

## *To Refresh Our Understanding: Part 2*

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*(spontaneous instruction given to students visiting on April 9th, 2017, who made the aspiration at that time that these precious reminders be made available to all in order to be of the greatest benefit)*

All sentient beings, each one of them has the buddhanature. Maybe someone, oh, their buddhanature is dirty, or their buddhanature is tired, or old or rotten after so many years? No, that is not possible. Buddhanature is the same buddhanature, the same buddhanature in all ten directions, the enlightened mind qualities of all buddhas of the ten directions. That is the very nature of our own mind.

Who has buddhanature?

All sentient beings have buddhanature.

What are the qualities of that buddhanature, the qualities of enlightened mind?

They are the qualities of liberation from samsara and attainment of perfect omniscience. Those qualities, they are already indwelling as our buddhanature. Our buddhanature is the cause for our eventual enlightenment, and at the time of our enlightenment it will be the result, it will be the enlightenment itself. It is the seed now and it will be the fruit at the time of fruition. It is the Buddha's nature and all buddhas' nature; it is *deshek nyingpo* in Tibetan, the nature or essence of all sugatas. It is not the essence of go-go ladies; it is not the essence of playboys. All qualities of enlightened body, speech, mind, qualities, and activities are fully present in our buddhanature, as our buddhanature. All we need to do is eliminate the clouds of obscurations that are covering them over. These clouds make it so we can't see, so we can't access those buddhanature qualities. Although they are there, although they are our very essence itself, our obscurations cover them so to us they cannot fully blossom—we are blind to the expression of our own nature. Stage by stage, slowly, slowly, what we need to do is clear away the clouds of our temporary obscurations, the clouds of the passions, the clouds of the poisons, the clouds of the afflictions. Just like when a wind blows away the clouds from the sun and the sun can shine freely, that is precisely the process of us engaging in the purification of negativity on the path until our buddhanature shines forth boundlessly.

Someone can be a scholar, even a great scholar, but without faith all they can do is blahblahblah. Sure they can blahblahblah lots, but they will never develop real qualities because for them the dharma will always be a joke. When this is how we practice, treating the dharma like a joke, we are not opening our buddhanature. We are only covering it up more and more. We are only making our obscurations deeper and deeper, heavier and heavier. Instead, as we practice what should be happening is all the qualities of our buddhanature should be emerging more and more. As we come to understand the enlightened qualities, our faith should increase, and through that, slowly our own qualities should increase. They should become more visible, more manifest, more apparent. They should blossom forth more and more powerfully. Our pride should decrease! All of our five poisons—aversion, desire, ignorance, jealousy, pride—these should all decrease. These passions and negative emotions, they should all decrease. Their opposites, our qualities, they should all increase, and deepen

and strengthen. Our compassion, our loving kindness—there is nothing beyond that! Our bodhicitta, our faith—what qualities could be beyond these? These unsurpassable qualities are what should be strengthening and deepening in our minds as we progress on the path.

We hear first with our ears about the qualities of the Buddha's enlightened body, speech, and mind. We receive empowerment, transmission, and instruction. Slowly, slowly, our own understanding of those qualities begins to deepen. Slowly, slowly, the teachings we are receiving on the Buddha's qualities of enlightened body, speech, and mind start to sink in. We learn about how the Buddha practiced single-pointedly for three inconceivable, incalculable eons in order to cultivate the qualities that he displayed. If we come to understand the qualities of even a single pore on the Buddha's sublime body, that will open the door to our understanding of all enlightened qualities, or all qualities of enlightened body. Or, if we come to understand the qualities of even a single syllable of the Buddha's speech, or a single quality of the Buddha's enlightened mind, those understandings open the door to our understanding of all qualities of enlightened body, all qualities of enlightened speech, all qualities of enlightened mind. Likewise, when we understand the qualities of one buddha, we understand the qualities of all buddhas. The buddhas are not separate. You don't have to understand the qualities of the buddhas of the future, the present, and the past separately! The buddhas of the three times, their qualities are inseparable. You don't need to go searching for the qualities of the buddhas of each of the three times separately in three different places.

When we say NAMO BUDDHAYA, we are paying homage to and taking refuge in the qualities of all buddhas. When we say NAMO DHARMAYA we are paying homage to and taking refuge in the qualities of all buddhas' enlightened speech or teachings, which are the dharma. And, when we say NAMO SANGHAYA we are taking refuge in and paying homage to the qualities of all sangha, which correspond to the buddhas' bodies. Body, speech, and mind all are included when we say NAMO BUDDHAYA, NAMO DHARMAYA, NAMO SANGHAYA. The body, speech, and mind qualities of all buddhas in the ten directions and the three times are all included.

Since the qualities of enlightened body, speech, and mind of all buddhas are of a single nature, if you are able to rest in equipoise upon those qualities, then those qualities will become yours—you will attain those for yourself. Even if you realize only the qualities of one pore on one buddha's body, if you have faith in that, it opens the door so that all qualities of the enlightened bodies of all buddhas can be realized. Because all are inseparable! Having real, pure faith and confidence in the qualities of one pore on one buddha's body, all empowerment, all transmission, all instruction, all pure vision, all that one could receive, those qualities are all included there. All the qualities of one's own ultimate enlightenment, one's liberation and full omniscience, they are all there, present, now blossoming forth based on that one realization.

But, if you get some little intellectual understanding of the buddhas' qualities and then you pop up with arrogance, then you have really ruined yourself. Then your understanding of the sublime dharma has been completely tainted by the eight worldly concerns, like falling into the sewer. That is the sign that you are not progressing properly on the path. If you are progressing properly on the path, your faith will increase rather than your arrogance.

At the moment, we waste our buddhanature and its qualities because of not knowing it, not recognizing it. If we are going to waste our own qualities of liberation and omniscience, then what? What result are we going to get if we refuse to create the causes of liberation and omniscience? If we are not creating those causes, then what causes are we creating? We are creating the causes of further delusion, the causes of the six realms of samsara and all its inconceivable sufferings. This is what the lamas say. This is what the unsurpassable sublime lamas say, so we need to understand it and consider it carefully. We need to understand karma, the law of cause and result. That way we will know what is the cause of samsara and what is the cause of enlightenment.

If we want to receive a real empowerment, that means we need to really understand the enlightened qualities of the buddhas. If we understand the qualities of the buddhas' enlightened body, beyond movement, separation, or change, then we will receive the empowerment of enlightened body. It is the same with enlightened speech and with enlightened mind. If you know the buddhas' qualities, even just one sublime quality of one buddha, if you know that, then that is the blessing and empowerment, the transmission and instruction that you will receive. Actually, all the countless buddhas' qualities are inseparable—if you realize one buddha's qualities, you realize all buddhas' qualities. Likewise, all the qualities of a single buddha are also inseparable. You can't say that someone just knows the Buddha's enlightened body, or enlightened speech, or enlightened mind. No, no, no. Enlightened body, speech, mind, qualities, and activities are all inseparable. If a buddha is really a buddha and not "buddha" in name only, then their qualities are like that: all qualities inseparable as one. That means you don't need to realize each one separately—first all the qualities of the body or just one part of the body, and then another, and then more until you realize them all. No. If you understand just one quality of a single hair on one buddha, then your faith in that whole buddha increases. Your faith in all buddhas increases. Your faith in all the objects of refuge increases. That is what we should understand, that is what we really should get right in our understanding. If we do, that is real generation stage.

When we say "buddha" here, we are not just talking about Buddha Shakyamuni. We can be talking about Buddha Shakyamuni, sure, but also Vajrasattva, or Vajrakilaya, or any deity. They are all buddhas, even the wrathful ugly ones. Ugly, pretty, handsome—they are all buddhas. Actually, our ideas of ugly, pretty, and handsome mean absolutely nothing. Enlightened qualities are enlightened qualities, all-pervasive.

Even the elements themselves are the five buddhas or the five dakinis. We say that the earth is the dakini called *Buddha Lochana* in Sanskrit, or *Sangye Chenma* in Tibetan. We say that is the nature of earth. That is earth pure in its place. Or we say that the nature of water is *Mamaki*, and so forth. These are buddhas. Buddha Lochana or Mamaki, these are buddhas. These dakinis, they are buddhas. We say the nature of fire is the dakini *Gokarmo* or *Pandaravasini*; the nature of wind is the dakini *Samayatara* or *Damtsik Drolma*; the nature of the five elements is the five dakinis or the five buddha families. These are all buddhas. When we say, "I take refuge in the Buddha," they are all included there. Even our bodies, our own flesh and blood and so forth, are also composed of the five elements. Their nature is the five dakinis, too. There is no difference.

If we know well that this inseparable nature pervades all that is composed of the elements, then that will inform our understanding, expand our understanding a little bit more when we go for refuge. However well we understand the outer, inner, and secret qualities of the enlightened state when we go for refuge, that is how much those blessings will enter our minds. That is how deep our refuge will be. That is the level of empowerment, transmission, and instruction that we will receive.

When we say “instruction” or “I received instruction,” that instruction is really an introduction. You are introduced; you come to know something. If you know these points well, if you come to know the qualities of the buddhas well, if you come to know the qualities of the dakinis that are the nature of the elements well, what is there to know beyond that? What is there to know beyond the qualities of the enlightened nature itself?

If we have faith then we can understand how good and bad are both included in this. Look at everything, view everything, hold the view with regard to everything. All good things are the qualities of enlightened body, speech, mind, qualities, and activities welling forth. All bad things are that too, if you know. All buddhas—or you can call them lamas, yidams, dakinis, dharma protectors—if you know their nature, then you know that all that we would call “good” and all that we would call “bad” are both encompassed in these. If you really understand the qualities of enlightened body, speech, and mind, then you see how all phenomena, both what we would call good and what we would call bad, are encompassed within them.

If you don’t know, if you fail to understand that nature, then even a billion buddhas will do you no good. Then even a billion buddhas are finished before they even start, because you will never come to see their nature without that understanding.

Everyone likes to talk about dzogchen. What is this dzogchen really? What is its real essence? It actually means knowing the qualities of the buddhas’ enlightened body, speech, and mind. Actually, if you know the qualities—outer, inner, and secret—of one pore of one buddha, that is the very same nature of all qualities of all buddhas, of all phenomena of samsara and enlightenment. All million billion buddhas, their nature is the same. So, if you know the qualities of one pore on one buddha’s skin, if you have faith in the qualities of that one pore on that one buddha’s skin, then you are having faith in all buddhas, you are realizing the qualities of all buddhas. I’m not talking about Columbian go-go girls or American big butt go-go girls. I am talking about the enlightened nature.

Try, stage by stage with faith and trust.

*[to be continued...]*

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