

# ~ *The Three Wisdoms* ~

By Mingyur Rinpoche

These three wisdoms are the traditional way of how to bring the view alive. This step-by-step process is really important.

The first wisdom is what we call, “the wisdom of hearing,” meaning that we study first. It is just learning from the teacher in the class, just receiving the information, whatever that information is.

The second wisdom is called, “the wisdom of contemplation.” With the second one, once you have learned — taking in knowledge and new ideas — after that, we have to summarize the real meaning of what we have learned. What is of importance? What is the meaning behind it? What is its real essence? We try to summarize all of this through contemplation.

The third wisdom is what we call, “the wisdom of meditation.” After contemplating we have to meditate in order to bring this knowledge, this wisdom into experience, to become alive. So number three is the wisdom of meditation, which is very important.

When I was young, at first, I studied Buddhist philosophy books. Some are very big, and there are so many different topics on a page, and also numbers, a lot of numbers. I would study, and study, word-by-word, but then, by the next day I had forgotten. At the end of the course, I knew each word but had forgotten the beginning part. So I asked my teacher: “I have this problem. What should I do?” The teacher said: “You are missing the contemplation.” Of course, you have to study, but at the same time, at the end of the day, you have to summarize what you have learned, especially the main message. Although there are so many numbers and different topics, all of them support the main topic. If you are clear about the big topic, it will really benefit you. Later I did that, and it really helped me.

For example, although I learned about impermanence — there are so many details about impermanence, how everything is coming together through causes and conditions, etc. However, in everyday life, when we are facing a problem, a difficult situation, we completely forget about impermanence, we are just the same as usual. That is the lack of the third wisdom, the wisdom of meditation. You really need to apply the practice of meditation in order for it to become an experience.

Another example is when you are learning how to drive a car: When you go to the class, the professor teaches you how to drive a car, and you learn on a screen from a PowerPoint presentation. If you want to drive a car, you need this point, that point, and there are gears, a wheel, an accelerator, and brakes. If you learn all of these things but do not apply them and experience them, then you will never learn how to drive. Therefore, the third wisdom is to bring the knowledge alive. Meditation is really important.