

~From the Archives of Teachings by Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche~

SEEING OUR OWN SITUATION CLEARLY

Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche gave this teaching as his parting advice at the end of his visit to Osel Nyingpo dharma center in Ojai, California, January 2010.

Part 13

What We Choose Not to See

When doing Vajrasattva practice for purification, we must see both the necessity of practicing on Vajrasattva and what makes that practice effective. By recognizing our own negativity, we will feel that purification practice is both urgent and critical. Knowing something of Vajrasattva's qualities and purificatory power, we will have confidence that his practice will be a powerful, effective method. In fact, the qualities of Vajrasattva—which we are trying to bring forth in ourselves through his practice—are qualities that we already possess. We need to recognize them. But instead, we ignore them.

We need to recognize what we are trying to eliminate with the practice: our negativity. We do know our own negativity. We are not stupid. But we choose not to see. We don't seriously consider either the qualities of the deity or the detrimental nature of our five poisons. We exist in a kind of numbness.

If you don't examine our state too carefully, it looks okay. On the one hand, we aren't free of suffering or fear. But we aren't the lowest or most terrified of beings, either. The result is that we let the numbness continue.

In the dullness of our complacency, we don't search earnestly or scrutinize our situation carefully. We don't examine and digest things thoroughly. Therefore, we never make ourselves confront the enormity of our predicament. We never force ourselves to look at the evil wrought by our five poisons.

Refusing to admit we are afflicted, we deny ourselves the cure. It is only by recognizing the harm of the disease that we are willing to submit to the doctor's instructions: don't do this, don't eat that, wash your hands.

Without realizing that we are ill, or without knowing that disease causes harm and suffering, we have no reason to inconvenience ourselves so. In that case, we don't care too

much what the doctor says. We just think we are some big hero, and congratulate ourselves on being smart enough to disobey the doctor's orders. Such a person will have no idea how or when or if to take medicine. They will have no notion of medicine's usefulness, effectiveness, or value. We are each like this.

Thus, it is absolutely crucial to know the purpose and benefit of the dharma, how it benefits ourselves and how it benefits others. Study and reflect on these points carefully.

~ teaching continues in Part 14...