

~From the Archives of Teachings by Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche~

Foundations of Practice and Dharma Community

In March of 2009, Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche sent the following message to the dharma community of Dorje Ling in Portland, Oregon.

Part I

Motivation is Crucial

Are people coming to the center? Are they learning? Are they practicing? Are they learning about ngöndro, the preliminary practices? This is the most important one, to learn about ngöndro. This is the basis, the foundation for everything.

So how do we learn about ngöndro? You do have practice there at the center every week, and Clark¹ and other students who have studied a little bit and have been practicing for some years can explain the stages and some of the meaning. Clark does know these things, and he can share a little bit with everybody.

And also everyone, especially when studying ngöndro, should read *The Words of My Perfect Teacher*. It contains everything! Everything is in this book—the proper way to listen to teachings and receive the dharma, the stages of the ngöndro and their meaning, how to follow a teacher and the proper way to rely on and relate to one, and the motivation that one should always have during dharma practice.

This last is particularly crucial, in dharma and in everything that we do. The difference between doing something meaningful and wasting your time is your motivation. The difference between virtue and non-virtue is your motivation. In this book, you will find very clear explanations of what a correct motivation is and how to cultivate it. There are different kinds of motivation in Foundational Vehicle practice, on the Great Vehicle path, and when practicing and engaging in the Vajra Vehicle. But whatever vehicle we are practicing, it is

¹ Clark Hansen, Rinpoche's longtime and devoted student and the founder of Dorje Ling.

certain that there is a correct motivation to be understood, recognized, cultivated, and maintained.

If you are wondering what your motivation is, look in your own mind. We do know ourselves! If you are wondering what your motivation should be, you can look in *The Words of My Perfect Teacher*. Since we have our mind and we have this book, we don't have any excuse not to know what a proper motivation is ...and no excuse not to cultivate it, either!

It is only through a proper motivation that we can purify our obscurations, which is how we will make ourselves into fit vessels, or recipients, of the precious teachings—able to take them in and put them into practice.

Because this is the point: to put the teachings into practice! To bring them into our minds and hold them in our hearts, which is how they will be able to effect a profound change in our lives.

It is not enough just to hear them. People are always saying, “I heard such-and-such.” In fact, when people are gossiping, they always say, “Oh, did you hear? I heard blah blah blah...” and then create a lot of negativity with their stupid mouths. But in dharma it isn't enough to just hear or just talk about it with your mouth. “I heard” isn't enough. We need “I know,” “I understand,” “I realize.”

~ teaching continues in Part 2...