

On Helping at the Guru Rinpoche Temple

Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche
August 25th, 2015 ~ Guru Rinpoche Day

It sounds like now everyone is working hard at the Guru Rinpoche Temple—preparing to pour concrete on Friday, supporting the outside projects there; and also many, many people coming to clean, it looks like they've been cleaning for a month already; and Ila and others are preparing all the offerings to arrange; and so on. It looks like everybody is doing their job and working hard. It doesn't look like anybody is being lazy, pigged out, or ignoring what needs to be done. Hopefully, it is not that way, anyway! But everybody needs to check. Everybody needs to try, doing whatever they can do. It doesn't matter if you are a man or a woman. It doesn't matter if you are young and strong and smart, or old and funky and hopeless—still everybody can do something. Right now when we are preparing everything, this is our chance. Do you think you can come help once everything is finished? We have had too much of that tradition in the past—when it's time to work and prepare everything, everyone is busy; then when it's time to eat and have a party, everybody has plenty of time to come—and they say, "Wow! So beautiful!" Yeah—so beautiful without you, you didn't lift a finger for that beautiful!

It isn't only Matthew's job to work on the outside; it isn't only Osugi's job, either. Everybody can try, everybody can help. It isn't only Ila's job to make sure that the temple is clean and the offerings are all prepared. This isn't just one person's work or one person's time. It is everybody's opportunity time.

Now that it is opportunity time, don't be lazy! Don't think, "I escaped the work! I escaped the offerings! I am so smart! I escaped my merit! I'm free!" For so many lifetimes, you have been wonderfully successful at escaping your merit, escaping your opportunity. You are so smart—you can even escape from your opportunities! Wow! You can escape your chance at virtue—that's wonderful! Look at how many lifetimes we have had such success in that kind of freedom, escaping our chance to benefit ourselves. We got too clever that way. That is why we have nothing: no merit, no success, no power, no wisdom, no qualities. We escaped all the positive things! So smart! Congratulations!

We don't need to be smart that way anymore, okay? This is your opportunity—you can purify your obscurations and accumulate merit. The chance is here, in your hands. It is in your face, even! Don't escape the positive things again, okay? Don't make some excuse and be a dumb sentient being. You think you are so smart, so try to be smart the real way this time. It's time to wake up!

Everybody does need to make some money, I know. But money will never make you rich. I feel, anyway! If you have too much money, you do too many naughty things. That is not the real “rich.” If you have too much wisdom from purifying negativity and accumulating merit, on the other hand—well, actually, I don’t think anybody has the problem of having too much wisdom. If you get too much wisdom then you can tell me, you can tell everybody if you want: “Gyatrul was wrong! I have too much wisdom! It’s a big problem!”

But until you have that kind of problem and can sincerely complain in that way, you still need to save merit and purify your negativity. The more obscurations you purify, the more clearly you can see where you need to stand, what you need to do, how you need to move. Then whichever direction you need to move, your obstacles melt away, too. Your path is not blocked. You are free to move or do whatever you need to do. As you accumulate merit, you are able to go swiftly and smoothly everywhere, and bring success or benefit to yourself and others. That is really to be rich! You can just go directly, without complications or difficulties, without being forced to go many crooked ways. That is real freedom.

So we don’t need to hide from our merit, we don’t need to escape our opportunities. We don’t need to make excuses to go down and hang out in Ashland, or Medford, or other places. We can be here, happy to be, happy for our opportunity. That’s the way to do it!

Now everything is almost finished in the Guru Rinpoche Temple. Then once it’s finished, it belongs to whom? Everyone. If you ask whose temple it is, the answer is that it is everyone’s. That means it is yours. Each person should think, “This belongs to me—it is mine to protect, mine to take care of, mine to clean, my place for making offerings, my merit-making place, my negativity-purifying place.” We shouldn’t think it is somebody else’s problem or somebody else’s responsibility. But we shouldn’t think, “It is MY temple! Only MINE! MY temple to do MY WAY! Not YOURS!” No, no. Don’t be that stupid. It is your temple, yes, and it is yours to help give to everybody, both now and for future generations. It is your temple to protect and keep so that you can give it to all sentient beings. That is your offering to the buddhas, helping keep their things nicely so that they can benefit everybody.

We have such wonderful, perfect representations of enlightened body, speech, and mind there—look at what Sonam Tsering did! And Wei and Trish and Colleen and other painters, and the builders and the sponsors—look at how beautifully they have done everything! That is our merit. Keep your merit nicely—don’t let it diminish or get funky or be ruined. Keep it, it is your merit, and it is the merit of future generations, too. To think that it is only yours, that is to ruin your merit with stinginess and blindness. To think that it isn’t yours at all—just somebody else’s responsibility, somebody else’s problem, somebody else’s building with somebody else’s stuff inside,

that it has nothing to do with you—that is also to ruin your chance for merit. Don't go this way or that way, those slippery ways that we cheat ourselves even though we have every perfect chance at merit.

Everybody try, okay? And everybody try to be honest.

These days if you don't want to make your merit while you have the chance, that's okay. Nobody is forcing you. Nobody is forcing me to stay here, either. I'm going to go to a party and drink lots of beer! I'm going to go dancing, because nobody can force me to make merit! Nobody is going to stop me from accumulating my dumbest, heaviest negativity!

That is our dumb samsara brain! We think that is our freedom. Actually that is just our MY WAY.

Don't be MY WAY. Don't think you are smart and you are slick.

Everybody try in a humble way, okay? It's time to wake up. Don't put yourself in a corner, saying you can't do anything. You can wake up. You can stand up. Whatever you do, you can do it nicely. Whatever you offer, you can offer it in a nice, clean, respectful way, even if it isn't fancy. Everybody can bring something.

You might think I am saying these things because I am still not satisfied with something. No, no. For myself, I am satisfied. For yourselves, don't do things the dumb-dumb way. You shouldn't be satisfied with that. You think you are so smart? Then don't be satisfied with your own dumbness.

I am satisfied, everyone has tried and worked so hard for all these years, and now there is slowly getting to be success and harmony at the centers. But still I *wish!* I *pray!* I *hope!* What is my wish, my prayer, my hope? That everybody benefit themselves, more and more. Only in that am I not satisfied, never satisfied. That way I am greedy. That is why I say again and again, please try. Please try honestly. Now we just have a few days until the consecration with Khenpo Namdrol, and just a few weeks more until Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal comes to bless the Guru Rinpoche Temple with the teachings on the longevity practice of Chimed Sok Tig. These two are like our Losar, our New Year celebration two times. Wake up—this is our time! This is our chance! Right now is when the work is happening, the offerings are happening. Don't sit at home, staring like a cow. Even a cow knows that when it has grass it is time to eat it!

Tashi delek!

-Gyatral