



## Dolpo Tulku Rinpoche Teachings

### Impermanence

Impermanence is a subject that we need to deal with and come to understand. Normally we think that everything will stay more or less the same as it is and that we will never die. This is how we go through the day – starting from the moment we wake up until we go to sleep. But if we examine things more closely, we can see easily that change is part of the nature of all phenomena. At times in our lives we are financially well off, and at other times we struggle. Sometimes we have a good position in our jobs, sometimes we do not. These changes are normal and can happen to anyone. But if we believe that something is permanent and it then changes, we will have great difficulty accepting the new situation and dealing with it properly.

Impermanence has many levels. There is subtle change, like the changes in the cells of our bodies, of which we are not conscious. Then there is coarse, perceptible change. One of the largest of these would be the formation and eventually the destruction of the Earth. This is the nature of things and in order to live in harmony with this reality, we need to understand and embrace it. In this regard there are three points that I want to discuss a little more deeply here: 1) the impermanence in our life as such; 2) the certainty of our death; 3) the uncertainty of the time of death.

1) That everything is impermanent may not be something we like, but if we reflect a little on it, this impermanence also entails a big chance for us. We have the ability to change. We can overcome our negative character traits and become better people. Our positive qualities can be enhanced. Were everything to stay the same, we would have no way to improve. When we are experiencing difficulties, we often feel that we are trapped in this situation and will never be happy again. This can lead to depression and even to the wish to commit suicide. But if we know that everything changes, it will be easier for us to search for ways to improve our situation.

2) Awareness of our own death helps us overcome the belief that we will live forever, a belief that breeds a very materialistic view. We work and focus our energies in order to secure our own seemingly unending lives. This does not leave much room for us to enjoy our life in the present moment. When we grow old, we realize that we wasted our

time with plans, preparations and the collecting of things. Therefore it is important to keep our mortality in mind, so that we can sustain our lives, but at the same time can enjoy it.

3) Finally we need to understand that the time of death is uncertain. This means that we do not have an infinite reservoir of time to do the things that are important to us. This helps us focus on what is dear to us without wasting time, thinking that we still have plenty of time left.

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