

Buddhahood Guaranteed

Teacher; All you need do is decide.

Student: What do you mean? Just because I decide, well, that doesn't change anything.

T; It changes your mind. What you experience, what you know, all of it is through your mind. Your mind is your reality, your experience, your observations are clear. It is when you allow your observations to filter through your mundane existence that your Karma applies stickiness to your thoughts, stickiness to your tendencies and conditions, your demands of "**being**" are the clinging of your thoughts.

S; So Karma is a sticky mind? Are you saying that it is Karma that keeps us in Samsara?

T: Karma is the transmutation of energy. From quiescent fluctuations that build variations of such subtle and pervasive fields, immeasurable and layered. Fluctuations express tendencies and create conditions, nested and nesting without termination until all potential interactions are expressed. This is the cosmos and all that is perceptible throughout. This is the process of **Life**. This is **Karma**. Every instance of that Karma is an expression, singularly, cumulatively, disperse or combined, to express newly nested variations. Earlier, we discussed the **Nidana**.

Those observations defined in the 12 linked causal chain identify this as the initial steps of inertia of tendencies and conditions. For some this is interpreted as a 'descent' from the divine to the mundane, or more simply, the transition from Tathagata to Samsara. Due to the scale of this initial state, pervasive and incalculable, differentiations form a rudimentary yet powerful force of inertial states like pressure, temperature, frequency, and inclination. This early 'inclination' resembles what we know as volition or desire, **desire** without aim other than to make visible, to make palpable, touchable, smell-able, taste-able, audible, identifiable. These are the beginnings of consciousnesses, the **Skandhas**.

But how to experience these consciousnesses. What vantage points must be created in order to manifest those variations of fields and to house the consciousness to perceive and identify these inertia of myriad expressed potential? From this point the Nidana walks us through the realms of form; eyes, ears, tongue, skin, and so on. We enter this realm of forms with an already fully developed "sense" of desire to observe, to experience the full spectrum of potential of our inertia, and we can name this sense, **Tathagata**. This is observation at its most pure or unmolested, without clinging or craving, but instead, like a first blush or excitement of experience with appreciation and joy and discovery. As these vantage points further delineate into separate entities and individuation, does this process of Karma also individuate into infinite aspects of the cosmos and represent unique paths of 'karma' for specific

accumulation of inertia and tendencies experienced within the collective cosmos, **individuals**. Here is the beginnings of **Samsara**.

As multitudes of individuated minds develop separate experiences and identifications of the processes of the cosmos and the **Engine-of-Life**, differences are given values as formative of individual identity. Comparative, collective, and distinguishing, all forms (things) become valued in the building of **Ego** and **Person**, leaving behind any notion of origin or unity. This quickly becomes a mind clinging to person, to a **Self**, and cravings to maintain that condition. This is Samsara. This is what I call a sticky mind. And yet, throughout this process the clear mind, the pure mind of Tathagata remains. Remember that **Nirvana** is the shutting down of this sticky mind of Samsara (a *revulsion*) to return to our fundamental Tathagata state to perceive with clarity this process of the cosmos, the Engine of Life.

S; How can one decide to do this without understanding the entirety of one's own individual path of karma? You suggest that each one of us has their own path of intricate tendencies and conditions; so how can I be guided by any other who's path or karma is a completely different experience or understanding than my own? And, for that matter, how can I myself recognize a change or a realization of Tathagata in my mundane sticky mind?

T; You might take just a moment to appreciate the lineage of great teachers available to you today. Also, Shakyamunibuddha was very clear that this Tathagata nature exist without restriction, without time, without diminished capacity within each and every sentient being and all life. Tathagata is a state of the cosmos. Tathagata is always active within your life experience. You were right to use the word "*realize*" when you asked about enlightenment.

The work that is before you is not to realize Tathagata (Buddhahood), but rather to replace your identity (*Self*) of Samsara with your already fully formed and realized Buddhahood. This work is only possible with a determination, a commitment, a decision.

S; Yes Sifu, I understand and have determined my life to live as Buddha in mind and throughout all my associations. But how? Is **meditation** the only way? **Study** helps me to understand the myriad concepts that clarify the obstacles I face in Samsara and the potential beauty to be experienced once enlightened, but how do I 'know' Tathagata?

T; You already 'know' Tathagata, as I have said. The obstacle is the **sticky mind**. To dissolve the sticky mind of clinging and craving, **Bodhisattva Nichiren** created some excellent tools for our specific era of Sticky mindedness. Culled from the 50 and more years of Shakyamuni's teachings, the stories and devices of insights for understanding the machinations of the mundane Sticky-mind of Samsara and to perceiving Tathagata, Nichiren collected those teachings to create a perfect **mandala** representing the full spectrum of the Buddha insights. Together, all these insights of the workings of the mind, the Samsaric obstacles, the stickiness of clinging and craving, the clarity and purity of the mind to perceive and experience reality with total absorption and freedom while using the very consciousnesses of our mundane

mind! The mandala is a tool to absorb our vision our focus, our voice, our sensations and thoughts on the release of Samsara as we delve into Buddha **directly**. This is the **objective of practice; to convert our full attention from sticky minded Samsara to wide open pure Tathagata**. Add to that our **invocation** of Buddhahood, providing complete integration into Buddhahood, **NaMuMyoHoRenGeKyo**, repeated rhythmically to control and express our **breathing, attitude and intent**, and you have a fully integrated whole of the Engine of Life in full expression. When we chant and focus our mind on mandala, we are in every moment engaging Tathagata with a pure mind of clarity and unencumbered by the sticky mind of Samsara.

S; But my mind wanders. I think of my problems or my needs even as I am chanting or looking at my mandala. Is it wrong to chant for things like money or passing a test or my love life?

T; This is the work! Think of it this way; you are in the position to enliven your Tathagata nature, your ultimate potential and joy-filled life; and that is not worth more than your mundane pleasures? Because you put on the same level of importance in your life, your enlightenment and your money or relationships, you fail utterly in holding your enlightenment in proper esteem. Is it not obvious to you that with enlightenment, all those mundane aspects of life are petty and meaningless?

Nichiren wrote that we must, “**...chant with the determination to meet Buddha.**” This is the only thought to have in mind when chanting. For this purpose there is no better aid than the mandala of the gateway to Tathagata. This practice and this way of the practice is your **guarantee** of enlightenment.

Love and respect,

NaMuMyoHoRenGeKyo

Sifu Sylvain