

## *Come to Practice!*

Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche

May 20th, 2015

Hello, my Dharma brothers and sisters,

I have something to tell you, not for my benefit but for your benefit. How many years have we spent together here at Tashi Choling, and Orgyen Dorje Den, Austin, Portland, and everywhere? Now we are getting success with everything at the centers, as we have hoped, all due to the compassion and blessings of our high lamas, including Dudjom Rinpoche, Penor Rinpoche, the Dalai Lama, and many others. I'm not saying anything for my own sake, but just because everyone has worked so hard to make these places, supports, and conducive circumstances for practice, and we ourselves have worked hard to have our chance to practice. So now it would be a shame to waste our opportunity and our lamas' blessings.

Therefore, I say: Come to practice!

Each of us cannot stay in this life a long time; we don't have very long lives. One by one we will die. At that time, even if you have a whole stack of money, it won't benefit you. If you have one hundred thousand loving family members, they will be of no use. If you have saved your money and taken classes, getting educated in many different ways, that is good; but if you were doing it to achieve a high position or to become rich, those benefits only would last for this lifetime and will not help you at death or beyond. And all would have been obtained at the cost of your chance to practice dharma! Even if you were a great scholar or had many extraordinary skills in this life, if you were a master carpenter or whatever, none of these kinds of knowledge would help you at death. Then what will? We have the lamas' blessings and compassion, and according to Buddhism that is what will benefit us at death. We are connected to Dudjom Rinpoche, Penor Rinpoche, and many other great lamas. To make the most of those connections, you have to stand up on your own by practicing and learning. You have everything you need to do it!

You have received such blessings—liberation through hearing, through seeing, through contact—do you remember all that you got? Sure, you know. You got so many empowerments! I think we got everything, in terms of empowerments and teachings, both. Those are for our liberation in this life and for benefitting beings in our future

lives. Since you received them, you need to train yourself first and then benefit other sentient beings.

So you do have blessings. Here we also have land, which is your blessing—the students offered it. The land is not empty, either: We have the temple, complete outerly and innerly. We have statues and stupas, books and thangkas. Most recently, some of you have been working so hard to build the Guru Rinpoche temple. It is not just for the workers' benefit; it is for everyone's benefit—everyone who sees it. You can look around and see for yourself that we have everything. These objects are not just for show -- they are our refuge objects, for our benefit in this and our next lives.

Now we also have our own teachers who can stand up, Sangye Khandro and Lama Chonam, Shashi, Ila, the Geku, and everyone. You guys are lucky, you have lots of teachers. We need teachers, then we need to practice.

So, according to Buddhism, you have everything you need. Now what should we do with it?

Come to practice!

We have weekly and monthly practices; we have practice intensives and our yearly retreats, such as Vajrasattva and Vajrakilaya. You who live here in Ashland, who live right here in this area, you have received many empowerments and teachings from many lamas. Now, don't waste your precious time, your life. Don't throw away what you received. You are not far away. Come to Tashi Choling and practice!

Some people here right now ARE from far away, they have even come from other countries to attend this retreat and take the opportunity to learn. But those of you who have it next door don't want to come. It's very sad. This is not for ME. It is for each person's benefit.

The people coming from far away, from Iron Knot Ranch and other places, here and there—they are all welcome! They are learning, helping, working, cleaning, fixing things, and so on. Wonderful! Thank you! Here, the workers such as Chris and Mat, Osuki, Derek, the Geku, Madhu, and others are trying. The ladies such as Sangye and Shashi and Ila and everyone are trying, too, step by step. Thank you! That benefits the dharma and you guys.

Some people don't want to come to study, practice, or help, but just want to see me. I am an old ugly guy, just like any old person. I am funky and ugly and have no money. And I complain! That's the kind of being I am. I am not asking you to come see me! You don't really want to come see someone like me, and I wouldn't really want to either. I am embarrassed. But, come and practice with your dharma brothers and sisters. Learn! Then, I will see you maybe in the next life. Ha ha ha!

You have the opportunity now to come and practice. The texts are in English -- you don't need to learn a different language or anything. So why not come? Do you think, "We are not suitable"? You *are* suitable. If this tradition is suitable for the people of many different countries, then why not for you?

Why are you wasting your chance? When it is time to die, there will be no chance. Please come. Don't ignore your opportunity. Come to practice.

Then when you come, practice in harmony with Buddhism. We can gossip, slander, and chase the men and women any time; we don't have to come here to do it! According to Buddhism, you are not supposed to practice being a playboy or -girl, or a smart aleck, with an arrogant style. Slowly practice with faith and trust, and with compassion for other sentient beings who don't have the opportunity to do dharma. You have a great opportunity, which you can dedicate to others.

The food is on the table in front of you, whichever food you want, whether Hinayana, Mahayana, or Vajrayana; outer, inner, or secret. What is the problem? I don't think you have a problem, but you are still wasting your opportunity.

Now Lingtrul Rinpoche is coming, and later in the summer Khenpo Namdrol and Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal will come. They are not coming for what they will be able to put in their pocket. They are coming for your benefit. So everybody come! Come with faith and trust, not gossip!

One way it's not my business. One way it is, because everybody here is treating me like a teacher. I am not a great teacher or anything, but every one of my gurus is a high being, so we have that connection: to Dudjom Rinpoche, the Dalai Lama, Penor Rinpoche, Yangthang Tulku Rinpoche, and so many others. You have interest and faith in them. You have the opportunity to practice. I think you need to wake up.

This is not a center for prostitutes; this is a center for learning. This is not a gossip center, so don't disturb others. Come and practice. Not for me! With regard to myself, I

didn't practice, and that's my own problem! If we don't learn, that's our own problem. Or if we learn but don't practice, that's our problem. We waste our time and opportunity. Don't be wishy-washy, don't chatter and don't gossip. If you want to benefit yourself, then wake up. If you want to benefit others, wake up!

I am not angry or upset, just pointing this out. Here, look -- look at how much a few people built. Look at the Guru Rinpoche shrine, the temple, and all of this. Some people don't want to come, they don't even want to glimpse this place! That's your mistake! If you don't want to come, that's fine, though. Your choice. I'm not forcing you.

We are all friends here, so I am saying this as a friend. I am not a king, queen, or leader. I am 90 years old, I can't even go to the bathroom nicely. I can't come down to practice. My feet are hurting me day and night. But you guys can come to practice. You have freedom! Don't wait like me! Whether you come or not, that is up to you. But maybe you have an opportunity here, that's all I'm saying. Thank you very much! Bye bye.

Everyone -- don't be naughty!

Tashi delek!

*-Gyatral*

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