

Cleaning Day Excerpts Part 2: Afternoon Teachings

Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche
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On June 25th, a group of students came to help with some deep cleaning at Rinpoche's residence. The following are some excerpts from Rinpoche's advice to the group when he met with them at the end of the day.

People make a big deal about meditation. "I'm *meditating!*"

What are you meditating on, anyway? You have your nature already there, what do you need to meditate on? What kind of special posture do you need besides that? Just stay who you are!

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Everybody, we need to practice, right now while we have freedom. OM MANI PEME HUNG is fine; OM BENZAR SATTO HUNG is fine. Whatever! OM MANI PEME HUNG is Chenrezig, if you want to remember him, or it is a thousand million countless buddhas. Same thing. OM BENZAR SATTO HUNG, same thing again. Any mantra, same thing. The refuge verses, same thing. The whole thing is one nature.

"I'm meditating! Don't talk to me! Don't push me! Don't this and that!"

I don't think you are meditating. You are holding. Just slow down.

"I'm *meditating!*"

My goodness!

Milarepa didn't say, "I'm meditating, don't disturb me!"

Just have faith and be kind to other people. Don't cheat them, don't lie. You don't need to prostrate to everybody, either, just be honest.

But lots of people say, "I'm practicing! Don't talk to me! Don't disturb me!"

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Don't fancy too much. You don't need fancy stuff, wonderful stuff, trying to dig here, pulling there, going and looking in a hundred directions. Don't waste your time! What do you already possess? Since you were born you have had your consciousness with you. You have your buddhanature. That is the essence of all buddhas—millions, billions, countless. Isn't it? What is the buddhas' essence? It is something every sentient being has. Just recognize that. Practice

more, slowly, slowly. You don't need to climb the tree. You don't need to cut down the tree. Just be stable and watch. Be more and more flexible, honest, and compassionate.

Have as much compassion for sentient beings as you can. Why have compassion for them? They have buddhanature and they don't know. What is the problem? Their ego? No, their ignorance. Such objects of compassion!

If you have more and more compassion, until it gets to be the biggest of the biggest, up to the limit, then that is dzogchen.

Do I have compassion? I don't know. Maybe none.

Practice and try. How to you get compassion? Practice more Vajrasattva. Or whatever you are practicing, practice it more. Then look at sentient beings. Are they cute? No. Dumb. Objects of compassion. They eat each other and kill each other. The same as we do! Slowly, slowly, that way have compassion for them, no big deal. If you make a big deal, then everything is complicated.

Learn and practice, mostly kindness. Kindness and compassion for others. How are you going to have compassion for others, by kissing or hugging or fucking them? No. That is your self-centered compassion. You need compassion like a mother for her baby. You can learn from the text called the *Way of the Bodhisattva* what real compassion is. Follow that text, or the teachings of real lamas.

In general, the important thing is generating bodhicitta.

As the famous verse says:

O precious and sublime bodhicitta,
May it arise in those in whom it has not arisen,
May it never decline where it has arisen,
But go on increasing, further and further!

If we generate bodhicitta in our own mindstreams, if we understand what we are doing, that is dzogchen. Buddha Shakyamuni attained full enlightenment in order to benefit sentient beings. I don't understand such things, I'm not the one claiming this—all the great lamas say it. Think carefully about taking refuge and generating bodhicitta. Why are you taking refuge in the Three Jewels? For sentient beings, all sentient beings, who are so vast in number that they fill space completely. That is why you go for refuge. What is your root of virtue? That is your root of virtue! Why do you have to go for refuge? For them, for their sake, for their benefit! Don't be self-centered. Don't twist the practice in that way, toward selfishness. Don't grow those horns. Just be more honest. If you are honest about things, you will disappoint people a billion times. They don't want honesty! When Tibet was flourishing, with lamas and dharma and everything, outerly, innerly, and secretly it was Buddhist. Now it is outerly cheating, innerly lying—so many lamas are like that instead. That's shocking to see, over the last generations. Going for refuge and supplicating the Three Jewels is not just for the sake of Tibetans but for the sake of

all sentient beings. They are your focus. You dedicate your efforts and your virtue to them, all merit that you create with your body, with your speech, and with your mind.

It would be difficult to say that there is some kind of generation stage practice that surpasses this sincere bodhicitta. There is not some other generation stage than this! If you are practicing sincerely to benefit others, you are generating bodhicitta. If you generate bodhicitta for all beings, and then dedicate the roots of virtue of your practice to them and make aspirations, that is the real essence of practice. Then you really have something. For their sake you hear, contemplate, and meditate on the dharma. For them—for their sake.

How did all the buddhas and bodhisattvas attain realization? How did they focus? On all beings!

We are trying to follow the bodhisattvas, so we should emulate them. That means we should not have pride. We should not have jealousy. We should not have anger. Untouched by the five poisons, we should generate bodhicitta purely, and then when we dedicate the merit and make aspirations at the end, it is the same—for the sake of all sentient beings. People talk about meditating on dzogchen. But if they don't really understand how to cultivate bodhicitta, then there is no dzogchen, is there? The very essence and nature of dzogchen is bodhicitta. Or when you go for refuge, you repeat the verses, going for refuge in "the Buddha, the Dharma, and the supreme assembly of the Sangha, from now until attaining the heart of enlightenment." That's the very essence of dzogchen, all contained there!

I'm not saying that now you are practicing dzogchen and you need a big throne! I'm not saying that you need fancy brocade on your golden throne! If we think that we need a golden throne with fancy brocade, then we are basically saying that we are smarter than Milarepa and all the bodhisattvas of the past because they didn't need such things!

If you are talking about real lamas with genuine qualities, unlike myself, then to offer them a golden throne or a diamond throne or the fanciest, most precious throne you can afford is extremely good. That is a wonderful offering and I'm not saying that you shouldn't do that. But the most pure, authentic offering is to cultivate bodhicitta in your mindstream.

When we take refuge, it is always for the sake of all beings, so refuge and bodhicitta are always together. If you say you have refuge, what is that refuge? Why do you have refuge? It is for the sake of sentient beings. If you don't have real bodhicitta but are going for refuge or doing any kind of practice just for the sake of your girlfriend or your boyfriend or your husband, etc., this is really meaningless. It has to be for all sentient beings.

To give rise to uncontrived bodhicitta is dzogchen. I don't know dzogchen, but to just stare with your mouth open? I don't think that's real dzogchen. Dzogchen has to do with recognizing the ultimate, the genuine fundamental nature of all phenomena. If you recognize that, then there's no reason to be proud, is there? There is nothing to be proud about, is there? No place to be! If you know that, then the past is dzogchen, the present is dzogchen, and the future is dzogchen. The nature of the three times is dzogchen. How can there be any time to be proud?

We talk about the buddhas of the three times. Anytime if we recognize our own nature, that is it! The buddhas of the three times are not three cowboys, I don't think.

Who are the buddhas, the enlightened ones, the awakened ones? They have none of the five poisons, do they? These days, how about us?

Myself, I have the name "tulku." The "tul" in "tulku" means "emanation." Why does a tulku emanate or manifest? In order to bring benefit to sentient beings! That is what the "tul" means. It means to be purely altruistic, acting only for the sake of others, free of the three poisons. If we come across such a tulku and see them as a buddha, having pure faith in them as being an actual buddha in the flesh, then that is the blessing we receive in our mindstream.

If we cultivate bodhicitta well in our own mindstream, that is dzogchen. That is generation stage, completion stage, and the union of the two. Where is "dzogchen" without bodhicitta? Without bodhicitta, there is no dzogchen.

We take refuge until we attain enlightenment. Why? In order to benefit sentient beings. All of the buddhas attained enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings, they taught the dharma for all sentient beings, and they display all the qualities of enlightened body, speech, and mind for all sentient beings. Who is higher than that? Where are you going to get something higher than that?

You think you are higher than buddha? Then I'll kill you and chop you into a hundred pieces!

Anyway, if you are practicing generation stage, there is no generation stage without bodhicitta. When you practice completion stage, it's the same thing. Or so it seems. Did any buddha ever become enlightened for money? Well, I guess it could be?

I don't really know anything. But if you are like me and checking yourself, then you will see that what you need to do is cultivate altruism, concern for others, bodhicitta for all beings. To benefit other beings, you don't need to hug and kiss them, do you? These days it looks like what it means to benefit beings in America is kissing and hugging everybody and fucking around in the ten directions, and then taking their money!

Are you going to give me money? Even if you give me a million dollars I'm not going to kiss you, hoho! A waste!

The real essence of dzogchen is to have unpolluted, undefiled, perfectly pure, altruistic intention—pure bodhicitta. Some people are crying, saying they cry out of compassion for sentient beings. I don't know! You don't need to laugh or cry to benefit beings. If you see the ocean of suffering that is samsara, then it's not crying or laughing that's important; it's supplicating the Three Jewels.

All the buddhas came for the sake of all sentient beings, not to cheat them; they achieved enlightenment for the sake of all beings, not to cheat them; and they taught the dharma for the

benefit of all beings, not to lie to them. That is the example we should follow. Even if we don't know how to say a single mantra, even if we don't know OM MANI PEME HUNG, at least we shouldn't lie or cheat others. When we chant mantras, we are not lying or cheating.

If you don't know, you can learn! Is it difficult? Oh, sure, it is so difficult you can say it in just one second! So difficult! You are busy? Just chanting for a few minutes is fine. Twenty minutes, if you have the time, just say OM BENZAR SATTO HUNG. That is not cheating anybody. That is the best!

Or just read a book—there are millions of books. All the books talk about the bodhisattvas, blah blah blah, bodhicitta blah blah blah. I don't think any of them say bodhicitta is useless. I don't think any of the bodhisattvas ever dropped it or threw it away.

But we aren't honest. We aren't sincere. The guys tell the ladies "I love you," but they are just liars!

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Anyway, we only have this much life. Just a tiny bit, this human being life. But we have freedom with this human life, and that's priceless! Why? If we use it nicely, without mistake, we can liberate ourselves, we can benefit other sentient beings. If you don't like suffering, do more practice, more honestly, with more faith. If you want to help, same thing. That way, try.

Do you need money? Yes, but don't trade in benefitting other sentient beings for money. Don't put your own benefit in the corner and then just focus on money. Try, try. Everybody has the freedom to stand up on your own feet. Practice! You don't need the name of "scholar" or "practitioner." If you want to be a real scholar or real practitioner, though, then practice. If you practice well, then you get Vajrasattva or Chenrezig or whatever buddha you are practicing. Then you are rich! Then you are a real scholar at last! Because who has greater wisdom than Vajrasattva? You are liberated, so you are a scholar, rich, intelligent, handsome, pretty, everything, equal to the Buddha!

I came to America in 1973 and until now I have been blah blah blah-ing, enough to break all the teeth in my mouth, because I am not a scholar or practitioner and I don't know how to teach. I am still mumbling that way! Now some students are starting to teach, they understand the dharma more than me, through the lamas' kindness. You can learn from them! But remember that going to a dharma teaching is not the same as going to a go-go party. Remember that you are going to a teaching.

Listen carefully to how the teacher teaches and see for yourself how they do. You don't need to shout out if the teacher makes a mistake. You yelling about the mistake would be the real mistake. Not seeing your faults and just seeing others' faults, that's the mistake. Pointing the finger at others, saying this lady or that guy made a mistake, that is not your business. I wouldn't want to do that. If you are like me and you don't know, then you are hopeless and useless but still you don't need to jump here and there, saying you are this or that big deal.

Mostly we don't need to be scholars. We just need to be honest. Have faith in the buddhadharma and be honest with sentient beings. Just stay dumb! Almost like that. Not pretending to be a scholar or pretending to be a practitioner. Pretending makes a mess of everything. How do I know? I am a pretender! Then, mess! Wherever I go, I pretend to teach, and then when I'm finished I think, "Uh-oh! I lied!" I am sort of proud! Then later when I see the result, if it is positive then that's okay, but if it's negative then I see—I did that with my lie. I am a pretender. I am pretending I did it, I lied. You don't need to do that. You just need to be honest, cleanly. Even in your family, you need to be honest, nicely. Be honest with Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Be honest with your practice—whether you are practicing Vajrasattva or Chenrezig or Guru Rinpoche or Kilaya or whatever. Be honest with that, because that is your refuge! Your protection or protector or whatever! A wisdom being. If you aren't honest, if you lie, ohoho! What kind of motivation is that? What kind of conduct?

You don't need to spread a lot of gossip, that this person is going to teach wonderfully and that one is going to teach horribly. Doesn't matter. If your eye is always only looking at others with judgment—"this one has a good body and that one's is bad"—if your ear is always listening with judgment—which one is a good talker and which one is bad?—then where does that come from? Your mind, your heart. And slowly, slowly you get uglier, uglier. Don't do this.

Don't be like me. I am just like a garbage image. You guys be honest, truthful.

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All the time, practice. Read books—there are lots of books! Don't be too smart, a smart aleck. Don't be too dumb. Just be honest. We need to be honest and truthful with ourselves.

Okay, thank you, everybody! And then see you later!

-Gyatral