

To Lama Yeshe's Students on His Passing

Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche

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Now your teacher, Lama Yeshe, has passed away. You are very fortunate at this time that Lama Pasang has come to help with the preparations for the cremation, and the rituals and so forth. It is your wonderful fortune that he has come to help you and teach you so that you can do everything properly for your teacher. Lama Pasang is one of Penor Rinpoche's own students and a real lama. You didn't make a mistake, getting that lama's help! It is like a miracle that he has come! He is not some bozo lama off the street. He will do everything nicely, so follow whatever he says. You are very lucky to have him there. Moreover, his lineage—as a follower of Penor Rinpoche and Dudjom Rinpoche—is the same as Lama Yeshe's, so that is very harmonious

Someone was asking about who Lama Yeshe's root gurus were, and which lama he received his ordination vows from. That was the 16th Karmapa. Karmapa named him Karma Yeshe Phuntsok. Yeshe then said that he was principally a follower of the Nyingmapa lineage rather than the Kagyudpa, so perhaps the name "Karma" didn't fit, and so his name was changed to Orgyen Yeshe Phuntsok. Lama Yeshe's root lamas were Penor Rinpoche, Dudjom Rinpoche, Yangthang Rinpoche, Chagdud Rinpoche—who taught him many things—and maybe Tulku Theglo. But primarily he was a student of Penor Rinpoche and Dudjom Rinpoche. He studied and learned many things from different lamas, real lamas holding their lineage traditions. He was not just a bozo.

There has been some talk that he passed away lying down, rather than sitting upright in meditation. The notion that it is absolutely best to pass away while in the sitting position is a Tibetan idea. Maybe they think that Shakyamuni didn't practice well, since he passed into parinirvana while lying down? Don't hold onto that idea and think that there was something wrong because Lama Yeshe wasn't sitting up, or indulge in doubts and gossip on this subject. It wouldn't matter if he died while standing up, sitting, lying down, upside-down, or any other way. I don't think that is any big deal. The important thing is that right now you can perform the preparation of the body and the process of cremation correctly because of Lama Pasang's presence. Penor Rinpoche himself gave Lama Pasang the name "Lama," and so through his knowledge and kindness now you can learn how to do what is right for your teacher. Recognize your good fortune and do everything as well as you can.

Especially at this time, don't hold tightly to your own idea and insist on doing things your own way. Your focus should be the accumulation of merit, through maintaining harmony with one another and doing practice, making offerings, and so on. But the most important thing is that your minds be respectful and harmonious, and

focusing on the practice. What do you need to practice at this time? Lama Pasang can show you, but also everyone can practice reciting the short Vajrasattva mantra—OM BENZAR SATTO HUNG—continuously.

You don't need any special instruction to do that, and it is very beneficial, we can be confident of that! Look at what all the great masters have taught about the power of Vajrasattva! Reciting OM BENZAR SATTO HUNG is not something small or powerless. You don't need to worry, "Oh, I'm not a scholar, I don't understand, I haven't studied much dharma; maybe my Vajrasattva mantras won't be effective." Don't think that way. Just have faith and devotion, and recite the mantra—that is everything. We don't need to worry about whether the virtue of reciting BENZAR SATTO is powerful or not. We should worry instead about how powerful the non-virtue of gossiping and slandering is, but we don't think about that too much.

As much as you can, recite OM BENZAR SATTO HUNG -- that creates merit. As much as you keep harmony and respect each other, that creates merit. And take care of the center! Lama Yeshe tried so hard and persevered despite so many complications and obstacles, all to make a center for you. He was helped by others, of course, especially Fernando. The sponsors and students have been trying so hard, struggling for many years now, trying to light the lamp of dharma in that land of darkness. What was all that for? For you, the students, and students in the future. Fernando and others supported Lama Yeshe so much—for what? For your benefit, not just for themselves! Now support him and be harmonious with him. Now you have a small lamp. Don't waste all that now! Now Lama Yeshe is gone, but you still have his teaching—that means the lamp is there, still making light. That means you need to practice! I don't know what lineage he was teaching, whether it was Dudjom or Payul or Nyingtig or something else. But whatever the case may be, he did know those lineages and so you have a connection with them, without mistake. Whatever lineage he taught, keep that purely, and practice according to the lineage teachings. Don't waste his teachings and his efforts.

When something goes wrong, people love to complain and spread that dirtiness to everywhere that used to be clean. Don't pollute your pure dharma container with the dirt of gossip and slander. Regarding gossip and slander, shut up, and put up with pure practice. We don't need to waste or throw away the lineage blessings. We gossip because we are ordinary sentient beings. We are not liberated. And until we give up our gossip, we will never be liberated and never become enlightened. We love our gossip, and we love our five poisons. We love to follow our boiling, sparkling five poisons. We don't love to follow what is peaceful and meaningful: the pure dharma. Everybody, please try to give up your trips and your stubbornness. Particularly at this time, which should be a time of accumulating virtue, don't waste your opportunities and ruin your merit.

Everybody try to practice, and try to keep harmony. Your practice is to keep harmony and refrain from gossip and slander. I know that gossip and slander are your Western wisdom tradition, sorry! Along with the knowledge and tradition of men and women chasing each other desperately, lying to each other, or lying to everyone about business. I heard Mexicans are particularly berserk—is that true? If that is some tradition you have, then please don't follow that tradition. If that is not your tradition, then I apologize—maybe that is just my misunderstanding because I don't speak the language? But I think actually you are berserk, because you are so macho. So I'm not going to apologize—I take that back. I'm going to keep my apology, because I am so stingy!

Anyway, please don't be berserk, ladies and men chasing each other, everyone drinking and smoking in the macho style. Don't go your own way, saying it is your tradition. You don't have a tradition—we sentient beings don't have real traditions, we just have the habits of our ignorance and five poisons. So, now that you have connections to the real wisdom tradition of dharma through Lama Yeshe's kindness and years of struggle, follow that purely. Everybody try, okay? We are all praying, at all the centers, for Lama Yeshe and for all you guys. You guys practice purely and keep harmony down there, okay? That is the best offering.

Tashi delek!

-Gyatral