

~From the Archives of Teachings by Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche~

Relating Skillfully to
Our Lamas, Our Dharma Centers, and Our Own Habits
Spontaneous Teaching on January 3rd, 2013 in Half Moon Bay, California.

Part 5

Building Merit and Performing Tulku Activity

The Guru Rinpoche statue in Canada, the one at Tashi Chöling, and all the various statues, stupas, and other sacred objects that have been built, whether they belong to outer, inner, or secret categories: When you build these, you build your merit.

That merit is precious. Don't waste it! Only with the power of merit can you free yourself from obstacles, have a long life and good health, take birth in a body that gives you the chance to practice dharma, and in your future lives be able to practice more and more until you become enlightened. I am not saying it is only the opportunity for these Kama empowerments we have been talking about that is precious in terms of creating merit! We have many chances. If you give me one billion dollars or one penny, either way I am happy; but better than either one—best of all, in fact—is to do this: Take your opportunities to make merit.

As I always say, these are not my ideas. All the lamas say not to waste your merit. Long life, wealth, dharma, and worldly success—all the paths, both worldly and spiritual, need merit. Therefore, we need to accumulate virtue and eliminate obscurations.

That is why we need to save the lives of beings—it benefits them and it benefits us at the same time, making merit. But we don't need to help just some of them but not others. It must be equal.

If we want our own body to be free of illness, we need to protect others from harm. If we want vast merit, we need to have vast compassion. The lamas explain what the results of such things are.

Lamas are vast in their compassion; therefore, their presence can benefit a whole country, a whole land. That is the incredible strength of compassion, if we choose to make it like that.

If you want to benefit yourself or others, you need to go for refuge and you need to generate bodhicitta, just as all the masters of the past have done, working for others and ultimately attaining enlightenment. For sentient beings' benefit alone, inconceivable peaceful, enriching, powerful, and wrathful manifestations have appeared. For incalculable eons, the tulkus and bodhisattvas all have come only for that same, single purpose. That is why they have that name, tulku, “enlightened body of emanation”—because they have that job, to emanate for the benefit of beings.

Tulkus don't have to be sparkling. But they do have to have sentient beings as their one-pointed focus, beings' benefit as their sole purpose. As you accumulate merit and purify obscurations, then slowly that becomes your purpose, too. If you are working for the dharma and for sentient beings, then that is tulku activity. There is no question. Other things called 'tulku,' I don't know.

~ teaching concludes in Part 6...