

~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 9

Freedom, Faith, and Pilgrimage

There is a lot of talk about how Tibet should be free, freedom for Tibet, everyone should fight to make Tibet free. Actually, you might completely disagree with my mouth, but really if you want to know what I think, I think that right now with the Dalai Lama and great lamas teaching and the dharma flourishing in India, I think there is a lot of freedom for Tibetans. They have freedom in India and in Tibet, too. Now there is more and more freedom to practice in the monasteries and again to rebuild them, and to rebuild statues and reprint texts, and so forth. Teachings and practices are beginning to be able to happen there again. But in India, too—in India anyone can practice, anyone can learn, right there in the place of Buddha Shakyamuni's birth and enlightenment. That is Guru Rinpoche's birth place, the home of great mahasiddhas, such extraordinary practitioners, the scholars of Nalanda University, how many thousands and thousands of extremely amazing scholars—*that* place, you are able to go to that place, the source of dharma. You can practice and study dharma in the place that is the source of dharma! What greater freedom could there be? I think that is real freedom. And lots of people are not going to like me saying that and are going to want to shut my mouth, but you're not here, hahaha!

If we have faith, then actually it is the same everywhere. It is not just in India. Of course, there is a special blessing in India, but it is not just India. Look at any place where the dharma has started to take root—where the great masters have come and left their blessings and those blessings have caught hold—there is a little toehold. That is a place that is also a

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sacred site to be visited, a place that is worthy to make pilgrimage to. Tashi Chöling is such a place. It is not just an ordinary place, not just ordinary land, not just an ordinary building. Really what makes it extraordinary is not the building itself, or the statues, or any of that kind of thing. What makes it extraordinary is that it is a place where people can go and practice dharma and study dharma; where people can go and learn the authentic, proper way to purify their obscurations. That makes it a site worthy of pilgrimage; that makes it a true place of dharma even more than its statues, stupas, and books.

~ teaching continues in Part 10...