

Treasure Vase Talks
Lama Tharchin Rinpoche
Los Angeles, 1996 and 2005

The following was transcribed, compiled, and edited from two short talks given by Lama Tharchin Rinpoche in Los Angeles, one before teachings on April 21, 1996, and the other on April 3, 2005. Edited by Libby Luning with Bryan Scheideck, July 2023. You can view the original talks on video.

Before we start the teaching, I want to talk a little about our treasure vases. Some years ago, we were having a long drought in California. It hadn't rained for three years. I heard about this drought a lot. For example, in Santa Cruz where we lived, there wasn't enough water for people to shower more than once or twice a week. It was that level of drought.

I was reading in a text about Guru Rinpoche's prophecy, which said that during a future degenerate time, sentient beings would suffer from three major "dirukhas." I don't know where the word "dirukha" comes from. It's not Tibetan and it's not Sanskrit. A dirukha is something very bad. One dirukha is related to disease, previously unknown and for which there is no medicine or cure. When you get this "dirukha" level of disease, you are sure to die. The second dirukha is related to weapons. Normally, during fighting or war, there is a way to fight back. But in the "dirukha" case, there is no way to return fire. The third dirukha is related to extreme drought and subsequent starvation.

In this text, Guru Rinpoche described how to cure each type of suffering. In Tibetan Buddhism, we refer to the three realms: above the earth is the deva realm; on the earth is the human realm; and below the earth, in the water, is the naga (water serpent spirits) realm. These three realms are always interconnected. If there is something negative or out of balance in one realm, the other two realms experience this, too. When our environment becomes polluted and the elements become imbalanced, the energy of the devas and nagas weaken, contributing to unwanted circumstances and suffering in the human realm, as well. For instance, nagas are a source of wealth and related with water. So, if the naga realm becomes polluted and poor, the human realm will experience drought, which causes loss of crops and many problems, including starvation and death.

In this text, Guru Rinpoche gave instructions on how to heal pollution and imbalance in the three realms and described the treasure vase. Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche said if one makes a proper treasure vase, it would magnetize rain, wealth, and all kinds of positive qualities. I will say that because Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche taught me how to make them, our treasure vases are the best. Kyabje Rinpoche taught that if you want to do something, you should do it perfectly. If you can't do it perfectly, then it's better not to do it at all. That was his style. He was always so precise with everything. So, according to my capacity, I am following Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche's treasure vase instructions.

Guru Rinpoche described incredible substances that need to be collected for the treasure vase, and we are very fortunate to have all these amazing substances. I have *sa-chu-rilbu*, sacred pills that increase the essence of earth, from Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche, who gathered his collection of

substances from Dzongsar Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö, Jamgön Kongtrul Rinpoche, Chokgyur Lingpa, Mipham Rinpoche, and Mindroling Rinpoche, for instance. Plus, when Kyabje Dungse Thinley Norbu Rinpoche and my uncle Lama Sherab Rinpoche built one stupa in Bhutan sponsored by the king,¹ they collected incredible materials and substances. I had some of these and put them together with Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche's collection to create this wonderful combined collection.

Guru Rinpoche Padmasambhava's instructions in this text are very clear. We gathered many other substances according to his instructions, such as the life-essence support stones (*la-do*) of devas, nagas, humans, and dakinis, which were combined with yantras with specific mantras and images. We also collected soil, rocks, and water from many different holy places.

I collected many jewels and jewelry as well. When I asked, the sangha offered amazing jewels. I have a big mortar and pestle and put all the jewels in it and smashed them, mixing them with the other substances. I have one story. My friend Helmut has a very wonderful heart. But his speech... He's not shy. He will tell you what he thinks very directly. He gave me a ruby for the treasure vases that cost around \$20,000. I smashed it with all the jewels right in front of him. He said, "I gave you that much and you smashed it! What are you doing here?!" I said, "Your jewelry got the benefit; its quality is better now." I did that kind of thing for these treasure vases.

I also want to tell you how Guru Rinpoche's instruction works and how we should have faith. When we made the first treasure vases, to consecrate them our whole sangha did one week retreat with Orgyen Khandro Norlha, the wealth deity form of Guru Rinpoche. During that week, we got rain in California that continued. Right away, the power of these treasure vases was demonstrated. Of course, I have faith in Guru Rinpoche, but when this kind of thing happens, I have even more faith.

The text said that when all the work following the instructions is completed, the treasure vase has the power to magnetize healing. It heals the polluted environment and the realms of the devas and nagas. The essence of earth is drawn to a treasure vase with the power of Sa-yi Lhamo Tenma (Goddess of Earth), Changchub Sempa Sa-yi Nyingpo (Bodhicitta Essence of Earth), and so on, from a distance of 80,000 *par-tsey*, a Tibetan measurement for how far the sound of a conch travels. That's a long distance!

Therefore, it is very good to bury treasure vases in the water, a lake, or a spring to be of benefit for the nagas. You can bury treasure vases on the top of high mountains to benefit the local protectors and purify that entire area's environment. Treasure vases placed in your house or treasure room will increase wealth. If you put this holy object on your altar, it will increase the power of your offerings and practice. However they are used, treasure vases are incredibly wonderful.

You know, these treasure vases cost a lot for us to make too. We couldn't find some of the needed stones in America so I ordered them from Bhutan. For others, we sent people to Mexico

¹ Memorial Stupa, Thimpu, Bhutan (also known as the Thimpu Chöten); Envisioned by Thinley Norbu Rinpoche, constructed in 1974 to honor the third Druk Gyalpo (King of Bhutan); with Lama Sherab Rinpoche; consecrated by Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche

to find. There were many aspects like this. Following Guru Rinpoche's and Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche's detailed instructions precisely took a lot of energy and money, but we did it. The vases' proportions, measurements, color, design – everything was done by myself and it is all correct. The outer design, the inner contents, and the consecration of these treasure vases were all done perfectly.

Vajrayana Foundation is selling these treasure vases because it benefits in two ways. For you, when you pay for this kind of valuable item, you accumulate merit. And second, the money goes towards our retreat center in the Santa Cruz Mountains called Pema Ösel Ling. We have a hundred and two acres (in 1996 - now two hundred acres). We haven't paid for it yet. I have a lot of plans to build and bring enlightened energy to the earth. It's good for this country, good for people, good for the environment, good for all local beings, including non-human beings like devas, nagas, and so on. It's incredible. I'm an old man and life is impermanent. We never know how much we can complete, but I am making a wish. In Tibetan, we say our life may not last more than a single day, but we still make plans for a hundred years. We do that, but then impermanence comes!

The Chinese Communists said the Tibetan people had green brains, meaning very stubborn. For instance, our sangha thinks Pema Ösel Ling belongs to us. But from the green brain point of view, until it's paid for, this land does not really belong to us. Without this land, there is no foundation for all our plans. I have a plan to build a stupa and a temple and so on, but without having that firm foundation, I am not comfortable. I think about if something happened and we need to sell the land, would the buyer respect what we built or not? Everything is unpredictable. My green brain point of view is so stubborn, so the sangha is kind of worried and they are trying to pay off the land sooner. This treasure vase project is fundraising to help pay off the land. This land never belongs to any one person. It belongs to everyone. I named it Pema Ösel Ling, which is Padmasambhava's pureland. I dedicated the land toward two benefits: one, to those preserving Padmasambhava's teaching tradition and lineage, making it thicker; and two, to anyone who wants to develop inner peace, wisdom, and their buddha nature. For anyone who wants to do practice, to educate themselves in the dharma, and to do retreat, this land belongs to them.

In this way, you can think that we created a little lake here at Pema Ösel Ling in order to benefit others. You can add a drop of water to this lake. When your drop merges with the lake, then all our merit comes together. When our Dharma activities continue, your connection to them will also continue. This accumulation of merit removes temporary and long-term suffering, and brings both temporary and long-term happiness.

The treasure vase has this kind of meaning: first, the material itself; and beyond that, your pure motivation. When you purchase a treasure vase, make that kind of aspiration and dedication. Then that small amount of money used to buy a vase can accumulate incredible merit too. This depends on each person's motivation. Therefore, I am encouraging you. I am not pushing and asking you to buy more, but whatever you are able to buy, have this kind of motivation. Your motivation is worth more than your money. This is skillful means. If you combine a little money with a pure heart, the merit is inconceivable. It is beyond the amount of that money. Thank you.