

Message to the Orgyen Dorje Den Sangha

Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche

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You guys are really lucky. Is that because you have money? No. Is it because you are scholars? No—I don't think you are very scholarly. Is it because you are handsome and pretty? No—I can't exactly say that you aren't, but I can say that we don't want to talk about if you are or not because it's embarrassing. Sorry, maybe I made a mistake? I am an old man. I get easily confused, you know!

Anyway, you guys are really lucky because you are taking care of O.D.D. What does that mean? It means that you are taking care of Buddha Shakyamuni's teachings, of Guru Rinpoche's teachings, and of all the teachings of the thousand buddhas of this eon. That is your merit, that is your opportunity, that is your good fortune, that is your lucky.

Whatever we want to do, we have to have merit to do it or we will never be successful. Even if we have a billion dollars, if we have no merit, everything will be difficult and won't work and will end up upside down. If you have no merit, if you want to go east, you will end up going west; if you want to go up, you will end up upside down; if you want more, the harder you try, the less you will have. In that way, a billion dollars does not benefit you at all. The way you are taking care of O.D.D., on the other hand, that will benefit you more than a billion dollars. It will contribute to your long life and success, and it will benefit others—in fact, it will bring benefit to whoever has a connection with you.

I heard Lama Sonam came recently and was so kind to us, giving teachings, and at that time everyone was very helpful and harmonious. That's it! That's the right way to do it. When we keep harmony, then we don't ruin our precious merit. If you work hard, that makes merit; and if you keep harmony, then you don't destroy the merit you just made. I heard how hard and how harmoniously everyone was working this time—especially Ila, Angie the Geku, Lhundrup, and others, you few people there, working day and night, trying to be of benefit—that made me so happy! Especially Ila, translating all day and pushing everyone, trying here and there so that everyone could benefit. Finally, everybody is standing up, not just hanging around arrogantly without lifting a finger, but doing things the right way! That will benefit you in your next life – and in this life, too, it can help you be free of sickness and obstacles.

Right now, there are a few people trying at O.D.D. That's good, and thank you to them. But it isn't just one person's job or the job of a small group. It's everyone's job. Right

now it seems that there is harmony among the leaders, and that's the best. Without merit, there won't be any harmony; but it looks like right now there is sort of harmony. I am really glad to hear that, not just about O.D.D., but about Tashi Choling, Austin, Portland, and all the centers. That way it can work.

I spent so many years working for the dharma centers, first Tashi Choling, and then the others, again and again going to Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, and even Australia and New Zealand. For what? Because I hoped that I could be of some small benefit by building the dharma in America. You can check in 100 directions and you can hear about where I went and what I did. If you ask why, it was all so that you people could have the chance to learn the dharma and practice. All your gurus who came, again and again over the years—Penor Rinpoche, Dudjom Rinpoche, Khyentse Rinpoche, the Dalai Lama—they all came so that you could do the dharma here in America, because that is the greatest way to benefit you. They came and taught and gave blessings and transmissions so that everyone could accumulate merit, everyone could purify their obscurations, and everyone could have success and long life temporarily and then ultimately achieve buddhahood. They came for you, not for themselves at all.

Have you forgotten their kindness? Have you forgotten how many people worked so hard up to this point, all for your benefit? I don't think you O.D.D. people have forgotten Yangthang Rinpoche, at least—how much he did, so many hours every day, the chopons buzzing in the ten directions, Rinpoche himself practicing and giving empowerments day and night. I don't think you have forgotten all that this soon. Don't forget, okay? Don't forget the lamas' kindness, their many blessings, all the empowerments, transmissions, and teachings you received from them. Remembering them, then know how precious the dharma you have is. Remembering everyone's hard work, know how valuable what we have today is. That you have a center, that is from amazing hard work. That you have the dharma, that is because of the lamas' amazing blessings and kindness. That is all your merit, that you have something to practice and a place to practice. Appreciate that—that means don't waste it, okay?

Don't waste your merit means don't gossip and slander each other. Keep harmony and practice. Follow the buddhas' way and the lamas' way, not your own MY WAY anymore. You don't need to go that way again. Just go Guru Rinpoche's way, he is the holder of our lineage; go Dudjom Rinpoche's way, Penor Rinpoche's way, Khyentse Rinpoche's way—woohoo, look at how we are getting rich in lineage masters! Go Buddha Shakyamuni's way, Amitabha's way, Vajrasattva's way, Vajrakilaya's way, Tara's way—woohoo, look! We have lots of buddhas here! We have lots of choices, lots of ways that we can go the right way. We don't have to be stuck or uptight.

We don't need to pollute their way with our trip, with attachment and hatred. We don't need to pollute everything with the three poisons. We are always keeping those, but we don't need them. Which are the things we actually do need? We need to study, contemplate, and meditate on the dharma; we need to create virtue and eliminate non-virtue. That's what we need! You who are trying to help the dharma centers, you who are trying to support everything and everybody there, that is good. Thank you. That is wonderful. You don't need to go the opposite way, just keep on that same path.

Everybody needs to try. Everybody needs to try to work, and everybody needs to try to keep harmony. Not just a few people doing everything and others standing around arrogantly. You might think that it's wonderful to be arrogant and proud. Maybe you're right, but the bottom line is that it destroys merit and accumulates negativity. Did you hear that? It "purifies" your merit, like burning the best seeds, and creates wonderful negativity. That's not the way to do it. Garbage goes in the garbage place, don't save it! Merit is for saving carefully, not putting in the sewer! Don't do the opposite, okay? We don't need that. We don't see our own shortness, but we stretch our garbage trips to be longer and longer like they were really precious. How long have we been going on our garbage trips? Unceasingly. We always save our garbage trips and throw away the dharma in the garbage place. Why do we have to be that stupid?

Everybody tells me that they wish I would come down to Alameda and see you. Not only you wish that—I wish I could, too! But right now, I have no energy and no merit to come see you all and see what you have been doing at the center. Nevertheless, I am praying for your success, that you can accomplish your purpose on outer, inner, and secret levels, and that everything works. I am 93 or 94 now and complaining every day; and Mimi, Ila, and Shashi are taking care of me all the time, so they have to put up with that. Through Mimi's kindness, everything is perfect and comfortable here, like heaven; and there are even supports of enlightened body, speech, and mind here, including thangkas of Guru Rinpoche's emanations and so on. All this, which is so wonderful, is all because of that one lady! That is why I have this chance to lie on my heavenly bed, day and night, showing my butt to heaven. Maybe you think that's not a good idea, but here they are: heaven up there and my butt down here, facing each other. Nothing to do about that, sorry! You don't have to look if you don't want to.

I heard that Les is very arrogant—is that true? I heard he has a mustache. If he didn't have a mustache, he would try to paint one on with black ink—poor guy! Then I would be too sorry for him. Somebody, please tell him that he's a man and doesn't need to use ink to get a mustache! You others, don't be like Les—Lama Les, Lingtrul Rinpoche is going to come pull your mustache! Yahoo! And I think Isis is going to whack your butt.

Also, I heard that Scott is pregnant? Is that true, too? If so, be careful of his belly—I think the baby is coming soon!

Anyway, these things are not our business. What is our business? At O.D.D., we have Lama Drimed and we have a geku. Everybody should help the geku and help the lama—that benefits the center and yourself. Be careful, everybody! Everybody needs to listen to the geku, and everyone needs to support each other, including the geku and the sangha supporting each other. It sounds like these days everyone is really trying, together, and keeping harmony. That is so good!

I hope that your success and long life, your work and accomplishment, will stretch to 100,000 years. I will pray for that.

Tashi delek!

-Gyatral