Hard to say, but it is like this, is it not? Rinpoche says he can't help coming back to this every so often. The human face is so busy and compared to the rest of the body it's overly busy.

[00:11:01] CNR English: One thing is about the what we humans don't like – these things that we have to keep within ourselves, inside of our body. It's so unpleasant. Someone, a god or demon or karma or doctor, I really want them to help us to make whatever we eat to come out of us again in same design, with the same smells and design. This is my wish, it feels so awful, it feels so bad. However we try to be clean we are all toilets. We are a walking toilet. We walk with toilet, sleep with toilet, eat with toilet, and talk with toilet. How many toilets are here now you know. There are over two hundred toilets here. This not fair, so we need to ask them to make the food and drink come out of us with the same color and design it entered our body. Then we will feel really clean, then we can experience cleansing. Real proper, and very holy, holy, holy.

[00:12:41] The main part of the practice session is also the part where we have development stage recitation and completion. This all unfolds in the main part of practice. So when we do this practice, what is it that we develop? We develop the perception of the divine environment where forms are visible emptiness, where speech and sounds are audible emptiness and where mind and consciousness are the play of awakened wisdom. So this is what we train in recognizing and we do this by means of certain features that we bring to mind as is described in the text here. That which we recall when we assume this perspective of the vajra body, speech, and mind is actually nothing else than the way things really are. That which we see is empty by nature, that which we hear is also the expression of emptiness, and when the mind moves it's the moving of the empty wisdom. [00:13:44.24] So in this way we simply acknowledge things as they are. By means of perception of the pure and perfect environment we give rise to the features of forms of enlightenment, the Buddhas and their environment, which are clearly perceptible, vividly present, and yet without having any individual nature. They are simply the expression, the clear and perfect expression, of emptiness.

And that's what we do here in this practice. We bring to mind the appearance of the Buddha Shakyamuni. He is in this case the central divinity and he appears, as it says in our practice text, as the display of the unity of dependent origination and emptiness. So he is present in the sky before us, and he is resting on a throne supported by lions. On that throne there's a lotus, on the lotus there's a sun disc, and on the sun disc there's a moon disc. This is the seat of the Buddha Shakyamuni. [00:14:59.29] He's present displaying all the forms of excellence, the major and minor marks of enlightenment. He's blazing like a golden mountain. He wears the three dharma robes and he's seated in the vajra posture. His right hand is in the earth-touching gesture and his left hand holds an alms bowl which is filled with nectar.

[00:15:28] Rays of light, wisdom light, shines forth from this splendid body of our teacher, Shakyamuni. He's surrounded, as he rests in this way before us, by a retinue which is infinite and it consists of great noble beings: The close children of the Buddha, the eight mahabodhisattvas, the sixteen sthaviras, an infinite retinue of bodhisattvas, arhats and so on. We visualize the Buddha in this way and as we do so we recognize that what we see is visible emptiness, that what we hear is audible emptiness, how we use our voice is also the expression of emptiness and what goes on in the mind is the play of wakefulness.

[00:16:23] The benefits that come from visualizing the Buddha's form is described in the text in small letters. It says: visualize the Buddha's form in this way, the very moment that you think he is seated there in person, at that very moment he will definitely settle there, wherever he is envisioned, because of the timeless wisdom body of the buddha is not governed by any direction, time or distance whatsoever. There's a sutra that says: whosoever brings to mind the Buddha, the Buddha will be present before him bestowing blessings continuously, he will liberate one from all imperfections.