

On Work at the Dharma Center

Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche

January 7th, 2017

Guru Rinpoche Day

Rinpoche heard news of students helping with the shrine renovation project at Orgyen Dorje Den and gave this teaching on work at the dharma center:

This morning you did the tsok ceremony, but actually you are already doing tsok because you are building this shrine room. Building, painting, and maintaining the dharma centers is a very special practice, and we all need to participate in that. That work is very important, and it is the same as maintaining our traditions and vows with the regular tsok ceremony. We might think, "Oh, we need to get it done fast, or do it THIS way, or do it THAT way." But really, the main thing is we need safety for the workers. All of you workers need to do it cleanly, carefully, and safely, and then the whole thing is tsok!

Why is work for the dharma center the same as tsok? Because we are building a shrine to be used for our future practice, future refuge, future learning, future meditation, and future liberation. This is our chance to make it clean and nice. Not only for ourselves. This offering of our efforts will benefit every future generation. When you build a temple like this, even just painting or even just feeding the workers or cleaning, that becomes the basis for every future generation to accumulate merit and purify obscurations. There will be so many people, men and women, who come and use this space to learn and train in dharma. So, we have to realize this is not just for us and not just for our generation. It is not just for the people we can see, not something small or limited. In fact, we are talking about liberation for many generations of practitioners, not just Mike and Derek. Therefore, every second you work you have to understand the vast impact and implications of your actions. These efforts are extremely meaningful.

You are working for the future dharma learners. Learning what? What is dharma? Buddha's teachings. What is the benefit? The benefit is they allow you to recognize your obscurations. Then you can even give up those obscurations, slowly. Like taking a bath and washing your body, stage by stage. We say OM BENZAR SATTO HUNG. Is Vajrasattva one guy? He is billions, countless emanations. All the buddhas' bodies are Vajrasattva, their voices are Vajrasattva, their minds and activities are Vajrasattva. OM BENZAR SATTO HUNG. Or OM MANI PEME HUNG. Chenrezig is the same as Vajrasattva. Or Quan Yin, or whatever name you may give.

Whenever people do physical work, they are always killing other sentient beings. So, from that perspective you could say, "Well, what we are doing is no good." But we

have no choice. Here we are, sentient beings, stuck in sentient beings' bodies. We can't avoid killing and harming other beings all the time, no matter what we do. However, when we do this kind of project, we must focus on our own pure motivation. That is what makes this work virtuous. Even if you forget everything else, don't forget what you are doing and why you are doing it!

On the other hand, you shouldn't be showing off, thinking, "I am building these practice places for all future generations, aren't I great!" Don't just make a "big noisy." If you show off that way, it has no tail. In the long run, you will get tired, because showing off energy doesn't last. If you really want to, then go ahead and make a big deal; but at least don't forget the real reasons you are doing this work. Help, mindfully and meaningfully. Don't just blah blah blah. Hanging around and blah blah-ing is an obstacle to building, so everybody try to do less blah and more work.

Muster a vast, positive motivation. Muster a deep conviction and commitment to what you are doing. Everybody try hard! And try to be happy, whether you can help only for one minute, one hour, one day, one week, or one month, or if you can help for your whole life.

Why should you be happy? Because you are building for millions of sentient beings' benefit. You are building for the Dalai Lama's vision—not just for yourselves; not just for tomorrow's breakfast; but for the future. Not just for here but for far away. I don't know how many hundreds, thousands, or millions of beings will be touched—really their number never ends because the blessings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama are endless. He is Chenrezig! Dudjom Rinpoche's blessings also never end; he was Vairochana. Penor Rinpoche was Vimalamitra. What you are doing is what they wished. Their vision. They concentrated on that. Our sentient being life is just a tiny one, so you guys must catch that high merit. You must work in the same way that Vimalamitra and Vairochana and all the bodhisattvas work. What is that work? Are they doing something different than you? No. In building and maintaining, you are doing their activity. What an amazing, lucky opportunity we have! The question is, why NOT be happy?

Therefore, cleanse your negativity and save your merit, and dedicate that to sentient beings. Dedicate it to the buddhas of the ten directions. That merit is endless and boundless.

You workers are enjoying yourselves, you are happy—dharma is like that. Very good. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! In the future, when building a temple or doing any dharma work, keep the meaning, which is priceless. Priceless meaning, a thousand million buddhas' vision. What was their focus, their idea? The buddhas came to the world for what? For cooking dried up ladies or rotten pumpkin heads?

His Holiness the Dalai Lama focused for many lifetimes only on sentient beings. So did the Karmapa. So did Dudjom Rinpoche and Penor Rinpoche. All your lineage lamas, they focused on sentient beings' benefit for eons and eons. They focused not just on guys who look like this (pointing to his own crooked teeth).

I am here laying down, lazy, just to benefit and enjoy myself. You guys are working for what? For the temple. That temple is the place for establishing buddha, dharma, and sangha. Then it grows up. What is it for? Barbecuing? No. It is for the future, it is for you guys to blossom, and then that work benefits all sentient beings. Therefore, look at our lamas—the Dalai Lama, the Karmapa, and all who have come. Everyone says NAMO BUDDHAYA. That NAMO BUDDHAYA brings the NAMO DHARMAYA. That NAMO DHARMAYA brings who? SANGHAYA. NAMO BUDDHAYA, NAMO DHARMAYA, NAMO SANGHAYA. And then what happens? Going for refuge, going to practice. Now you guys are united with that.

The sponsor is sponsoring Buddha Vajrasattva. Think about it. You guys are becoming Buddha Vajrasattva. How? Vajrasattva starts from Vajrasattva's body, which is not just skinny or naughty. You are connecting to Vajrasattva's body here, building this shrine, but you need to use your brains to connect, too. Recognize Vajrasattva's outer qualities, inner qualities, and secret qualities. How do we get those? Practice!

Take care of each other. Take care of each others' emotions. Try not to be wishy washy. Try not to get angry. Try to be steady for each other. Mike Osugi is a Japanese soup. Derek is some kind of Australian-or-New-Zealand-or-something snake soup. And Les...Les means you need more, right? He is some kind of American, Canadian, Mexican mixture. "Etcetera, etcetera, etcetera." (Rinpoche was quoting Yule Brynner in *The King and I*.)

Thank you for working. Watch carefully. Don't hurt yourself. If you damage your body, you damage your mind as well. No matter what you build, large or small, everything should be clean and for the sake of future generations. Step by step. Even if you are just doing one hair's worth for the dharma, that's dharma. Maybe it's just a small hair, but it includes the whole dharma. It's the same for the sangha.

Okay, everybody's working hard—thank you, thank you! I'm laying down, sleeping hard. Thank you, thank you!

Tashi Delek!

-Gyatral

This material is being made available as a free download by Vimala Treasures. ©2017 Vimala