

Introduction

The chapter you will read this month is a continuation of the text “Buddhahood Without Meditation.”

It records the visions of Dudjom Lingpa, a nineteenth century Buddhist Master. In each chapter, he has a vision and is given teachings on Vajrayana and Dzogchen. Through each chapter his realization grows. It starts with ordinary person’s mindset and continues through layers of the Buddhist view.

In this month’s reading. Vajrapani appears

Dudjom Lingpa asks:

Q: “does buddhahood imply awakening to enlightened being right here in my own immediate situation, or does it imply that there is some other place to go in order to become awakened?”

A: Vajrapani’s answer fills the entire chapter.

This text is a guide to use while reading this chapter to help keep track of the ideals.

Chapter Themes

What is Buddha?

What is Buddhahood?

What is the goal of the path?

Why does how I think about the goal matter?

I. Misconception Buddha = godly ideal

A. Characteristics

a. existence as a majestic person

b. handsome and attractive to behold, beautiful, someone you would never grow tired of looking at

- c. peaceful and lovely,
- c. someone living in some great spacious country

B. Refutation - the goal is not subject to origination, cessation or eternalism

The limitations of origination, endurance, cessation

- a. What is the origination then? If so who are the parents of such Buddhas?
 - a. if born = limitation of origination (it has an beginning, therefore it will end, this is the flaw of dualism)
 - b. if endure = they are subject to limitation of permanence (if it is permanent it never could become enlightened, this is the flaw of eternalism)
 - c. if they cease to exist = limitation of being fictional, non-existent nihilistic (if it is cessation, that is nihilism)
 - d. summary:
 - i. if a Buddha has these three qualities stated: origination, duration and cessation = then it can't be free of dualistic extremes
 - ii. sum: origination, duration and cessation are just appearances p71

C. Refutation – there are no fixed entities

If you treat what is pure and refined as truly existent,

- you bind yourself

ཡར་དག་པ་རྣམ་གྲང་གི་ཚུགས་སུ་ཡང་བདེན་པར་བརྒྱུང་ན་རང་གིས་རང་ཉིད་འཛིང་བར་འགྱུར་གྱི།

....you will bind your to a fixed self!

- a. (In other words: Belief in 'other' as a fixed entity = belief in self as a fixed entity)

D. Refutation – Samsara and Nirvana are just perceptual states

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If you hold samsara and nirvana as separate states/places

- a. then you are not seeing the Dzogchen view 'you do not believe samsara and nirvana are equal' (a core teaching of Dzogchen, that the fundamental

reality is what it is and samsara and nirvana are perceptual shifts in relationship to it)

b. then you fall into the trap of hope and fear (because we hope for nirvana and dread samsara, this puts us on the roller coaster of grasping)

c. then you will think there is a 'pure realm' which is real which will lead you to believing in a fixed self (To believe in a fixed self is the very cause of suffering, confusion)

E. Correct view- Buddha nature

(Later in the chapter Dudjom Lingpa describes the correct view – that our Buddha nature is already within us, 'buddha' refers to the ground of our being, that it doesn't begin or end, it is not eternal because it has an 'empty' present moment quality, like a sun that is always radiating, never rising, never setting, but never solid either, it is just made of light.)

II. Misconception: the Buddha is something constant; is something that truly exists (has a fixed self)

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A. Refutation – fallacy of fixed self

This does not transcend the belief in fixed self

B. Correct view- Buddha nature

(Later in the chapter Dudjom Lingpa describes the correct view – that our Buddha nature is already within us, 'buddha' refers to the ground of our being, that it doesn't begin or end, it is not eternal because it has an 'empty' present moment quality, like a sun that is always radiating, never rising, never setting, but never solid either, it is just made of light.)

III. Misconception: Buddhas and Sentient Beings are Different

A. Refutation – that's a contradicting statement

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If you describe the Buddha in the same terms as a human being, this

makes the buddha an ordinary sentient being.

(One cannot simultaneously assert the Buddha is different than sentient beings and that the Buddha is the same as sentient beings)

a. The eyes part = If you think a 'buddha' is a creature with eyes/ears etc (names all the six senses - sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, concept) and ordinary mind. (This describes a Buddha as a ordinary human being).

b. there is now a subject / object dichotomy because there is a being (the subject) who perceives things (the object)

i. so this implies the Buddha does not transcend subject and object

ii. or if not, then the qualities of a buddha could pass to others, just like ordinary traits can be passed

iii. Describing Buddha like a human being is saying that Buddha is actually a 'sentient being' (One cannot simultaneously assert the Buddha is different than sentient beings and that the Buddha is the same as sentient beings)

B. Correct View – “Buddha” is not a type of being, it is a perceptual state

(Later in the Chapter, Dudjom Lingpa will argue that what we think of as “Buddha” is actually a state of recognition)

IV. Misconception: Buddhas are ‘teachers’ who give ‘spiritual teachings’ to ‘others’

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A. Refutation – Contradictory

If we describe a Buddha like this, then this is exactly how ordinary sentient beings operate. (Can't say that Buddhas are sentient beings are different then say that Buddhas operate like sentient beings, that is a contradiction).

B. Correct view

As is said in the traditional texts, (The teacher is your own Buddha-nature is reflected to you)

IV. Misconception 4 Buddha = Godly ideal (revisited)

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A. Characteristics reviewed

Buddhas have a blissful environment, physical beauty, excellent companions, great wealth and happiness, absence of anger and attachment

B. Refutation – This ideal is really just a glorious human

Then this is how a sentient being is described, or how a god is described (so this is saying that buddhas are the same as sentient beings. One cannot say buddhas are different than ordinary beings and then also say they are different – this is a contradiction)

C. Correct View

(Buddhas are not a special type of godly, glorious being, 'buddha' refers to the intrinsic nature already inside you)

V. Correct View: Buddha is your already intrinsic ground of being

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A. Buddha = your nature

Your own inherent ground of being is what the term 'buddha' refers to (the 'bliss gone one of the three times' is a literal translation for the title of a buddha)

B. Refutation of origination

A buddha does not come into the world (therefore Buddhahood is not something that starts and ends, it cannot be gained and lost, it is our own intrinsic natural state which is beginningless)

C. Refutation of Buddha as other

Buddha giving 'teachings' - a teacher is a self-manifesting appearance that arises to teach the student

- (this argument is saying that the human teacher is just an inherently manifesting 'appearance' that arises as an ambassador of your buddha-nature)

VI. Mistaken view: Buddhahood is separate state or place

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(The idea repeats) A misconception of 'buddhahood' refers to other separate states of being, which existed as fixed realities or separate places

A. Characteristics

- a. That beings go to some other 'place' of pleasure (heaven or the god realm) or pain (the hell realm) after death

B. Refutation – these places don't really make sense

If the mental body (that which dies and is reborn through lifetimes) is a true body that goes to true places, what place does it go to between lives?

- a. if that true body was alive in the 'place' between lives (such as one of the six realms) and during this life, why don't the same rules govern the realms?
 - i. For example – if hell really exists - why can't a person be killed in the hell realm by burning and boiling, but they can be killed in this life?
 - ii. For example - why doesn't a hungry ghost die from starvation in the hungry ghost realm, if humans who exist die from starvation

C. Correct view in Conclusion: Hell is a State of Mind

- a. hell and heaven, hungry ghost realm and all the six realms are just mental states)

VII. Correct view – Samsara is Simply Mistaken Perception

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What makes beings confused or puts them in the six realms is that they become 'fixated' investing phenomena with truth

A. Empty Presence

In reality everything is unfolding like a dream (shift in states)

B. Everything is appearances

C. Everything is made of shifting states

everything is empty without 'objective' existence (dualized, or fixed existence)

D. Samsara and Nirvana are mind states

Terms like 'samsara' and 'nirvana' are partial truths (In reality, these terms just describe shifts in states, perceptual shifts)

VIII. Conclusion: What Makes A "Buddha"

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What liberates someone from samsara (what makes a buddha)

What leads to 'natural freedom of the many buddhas'?

A. Recognizing Emptiness

To recognize that phenomena lack true (fixed) existence

B. Recognize everything is appearances

C. Recognize there is no other place or separate state

everything is empty without 'objective' existence (instead everything is interdependent, Buddha-hood is something not separate than one's own phenomena)

D. Recognize Buddha-nature

to recognize that buddhahood is none other than your own inherent ground of being