

Ati Yoga Retreat Teaching Part 2 .

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Part two of day one of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Ati Yoga Teaching at Dzamling Gar, December 28, 2017. [Part 1](#) was published in the last issue of The Mirror, no. 143. Rinpoche continues explaining how to do Guruyoga.

We have primary causes and also secondary causes, which are related to circumstances. Sometimes we have a lot of problems because we may have positive or negative karma in our condition. This is the real cause so when we find ourselves in circumstances with strong secondary causes, our karma matures and that problem manifests. Hence we are not really dependent on secondary causes but we have that potentiality and should know that all possibilities exist.

When we do practice we sound A, we do visualization, using our mind, judging and thinking. This is not the state of meditation but we are going in that direction. After a little while of doing this visualization we feel that it is something alive, however, we should do it in a relaxed way. Many people don't know how to do practice in a relaxed way. If we are not relaxed and get charged up when doing the visualization, any kind of transformation will not work. We need to be present when we are doing practice. We know very well how to be present when we are doing Ati Guruyoga, relaxing, not getting charged up. Then we cannot have problems. Some people say that although they have done Ati Guruyoga many times, they feel a little uncomfortable within their body. They feel uncomfortable because they are not relaxed.

So, we do the visualization in this way and continue to remain in this presence. Then very gradually we relax. What does relax mean? It means we are no longer thinking. We are no longer doing anything such as visualization. We have just done it and we are in that presence. That is being relaxed. When we are relaxed then some kinds of thoughts arise. Some kinds of emotions may also arise. What should we do? In the same way we also relax with that white A and thigle. We cannot find these thoughts and emotions anywhere. We just relax. How is our condition when we relax? It is not something easy to define. It is not the same as being in mind.

In general we always follow our minds. When they do practice some people say that they feel something strange, or see something, or hear something with their senses. In particular if we go after our mind too much then our mind becomes very powerful and dominates us. We become a slave to our mind because we do not understand how it functions and then we can have a great many problems. We believe more and more in the mind and follow what our mind is thinking, judging, and feeling. Then mind becomes even more powerful and very slowly it also dominates our energy level. When this happens then some people may think that they can hear someone talking to them.

If I tell this person that there is no one talking to them, that it is only their mind, they do not believe me because they feel that someone is really talking. This is because mind becomes very powerful and dominates their energy and the energy functions of their senses of hearing, seeing, and so on. When a person has this kind of problem what is their realization? One day they may hear this voice telling them to jump off their house down to the street. Many people jump that way and then they die. They kill themselves because they are conditioned by mind too much. If someone arrives at this point it is not very easy to free themselves from it. Then they should do some yantra yoga and breathing exercises, and working with their existence it is possible for them to overcome that problem.

We can understand a little when we are relaxed, when our minds are not in time and space. Even if mind tries to dominate us, it cannot. In this case we dominate mind. We can use mind; mind is extremely useful in many kinds of circumstances but we must understand this. So when we do Ati Guruyoga and are in a state of relaxation, this represents the state of Guruyoga. It may not be 100% perfect, but it is much better than not knowing and only going after mind.

This is the reason I always say that we should learn and practice Ati Guruyoga. But when we do Ati Guruyoga we can only relax for a few minutes because we start to follow our thoughts, follow our physical body and our energy and so on. We do this because we have not realized that state, we are only relaxing in it. When we are able to totally relax in that state it means we have this kind of realization. However if we do not have that, we should learn Ati Guruyoga and practice it so that we can have a very precise idea what it means to be in the state of contemplation.

Being in the state of contemplation is realization of the path. Any kind of teaching we follow, Sutra, Tantra, and so on, finally brings us in the direction of the state of contemplation and we can have total realization. If we do good actions, accumulate merits and so forth, relatively it is good, but no one can have total realization only doing that. In the Sutra Buddha gave an explanation that we should remember. Buddha gave the example of two practitioners: one does practice to accumulate merits, always carries out good actions, prays and does all these kinds of positive things, not creating any negative actions. If a person manages to do this throughout their life, that is fantastic.

Then Buddha gave the example of the other person who knows how to be in the state of contemplation. Contemplation means not judging or thinking, but relaxing in that state. If a person spends their whole life doing contemplation, that is excellent and superior. Buddha made a comparison between this person and the person who accumulates merits throughout their life. He said that if a person is relaxed in the state of contemplation for the time it takes a small ant to walk from the tip of the nose to the forehead – ants walk very quickly so it is an extremely short time – this is much more significant than spending one's whole life accumulating merits.

But this doesn't mean that there is no benefit in accumulating merits, which are related to mind. In Tibetan we say ?????????????????????????????? (*gewa khajor lagjor*) that when circumstances make it possible to do virtuous actions we should always do them. But we should not concentrate on them

and consider them to be essential. It is very important that practitioners understand this.

In the Dzogchen teaching, the main point is to be in the state of contemplation. When they do not know this principle some people say that, although they like doing Ati Guruyoga very much and know that it is an important teaching, they also feel to do some purification because they have so many negative things to purify. When we know Ati Guruyoga, and we are in the state of Ati Guruyoga, it is a much more important purification than chanting Vajrasattva or another mantra.

For instance, when we study and learn about the Dzogchen tantras there is no explanation of the bardoof existence, the normal bardo, in most of the these tantras. When some people follow Dzogchen teaching they consider that they can have realization in their lifetime. But realization in a lifetime doesn't mean that we attain something like the rainbow body of Guru Padmasambhava. For instance, when we die immediately after death we have the bardoof dharmata. That is the passage of the nature of light. At that moment what we learned in our lifetime from our teacher is really easy to understand: the three primordial potentialities of sound and light and rays that we have are naked in the bardoof dharmata. At that moment we say that the mother and son wisdoms meet. What is son wisdom? It is what we received from our teacher when he introduced us to Ati Guruyoga, for instance. Now we know that Dzogchen is our real nature. That qualification, potentiality, is related to sound and light and rays. With this knowledge, understanding, they are integrated in us with the potentiality of practice. When we are in the state of the bardoof dharmata, at that moment sound and light and rays are naked. There are no obstacles. This is mother wisdom. Mother wisdom recognizes son wisdom immediately. When we have this recognition we have total realization of sambhogakaya.

We say that we have infinite negative karma to purify. With this realization in the bardo of the dharmata we purify it all, even though we have infinite obstacles. It is just like a room that has been without light for a thousand years. We think that the dark is very heavy because so many years have passed, but if we use a light, we can see everything immediately. Recognition of the sound and light and rays is supreme knowledge. It is supreme purification. For that reason when we do Ati Guruyoga some people think that we are not doing purification because they are ignorant of that. Ati Guruyoga is also supreme purification. So, it is essential to understand that.

What should we do when we are not in that state? We should be present. Later on I will explain more fully about how to be present. When we are in the state of contemplation then we sing the Song of the Vajra. The Song of the Vajra can be compared to the way Sambhogakaya manifestations appear from the Dharmakaya when there are secondary causes. For instance, the five Dhyani buddhas manifest from Samantabhadra. All of them manifest with sound. Sound is the principle of the Song of the Vajra.

There are many things to learn but for the moment you only need transmission of the sound. That means you are listening, and I am reading this mantra. When you listen you receive that transmission. This is transmission of the sound.

[Rinpoche gives transmission of the lung of the Song of the Vajra]

When we sing the Song of the Vajra we should try to be in a relaxed state. Some people ask what visualization they should do. We don't need to do any type of visualization. Visualization is a mental concept. We are judging and thinking in time and space. It is not meaningful. But if we are present, then we can enter the state of Ati Guruyoga. So it is important to sing the Song of the Vajra after Ati Guruyoga.

At the end of the practice we should dedicate merits to all sentient beings. Then at the end of all different kinds of practice we have a mantra. This mantra is not for dedicating, but for empowering the dedication. We dedicate mentally and then we chant this mantra to make our dedication become more concrete. Moreover whatever practices we have done become more concrete with this mantra.

[Rinpoche gives the lung of the mantra]

This is how we do Ati Guruyoga. Tomorrow at the beginning of the practice we'll do Ati Guruyoga. If people do not know how to sing the Song of the Vajra, they should listen and try to do it with other practitioners a few times. It is easy to learn. This is the teaching I wanted to give you for this moment.

Transcribed by Anna Rose

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