

~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 12

#### Respect and Disrespect

As you understand the qualities of the Buddha's body, speech, and mind more and more, you will be more and more drawn to coming to places like this—places of dharma. It doesn't have to be this place; but coming to places where there are supports of wisdom, and contributing something there, will become more and more delightful to you. Making an offering, or doing prostrations, or performing circumambulations: that is based on your understanding of the enlightened qualities.

It's not just because, "Oh, someone said let's go there, it's really nice." And it's not because, "Oh, someone said I have to come on Thursday and sweep the floor." It is because you understand this place is all about helping you to cultivate your own qualities of enlightened body, speech, and mind: helping you to purify your obscurations and accumulate merit. And so, everything you do in support of this place, or in relation to this place, helps you to do that. It's an opportunity to do that. As your appreciation of the Buddha's body, speech, and mind increases, so will your appreciation and respect for all of the manifestations of those—including stupas, statues, and books; dharma centers, malas, and texts; bells and vajras; and everything that's used in the ritual, and so on. As you understand the qualities of what they refer to and what they represent, you will treat those representations with greater and greater respect, and that will bring you greater and greater chances to accumulate virtue and purify negativity.

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~Translated and edited by Shashi Reitz~*

I'm not just saying respect the books. Of course everyone has to respect the books, any dharma texts, that's very important. It is very good these days. It used to be that people would jump over the books like anything, and these days they are putting them nicely on the shrine, or on a table, not putting them on the floor, not sitting on them, not leaving them in the bathroom, not wiping their butt with them. Really, it's much better than it used to be.

So, it's very good that you're learning how to respect the representations of the Three Jewels, but you shouldn't just respect the books. You also have to respect each other. And you might think, "Oh, I respect everyone. I'm a good person." But actually, mostly people really think, "I am higher than him" or "I am higher than her." And whenever you think that, you are actually being disrespectful. That is disrespect. That is cheating somebody. You think, "I am higher than him or her" — that is especially cheating yourself.

So many people think, "I am higher than the lama. He is on the throne, but I know more than him." That is a really good way to cheat yourself. Congratulations. No, you have to learn how to *respect* each other, and that means you have to see how everyone is the same, everyone is equal. There is not any reason that you should think you are more special than everyone else. Well, maybe you have a bigger ego. That could be, but I don't think that you should brag about it. I think you might want to be a little bit embarrassed instead of boasting, if that is your reason for being so special and that is the reason everyone should respect you more than everyone else.

*~ teaching continues in Part 13...*