

~From the Archives of Teachings by Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche~

Heart Advice on Tsog and Other Matters

*A teaching read to those gathered at Orgyen Dorje Den on January 14, 2012,
to practice Vajrasattva in connection with Dungse Thinley Norbu Rinpoche's Parinirvana.*

Part I

On the Passing of Great Masters

Ven. Gyatrul Rinpoche very much wanted to come and perform the tsog practice with everyone. He said, "My brain wanted to come but my body said no—and if you've studied a little dharma, you know it's not supposed to be that way. The body and the speech are supposed to be the servants of the mind and not the other way around." Then he said, "As usual, I've got it all upside down and backwards, as you can see, so don't be like me. I am very glad that all of you came to gather and practice today because the tsog practices are very important and a very powerful means to accumulate merit and purify obscurations. Even though I can't come and bug you guys in person, there are a few things that I want to try to remember to say." Then he gave the following message to be read during the practice.

Look at all the great beings. Look at all the enlightened masters. Look at Guru Rinpoche! He worked only for the benefit of others. Not just a few others, not just the ones that he knew or just the ones that he liked. He worked for the benefit of *all* others. His blessing was so strong because his compassion and wisdom were so powerful—so powerful that he is able to bring benefit to beings, not only in his own time, but also infinitely into the future and also to all beings of the past, because for his omniscience there is nothing of the three times (past, present, and future) as we think of them. For his omniscience, there is only the great transcendent time, and therefore he is always able to benefit all beings perfectly at any point throughout the three times as we know them.

Now we find ourselves in a time when many of the great masters are passing on, and

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we might look around and wonder, whom can we still look to, whom can we trust as an authentic object of refuge? We should know that Guru Rinpoche's blessing has not gone anywhere. Guru Rinpoche himself has not gone anywhere. It is only to our perception that he has gone somewhere. It is only our limited understanding that makes us feel distant from him or from any great lama.

Sometimes we feel this distance or separation from our masters, who are great beings. What is that distance? What makes that separation? Obviously it is nothing from the master's own side. It is something from our side. It is our ignorance. It is our obscuration. Our obscuration seemingly separates us from the guru. As we purify our obscurations, the gurus—or we can say the buddhas—will, to our perception, seemingly draw nearer and nearer. In fact, this is only our own qualities expressing themselves. This isn't really the buddhas getting any closer. They didn't go far away; they don't have to return. It is that, as we purify our negativity, they seem to draw near and their blessings seem to come close to us at last. In fact, we are just discovering the blessing that we have always already possessed.

So then we wonder, what is this darkness? What is this oppression? What is this separation that we feel? This is just our ignorance. It is just our delusion. It dresses up in many different fancy outfits and goes by many different names, but really all negativity is merely our own confusion. From the feeling of separation from the guru to intense hatred and anger, from very strong and powerful emotions to slight feelings of unease and dissatisfaction, from depression and all kinds of mental instability to every kind of physical suffering—any negativity you can think of, anything that is unwished for, any difficulty or unpleasantness, all of these are simply our own delusion. This delusion can become so powerful sometimes it will even manifest as ghosts and demons.

~ teaching continues in Part 2...