

# *WHICH ONE CAN YOU CHANGE?*

## *ON POLITICS AND PRACTICE*

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Are you a Democrat? Are you a Republican? Are you sure? Show me which part! Your nose maybe is Republican? You have a Democrat finger? I don't think so. Just human being, each piece. Your whole government, same thing, top to bottom: human beings, sentient beings. If you want to complain, maybe complain about the laws—the people are just sentient beings, good and bad, lots of wishy-washy ones. Whatever they want or try to do, it depends on their merit, if they will be successful or not. If they will be of benefit or not. That is their own karma.

Instead, look at *yourself*, *your* own karma. You don't have much merit either, hahaha! You can see that or anybody can see that. I don't think you are even beautiful or handsome. Look at your own body, your own mind—that is your business. If there is virtue or non-virtue there, that is your business! Other guys, their situation, that's not your business! If you complain about them, does that benefit? No. If you sincerely want to benefit them, benefit yourself through practice. Then slowly you can benefit others. If your mouth says you want to benefit, though, but you are just complaining instead of practicing, that's strange.

Your government is giant. How many people are in it, top to bottom? Are you going to change them? Can you change even one person, let alone all those hundreds or thousands? Actually, which one can you change? *Yourself*. Therefore, just practice.

So much complaining—did you control yourself, now you are looking for something else to control? And if you didn't control your own self, your own mind, then wanting to control everybody else, that's embarrassing! You are not qualified! We say, “*They* should do this!” “*They* should do that!” But what we should do ourselves, we don't know or we ignore it. Therefore, we are shameless, pointing the finger at everybody else and ignoring the smell coming from our own butt that we didn't clean nicely.

Like myself, here I have a control for my television. I have a television control but no control over my own mind! That's embarrassing!

You might think your own idea is wonderful, and everybody should follow your way. Actually, does your “my way” have any foundation? You should check. If you think you have a wonderful “my way,” then you need to get more educated. Study and check, carefully. Then you can see if your way is really solid or not before you start thinking you are a big hero just because you can blah blah blah. Anybody can blah! Even Odzer the cat can meow lots!

If you really think you are better than others, you should check carefully: what is that 'better?' If you are really better than them, then good. Stay that way. No reason to be proud. Your merit.

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Don't lose it, boasting! Or if that 'better' is not really better, then examine your faults. Maybe what you thought was better was actually a mistake. Maybe they are the right way and you are the wrong way. Whatever your wrong way things are, then do confession and Vajrasattva and purify them. Slowly give up your negative things. If you find you are indeed better, you don't need to scream at everyone, "I am good! I am the goodest! The best!" If you find you have faults, you don't need to make a big announcement: "I am bad!" It is just your own business. Good things, keep. Bad things, slowly move away from them.

You are practicing Buddhism. How many Buddhists are in America? Each one practicing, purifying their negativity, accumulating merit. Oho! We are getting to be a whole group! Not politics group. Just naturally dharma group. Merit group.

Just watch yourself. That you *can* do. That you *must* do. What are you watching for? If you are a Vajrayana practitioner, watch that you don't break your samaya. The bottom line is that means to benefit yourself and others in a real, true, honest way. That means refuge and bodhicitta, the most profound, nothing beyond that. That is our job, the most important, more than some kind of Dzogchen fancy stuff.

If you are Mahayana, don't break your compassion. That doesn't mean "I love you!" from your mouth, but real compassion sincerely from the heart. Not the 'compassion' that they said meant they needed to bomb everything. Compassion for *all* beings. Not this government or that army. Not just the United States. Not just human beings, even—all the doggies and kitties and bugs, every animal, the hungry ghosts and hell beings. Everybody. Every kind. Anyway, that is your Mahayana vow. Not something small. Nobody forced you with guns or swords to take it. You yourself said, "Yes, I will do it!" Were you lying? Now if you want to put bodhicitta in the corner or throw it away like toilet paper, that's up to you. On your head. Think about that, before you jump into the politics garbage.

If you are Hinayana, stay clean, your own actions of body, speech, and mind. You don't need to show anybody, "I'm clean!" Just stay clean and quiet. That keeps your Hinayana vow.

Your country, here, to me it looks wonderful. You who have grown up here, you have amazing things. Everybody, every country can complain. Rich or poor, handsome or pretty or ugly, man or woman—we are all professional complainers! What is the benefit?

Most important is what is honestly your own business: your own body, speech, and mind. If you want to complain about yourself, yes, that's your business—but I don't think anybody wants to listen to that. It doesn't benefit, either. More than complaining about outer things or inner things, just try to practice. Our human life is short. We need to focus on our own nest.

Tashi Delek!

*- Gyatrul*

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