

## *Teach and Learn*

Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche

May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Hey everybody at all the centers, I am requesting you all to teach and learn. Request teachings from each other. We don't need to wait until Sangye Khandro dies to ask her to teach. We don't need to wait until Ani Baba dies to learn about what she does. We don't need to wait for the umdzed to die, or Shashi or Ila or the chopons or anybody else who knows something. Request each other to teach; learn from each other.

Requesting a dharma teaching is a high thing to do. If somebody has a quality or knowledge, they can share it. If you request them, does that mean they are higher than you, big deal? No. Requesting is an opportunity, teaching is an opportunity, learning is an opportunity—all opportunities for great merit. Even just one sentence is great merit. You should always supplicate the three jewels, "May I not waste the merit I have." If you waste your merit, ignoring it, hanging out, then it will be exhausted in one week.

"Request teachings" means don't ignore each other. Respect each other. When you respect each other, whom are you respecting? The "gendun" or "sangha." What does that mean? "Gendun" means "gewa la dun pa," or "those who are intent on virtue." Sangha is not just a small or simple thing; it is profound. It is one of the three jewels: buddha, dharma, and sangha. Whenever we say, "I take refuge in the lama," that refers to all lamas, who are the embodiments of the three jewels. The three jewels have the power to liberate you. If you don't think buddha, dharma, and sangha can liberate you, then who is gonna do it? Think carefully.

Right now you have lots of opportunities to learn. Lingtrul Rinpoche can teach you. When the artist Sonam Tsering comes, he is a good one. He knows so much. We don't need to close our eyes and plug our ears when he is there.

If you are teaching, don't get puffed up and proud. Don't pop up, saying, "I know more than you!" Whenever you teach, actually you are teaching yourself. You are increasing your own knowledge and your own wisdom. It is your chance to make offerings to your objects of devotion and to be generous to sentient beings. If you are able to teach, it is only due to the kindness of your past hearing, contemplating, and meditating upon the dharma. It is your chance to purify obscurations and accumulate merit. Teaching really is practice. When you teach, you are learning, and then next time you can teach better.

Sometimes when we Tibetans and Golog people are supposed to stand up and teach, we are just frozen or rotten. Maybe we show off and then we get swollen, or we are just dumb. In contrast to this, if someone is a great bodhisattva, a noble one who works for the sake of sentient beings, they don't get proud or uptight. If they are real buddhists, then they are always open and easy. Look at His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He is just laughing, playing with the children, hanging out with the old ladies and old men. No lama is as flexible as he.

All the high lamas are like this; they are really nice, they are flexible, and they don't have iron backbones. They don't have pride, jealousy, or the five poisons. Those are already tamed. The Dalai Lama is like fine silk: soft, gentle, and accommodating. So what's wrong with us? Can we blame somebody else? "Oh, that guy, he put an iron pillar behind me. That carpenter put a rod in my back." But the Dalai Lama and other bodhisattvas, they have nothing like that. They are very easy, they can sit on the floor, sleep, stand up, walk, or anything. We just pop up, "I am a lama, I can't stand up. I can't sit too low or too high." We do have that kind of problem, especially Tibetans.

Americans have that problem, too, but one way they don't know what they are doing. One way they do know, but it's a dumb way, strange. But you guys need to learn these things, you need to subdue your own mind. To subdue your own mind—now THAT'S an amazing, amazing project! Yeah!

Look at the Dalai Lama—he doesn't need an attendant or anything. These days, some lamas have many, many attendants, this and that. Night this, day that, all different kinds of stuff. But when it's time to die, they say, "Oh lama, oh buddha, oh, oh." Too late! You have every opportunity, but if you are swollen, then too much swollen becomes frozen, and then it's too late. In the future, don't be too late, okay? Too late is no good. Don't wait. Teaching and learning doesn't take you far away. Just go slowly, learn, teach, learn, teach, when you are teaching, you are learning. When you learn, then you can teach more.

Don't be like this old man. Now my own karma is finishing. My funky, funky karma to teach my funky way. Now your karma is starting, to teach and to learn.

Everybody try, stage by stage. Think about His Holiness Dudjom Jigdral Yeshe Dorje. He brought treasure, and that is holding us. He brought everything—mentally, physically, the books, everything. For what? For you guys. You are lucky you have merit, so you can look at those books, outer, inner, and secret, which are the heart blood of all the dakinis. That refers to the highest dakinis, the middling dakinis, and all the

different dakinis. If you take care of these treasures, you have the merit to really practice them. Only thinking of eating, that's not the way!

If you want to be high, good luck. If someone else wants to be high, you can push them up. "Yes, yes, you are high." However much you push someone else, that is how much you go up, too. It's like water raising a wooden block. However high the block goes, the water is already at that level. Stay like that. Then you don't need anything from anybody.

When you learn and try to help others learn, you go up. Buddhism is like that; actually, everything is like that, but especially buddhism. If you learn hinayana, then you have naturally learned hinayana discipline, and that will take you to mahayana. Hinayana is not just "only me!" crying. No, no, no. You know what hinayana is really like, and it's not just hippie style. It is discipline. If you know hinayana well, you naturally achieve mahayana. It leads you there, step by step. Then vajrayana is already there, too. If you know both the lesser and greater vehicles, what else are you looking for?

Even if you think you are high, a big deal, how long are you gonna stay? Ten years? Eight? Maybe thirty? Maybe three? Impermanent. Then one day, like a mushroom, *poof!* You are all like that. So this is the opportunity, now. Think about it, you guys.

Tashi delek!

*-Gyatral*