

~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 16

We Are Surrounded by Riches

All buddhanature is the same. This buddhanature is the suchness that begins each generation stage practice. This buddhanature is the same as the nature of all phenomena. This buddhanature is the compassion of all the buddhas that actually pervades all beings, all phenomena, all the time.

We need to think about that a little bit. That can help us wake up. That can help our mind open. That can help us say, “Oh, wow, now I understand a little bit or have a glimpse of how vast the qualities of the buddhas' enlightened mind are.” So please, stop ignoring your buddhanature. Please stop ignoring your connection to these great lamas.

We do have great lamas. We are gathering here and practicing according to our connection with Thinley Norbu Rinpoche, and he used to sing a song and say, “I am proud to be a cow.” We should know that even him saying that was to benefit us—of course he was not a cow and he didn't think he actually was. So, we should recognize the qualities of all of our lamas, past and present.

We might ask, “What is the right time to start?” Sometimes people get very concerned, “What is the right time to do this? I need the right time, the right day. When is my astrology perfect?” Forget it! If you want to know about timing, right now is our timing. The time for hearing, contemplating, and meditating—that time is right now. The time for acting against our own habits and our own negativity—that time is right now. The time to be humble rather than proud—that time is right now.

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~Translated and edited by Shashi Reitz~*

When I say “hearing, contemplating, and meditating,” you have to start at the beginning with hearing. You see people who say, “Oh, I am a practitioner! I am a meditator!” Meditation doesn’t mean spacing out, okay? If you are spacing out and calling it meditation, you are never going to tame your own mind. You are never going to tame the mind of any other being either. Actually, we haven’t really arrived at the stage of meditation. We say “hearing, contemplating, and meditating,” but we haven’t really gotten to the meditating part yet. Why? Because we don’t have certainty. You hear and contemplate the dharma so that you come to certainty, and then you have something to meditate on. Otherwise, there is nothing to meditate on.

So please, start with where you really are, start at your own level, which is hearing the dharma, studying the dharma, chewing the dharma. Simple, stupid, tiny things—that is where we need to start. Be humble, shut up, put up with your own things, put up with your own practice.

We can start by looking in the ten directions, and we will see what is happening in samsara. We can look in our own minds and see our five poisons happening. Right now, our lineage is the lineage of ordinary stupidity, so we are rich with the five poisons. That is why we have to turn to the wisdom lineage gurus. We can see for ourselves that our worldly lineage is a complete failure; therefore, we have to turn to the immaculate lineage of the buddhas.

And we need to know that we do have that pure lineage, too. Right now, we don’t know it, but we do have it. If you don’t think you have that pure lineage as well as your ordinary habitual impure lineage, then ask the Dalai Lama. If anyone can tell you about pure lineage, he can. If you hear, contemplate, and meditate properly and authentically and in a heartfelt way, it doesn’t matter if you’re practicing the lineage of the Foundational Vehicle, the Great Vehicle, or the Vajra Vehicle. If you find any pure lineage, if you have a connection with a pure lineage, then keep that. I say then you have something really worth keeping.

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If you are practicing the Foundational Vehicle and then you move to practicing the Great Vehicle, you are not abandoning the Foundational Vehicle. Make no mistake—when you practice the Great Vehicle, it is not because you have given up the Foundational Vehicle and have become superior to it. It is that the Great Vehicle takes the Foundational Vehicle as its basis and then improves upon it: It uplifts it, it expands upon its wisdom, and brings to blossom even more, greater qualities. Then the shift from the Great Vehicle to the Vajra Vehicle is the same—you still need the foundation. So always keep that. You will always need your foundational understanding. That is what will bring you to true realization.

Right now, you are actually surrounded by gold. You are surrounded by diamonds. But you don't pick any up. That is so shameful. That is really your fault. You always want to say that everything is everyone else's fault, but this is your fault. You don't pick up the gold of your buddhanature that you are lying in the midst of, really wallowing in the middle of it, all of the time. Gold or diamonds, or whatever you want to call it, you are always surrounded by riches and you refuse to pick up even a single piece. Sometimes our merit is very strong—*almost* strong enough!—and we pick up one little piece, like we get one little bite of food. Here we are at a vast banquet and very, very occasionally we have the merit to pick up one little morsel of food. And we get it halfway to our lips...and then we throw it in the trash again because we don't quite have the merit to really take it in and chew it and digest it. That is like us relating to the dharma. That is how tenuous our connection to the dharma is. If we recognized how precious the dharma is, we would see that it is like this great banquet for someone who is starving, and we would devour it as fast as we could, every minute of every day, and that would surely put us on the path of bringing about our own greatest benefit and the benefit of others.

~ teaching continues in Part 17...