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Words of Advice

from [Kyabjé Chatral Rinpoche](#)

Namo gurubhyah!

Precious master of unrepayable kindness, Pema Ledrel Tsal,
Remain as the crown ornament on the top of my head, I pray!
Grant your blessings so that we may find freedom here and now
From all the sufferings of samsara and its lower realms!

Listen well, my dear disciples who are gathered here,
And whose hearts have not been spoiled, consider this.

The chances of finding a human existence are one in a hundred.
Now that you have found one, if you fail to practise the sublime Dharma,
How could you possibly expect to find such an opportunity again?
This is why it's crucial that you take advantage of your situation.
Conceiving of your body as a servant or a thing to ferry you about,
Don't allow it to rest in idleness for even just a single moment;
Use it well, spurring on your entire body, speech and mind to virtue.

You might spend your whole life pursuing only food and clothes,
With great effort and without regard for suffering or harmful deeds,
But when you die you can't take even a single thing—consider this well.
The clothing and alms needed to keep you alive are all you need.
You might dine on the finest meal of delicious meat and alcohol,
But it all turns into something impure the very next morning,
And there is nothing more to it all than that.
So be content with life-sustaining provisions and simple clothes,
And be a loser when it comes to food, clothing and conversation.

If you don't reflect on death and impermanence,
There'll be no way to practise Dharma purely,
Practice will remain an aspiration, one that is constantly postponed,
And you may feel regret the day that death comes, but by then it's too late!

There's no real happiness among any of the six classes,
But if we consider the sufferings of the three lower realms,
Then, when you feel upset just by hearing about them,
How will you possibly cope when you experience them directly?
Even the happiness and pleasures of the three upper realms
Are just like fine food that's been laced with poison—
Enjoyable at first, but in the long run a cause of ruin.

What's more, all these experiences of pleasure and pain,
Are not brought about by anyone besides yourself.
They are produced by your very own actions, good and bad.
Once you know this, it's crucial that you act accordingly,
Without confusing what should be adopted and abandoned.

It's far better to eliminate your doubts and misconceptions,



Chatral Rinpoche Series

By relying on the instructions of your own qualified teacher,
Than to receive many different teachings and never take them any further.

You might remain in a solitary place, physically isolated from the world,
Yet fail to let go of ordinary concerns, and, with attachment and aversion,
Seek to bring defeat upon your enemies while furthering the interests of your friends,
And involve yourself in all kinds of projects and financial dealings—
But there could hardly be anything worse than that at all.

If you lack the wealth of contentment in your mind,
You'll think you need all kinds of useless things,
And end up even worse than just an ordinary person,
Because you won't manage even a single session of practice.
So set your mind on freedom from the need for anything at all.
Wealth, success and status are all simply ways of attracting enemies and demons.
Pleasure-seeking practitioners who fail to turn their minds from this life's concerns
Sever their connection to the authentic Dharma.
So take care to avoid becoming stubbornly immune to the teachings.
Limit yourself to just a few activities and undertake them all with diligence.
Not allowing your mind to become fidgety and restless,
Make yourself comfortable on the seat in your retreat cabin,
This is the surest way to gain the riches of a Dharma practitioner.

You might remain sealed in strict retreat for months or even years,
But if you fail to make any progress in the state of your mind,
Later, when you tell everyone about all that you did over such a long time,
Aren't you just bragging about all the hardships and deprivation?
And all their praise and acknowledgements will only make you proud.

To bear mistreatment from our enemies is the best form of austerity,
But those who hate criticism and are attached to compliments,
Who take great pains to discover all the faults of others,
While failing to keep proper guard over their own mindstream,
And who are always irritable and short-tempered,
Are certain to bring breakages of samaya upon all their associates,
So rely constantly on mindfulness, vigilance and conscientiousness.

No matter where you stay—be it a busy place or a solitary retreat—
The only things that you need to conquer are mind's five poisons
And your own true enemies, the eight worldly concerns, nothing else,
Whether it is by avoiding, transforming, taking them as the path or looking into their very essence,
Whichever method is best suited to your own capacity.

There's no better sign of accomplishment than a disciplined mind,
This is true victory for the real warrior who carries no weapons.
When you practise the teachings of the sutras and tantras,
The altruistic bodhichitta of aspiration and application is crucial,
Because it lies at the very root of the Mahayana.
Just to have this is enough, but without it, all is lost.

These words of advice were spoken in the hidden grove of Padma,
In the place called Kunzang Chöling,
In the upper hermitage in a forest clearing,
By the old beggar Sangye Dorje.

May it be virtuous!

| Translated by Adam Pearcey, 2005

This translation was published in Chatral Rinpoche, *Compassionate Action*, Edited by Zach Larson, Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 2007

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