

By Video Call to Ojai, Part 2:

On Buddhanature

Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche

December 11th, 2016

On December 11th, 2016, Rinpoche video-called the Ojai sangha when they were gathered for their weekly ngondro practice, and in the course of his conversation with the sangha gave the following practice advice:

So, what do you think? Do you think that there are lots of Vajrasattvas and lots of Guru Rinpoches? Actually, if you think that, in one way you are right. Because how many sentient beings are there? And each and every sentient being has the buddhanature, the nature of the sugatas. Each and every sentient being, the nature of their consciousness is buddha, awakening itself, if they recognize it. Their body, speech, and mind are the enlightened body, speech, and mind of all buddhas, if they recognize them. That is why we have to practice recognizing that nature.

How do we practice that? We practice by remembering that the nature of all forms that arise is enlightened body. The nature of all sounds we hear is enlightened speech. The nature of all thoughts that come into our mind is enlightened mind itself. Then, when we are practicing different deities, it doesn't matter which deity we are practicing: Vajrasattva, Guru Rinpoche, Buddha Shakyamuni, Amitabha ...it really makes no difference. We think there are so many differences, but that is because we are sentient beings. We are all different, and so we need seemingly different connections to the state of buddhahood, our buddhanature. We think there really are differences between the deities, and then we like some and we don't like others.

Why are there so many kinds of deities? Because there are so many kinds of sentient beings, and they each like different kinds. Some sentient beings like male deities, some female; some like white ones or red ones or black ones. There is no end to our desire. We are never satisfied, and therefore there is no end to the many manifestations of the enlightened nature. Always remember that all of these myriad manifestations, these myriad appearances, their nature is the one enlightened nature. That is the buddhanature. All the buddhanature is the same. That is the buddhanature of every sentient being. There is no being anywhere throughout the whole world, throughout all of existence itself, who does not have the buddhanature.

If we think about that for a second, then we have to recognize: Wait a minute! If the nature of all these beings is buddhanature, then that means the nature of this place itself is the buddhas' own pure realm. That means that there is no better place to go, is there?

If you put it very, very simply: All sentient beings have the buddhanature. That is simple enough, isn't it? That is not just something I am saying, either. It is something that all the great masters of the past have said. They say sentient beings pervade all of space, and every sentient being is pervaded by buddhanature. Who are those sentient beings? We are! Since every being has the buddhanature, that means each of us has buddhanature, without doubt. That is why we need to hear the dharma, study the dharma, contemplate the dharma, meditate upon the dharma, and practice the dharma ...with more and more faith, more and more understanding, more and more devotion. As much as we can!

Because this is the only way that our buddhanature will grow up—slowly, slowly, step by step and stage by stage. Like a flower developing into a fruit. A plant begins to grow from a little sprout, and then from that great broad green leaves develop, and from those there come beautiful flowers, and then the flowers become fruit and ripen. That is just like the process that will happen in your mindstream as you connect with and familiarize yourself with your buddhanature.

There is no sentient being in all the world who does not have buddhanature as the very nature of their mindstream at this moment. If we understand that, the realm of this world is no ordinary realm. The beings here are not ordinary beings—they are filled with buddhanature. We are sentient beings, aren't we? Therefore, we have the capacity, that seed, that possibility of full blossoming and full fruition into complete and perfect buddhahood. Think about that. Guru Rinpoche, he doesn't lie. All the buddhas of the ten directions, they don't lie. They wouldn't lie to you. They don't lie to you. They have not lied to you. They are the ones who say each and every one of us have the buddhanature. Therefore, we need to do all that we can in order to bring forth the indwelling qualities of that nature.

You can't say that you don't have lamas—you do have lamas. You have incredible root gurus. Look at the lamas—so many who have come and you have had the opportunity to meet them, even in this very lifetime. Lamas such as Dudjom Rinpoche or Penor Rinpoche: these are real emanations of the buddhas and the emanations of Guru Rinpoche himself. Our opportunity is that we have had the chance to connect with them. This means that now in our own mindstreams we have the chance to ripen or mature or bring forth the qualities of that buddhanature. We can do that. We have the seed of buddhanature because we are sentient beings. Now, having encountered the dharma, we have the methods by which we can grow that seed. We can sprout and grow that seed and bring it to full blossoming and fruition.

These lamas we have had the chance to connect with, they are inconceivable—real emanations of Guru Rinpoche and Buddha Shakyamuni, real holders of that same

lineage. Dudjom Rinpoche, Yangthang Rinpoche, Penor Rinpoche—inconceivable lamas! And, of course, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who is still with us, and the Karmapa. All of these are emanations of the buddhas. That means any connection we have with them can bring our liberation. Even just to see them, their form, is liberation through sight. Even just to hear them teach, that would be liberation through hearing. If they touch us, for example when giving empowerment, that would be liberation through touch. If we partake of dudtse or other substances that they have blessed, that would be liberation through taste. That they can plant the seeds of liberation in our mindstream just through a mere connection with them—even the sight of them, even the sound of their voices—we should recognize and appreciate such extraordinary qualities of these great masters. Think about these things again and again so you can truly rejoice in the qualities of these living buddhas.

Anyway, everybody try. You have buddhanature, therefore you have the opportunity to ripen your own buddhanature for all sentient beings' benefit. Therefore, try to step by step practice. OM BENZAR SATTO HUNG, OM MANI PEME HUNG, OM AH HUNG BENZAR GURU PEMA SIDDHI HUNG—whatever you can. Don't get stuck. For example, in India there are the yellow hats, the red hats, such and such of this and that group. I don't think hats have anything to do with liberation. Don't get stuck there. Whether red or black or green or square or round or ball-shaped, it doesn't matter which. What matters is that you have the buddhanature. We don't need to borrow it, we don't need to buy it, we don't need to steal anything. We do have it! If you don't practice, then you are going the opposite direction from your own buddhanature. Isn't that the case? Isn't that scary, that we go that way? The wrong way?

Buddhanature—you have it. Then you don't recognize that or care about that, and you need something else. What? Business! Or a lady! Or a guy! Something! This or that, anything! Don't waste your buddhanature like that! Please, don't waste. Time to practice a little bit. OM BENZAR SATTO HUNG, OM MANI PEME HUNG, NAMO BUDDHAYA NAMO DHARMAYA NAMO SANGHAYA, that kind of practice. Everything, whatever you are reciting, it is the same. If you say OM BENZAR SATTO HUNG, you connect to millions and millions of countless buddhas. If you say NAMO BUDDHAYA NAMO DHARMAYA NAMO SANGHAYA, same thing: you connect to countless buddhas. In Tibetan we say 'deshek nyingpo,' buddhanature. 'Deshek' or 'dewarshekpa' is sugata or buddha. Those who have awakened to joy, who have become enlightened. 'Nyingpo' is essence.

Therefore, everybody try, step by step. You are trying right now. I really appreciate it. I am really happy, more than if you were to give me a million dollars or one dollar. I do like even one dollar, anything, but the bottom line is which one is going to benefit? OM

BENZAR SATTO HUNG is going to benefit. NAMO BUDDHAYA NAMO DHARMAYA NAMO SANGHAYA is going to benefit. That way try.

Don't mix up this religion and that religion. Actually, one way, if you want to mix up everything, all the religions, if you understand the nature, that they are really oneness, then all sentient beings have buddhanature.

...Anyway, everybody has buddhanature. I'm not the one saying this. All the buddhas, Guru Rinpoche, Shakyamuni, all enlightened beings, they say we have buddhanature. What they have, we have. Don't forget that.

Whatever Shakyamuni has, buddhanature, all the buddhas' qualities are there. Body quality, speech quality, mind quality, outer, inner, secret, nothing is left out, even one speck of dust. Even this pumpkin head guy, nothing is wasted or beyond buddhanature. Everybody has the same thing, everybody has that kind of buddhanature. Then what are you waiting for? Buddhanature is there! Is somebody lying? No. Guru Rinpoche said it, Shakyamuni said it, all the high lamas say it: we do have buddhanature. Therefore, we can be liberated.

One stalk of rice, it has the power or nature that a whole field can eventually be filled with rice. That kind of way, like one grain of rice, that way we have buddhanature. If we take care of that buddhanature nicely, not just hiding it, then everything can come from that. Don't hide it with your ignorance. It needs to come out. How? With practice. Don't waste it. You worry about wasting your money? You say you have millions and millions of dollars' worth of gold, billions and billions; or diamonds that I don't even know the price of. "This price is—whoa!—*priceless!*" This and that, blah, blah, blah—hey, hey, hey! That is important, wonderful, yes, but! **BUT!** What about human body, speech, and mind? Are all your millions of dollars going to bring you buddhahood? Are they going to take you to heaven? Give me a break! You have buddhanature, buddha. If you ignore that and jump into the garbage, then what?

...Hey, I can hear someone is leaving a message on the telephone! Hey, if you have buddhanature, or you don't have it, I don't care! I'm not talking to you. Who are you, anyway? Look at their big ego, talking and talking! Big ego means big ignorance. Big ego, big ignorance, big desire, big jealousy, all the five poisons sparkling! Scary!

Anyway, nice to see you guys. Nice to see you, but the most important is the practice. Slowly, you need to practice. OM BENZAR SATTO HUNG, that is fine. Or OM MANI PEME HUNG, that is fine. NAMO BUDDHAYA NAMO DHARMAYA NAMO SANGHAYA ... that is fine. OM TARE TAM SOHA, that is fine. Whatever you can. The lamas have given you lots of initiations, and those lamas are not just simple or shallow

guys. Yangthang Rinpoche was Vimalamitra's emanation; Penor Rinpoche, same thing. Everybody step by step, OK? We need to try, step by step.

Everybody try. You don't need to search for it. You don't need to buy it. You don't need to steal it. What? You have it. You have buddhanature; therefore, you can practice, you can achieve the buddha. I'm not the one saying these things. I don't have anything, power or anything. But you guys practice because all the lamas say that, and why would they need to lie? They say buddhanature pervades all sentient beings. Not only you guys, but all beings. Everybody practice, with faith, and you will liberate yourself, because you have buddhanature, which will ripen as buddha. If we ignore that and then we pretend we are so smart, such scholars, so slick? Then what?

What is that? Oh, you are taking pictures? Pictures are very important but more important than pictures is what you have, what is your own. You don't need to steal anything, you don't need to grab anything, you don't need to take any picture, because you have buddhanature. Buddha! Buddhanature means buddha! Doesn't it? Like your human nature: do you need to steal your human nature from someone? How are you going to? Wake up! These are your own things. Stage by stage, we need to go.

I just have a big mouth. I am here talking to you guys, under my ten blankets ...of ignorance. There still. Therefore, we need to try. We need to try.

Shashi wants to show you the Vajrasattva statue. She isn't satisfied that everybody is the buddha, possessing buddhanature! Why am I saying buddhanature? All the lamas, all the buddhas, they say buddhanature. But she isn't satisfied, of course—look at her butt! Such ego!

Everybody try, stage by stage. If you are alone, or if you have a friend—a few, one, two, three, doesn't matter. All sentient beings are your friend. They have the buddhanature. We are not alone. Try, everybody.

You can call these nasty ladies, Shashi and Ila, you can talk to them. They really do know how to support you. On the telephone, when you have time and when they have time.

Don't forget, everybody has the buddhanature. You don't need to borrow it. You don't need to sneaky way steal it. You don't need anything—just recognize and practice. What are you going to practice? OM BENZAR SATTO HUNG. Simple. OM MANI PEME HUNG. Simple. OM TARE TAM SOHA. Simple. NAMO BUDDHAYA... Simple. Just recognize the buddha you have, recognize your buddhanature. What do you need to get, anyway? Are you going to ask, can I borrow your buddha? You don't need

anything like that. You don't need to borrow. You don't need to steal. You don't need to buy, or anything. You just have it in your pocket, your own money. You don't need to borrow. You don't need to ask. You don't need to steal. That is your endless merit. In all your past many lifetimes, all your merit has come from your buddhanature. Every sentient being, they have it. Therefore, everybody try. Don't be like me. Still I am sleeping on my bed, my mouth going blah, blah, blah with broken English, and upside down mind. That kind of way.

Anyway, I waste your guys' practice time! So sorry, you guys. Go for the practice, stage by stage. What are you practicing? Any deity—Guru Rinpoche or Vajrasattva or Tara or whatever—I am saying that deity is your buddhanature, which you have, your mindstream.

All sentient beings have buddhanature. Buddhanature pervades all sentient beings. If you don't recognize that, then you are born in the six realms of samsara and have to experience all the many various experiences and complications of those realms.

Many people say with their mouths, "Oh, buddhanature, buddhanature—buddhanature pervades all sentient beings." It is an easy thing to say. But the real buddhanature is enlightened body, speech, mind, qualities, and activities—the enlightened qualities of those who are the bliss-gone ones, the sugatas. The "bliss-gone," that means buddha. Our buddhanature or sugata nature is enlightened body, enlightened speech, and enlightened mind.

All enlightened body, speech, and mind that there is *is* this buddha, or buddhahood, or buddhanature.

If you recognize your buddhanature, it is this: It is enlightened body, it is enlightened speech, it is enlightened mind.

Think about that! If you have that buddhanature, you don't need any other. You don't need to go searching for any other buddhanature.

Guru Rinpoche is that—that very buddhanature. Vajrasattva is that. Tara is that. All of the buddhas, that is precisely what they are. Whether it is one buddha, or hundreds of buddhas, or thousands or millions or billions or countless buddhas. All of their nature is that same buddhanature. So, please think about that and train in that as much as you can.

If you can see me or not see me, that is nothing to do with it! Take care of what we have been talking about, this blah, blah, blah, that is the important thing! The meaning of that, stage by stage, practice that. You possess the buddhanature—what do you need, a

secret? Since you were born, until you die, obviously everybody has it. Obviously everybody is going to be disappointed, because we don't practice.

The seed, we do have it. Therefore, everybody try, practice, slowly, slowly. Recognize, not just spacing out. I saw lots of people "meditating" — spacing out, mouth open. Then, their posture... is interesting posture! You don't need that! If you open the big mouth or close the mouth...doesn't matter.

Easy to breathe, easy to sit! Then you don't need something more complicated. Then who are you, calm it down! That nature is the buddhanature. You think you need "meditation"? Postures? Eyes closed or big open, mouth can be only this way? And still you want your cigarettes? We don't need those things. Just be who you are. Recognize yourself. Buddhanature, you do have it. Then what do you need? We need liberation. That means buddha—you have it. Don't ignore it, that is embarrassing. Shameful. Therefore, try. How many empowerments did we receive? From Penor Rinpoche, Yangthang Rinpoche, Dudjom Rinpoche, Tulku Teglo, the Dalai Lama, and a whole bunch of others. We received everything. Then that's it! You got it! So sorry!

Good night everybody! Happy, happy practice!

Tashi Delek!

-Gyatral

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