

~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 15

A Place to Practice

As a sangha, help each other—gather the qualities and wisdom that you have collectively. What qualities or knowledge you have, humbly share them with each other.

You have an American tradition of needing a house where you can meet. I just come from a beggar's lineage, so I don't necessarily have this tradition—sometimes everybody just camped in tents. But here in your situation, you need a building. Therefore, to help yourselves develop as a sangha, please help this old lady, Sondra.¹ Old ladies talk a lot, because that is their nature, but how can you get angry at them? If you get angry, you are showing your own fault. But we never want to see our own faults.

We want to blame someone else because we are upset. We are so reluctant to look at our own faults and errors, but when it comes to seeing faults in others, we have endless diligence and enthusiasm! Think about that. We want to think that we ourselves are pure, like flawless crystal. And if we ever accidentally stumble across any faults in ourselves, we rush to cover them up.

If you are beautiful, you check yourself in the mirror to see if anything is out of place. Likewise, we can check ourselves in the mirror of the teachings, such as the instructions on practicing the six perfections, and by hearing and contemplating and looking within we will see if we have faults. Please do this, exactly. Then your practice will grow and improve.

¹ Sondra Bennett, Rinpoche's longtime and very devout student, who established Osel Nyingpo Dharma Center and hosted it in her house for many years. Although Rinpoche was decades her senior, he affectionately called her "Grandma" and "old lady."

Look for yourself at the supports for practice that you have—if you want to accomplish virtue, you need a place to do it. If you want to practice, you do need a practice place of some kind. All over America we can see this—each group or church or university has its place to gather and study or pray or whatever. You aren't a large organization or a megachurch, you just need a place to come together and practice. This old lady has provided that place, she has been able to do that thus far, but she might not be able to much longer. Think about that, and help her as much as you can.

Then, if she does lose this house, are you all going to give up? No. Don't give up your dharma. Study, contemplate, and meditate on the teachings as much as you can. As Buddhists, you are trying to accumulate virtue. To give up is non-virtue. If you just drop all your dharma, then at the time of your death what are you going to do? If you want to drop something, drop your finger-pointing, gossiping, and blaming others.

And if someone else does give up, don't be angry with them. Let it go.

If you recognize what is virtue and non-virtue, then please act as I am explaining here. Considering I am a funky old guy with no qualities, if I don't give up but you do, how embarrassing for you! Really, that would be humiliating!

You have also said that I am precious or important to you, and, if that is the case, you won't want to embarrass yourself for that reason either.

~ teaching continues in Part 16...