

500,000 Heart Recitations
On Accumulating the Ngondro (Preliminary Practices)

Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche

April 21st, 2019

Rinpoche saw some photos of the Ngondro Accumulation Team in Ensenada doing prostrations and practicing. He sent them the following thank you:

Hey, Mexican sangha! I saw your picture, how you are all practicing. That is wonderful! It looks like you are really practicing sincerely, not just artificially for the pictures. Thank you for practicing that way, real practice.

You do have teachers to explain the meaning to you, and you do have places to practice and dharma brothers and sisters so you can all support each other. That is wonderful, the real meaning of sangha. Everyone should help each other, as much as you can.

Sometimes the younger people have more understanding than the older people. That's okay. You can listen to them, humbly, and benefit from what they know. If you are older but you don't know something, it is fine to learn from the younger ones. That is nothing embarrassing. Embarrassing is to pretend that you know something you don't, whether you are young or old.

Most important is for everyone to stay humble and support each other with respect and love and faith in the Three Jewels.

First, everyone receives teachings. Then you have to think about it. And practice a little bit. Then you get some meaning, just like tasting something, one tiny taste for the first time. Then maybe you ask questions. Then there is thinking about it more. Then practicing, continuously, just slowly, slowly, piece by piece. Then you get more and more of a taste. That way, step by step, the dharma comes into you, and you get more and more of the real taste. The more you taste, the more you trust. You don't have to keep asking—does the other side taste the same? The top? The bottom? Maybe in some other place it has a different taste? Instead you know from your own tongue that it is one trustable taste.

What is the benefit of bringing the dharma into your heart that way? Does it bring benefit like your breakfast or lunch, just temporarily satisfying your hunger? No. That dharma taste is not like the taste of breakfast or lunch. It brings benefit the long way—for your next life. For this life, your next life, for yourself, for others.

Through that kind of benefit, in your next life you don't need to go again into the six realms. Do you know about the six realms? If you don't know, you can read in so many books about ngondro. You need to know how you make your own six realms, what kind of karma creates each one. You need to recognize what is the reason you have to experience all those different kinds of phenomena, why you have to go through that. Is it because someone is punishing you? No. You created it, yourself. Does someone take you there, force you to go, kidnap you? No.

You take yourself. Your own karma. Your karma forces you. Nobody else. You can't point your finger anywhere except at your own karma!

So if you don't want to go to ugly, nasty, suffering places, then you need to purify. What do you need to purify? The causes for that. The causes are all your negativity of body, speech, and especially of mind. We have so much garbage! That is why we are born in such places. If we don't want to be born in a suffering area, then we need to practice. Through practice, we can clean up. We need to clean up our body, our speech, and particularly our nasty mind.

We *can* give up our non-virtue. Nobody is forcing us to hold onto that junk. Therefore, we need to do the ngondro.

So thank you, everybody, for practicing, doing your prostrations, each one. It is very good to complete the 500,000 ngondro accumulations; but even more than the numbers is your faith and your focus. If your mouth says 500,000 recitations, that's no big deal. Everybody loves to use their mouth all the time, so that's not so difficult, just a few days or whatever, like blah blah blah. But to accumulate 500,000 faith recitations, 500,000 focus recitations, 500,000 heart recitations, then that's really meaningful.

So please, continuously practice and consider what you are doing, don't forget your brain.

Myself, I am 94 years old, but I didn't study or practice nicely. Therefore, I'm sort of useless. I didn't do myself what I'm telling you to do. I had amazing teachers and received really inconceivable blessings and the highest teachings, but I cheated myself. I didn't really study or practice what I heard, so it was like my ears were blocked and there was no benefit. Don't be like me, please! After 94 years, I still have no qualities, and still I am stuck here in samsara. Now my chance is finished. But you are all young. You still have time, you still have strong bodies, and your minds are clear. You can do prostrations, you can recite everything perfectly without mistake, you can focus and learn and understand more and more deeply. More than a hundred billion dollars, what you have is precious. Your chance. Please don't waste. Thank you! It really makes me happy to see your pictures, everyone practicing together.

Tashi Delek!

-Gyatral