

~ Your True Nature ~

A Talk on Refuge and Buddha Nature

By Mingyur Rinpoche

The practice of absolute reality, especially in the Mahamudra tradition, is nature of mind practice. That is the practice of absolute reality. What is nature of mind? It is buddha nature, your true nature. One of the unique practices of Vajrayana is what we call, "Taking fruition as path." The meaning is that the fruition of your practice, dharma, and path is to achieve enlightenment, to become a buddha, that is your goal. For what purpose? To benefit countless sentient beings. To benefit all sentient beings and to help them, you want to become a buddha. Buddha is the fruition.

In Vajrayana practice, we especially emphasize that you are buddha right now, right here. It is not like buddha is somewhere in the future and right now you are not good, you are bad, and slowly, slowly you become better, and in the future you will become buddha, it is not like that. Buddha is within you right now, right here.

How do you see this buddha? This special practice called, "nature of mind," is to recognize that you are buddha, what we call, "pointing out teachings." If you are holding two big diamonds in your hands and you are playing with the diamonds. But, if you do not recognize your own diamonds, then, although you have these diamonds there is no benefit, you still look like you are poor.

So, how to deal with that? You have to recognize it. But you cannot recognize it (by yourself,) so someone has to introduce you to it. If you do not know what a diamond is, or if you have no idea what a diamond is, someone has to introduce you to it. The person may tell you, "This is a diamond." The person will point out your own diamond in your

hand. You see the diamond, you are looking at the diamond all the time, but the issue is knowing that "this is a diamond."

Similarly, we have a diamond-like buddha nature within us, and the pointing out teaching is there to point out your our true nature. This is nature of mind practice.

What is it that is being pointed out? That this nature of mind is buddha. In order to recognize your true nature as buddha, first you have to know what a buddha is. If you have no idea what a buddha is... "It sounds kind of nice, but I have no idea what a buddha is..." (Mingyur Rinpoche laughs.) In order to know what a buddha is, refuge is very important. You are learning what the external buddha is, and the external buddha is connected with the internal buddha. In order to become buddha, you have to recognize your true nature. In the past, all the buddhas recognized buddha nature. That is how they became buddhas. How to do that? Through dharma. Who is still holding this lineage in the world, right now? The sangha. I think I will go deeper into this later. The ultimate benefit here is the help to recognize pure awareness — the third awareness — which is your true nature, the buddha nature.