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## 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 4

#### Blessings Right Away

Taking refuge in the Buddha's body, we begin to develop the qualities of the Buddha's own body in our body. Just slowly, slowly. Part of having faith—meaning understanding the power of the dharma—is understanding that the process is not only effective but that it starts working from the very beginning.

It's not like you start to have faith now, but you have to keep having faith for 1,000 years before it actually begins to do any good. It doesn't take a set amount of time.

You have to have faith this instant, right when you are practicing!

If you do, you generate merit this instant. That means you are purifying body, speech, and mind this instant. You don't have to wait a long time, like people sit and wait with their mouths open, waiting for something to happen. It's not like that. The instant you cultivate faith or loving kindness, in that instant you generate merit and you create the cause for future goodness, our future good fortune.

It is just like the minute your mind engages with negativity—such as hatred or desire or jealousy—in that instant you are creating the habit of those poisons and you are creating mental suffering for yourself merely by experiencing those poisons. If you act from them, you are creating the future negative results of those negative actions as well. The immediacy is the same, whether positive or negative.

As you take refuge in the qualities of Buddha's mind, those qualities simultaneously are being called forth from your own buddhanature. Then, as you take refuge in the Buddha's

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wisdom mind again and again, your own negativity and obscurations of mind will lessen and weaken further. They will come to rest or subside more and more. Gradually, the poisons will no longer have you under their power. You will no longer be at their beck and call and under their command 24/7. They will begin to loosen their hold over you.

Instead, there will be room in your mind for compassion and loving kindness. These will begin to slowly, slowly increase. You will notice this general trend or tendency of your thoughts: slightly more than before, when you get upset you also have space for a little compassion rather than just being angry. Or, slightly more than before, you have a little understanding like a little ground under your feet rather than just continuing to drown in the great roiling ocean of ignorance that we usually find ourselves in. That little understanding is actually the twofold omniscience of the buddhas beginning to make itself known in the tiniest way, like a tiny little sprout in your mind.

The reason it begins to happen right away and there isn't some long period of waiting before the blessings are able to start entering your mind is because the blessings entering your mind is dependent on your own faith, not upon the blessings taking a set amount of time. In samsara, many things can take a long time to happen, especially good things! This is not like that. This happens immediately. When you are having a moment of faith, then blessings can enter at that moment.

*~ teaching continues in Part 5...*