

## 2019\_04\_07\_am3\_QA\_LMC\_LL.mp4

*the profound truth of interdependence*

*included only Lama Michael responding to a question*

**Student 1** [00:03:29] I recently posted an article to KCC that was from Lions Roar by David Loy. And it was something about Buddhism and the climate crisis. And I have a real, I don't know, problem, confusion. I've been practicing the Dharma for a long time and it has enormously, immensely changed my life. And I'm so grateful that I found it or it found me. And I think the growing of it in the West is incredibly, extremely important. But the other side of it is we all sit here and we are an endangered species. We are possibly at the... breaking point with the climate. And there already is tremendous suffering around the world with this. We don't suffer so much, except hot summers and lot of smoky air, but some people have lost their homes on islands, etc. And I'm probably preaching to the choir, but I don't know how to put that together in terms of... I think this work is invaluable and important and I'm not going to stop doing it. But then there's... what's going on around me and how to, I don't know, do something about it or come to terms with... whatever. I'm not sure I have a question. I just a lot of confusion about. I've been very political off and on throughout my life. And... anyway... for decades my opinion has been nothing, no other issues really matter if we don't have a planet to live on. And we're getting to a point where the planet is going to be possibly unlivable in the future. So, anyway, that's, that's what I have to say.

[00:05:33] *Lama Lekshe responded first*

**LMC** [00:16:12] One of the salient teachings that we work with regularly is... the truth of interdependence. Which we often trivialize by referring to them as impermanence, everything is impermanent. So, we know that. Everything's impermanent. And knowing it doesn't seem to help. So, there's something missing there. But one of the things that we can do, with impermanence is we can contemplate it on a regular basis... easily, by looking at it from a personal perspective. One of the ways that we work with, learn about interdependence, of course, is our relationships with each other. The kinds of things that we... give to each other, such as loving kindness and compassion and joy. And embracing all of our neighbors and friends with equanimity, with loving kindness and so on. So, we see the connection between these things and we call that connection... the truth of interdependence. ... And... that interdependence can be elaborated in many different ways. If we're kind... to others, we tend to experience kindness from others. And we can elaborate that again also and see... how the truth of interdependence is actually true. It actually is functional. We actually can *witness* it at any given moment that we care to look.

[00:18:13] The value of that... is that it leads us into another view... in the... Buddhist 'banquet of views', we might say. The view in this case is that... our minds, in the midst of interdependence... continuously generate experiences. We say, nonstop day and night, experiences are being generated. And the old monk Kalu Rinpoche, back in the 70s, said... day or night, dead or alive. In other words, as life experiences continue... whether our physical form is gone or it's still here or it's sick or it's, well, whatever it is, it's like the experiences just keep flowing. And we can, without dying, [laughs] *confirm* that this seems to be the case. That we are never without experiences. They flow continuously.

[00:19:35] So, when we think about the Dharma, we could say... that the Dharma can be... reduced to a statement about interdependence. The truth of karma, cause and effect, is all about... the truth of interdependence. It's not about anything else. It's about the truth of interdependence. Virtually all of the philosophical propositions even... come down to an understanding which is based on the truth of interdependence. So, we tend to think of interdependence in kind of small ways. That is to say, if I'm nice to someone, they'll be nice to me. And if I'm not nice to them, they won't be nice to me. But it applies also to things like climate change, for example. It's clear that the truth of interdependence is probably, in terms of global issues, there probably isn't an issue that is more... *exemplary* of the truth of interdependence. What more... example could you find than global warming? Unless, of course, you're of a particular political persuasion that denies the whole thing. But short of that, it seems like, in front of us, is the biggest thing there is... is that truth of interdependence.

[00:21:04] So... it's another view that we can hold. When I pick up... this [Aspiration of Mahamudra] ... I'm not going to read this. I just want to say... one line here. A dharma can be for, we sometimes call... occurrences dharmas... can be. Dharmas can be things we practice. They can be teachings that we learn. They can be meditations that we do... and sometimes we talk about dharmas as phenomena themselves, just phenomena. ...] So, here's a couple lines, "All dharmas are projections of the mind." What that means is that every experience we have is a projection of the mind. There are no exceptions. "All dharmas are projections of the mind." And the next line is even better. "As for mind, there is no mind; mind's nature is empty." This is a confusing point because we tend to think of empty as nothing. Empty in this case means it can be *anything* at any time. So, it's empty of being a *fixed* thing. A kind of a permanent thing, somehow. It's empty of... its own nature because its own nature is continually in flux. "Empty and immediate, mind appears as everything. Investigating it well, may I settle the basic points." So, this is like four lines that you could spend the rest of your life... teasing apart and working with. And it would be... a valuable project to do, personally. Like the *entire* teachings of Buddhism would become clear, does become clear, by just focusing on those four lines. And there are a whole series of little short sentences... like that in this one thing.

[00:24:20] So, I want to say just one more thing. Back in 1973.... many of you have heard me say this, but I think it just bears repeating over and over, Kalu Rinpoche... at the time, renowned as one of the greatest masters of meditation ever... he said, talking about this... extraordinary, complicated set of instructions in Dharma practice... he said, if you find one thing out of all of that, like... let's say Kalu Rinpoche is speaking... and one thing strikes us! It just hits us and we think like *that* makes sense to me somehow. If you can take that one thing... and follow it continuously, you will discover the entire path, and all the aspects of it.

[00:25:20] So... one of our... I don't want to call it a problem, I'll call it an opportunity, one of our opportunities is that we tend to... think, that in order to get the most out of our meditation practice, we need to actually understand the whole thing. All the pieces. Where it came from. Where it's going. How it works. How all the pieces fit together. And... in the process of that, of course, we're talking about the things that we don't yet know about experientially. So, we tend to come to a place where we begin to abandon it. So, Kalu Rinpoche was saying, find one thing that is relevant. And... when you experience the benefit of it, just keep doing that one thing. That's totally okay. You will discover the entire path from that one small thing.