

The Vajrayana Big View

Heart Advice From Khen Rinpoche Pema Choephel



There are some things that we must do before we take Ngondro. First we must change our view from a small view to a big view. This is very important.

We are beginning a new life. Before our view was small. We thought only about benefiting ourselves. There are many different living beings who share the same space that we do: demons, hungry ghosts, gods and so forth. We must take responsibility for the happiness of all of them.

Why must we fight over our differences of religion, race etc? We all want the same thing: to be free from suffering. The Dharma Way is to not harm any living beings. If I am sleeping and a mosquito comes to rest on my neck, the first question I must ask is: how can I help this mosquito? How can I protect this mosquito from suffering? As a Dharma practitioner, I will let the mosquito feed on me. For next time I can spray (insect repellent) and cover myself with a mosquito net.

When we enter the Vajrayana path we have a responsibility to support our fellow Dharma practitioners in their practice and with any problems they may have. We enter into a community. This is very important.

It is easy in the beginning to start Dharma practice, but it is very difficult in the middle and towards the end. It is easy to establish a Dharma centre, but it is difficult to manage one. We all have obstacles, I have obstacles, everyone has obstacles. There are many obstacles, big obstacles, small obstacles. That is why we must be strong and think "I will practice the Dharma for the rest of my life. I need the Dharma to benefit me in this life and also in the next life."

When we only think "I must take care of myself, I must take care of my family," we create strong borders (Khenpo Rinpoche waves his arm in a semi-circular motion

around himself). Having a big view means taking care of yourself and your family but also includes the Vajrayana community and all living beings.

We must have a big view otherwise our (spiritual) level will not change. People in the world become tired by working very hard, but the rewards are very small. This is because the view is too small. We must think big and the rewards will also be big.

People from Taiwan and Tibet find it very difficult to go home to see their families. It is not always easy to get visas and the time to travel. However, national borders are nothing compared to the borders within the mind. The borders of the mind are the greatest borders. This is why we need a big view. If we have this, then our mind will become open and free to fly anywhere, just like a bird.

Right now our ego is very strong. We are not suitable to receive what the master wants to teach. Dharma practice slowly makes the borders of the ego thin. Dharma does not mean the prayers that we chant (pointing to a sadhana text). They (i.e. prayers, sadhanas) help us open our heart and minds to the true Dharma. The true Dharma is a peaceful, open heart.

Why must we have a big view? The reason why we must have a big view is because we want to realize Enlightenment to benefit all living beings.

Dharma is transmitted by building a bridge between master and student. In order to develop a strong connection we should take the opportunity to meet the heart teacher whenever they are in the country. This way the teacher gets to know the student and the student gets to know the teacher. We must be honest with the teacher and avoid false humility: behaving nice and politely on the outside, but thinking something completely different on the inside. Otherwise after joining the Sangha for some time, people will say, "Where has ----- gone?" And nobody will see us again.

Practicing the Dharma is a big project, different from learning business or something at university. So whenever we meet the master, to show respect, we say something like (Rinpoche walks to the shrine room door, turns around as if just entering, folds both hands against his chest and bows slightly), "Hello Rinpoche, it is good to see you. I have come to receive teachings." And when we are leaving the master, we say (Khen Rinpoche motions as before) "Thank you Rinpoche, I am going now. Goodnight." This is very important.

- Khen Rinpoche Pema Choephel (4, 14 May 2009)