

Message on the Last Day of the Ngondro Retreat

Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche

June 21st, 2015

This is a great group of ngondro students! Thank you. It has been a wonderful retreat, and I am very happy with how you all have been practicing.

This year in particular, Tashi Choling is a great success in terms of really accomplishing something meaningful. What is meaningful? People are listening to the dharma, but not just throwing it away after they listen once. They are contemplating it, and they are meditating upon it. People are really engaging by carefully considering and applying what they hear. This is quite amazing. This is what will please all of our root gurus and fulfill their enlightened wisdom intent for this place. For this, I say thank you very much!

In ngondro, you learn that you have a precious human rebirth. Then, you learn how to avoid wasting this human opportunity. You learn how to extract its essence by wholeheartedly practicing the preliminaries and bringing the dharma into your heart.

If someone motivated by the eight worldly concerns worked very hard and became the president of America, or even the president of the whole world, what would be the result? Although he might have a high status for a while, his actions would just be the causes for lower rebirth. Because he was acting through ignorance, attachment, and aversion, he would simply waste his position and influence. He would waste his wealth, his energy – and even his family, children, and friends – due to his incorrect motivation.

In contrast, this ngondro practice is the cause for achieving the state of liberation. Not just our own liberation, but all beings' liberation. With the ngondro, we can use the high status and wealth of a precious human rebirth to create our own and others' ultimate benefit. Just read the teachings to find out if what I say is true.

You guys are listening to the dharma. You are taking the essence of what you have heard and contemplating it. You are taking the essence of what you have contemplated and meditating upon it. Thank you so much. Please maintain this continuously in the future. Don't just do it this one time!

In ngondro, there are so many different topics. You learn about this and that, and you have to visualize and recite and meditate on so many different things. But what is the essence of ngondro? The essence is that we must accomplish virtue and give up nonvirtue. Everyone, please learn the difference between virtue and nonvirtue and how to accept and reject the actions which create them. All of the lamas teach this, so we have no excuse not to learn and practice it from now on.

And finally, it is important to understand that whatever work you do here at Tashi Choling is not something ordinary at all. Everything you do to support the temple and grounds is accumulating vast merit and wisdom and purifying vast obscurations. Even if you had a million dollars, you couldn't buy the benefit and virtue that you get from working here. Even if you were the American president, you wouldn't be able to gain virtue and benefit like this. Please remember that.

Thank you, everyone,

-Gyatrul