

Harmony: Holding the Dharma's Essence

A Message to All the Centers

Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche

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Rinpoche asked about what is going on at the centers these days and was very pleased to hear about the regular practices and teachings that are happening at each one. He was particularly glad to hear that students are working together harmoniously and that individuals are coming forward more and more to actively support and maintain each aspect of our centers and community. He sends this message to all:

Wonderful! It is real dharma to keep harmony. I hear you guys at all the centers now are getting more and more harmonious, and that makes me really happy. Sincerely I send you my thank you for that. If you have a giant group or just a few people, it doesn't matter. The important thing is to be harmonious. That is holding the dharma's essence. If you have 100,000 people but there is no harmony and just politics, then that is like 100,000 non-virtues and you can't say it is a dharma center at all. Even if there were a billion people and everything was gold and diamonds, same thing. But even a few people trying sincerely and in harmony, supporting and respecting each other as sangha, then that is the real dharma. That means you are holding the lineage purely. That is the really important thing. Then you aren't embarrassing your gurus or anybody. That place we can call a dharma center, even if it's sort of funky.

Some people have asked here and there if I will come and visit, and one way I would love to come visit Tashi Chöling and the other centers and bug you guys, but right now it looks like it's very good for my body just to stay here and not get too excited or go jumping here and there. For me, here in Half Moon Bay is best. And for you, if this funky old man comes or doesn't come, there is nothing different. I have no blessing and no qualities, nothing to give you. If you are sincerely studying and practicing and taking care of the centers, then that means you are giving yourself the most precious thing: the dharma. Nobody can give you anything beyond that. When I hear your news, that you are all studying and practicing and helping and teaching each other, that really makes me so happy. It makes me happy for myself, and also I think I can be a little bit satisfied that so many years of hard work are being successful and the prophecies and prayers of my lamas are really coming true. After things were complicated for so many years, now it looks like they are getting more and more solid and sort of firm in each center. That's really the blessings of the amazing gurus who sent me to America.

Outerly, dharma is to keep harmony with each other. When someone is really harmonious, then when you are around them you can really relax. They won't poke you or cut you. They are just smooth, outside and inside the same, not inside full of swords. Whatever group they are in, they benefit. They help support everybody's long life with their style.

If you are really taking dharma into your mind, into your heart, then you won't feel the need to be rough like you have horns on your head. You can just be smooth and gentle with everybody. Then naturally there is harmony. So outerly there is a sign of dharma, which is harmony. What

is that sign showing? It is showing the dharma's meaning is going more and more sincerely in. The outer is the natural expression of the inner, of what's going on inside. You don't need to go around telling everyone, "The dharma is really going in!" They can see it with their own eyes! They don't need you to boast and embarrass yourself. That kind of boasting is actually the sign that the opposite is happening—that the dharma is just superficial or artificial and hasn't gone into your mind even one hair's worth.

Boasting, arrogance—what is that? That is just the blessing of the five poisons coming out. We are really blessed that way, with so many poisons! When we proudly show our poisons, we are showing our upside-down-ness. That is called ignorance. It means we don't even know which thing is poisonous and which thing is not. We don't know what to keep and what to throw away. We need to learn that stuff—which one is good and which one is bad, which one to keep and which one to throw away, which one is delicious and which one smells like the sewer. We don't really know those things clearly. That is why sometimes we are proud of what we should be ashamed of—our giant poisons. Or sometimes we ignore the most precious things—like compassion and faith. That is how upside-down we are.

So where are we going to learn, piece by piece, what is the real good one and the real bad one? Which one helps us and which one harms us?

Therefore, we have the dharma! The dharma teaches us each piece, like a baby being fed, slowly, one spoonful and then another. The dharma can show you exactly what you need and what you don't need. The ones you don't need are the poisons. First we have to see that. We need to understand them, how poisonous they are, how harmful, how they destroy everything, innerly and outerly. They are never of any benefit. They are the ones we need to throw away.

How can you throw them away? Or how can you make them change? That is also what the dharma teaches. That is what you are learning and that is what you are practicing. Without learning, nobody can understand those things. Without understanding them, you can't practice. Then how would you be able to benefit even yourself, let alone others?

First you have to learn. Then you practice. Then after a while, you can teach others, too. What do you teach them? How you got peaceful. How you dropped the horns off your head. How you were able to throw the five poisons away into the garbage. If you study and practice and do those things, then you can teach because you learned them yourself.

This is the whole reason for a dharma center. You can go there to learn. You can go there to practice. You can go there to teach. Absolutely everybody needs to keep harmony with each other, my goodness! You are all there like babies of the same mommy and daddy. You are all there to drink the same dharma milk. Don't make the milk sour with politics. We don't need any politicians. When there are politics, it is like suddenly everybody has giant horns, suddenly everybody has fangs—then forget about harmony, everyone just makes non-virtue! When there are no politics, it is quiet and peaceful like the deer all just enjoying themselves and being happy to eat the grass.

We are practicing dharma—that means we don't need politics. Where are you going to get politics in the dharma, anyway? Teachers don't teach politics. The books don't have politics. You won't find one bit of politics in the dharma teachings, not even as tiny as one speck of dust. You didn't get politics from your daddy or mommy along with your body. You were born clean, with no politics. You grew up clean. Don't make yourself dirty now by getting mixed up in them—no reason you would want to learn about that kind of negativity or practice it. You don't need to waste your time or your energy on those stupid things. There is plenty you need to learn, but not that. Generally, everybody says it is good to be diligent, but you don't need to be diligent in politics. That's the wrong kind. You don't need to have faith in your five poisons.

Anyway, it sounds like these days nobody is doing politics garbage stuff too much. That is wonderful! In the future, please always continue just purely and cleanly, and drop whatever is dirty and harmful. It sounds like people are doing good, studying and practicing in a happy way. That's the right way! Right on! Stay happy!

-Gyatrul