

~From the Archives of Teachings by Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche~

Excerpts from Conduct and Discipline in the Spiritual Community

Part 4

Knowledge and Realization, Hand in Hand

H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche, after asking us to listen attentively, begins the teaching.

According to the Buddha's teachings, there are two categories of the doctrine: scriptural transmissions, *lung (lung)*, and realization, *tokpa (rtogs pa)*, the practice and accomplishment of the teachings. A teacher of Buddhism not only has to be familiar with the scriptural transmissions and know how to present them according to the tradition, but [he or she] must also have some level of realization and accomplishment. This is necessary. Many Buddhist American scholars can speak about Buddhism, but because they don't practice, they don't accomplish what they are teaching on a personal level. It is not meant to be like this at all. To determine if these are in balance, examine yourself to determine whether your inner delusions are subsiding and becoming pacified or not. As a teacher, if the inner delusions are not diminishing, that means that one must place more emphasis on the category of realization, which means one must practice. On the other hand, if one has some degree of practice and is receiving the blessing of a pacified mind and pacified passions but is unable to explain the teachings because of a lack of emphasis on scriptural transmission, one must focus on learning the Buddha's teachings so that one has some means or capacity through which to help others. These two go hand in hand. If one tries to meditate, even just as a simple practitioner without having heard the teachings and without even a basic knowledge of the path of Buddhism, it's like trying to climb a mountain without hands. You see many people who just sit with their hands in meditation mudra. One wonders if they know what they're supposed to be meditating on. On the other hand, there are those who are verbally

very clever and are able to speak about teachings they haven't internalized, but they too don't present themselves as a proper example of what they're speaking about.

For instance, let's look at the famous tale from the Jataka stories of the Buddha's life. Buddha's relative, Noble Star, constantly served the Buddha for about twenty-five years. At a certain point, he just had as much as he could handle. He announced that he realized his own qualities were more exalted than the Buddha's, so there was no point in continuing to serve him. He told the Buddha, 'My qualities are higher than yours. The only difference that I see between us now is that you have this aura of light surrounding you, which I don't have yet. Aside from that, my qualities and scholarship are much greater, so, I can no longer be your servant.' Then he departed. Actually, Noble Star, after that lifetime, was reborn as a huge preta, hungry spirit, and remained in the lower realms for many countless lifetimes, suffering tremendously. This is a good example of having *lung*, scriptural transmission awareness, but not realization—scholarship without practical application. This is a problem because dharma isn't internalized; instead, passions such as pride develop, as it did in the case of Noble Star. He was like a stone lying on the bottom of the ocean. A stone cannot be penetrated by water; it always remains a stone.

This is why it's really wrong to emphasize only hearing teachings or reading books and just leaving it at that. Many people do this and even develop an attitude. They think, 'Well, I already know that. I read about it. I've heard it many times.' But in this tradition you don't really get it until you meditate. First you learn, but then you must sit and meditate on what you have heard and contemplated. You have to accomplish the teachings by internalizing them through introspection. Without introspection, one will become swollen and puffed up with pride, with other problems surfacing and becoming apparent. Worst of all, by the time death comes around, a person with nothing to rely upon will only die like an ordinary person, or even more regretful, filled with fear and disappointment. On the other hand, someone who has accomplished practice with faith, devotion, pure view, and believing

in the law of cause and result will feel either some sense of happiness or know they only need to direct their mind to an object of refuge, such as Amitabha, with faith and devotion and die in that state.

Then there are signs and indications of accomplishment at the time of death. This is the accomplishment that comes from practicing. But again, I'm not saying this means focusing only on practice because, of course, one needs to hear the teachings. Without hearing and without studying, it's like trying to climb a mountain without hands. Even not knowing how to be a *chöpon* (*mchod dpon*)¹ means one has failed to understand the importance of learning the aspects of the tradition. But only through accomplishment can the qualities one has learned be brought to a state of fruition and perfection. This comes about by practicing *ngöndro* (*sngon 'gro*)² and generation and completion stages. Wherever one is connecting and being guided to connect, noble qualities will gradually develop until culminating in the final result of realization. These two go hand in hand, but it is especially through practice and accomplishment that we achieve realization.

—taken from pages 19-22

¹ one who assists the lama and performs activity during rituals

² the so-called “preliminary practices”