



Four Dharmas of Gampopa

A TEACHING BY KHENCHEN THRANGU RINPOCHE
THIRD DHARMA – MAY DELUSION BE DISPELLED FROM THE PATH

July 13 – 15, 2018
For Karma Tashi Ling

1) May Delusion be Dispelled from the Path

So, in this time, Rinpoche is teaching *The Four Dharmas of Gampopa*, so the First Dharma, *may the mind turn to the Dharma*, and the Second Dharma, *may the Dharma follow the path* – the teaching of those has been concluded. Now in this session, it's the Third Dharma, which is *dispelling delusion on the path*. So, in general, Gampopa taught this way to practice the Dharma, summarized into these four topics. And so now we have reached the third of those four, and Rinpoche asks us to listen with the pure motivation of the *Bodhicitta*.

So, we have the mind turning to the Dharma, going to the Dharma; the Dharma going along the path, and then dispelling delusion on the path. Generally, the reason why we have the mind turning to the Dharma and the Dharma following the path, is that this is the path towards omniscience and Buddhahood. So, having entered on to this path towards Buddhahood, what is it that we need? We have been wandering in samsara throughout beginningless time until the present, what is the cause for that? The cause for why we are wandering in samsara, and experiencing the suffering of birth, old age, sickness and death, is because of the defilements in the mind and bad karma, so we need to free ourselves from these defilements and the karma. We need to be purified of them. And so in terms of karma, one's actions, there are good actions and there are bad actions. The good actions, the good karma, results in happiness, and the bad karma is a source for suffering. We need to be purified of bad karma. And so how do we do that? It says that bad karma has one good quality, and that is that it can be purified. We can purify it through confession. So this is something that we have to do, to confess our bad karma, to purify it. And then to purify ourselves of the defilements, then we have to train in *samadhi*, in meditation.

So, whether it's bad karma that we have created in this life, or it's bad karma that we have created in a previous life, when that ripens, its result will be suffering. In order to prevent this bad karma from ripening, we need to confess it, we need to purify ourselves of it through *the Four Powers of Purification*. So, there are these four powers that can purify us, there's:

- 1) The power of rejection,
- 2) The remedial power,
- 3) The power of restraint from repetition, and
- 4) The power of reliance.

The power of rejection is where you look at bad actions and you recognize that these bad actions are not good and these are something that we should regret. So then we regret

whatever we have done in the past, and we will not repeat it again in the future. This is the power of purification, the power of rejection or denunciation of bad actions.

So in that way, when we think we've done some bad actions, actions that are not beneficial for us, but if we think, "Well, it was good that I did that, and that has been beneficial for me", then we will not be able to purify ourselves of it. If instead, one thinks, "Well, I did those things, and this is not going to benefit me", sometimes some of these bad actions were done to protect one's friends, or they were done to defeat one's enemies. Or they were done in order to gain wealth, or for whatever reason one did those bad actions, life is impermanent, so there's no benefit in doing those bad actions to protect one's friends or real purpose or benefit to defeat one's enemies. And also, whatever wealth one has gained through doing those bad actions, we will lose them all. But yet the result of those bad actions will ripen for oneself, so then one thinks, "I made a mistake in doing those actions. It was not a good thing to do, and I need to, I really need to confess them". And so one does that with this pure motivation. And that is the power of renunciation or rejection of one's bad actions.

And the second part is the power of remedy. So in order to purify oneself of this bad karma, one has a remedy against it – one does good actions with one's body, with one's speech, and with one's mind. With one's body, one performs prostrations, circumambulations, and so on in order to gain the accumulations of merit. And with one's speech, one recites sutras, mantras and so on to purify oneself of bad karma. And with one's mind, one practices meditation, and meditates on the *Bodhicitta* motivation, and so on in order to purify oneself of the bad karma. And also, the wealth that one has, one can use that through acts of generosity, or as offering, in order to accumulate merit. And one does that in order to purify oneself of one's bad karma, one does that with that motivation of doing these good actions as a remedy. One think, "I am gathering this accumulation of merit in order to purify myself of the bad karma". And so that is the power of remedy, which will purify us of that karma. And so that is the second power of purification, called the power of remedy.

Then the third power of purification is to not repeat that bad action, it's not to do it again. So we make a commitment not to repeat those bad actions. And if we do that, then we can purify ourselves of that bad karma, but without making that commitment, we can't purify ourselves of it. If we confess the bad actions, if we have done bad and confess it, but also think, "Well, in the future I may have to do that again, when a certain situation arises", then we won't be able to purify ourselves of that bad karma. We cannot really, truly confess it. We have to think that the bad actions one has done before, in the past, that was bad, and through that I've accumulated bad karma. And in order to purify that, one makes this commitment not to do this bad action again. Even if it's at the cost of my life, I will not repeat that bad action. And so to make this strong commitment not to repeat it. And then that will purify oneself of that bad karma, through this third power of purification – the power of commitment not to repeat the bad action.

And so that way we have had these three powers of purification:

- 1) The power of denunciation or rejection of one's bad actions,
- 2) The power of applying a remedy, and
- 3) The power of commitment not to repeat those bad actions.

And so, with a very pure motivation, one confesses using those three powers as a method for purifying. Then the fourth power is the power of reliance. We purify ourselves of our bad karma through the process of reliance, but what are we relying on in order to purify ourselves? We purify ourselves through praying to the Three Jewels, and praying to them with faith and devotion, and praying to the Three Jewels for the purification of one's bad karma. So one prays for that purification, one confesses those bad actions, and so through that power of reliance, one gets this purification. One applies these four powers of purification, then one can truly purify oneself of one's bad karma.

So, then also, there's this practice of reliance, the power of reliance, but then when we use that in relation to the practice of the *Mantrayana*, the *Vajrayana* practice, that special way of practice, then we do the mantra recitation and meditation of *Vajrasattva* for that purification. And so, this becomes a part of, is included in, the four powers of purification. The way we practice that, is that we imagine that above our head is the body of *Vajrasattva*, and in his heart is the essence of his mind, which is the 100-syllable mantra encircling a white syllable HŪṂ, and one prays to *Vajrasattva* one-pointedly with faith and devotion for one's purification, and because of one's prayer, one's supplication to *Vajrasattva*, he regards us with compassion, and from this white 100-syllable mantra, there flows *amrita*, and this *amrita*, this nectar, it fills *Vajrasattva*, and comes into us, our body, through the crown of one's head, and this fills our own body, so that all our bad karma and obscurations are washed out. They exit from us in the form of dirty water. And we think that we have become completely clear, and pure of our bad karma and defilements. And so in that way, there's the practice of, these practice instructions for purification, for the *Vajrasattva* meditation.

So we do that visualization, and that practice, and then to gain certainty in that practice, one again prays to *Vajrasattva* above one's head, praying for purification of one's bad karma and obscurations. And then *Vajrasattva* gives us his reassurance. He says, "Now I have purified you. You are now free of all faults from now on". And he says this reassurance, and smiling, he dissolves into light and merges into oneself. So this is a very special practice, which is included within the Preliminary practices. So the second set of the 100,000 practices is repetition of the 100-syllable mantra of *Vajrasattva* 100,000 times. Within that practice, there are these four powers of purification. This is:

- 1) the prayer to *Vajrasattva* to purify us from bad karma, and obscurations, and this is this rejection or denunciation of the bad karma;
- 2) And then there's the reciting of the 100-syllable mantra, and meditating on the deity, and that is the power of remedy;

- 3) And then the power of reliance is, that we are relying on Vajrasattva to purify us; and
- 4) Then there's the power of non-repetition, which is that Vajrasattva has given us his reassurance that we are purified, and then we make the commitments not to commit those faults again.

And so in that way, we are able to purify our bad karma, and obscurations through this practice. The bad karma and obscurations will prevent us from attaining great realization and experiences. By purifying ourselves of these obstacles, then we will be able to have realizations and experience. This is why we do the meditation on Vajrasattva – to eliminate those obstacles.

So there's also the (method) for purification of bad karma - there's the very special method of developing the *Bodhicitta*, the aspiration for Buddhahood for all beings. And to have love and compassion in one's mind. If one has these, then one's bad karma and obscurations will just be naturally purified. Even if one has great bad karma, this can be purified through developing the *Bodhicitta*. Shantideva, the Indian master, said that even if one has very vast bad karma, really terrible bad karma, it's like, if someone is going somewhere which is dangerous, where there are wild beasts or bandits, if they go alone, then they will be in danger. They will be afraid. But, if they are accompanied by a hero, with weapons, with very strong weapons, who will escort them as their guard, then that person won't be afraid of wild animals, or afraid of bandits, and can just travel happily. In the same way, to purify the bad karma and obscurations, if we have the *Bodhicitta*, and love and compassion, we will no longer be afraid of our bad karma and obscurations, or afraid of the result that comes from them. So, if one feels the fear of having bad karma, and its result, one can turn to, or rely upon, the method of developing the *Bodhicitta*, and that there is no greater method for that purification.

So, in that way, one purifies one's bad karma and obscurations, and the result that will come from that, is that we will be able to gain experiences, good experiences and realizations. In order for those to come, one also needs to have merit, so in order to gain that merit, one needs to do good actions with one's body, speech, and mind – vast good actions that will accumulate merit. How does one do that? How does one accumulate merit with one's mind? The method for that is what's called the mandala offering. The mandala offering is making an offering of all wealth and pleasures in this world. We visualize that we take all of these things in the world, and make an offering of it. And so, there's no greater method for gathering the accumulation of merit than that.

So, one can also do actual offerings, make actual offerings, with one's possessions, things and so on. But then making an offering with one's mind, make an offering of everything to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas through the mandala offering as support for one's actual

acts of offering. Then one is able to accumulate great, vast merit. And that this will make one able to accomplish one's purification of bad karma and obscurations, and the accumulation of merit. So that way, one will be able to attain the great result.

In order to accumulate all this good karma and merit, there's two (things):

- 1) There's a cause, and
- 2) A condition

that's necessary. So in terms of the cause of accumulating merit, one can do the mandala offering, the 100,000 offerings of a mandala. Then there's also a necessary condition, which is the blessing of the lama or guru. So, first of all, one purifies oneself of the adverse factors of bad karma and obscurations, and then one has this cause of the accumulation of merit through offering the mandala. And then one has this condition, this necessary factor of praying to the guru with devotion for their blessing, and through this will cause one to accomplish the accumulation of merit.

For a beginner, they will wonder, "Why praise to the lama?". In the world it is said, the best quality is the Buddha, so they should be praying to the Buddha, and receiving blessing from him. But in the Vajrayana tradition there is praying to one's own lama with devotion. And so, one might wonder, why do that? And doubt the reason for doing that. But there's no reason to have that doubt, because there is a reason, a purpose for doing that. The Buddha had this great kindness, and he was superior, but in terms of us in particular, we don't have the good fortune to be able to meet the Buddha, because the Buddha was 2,500 years ago. We have been born 2,500 years late, after the Buddha. That's a very long time since the Buddha was in the world, so we have no opportunity to be able to meet the Buddha, to be able to see him, to receive Dharma teachings from him. But, although we are not able to meet the Buddha or listen to him teaching, that doesn't mean we are unfortunate, that we are without good fortune, because we can still practice the Dharma, we still have the opportunity to do it, just as if we met the Buddha and heard the teachings from him, because we can still listen to the Dharma teachings and practice them. In that way we are very fortunate. And the reason for that good fortune is that the Buddha lived, and taught with this kindness, but then these teachings have been passed on through the lineage of gurus or lamas down to one's own root lama, one's personal lama, so that we can receive them and practice them, and attain the result. So in that way we are very fortunate. We have received this from our root lama, and through the lineage lamas, (directly) from the Buddha. So the Buddha has these perfect qualities and great activity. But in terms of the kindness shown to oneself, the lama is even greater – one's own teacher is even greater. So therefore, one prays one-pointedly to one's teacher, imagining him above one's head, encircled by the lamas of the lineage, praying with faith and devotion, and that way we can receive very special blessing.

So in that way, one receives the blessing of the lama. But for someone who is new to the practice, they often wonder, "What exactly is a blessing? Can a blessing actually come

in? What is that, is that some kind of intoxication?”. What the blessing is, is a power. What it means by power is that, if one had little faith and devotion, through that power, that faith and devotion increases, and one’s diligence increases. And so that’s through receiving the blessing of the Dharma, and the lama. With that, one’s practice gets clearer and stronger.

So, in the Guru Yoga practice, in order to receive the blessing, one does not see one’s own body or the body of the root lama as ordinary, in ordinary form, but as Yidam deities. It’s a very special Yidam deity, like Tilopa, Naropa, Marpa, Chakrasamvara, for example. In the Chakrasamvara practice, there’s a male deity Chakrasamvara, which is method, and a female deity, which is wisdom, which is Vajravarahi. So, as the wisdom is most important, therefore we meditate on our own body as being the body of Vajravarahi. And above one’s head is one’s lama or guru. In order to increase one’s devotion, we don’t imagine the lama in an ordinary form, but in the form of Buddha Vajradhara, blue in colour, and wearing the Samboghakaya costume. And then above Vajradhara there are all the lineage lamas like clouds in the sky. Also, in the front of Vajradhara, there are all the Yidam deities, and behind, the Dharma. And in that way, one imagines them above one’s head, and to the right and the left are the Sangha, and one meditates in this way.

And then there’s the special instruction for praying in this way, that really, there are the Three Jewels – the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. Then in the practice of the Vajrayana, there’s the Three Jewels and also the Three Roots. And these Three Roots are:

- 1) the Root of Blessing, which is the gurus,
- 2) the Root of *Siddhis*, or Accomplishment, which is the Yidam Deities, and
- 3) the Root of Activity, which are the Dharma Protectors.

And so, as I said before, the Buddha, the source of great kindness we pray to, but more than that there’s the lineage lamas, the root lamas, through whom we receive the instructions. So we pray to them for blessing. So, we are praying to the Buddha, but also to all the lineage lamas and the root lama.

And the second object of prayer is the Dharma. In terms of the Dharma, there’s the two aspects:

- 1) the Dharma of the Path, and
- 2) the Dharma of Cessation.

And so we practice:

- 1) the path of the Four Truths, and
- 2) there is the path of elimination.

The Dharma has these two aspects, and we imagine them as being these volumes, all the volumes of the texts, and so we pray to them as being the teachings and the Dharma. But

all of these teachings, we cannot practice all of those. And do we even have to practice all of them? No, we don't have to. In the Vajrayana, there one just does the practice of one Yidam deity – it's generation and completion phase, and through that we receive the blessings of the Yidam deity. And through that we attain the accomplishments. Through the development and perfection stage of the Yidam deity, the Yidam deity becomes the root of accomplishment, so that is the, we pray to the Yidam as the root of accomplishment.

Then there's the Dharma protectors, that are the source or root of activity. So as I said before, we have the Sangha in the Three Jewels, who are the helpers on the path, that eliminate adverse factors, and help to develop good factors and good conditions. So we pray to the Sangha. We visualize that the Sangha is in human form, as human forms. But there's also the Dharma protectors, in non-human form, and we pray to them, invoking their activity – their activity that will eliminate adverse factors and develop good factors. We pray to them, we supplicate to them to aid us and to be our helpers, so that in that way, they are the root or source of activity. And so in that way, there are these six objects of prayer or supplication: the Three Jewels and the Three Roots.

So, then there are the 100,000 repetitions that are done in the Preliminary practices:

- 1) First with faith and devotion, there's the repetition of the prayer of Refuge 100,000times,
- 2) And then for purification of one's bad karma and obscurations, there's the repetition of the Vajrasattva mantra,
- 3) And then for the accumulation of merit, there's the 100,000 mandala offerings.
- 4) And then in order to receive the blessings in the Guru Yoga, there's the 100,000 repetitions of the Guru Yoga prayer.

And so, in this way, practicing the Preliminaries, there are the two sets of Preliminaries. There's:

- 1) the general, and
- 2) the special.

The general ones are:

- 1) the contemplation of the precious human existence, and
- 2) impermanence, and
- 3) karma, and
- 4) the suffering of samsara.

And these are to turn one's mind away from samsara, in order to increase one's diligence. And then there are the special preliminaries, and through the practice of those special preliminaries, then that increases one's devotion, purifies oneself of bad karma and

obscurations, increases good qualities, increases great diligence, so that we will be able to attain the result. So that is the purpose for those special preliminaries.

At the conclusion of the Guru Yoga practice, to obtain the blessing of the Three Jewels and the Three Roots that are above one's head, because of one's prayer and supplication to them, they melt into light and merge into the root lama, and we see the root lama as being this union, or this embodiment of the Three Jewels. And we pray to the root lama with faith and devotion. And from the three places on his body [OM̐ – Third Eye/Body, ĀḤ – throat/Speech, HŪṂ – heart/Mind], there comes three rays of light – white light, red light, and blue light. And these lights enter the three places on one's own body, so that one's body, speech and mind is purified of all bad karma and obscurations, of all bad actions. And we receive the blessings of the body, speech and mind from all the root and lineage lamas.

And with faith and devotion that one prays, these three lights come from the lama to oneself, and one thinks one has received all the qualities of the body, speech and mind of the root and lineage lamas, that these qualities have arisen in one's being, and with that certainty, then we rest in meditation.

And so it's very fortunate if one is able to practice these Preliminaries. And there are people who are saying, "I want the pointing-out instructions, or this direct introduction into the nature of the mind". So doing that pointing out, or direct introduction, that is something which does have a blessing, but without having practiced, and gained realization and experience, then we will not be able to gain the realization and experience that comes from that pointing-out.

So, there's the *Four Dharmas of Gampopa*, and that was the *Third Dharma* – the dispelling of delusion on the path. And so, and taught in terms of the Preliminaries for increasing our positive qualities. So in the *Four Dharmas of Gampopa*, we've heard the *First* - the mind going to the Dharma, the *Second* – the Dharma following the path, and the *Third* – the elimination of delusion on the path. So that concludes the teaching for today.