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## On Faith and Recognizing the Oneness Nature

*In April of 2013, Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche gave the following spontaneous teaching privately while at Tashi Chöling Center for Buddhist Studies, near Ashland, Oregon.*

### Part I

#### Faith and the Oneness Nature of the Objects of Refuge

These days, American Buddhism is hippie style, wishy-washy, up-and-down because we didn't read the teachings well. We didn't understand.

If you don't read and understand, how can you develop faith?

In that case, there's no reason to have faith, of course.

If somebody gives you a stone and tells you "this is so special," so what? At that point, to you it's just a rock. But if you examine the rock for yourself to see what it really is, maybe even using machines to test it, then you can come to your own conclusion if it is just an ordinary rock or something special. If your investigations start to reveal some special qualities, if you start to think maybe it could be a precious metal, then naturally you have more and more interest in it and want to check even further. If you are finally convinced by your own examination that it is gold, then of course you value that rock. Then you think that it's really precious, not because someone told you it is but because you saw its qualities for yourself. It's the same thing with faith and interest in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.

Actually, one way you only need Buddha, not the others. The so-called 'Three' Jewels, really they are all the Buddha: his body, speech, and mind.

If we understand all the objects of refuge are those inseparable three—wisdom body, speech, and mind—then as we go into each detail of those more and more deeply, we don't have to get more and more spread out, in our confusion crazily mistaking each quality as separate.

If you think everything is spread out and isolated, even if you know a little something

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~Translated and edited by Shashi Reitz~*

about the objects of refuge it's just pretend understanding, wishy-washy. Your mouth maybe sounds good, but your mind is artificially spread out, putting each thing in a different corner. Then Buddha becomes shallow because you are chasing just his body, just his speech, or just his mind as if they were unconnected.

Actually, if you know one tiny hair tip of the refuge objects, the whole thing is there.

Who possesses that, those all-pervasive, all-encompassing qualities?

We possess that, if we understand.

If enlightened body, speech, and mind all become dust, then each tiny speck of that dust possesses everything.

If you understand the Buddha's body, speech, and mind—the Three Jewels—more and more, then like slowly coming to see that an ordinary-seeming rock is actually precious gold, they become more and more valuable in your eyes. Then you have more trust, more interest in them.

That is how we get more faith—realizing for ourselves this rock is not plain rock. It's gold.

*~ teaching continues in Part 2...*