

Pema Chodron

### **Biography**

- Ane Pema Chodron was born Deidre Blomfield-Brown in 1936 in NYC
  - o Attended school in Connecticut and college at Berkeley
  - o Elementary school teach in New Mexico and California
  - o Two children and three grandchildren
- Studied under Lama Chime Rinpoche'
  - o Novice nun in 1974 while studying in London with Chime
  - o At this time also received ordination from His Holiness the Sixteenth Karmapa
- Root Guru Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche-under him made her most profound connection
- Received the full Bikshuni ordination in the Chinese lineage of Buddhism in 1981
- Served as director of Karma Dzong in Boulder until moving to Cape Breton, Nova Scotia (Gampo Abbey)

**Highly touched upon Teachings:** A great emphasis placed on compassion

- **Bodhichitta** (explanation) Buddha said: easier to understand than to translate
  - o Chitta- mind, heart or attitude. Bodhi- awake, enlightened or completely open. Open heart and mind often called the *soft spot*, equated with our ability to love
  - o Also equated with compassion- our ability to feel the pain that we share with others-which we often try to shield to avoid pain
  - o Analogy: *A Broken Heart*: rawness of a broken heart gives birth to anxiety, anger, panic, and blame, but under the hardness of these shield is a genuine sadness, which is our link with all of those who have ever loved. When understood and accepted this hardness can humble us and teach us compassion.
  - o 4 qualities: maïtre, compassion, joy and equanimity: all expand upon bodhichitta
  - o Based on two levels
    - Unconditional- having a good feeling about something for no reason
    - Relative- ability to keep our hearts and minds open to suffering with out shutting down
  - o Bodhisattvas- those who train in awakening both forms, also means warriors- nonaggressive- e.g fight for relief of suffering for all like MLKJ or Mother Teresa
- Practice of compassion
  - o Nurturing our ability to feel compassion awakens bodhichitta
  - o Imaging ourselves in the place of others who are suffering

- 7 Steps: Wish others could be free from suffering, wish ourselves free from suffering, awaken compassion for a friend, move on to “neutral people”, move on to difficult persons, bring all five together, extend it out to all beings
- “Idiot Compassion” can’t bear to see someone suffer so you give them what they want. This is not helping them it is giving them what they want so that you do not have to suffer by watching them suffer.
- Parents
- **Tonglen practice** in regards to showing compassion towards other people
  - Method for connecting with suffering-ours as well as that which is around us- method for overcoming fear of suffering and for dissolving tightness of our heart
  - Tibetan Word literally means sending and taking
  - Four Stages
    - Brief moment of stillness or openness
    - Visualizing and working with space surrounding us, breathing in the qualities of what confines us and breathing out openness
    - Breathing in what is unwanted breathing out relief
    - Extending our compassion out to all beings