

~From the Archives of Teachings by Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche~

## HEART ADVICE ON TSOQ AND OTHER MATTERS

*A teaching read to those gathered at Orgyen Dorje Den on January 14, 2012,  
to practice Vajrasattva in connection with Dungse Thinley Norbu Rinpoche's Parinirvana*

### Part 15

#### On Searching for Rinpoche's Tulku

So, I think that that is all I have to say—except, no, there is one more thing. The one more thing is that everyone is always talking about how great lamas have to have a tulku, every great lama has to have a tulku, and this is a big deal. So, for myself, I am just telling you now while I am still alive and you are still alive that when I die, don't worry about my tulku.

For one thing, I am not going to have a tulku because I am not a realized being. I'm just going to die like a doggie, and that's it. Who knows what will happen next, but looking for me is not going to do any good whatsoever. Someone might say, "Oh, Gyatrul Rinpoche's tulku! We have to go find Gyatrul Rinpoche's tulku!"

Well, I will tell you right now what my tulku is and what my tulku will be—if you want to even use that kind of high word, which I do not believe I earned or deserve whatsoever.

If you really want to find my tulku, look into your own mind. Hearing and contemplating and meditating on the dharma, trying to share your understanding with others, teaching and listening, studying, maintaining the lineage, spreading the teachings, helping the sangha, supporting the dharma centers—*that* is my tulku. I am just this stupid old man, and when I die I am going to die just a stupid old man, and stupid old men don't have tulkus. Realized beings have tulkus. So, I am not going to have a tulku. But if you want to know what can carry forward after me like a tulku would, it is all the dharma I have tried to

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~Translated and edited by Shashi Reitz~*

establish. You have to take into your own mind whatever teachings the great lamas who have come here have given you. Whatever empowerment or transmission or instructions you have received, take those into your mindstream: *that* is the real tulku. And that tulku, it doesn't matter if it is my tulku, Gyatrul Rinpoche's tulku, or Penor Rinpoche's tulku, or the Dalai Lama's tulku. That tulku is just tulku itself, nirmanakaya; it is everybody's tulku, it is the nature of your own mind.

That is where we all come home—we come home to ourselves when we die. So, you see, it really doesn't have anything to do with me. Forget about my tulku, what about *your* tulku? I think you should really worry about your own tulku, not my tulku. My tulku is probably going to be off living in some hell realm or somewhere. But what about your tulku? Your tulku is however much you are able to benefit yourself and benefit others. That is the real tulku.

Actually, tulku or nirmanakaya manifestations, they are endless. We say, "Oh, Buddha Shakyamuni lived and then he passed away and now his dharma endures." But actually, there is no difference between Buddha Shakyamuni and his dharma. All of the dharma is Buddha Shakyamuni, is his manifestation, is his tulku. People make a big deal when a lama passes away, "Oh, were there rainbows, did you see rainbows? Were there rainbows in the sky when the lama passed?" People make this big deal about rainbows. Actually, you can see rainbows any time. When you go up on the mountain, there is a rainbow—big deal, it doesn't mean anything. The real rainbow is if you are able to bring to blossom the qualities of your own mindstream. That is the real rainbow, that is the real sign of a tulku, that is the sign of realization. When some lama passes away, whatever happens to them when they die, that is really their business. But what happens in your mind now, what happens before you die, that is what you should concern yourself with because you can do something about that. So look for your own tulku, *now*. You don't have to wait for yourself to die, that would be too late.

So now while you are alive, look for your own tulku: contemplate the dharma, think about the dharma, bring the dharma into your mind, and you will find your tulku there. However much you are able to help and encourage others in the dharma, that is also your tulku, my tulku, anybody's tulku. That is the real rainbow arising in the sky, and that is a rainbow that I will also say is a legitimate sign of realization, a sign of the qualities of buddhanature coming out. So, don't get hung up in worrying about this lama, that lama, this tulku, that tulku.

And then, of course, when you find a tulku, the first thing you ask is, are they pretty, are they handsome, and are they rich? You don't really care about what their blessings are. Since when you find a tulku you don't really pay attention to their qualities anyway, that is another reason not to go running around looking for one, because what good is it going to do you? If you find a pretty one or a rich one, then you love them. If you find an ugly one, then you think, "Oh, they are okay...but maybe I'll find a prettier tulku later that has higher realization. And because he's pretty, that is how we'll know."

This is actually a worrisome trend that I see at various monasteries: once a lama passes away, the other monks or lamas or leaders of that place will say, "Oh, we just have to wait for the tulku to show up and then it will all be okay; and maybe if that tulku has a really big name, it will really benefit our monastery." That is so backwards. If that lama was a pure authentic lama like they say, I don't think he taught them to do that when he died. I don't think that is what he wanted them to do as his legacy. I think that maybe they are getting it a little bit wrong, wanting to use the tulku like waving some flag, like a money-making machine. I don't think that is the best way to make use of a tulku's precious qualities and to support their enlightened activity. I don't think that is a way to help them perform benefit for all beings while they are here, embodied. I think maybe that is really a little bit of a waste of the tulku's time and our merit.

There can be tons of tulkus, to the north, south, east, and west. Sure, everyone can have a tulku, go for it! There can be inconceivable tulkus. But if you are going to come looking for my tulku after I die, what are you going to do, connect with a ghost? Forget about it. You should connect with your own real tulku instead, the tulku that is your own buddhanature—and whatever connection you can have with that, I say that is the real tulku. Whatever connection I have been able to give you to the blessings of my root gurus—the Dalai Lama, the Karmapa, Dūdjom Rinpoche, Penor Rinpoche, these tremendous beings—that is really all that I hope to leave you with. That is something that will truly be of benefit. Without mistake, without doubt, I can say 100% for sure that you can rely on that. Don't rely on me. I am just a funky old man and I will be dead soon, one way or another. Maybe I have a year or two left, who knows, we could all die at any time. But however long or short a time I have left, soon enough I will be gone. Soon enough we will all be gone; but who will be of benefit to us, even when we die, will be those lamas and their blessings. Why? Because they are beyond all the stuff and nonsense of this life.

We look at these bodies that we have. This body is just a heap of relative phenomena. It is completely contaminated by the five poisons. It is just momentary, it is ephemeral, it is just hanging here for a breath before it is gone. There is nothing pure about it, there is nothing permanent, stable, or lasting about it. If any of you are looking to me and this ephemeral, momentary, yucky body of mine for some kind of blessing, you are looking in the wrong place. But if I have been able to give you a taste of any of my teachers' blessings, then that is a source that you could look deeper and deeper and deeper into and only find greater and greater blessings. For they were actual manifestations of buddhas and bodhisattvas with real wisdom kayas here on this earth for us, for no other reason but to benefit us, to benefit all beings.

So that is the final word on tulkus. I don't want to hear about any sort of nonsense about where I am going to be born, or this or that. Really that is ridiculous, just shut up and

practice, that is really the best thing and that makes everybody happy. That makes you happy, that makes all beings happy, that makes all of the lineage lamas happy. And the buddhanature that you are practicing to realize, remember that it is not just you who has it, it is all beings. So don't be stingy. For those others who have the buddhanature, first we need to wake up our own buddhanature, and then we need to help them to wake up theirs, too. That is really all that there is to do. That really is the whole dharma, all of the teachings are for that purpose.

*~ teaching continues in Part 16...*