



## Dolpo Tulku Rinpoche · Teachings

### How to use Dharma in every day life

It doesn't matter if we just listen to the Dharma or meditate. If we do something connected with Dharma, we should do that with the motivation or with the thought of benefiting all sentient beings. It should be deeply connected with our heart, this listening or meditation, and should be done for the welfare of all sentient beings. This is the altruistic motivation with which we should also listen today. If we listen to the Dharma or one practices just for one's own welfare, then it'll just lead to suffering. If Dharma is practiced with the motivation for only one's own welfare, then it is still a rope, that ties our hands. This rope maybe made of gold and we might think it is better than any other way of tying our hands. But it doesn't matter, if the rope is made our of gold or out of an ordinary material, it binds us and doesn't allow us to move and eventually will lead us to suffering. Therefore we should practice Dharma with the thought of benefiting others and with an altruistic mind.

Now Tulku will explain briefly what the word 'Chö', what Dharma actually means. The word ' Chö' in Tibetan means to change, to repair, to turn around. What is to be turned around? What has to be changed are the negative states of mind, that we have like attachment, anger, jealousy. All this we are to change through Dharma. The practice of Dharma is a method to obtain wisdom, compassion, love and other positive states of mind. Sometimes we think, we practice Dharma when we go to a temple or a monastery. Then we turn towards the Dharma, then we practice the Dharma. But when we are at home with our families, when we are at work or do something else, we have the feeling we are not practicing the Dharma. To think that we can only practice the Dharma in a temple, a Dharma centre or in a monastery, but not in other parts of our life, is a big mistake. The

most important point is to integrate the Dharma in our every day life. That Dharma permeates everything we do, influences our behavior in every way. There should be no borders like that's when I practice Dharma, and that's when I don't practice Dharma. We should have a pure mind and lead a dharmic life in all situations.

For example when we work in an office: There is an owner of the office or somebody who pays our wage, and we have a job to do in return. Our boss of course expects us that we do our job well, for which we get paid. We on the other hand take the money and therefore have the responsibility to do our work well. If we do a good job, not calculating to do as little as possible or trying to avoid what we have to do, then we have really earned our money, we can take it with a good conscience. If we work with a pure intention, we feel satisfied ourselves and our boss will also be happy. That is one way of practicing Dharma.

If we practice Dharma, we don't necessarily have to attach the word 'Buddhism' to it or act in a 'buddhist' way. It is more a natural attitude of acting with a pure mind in all situations in life. This can be practiced during childhood, through going to school and university and later in one's work place. Dharma is a pure, good behaviour in our motivation, in our place in society, in everything we do. It doesn't mean that we only do a certain practice in a temple using a bell or chanting mantras. That alone isn't Dharma, but our everyday behaviour grounded in a pure mind.

What do we have to change? We have to change our behaviour of body, speech and mind. Amongst them changing our mind is the most important one. If we turn our mind towards the Dharma, then it happens naturally, by itself. The most important thing is to watch one's own mind and to see how it works. We don't absolutely need to consult Buddhist texts or engage in philosophical studies. The most important thing is to watch ourselves and observe the different stages our mind goes through. We have to see how anger develops and what effects it has; how attachment develops and the effects it has; how ignorance develops and the effects it has. It is not the most important thing to read a text and then rely on it. The most important thing is to learn from our own experience. The essence or summary of the Buddha's teachings is that suffering comes from attachment to the self or that we are just concerned with our own well-being. All happiness and well-being comes from being concerned with the well-being of others.

How come that attachment to the self leads to suffering? It starts with identifying the 'I', meaning that we develop some sort of attachment and based on that sense of 'I', we identify people that are close to us as being 'my friends, my family, people that belong to me'. We have attachment towards them. Then on the other hand we develop aversion towards those who are our enemies or who have negative feelings towards us. Then in between these two extremes there are people that we have a neutral attitude towards, based on ignorance. These three emotional states are what leads to suffering. This way of having

attachments and aversions are what leads to problems and conflicts amongst families, friends and even countries.

Today there certainly also people here who have children, maybe more than one. Amongst these children there might be one that is especially self-centered, who just thinks about him- or herself and is easily upset. This child will have the most difficult position in the family. For example: A family has three dogs. One is locked away all the time, the next one is locked away during the day, but allowed to come out and play in the evenings and the last one can roam around freely. The difference between the three dogs is, that the one locked away is the most aggressive one and the one who is hardest to keep with the family. The next one is not as aggressive and can be handled more easily. The last one is the one that is the friendliest, the most relaxed one. It is the one that is easiest to keep with the family and the nicest one to play with. In the same way it depends a lot on our character how much suffering we experience through the way we act and we treat other people. This attachment to the self, this wish to gain some advantage for oneself, to be better off than others leads to problems between family members, countries - they are even the reason for the last two world wars. The reason is, that we think we should be better off and if others suffer through that, we don't care. Or maybe we even have the wish for others to suffer. But this is the reason for our own suffering that is what the attachment to the self entails.

This attitude that we should be better off than others or that we just work for our own gain can be observed in economics or in relationships between people, which are based on business. There it is clear that everyone is focused on their own profit and in this environment relationships that are based on love, compassion and a sense of companionship decline, because of the lack of time. One is so busy that there is hardly time to meet people, which one feels close to because of love like family and friends. One spends more time with people who one has work to do with, business partners and so on. Business relationships are valued more than relationships based on love and family.

When this business aspect becomes too important, it also has an effect on the environment. The people around oneself are not that important anymore, one neglects friends and family and they become less and less. And oneself becomes busier and busier and thinks only about business. That's what I have observed.

We can also observe that in our own minds. When we just think about ourselves, if we are only concerned with ourselves, we have negative emotions like jealousy and don't feel very well anymore. But if we spend time with people that we love, that we get on with well, then naturally the mind relaxes, we feel good and the attachment to the self gets less naturally.

Let's take the example of a scale. The more balanced the mind, the better we feel and the more happiness we experience. If the mind isn't balanced, but

moves up and down, changes quickly, then we don't feel well. What we need is a balanced mind. If we have that, then positive traits like wisdom can develop.

If we chase too much after external objects, we become dissatisfied and it is also very expensive. We must try and bring peace to our minds, be content with what we have. No matter what kind of mobile telephone we have, we should think that it has all the functions that we need, it doesn't need to do more than that. It's okay. Then we will feel peaceful naturally. We have to become aware of how our mind in constantly grasping at outer objects, always chases after them, how many problems this creates eventually and how expensive it becomes.

How to keep our mind from going everywhere without having any control over it, how to stabilize it - we can learn that. The most important are the teachings on Madhyamika or the Middle Way. To learn about awakening the mind of enlightenment you can read Shantideva's 'The Way of the Bodhisattva', then from Patrul Rinpoche 'The Words of my Perfect Teacher' and from Kongpo Lama Yeshe Tsöndrü 'The Gradual Way to Enlightenment'.

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