

2015 Vajrasattva Retreat Last Day Teaching

Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche

June 2nd, 2015

Thank you everyone, thank you particularly to Lingtrul Rinpoche for coming continuously, in his great kindness, every time we practice. Thank you to the lama, the umzed, to the geku, and to others. Everyone prepared everything and performed everything so beautifully. And to the sangha, too -- thank you to everyone. It is not easy to do this kind of practice, to pull something like this off is very difficult.

Some of you know how we started here on this place 30 years ago. Some of you have been here this whole time. You know how difficult it has been. In the beginning we didn't have anything professional, we didn't have anyone who really knew what they were doing, only a bunch of people with horns; and so slowly, slowly we had to learn. Really, thank you to everyone for doing it so beautifully and smoothly this time. Old and young, I say thank you to everyone.

In the future, please continue practicing like this. Why? Because each of us needs to accumulate merit and purify our negativity. If we fail to accumulate merit, we will find no success, either in dharma or in any worldly endeavor. If we fail to purify negativity, we won't be able to study, contemplate, or meditate on the dharma at all. Therefore, we won't be able to accomplish our own benefit or others' benefit. There will be no benefit whatsoever without these two, accumulating merit and purifying negativity.

If you don't accumulate merit and purify negativity, even if you get some little thing, or some little success, you will be like an American businessman, just boasting about whatever success they get, wasting it. Don't be like that. Keep harmony and keep pure discipline as much as possible in the future. Thank you to everyone for doing everything so nicely this time!

In the future, everything is harmony. Tashi Choling, ODD, Portland, Austin—you guys, help each other. And then what do they call that other place? Something not soft, some kind of Iron Knot? Oh, maybe that refers to carpenters and others, coming here and working like an Iron Knot, learning, trying to help, everything. It isn't only Iron Knot people who should do that—wherever you guys go, everybody help other centers, dharma centers. You can learn from them, stage by stage. OK? Thank You. Learn the umzed, learn the chopon, even learn how to beat the drum, everything stage by stage—but actually it benefits you! I am not asking you to learn naughty things -- you are a hundred million times more of a scholar in that area than me; therefore, I

don't need to request that. I am requesting that in the future you always maintain harmony and pure discipline, and study, contemplate, and practice as much as you can.

We do have a lama: Lingtrul Rinpoche has come. He comes again and again, and we need nothing above or beyond him. Of course, there are other lamas, good ones like Getse Rinpoche, who is an inconceivable lama. If you need someone who holds the Palyul Tradition, there is Khenpo Namdrol Rinpoche. If you need one who holds the Dudjom tradition, there is the younger of the two khenpo brothers, Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal. He was like Dudjom Rinpoche's own son—Dudjom Rinpoche treated him like that. For twenty years, he traveled with Dudjom Rinpoche and was always at his feet whenever he was teaching or giving transmission, so he really holds that lineage completely.

We have all of these lamas. And then among our own group, we also have teachers. We have Lama Chonom and Sangye Khandro; and slowly, slowly Shashi and Ila and others are coming along, stage by stage. And then all other different kinds of helpers and supporters -- everyone who is helping, everyone who is supporting, everyone who is participating at the center, all wonderful. Don't get swollen up with pride, don't be proud; just hear, contemplate and meditate on the dharma.

Your own country's tradition, actually, is first to hear, then study and understand the meaning. This you know from all your years' training in school, which is your country's tradition. You know how to receive teachings. You know how to contemplate and come to understand them. So, please, use these qualities that you have developed here in this very place where you grew up. Use the qualities of knowing how to study, knowing how to understand, and how to internalize the meaning. Always try to study and contemplate the dharma, and keep pure discipline, and do this with an attitude of altruism. Don't do this for some kind of selfish motivation.

You do know how to keep harmony; that is also part of your country's traditions. Look at the laws set up here. You have rules in school, and you have laws governing society. Through these, you are supposed to keep harmony. Thus, we have this tradition of harmony in this country as well. So, please follow these, they are the traditions of your very own country -- how to study, how to keep pure discipline, how to keep harmony. Don't be wishy-washy, but follow that tradition in the very best possible way. If you always keep harmony, and you always keep pure discipline, then you can know that you will not be bringing harm. You will not be damaging your samaya. If you break your discipline and cause or create disharmony or encourage disharmony, then your samaya will deteriorate. You will have fallen under the sway of the three poisons.

What are the three poisons' qualities? The wonderful qualities of the three poisons are that they will bring you birth in the hell realms and all six realms of suffering in samsara. That is the kind of quality they have. That is their characteristic,

and that will be the fate awaiting you after this life if you always only allow yourself to fall under the sway of the three poisons again and again.

This is a dharma center. It is not a place for business. It is a place where people can come and cultivate altruism, where they can come and bring benefit to themselves and others, where they can come and work in order to serve others. Slowly, slowly, stage by stage, please do this. Don't say that you don't have anyone to guide you or help instruct you in the proper way to come and study and practice at the dharma center. You do have teachers here continuously. Lama Chonam and Sangye Khandro; and another one, maybe called more or Les. You have different kinds of teachers, and of course we have our lama, Lingtrul Rinpoche, and we need nothing beyond that. We don't need anything that surpasses that. We need to honor him and his qualities, and we need to study, contemplate, and meditate on the dharma.

If we ignore the study and contemplation of the dharma, then we will just continue to do things our own MY WAY. If we just follow our own MY WAY, where are we going to end up? We will end up in the hell realms and the hungry ghost realms, and all the realms of suffering in samsara, again and again. So, please, now don't take this opportunity to follow your own way; take this opportunity to really follow in the footsteps, maintain the lineages, and keep the practices of your root gurus, Dudjom Rinpoche and the Dalai Lama, Penor Rinpoche, the Karmapa, Chagdud Rinpoche, and other such inconceivable teachers we have met in the course of our lives. Also, of course, Khenpo Jigphun Rinpoche; and especially Yangtang Tulku Rinpoche, who performed the entire Rinchen Terzod and other profound transmissions.

Yesterday or some time ago, maybe everyone was just a bunch of naked hippies in Berkeley; but it is not like that anymore. Please, try not to continue following that tradition. As much as you can, it is time to give that up. Giving up the hippie tradition and instead keeping really pure discipline and keeping harmony, this is how we will attain siddhi and how we will receive blessings. This is how we will benefit ourselves and benefit others. Otherwise, if we ignore the idea of keeping harmony and we ignore our pure discipline, and we let these deteriorate, then our horns grow and our claws grow and we maybe end up with four or five eyes apiece -- and who's going to benefit from that? Nobody!

We are of the lineage of Buddha Shakyamuni, we have met with that lineage, we have received its teachings, and so forth. Buddha Shakyamuni never taught that any good result would come of the three poisons. I never heard that he ever gave any teaching like that. So please, don't shame your lineage. Don't shame Guru Rinpoche. Don't bring down Shakyamuni or your root gurus; but instead, conduct yourself well, with pure discipline, and with as much harmony as you are able. If you do these two things, you keep harmony and you hold pure discipline, in this life obstacles will be dispelled, and in future lives you will have success with whatever you need to

accomplish, up to and including the ultimate goals of your own purpose and all others' purpose.

If, on the other hand, you are like me—whose three poisons are not under control at all, and, therefore, I am unable to be of benefit to myself or others—then you completely lose any possibility of bringing benefit to yourself or to others. So, please don't follow my tradition.

Here we have the main temple, where we are sitting now, Tashi Choling itself. Then outside on the grounds, there are many other places where you can accumulate merit and purify negativity. The work doesn't just go on right here in this room! We have the Vajrasattva statue and garden, we have the Guru Rinpoche temple and Vimalamitra, and all of these require so much hard work to maintain. They require so much hard work to build, and now to maintain and improve and so forth. All of you who are working anywhere, anywhere on this property, anywhere on these different structures and statues and so forth, you are accumulating merit and purifying negativity as surely as you are in this room itself. This is not some kind of business, this has nothing to do with the three poisons. This is just an extension of the activities that take place in this room, the opportunity to accumulate merit and purify negativity.

In the future, if you want to build more supports of enlightened body, speech, and mind, or if you want to perform practice, these are all very good; but whatever virtue you wish to perform, always perform it by keeping harmony, and keeping pure discipline. Why? Why should you listen to what I say? Is it because "Gyatrul said"? Should you run around and say, "This is because Gyatrul said it?" No. This is what the root gurus of our lineage have taught. Those were real lamas, not lamas like me. The lineage lamas such as Dudjom Rinpoche, and Penor Rinpoche, and Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche, these were inconceivable masters, and it is their lineage that we have made connection with. You yourself have as your jewel Lingtrul Rinpoche; you will never get one beyond that.

As much as possible, please continue to maintain harmony and to practice and work very well. Coming together and doing these kinds of practices or retreats, everyone—it seems like—is supporting each other very well. In harmony, with good discipline, each person watching their own conduct. That is excellent, it seems like everyone is supporting those who might need support, are supporting wherever support might be useful. The chopons, the umzed, the geku, we need to support all of those who are performing these functions. This means to maintain harmony, not to just go our own way. Please support each other well and with humility, don't be swollen up with pride or jealousy.

You have to examine your own faults, don't hide or conceal your faults. Instead, rid yourself of them. Eliminate them from your mind. If you don't work to eliminate your faults while you have the chance, you will end up like me, just stupid, destined for

the lower realms, the lowest of the low, bringing nothing but harm to myself and others. Your faults by definition are what should be eliminated from your mindstream.

You might ask, “Then what are we supposed to keep?” If you want to keep something, what should it be? You should keep your qualities—keep your qualities of hearing, contemplating, and meditating. We already have the three poisons. Therefore, we need to see them, recognize that they are the very thing that we should eliminate, and then eliminate them from our minds. If we don’t eliminate our faults, we will continue on as we are...and no good will come of it! If we recognize and eliminate our faults, then it is possible for all qualities to blossom. If we need to bring benefit to ourselves, we need to eliminate our faults. If we want to be able to bring benefit to others, we need to eliminate our faults. All of the buddhas, all of the bodhisattvas, all of the lamas and masters of the various lineages and traditions, they all have attained their levels of realization only through this. All of the objects of refuge give this instruction: In order to practice on the path of dharma, you must see and then eliminate your own faults and increase your qualities.

How do we do this? We have to hear, contemplate, and meditate on the dharma. You have to practice as you are doing now. So, please, in the future, always continue in this way. You don’t need to be like the great moose they have up in Alaska, with giant horns. You don’t need to do that, you don’t need to go there. You don’t need to become like poisonous snakes—that is to waste your own precious human birth. That is to waste this opportunity to practice, this opportunity you have obtained at this point.

Whether you are practicing sutra or tantra, whatever the case may be, whatever path you are drawn to, you have already met inconceivable root lamas. You have been able to make a connection with lamas who are the direct emanations of Guru Rinpoche, of Vimalamitra, Vairochana, and so forth. You can’t say you haven’t met them! You can’t say you don’t have their blessing! We have met such incredible beings, and we do have their blessings. Now, we need to cherish that, which means not going our own way, which would be to bring shame on ourselves and them and cause nothing but our own rebirth in hell; but instead we should turn our minds towards the dharma and make the best possible use of that blessing.

Otherwise you will end up like me: I do nothing but sleep, I am lazy all the time, and, therefore, quite stupid. So please don’t follow that example.

In the future, I pray that Lingtrul Rinpoche will always come to our Vajrasattva and Vajrakilaya practices every year. I have made this request of him, and it is my sincere wish and prayer that he does this. Then you have your lama! You have a lama, and you have teachers. You have Khenpo Namdrol Rinpoche, Kenpo Tsewang Dongyal, incredible teachers like these. It would be difficult to find other khenpos who have such qualities.

Now down at the Guru Rinpoche temple, there is still lots of work—there has been lots of work, and there is still lots of work. Regarding the work that remains, everyone please, don't use it as your opportunity to make excuses for not coming to work, don't jump away with this reason or that reason; instead, use it as your opportunity to come. Even just to come and put in an hour's worth of labor, or anything that you can contribute, that is your opportunity to accumulate merit and purify negativity in connection with that project. This Guru Rinpoche temple, it is not an object of the three poisons, it is a refuge object. We should keep that in mind, and be generous in our offerings toward it and always have reverence toward it, and not intermingle the three poisons in our relations with it.

For too long, everyone has held onto their deer horns of pride, ego, and so forth. It is time to drop the horns—drop the gun!—stage by stage. Why? Because they just don't work!

Everyone has done so well at this retreat; I say thank you, and thank you, and thank you. To the young ones who are training and studying, I say to you don't copy the older ones, because for them it's already too late. Instead, study and train nicely, stage by stage. You do have those you can follow: Shashi and Ila, the umzed, the geku, and others. We have lamas to lead us like Lama Chonam and Sangye Khandro; and the one with the strange name, Lama Les, which means not fully, although he looks like he is full, I don't know what might be less, but apparently something is less.

Everyone please try, as much as you can. If we need to bring benefit to others, or we need to bring benefit to ourselves, either way we need to accumulate merit and purify negativity. Otherwise, without making the effort to accumulate merit and purify negativity, although we have these inconceivable lamas, amazing lamas, we waste their blessing and we waste our opportunity. If you are a Buddhist, there is no Buddhist who does not need to accumulate merit and purify negativity. All of the buddhas and bodhisattvas and their countless emanations, they have only come into this world in order to bring benefit to others, in order to work, out of their altruistic intention. If we are really going to follow them, we need to work in order to bring the greatest possible benefit to ourselves and others. We should have a similarly altruistic motivation. We shouldn't think, "Oh, I will work for myself and others, but for myself foremost, and others second." We shouldn't think like that. All the great masters who have ever lived, the buddhas and bodhisattvas and their many emanations, they always held the purpose of others or others' benefit as being principal. That was always their primary intention and their main goal.

All that Penor Rinpoche did, all his hard work and his many years of struggle and difficulty, they were in order to bring benefit to others. The one thousand or two thousand or many thousands of sangha that gathered around him, all of that was not for his own glorification, but in order to bring benefit to others. Dudjom Rinpoche,

wherever he went, he gave empowerment, instruction, and transmission. This was only out of his altruism, out of his compassion. Penor Rinpoche, the Dalai Lama, the Karmapa, Khyentse Rinpoche, all of the great masters, they have only ever done anything, including manifest for us, in order to bring benefit to others. All the great lamas of Tibet, each and every one came only in order to bring benefit to others. If you really are going to search for the real reason, that was their meaning and that was their purpose. Khenpo Jigphun and so many others, it was only in order to bring benefit, that was their only reason for engaging in any of their endeavors.

Ourselves, if we fail to follow this example of altruism and instead we disregard what would be beneficial for others and think selfishly only of ourselves, well then we just end up uptight, we end up constipated, and we get nothing. You will end up old like me, empty outerly and innerly of any qualities, and completely hopeless. Don't do that! For me it is too late, because I was stubborn and I always went MY WAY. I went MY WAY, and it wasn't that I lost nothing and gained nothing; actually the bottom line is, of course, I lost! I lost my opportunity, so please don't follow that. Instead, follow the examples of the great masters. Eliminate the three poisons from your mind. Eliminate jealousy, particularly. When you have jealousy, there is no reason to even try to accomplish the dharma because you are already very successfully accomplishing your own future rebirth in the three lower realms. Please don't do that. As much as you can, avoid such terrible harm to yourself.

Lingtrul Rinpoche, I say thank you. Thank you for coming again and again, and in the future please do always come out of your kindness and blessings, and always please hold us with your compassion.

And then I say good night!

Tashi delek!

-Gyatral

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