

The Real Chöd Practice

When somebody tells you something that really hurts your mind then that is the most beneficial thing for your mind, because it goes straight to your ego - it goes straight to your heart and touches your ego.

That is the most beneficial thing for you, for your mind. This shows you like a mirror, like a teaching from the Buddha one's own mistaken thoughts, especially it shows that there is ego, and because there is ego it hurts. If there is no ego then it would never hurt. So when people tell you your mistakes or say words which hurt you they hurt the ego, the self cherishing thought, and that is the real Chöd practice. This is what makes you see your "I", (the emotional I in Western psychological terms) or the object of ignorance, the root of samsara, which is holding the "I" as truly existent, the "I" which is believed or trusted by ignorance as truly existent.

Normally one is not aware of this, but by doing the practice of Chöd, inviting the spirits, they create violence and it makes you clearly see the "I", the object of ignorance, the object to be refuted, which is the truly existent "I". They show that "I" to you very clearly and then you are able to recognize that it is false, it is the object of ignorance, and then you are able to use your logical reasoning to prove that it doesn't exist, because the "I" is a dependent arising, or merely imputed in relation to the aggregates, the base, etc. There are so many other reasonings, however, at that minute you recognize the object to be refuted, that object that doesn't exist at all, is totally non existent.

So this is similar to Chöd practice: being in an environment with the conditions, the people who use harsh words, or bring up your mistakes - and this is how it is so helpful.

In Iraq and those places where there are many killings and feelings of enmity, two sides attacking each other, and the Americans are supporting one side. The other side is the enemy to the USA so they are killing the outside enemy in Iraq and those places. But our practice is killing the inner enemy. In those places such as Iraq they are killing the outside enemies, who are sentient beings, the most precious, most kind sentient beings, from whom I receive all my past, present, future happiness, liberation and enlightenment, everything, the most precious most kind ones.

What we should practice is killing the inner enemy, the delusions, and the only way to do that is with Dharma practice. To defeat the delusions, to achieve liberation, and not only achieve that but to achieve ultimate happiness, everlasting happiness, liberation for oneself, cessation of all the sufferings, no more rebirth, old age, sicknesses and death, or all the sufferings of each of the six realms. To cease forever all sufferings of the samsaric realms, the six realms, and cease karma and delusions as well. Not only to achieve liberation for oneself, but also to achieve enlightenment, great liberation for the benefit of all sentient beings: so this is the difference. In the world when they kill many people, they are killing the outside enemy, thinking that the enemy is outside and killing them. Killing so many sentient beings, who are the most kind, most precious ones, the source of all one's own past, present and future happiness. What we need to practice is killing the inner enemy, delusions. Making war with the delusions to defeat them.

Colophon: Transcribed by Ven Yangchen, lightly edited by Ven Holly Ansett in Dec 2006; edited by Claire Isitt in March 2007.