

On Long Practices
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Some people are saying how the Chimed Sok Tig practice is so long, so much chanting, and everyone gets tired. Of course you are going to get tired! Even scholars and great practitioners get tired. When you are trying to focus continuously, you get tired, I agree! I do, too! Then you relax a little bit. That is also why we have tea breaks and lunch breaks and everyone can get their delicious things. And we Tibetans don't have yoga, but you Americans have yoga -- you have to go outside at break and point your arms and legs all different ways. Some people's yoga is they have to go kissing everybody, all the guys and girls. I don't think that's necessary. More than using the breaks to practice hugging everybody like you are dying without them, you can look at the practice a little bit and check, "Now what is the meaning? What is the focus?" That maybe helps a little bit when you are doing a practice you don't know.

Think about what you are practicing. You are not practicing cutting firewood, digging holes, or hauling rocks like some ordinary work. If your practice is just an ordinary activity like that all the time, and you never go into having faith or trust in the meaning of the practice, then you are like a zombie practicing. You are a living corpse chanting. Then of course you are tired -- where is your meaning, your essence? You have to know the meaning. You have to have trust and faith in the practice, in the lama who revealed it, in the lineage. If you don't have strong faith, at least you should trust their qualities, that their practice is not leading you the wrong way. Then it is meaningful to practice.

In school, if you know your teacher, you can trust that they are qualified. Then you listen to them, and as you get to know them better you get to like them, you get more comfortable, sort of like family. Then you really enjoy learning from them because you like them as a person and you trust their qualities, you trust that they are teaching you the right way, and so you just take whatever they say and use it directly, without doubt. These days, some Tibetans are getting berserk, but it used to be that Tibetans really had faith naturally in their lamas, and had this very strong love and reverence for them, even if the lamas were wrathful with them or whatever. We need to have that kind of faith, slowly, slowly.

Really, when you are practicing, you need to understand what you are practicing. That way you will be interested, understanding each part as you are chanting -- understanding the meaning, even if you don't understand the Tibetan words. That is our job! You have the practice translated, which means you can read the English when you get tired, to remind yourself of the meaning of each piece. You can't

say that you don't have books and teachings explaining how to practice and the meaning of each piece—how to practice generation stage, and completion stage, and even so many teachings on dzogchen! Therefore, you have no excuse.

If you don't come when there are teachings, and then you complain that the practice is too long and you don't understand it, then eat my shit! If you won't read the books explaining the practices, and then you complain that you can't focus, what is your problem?

If we don't understand the practice, that means we need to learn about it, learn the meaning. You have no interest if you have no understanding. You have nothing to focus on, either. But, my goodness! Even if you aren't professional with this practice, you do know something about the dharma. You know the dharma's qualities—outer, inner, or secret—a little bit. You know the qualities of the amazing buddhas, who are the wisdom source; and the lineage holders, who were such wonderful mahasiddhas; and the tertön, the revealer of this treasure, who is unsurpassed and an unquestionable object of refuge. This treasure itself comes directly from the blessings of Maratika cave, the very spot blessed by Amitayus and Guru Rinpoche, who are inseparable. If you need to know what you should think about when you get tired and the practice is so long, think about that!

However much you understand, that much you will have faith. However much you understand, that much you will enjoy your practice, more and more, like something delicious. Otherwise you just sit in the temple and look around, the ladies looking for the handsome guys, the guys looking for the pretty ladies. No, no, no! You can do that anywhere; you don't need to come to the temple for that particularly. The temple is for practicing and learning. Come at teaching time and learn; then come at practice time and practice what you have learned. Practice time means it's time to bring whatever you understand into your hands and hold that while you practice. Even more than holding it in your hands, hold your understanding in your heart. Then you are practicing with faith and trust. That is the real practice. So everybody try, okay? Then slowly, slowly you can improve. Everybody practice, happy way. You get tired, that's okay. Still you don't need to be uptight or poking everybody or go berserk style. Just relax a little bit and remember your faith and your reason for practice. You are not doing an ordinary thing. You are not doing a small thing. You are doing the most meaningful thing. At least we can remember that!

Tashi delek!

-Gyatrul

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