

## All dharma Agrees at One Point

We could say that all teachings are basically a way of subjugating or shredding our ego. And depending on how much the lesson of the subjugation of the ego is taking hold in us, that much reality is being presented to us. All dharmas that have been taught are connected with that. There is no other dharma, particularly in the teachings of Buddha.

...

That is why this slogan goes along with another saying of the Kadampa teachers, which is "The shedding of the ego is the scale that measures the practitioner." If you have more ego, you will be heavier on that scale: if you have less ego, you will be lighter. That is the measure of how much meditation and awareness have developed, and how much mindlessness has been overcome.

*From Training the Mind & Cultivating Loving-Kindness by Chogyam Trungpa ,*

## All dharma Agrees at One Point

The point at which they agree is to let go of holding on to yourself. That's the way of becoming at home in the world. Ego is not sin. Ego is not something you get rid of. Ego is something you come to know - that you befriend by not acting out or repressing all the feelings that you feel.

Ego is like a room of your own, a room with a view, with the temperature and the smells and the music that you like. You want it your way. You'd like to have a little peace: you'd like to have a little happiness, you know, just "gimme a break!"

But the more you think that way, the more you try to get life to come out so that it will always suit you, the more your fear of other people and what's outside your room grows. Rather than becoming more relaxed, you start pulling down the shades and locking the door. You become touchier, more fearful, more irritable than ever. The more you just try to get it your way, the less you feel at home.

To begin to develop compassion for yourself and others, you have to unlock the door. You don't open it yet, because you have to work with your fear that somebody you don't like might come in. Then as you begin to relax and befriend those feelings, you begin to open it. Sure enough, in come the music and the smells that you don't like. Sure enough, someone puts a foot in and tells you you should have a different religion or vote for someone you don't like or give money that you don't want to give. Now you begin to relate with those feelings. You develop some compassion, connecting with the soft spot.

It helps to realize that the Nelson Mandelas and Mother Teresas of the world also know how it feels to be in a small room with the windows and the doors closed. They also know anger and jealousy and loneliness. They're people who made friends with themselves and therefore made friends with the world. They're people who developed the bravery to be able to relate to the shaky, tender, fearful feelings in their own hearts and therefore are no longer afraid of those feelings when they are triggered by the outside world.

When you begin to practice in this way, you're so honest about what you're feeling that it begins to create a feeling of understanding other people as well... We become part of a

people who have cultivated their bravery throughout history, people who, against enormous odds, have stayed open to great difficulties and painful situations and transformed them into the path of awakening. We WILL fall flat on our faces again and again, we WILL continue to feel inadequate, and we can use these experiences to wake up, just as they did. The lojong teachings give us the means to connect with the power of our lineage, the lineage of gentle warriorship.

---

All the teachings and all the practices are about just one thing; if the way that we protect ourselves is strong, then suffering is really strong too. If the ego or the cocoon gets lighter, then suffering is lighter as well. Ego is like a really fat person trying to get through a narrow door. If there's lots of ego, then we're always getting squeezed and poked and irritated by everything that comes along. When something comes along that doesn't squeeze and poke and irritate us, we grasp onto it for dear life and want it to last forever. Then we suffer more as a result of holding on to ourselves.

One might think that we're talking about ego as enemy, ego as original sin. But this is a very different approach, a much softer approach. Rather than original SIN, there's original SOFT SPOT. The messy stuff that we see in ourselves and that we perceive in the world as violence and cruelty and fear is not the result of some basic badness but of the fact that we have such a tender, vulnerable, warm heart of Bodhicitta, which we instinctively protect so

*From Start Where You Are : A Guide to Compassionate Living by Pema Chodron,*

## All dharma has a Single Purpose

Since the purpose of all dharma, both mahayana and hinayana, is simply to tame ego-clinging, as you practice dharma or work at mind training, ego-clinging should decrease. If your efforts in dharma do not counteract egoclinging, your practice is meaningless. Since this is the one criterion that determines whether dharma practice is effective or not, it is said to be the yardstick by which a dharma person is measured.

*From The Great Path of Awakening : An Easily Accessible Introduction for Ordinary People by Jamgon Kongtrul, translated by Ken McLeod. Copyright 1993 by Ken McLeod.*

## All dharma is Included in One Purpose

Many of us have by now encountered a wide range of practices - breath awareness, mindfulness, loving kindness, the Lam Rim practices, meditation on emptiness, meditative quiescence, and even tantric practices. All these practices, all the teachings of the Buddha, all the commentaries, serve one purpose: to subdue self-grasping.

We are now challenged to investigate ... the level of our self-grasping. We may find that the practice is in fact enhancing the so-called eight mundane concerns-pleasure and pain, gain and loss, praise and blame, honor and dishonor. If our practice does not diminish self-grasping, or perhaps even enhances it, then no matter how austere and determined we are,

no matter how many hours a day we devote to learning, reflection, and meditation, our spiritual practice is in vain.

A close derivative of self-grasping is the feeling of self-importance. Such arrogance or pride is a very dangerous pitfall for people practicing dharma, but if these are the results of the practice, then something has gone awry.

Although we all try to engage in spiritual practice according to our own abilities, it is very helpful to have some criterion by which we can estimate our progress. Here is the crucial test: how has our sense of personal identity been influenced? The stronger our self-grasping, the more easily it gives rise to irritation, anger, and resentment. It gives rise also to attachment, and actually forms the basis of self-centeredness. We can check the level of our own self-grasping by checking on the derivative mental distortions and obscurations that arise from its root.

On a more optimistic note, if we find that our practice results in decreased self-grasping, we can recognize its authenticity. This too distinguishes a true dharma practitioner from one who is merely practicing a facsimile.

<sc

*Excerpted from: The Seven-Point Mind Training (first published as A Passage from Solitude : Training the Mind in a Life Embracing the World), by B. Alan Wallace. </sc*

## All Dharma Collects Into One Intention.

All methods of the different traditions of the Dharma that were taught by Buddha Shakyamuni have the same intention and goal—the destruction of both the selfcherishing attitude and self-grasping ignorance. If we approach this goal steadily, our practice is progressing well, but if nothing is bringing these real targets closer to destruction, something is wrong in our approach. If this is the case, then just as we would add weight to one side of an unbalanced scale to bring it to equilibrium, we should add more energy to our practice by applying the appropriate methods and meditations more diligently than before.

*Copyright Brian Beresford, 1977, 1996. Excerpted from Advice from a Spiritual Friend,*

## All Dharma has a Single Goal

The Buddha gave 84,000 different teachings, all of them designed to subdue ego-clinging. This was the only reason why he set them forth. If they do not act as an antidote for our attachment to self, then all practice is in vain, as was the case with the Buddha's cousin Devadatta. He knew as many sutras as an elephant could carry on its back, but because he could not shake off his clinging to self, he went to hell in his next life.

The extent to which we have been able to overcome our self-attachment will show the degree to which we have used the Dharma properly. So let us try very hard.

*From Enlightened Courage, by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche*