

## **Relationship Between Physical Body and Mind .**

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I am very happy to be here with all of you. This is the first time I have been in this place. In general most of the time I live in Tenerife. My origin is Tibetan and I received all my education when I was in Tibet. When I was 20 years old I came to India and two years later I was invited by the famous Tibetologist, Giuseppe Tucci, to Italy, and worked at the university in Italy for many years.

As you know, for many centuries Tibet remained isolated and for that reason ancient spiritual knowledge and many ancient sciences have remained as they were up to this moment. When I was studying in Tibet, I did not realize the value of all the education that I received there, but after working for many years at a university in the Western world, I have understood that Tibet has many things that are valuable not only for Tibetans but for all human beings. So a little later when I finished working at university I dedicated myself to trying to communicate this knowledge to people.

I have been requested to explain a little about the relationship between body and mind. In general, in the Tibetan sciences and the spiritual path, when we speak about a human being we speak about three gates. A gate means something for entering into knowledge, or a way to come out of a problem. For example, if we want to visit a museum, we have to go through a gate or door. When we enter then we can discover what is inside. In the same way if we are inside a prison, in order to free ourselves, we need to go through the door. For that reason our physical body, our energy, and our mind are called our three gates. It is important to understand that we all have this base. If we study Tibetan medicine, it is explained and people learn it that way. That is the base of the relationship between the physical body and the mind.

This is connected to our different kinds of energy. Basically our physical body and everything is related to the five elements, and the function of all our vital energy and movements is part of

energy. For example, if we want to have a peaceful calm state in our mind, even though we may have a very nice idea about it, it isn't easy to find this peace because mind is related to our energy. If we want to have a peaceful mind, we should know how to work with our energy. If we want to control and coordinate our energy, we need to understand how our physical body is because energy is also dependent on the physical body.

Energy is very important in our daily lives. Sometimes we are happy and everything goes well. I am sure that all of you have had this experience. We think that it is a fortunate moment for us because everything is going well and we don't need much effort to do things. Even if we buy a lottery ticket in that moment, perhaps we can win. Other times we have the opposite situation and even though we make our best efforts, everything goes badly. When we have these experiences we think they are linked to luck or fortune, but they are based on the condition of our energy.

In Tibetan medicine we talk about the three humors, which really have their origins in the three emotions. The first of these is ignorance. But ignorance doesn't mean that we have no education. It means we are ignorant of how our real condition is. We do not observe it and we do not know it, only going after our minds, judging and thinking. Then, when things do not correspond, we are upset. But in the real sense, instead of fortune, it is the condition of the three humors. When our three humors are balanced in a perfect way, we are very healthy. When one of these humors is disordered, or missing some function, then we have illness and problems. It is the same with the condition of our five elements; when some are damaged or not balanced, we have many problems. When we have problems and everything goes badly, in that moment our energy is disordered or damaged. In general, when we have these types of problems, we are upset. But it doesn't help to be upset. It is more important that we understand that.

There are many ways to coordinate and strengthen our energy. At the physical level there are many types of movements such as Yantra Yoga to coordinate and strengthen energy. For example, if we have this kind of problem, by learning and applying the eight movements of Yantra Yoga, we can coordinate our physical energy. There are many things related to our energy level. On the spiritual paths in many different traditions they use different kinds of mantras to help for particular diseases. There are also many mantras for controlling negativities when they are related to our energy.

So first of all, it is very important to know why we have a type of problem. Then it is not enough to know it, but we should also apply something. In the same way, we may also have an opposite situation when we are very happy. But it is not sufficient that we are happy. It is important to understand this. That is why we say 'gate'. It is a means for entering into knowledge, so we should observe ourselves.

Observing ourselves is the root of everything because in our condition, everything is interdependent. We talk about good and bad, but they are interdependent. Good does not exist on its own. Today something may be good but tomorrow another aspect may manifest because we

live in time. Today is not tomorrow and every day we have different kinds of situations.

Instead of thinking too much and making too many programs, it is more important that we are present in the same way that we drive a car. When we learn to drive a car, at the beginning it is not so easy. But when we become familiar with driving, we don't need to concentrate only on driving. When we drive, we can talk with our friends, and even if they ask us something complicated, we can think about it and reply while we are driving. This is called presence and we learn this when we drive. But our lives are not only driving a car. If we are present, we observe ourselves and then we can discover that.

It is really very important that we observe ourselves. In general we do not observe and we do not know what the root of all problems is. This is why, when we talk about the three emotions, the first one is called ignorance. We are ignorant, we do not observe, and we do not really know what the root is. For example, we may have a problem with someone. In our human condition we are very proud and always think that our way is perfect, that we know everything. Perhaps we don't say this to other people because we want to be polite and if we tell people that we know better than they do, then they think it is strange. We don't say it, but we think it. Our ego is very strong and for that reason when we have some problems we immediately think that we are the innocent party, that it's all the fault of the other person. We insist on it. That means that we do not know how it is related with interdependence. If there is no connection of interdependence, then why do we have a problem with that person? When we have a problem with someone, there is some connection. It may not be easy for us to convince that person because they, too, have a very strong ego, and so we develop our tensions more and more. The best way is that we observe ourselves. We can change our own ideas easily, but it is difficult to change someone else's.

This way of doing things is called 'evolution', in your language. We work with our condition and when we free our tensions, we feel happy. If we keep these tensions and they develop day by day, we are not happy at all. This means not being ignorant and observing.

Another of the root emotions is attachment. An example of this is when we need or want something. When it is difficult or not possible to have it, then we get angry. Attachment and renunciation are the two bases of the emotions and we go ahead in that way – right, left, right, left – just like our two legs, spending all of our time like that, from childhood until the end of our lives, instead of observing ourselves. We never enjoy our lives and they become heavy and problematic. So it is better that we know what these three root emotions are. We also have jealousy and pride, which are combinations of the two legs – attachment and renunciation. We should work to observe and free ourselves from these because it is one of the most important aspects of our lives.

We may follow a spiritual path – and there are different kinds of teachings and traditions – but in the real sense the conclusion is that they all teach these things, even though they may use different language or present it in a different way. When we have learned and had experience, we can understand what the essence is, even if we are not following a particular religious tradition. We can

understand what we should do in order to live in our society. This kind of knowledge is also very useful.

For example, we put everything into right and left sides and we are always fighting. That is called limitation. If we observe, we can understand that the root of everything is our limitations. Limitations are not really positive.

In general everybody says that we need to have peace and when we talk about it, it is very nice. When I worked at the university I participated in many of these peace meetings. When we went there they would prepare a very nice hotel and we would talk about peace for a few days. But then it would finish and become history and nothing much would remain. However, when we know a little about the real sense of the teaching, or a spiritual path, or our condition, we can discover that the root of all these problems is our limitations.

We know very well that we are living in a limited society. If we are not limited, we cannot do anything. I'll give you a simple example. Some time ago all the Tibetan traditions of Buddhism met together in India. The meeting was organized by HH the Dalai Lama's office. In that period I was working at the university [in Italy]. I received a letter from the organizers inviting me to the meeting but I couldn't go in that period because we had exams at the university and I wrote telling the organizers that. After a few days I received a letter from the Office of the Dalai Lama telling me that I should come because it was an important meeting, so I couldn't say no. Then I organized for the exams and I went to Varanasi in India where they were holding the meeting.

It was very crowded with Tibetan lamas and monks. They had invited me but I didn't know where I should stay. I asked some monks where the office of the organizers was and when I got there I found it was a big school of the Gelugpa tradition. They asked me which school I belonged to. I had a bit of difficulty explaining because I left Tibet when I was nearly twenty years old and when I was there I had spent most of my time at college studying. It wasn't necessary for me to come from a limited tradition. Until I was nine I lived in a monastery belonging to the Sakyapa tradition, so I thought that maybe I was Sakyapa. But according to Tibetan tradition I am also recognized as a reincarnation belonging to the Kagyupa school, so I thought that perhaps I was Kagyupa. Then I follow a teaching, the principle of which is called Dzogchen. I follow Dzogchen teaching not because I belong to this school. After many years of studying the Buddhist traditions in Tibet, I finally understood the real sense of the teaching in the Dzogchen teaching and for that reason I am following Dzogchen teaching. But basically the Dzogchen teaching is related to the Nyingmapa school, so I thought maybe they consider me to be Nyingmapa. I really didn't know what to reply. I asked them if they could check to see which school I belonged to. So they sent some monks to the offices of the different traditions and discovered that I belonged to the Nyingmapa school. When I discovered that I finally got a place to stay!

In the Dzogchen teaching, the root of all problems is limitation. When we observe and discover that, then we know that we should go beyond that in the real sense. When we have this knowledge

then we can recognize all limitations that apply to our relative condition. When we know that limitations are negative and the root of all problems, it is fine if we comply with them. When we do not know and we think that limitations are important, we are controlled by them. I'll give you an example of this.

When I was working at the university in Italy, the cultural revolution was taking place in China in that period. At the time I received a lot of negative information about monasteries being destroyed in Tibet. I knew a little bit about the Chinese Communist system because before I went to India I had spent almost two years in China when I was 16 years old. I had the name of a reincarnation and they invited me as a representative of the monasteries for a conference in China. We had a five-day conference and people spoke every day but I didn't understand anything. I had only studied in college and didn't know anything about the political situation.

When the conference finished, they formed a new school with the young Chinese people who were working in East Tibet and learning the Tibetan language. During the meeting they chose two teachers: one was called Konkar Rinpoche, a very famous scholar, and the other was me, even though I was quite young. So I wasn't able to return to Tibet and remained in China for two years. During that period I also studied Chinese language and the political system, so I knew a little about the situation.

I believed that possibly they had destroyed something, but I never really thought that everything had been destroyed because China is a very big country and there are many people who know the value of culture. So even though I received a lot of information, I didn't completely believe it.

Then in 1982 I went to Tibet for the first time [since I had left]. Then I saw that the monasteries and everything had really been destroyed. I was very surprised even though I hadn't believed it before. I spent a few weeks there, the local authorities helped me, and it was very nice. Then before I left, they invited me for dinner and asked me how I found the current situation in Tibet. I replied that it was fantastic, really nice.

Relatively this is called how we should work with circumstances. Even if we know that something is a limitation, is negative, we can accept that and know how to work with circumstances, if we are aware.

What I have learned in the Dzogchen teaching, teaches that. It is not only doing meditation, chanting, and prayer, but basically being present and working with circumstances. This is, I feel, really useful not only for people who are following a spiritual path. If we have the base for evolution it helps our fellow countrymen and we can work very well in our limited situations. Gradually going in this direction, increasing and developing our knowledge, is called evolution.

When I arrived in Italy, I worked with Prof. Tucci, the famous Tibetologist. He had been to Tibet seven times. He was also famous in Tibet and had a vast knowledge of Tibetan culture. One day

he asked me about a current in the different schools and traditions of Tibet, a kind of teaching called Dzogchen. He didn't know about it because officially Dzogchen is not a school. It is not a tradition. Dzogchen is one of the most ancient teachings that has existed in Tibet for centuries. So I explained and showed him some books with explanations of Dzogchen teaching. Of course if someone is following the path of the Dzogchen teaching there is also meditation and a wide range of practices. But what I discovered is that the principle of the Dzogchen teaching is very useful in our society. If we develop that, there is really a possibility that we can have peace in the world because first of all we observe ourselves and free ourselves from our limitations.

I'll give you an example. In the teaching we say that all the schools of the Buddhist tradition give too much importance to their own point of view and discuss them among themselves. The Hindus and other traditions have all developed their point of view. For many years I also studied that kind of teaching in college and was convinced that I knew the traditions of the Buddhist schools very well. The college where I studied belonged to the Sakyapa tradition and I studied the Sakyapa point of view very well and was convinced that this point of view, which negates that of the Gelugpa, was the most important.

When I met my teacher of Dzogchen and he transmitted knowledge of Dzogchen concretely, he said that the point of view of Dzogchen teaching is not what you have learned. I was very upset [when I heard that] because of what I had learned and studied. He told me that I should discover what the difference is between how a pair of glasses and a mirror work. If we have a good pair of glasses, we can see even the smallest things in front of us very clearly. This means that we remain in dualistic vision: I am here and there is something there and I want to check what these things are. But in the Dzogchen teaching firstly we observe ourselves, and an example of this is the mirror. If we look into a mirror, immediately our face appears. If there is some abnormality with my face – perhaps my nose is not normal, and I don't recognize this in the mirror, I don't know my face – and someone tells me that my nose is strange, I don't like it. I defend myself – my nose is perfect. This means that we do not observe ourselves. If I recognize the way my nose is in the mirror, there is no need for somebody to tell me about it. I can accept it myself.

My teacher told me that the point of view of the Dzogchen teaching is that we observe ourselves. When we observe ourselves, we can discover how many limitations we have, how these limitations create many problems, and we can free ourselves from those problems. We no longer go behind or believe our inventions and become free from all these limitations.

It is the same with the situation in our society. We may be part of this or that political party because our condition is always limited, but we do not seriously believe that this is the final goal. The final goal is that we observe and discover that limitation is not good and in that way we are not conditioned by it. This is an example I learned in the Dzogchen teaching and is important not only in the teaching but in our society. When I went to different peace meetings, nobody would speak about our limitations. They would only speak about how peace is very important. We can talk, but it doesn't always work in a practical way.

Firstly we need to discover what is more important. An example. If we have some problems on the physical level, such as an illness, we understand that it is related to our energy. We go to a doctor because we are ignorant [about medicine] and think that the doctor is an expert. Even though he is an expert, he always asks his patients questions about what they ate and what they did in order to discover the secondary causes. Finally the doctor identifies the problem and advises us what to do. That is an example of how we need to discover the root of a problem. Then sometimes we discover it and are happy. But this is not sufficient. We should apply [the knowledge we have discovered]. When we discover what the real condition is and we apply [this knowledge], then everything becomes easier.

When I give explanations to my students, they learn gradually. Sometimes they say that I have changed their lives. But I have not changed anyone. I couldn't. I know that everyone has their limitations. But what I can do is explain and make them understand themselves, observe themselves. When they discover their condition, and are free, they feel more relaxed. When they are relaxed, their situations also change. They think that I have changed them, but they have changed by themselves. This is something very important that we should learn in our daily lives.

Some people say that they are following Buddhist teaching. It is very nice if we follow some particular method and learn. But time goes by very quickly and our lives are very short. We can see that time is going ahead when we observe a clock ticking. It always goes ahead, never back. This is our life and it passes very quickly. Time is very important. Knowing that time is important we should enjoy our lives and we can only do that if we are relaxed.

Everyone knows that being relaxed is useful. But it isn't sufficient that we only know that relaxing is good. When people don't know how to relax they may go to a teacher to learn. If someone comes to me and says that they don't manage to relax, then I have to explain somehow. What is the easiest thing to do to relax a little? I tell them that they can do breathing practice, for example, inhaling reaching up and then exhaling bending over, repeating twenty or thirty times. Then they should lie down and after a while they will feel a little relaxed. But although they may relax with that breathing today, tomorrow is another day and they need to do the breathing again to relax. In order to be completely relaxed, we should work not only with breathing but breathing related to mind. In this case, we know how we should observe ourselves related to limitations of the mind.

In general we follow our minds too much, thinking, judging, and making plans, considering that we are clever. At times mind is very useful, but when mind dominates us and we become slaves of the mind that is not good. If we dominate mind, that is good. In this case we need to observe ourselves and understand the root of how our minds are related to limitations. Then mind cannot dominate us because we already know and do not totally follow mind. Otherwise, when we follow mind too much, when mind succeeds in dominating us, it dominates not only us, but also our energy. When mind dominates our energy, we can have many heavy problems. Some people become abnormal and think that they see things that are not there. They are definitely sure that someone is talking in their ear telling them, for example, to jump out of the window. Many people actually jump from their

windows and die. This kind of thing happens when people are dominated too much by mind. In this case it is not so easy to coordinate and to do that we need to do some deeper spiritual practices such as fixation or other methods to coordinate energy. That means that we re-educate our minds. We can do this when mind is dominating us but has still not succeeded in dominating our energy.

It is very important that we understand these types of situations. When we know all these things then we are being aware. So we should remember these things in daily life because they are very useful, not only spiritual teachings. In the relative condition we need to be present and not distracted, just like driving a car. If we learn and develop how to be present in that way, this can also be an important practice, even a spiritual practice.

For example, I am teaching dancing to my students. Some of them feel strange and think that these are just ordinary dances. But if we are present we can also integrate a spiritual path in ordinary things. That is what we should learn and is very useful for everybody. We don't always need to become a practitioner of a spiritual path. We also don't need to refuse or negate that. Everything is relative.

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