



Namgyal Yangzab Buddhist Community of Canada

## Essential Points of Buddhadharma

Excerpts from “Covid\_19 Online Dharma Teachings 2020”  
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# Overcoming Paralysis

An edited excerpt of comments on White Tara practice  
Online retreat Dec. 6, 2020

*“Too much or too little of anything that is not appropriate for generating good causes and conditions is a type of paralysis.”*

*“If you wish: find the anti-comfort without being a masochist. We desire comfort because we want to be in a state of love—not loving-kindness, not awake love, but a cozy love.”*

*Lama Chokyi Gyaltzen*

Lama Yongdu Chokyi Gyaltzen

## Overcoming Paralysis

The hallmark of neurosis is paralysis. That's what often happens—frozen. Meditation can be paralysis. Too much calm can be paralysis. Too much activity can be paralysis. Whether frozen or active, too much or too little of anything that is not appropriate for generating good causes and conditions is a type of paralysis. And Tara and her many manifestations are anything but a frozen state. It is preposterous to think of her as just sitting peacefully, a sort of inactivity. Just witness what it is like when she becomes green and in all her different colours—she may be serenely calm, but she is very active. Or stated in a more precise way: she is totally alive.

When I was preparing for today's class, there arose in my mind—I guess maybe due to Guru Yoga—a vision or the feeling of Namgyal Rinpoche, the 16<sup>th</sup> Karmapa, Ontul Rinpoche, the Dalai Lama, the 17<sup>th</sup> Karmapa, Karma Tinley Rinpoche ... many great masters. And when I think about all of them, they all have this blazing awakenss, this incredible power that is anything but being asleep, whether active or resting. It is a display of aliveness, of awake energy. It feels like bursting energy. The 16<sup>th</sup> Karmapa was bursting with energy all the time. Fantastic to watch. Even when he was still and absolutely composed, saying Chenrezig mantras during the Black Hat ceremony, there was this beautiful radiating stillness and aliveness. You could feel this seething energy, the aliveness of his awake mind. Fantastic! Kalu Rinpoche ... all these great masters have this quality.

So, you have to be very careful that when we are paralyzed, when we are in the grip of neurosis, when we are in the ensnarement of anxiety, and our feet get frozen, our hands get frozen, our forehead gets frozen, and our heart gets frozen, we can mistake it for calm. And we do get paralyzed. You think, 'Ah!' Paralysis is when we can't do anything. No, paralysis can be when we break things. Paralysis is when we smash things, when we hoard things or have an aversion against collecting things, when we harm others, get dull, and enter stupidity. And then we don't want to look, have no interest and don't want to learn. These are all forms of stuckness or paralysis.

Think of paralysis as active, not just dull, and not just shut down. Look at the paralysis of some of our leaders. Look at the stickiness of when we do things and when we are very active, in the kitchen, in the garden, outdoor, reading, whatever it is. We are not even paying attention anymore. Busy, even frustrated, but stuck in a rut. That is paralysis; because we won't be "with it." We won't investigate or be closely attentive. There is no engaging interest. When there is no meaningful interest, there is no loving-kindness. This is the key to understanding ignorance.

I am going to share with you one of the great insights I get about studying biological creatures. And I mean very little creatures. You know, if I study big creatures like humans too much, I can lose sight of the vast majority of creatures. But one thing I have learnt about little creatures is, they are really on about survival! These tiny creatures are really intelligent about staying awake. Because they know if they ignore causes and conditions, they know how rough it is, how challenging the habitat is and how easy it is to be eaten or infected and die.

I think sometimes we are getting a little too comfortable. We need to challenge ourselves! We need to do projects. Namgyal Rinpoche was great in that way. Challenging projects, Dharma projects, physical projects, craft projects, science projects, travel projects, we need projects that challenge us, that bring us out of paralysis. He was amazing this way. He would say: “Let’s go on a trip,” “Let’s go on a challenging trip.” Because when you come to retreat work—engaging fully with mind, experience and compassion—one needs to rise to the challenge, like travelling in a foreign land and culture. I think all of you, or most of you out there, have been in meditation retreats. Have all of you experienced absolute terror coming from nowhere? A total paralysis of not wanting to practice? “Can’t practice! Can’t walk! Can’t sit! Can’t stand! Don’t want to do anything!” Yes, I do mean utter terror. You have to come to that experience! Utter terror, utter anxiety, utter paralysis—fantastic! You have to know what that is like with full clarity and recognize it. And by recognizing it, through recollection, which is mindfulness, clearly knowing “That is paralysis!” you then have to work very hard to un-paralyze yourself. That is mindfulness and diligence as a powerful antidote. Declare: “I will get up now! I will sit now!” when you meet “I don’t want to sit! I don’t even want to meditate!” Say: “I will! I am going to! I am going to do another session! I am not going to go for a walk! I am not going to go chop wood! I am not going to go play in the garden!” Saying mentally, “I am actually going to sit through it and manifest awakesness.” “I will walk and stand through the stuckness.” As an antidote, it works.

Through awareness of stuck mental and physical sensations and by cutting through the bewitching stories of the active or somnambulant paralysis, we learn that we can overcome paralysis. This is the key!

I suggest, as a practice: Find the anti-comfort without being a masochist; stay in the mental and physical sensations of paralysis until they break up.

We desire comfort because we want to be in a state of love—not loving-kindness, not awake love, but a cozy love. It is the comfortable love of familiarity, even if it results in pain or unwholesomeness. It does not head towards the great love of freedom from clinging and along the path of vast awakesness. For that, we have to go into the unknown.

The practise of the precepts—which I consider sublime training because this is how it was given to me by Namgyal Rinpoche—is a profound, deep meditation that we never ever give up. And it is active. It is about anti-paralysis. The precepts are so deep in what they will reveal and tame.

And look at the Bodhisattva commitments: they too are extraordinary deep and have the power of cutting through paralysis swiftly.

And refuge! We will never ever finish with refuge until full, complete awakening! Because then we are manifesting all the sources of refuge rolled into one. That is the Vajrayana Practice, to become all the sources of refuge, to become Vajradhara, to become Vajrasattva, to become White Tara, Green Tara—and actually be that manifestation.

(Find the audio recording of the entire Teaching on White Tara practice on [www.nybcc.org](http://www.nybcc.org))

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May any errors do not obscure the essence, and may they be forgiven.  
May these teachings, so generously offered, help lead to the cessation of suffering and the full  
awakening of all beings!

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