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Enlightenment Is Within You

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Our Kagyupa teachings were established by Marpa. Marpa was a great enlightened person, the guru of Milarepa who is the most famous Yogi of Tibet. The initiation given today is the Guru Yoga initiation of Marpa. The benefit and the effect of this initiation is mainly the ripening of the seed of enlightenment which is within you. After you receive the Marpa initiation, all practice that you do will be successful and all obstacles will weaken. This blessing comes from the wish made by the great Marpa. When enlightened Bodhisattvas make wishes, they come true. This is how the blessing works.

Enlightenment is within you. Enlightenment cannot be just given to you by Buddha's hands. Enlightenment is within you because illusion is within you, samsara and all problems of the mind are within you. If illusion, negative emotions, samsara, whatever you call it, are part of your mind, then enlightenment is also part of your mind. When all problems subside, there is enlightenment. So enlightenment is within your mind. Dharma means methods - how to get enlightened. Dharma is the methods that you practice. When you accomplish the practice, the result is Buddhahood. Before you begin the Dharma practice you must know how important the Dharma is. The length of our life is determined by how long the physical body exists, not how long our mind exists. Mind will continue. Whatever good or bad happens in one's life, it is the result of past karma. That is why, collectively, we humans and all living beings in this universe, have the same collective karma, the same realm, the same type of nature, similar form, and we can communicate with each other. This is the result of collective karma. Individual karma is not equal. Some people are more lucky, some are not so lucky.

This individual difference depends on our own karma. Actually the whole universe including your form, is an illusion of your own mind and happened as a result of your karma - karma is also mind- but once it happened, it is solidly there until the cause is finished. When the cause is finished, then the result is like a dream disappearing and you will change from this illusion to another illusion according to another cause. Cause and result, just like that. No one knows what karma one has, what it results from and what comes next. You will not know what karma caused this life, what you are heading for, or what the result will be. Nobody can find it out. Because karma is accumulated, built up by your own negative emotions, it is invisible, it is not substantially formed. Since your negative emotions are invisible, you cannot see karma. The result, however, is visible because it manifests as an illusion. Because your negative emotions are part of your mind and karma is also part of your mind, the result, illusion, is also part of the mind.

Out of all three aspects only one is visible, but it is too late to change it. Whatever karma you accumulated is limitless because your past negative emotions are limitless. So you cannot make excuses that you didn't do anything wrong, because as long as your mind is in samsara, you are confused by negative emotions, and the accumulation of the karma you have created in the past has no limit. Among all kinds of karma, the strongest one, or the one ready to ripen, will give the result. The future is never certain, you do not know what karma will come up next. When you begin the Dharma practice by understanding this, you will have a very strong commitment and continue the practice. Among all humans, the ones who have already found the Dharma and have some understanding of the Buddha, have what we call a precious human life. Why is it precious? Because you found a solution in the mind. Yes, it is precious, and fortunately you made your life meaningful, but it is impermanent. You are aging with every moment. Without a solution like enlightenment, life has no meaning. Going through life

comfortably is a good idea and everyone's wish, but whether it will really turn out the way you want is uncertain. But if you are going through life applying the methods which lead you out of samsara's trap, then every moment is meaningful. Understanding this you should have a very strong intention. But intention is only the first step.

The second is knowing about Dharma. Probably people will not understand Dharma immediately, but by knowing the example of the Buddha they will develop the intention and want to learn the Dharma. Learning the Dharma is the second step. It is very important to learn from a person who knows the Dharma, then you receive the teachings in detail. Teaching is like when you want to go to San Francisco, you need directions and you study the map. An experienced person tells you how to get there. He may say, "This highway is longer," "This highway is shorter," and "Here you have to do this and you will find the place that you want." A qualified instructor is somebody who can teach you and show you the directions. It is the same with the Dharma. A person who knows the Dharma is the teacher, you should study the directions, and then you must go. Otherwise, why did you learn? And you must go properly.

For example, you may have very important work to do in Los Angeles. You have to get there at the right time. From the moment you leave your house and head toward Los Angeles, every minute is meaningful. You know the directions very well, you are going along in a meaningful way, and you will reach your destination, you will get what you want. Dharma practice should be like that. In Dharma practice you apply what we call paramitas (1).

Paramita means you managed to cross over, like crossing the ocean and reaching the other side. The Paramita of proper ethics for instance means, that when you drive to Los Angeles, you do not drink alcohol because you may get drunk and have an accident, and you do not sleep in the car, and you avoid all kinds of things which may bring obstacles. This discipline is required to make your journey successful. When you go through the practice and you apply the paramita of ethics, that means you are putting out all the effort to make your journey to enlightenment successful. Dharma practice is limitless. Enlightenment is beyond our imagination but our mind has the capacity to do the Dharma practice. If you make it concise, Dharma practice has three aspects. One main practice and two side practices.

The main practice is the meditation. Meditation is a common word but in the Buddha Dharma, meditation is about removing all our mind's problems. Samadhi is the realization of the nature of mind. Samadhi is meditation but the main focus is on the nature of mind. It is simple to say "nature of mind," but it is very difficult to realize it. The view of the mind nature is the main meditation and it eliminates all mental problems. By mental problems I don't mean abnormal problems, I mean negative emotions, ignorance. Ignorance is the main cause of all negative emotions and this view will focus on each of the negative emotions and eliminate them. In this way, you will be liberated. Of the two side practices, one purifies your karma, and the other develops merit - the support and strength to make your journey successful. So these two practices are methods and meditation is the main practice. In this way you will be enlightened. This is Dharma practice.

When you do the Dharma practice in this life, you must achieve something. You can get enlightened fully in this life, but even if you are a very slow mover, you must achieve something. Then the cause is solid and it will keep growing and, even if not in this life, then in the next lives you will get there. Otherwise, once this chance is lost and another karma ripens, you will lose this chance almost forever, because your past karma is probably not very good, otherwise you would not be in samsara now. As much as you have negative emotions, that much habit you had in the past, so nothing good can come out of it. That is how you can logically prove to yourself that the majority of your karma is not good because your negative emotions are still strong. Once you lose this chance you will lose it all the time. That is why this human life is precious and must not be wasted. The common problem is that people think, "I must achieve the results quickly, I cannot wait more than 5 or 6 years. Otherwise, I don't like it." But

otherwise, after 6 years what do you have in life? You have nothing else. You cannot achieve the results of the Dharma practice within 6 years. You simply cannot. But still you are doing something meaningful.

After 6 years, if you have another goal which you could achieve, then forget the Dharma and chose the other one. But the sentient beings' life has no other goal besides enlightenment. I am not trying to discourage you from being human, but there is no other thing to do in life. You can try to get rich, but then what? Suppose you can be a successful politician, become a president or something like that, but then what? The problem is the same, isn't it? There is no other goal to achieve. Dharma is the best. That's why I say that even if you are a slow mover, still, Dharma brings more meaning than anything else.

(1)The Six Paramitas are also called the Six Liberating Actions .

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