



## Dolpo Tulku Rinpoche Teachings

### Contentment

I want to mainly mention two points, which can lead us to contentment.

1) Being satisfied with what we have - I think, first of all it is very important to be satisfied with whatever we have. Most of us are never satisfied, no matter what. We think we have too little, the quality isn't good enough and so on. This way of thinking can be very strong. If we buy some clothes today, then already a few days later we are looking at something new, something we deem to be better. Then we want to have that, forgetting about what we bought just recently. Of course this doesn't only apply to clothes, but to anything we can experience through our senses, like taste, smell, touch, hearing and seeing. We mostly operate from a point of not having enough, so we want more and more. Therefore, we definitely need some way of bringing about contentment with what we already have by using our intelligence for everything in our lives. This includes all areas of our lives – be it our knowledge, experience, abilities, work, living environment, friends etc.

But what is the main obstacle to contentment? It is not seeing the positive aspects of what we have. We don't see what is good about our friends, our lives, our possessions. We need to train ourselves in acknowledging these positive aspects, even if it means making some effort. This will naturally lead to increased contentment.

The Buddha said that even water can be experienced in a variety of ways. Some beings experience water as if it were pus or blood due to their karmic imprints. If these karmic imprints get gradually purified, they will experience it as water, the way we do as humans and, eventually, as nectar.

An example I like to use is that of a mug. If we look for faults in it, we can find plenty. We might not like the shape or the fact that it only has two colors and no more, we might think it to be too big or too small etc. Then of course, the mug will not be satisfactory from our point of view. But if we turn our mind around and change our way of thinking, we can experience it completely differently. For example, we can think that

is good for having just those two colors, matching well together. Then slowly, the mug will appear fine to us, even though the object itself hasn't changed. In the same way, we can look at everything in our lives and see what we can appreciate about it. Then our whole life will change for the better.

2) Reducing our wishes - The Buddha actually advised us to reduce our wishes. We are all witness to the workings of our minds. If we have one thing, we want two. If we have the two, we want three and so on. Even when we have a hundred thousand things, we want a million. Even the world richest person might not be satisfied and goes through all sorts of difficulties to make more and more money. Knowing contentment he would be happy and relaxed. Looking for more he will be agitated and unhappy. So it's ironic that we look for happiness through acquiring more while, actually, this hunt for more makes us unhappy in the first place. We have no idea what really makes us happy.

I heard that there are laws here (in Germany) that regulate the working day to no more than eight hours. I think this is great. Without this kind of law, we would have at least twice as many cases of burn out. At least the law can then put some kind of limits on our work, if we are not able to do it ourselves. This helps us to find some space in our lives. I have great respect for the Christian religion and I especially appreciate the idea of there being a Sunday, on which we should rest. Without a compulsory day of rest or even a weekend, we might never get any day off unless we fall sick. Of course, you might think now: 'Oh, this is just a lazy monk hanging around a monastery', but if I could actually start a religion, I would compose the week of four working days and three free days. But unfortunately I can't do that. Think about it, why do we work? We work to support our lives, but nowadays we live our lives to work. If we had three days off, we could work in order to be able to enjoy these three days fully. So that's my thought.

Ultimately, it is important to reduce our desires. That doesn't mean to give up our jobs and hang around all day or to lead the life of a beggar. What it means is to clearly acknowledge our needs and limits in terms of experience, knowledge and abilities, and act according to them, and not to foster limitless wishes and wants.

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