

2014 Vajrakilaya Retreat--Third Teaching

Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche

November 4th, 2014

A student came to a session of the retreat yesterday; and, although I didn't see her, she sent me her greetings. I say thank you--especially for coming to practice. Thank you for coming with a mind filled with faith rather than just curiosity. This is exactly why so many great lamas have come to bless this place: so that you can receive benefit in this life and your future lives by practicing with faith. The Dalai Lama, Dudjom Rinpoche--this is their vision, their wishing, everything! Everything has been done so that you can come and do dharma. They were not after some samsaric purpose, but to benefit all sentient beings, and particularly those in this land and this region.

Does that mean others shouldn't come here to receive benefit, too? Of course not. I'm not saying that. Anyone with sincere interest should come. Anyone should come who is honestly trying to do dharma. They don't need to be a renowned practitioner or an exceptional scholar. It doesn't matter if they are pretty or rich or ugly and poor. They just need interest in buddha, dharma, and sangha--that, and to have a big mind themselves: the thought to benefit sentient beings. The Buddha came to benefit sentient beings. The Buddha taught to benefit sentient beings. All the high lamas, the Buddha's emanations, are here to benefit sentient beings. They are born for the sake of all sentient beings, they grow up for the sake of all sentient beings, they study and practice and eventually even die for the sake of all sentient beings.

Coming to the temple, studying, practicing, working--this is our opportunity, like a glimpse. We are like fish leaping from the ocean: for an instant we can see clearly. This is our glimpse. This is our best luck, because we can connect to our liberation, which means our own benefit and all others', too. To practice for yourself and others is the best generosity. If you were going to put a price on it, it would be billions of dollars.

To be a real Buddhist means not to be partial, political, or play favorites. It means to benefit sentient beings. That is why we study and practice. That is why we take initiation and receive teachings. All of these aspects of dharma are just for your liberation. Your liberation is for sentient beings, because then you can benefit them. Therefore, it is so good that each person comes to practice--good for that individual, and good for all beings. If you come for one hour or your whole life--however much merit we have, which is what gives us the opportunity to practice, we should use it! If we are not kind to ourselves, who else is going to benefit us?

Do you need someone to put you up on a throne? If you need a permanent throne, you need to practice--then you will be liberated and you can truly benefit yourself and others. That is your own throne, and nobody needs to put you up on it.

Anyone who is a Buddhist should be cherishing themselves less and less and cherishing sentient beings more and more. That does not mean kissing them more, hugging them more, and having sex with them more. That is not how the lineage lamas showed us how to cherish and benefit beings! Learn what they did. If you want to benefit yourself and others, do you have to go to a cave and hang out there in some strange way? No. You can benefit yourself and others sitting in public, just fine. But if you are practicing in public, you don't need to show off or boast. That is cheating the dharma. We don't need to cheat more, we have cheated enough. What we do need to do is benefit ourselves for one day or one hour or one minute. Do you want a long life? Do you want wealth? Do you need to be pretty, or handsome, or

famous? Do you need to be able to help others? Then this is the one: the Buddhadharma. That is the one you need.

Or at least, that is what all the buddhas and bodhisattvas and their realized emanations say, and they have no reason to lie!

Therefore, working here or practicing here even for one minute or one second is amazing--finally, you are bringing yourself benefit! I know you have amazing important things that keep you busy, but I don't think you have anything more important than practice. So I say: Please try, everybody. Our time is short. Our opportunity won't last. Our sun is already in the west, going down. The sun rose and we got one glimpse and that's it, now it's setting already. What is that glimpse? For a minute we can see. We have the chance with our glimpse to see what to adopt and what to reject. We can learn what good and bad really are. If you have buddha, dharma, and sangha, then you can know what to do and what not to do. If you have knowledge, then you can know that. Not like me! But all of you, you have plenty of intelligence. You do know that. Do you know that you are going to die, too? Will you take advantage of your chance before you do? I guess we'll see.

Anyway, try!

Tashi Delek!

-Gyatral