

# *On Teaching and Learning—Part 1*

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Teachers need to teach! Students need to learn! That is how the dharma works!

I have asked Lama Chonam to really teach the dharma. I told him he has lots of places to teach. He can teach at Tashi Choling, O.D.D., Portland, Austin, everywhere! We have dharma centers; therefore they need teachings! He needs to teach rather than standing around like a zombie. Actually, I am asking everybody—Sangye Khandro, too, and Lama Drimed, Keith, Shashi, Ila, Ani Baba, Samantha—everybody knows things that they can share. What you know, correctly and according to the lineage, you need to share with others. That way you can be of benefit, the real way. I am so happy that Les is teaching about the bardo, and I have asked him to teach more. Osugi can teach carpentry, Madhu how to take care of the land, Ani Baba how to take care of the temple and protectors, which benefits not just one place but all the centers.

When you teach, teach according to the dharma, not just going your own way or having your own idea. When you are teaching, listen to your own teaching! You are teaching others but also yourself. You need to listen, too. Don't just tell others what to do, you have to listen and do it yourself, too. Everyone, those teaching and those listening, should be focused one way: the Buddha's way. Not focused on anybody's trip, just on pure dharma -- teaching pure dharma and learning pure dharma. That way the dharma works. Right now we have the opportunity to do dharma purely that way. That is our opportunity to accumulate merit and to purify negativity. When you teach or learn, you are offering the dharma to the Three Jewels. You are being generous to sentient beings by giving them the dharma, too. Don't waste those opportunities—taking advantage of them is how to make this precious human birth meaningful.

When you teach, don't boast about it and make a spectacle of yourself. Teach humbly and smoothly; underground, not proudly up in the sky. If you teach with humility and faith in the dharma, then you can really be of benefit to yourself and your listeners. That is what it means to really be a Buddhist.

Don't do like I did, teaching even though I have no knowledge. Look at me—forget about the dharma, I didn't even know English, to be able teach properly! Don't do that. In my case, through the blessings of my root gurus, despite my lack of qualities, still there has been some success and some benefit. But don't follow my example of stupidity.

Also, don't fall into some kind of trip just because you are teaching something. Don't start getting puffed up, thinking, "These are MY students!" "Everyone has to do things this way because it's MY way!" "I am so important!" We don't need this kind of

political idea. We don't need this kind of garbage in our pure dharma. We are all following the same dharma tradition, okay? We have the same root gurus—His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche, Penor Rinpoche, Khyentse Rinpoche, Dodrupchen Rinpoche. They are the same wisdom tradition. The dharma centers are of the same lineage. We don't need something else, something impure, somebody's trip. We just need that one tradition, and everybody can follow it. We don't need "my way" and "your way."

Please don't fall into pride, or jealousy, either. These are not pride centers or jealousy centers, they are dharma centers. Pride and jealousy are not part of the dharma tradition. They are part of the tradition of worldly concern and only create the causes of birth as a hell being. Please, don't create the causes of falling to the hells yourself, and don't lead others down that path, either, when you teach. If you can create the causes of liberation and omniscience, of course that is the best. But at least stop blindly following your attachment and aversion, which is just like a path in the darkness. That is your "MY WAY" path. We don't need that anymore. Especially if you are teaching the dharma, don't pollute it with that poison.

I have seen so many interesting things over the years, people slipping this way and that way. If you just watch people, naturally they show who they are—you don't need to do anything to get them to show you. I thought that the Tibetans had heavy trips about dharma; but these Americans, they can really lie to themselves and cheat themselves, getting jealous and having politics in the dharma. It is so sad that we do that with our dharma. Once you start with jealousy, it is never finished! You start being jealous of someone and then it just gets bigger and bigger. Does it harm that person? Not a bit. Does it benefit you? No—the opposite. When you are jealous, you are just showing your ugliest fault, worse than showing your butt without any pants on. But our samsara habit is many layers deep, layer upon layer; it looks like it is never finished. Nobody forces us to destroy ourselves that way, but we are happy to. We need to finish that, okay? We need to bring an end to our habit of lying to ourselves and cheating ourselves with jealousy and politics. And pride!

Regarding pride, it is true that you have received amazing blessings, transmissions, and instructions. Those are not the empowerments authorizing you to be proud and jealous, okay? You don't need empowerments for that—you are already professionals! The empowerments you have received include the scriptures, which were in the Kama cycle, for example; the treasures, the Rinchen Terzod; and the transmissions of pure vision, including the cycles of the realized masters Dudjom Rinpoche, Dorje Dechen Lingpa, and others. Although it would be rare to find practitioners in Tibet or India who have received what you have, don't be proud! Appreciate your good fortune, yes, but don't pop up because of it. The more you appreciate it, the more you should have faith and devotion, humbly. Appreciating the

teacher's qualities or the lineage masters', you should have more faith in them. You shouldn't think more and more that you are equal to them or greater than them.

Likewise, whatever teachings you have received or study you have done, don't think that now you are some great scholar. You like to think that you are so clever! You have received such precious things, but if you are not careful, they can be dangerous. Does that mean somebody is going to bomb you? No. They are dangerous if we use them as the basis for pride and jealousy. That is what it means to damage our samaya. That is not so clever, is it? That way we send ourselves to the lower realms and can drag others down with us. That is wholly within our power. We can send ourselves to the hells, or we can liberate ourselves from samsara. We have the freedom to do either. When we use our good qualities, or the fact that we are teaching something or doing any kind of dharma, as a reason for pride, then we are taking the pure dharma into our heart as poison. Please don't choose to go that way, whether you are teaching, learning, studying, practicing, or engaging in any kind of dharma activity.

Also, there shouldn't be gossip or slander among the teachers. There shouldn't be gossip or slander about the teachers, either. People shouldn't complain, "He's teaching this!" "She's teaching that way!" Sometimes the teachers can gather and discuss what teachings are being given, and help each other as needed. You are all one family, my goodness! What is the problem?

I told you guys already that Les's horns are rotten and broken, and Scott's tail is dried up so everyone can see his dirty butt. Poor guys! But actually, Les is doing very good these days, teaching the bardo. Everyone should be listening to those teachings, and not just listening to them but thinking about them. Really, everybody needs to think carefully about their death. Whoever is going to die, they need bardo teaching and training. None of us are people who aren't going to die, are we? None of us have a guarantee that we will be liberated at our death, and, therefore, we don't need the dharma—do we? Only the lineage lamas, maybe, have that guarantee. For us ordinary guys? Forget it. Don't make a fool of yourself! Practice! Teach others! And learn, yourself! Teaching and learning, hearing, contemplating, and meditating, these are how you are of genuine benefit to others. The dharma is not for selling, okay? It's not for show, either. You say you want to bring benefit to the doctrine and to sentient beings? When you teach and learn, you are bringing benefit to the doctrine. When you teach others, you are bringing them benefit directly, the best kind of benefit. That means you are being a real Buddhist. Not a Buddhist in name only, or the appearance or image of a Buddhist, but fulfilling the real meaning of Buddhism.

Myself? I don't know dharma. I don't know about the world, either. But my root gurus told me to teach the dharma to others. We who don't know the dharma, all we can do is follow our teachers. Hopefully we know how to do that! Hopefully we know how to follow our mommy and daddy: Dudjom Rinpoche is our daddy, and Penor

Rinpoche and all his khenpos are like our mommy. We need to know how to follow them. They are not all gone—we still have mommies and daddies, amazing ones. Think carefully about that. We still have His Holiness the Dalai Lama, like an umbrella or like the trunk of everything. The Dalai Lama is not a party guy, and he's not a politician. He's an authentic dharma practitioner.

He is the one we should take as our example. Look at his qualities, how high they are. He is nothing ordinary. But has he puffed up with pride? No. Does he have jealousy toward other lamas, or those who have a high name and great renown? No. Then why do we need to do that? Do we think that we are so high that we need more than him, more pride and more jealousy? Cool it, okay? I can see lots of people do that when they start teaching. You can look at them and see that they are sort of uptight or constipated with ego and pride. Maybe they kind of sound okay, but when you really look at them, something is stuck! Don't do that. That isn't a quality or a sign of wisdom. It is a fault and the sign of your faults—very shameful! In Tibet, some of the most exalted scholars were the most open, soft, and flexible. They were more nice! Look at His Holiness Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok -- he never thought that he was superior to anyone. He never thought, "I really know something, therefore I am teaching!" Or look at Khyentse Rinpoche, greatest of scholars—he would just blah blah blah his teachings, no big deal, holding onto nothing. Or look at His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche—wow! Another Vairochana! Yet he never made any big deal about himself or thought that he was something special.

Now some lamas and scholars would pop up with pride, that's true. Those were the ones whose knowledge was only 40% or 50%. The authentic 100% scholars? They all stayed in the lowest position and didn't get swept up in pride. That showed their qualities in the most authentic way. That was the proof that they had really learned the dharma. If you don't learn the dharma from its root, if you don't get its essence, then you go the wrong way. The sign of that will be pride and jealousy showing themselves. So embarrassing! When you guys are teaching, don't do that, okay?

Teaching doesn't mean you can do whatever you want or teach whatever you want. It means your faith should be very high and your ego the lowest. Don't use the dharma for your own trip or to make yourself the highest. We are not that kind of high! Teach with faith and compassion, sincerely. If you really have faith in the lineage, then you will teach it purely, and not stain it with your trip. Everybody try like that, okay?

(to be continued in Part 2...)

Tashi Delek!

*-Gyatral*

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