

~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 16

#### Do You Need a Dharma Center?

Therefore, help this old lady however you are able to. Right now, you have a place to hear, contemplate, and meditate on the dharma. So, use it! Come and work and participate here as much as you can, for everything you do in support of this dharma center is a way to purify your obscurations and accumulate merit. This place is a place for dharma, and, if we look within our minds, we will see that we are filled with negativity, and therefore we need as much dharma as we can get.

The lamas gave us dharma centers, not for their own glorification but as a place for us, their students, to do our work of dharma. The whole center and the activities associated with it are, therefore, so many skillful methods by which we can accumulate merit and purify our obscurations.

We can look within our own minds and see if we need these things—do we need to gather merit? Do we have negativity that needs to be purified? Don't take my word for it; I can't see what is in your mind. But you do know yourself. If you look and see that you do indeed need to tame your mind, then having a dharma center is a wonderful support for that, and all the work you do at it and for it will bring about purification and the gathering of merit.

However, usually we don't think this way. Usually we ignore the inner work that we need to do, and we treat the dharma center as an ordinary place and the work we do there as ordinary work. Approaching dharma as ordinary, we whine and complain and run our normal samsaric trips and ruin whatever merit we are creating!

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~Translated and edited by Shashi Reitz~*

Just come and practice nicely and work humbly with everyone, and at the end dedicate all your virtue to all beings. Every time you are able to come here or participate in some way, recognize that this isn't a favor you are doing for someone else, this is an opportunity for you to practice dharma. That is how we are meant to interact with the dharma center. That is what all the great lamas intended this place to be used for when they established and blessed it so many times. But instead, we get caught up in our ordinary complaining mindset, thinking, "I am working so hard! I am so special! I am so self-sacrificing for the center! I do so much more than he does or she does! They don't appreciate me!" Alternately congratulating ourselves and whining like this, we destroy what good we have done.

With regard to others, also, we are always wanting to blame them. We say it is his fault or her fault. Really this is one of our strongest habits. One of our solid American traditions. I think that of the more than 200 centers started by the Karmapa, almost all of them have gone down under the weight of "his fault, her fault." Really it was each person's own fault, for not understanding what a dharma center is and what amazing potential for virtue it holds. It was because each person didn't have the merit, that is why those dharma centers fell apart. But we have the opportunity to make that kind of merit here. We need to recognize and use it as our opportunity, to care for it, support it, and look after it as much as we can.

The dharma center is not just one or two people's responsibility. It is not just one or two people's job. It is anyone's job who needs to purify their own negativity, who needs to accumulate merit, who recognizes that the dharma is precious. There isn't a certain group that is 'the sangha.' We don't need to think, "I am not part of that sangha. I don't belong there. It is not my center."

That is a mistaken and destructive way to think. Enough with our own trips. Enough with being wishy-washy. Enough with making excuses for yourself like "It's not my dharma center" to justify why you won't purify your own negativity. Enough with being bossy and thinking that you are the leader of the world. Just come and be harmonious and then the

dharma center will thrive and the lamas will come. If the sangha strengthens and expands, you can invite lamas and translators to come and teach here more and more.

*~ teaching continues in Part 17...*