

Introduction to Mahayana, Module XIII Class 5
Talk #2 Buddha Nature
May 12, 2016
The Complete Teachings of Mahayana
Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche
Notes by Michael Levin

This summary covers the thirteen paragraphs of the talk in order.

Summary of Talk 1: Experiencing the spark of intelligence or enlightenment within us. Feelings of inadequacy, pain and confusion are seen as neither good nor bad. The search for pleasure, material or spiritual is no longer convincing.

Dissatisfaction is the discovery of the First Noble Truth (duhkka).

Also the discovery of Buddha-Nature. The bad news is good news.

Discriminating awareness allows us to look at situations of life critically or hopefully, even to the point of searching for spirituality. Warmth is there even though we may condemn ourselves as being bad or weak or confused.

These virtues of intelligence may be entirely spiritually or psychologically materialistic ... the very driving force ... is the buddha-nature operating.

Taranatha talks about the embryonic awakened state of mind as being eternal, solid and permanent. Here Trungpa Rinpoche is agreeing with this controversial assertion. Whatever is confused must have the seed of what is enlightened within. (Elaboration follows.)

(1) Solid because it is unborn. No effort to give birth to buddha-nature, requires no parents. What does he mean by parents?

(2) Unobstructed. Not dependent on karma. (3) Non-dwelling because beyond good and bad.

Not a mystical experience, not obscure, just functional, simple, direct, intelligent, sane pragmatic. So intelligent that one cannot put a patch over irritation. One cannot find any comfort that is not temporary in samsara.

Many metaphors. Every metaphor has limits. Yet any one of them might help our mind to leap beyond concept. (1) Lamp whose brilliance is shining through an enclosing vase which can be broken bit by bit. (2) The sun which is obscured by clouds. (3) Treasure buried in the dirt beneath hut of poor person who does not realize that it is there.

All sentient beings are good vessels. None are excluded. Therefore one has no reason not to cheer up.

Taking the Bodhisattva Vow is acknowledging that one has a great many family characteristics of the Buddha. This family is called the Mahayana Family. It is a leap of courage to take this vow. We daring that we have within us something that is beyond the small self, and we are willing to let it mature no matter how long this might take. (We have some copies of the vow in class here.)

One of the foundations of Mahayana is realizing that complete enlightenment is not a myth. Before you think big, you have to think real.

View, path, fruition:

- Thorough examination of samsara, not giving in to ignorance.
- Energy to go forward beyond personal self there is no alternative.
- Humor, Courage, Equanimity, No regrets – In life and death.

Appendix: The Bodhisattva Vow
from The Bodhisattva's Way of Life by Shantideva
Chapter 3, verses 21 – 34

As earth and the other elements together with space,
Eternally provide sustenance in many ways for the countless sentient beings,

So may I become sustenance in every way for sentient beings
To the limits of space, until all have attained nirvana.

As the sugatas of old gave birth to the bodhichitta
And progressively established themselves in the training of a bodhisattva,

So I too, for the benefit of beings, shall give birth to bodhichitta
And progressively train myself in that discipline.

At this moment my birth has become fruitful; I have realized my human life.
Today I am born into the family of the Buddhas; now I am a child of the Buddhas.

From now on, I will forthrightly perform the actions befitting my family.
I will act so as not to degrade the faultlessness and discipline of my family.

Just as with a blind man finding a jewel in the heap of dust,
Thus, somehow, bodhichitta has been born in me.

This is the supreme amrita, which destroys death,
The inexhaustible treasure that removes the world's poverty.

It is the supreme medicine that cures the world's sickness,
The tree that provides rest for beings weary of wandering on the paths of existence.

It is the universal bridge on which all travelers may pass over the lower realms,
The rising moon of mind which dispels the torment of the kleshas.

It is the great sun which puts an end to the obscurity of ignorance,
The pure butter which comes of churning the milk of the holy dharma.

For travelers wandering the paths of existence seeking happiness from objects of enjoyment,
It is supreme bliss near at hand, the great feast which satisfies sentient beings.

Today, witnessed by all the protectors, I have welcomed the sentient beings and sugatas;
Devas and asuras rejoice!