

## *On Holding Our Precious Lineages*

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I heard that all the nuns at Tashi Choling are trying to help each other learn. That is exactly the right way! In their kindness they are holding the lineage. Everybody should be doing that.

Wherever you go, and whether you are a monk or a nun or a layperson, still it is the same: you need to learn the dharma, you need to train in it, and then you need to teach and help others with what you have learned. That way, piece by piece you will understand it, yourself; piece by piece, you can share it with others. That is how you can benefit yourself, benefit others, benefit your center, benefit your dharma friends.

Those who have learned and trained in some dharma, everyone can learn from them. Don't be too shy, hiding, or uptight, stingy, refusing to share what you know. Dharma is not uptight.

Dharma is not gossip or slander, either. Dharma is also not just for play, like a children's playground. Particularly Vajrayana, and these lineages of Dudjom Rinpoche, Penor Rinpoche, Yangthang Rinpoche, and other high lamas—these are very heavy, not for play. You have met such great teachers, you have received such great teachings, therefore don't forget your responsibility.

What you learned, what you received—don't throw that away. If we just throw it away, then the dharma came to the West for no reason. Then so many lamas tried to help us and establish the teachings here, for no reason. No reason for so many people to have struggled for so many years for the dharma—myself and Sangye, but not only us, so many people, and now generation to generation, people trying and trying. So many people have helped, but the dharma belongs to no one or even one group of many people together. The dharma belongs to everybody, and not only now but in the future, for generations to come.

Particularly in this time we have the treasure teachings, all the different kinds of *terma*—earth treasures and enlightened mind treasures, so many! How many lamas have come and given the empowerments, transmissions, and teachings for these lineages! You guys have everything! These are not just something insignificant or superficial. They are not just something made up yesterday. They are not short-term, just for today or tomorrow. They come from Kuntuzangpo, that is their source, and then to Vajradhara and Guru Rinpoche, and then to his disciples. Those are the kinds of amazing things you have. So everybody pray, learn, practice, and try sincerely. These practices are not some casual things for just hanging out.

In Tibet, we didn't know anything—we just heard someone beating the drum or blowing the horn, and sometimes everyone would make a big deal. We didn't have any understanding of sutra or tantra or the meaning. But what you guys got, you guys got everything, piece by piece. You got these amazing things, stage by stage. Now that you got it, that's not enough. You need to think about it. Think about it, and you can ask lamas about it. I'm talking about real, honest, trustworthy lamas, truthful high lamas or scholars, not just pretend ones. Real lamas, you can ask them about each piece: What is sutra? What is tantra? What is *terma*? What are earth

treasures? You can ask them many things. Check it out! You can learn it, piece by piece. If you look into it carefully and come to know it well, you will really see how amazing what you have received is. You will be amazed at what you have received and at what you can do because you have the empowerments and transmissions and everything perfectly, which means you can become a suitable vessel for these blessings.

Don't ignore this dharma, more precious than a jewel. This is Guru Rinpoche's essence. This is the blessing of Kuntuzangpo, Guru Rinpoche, and all the thousands of buddhas. If that's what you need, it is there! Don't forget them. Don't forget all the gurus, the yidams, the dakinis, the protectors. If you need any of their blessings or all of their blessings, this is the way.

You all know you have here lots of people—Sangye and Lama Chonam, Shashi, Ila, Ani Baba, and others. These days we have lots of people who can share their knowledge, so everybody can open up their eye to the positive, to the dharma, to the teachings, to understanding the meaning, to learning everything. So don't waste that! Wasting your precious life is equal to wasting the buddha. Same thing.

When you study the dharma, you can get the very life force of sutra and tantra. Sorry, you won't get a million dollars! A million dollars is sort of good but liberates nothing. And maybe just makes you more uptight.

Try, everybody! You do know what is important according to sutra, you can read the vinaya teachings, blah blah blah, they have so many things. Then in mahayana you can learn all about bodhicitta, and in mantrayana there are all the teachings on generation and completion stages and so forth. Look at how much you have! How much you can learn, more and more! I don't think there is anything beyond this. And the lamas you have met—there is absolutely nothing beyond them.

Don't ignore these—the lineage teachings and the lineage gurus. If you want to ignore something, it is better to ignore even yourself than to ignore them. To ignore those wisdom lineages, those teachings, those blessings, that would be too much. That would be going TOO far. That would be really crazy. In the past maybe you didn't know, maybe you didn't understand—maybe at that time you could ignore them or you could say something against them. But now you have everything—teachings and transmissions from all the schools, both sutra and tantra, outer and inner. Now you do know what you have.

And the transmissions you received—were they just some okey-dokey reading transmissions from some okey-dokey lama? No. You got complete empowerments and transmissions and instructions from inconceivable lineage masters, such as Dudjom Rinpoche, Penor Rinpoche, and Yangthang Rinpoche. They are not just superficial guys.

So first you need to appreciate what you got from these masters. Then you need to not only appreciate it but value it. What you got is beyond value, beyond some dollars or money. This is Kuntuzangpo: outerly, his body; innerly, his speech; secretly, his mind. Nirmanakaya, sambhogakaya, dharmakaya. That is what you got. Value that. Don't ignore it. Don't waste it. If you want to be liberated, you need to study it more. If you want to benefit sentient beings, same thing.

If you recognize and value what you got, then you won't make mistakes. You will recognize it is something profound—it is not like getting pieces of bread, it is like getting pieces of the three kayas. For example, if you don't recognize what you have, then you might think that because you learned some tsalung practice that meant you are qualified to have sex with anybody you want. No, no. That is not the tradition. That is not holding the lineage.

You have received the teachings. You have the opportunities to practice. If you ignore them, then for many lifetimes you will not be liberated. You think somebody else is going to do it? No. This time it is your own merit, the strength of your own virtue. That is why you got the teachings, and that is why you got the opportunity.

Keep harmony with your teaching; harmony when receiving empowerment, transmission, and instruction; harmony with your dharma sisters and brothers. Don't just see your dharma brothers and sisters as funky. That dharma you have with these brothers and sisters, it is hinayana, mahayana, and vajrayana, outer, inner, and secret—I guarantee you can't get it other places. Therefore, recognize its value—the value of the dharma, the value of your dharma family. Don't ignore it; don't waste it. These kinds of things we are talking about, if you waste them it is not like wasting other things. Other things, if you waste them, then maybe you lose a little bit of money. But if you waste these things, you will never be liberated.

If you don't respect your vajrayana sisters and brothers, then what are you going to respect? If you don't respect them, what happens? Samaya is broken. Why? You have received empowerments, transmissions, and instructions together. You have that kind of connection—not just something shallow, but quite heavy. Then if you are going to hang out and gossip about each other, and talk about which one is good in bed, or which one has money or power that you could maybe get—that breaks your samaya. Such things don't matter, anyway—money, diamonds, jewels. The real money is what you guys got, what you guys learned, piece by piece. That is your real richest essence. The real jewel is the terma. The real buddhas' essence is that. Amazing, that kind of thing you got. What you got, connection to those lineages, nobody can get anywhere! And now you only have it for a few seconds, and then you will lose it again.

So really don't waste it, okay? If you love me, don't waste. People tell me they love me so much! And then they say, "We love you...but we don't know anything!" No, no. Don't use that excuse.

We got really...amazing...shocking...lucky...merit! I swear to a thousand million buddhas! This dharma lineage is that precious. Therefore, don't ignore it. Appreciate it. When you see what you got, then you want to pay it back.

You want to be able to pay it back? Then learn more. Practice. Teach each other. Not wishy-washy way. Try, okay?

Good-bye!

*-Gyatral*

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