

~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 5

Planting the Seeds

If we practice these preliminaries wholeheartedly, bringing all of our creativity and energy and inner resources to bear, then we will not only be able to clear out the sticks and stones and pests from the farm of our mind, but naturally an inner fence will arise. This is just a metaphor that means that if we purify our negativity, it will not return, like having a good fence that keeps out the deer. Our bad habits and negative emotions and all non-virtuous thoughts will not arise, will not be able to harm us, if we eliminate them through correct practice.

In the ngöndro, truly understanding why and how to practice is our protection. It is like our protective fence or our armor—if we make everything that we do a dharma practice, then even things that arise that would seem to obstruct or harm our practice cannot affect us. If we see whatever comes to us, externally or in our arising thoughts, as an opportunity to practice, then how could any circumstance hinder that practice? This is the best protection, the best fence. Then we can plant seeds in the ground we have so carefully prepared, and they will be able to grow, blossom, and bear fruit.

So first we have to eliminate negativity; and then when we've cleared away all the “junk” and made sure it will stay away, then we can plant our seeds of merit and of wisdom here, on our own farm, in our own mind which is our own home.

We plant our seeds and then we have to care for them, water them and weed among them and fertilize them with horsey poops and chicken poops and all kinds of things, because then they say that you will get really good greens in the summer! You plant the seeds and

*This material is being made available as a free download by Vimala Treasures. © 2009, 2024 Vimala
~Translated and edited by Shashi Reitz~*

tend them, and then the shoots are so cute coming out of the ground! But the shoots and greens and flowers and crops can only come if we have done the preparatory work.

So, in practice, if you really want to practice, then you need this foundation. Without it, then any practice that you do is just blah blah blah. No matter how high a practice you say you are doing, it will just be hot air.

Like me—I am eighty-five years old, and I have gone through ngöndro many times: doing the prostrations as fast as I could, mumbling the verses, saying the Vajrasattva and Guru Yoga mantras while my mind was everywhere else, buzzing. Thus, I never really did the practice, just accumulated the numbers. Therefore, if you look at my farm, there are not only sticks and stones still in my field but snakes and tigers of the five poisons—everything is there! Not one sprout could grow! So don't be like me.

~ teaching continues in Part 6...