

Mingyur Rinpoche Talk

The Fundamental Nature of You

My name is Mingyur Rinpoche. So today I would like to share a little bit about the meditation practice. So this event is related with Pema Chodron.

So first time I came to USA, I think that time it was 1998. So one of my friend reading one of the book about Pema Chodron, and I asked him about the meaning in the book, although at that time I cannot understand English well. So he can speak Tibetan, so he told me a lot of things about in the book.

So for me it's really beneficial and special that really give me some sense how the meditation teaching and Dharma to relate to the West in particular now in the 21st century. So this is really appreciate and wonderful the work that she did and benefit for many many people. So today my main focus of the teaching is about related to our fundamental nature.

So normally what we call that we all have basic innate goodness. So the fundamental nature of all of us is wonderful and the fundamental nature is always present, pure, free, always there with us. And the traditional in the Dharma, Buddha Dharma, there are so many different names.

Sometimes what we call Buddha nature, sometimes what we call enlightened nature. So many names about this wonderful nature within us. But sometimes the common problem is it is very easy to recognize because it's too close to us, always with us.

But sometimes what we call the problem is because of too easy we cannot believe, too close we cannot see it. Why our mind, normally our mind is caught up with doing, we don't know how to be, we don't know how to be with as it is. So normally I'm telling my own story from the childhood story that I had the panic attacks when I was young and although I was born in the wonderful Himalayan, in the middle of Himalayan mountain, wonderful environment, but I have a lot of fear about the storms in the summer, thunderstorm, winter, snowstorm and fear of strangers.

So panic is a big problem, very difficult for me. But then fortunately my father was a great meditation teacher. So I learned meditation with him when I was nine years old.

So he said, look at the sky, of course there's a wonderful sky in the Himalayan mountain and sometimes there's a cloud, sky, cloud, mountain. And he said, normally my panic, maybe we all have what I call crazy monkey mind. Sometimes it manifests as stress, depression, loss of steam, anxiety, panic, various, manifests with the various way in the different people.

So all this, the thought, emotion, feeling, perception, is just like cloud in the sky and our fundamental nature, the basic innate goodness is like sky. So he said, no matter how strong the storm is in the Himalayas, winter, snowstorm, summer, thunderstorm, and these storms cannot change the nature of sky. Sky is always free, present, always there.

So and this is our fundamental nature, that what I'm saying, that basic innate goodness, and

this is my nature and your nature and all of us nature. And now main important thing is how we can connect to our true nature. This is very important.

So there are three gateways, one through awareness, or second, love and compassion, third, through wisdom. Three gates, but they reach the same thing. You can come from east gate, west gate, south gate, same thing inside, you reach the same place.

So first, I would like to a little bit introduce awareness. So what is awareness? Awareness meaning knowing, so knows about thinking, feeling, you can see, hear, you can think, you can experience. Though all this thinking, feeling are clouds, but that cloud is coming from, is coming within the sky.

Without sky, cloud cannot arise, cloud cannot exist. Because of sky, there's cloud. So all this thought, emotion, feeling, everything is in the awareness.

The background of this bala bala bala yada yada is pure awareness. Sometimes what we call luminosity, sometimes what we call clarity, awakeful presence, pure awareness, non-conceptual awareness, basic innate goodness, buddha nature, so many names for that. So how to connect with this fundamental nature, the awareness? For example, now you are looking at the screen, right? So there is light between you and screen, in the space, in the empty space.

Can you see that light in the empty space? Not so easy, right? You can see light on the wall, on the screen, on your hand, on your lap, but not easy to see the light in the empty space. So this fundamental awareness is beyond concept. So not easy to see at the beginning.

It is not so salient. So therefore, you cannot see directly this pure awareness, non-conceptual awareness. But you can see thought.

You can see form, sound, smell, feeling, sensation. So you can connect through cloud, sky. You can connect sky through cloud.

Okay? So now we need to choose one cloud. So which one you want to choose? Visual object, sound, smell. You may not have taste, right? Taste and smell, I think not much now.

When you have lunch and dinner, you might have maybe sensation. So we can connect with any of those. Yeah, maybe we can connect through the sensation.

Let's try, everybody. Raise your hand. So what is the sensation in your hand, in your palm? Maybe warm, maybe cool.

Maybe you cannot find sensation. All these are awareness. Knowing warm is awareness.

Knowing cool is awareness. Knowing there is no sensation is awareness. So be with that.

Doesn't matter. Warm, cool, no sensation or pain. You raise your hand almost one minute now, right? You might have pain.

That's also another cloud. Be with the pain. You don't need to do anything.

You don't have to control it. You don't have to stop it. You don't have to increase it.

Just be whatever there. So now you can let your hand down. So when you be with whatever sensation there, that is the awareness, luminosity.

The sensation is in the awareness. Cloud is in the sky. So you can be with the sky through cloud.

Now here you can be with non-conceptual awareness with concept. How nice, isn't it? So now we will do practice this together if you want. So please keep your spine loosely straight and relax muscles in your body.

And if you want, you can close your eyes and maybe do one deep breathing and just relax. Relax your body. Relax your mind.

And maybe there might have some sensation in your body. Maybe on the top of head. You might feel relaxed, heavy, tingling, pain.

Doesn't matter. All are cloud. And these sensations occur in the awareness.

And awareness is always present, pure, free. You can be with the sensation in your face, ear, neck. Just relax.

Drop. Just be with who you are. No need to pretend to anybody.

No need to act anything. You are free. You are wonderful.

Be with it. Maybe sensation in the back, upper back, lower back. Relax muscles in the chest, arms and stomach, legs and entire body.

Just relax. And if you cannot relax, it's okay. Allow that you cannot relax.

Not relax is also awareness. Tight is also awareness. So for the awareness, relax, not relax.

Doesn't matter. Beautiful cloud, ugly cloud, stone, rainbow with blue sky. It doesn't matter.

So when you let it be, rather than dreaming, you don't have to do anything. Just be. Just listening.

Almost like you are listening to feelings. You are listening to thoughts. You are listening to emotions.

When you do that, what happened? You can eventually connect with the awareness, the fundamental more and more. We will discover our mind is not just thought and emotion. Awareness, the fundamental awareness is more than thought, more than emotion.

And at the same time, this is the beginning of love, kind, compassion. This is the self-compassion. Kind to yourself.

Accepting. Right is okay. Wrong is okay.

Nothing wrong in the awareness, actually. And there might have some thought. Let them come, let them go.

Thought comes in the awareness, stays in the awareness, dissolves into awareness. Just like cloud appears in the sky, stays in the sky, and dissolves back to the sky. Now, slowly, open your eyes.

Can you see me? If you can see me, that is also awareness. Through awareness, you can see. So that is clarity.

You can hear, right? That is awareness. That is clarity. And within that clarity, there's a feeling, there's a perception, thought, memory.

So these all are clouds. And the background of the cloud, yes? Remember? The background of the cloud is the sky. So what is the sky here? Awareness.

So this awareness awareness looks like not easy to see it. Just like empty space with light. There is light, but when you look at the empty space, not easy to see it.

But there is light. Light appears on the wall, on the table, on your face, on the screen, everywhere there's light, right? So awareness is like light. But that awareness, when you look intellectually, cannot find it.

So what we have to do? Be. Okay, so now this is the one. In fact, now here, we already connect with our fundamental quality, the basic innate goodness, through awareness and through love and compassion.

So awareness begins with our body, feelings, then eventually whatever comes in our mind, we can be with that. So awareness manifests as knowing. So knowing comes in the feeling, in the thought, in the perception, in the memory.

And now when we connect with the sky itself, the awareness itself, then we can have turbulence, storms, or blue sky with the sun shining. For the sky, it doesn't matter. These cannot change the sky itself.

So now we will have real kindness will come, acceptance will come, forgiveness. My mind can open. Normally what happens? Our mind is very tight, very small, black and white.

Yes, no, yes, no. And we try to control and manipulate and then fight and push away. Like for me, the panic is quite difficult, but the most difficult for me is the panic of panic, fear of panic.

Try to push away, try to block, try to stop. Then things get worse, right? You can try, no pizza, I will not think about pizza, I will not think about pizza, what happens? More pizza comes, you will think about pizza, you will think about pizza more. So same thing, I'm going to meditate today, so concentration, empty mind, peace.

Now all this, what I call crazy monkey mind will come. The more you try to resist, push away, the worse you will get. So no need to block anything, no need to push away anything.

In the awareness it doesn't matter, right? Actually, beautiful thought, disturbing thought, peaceful thought, not so peaceful thought, it doesn't matter, it's just a thought. And this is the beginning of love, compassion. And you can understand, even to the others, everybody has thought, feeling, perception, and normally we are lost in that.

We are caught up by thought, emotion, feeling. We never see the sky, we never even think about the sky. What we see is only thought, emotion, feeling.

So normally when we think about the mind, what do we think? Thought, feeling, perception, memory, isn't it? Even I sometimes discuss with the psychology and the cognitive science and they talk about feeling, thought, perception, all this. But there's not so much about what is the background of all this. So now here, the fundamental awareness, like you see my image on the screen now, right? So background is white, my clothes are yellow, maybe there's a little bit dark here, my eyebrows are black and white, so many different colors here.

So what is all this color? It's light. Everything is light. Without light you cannot see yellow, brown, black, white.

So all this thought, emotion, everything is a manifestation of the awareness, manifestation of love and compassion actually. So we already connect through the second important thing, love and compassion. Now last is the wisdom.

So what is the wisdom? So wisdom here meaning being with whatever comes in your mind, being with that is the wisdom here. Normally we are not looking at the reality itself. We are lost with it.

We are lost in the thought and emotion. We don't know how to be with thought and emotion but we are lost. We are infused with it.

For example, if there's a river comes and we fall in the river, carried by the river, then what happens? We don't see the river. Isn't it? So same thing, that's our normal mind. We are lost with thought and emotion.

But now you're being with that. So when you see the river, that means you're out of the river. But you don't need to stop the river.

You don't have to block the river. You don't need to push away. Let the river come.

Just watch. You just observe it. So in the Tibet what we call, if you want to see the mountain, you have to go to the other side of the mountain.

So when you see the mountain, that means you're out of the mountain. If you're in the mountain, you cannot see the mountain. So if you see these feelings, thoughts, emotions, it doesn't matter.

Peace or not peace. Disturbing, not disturbing. So disturbing doesn't matter.

As long as if you be with that, you are free in a way. That is wisdom. But there's one very important thing.

Sometimes when you try to look, you cannot find. That is also okay. Normally what we call, when you really be with the reality, then it becomes fuzzy actually.

That's the true color of reality. Why? Actually, reality in the end, everything is emptiness. So the more you look, the fuzzier you get.

So sometimes when you look at the feeling, you cannot find a gap. Wonderful. That is non-conceptual state.

So if you don't see, wonderful. If you see, wonderful. You are out of it.

So nowadays I make new terminology for this. A little bit of funny, funny terminology. What I call, there are two liberations.

One is horizontal liberation. Horizontal meaning when you be with thought, emotion, feeling, whatever, they are gone. Mind becomes a gap.

Mind cannot identify anything. There's some kind of loss. But you are not lost.

You have awareness. You are fully present, but you cannot identify this gap. So the gap comes between past and future.

So that's the non-conceptual state. You're not lost yet. You're beyond concept for a while.

So that is what I call horizontal liberation between past and future. Then another liberation is what I call vertical liberation. Liberation comes front and back.

So when you look at the feeling, be with the feeling, thought and emotion, you can be with that. You can see that. When you see that, you're automatically out of it.

Although they are still there. Don't think that they are gone away. Don't try to get rid of them.

If you can be with awareness, you can have that. And actually, it develops the capacity to connect with awareness stronger, stronger, stronger. So your mind is not just thought, not just emotion, not just perception.

It's more than that. Awareness is there. And they come.

They go. They come. So you can let them come.

Let them go. That is the vertical liberation. So liberation comes front and back.

So these are the wisdom. So through experience, we can connect with our fundamental nature, awareness, love and compassion and wisdom without doing anything, just being, without controlling anything, without stopping anything, without creating anything. So hopefully through this talk and a little bit of meditation together, hopefully you all get some glimpse of basic Indian goodness with us all the time.

So of course, from the traditional teaching, there's a systematic step-by-step practice. And

so I cannot explain this everything now, but hopefully you will discover in the future and hope this will bring you liberation inside and peace, love, compassion and wisdom. Thank you.