

On Opportunities to Learn at the 2017 Vajrasattva Retreat

Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche

May 28, 2017

Rinpoche spied on the setup for the Vajrasattva retreat via a video call to Tashi Choling two days before the retreat started, and the following are some of the comments and advice he gave to those who were gathered at the temple, working on various aspects of preparation.

Those who are trying to help you learn, the older students and teachers, listen to them well. Don't cheat yourself—learn nicely. Whatever you are learning—chopon, umzed, or whatever—try to learn well, as much as you can. Do it as nicely as you can. Don't pollute yourself by being sloppy. You have a wonderful opportunity, so try! Wonderful, you guys! Stage by stage you went to school, then you finished—now in the same way try to learn these dharma things.

Whatever you are learning, try hard. Put it inside your brain and don't forget it! You are learning Buddhism in general, but particularly here you are learning about activity—all the buddhas' activities of enlightened body, speech, mind, and qualities. Learn about that, outer and inner, the meaning and how to do it. All of you, from different places, naughty pennies from here and there—learn! You have your opportunity here, so try hard. Okay? Very good!

You have people here to teach you—Keith is a very good umzed and knows how to make tormas and everything. And Ani Yeshe, and others—they are really helpful. You don't need to be shy or scared with them, they can teach you directly. Here at O.D.D. they have built everything very beautifully and they are really trying. This is your temple, too. If you come down here or up to Tashi Choling, you need to learn. If you want to be the owner or keepers of Tashi Choling or other dharma centers, you need to learn. An owner is not like a businessman.

Before the practice, learn how you are going to practice. If you don't learn, what are you going to practice? Learn, and then you understand the reason and meaning! Ask the older students, more and more. Sangye Khandro is very good, and our umzed, Keith, and his mother, and Ani Baba—everybody can be open.

You guys are lucky, you have the Vajrasattva 10-day retreat happening! Wonderful! Wonderful, all you guys! It used to be we didn't have that many people.

[*Looking at the tormas being made:*] Whoa! Very nice! I don't know anything about tormas and these things, but in Tibet, India, Nepal, Bhutan, they do look like this. Bhutanese are number one good! You guys are doing good, wonderful, step by step.

Chagdud Rinpoche's students, they learned wonderfully. Now here, however much you know, teach others; however much you can learn, learn! Don't waste your time, okay?

Everybody try, the positive way. Don't forget your refuge or to say the refuge verses. Don't forget to say the BENZAR GURU mantra, Guru Rinpoche's essence mantra—that's asking for

Guru Rinpoche's blessing. Say OM BENZAR SATTO HUNG, Vajrasattva's mantra. That is all buddhas' source, they say. Try, everybody.

You have become a Buddhist, now don't waste your opportunity. This is an amazing opportunity time, so we don't want to waste it.

Don't do like I did. I had amazing opportunities, but the Communists came and I had to go here and there, and eventually I had to come to the United States. Then I was busy pretending I was really important, still going here and there—and slowly we got Tashi Choling, O.D.D., Portland, and other centers. Now you guys are getting quite good, these centers. Now read more and ask other lamas, those who are real scholars, unlike myself, about what you are learning. Then you will know if you are making a mistake or not, if it will benefit you or not. You don't need to check if it will benefit you or your boyfriend or girlfriend, but if it will benefit you and all sentient beings. What is that benefit? Is it making money? No. Liberation. That kind of benefit. Money? That's handcuffs! No real benefit there. Self-grasping is, for example, wanting money or wanting power. Is self-grasping just no good? No, you can't just automatically say that. Is it good? No, you can't just say that, either. You have to check and decide if it is positive or negative. Look for yourself—on the negative side, look at samsara. Look at all these naughty ladies shrieking, "Money! Money! Money! Oh, my husband is looking at somebody else, at that young lady! Nooooo!" That's no good.

Anyway, wonderful—you guys are learning everything, how to make tormas and beat the drums, the reasons for each different thing. How to sit in the temple, how to keep the temple clean, stage by stage. This is not just a restaurant, it's a praying place, a practice place. If we keep it properly, then when lamas come—high lamas or small lamas, either way—we don't have to worry that it is ugly, dirty, or messy. You need to keep yourselves clean and neat, too; then when other people come, even important people, you can easily engage with them, without needing to be nervous or having to clean up at the last minute. It's the same thing with your mind. Clean the temple of your mind, stage by stage, recognize the positive and the negative and then slowly we can drop the negative and build up the positive.

Nobody has asked you guys to be on the throne. But when Getse Rinpoche or Lingtrul Rinpoche come, they sit on the throne. Why do they need to sit there, everybody making a big deal? Because they learned. They practiced. They have achieved that. They paid already! You don't need to be proud—actually when you get to that stage, you don't need a throne. You don't care about a throne at that time! Because your dharma has filled up your real throne. You learned the buddhas' blessing—that is your throne!

Everybody try. Everybody learn. Naughty ones, don't be naughty!

You guys really are lucky. Right now everybody is working—why are they working? Learn that. Why are they cleaning? Learn that. Which piece you need to clean and how to clean it—learn that. Then stage by stage, they are making offerings, tormas, and lots of things—how do they make them? Do they have their mouths open, chattering and blowing on them, breathing

all over them? No. They cover their mouths. No breathing junk onto the offerings! Even in restaurants they don't hold your food near their mouths and talk and breathe onto it as they bring it to you. Here it's the same—you are inviting Vajrasattva, a wisdom being. Are you going to breathe all over the offerings to him? No. You are not from Golok [a remote region of Tibet where the people are thought to have rough manners]! But actually, though, Americans are worse than the people from Golok! Hahaha!

Okay, thank you! Do everything in a clean way. Then, when you practice, your head shouldn't be turning in a hundred directions, looking everywhere. Just focus, with faith and trust in your practice, then that benefits yourself and is for other sentient beings as well. Stage by stage! Read, step by step. Ask others—what you don't know, you can ask your friends here and there. You can ask the lamas who come about the meaning. Mostly you can ask Sangye Khandro! She does know.

Step by step, okay?

It's nice to see you guys! Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Tashi Delek!

-Gyatral