

That Kind of Power

Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche

February 6th, 2019

We pray to the buddhas—to Vajrasattva or Chenrezig or whatever—or to all the buddhas of the past, present, and future. Or we pray to the three roots, lama, yidam, dakini. Or we pray to our own guru, inseparable from everything. How come? Why do we have to pray to them?

It is because we don't have that kind of power. What we want, happiness, we can't create. What we don't want, suffering and obscuration, we can't escape that. We don't have that power. We think we are so powerful, so strong, so rich, so handsome, so smart—very smart, particularly, we think. But actually we don't have power over one tiny hair on our own head, even. Forget about anybody else. We can't even control ourselves. We even know what will harm us, what will benefit us—still we can't control.

Look at your own brain and your own mouth—do you have some five poisons there? Maybe not you, maybe you are just pure and innocent, but I am rich with the five poisons. I have tons of five poison pocket money, I can spend it everywhere. So many wonderful things I can buy—hell realm things, hungry ghost things, animal things, suffering things, unfortunate things, ugly things. I am the most rich.

How about you? Check yourself. Do you have politics? Do you have jealousy? Do you have stinginess? Are you proud? Do you have desire, almost you want to gobble something up instantly, maybe him or her, you can't wait one second? Do you have anger, poking you, like a knife constantly cutting, cutting, cutting, your face getting red? Do you have ignorance? You don't know! Haha! That's it! Bottom line, we don't know! That means ignorance. That is our number one in the bank. Our biggest one is that.

Therefore, we pray to them, to all the buddhas. They can control themselves. They don't have politics—therefore, they have power. They have gotten rid of all the dirty things: desire and anger and ignorance. Therefore, they are not liars. They don't cheat anybody. They don't gossip or slander. They aren't jealous. They don't have desire—not like you, desire chewing on your butt all the time like ants in the pants so you can't even sit still. They don't have anger swords poking them all the time. Therefore, they are calm. Therefore, they are peaceful. They don't make a big deal. They control themselves—that means they control their mind. That is why we pray to them. They do have that power—the power of their own mind, tamed. You don't need power over other people. Just over yourself. Your own body, your own speech, your own mind. That kind is real power, it is nothing to do with worldly things. Being a king or president or governor or rich or whatever means nothing, even if you can squeeze everybody and they have to follow your orders. Still you have to look at your own mind—do you have power over that, or not? Have you tamed yourself?

Think about that. Look at the buddhas. You pray to them—think about why! Look at what they do, and what you do. What is the difference? You don't have to do everything instantly, but

slowly, slowly, you have tiny things—tiny patience, tiny compassion, tiny faith, tiny interest in the dharma, tiny study, tiny practice, one tiny teaching, maybe one word, tiny understanding, then little bit more and little bit more, deeper, deeper—then slowly everything, all the buddha qualities come. You are not a hopeless one, but when you are arrogant and stupid and ignore your own brain, you look really hopeless.

You want power? You never get it. Until now in samsara, it looks like you didn't get anything. If you got it in some past life, where is it now? Even if you were king of a giant country in the past, what is the benefit to you now? That's not what makes you a real powerful one. Just pay attention to your own things—your own three doors and your own five poisons. We need to become king of that kingdom. More than a king, we need to become our own buddha. Other people's power or money or whatever—that's not our business. We have plenty of our own. If we want poisons, we have tons. If we want qualities, we have limitless qualities, inconceivable ones, if we want to blossom them. Stop ignoring that!

And when you pray, do it sincerely! It is not only for your mouth. Nobody is going to pay you. Don't lie to the buddhas, or your lama, or whatever, the ones you are praying to. They don't cheat you—you don't need to cheat them, either.

Tashi Delek!

-Gyatral