

~ Sense of Humour and Meditation ~

Mingyur Rinpoche

Some people ask me a question about when we practice meditation or are meditation practitioners: how can we bring a sense of humor into the practice and into ourselves as meditators and our personal life?

I do not know what the answer is. For me, at the beginning, I was a little bit introverted, and I was quite serious. I was especially very sensitive. My mind was very sensitive. If I felt something was wrong, I might worry for weeks. I think that is the reason that I had panic attacks.

But now, I have become a monkey. Sometimes some students say, "When you teach, you become like a monkey." [Mingyur Rinpoche laughs.] I thought, "Maybe, yeah." My hands are all over the place, and I laugh at myself.

Then, sometimes I see that some of my friends, especially in the West, when they teach, are dressed relatively quite nice and put a smile on their face. Then their voice is quite soft, and they look around with gentle eyes. I do not do all these things! [Mingyur Rinpoche laughs.] I become a monkey.

What I do is be myself. And be spontaneous. Also, I connect with the joy of it. What I teach is joyful, and what I am doing feels meaningful. And when it is taught with a sense of humor, people also like it. And a sense of humor is beneficial and also meaningful. But I am quite sensitive about not touching on political things or pushing personal buttons. Normally I do not do those things.

That is really important for the meditation practitioner and teacher. Especially the essence of meditation is really playful and joyful, right? What we believe is that, at a deeper level, everybody has this

wonderful nature. No matter what happens on the outside, it is temporary, and you do not have to be so serious, right? If there were something ultimately right and wrong, then you would have to be very serious. But whatever we experience, everything is just like a manifestation of our mind. It is like a display, like a show. A TV show, or a movie.

So if we understand that at a deeper level, we feel more relief. That does not mean that we do not have problems or make mistakes, or that we do not have obstacles. We have them, but sometimes we might experience very strong habitual patterns that make us feel serious, and that seem fixed and unable to be changed. "I have tried so many times, and I come back to this again and again." Then you can bring a sense of humor to that. How to do that? From the view level, know that it is just temporary. "It is not my true nature." Like a diamond in the mud, even when the mud is very thick, the diamond never becomes mud. The mud never changes the nature of the diamond. Also, meditation-wise, you can use it as the object of your meditation and make friends with it. Being friends means you laugh, you play, you talk . . . Also, you can share it with your friends and family and show some humor about your obscurations.

Normally I tell this story again and again. There was a couple who came to me, and they asked me to bless their miserable life. What was miserable in their lives was that they were arguing all the time, morning to evening. And they were expecting me to give them a special blessing, and then from the next day on there would be no more arguments. I said I did not have that power, but that I would give them special advice. "From tomorrow on, you have to take half an hour a day to have a positive discussion about each other." "Okay, thank you." A few weeks later they came back and said that a half hour is too long. They would look at the time [Mingyur Rinpoche pretends to look at a watch on his wrist] and could no longer talk because all their topics were finished. I gave them a discount and told them to do five minutes only. The next year they came back and said, "Thank you so much for that advice. Now, a half hour is not enough, and it has changed our lives." I was quite surprised and asked them, "How did it change?" They said that when they began to discuss positive things they began to discover so many good things within each other. But, at

the same time, they both had some imprints and personalities which were difficult to change. Then what they did was bring a sense of humor to that. They gave each other special names. The husband's name is "Control Freak," and the wife's name is "Worry Freak." And when the husband comes home from work and knocks on the door, he says, "The most powerful person in the entire world is coming," showing a sense of humor about his personality. And the wife says, "The most worrisome person in the world welcomes you home." And they are both very happy. Of course, there are still some personality problems there, but they never give up. They accept each other. There is space to make mistakes, and they forgive each other. But they also support each other in continuing to transform, to grow, and to learn.

So this is how we practice by ourselves, with our friends and family, and in interactions with others.