



Dolpo Tulku Rinpoche - Teachings

Intelligent Self-Care and Meditation

Teaching by Dolpo Tulku Rinpoche on Chapter 8 „Meditation“ of „The Way of the Bodhisattva - Bodhicaryavatara“ (Shantideva)

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Mahayana practice is all about how to be altruistic. That's the main practice.

Maitreya Buddha described very nicely what the Buddha's responsibility is, what the bodhisattvas' responsibilities are and what the aim of the Heareryana's practice is:

He said, Buddha's responsibility is to reveal the Dharmachakras¹ and to be the guide. The Bodhisattva's main responsibility is to engage in altruistic actions to help others. The followers of the Heareryana's aim is to liberate themselves from samsara.

That's why the Bodhisattva-Charyavatara is all about how to engage in altruism.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama very often says that Mahayana practice is also selfish, but in a very intelligent way. We all want to be happy and joyful. But there is a saying: 'You do something very happily yet you have to face the result crying.' Normally, we want to be happy and we want to generate happiness, but then we try to cheat others, we try to lie to others, we want to blame others. To achieve happiness, we commit harmful actions. That is not intelligent. His Holiness has this idea in mind: trying to engage in selfish actions is not intelligent. Our happiness is dependent on others. So, if you want to be happy, you should be nice to others. Then, you will also receive happiness.

When I speak with business people about religious and business affairs some of the businessmen state that they are aiming for perfect benefit. But others know how real benefit is achieved. Real benefit comes only by making the clients happy. They know it very well through their longtime experience. So, many CEOs give the guideline that the first priority is to make clients happy and to make sure there are no complaints. Especially nowadays the CEOs or those leading a business always focus on making their clients happy. Employees and workers without big responsibility most of the time don't think about

¹ Dharmachakras are a series of teachings that were given by Buddha Shakyamuni.

how to make clients happy. Those who are responsible for the whole company care much more about it. That's why they make sure the company workers are good with the clients. So this technique is really an intelligent way of arranging your own happiness.

I think His Holiness uses this phrase „intelligent way of being selfish“ because he is kind of tired of telling us we should engage in altruism without any expectations. In psychology and neurology the big topic is about learning about self love. So with this phrase the Dalai Lama found a very nice answer. But when he is teaching in the monastery, he never talks about the intelligent way of selfishness.

Here we read: DRO LA PÄN CHIR SANG GYE DRUB PAR SHOG (May I attain Buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings). For the benefit of other sentient beings we should attain Buddhahood. When the Dalai Lama teaches on this topic in public, he says the intelligent way of acting selfish, but when you really go into the practice, you shouldn't aim at anything, otherwise the business-minded attitude comes through again. In business theory, why do they want to see their clients happy? They will only care about their clients' happiness until they get benefit from them. From their point of view, if their clients cannot bring them any benefit, the respect and the caring will disappear.

The first step to provide yourself with happiness is by not harming others. And if you really want to care about your happiness, do it in an intelligent way. And that means help others also with the aim to be happy yourself. But the ultimate Bodhisattva practice is without any aim like His Holiness and the other teachers. We also have the experience when we sometimes do wonderful altruistic actions without any expectations. We don't aim to create good karma. We don't aim to make someone happy. We don't aim for anything. Like when we experience deep empathy, when we see someone in difficulties, it comes that we fearlessly do something for them without any expectation. At that time, when you think back, you will remember that you never lost your happiness. You were not aiming for it, but you received so much happiness while you were doing it. Ultimate Bodhisattva practice is never about giving up one's own happiness. Don't think that Bodhisattva practice doesn't also maintain your happiness and that you are doing things only for others.

Sometimes we think practicing altruism is not so easy. It costs so much energy, so much time, we think like that. But I tell you, when we feel that we are losing energy or losing time, that we are losing something while doing altruism, that means you are not fully dedicated. Very often while I was carrying out my responsibilities, I had the feeling it's so tiring, not always, but very often. Then I looked at this mental attitude. I asked how does it come about? For what reasons? I saw that it really comes when I have some wish for my own self.

At other times when you do very good things, without knowing it you feel happy and joyful. When you get happy and joyful you never feel that it was tiring or a waste of time. This is not from the teachings, this is human psychology. It is natural that when you are happy and joyful, you never feel you are losing time or losing energy.

When I was in Europe, I heard a lot of people say, that when they go to see their parents they are losing their time and energy. I give them this advice: You are offering in a month or per week, one or two days, even in one or two days you are offering only two or three hours. That time you just dedicate, don't bring your rules, don't bring your theory just be there and do what they want, what makes them feel happy, that's very important. Then you will never feel like losing time. I let some people intentionally do this practice and they have very good results.

So, we have finished chapter 7 on Diligence and are now on chapter 8 on Shamatha meditation. Meditation is general. Within the topic of meditation there are shamatha and vipassana meditation and here, the focus is mainly on shamatha meditation or calm abiding. This we have to know from the beginning of this chapter. Why do we need to know about calm abiding? Why should we bring our mind into one-pointedness? The main reason is that, when our mind is out of concentration we open the door to developing negative emotions. If you want to control your negative emotions, you need calm abiding, shamatha meditation. That's the main thing.

Now, I want to share my own understanding. In our experience, about how many subjects have we learnt something? In the end, I think when we learn, we understand 50% of what we learnt. Then of the 50% I think, 25% we forget and the rest maybe 25% we remember. But out of this, 25% to 50% are not so clear, so we know only 15%. But actually we were reading and listening, giving some effort for 100%. In the end, I think, the solid, fresh knowledge we gained is only 15%.

Why does this happen? It happens because, when I try to think or learn something, immediately the distractions pour in: my phone rings, my spiritual mobile (mala) needs attention, my samsaric mobile pings and all that. These objects' attractiveness don't help stabilise my knowledge and that's why it's always unbalanced. Shamatha meditation on the other hand makes the knowledge you have gained stable. That is the purpose or benefit of shamatha meditation.

Here's an example, I have recently come back from Europe and if my mind is very, very clear and concentrated, I remember every single action and everything I did. But now my mind is like a monkey. So certain points I remember, other points I don't remember. Therefore, shamatha meditation stabilises the mind and also makes the knowledge stable. That's the main thing.

Now the second question is very, very important. First, here is an example: if you have a great realization of emptiness, Dzogpachenpo, whatever, and your mind is not stable, this realisation can immediately disappear. So, it's not good enough to just have the realization, because it can disappear! Therefore, Longchenpa says very nice things: If you don't have a meditation practice like Shamatha meditation, your realization of transcendent wisdom or prajnaparamita is like a candle, a candle lamp in open space. It radiates shiny rays of light, but it can be blown out any time because it's exposed in open space. So, we can have great realization of our nature of mind, but if our mind is not stabilized, the

realisation can disappear. And it can really disappear so much so, that when you need it the most, in a difficult situation, you cannot catch it. That's the most important point to know.

However, when your mind is calm, stable and flexible and you are able to focus one-pointedly on an object, applying this mind quality to your knowledge or your realisation you will stabilise them. Then everything is so clear.

So, these are the important points you need to know and they are the answer to the question of why we need shamatha meditation. I answered it based on our experience.

Here is another perspective on why we need stable knowledge. That is such an important question. Even though we have many very good habits, sometimes we think we are controlled by negative mind only. On the one hand we have a lot of positive habits that maintain our sanity and we are fine and capable to face many different life situations, which is the positive side effect. But at the same time, our anger, our desire, our hatred and bad habits, which are quite strong in our life and which we have been carrying for years and years and let's say, they hang around, although they are not the nature of your mind, they're still very stable.

Because they're so stable and strong and to break them down you have to develop your knowledge. You need not only knowledge, knowledge is not enough, but a certain kind of knowledge: strong, stable, steady knowledge that can destroy strong, stable negative emotions. That's why we need to be stable-minded. Why do we need it? Because our inner enemy, some of our inner enemies are very strong and stable.

That's it, these points are very important to know and give a kind of overview of this chapter.

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