

## *Christmas Eve Teaching From Rinpoche*

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I know nothing! Therefore, I don't have a fancy view or a fancy practice. I try to keep buddha, dharma, and sangha as my view. My view is the faith I have in them. I try to maintain that view.

My meditation is to try to have compassion toward all sentient beings. We all have the opportunity to be liberated, but we don't take it. We all want to come into the sunshine but we are facing north or west, and I don't think that will ever work. The sun never comes there. That is why we need to have compassion for all sentient beings—because we see that what they are doing will never work. We need to have faith in the Triple Gem because what we are doing doesn't work, either. What works? Buddha, dharma, and sangha. That is why we have faith in them. Through that faith, we will be able to actually benefit ourselves, and through that, benefit others. We cultivate faith so that we can help others, because we have compassion for them.

Do you really have compassion for sentient beings? I don't mean just lying. Everybody is always lying about having love and compassion. You lie to yourself and you lie to others, too. You say, "I love you!" to your boyfriend or girlfriend, your wife or whomever. Then what about everybody else? Forget them! And actually, even that "I love you" — why are you saying it? Because you want attention! Because you want something from them. That is not real love. That is not real compassion, that is just impure compassion. Your "I love you" is bullshit. Your "I love you" is actually "I love myself."

If you want to know what pure compassion is, on the other hand, read in the ngondro practices and commentaries, read about the bodhisattva vow and trainings. Real compassion is considering all sentient beings. What do they need? They don't need your "I love you" lie. They need the true "I love you," the true compassion. That is the basis of Mahayana: true compassion, bodhicitta, the vow of it and the practice of it. If you want to practice Mahayana or say you are practicing Mahayana, you need to practice bodhicitta continuously, always cultivating compassion, step by step. Then we will get the real Mahayana, on outer, inner, and secret levels. Compassion—that is our practice.

What is the result of that compassion? It opens our minds. Our self-centeredness opens up so that we can work to serve and benefit others rather than being self-absorbed.

A mother, for example, has real compassion for her baby—if it falls in the water or in a fire or in a pit of poisonous snakes, the mother would rather be drowned or burned or poisoned herself than see her baby suffer, and so she will jump into that river or fire without thinking of herself, in order to save her child. She has no hesitation. That is pure compassion, pure love.

With our love, on the other hand, if a guy is handsome, all the ladies love him; if a lady is pretty, all the guys love her; and if someone has big money then everybody loves them. For us, if someone doesn't have money, we don't love them; if a lady isn't pretty, we don't love her. Real love, real compassion is not like that. A bodhisattva's love for sentient beings is for all beings equally, no matter what kind of problems they have, big or small. Bodhisattvas don't have compassion today and lose it tomorrow. Does their compassion go up and down, up and down? No. Their compassion only gets deeper and deeper.

You say you want to cultivate compassion for all beings, but you still do compassion your own way, which is that when you are happy, you say "I love you," and then on a day when you are not happy, you don't even love your mommy and daddy. That is our kind of up-and-down, wishy-washy compassion, like doggies licking each others' faces. Don't keep doing compassion like that. Read about what real compassion is, what it means to be a bodhisattva, such as is described in *The Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life*. There are lots of books like that, with wonderful, amazing teachings, exactly what we need, but nobody wants to read them because everyone only wants "Dzogchen! Dzogchen!" I think we need to have compassion before we jump to that.

If you learn real, pure Mahayana compassion then you will love sentient beings unceasingly, not just for today and maybe tomorrow. Your compassion won't just be in one direction. Instead, it will be like the sky. It will be every inch as vast as space itself. Nothing is as important as space. Space is there, day and night, in every direction. Without space, there would be nothing. Everything is possible because of space. Space is the most giant thing. Space is all the room there is.

Our compassion is not like space. We have compassion just for an hour or two. We have compassion today but don't have room for it tomorrow. We have space for it this hour but no space for it in the next hour. We'll kiss you for half an hour and then hate you for the next half-hour. We are not trustable. We are wonderful one second and make a big deal about it, then the next second we screw up ourselves. We are up-and-down, useless! We smile one second, then a half-second later our face changes into that of a demon or demoness. You can't trust yourself, even! Forget anyone else being able to trust you. Real compassion is not like that. So try to make your compassion more and more vast, like space.

However much real compassion is in your mind, that is how much space—peaceful, wonderful space—you will have as well. Your mind will be clear and clean to that same degree. That will benefit both your body and your mind. It will also benefit your speech, which will become more trustable. Others will be able to trust your speech and trust your mind, too, naturally, just as they do with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and other great masters of compassion.

All the high lamas of any lineage or school have this same quality—their minds are plenty soft, clear, and wonderful. That is the power of their compassion.

That is what we should try to cultivate.

Everybody try, okay?

Tashi delek!

*-Gyatrul*