

~From the Archives of Teachings by Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche~

## TEACHINGS ON THE PRELIMINARY PRACTICES (NGÖNDRO)

*Rinpoche sent the following teaching for those gathered to do the preliminary practices (ngöndro) at Dorje Ling in Portland, Oregon, on May 12, 2013.*

### Part 10

#### The Best One: The Power of Faith

We all think, "I need the best! It's only the best for me, I need the best one!" OK, that's fine. Then I tell you the best one is faith. And the best one is compassion. We are always so self-centered. How long? How many eons have we been nothing but self-centered? And what did that get us? That just got us more samsara. You want to continue being self-centered, guess what? That will just get you more samsara. That's okay. You like samsara? You can stay there. Nobody's forcing you to leave.

If we practice the dharma, then that self-centeredness decreases—the three poisons decrease; our qualities increase. As our three poisons decrease, and especially as our self-centeredness decreases, genuine faith can emerge more and more in our minds. When our three poisons are quiet, then our mind can be filled with faith because it can be filled with appreciation for the qualities of enlightened body, speech, and mind.

When your mind is filled with faith, the blessings of the objects of faith—in this case we are talking about the blessings of the Buddha—are able to actually enter you. Without faith there is no way for the blessings to get in. There is no place for them to engage. This is why the qualities of Buddha's body, speech, and mind are described in all of the great teachings on ngöndro. They talk about the characteristics of the objects of faith. What are you taking as your objects of faith? What are the objects of refuge? Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Do you know what they are? If you do, then you know why you are taking them as your objects of refuge. If you don't, you can say, "I take refuge in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha,"

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~Translated and edited by Shashi Reitz~*

but what is your mind doing, and what good is it going to do you?

There are so many books and explanations out there. You are all rich with many, many books, and people love to buy books. I don't know if they like to read them, but they like to buy them. And sometimes they like reading them, but I don't know if they like to think about them. But you do have books, and so there really is no excuse. You have all of these books which explain the ngöndro practices and which explain the qualities of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, or the qualities of enlightened body, speech, and mind. So please hear teachings on these. Please read these books, since you have so many! Buy them, yes, that's good. That alone is virtuous. But even more virtuous is to read them, and more virtuous still is to think about what you are reading and not just blah, blah, blah all the time. So please think about Buddha's enlightened body and enlightened speech and enlightened mind. That will make your ngöndro practice more and more juicy, more and more powerful. Why? Because your faith will grow and deepen.

Then when you come here and you're sitting, reciting the ngöndro, you don't just have to think, "Oh, Clark<sup>1</sup> has such a wonderful voice!" Instead, you can think, "This is my moment to take refuge. This is my chance to take refuge in enlightened body, enlightened speech, and enlightened mind. This is my chance to purify my obscurations. This is my chance to accumulate merit." Then through the strength of that faith, your practice will be really meaningful and really powerful.

*~ teaching continues in Part 11...*

1 Clark Hansen—also known as Jampal (and whom Rinpoche nicknamed “Clock”)—Rinpoche's longtime and devoted student and the founder of Dorje Ling, would lead the chanting for the weekly ngöndro practices.