

~From the Archives of Teachings by Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche~

The Powerful Practice of Patience

A teaching given after tsog practice on September 15, 2010.

Part 2

Patience and Awareness of Impermanence

Right now, you do know some dharma and how to practice. You still have an opportunity. As you get older like me, all your faculties will decline. Not only will you forget things, but everything about you will deteriorate. You will not have the capacity to sustain an awareness of dharma.

In fact, everything—not just your youth and mental clarity—is impermanent. Just look at the flowers, the fruit, all the forms you see. We don't even have to teach about impermanence because everybody can see it, all around us!

We can take our great teachers as examples of impermanence, too. My root teachers have all passed away. The Sixteenth Karmapa, Dudjom Rinpoche, Penor Rinpoche, my good friend Khenpo Palden Sherab—many, many lamas have passed, and in the future there will come a time when not even their names are remembered. Look at Guru Rinpoche, his twenty-five principal disciples, all the great tertons of the past. Where did they go?

Look at your life. You have food and shelter, some wealth. You have what you need right now, and you have dharma. Now what?

You see impermanence. All those things, those wonderful circumstances, your opportunity—they are all temporary.

If you need a medicine for impermanence, what can help you? Dharma.

And right now, you know some dharma. Due to your previous accumulation of merit and wisdom and purification of negativity, you have met with amazing lamas.

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~Translated and edited by Shashi Reitz~*

Though it is impermanent, right now you still have an opportunity.

So, practice patience. That is how to make the best use of this opportunity, this moment, this breath you have before impermanence snatches it all away. Practice patience, and don't go after the eight worldly concerns. This is so important.

If you don't benefit yourself by practicing dharma, there's no way you will benefit others.

Do you think it's only us who need to practice patience?

Actually, any lama, from the highest realized being on down, needs patience if they are going to come into this world, into any of these realms of suffering, and benefit beings.

We must first accomplish dharma if we wish to benefit others.

If we don't accomplish dharma ourselves, we will be overcome by distractions, such as having strange thoughts—maybe even about our own teachers. Lots of obstacles will come.

