

All These Buddhas: What Are We Talking About?

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May 23rd, 2019

Rinpoche was looking at photographs of a giant statue of Buddha Shakyamuni in Bhutan.

Look at that Buddha, a giant one! Actually what is Buddha? ‘Buddha’ means we are talking about our nature. That means the nature of our own mind. Our buddhanature. Not a statue made of sticks and stones. The nature of enlightened body, speech, mind, qualities, and activities—we do have that. We don’t know, though! The reason why? We don’t want to accept it. Why? We are just stupidly self-centered. And we don’t even know how to be really self-centered, either! We just go the wrong way, that’s it!

But if we recognize our own rigpa, then we are quite liberated. Why? Because we are liberated from what we didn’t understand. Liberated doesn’t mean you get a blanket or some kind of cover. It has to do with whether you accept what is your own, or not. How can we accept our nature? Do you have to be smart to accept it, is that what it means? No. You don’t need to be smart. Just accept it.

We say buddhanature, buddhanature, buddhanature—*deshek nyingpo* in Tibetan. What does that mean? What is this buddhanature that we dumb guys have? It means our own dumb guy nature is the real buddha. Therefore, in the future we can be liberated when we accept or recognize it. How come we’re so dumb, we don’t accept ourselves?

That is why we need to practice: generation stage, which relates to Buddha’s body, and completion stage, seeing everything is Buddha’s speech. Of course Buddha’s mind, qualities, and activities are there, too. Hopefully, we can recognize this more, more, more, more, more... Then ‘recognizing’ nothing. Just yourself is there. That means yourself is liberated. You understand your real self finally.

But we don’t accept that! It’s difficult! I don’t! If somebody asks, “You are the Buddha?” I say, “No way!” Actually, could be. That’s what we need.

Therefore, we need to practice, first lying to ourselves, slowly, slowly. “What are you practicing?” “I am practicing Shakyamuni.” “What is that?” “A million buddhas, thousand buddhas, countless buddhas.” “Everything’s buddha?” “Well...maybe that’s *too* much! Maybe you’ve gone too far.”

How come too far? The nature of the five elements—earth, air, fire, wind, and space—are the five dakinis! They are buddha! You think you can refuse to accept that and still be liberated? Good luck! Actually, more than ‘good luck!’ that kind of thinking is like ‘eat shit’ as far as liberation goes. You won’t get one tiny hair in the direction of liberation.

But if we can trust ourselves and respect ourselves, we can liberate ourselves. Of course, not in an ego way. Naturally we respect ourselves in an egotistical way, thinking “I am something special!” but actually we are nothing, and that idea just screws us up. Drop that one. ‘Trust yourself’ means you see, you recognize. Don’t think you are something special or wonderful, just recognize what is there. Open your eye. See yourself. Buddhanature is not proud to be something. The reason? Because there are no five poisons.

The ‘buddha’ in ‘buddhanature’ is *deshek*, which is short for *dewar shekpa*, or *sugata* in Sanskrit. *Dewar* is peaceful or wonderful. *Shekpa* means gone, people usually say. But actually it means you haven’t gone anywhere, and nothing has come from anywhere, either. It means recognizing your own face. “That’s me.” You don’t need to be proud or jealous. The million buddhas are also all the same! You don’t need to jump anywhere.

You are the same as all the buddhas, but instantly you question: “Why are we like that?” Again you don’t accept it. Oho, you’re so smart! Screwing yourself up again! That’s the way we go, again and again.

Rigpa—that is, your *own* rigpa, not someplace else—is the dharmakaya. And then, where’s the samboghakaya? Your breath. Your speech, the wind element. Then your body is nirmanakaya. Body is nirmanakaya, speech is sambhogakaya, and the nature of the mind is dharmakaya.

You might ask, if the body is nirmanakaya, why didn’t it become sambhogakaya or dharmakaya instead? It’s not separate! It’s like calling your body “my body.” What is your body? It is what you are using to do things in this life. You call it “me.” You don’t need something extra or separate from that. You say you have your body, your speech, and your mind. Everything is yours. None of those are separate from you. Just different names of things but they belong to the same person. In the same way, the body is nirmanakaya, but it is the same as rigpa.

Is rigpa something you can hold? Something you can grab? No. Just recognize. Right now you recognize yourself as a lady, for example. Is it true? No. That lady’s mind is dharmakaya. Dharmakaya is not a lady, sorry! Her speech is sambhogakaya. Why? Because of her breathing. Her wind element is there. That shows sambhogakaya. Her body is nirmanakaya. Why? Because form is appearing. Now that ‘lady’ is just three kayas. Why don’t you accept that?

You accept your body is a ghost, your speech is a harmful spirit, your mind is a demon! It looks like you accept that. Or maybe you accept that your body is sort of a tulku but a go-go tulku. Forget it! That is really upside down. That is what we accept all the time. We accept ordinary phenomena—ordinary means upside down. Wrong way.

Buddha’s body is nirmanakaya. Buddha can have a body, a form. We think it would be something different than this tree for example—but its nature is the same. Its nature is not different at all. We just have ordinary phenomena. We think this is an ordinary tree, nothing to do with a buddha. That means we’re forgetting the five elements are the nature of the five families of buddhas! That means every piece there is buddha!

But forget about recognizing that—instead we protest and yell, “No! I am not a buddha! My name is Gyatrul! This is *my* body! I am this thing and that thing!” We think we are really smart and get proud, like we really are winning something, holding all of our upside down ordinary phenomena. The bottom line? Your name is Constipated, if your thinking is so uptight like that. Your name is Stuck!

If you look at any statue or buddha image, is it showing a man called Buddha? No. It’s showing our *own* nature’s qualities. What do we want? We want to be buddha, to become that. That’s our nature: buddha.

Do I accept that? No. I’m sort of a wrong way sentient being. All beings are like that.

-Gyatrul