

To Refresh Our Understanding: Part 1

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(spontaneous instruction given to students visiting on April 9th, 2017, who made the aspiration at that time that these precious reminders be made available to all in order to be of the greatest benefit)

When you take refuge and you say NAMO BUDDHAYA, that is the same as saying, SANGYE LA KYAB SU CHI-O in Tibetan: “I take refuge in the Buddha.” When you say NAMO DHARMAYA, that is the same as saying, CHO LA KYAB SU CHI-O in Tibetan: “I take refuge in the Dharma.” And when you say NAMO SANGHAYA, that is the same as saying, GENDUN LA KYAB SU CHI-O in Tibetan: “I take refuge in the Sangha.” These are the three “rare and supreme ones,” or the Three Jewels. We take refuge in them because they are rare and supreme. They are supreme because when we speak of accumulating merit and purifying negativity, these Three Jewels—and saying “Three Jewels” is the same as saying the state of enlightenment itself—is the perfect completion of the two accumulations and the perfect purification of the two obscurations. Those are the qualities of the Buddha. Then the teachings of the Dharma are the Buddha’s teachings on how to accomplish that. Then the Sangha are those who have fervent interest in following the teachings of the Buddha and accomplishing the Dharma. When we say “the Dharma,” there are eighty-four thousand categories of dharma. It is not only the teachings of sutra, and not only the teachings of tantra. Both of those are included, and, of course, the teachings of dzogchen as well. These are all the Buddha’s teachings, they are all the Buddha’s speech. All of the *terma*, or treasure teachings, are included there as well.

When we speak of treasure teachings, there are different categories—there are earth treasures, there are mind treasures, there are treasures of pure vision—that are revealed in different ways. All of them, their lineage is the same. And that lineage is your lineage, because look at the lamas from whom you have received blessings and transmission!

For example, Yangthang Rinpoche: In his previous incarnation he was Dorje Dechen Lingpa, who was an inconceivable treasure revealer, and he did reveal earth treasures and enlightened mind treasures as well as treasures of pure vision. Yangthang Rinpoche himself was a keeper or holder of all of those, and because of that you can also say that he held the three lineages—the enlightened mind transmission lineage of the victorious ones, the symbolic indication lineage of the vidyadharas, as well as the aural transmission lineage of ordinary beings. So, Yangthang Rinpoche was a holder of all of those kinds of treasures and was a holder of all three lineages.

Look at your lamas, how inconceivable their qualities have been. Dudjom Rinpoche, for example! And Penor Rinpoche! You can say of each of them that they each were keepers of all these different kinds of treasures. Penor Rinpoche, he was never arrogant, he never put himself forward as a scholar or said, “I know!” “I know this!” or “I know that!” But he did have genuine qualities. He was an inconceivable master and emanation of Vimalamitra. And the Dalai Lama, again one of your teachers, he is also a keeper of all three kinds of treasures. And Dodrup

Rinpoche as well. So, you have connections to all of the lineages. Tulku Teglo Rinpoche, Dodrup Rinpoche, these are inconceivable lamas. They have achieved realization, and you have received transmission directly from them. You have received empowerment, transmission, and instruction, all three.

When you take refuge, the real essence of refuge is the fundamental nature of all things. To know that ultimate nature is the ultimate empowerment, the ultimate transmission, and the ultimate instruction. Your own mind is realized as the dharmakaya. Your own mind is realized as sambhogakaya. Your own mind is realized as nirmanakaya. All three! All three lineages are included in that, as well.

Do you know the three lineages? The lineages of the victorious ones, of the vidyadharas, and of ordinary beings? The aural lineage of ordinary beings means it is for those who hear. You hear and then you understand the meaning, and through that you slowly receive the lineage. That means receiving all of the vase empowerments and so on and so forth. You got all of these things, you got all of the transmissions! You need to understand that, to know what you got.

Always refresh and renew your understanding. We are always worried about cleaning material things. You keep all of your stuff so carefully. Your possessions, you worry about keeping them clean, as well as your house and your bathroom, and on and on. Your understanding you also need to constantly refine or constantly refresh; that way it will become more and more clear, more and more pure, not just like some go-go lady.

When we say, “I take refuge in the lama,” that lama is not some Golok lama who only knows how to show his butt, some playboy. That “lama” means a lama with genuine outer, inner, and secret qualities. The outer qualities are that they hold and can transmit the teachings of individual liberation. The inner qualities are that they hold and can transmit the teachings of sutra and tantra. The secret qualities are that they have brought forth the qualities of realization from all of these teachings in their own minds. This means they really embody all of those teachings, and then they can actually transmit them. The ultimate qualities are the ultimate realization of liberation from samsara and the attainment of full omniscience, their own ultimate benefit and all others’ ultimate benefit—they are the reflection of these qualities. Slowly, slowly, you should understand this is really what refuge means.

You have had the opportunity to meet so many lamas. Just think of them: His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche, the Karmapa, Tulku Teglo Rinpoche, Penor Rinpoche, Yangthang Rinpoche, the Dalai Lama! You have received empowerment, transmission, and instructions from all of the lineage lamas, really authentic lineage lamas. These were not artificial, go-go, playboy lamas! Not at all!

And who were the vessels to receive their transmissions? *You*. You were the vessels, you who have the precious human rebirth, you who have the eight kinds of leisure and the ten endowments that allow you to practice the dharma.

Recalling and understanding this, your faith will deepen. Have faith in the lineage, have faith in the gurus. Have faith in the qualities of their enlightened body, speech, and mind. And always strive to follow their teachings by accumulating merit and purifying negativity as much as you can, as much as you understand, as much as you are able to.

However great your understanding of the lama's qualities is—even if it is just the tiniest bit—to that extent the blessings of those qualities will be able to enter your own mindstream. However much you understand of the qualities of enlightened body, speech, and mind, that is how much you will be able to receive the blessings of those qualities in your own body, your own speech, and your own mind.

But if you have no understanding and no faith, if for you the dharma is just play or a joke, then it is very difficult to realize the genuine meaning. That is another way of saying that it is very difficult for the actual presence of enlightened body, speech, and mind qualities to manifest or express themselves. It is extremely difficult for those blessings to enter your mindstream without understanding and faith, even though you have a precious human birth and, therefore, have the opportunity to practice the dharma. This is true for everyone.

Being Columbian doesn't make you high or low particularly, that is not what is important! What is important is that you have a precious human rebirth, a precious human situation, which means you have the opportunity to study and practice the dharma. You have the eight kinds of freedom; you have the ten endowments. If you take advantage of that opportunity and come to know the qualities of the Buddha's enlightened body, then the qualities of enlightened body and the blessings of enlightened body will be able to enter and purify and bless your own ordinary body. Similarly, if you come to know the qualities of the Buddha's enlightened speech, those qualities and blessings will be able to enter your own ordinary speech and purify and bless it. If you come to know the qualities of the Buddha's enlightened mind, then the blessings and qualities of the Buddha's enlightened mind will be able to enter and bless and purify your own ordinary mind. This is the way that blessings are received. Knowing and understanding deeply the qualities of enlightened body, speech, and mind, that is the real empowerment, the real transmission, the real blessing, the real introduction, that is the real transmission of wisdom itself. You will get nothing beyond that.

Have faith in what you already have, what you possess as your buddhanature, fully endowed with all enlightened qualities. Have faith in that! Understand that! This is how we should cultivate faith, not by going OUR WAY.

We are Buddhist. That means that we are followers of Buddha Shakyamuni; we are followers of the thousand buddhas of this eon. They are all going to follow the same path. They are all going to follow the BUDDHAS' WAY. They all become enlightened by following the path of enlightenment, not by following their MY WAY. Guru Rinpoche and a million buddhas, they are all the same. They are all the same in how they will come to their realization, in how they will come to the state of enlightenment: by following the teachings and the path of liberation. None of them follow their own idea or go their own way.

We need to come to know what they know, come to realize what they realized. What is that? It is the qualities of every being's buddhanature. It is the qualities of enlightened body, speech, and mind—which ARE the qualities of every being's buddhanature! So, as much as we can we need to familiarize ourselves with these qualities, the qualities of the buddhas, the qualities of Guru Rinpoche, the qualities of all the lineage masters—outer, inner, and secret qualities.

When you know outer enlightened qualities, that means you know qualities of enlightened body. That means that the blessings of enlightened body will enter your mindstream. When we talk about enlightened body, we are not talking about sticks and stones and inanimate material objects. We are not talking about something concrete and physical. We are talking about enlightened body qualities, *kaya* qualities, wisdom body qualities themselves. If you know these qualities of enlightened body, then you are receiving the empowerment of enlightened body. And the blessings of enlightened body are entering your mindstream. Likewise, if you know the qualities of enlightened speech, then you are receiving the empowerment of enlightened speech and the blessings of enlightened speech are entering your mindstream. If you know the qualities of enlightened mind, then you are receiving the empowerment of enlightened mind, and the blessings of enlightened mind are entering your mindstream.

This is why we hear, contemplate, and meditate on the dharma! This is why we study and practice: because if we do these properly, we can bring forth the blessings of enlightened body, speech, and mind in ourselves. We can bring our own buddhanature to blossom. That is why sincere study and practice are the most important things. They can bring about this result, such a result! Without them, meaning without sincerely engaging in this process of hearing, contemplating, and meditating on the dharma, we are just wishy-washy practitioners, probably just chasing playboys or chasing go-go girls. What will that bring us? It will not bring us the qualities of enlightened body, speech, and mind; it will only take us deeper and deeper into hell.

These days people think, "Oh, I am so rich!" "Oh, I am so pretty!" "Oh, I am so handsome!" and then they pop up! Oh yes, good! That is wonderful!

These people, they have no dharma! They think they are so wonderful because they have a little bit of money or good looks, but then what is going to happen? They might have that money or their good looks for a few hours, for a few months, or even a few years, but then their life is used up. Their life is used up and gone and wasted, and they used it for what? For nothing. We should use our opportunity to accumulate merit and purify negativity. That is the real wealth. You are a practitioner. You are one who practices dharma. You don't need to increase the popcorn of your arrogance. You need to increase your qualities.

[to be continued...]

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