

On the Power of Making Tormas and Other Offerings

Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche

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There are so many teachings about the power of making offerings. I am watching these ladies, every day they offer water bowls and a serkyem on my shrine, and at night they clean up everything, so nicely. I tell them, “Thank you,” they are keeping my shrine so nice, but they already gave themselves the “thank you” the real way, by accumulating merit and purifying negativity, continuously. Actually, I am just lazy so my “thank you” is not pure, kind of guilty!

Anyway, all the lamas and buddhas have taught about making offerings, how powerful it is and so much benefit, blah blah blah. You can ask Sangye or other teachers, they can tell you those teachings. Or—oho!—Khenpo Tsewang is coming, absolutely you can ask him and he can blah tons about that, from many angles.

They say that when you make offerings nicely to the shrine or any representations of enlightened body, speech, and mind, it purifies your negativity and accumulates great merit. If you make offerings nicely, then in the future your body will be strong, handsome or pretty, with a long life and no sickness or other problems; your speech will have many qualities and be strong; and your mind will be filled with qualities and everything sort of easy. Outerly, making offerings benefits the body. Innerly, it benefits the mind. It supports everything, your success.

You guys up there making preparations for the Kilaya practice, it’s the same thing. Cleaning the temple, outside and inside, making the tormas, arranging the mandala, all the details, each piece—that’s your offering. Your merit. Cleansing your obscurations. What you do with your own hand, that makes your own merit.

I heard our umzed, Keith, is our torma leader and showing everyone how to make them. That’s wonderful, thank you! He knows lots of things, he can explain to you. If he doesn’t want to talk, it’s okay to pinch him. He is juicy so you will get something! Not like pinching a dry mushroom. Tell him, not only the torma shape, we need the meaning, too. And not only him but other older students, they can show you how to do things nicely, they have some experience if they haven’t been spaced out, my goodness, so many years they have been doing everything. They can tell you the meaning, a little bit, too. They love to blah!

Everybody try, okay? If you don’t know, this is your opportunity to learn, still there are lots of things you can do. We have lots of older students, how many years have they been practicing, they think they are really professional. Therefore, you need to share your “professional” with new students. But just professional practice, you don’t need to show them professional gossip, okay? Anyway, everybody can come and try. Now you have Kilaya—that’s wonderful. He’s an ugly guy, but still wonderful. You can learn about his ugly wonderful things, all his qualities, then maybe you don’t mind his ugly face. Or maybe you just think, “Yuck!” Anyway, all form is

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his form, ugly or pretty doesn't matter. All sound is his sound, his speech. All concepts are his wisdom mind. You can focus like that. Actually, retreat or no retreat, anytime you can focus on that. Doesn't have to be one week particular. Just for us this is our special opportunity to focus, to practice, we call it "retreat" like it's some big deal. But Kilaya is every time. Every place. Anytime, you can focus on his qualities, all phenomena there.

Okay? Anyway, ask others, I have forgotten everything. My offerings, I have forgotten. My Kilaya, I have forgotten. Just I remember my delicious breakfast, my delicious tea. I tell you to focus and practice, to accumulate merit and purify negativity, but myself I just sit here with an open mouth, making karmic debt by chowing down on everything! Really I am a liar! Anyway, don't follow me. Don't follow my lie. Don't follow my action. Just follow your buddha, your Kilaya, your Three Jewels, your pure lamas. Oho, you are rich in pure guys to follow! Not this funky old man. Anyway, thank you, everybody, for arranging the mandala, making offerings, cleaning, cooking, each piece—you don't need my useless "thank you" but really it makes me happy to hear about that. Your own "thank you" is your merit, you gave yourself.

Tashi Delek!

-Gyatral