

## *Vajrasattva Retreat Pizza Party Teaching*

Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche

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Thank you, everybody, for coming to the retreat, especially to those of you who have come long distances. Thank you to everyone for supporting the dharma center. The center's people are all working so hard, and it is really time for everyone to be standing up, nobody spacing out. I hope everybody got enough pizza today, that it was delicious and everybody was satisfied! But the real pizza party is in the temple, the Vajrasattva practice, focusing on that with your body, speech, and mind together.

We are all staring our future life in the face because this life is nearly finished, almost used up. Each of us will have to follow our positive or negative karma, whatever we have. Right now you have arrived at this pleasant, wonderful place--that's nice, but your whole life you have gone to many wonderful places. The real quality of Tashi Chöling is not that it's a beautiful place to hang out, but that we have all the supports for practice, the representations of enlightened mind, speech, and body, such as the Vajrasattva statue. That means this is a place that is not just beautiful in itself but where you can become more beautiful, too, by increasing your positive qualities. Today is your chance, because at death it will be too late. Today you say you can't practice but it is a lie; at death you will say "I wish I could practice" and THAT will be the truth but then you will have no chance. Right now is the chance, while the eighteen conditions constituting the precious human birth are all present--you can benefit yourself and others and even achieve buddhahood. I'm not saying you are a buddha, now everyone is going to call their friends and say, "Gyatrul said I'm a buddha!" No, I am saying you have a chance. And I am saying don't stupidly throw away that chance. Right now you have a few days to recite Vajrasattva together, and then the bardo retreat and Yeshe Lama are coming--don't cheat yourself, at least for these few days. Don't waste this precious time.

Don't waste the teachings you have, either. Whatever recordings and books you have, or the new ones you get when lamas come and teach in the future, remember that it is you who need to be liberated, not your books and recordings. They don't have negativity to purify; they don't have ignorance to dispel; they don't need to awaken. Also, they don't need your compassion, you thinking that you don't want to make your books tired by opening them, or wanting to save your recordings and so never playing them.

All the opportunities, we have them; the power to practice, we have it. I know that you know this, but remember it. Don't lie to yourself. This time to practice is your passport. Don't lose it! Everyone is very mindful of their passports, their ticket. Time to think about the ticket to the next life. Do you have a good one or a bad one? Do you have any guarantee? Therefore I am saying "Don't lie to yourself." It's not just me--the lamas warn us again and again but we would rather think we are so smart and believe ourselves rather than them. Are we really so smart? Are the lamas really such liars? In that case, it looks like Buddha Shakyamuni must be the biggest, first liar of them all. No wonder he can't afford nice shoes. Anyway, think about these things carefully. Good luck, everybody! Thank you! Happy pizza!

Tashi Delek!

*-Gyatrul*

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