

~From the Archives of Teachings by Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche~

MAKE YOUR MIND VAST ~ IT'S EASY!

November 23, 2011, in Half Moon Bay, California

As was his custom for many years, in 2011 Rinpoche had spent the summer at Tashi Chöling and by the holidays had returned to his residence in Half Moon Bay for the winter. The day before Thanksgiving, when asked if he had any holiday messages for his students, Rinpoche gave the following teaching on how simple it can be to have a vast mind when doing any prayer or practice.

**Note—since Rinpoche frequently refers to the extremely brief Chenrezig¹ Food Offering Practice to illustrate his points, the practice is also included on the last page for your reference.*

Part I

It's Easy to Include All Sentient Beings

We think when one guy becomes a buddha, like Buddha Shakyamuni, he alone is liberated. Actually, countless beings are liberated—not just a thousand or a million, but countless billions and millions. Why? Those who practice with them, who have the karma, they can be included in that being's liberation. These days when one great master such as H.H. Penor Rinpoche passes into parinirvana, it is the same thing. Countless beings are liberated at that time. But we don't see them; we just see one guy who we think is dead in an ordinary way.

It is the same with enlightened beings manifesting. H.H. Penor Rinpoche, for example, passed away, and inconceivable beings were liberated simultaneously. Then after one or two months, he manifested again, but not just as a single reincarnation—countless, inconceivable numbers of emanations came into the world at the same time.

When we see one sentient being has been guided to liberation, actually countless beings have been guided. When one being's obscurations are cleared away, in fact countless beings' obscurations are cleared away. Thus, you can see that we really have no idea what is

1 “Chenrezig” is the Tibetan name for the Buddha of Compassion, who is known as Avalokiteshvara in Sanskrit.

going on! We should at least pray, continuously, because enlightened activity is continuously manifesting.

Very high, realized beings don't think like Republicans. You have a Republican brain—we all have it. Why? Because we only think about ourselves or our own people or our own side: I need to be liberated, I need blessings. Other sentient beings, forget it.

You think it is difficult to think about other sentient beings? Nothing's difficult about it! Just think, "Buddha, help me liberate all sentient beings." Everything is included there: all sentient beings and all buddhas. That's not difficult, is it?

Thinking about sentient beings and about buddhas, both together, can be as simple as that, whenever we pray or practice. When we do one prostration or make one offering or recite a single MANI mantra, when we begin and then when we dedicate the merit at the end, think of all sentient beings. You don't need to just think of big ones or just small ones—include all sizes, shapes, colors, whatever. Bugs, worms—whatever way beings exist!—all are sentient. 'Sentient' means that they have a mind. Having a mind means grasping to the self. It means thinking "I am," and taking that 'I' to be real. This means being limited. We limit ourselves with our 'I.' We have buddhanature, but we ignore that and instead we think we are just the self. Therefore, we are separated from our best, most wonderful treasure—our buddhanature—and then we go looking everywhere else for something to satisfy us. To be a sentient being means to be limited in this way. It means to hold to the 'I' as real. All samsara comes from that. To be a sentient being means to be a suffering being. We *are* objects of compassion, aren't we!

Another way you can easily think on a vast scale is to consider that when one person dies, billions of beings living in and on their body die with them. When a person is born, it's the same thing—billions of beings are born with them. So, pray for the countless beings living in your body. And not only the ones in *your* body, but all sentient beings' bodies! To pray for or dedicate your merit to one group of beings is good, but we need to do better and bigger

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~Translated and edited by Shashi Reitz~*

than that. We need to think not only about this one but also about that one, not only about my people but also about all the other people. Past or present or future also doesn't matter — we need to pray for beings of all three times. Then our dedication becomes vast.

We forget about making first our intention and then our dedication vast, though. Or at least, I don't know about you guys, but I forget. Therefore, we have to remind ourselves.

We need to have vast intention, which means we need to stretch. We need to stretch to think that we are doing one prostration or a half prostration or any kind of practice — even one second — for all beings. Then when we recite a deity's mantra or the verses of refuge or any practice, we also need to think that the focus of the practice is all buddhas. If you are saying MANI mantras and thinking of Chenrezig, or visualizing the field of refuge and reciting the refuge verses, or performing purification while visualizing Vajrasattva, in any practice think that the deity is actually all buddhas and bodhisattvas that exist. What is their nature? Their nature is your buddhanature. There is no difference. The visualization, the practice, the recitation, those are methods to help you realize that nature. The buddhas don't think, "I need to spank her, she has been naughty," or "He had better recite my mantra, he is a really bad guy with a lot to clean up." The buddhas' essence is emptiness, their intrinsic nature is luminosity, and their compassionate display is all-pervasive. Therefore, the nature of all buddhas is empty. There is nothing to grab there, there is nothing to hold there, there is nothing to name or label there. That is the buddha you need to remember always, whatever you are doing. That is what you are reminding yourself of when you do the Chenrezig food offering prayer. I don't know about when you are going to the bathroom, but if your motivation is okay, then at that time, too.

If you start to really contemplate how many beings there are, you may think, "I can't liberate them all!" Take the phrase, 'sentient beings who fill space.' Space has no end, no edge, no limit, no center. Therefore, 'all sentient beings' means countless, numberless, limitless beings. But likewise the buddhas are limitless. If you recite one MANI mantra, it

calls on limitless buddhas. It benefits all those limitless suffering beings. So, we don't need to be lonely! Buddhas are everywhere. When we say one MANI, Chenrezig doesn't need to be lonely. And as suffering beings, we aren't alone either. There are limitless beings like us, just as stupid. And worse.

So, each day think about sentient beings who fill all of space, and remember the buddhas and bodhisattvas who are likewise limitless. We don't need to get stuck on "I know him but I don't know her," "I know this being but I don't know that one." We might not know every being, but we do know the important thing, which is that whoever they are, they are suffering. If we know that, then we know that they are objects of our compassion, regardless if we know their name in this life or not. We can see that, by the power of their five poisons, they have accumulated terrible, inconceivable, negative karma. They don't know what they are doing. We don't know what we are doing, either. We are all suitable objects of compassion! We are all in jail, imprisoned by our passions and poisons. We all need to have prayers said for us!

We all say, "Pray for my father, my mother, my husband, my wife, my girlfriend, my boyfriend. ...Only them!" We don't need to be that kind of picky! How easy to say, "Pray for my father who died *and* for all sentient beings." But we are too attached to 'my way.' We don't want to include everyone, even though it is so simple. We have OM MANI PEME HUNG and countless other mantras and practices—we have endless powerful ways to bring blessings. We don't need to be stingy. We can share with all sentient beings, for countless eons. But we don't do that. Still we say, "Can you pray for my dead father, mother, girlfriend, boyfriend, doggy, kitty only?" So narrow! We only see that tiny dot, like the tip of a needle, and we ignore everything around it. We should name the doggie, father, mother, or whomever—that is the main focus, then pray for all sentient beings, too. You don't have to take anything away from anybody. You don't have to be stingy with anybody or leave anybody out. Don't limit

your motivation or your dedication. It is easy, just this simple, to include all beings at one time.

~ teaching continues in Part 2...

THE BLESSING:

Visualize that the offerings are purified and increase.

ཨོཾ་ཨུཾ་ཧཱུྃ། **OM AH HUNG**

སྤྱོད་པ་སྐྱེ་བ་ལྟོས་ཀྱིས་རྒྱས་པོ་ཆེ། །སྤྱོད་པ་སྐྱེ་བ་དམ་ཚེས་རྒྱས་པོ་ཆེ། །
འདེན་པ་སྐྱེ་བ་དེ་གི་འདུན་རྒྱས་པོ་ཆེ། །སྐྱེ་བས་གནས་དཀོན་མཆོག་གསུམ་ལ་མཚོན་པ་འབྲུལ། །

TON PA LA MED SANGYE RINPOCHE
To the unsurpassed teacher, the precious Buddha,

KYOB PA LA MED DAM CHÖ RINPOCHE
To the unsurpassed refuge, the precious holy Dharma,

DREN PA LA MED GENDUN RINPOCHE
To the unsurpassed guide, the precious Sangha,

KYAB NEI KON CHOG SUM LA CHOD PA BUL
This offering is made to the three supreme and rare Jewels of Refuge.

THE PRACTICE:

Visualize oneself as the Buddha of Compassion, Avalokiteshvara (Chenrezig), white in color with one face and four arms. Two palms are pressed together at the heart and the outer two hands are holding a crystal mala in the right and a lotus in the left. Adorned with jewels and silks, you are seated in the full lotus posture upon a lotus and moon seat.

རྗོད་སྤྱོད་གྱིས་མ་ལོ་སྐྱེ་བ་ལོ་གཏེན་པ་། །རྗོད་གསལ་སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱིས་དབུ་ལ་བརྒྱན། །
ཐུགས་རྗོད་སྤྱོད་གྱིས་འགྲོ་ལ་གཟིགས། །སྤྱོད་རས་གཟིགས་ལ་གསོལ་བ་འདེབས། །

JOWO KYON GYI MA GÖ KU DÖG KAR
To the unstained Lord, whose body is white in color,

DZOG SANGYE KYI U LA GYEN
Whose head is adorned with a perfect buddha,

TUK JE'I CHEN GYI DRO LA ZIK
Who views living beings with the eyes of compassion,

CHENREZIG LA SOL WA DEB
To Avalokiteshvara I pray.

THE MANTRA RECITATION:

Recite the Mani Mantra as many times as possible:

ཨོཾ་མ་ཎི་པཌེ་ཧཱུྃ།

OM MANI PEME HUNG

While reciting the mantra, recall all sentient beings who have passed away—especially those who lost their lives in the preparation of the meal—and generate compassion for them. Expand your awareness to include even the insects that were harmed in the course of raising, transporting or cooking the vegetables and grains. If one has received the empowerment of Avalokiteshvara, by this prayer and recitation one will maintain the samaya commitment.

THE DEDICATION:

Meditate that all beings attain the state of liberation through this prayer.

དགོ་བ་འདི་ཡིས་སྤྱོད་པ་བདག །
GEWA DI YI NYUR DU DAG
By the virtue of this practice, myself

སྤྱོད་རས་གཟིགས་དབང་འགྲུབ་སྤྱོད་ནས། །
CHENREZIG WANG DRUB GYUR NEI
Accomplishing swiftly the Lord Avalokiteshvara,

འགྲོ་བ་གཅིག་ཀྱང་མ་ལུས་པ། །
DRO WA CHIG KYANG MA LÜ PA
May all beings without exception

དེའི་ས་ལ་འགོད་པར་ཤོག །
DE YI SA LA GÖD PAR SHOG
Be liberated to his level.

This concise food blessing was composed of various traditional Tibetan Buddhist prayers by the Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche for his students. May it be of benefit.

Chenrezig Food Offering Practice