



HISTORY OF HOW BUDDHA BECAME ENLIGHTENED

Lama Nawang Kunphel

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INTRODUCTION AND SHORT MEDITATION.

Hello from Nepal, by the way, I still am at Nepal. This is my first time to be in the middle part of Nepal. I realize that this place is indeed a very special place for Buddhists, especially with lots of ancient related stupas, and many of the places around have very old stories related to Buddhism. I'm really happy to be here, at the same time, the three holy stupas that is quite known here. Among them, right now I'm just in about 100 meters away from *Boudhanath* or *Bouddha*, that's what they call.

Today, we will be talking because it's my very much related, we will be talking about the way Buddha has achieved enlightenment, and also I would like to go with the power of prayers. But before that, we will start with a short meditation then we will go through the, not really history, but more from inspiration point of view. I mean, the way Buddha achieved enlightenment can be elaborated in many different ways. But today we will go through few ways, few points which can be a bit helpful in our daily life practices.

Yeah, let's start with a short meditation. The medication will be definitely on the mind, the prayers, the power of prayers in the power of mind. We all know that we feel trembling when we are scared of something. So the fear is the mental, is a mind, when that mind activates, it influences the physical body. Similarly, the mind can pretty much influence not only our physical body, but outer physical world as well.

In Buddhism we say that everything is being projected by mind are definitely true, definitely it makes sense because as we have discussed about Solomon Islands, the way they die, the trees, or Masaru Emoto's water experiment and not only that, but there are lots of achievements that can be seen in a physical form, achievement of meditation. Let's have the subject, a prayer in the power of mind, as a subject of meditation. So let's have few minutes for meditation.

Try to have a deep breath, probably if you need just relax, the physical position is pretty much similar as all the time, but the main focus is the mind. Generally, I would say like you can keep the physical body as you feel comfortable, but if you are training, if you don't have any problem to keep your body in a meditation position, then yes, it's better to have the body in a meditation position because gradually it will really be helpful. Alright, so three,two,one...

[short meditation.....]

It's used perhaps the Nepal is once a Buddhist country, I don't know, but nowadays it seems to be a little bit mixed up with Hinduism but still the essence of Buddhism can be felt everywhere. So this is something nice and even to meditate here, to pray or to meditate, it's a bit different.



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HOW BUDDHA HAS ACHIEVED ENLIGHTENMENT.



Yeah, so today, 'How Buddha has achieved enlightenment' is very interesting, at the same time, this can be understood in many different ways. In a very simple way, generally if you look at the books you're gonna find that Buddha has left the Palace, went to meditate in the search of the truth of how to get rid of all these sufferings. Then he meditated, he tried to analyze and check, and meditated for about 6 years when he understood the truth or he achieved the enlightenment. Yeah it is true.

But when you look deeper: "What was that Buddha was meditating? What was the actual practice?" Yeah, it is true that he meditated for six years, but if somebody asked, "Is that the only reason? Was there some other practices as well? Is there any other practices which is hidden or not really manifest?". And then what another question can be like "What was he really meditating on in the six years right before, because of which he achieved enlightenment?"

So if somebody asked "Is it only that six years, because of which he achieved enlargement?" Of course not. From Mahayana perspective, he achieved enlightenment already, the six years of practice was just to show a part or a way to people, to show people that this is how you can achieve enlightenment. From Theravada perspective, he was a Bodhisattva before, then he practiced for six years, he meditated for six years, and those years he achieved enlightenment.

Six perfections were the main practices of Buddha during six years.

Now the question remains the same: "What was he meditating on during that six years?" I think I've been through this topic, but not with this link, but anyways, generally there are lots of small minor practices, but the major practices, the main practices were on the six perfections, the six paramita [*Pāramitā*]. The six perfections is what he was meditating on.

Even among the six perfection, the perfection of wisdom along with the Bodhicitta is the main practice. So if you wonder what the six perfection is, the six perfections are perfection of generosity, now you may wonder like "He was meditating, how is it possible that he was practicing generosity?" The generosity is actually we'll wish to give away whatever we have without any attachment, is the actual generosity. Even if we has nothing to do with physically, it's still alright because the practice of generosity is to reduce the greed and selfishness. So to reduce the greed and selfishness, of course, you can practice of giving away to be generous. But it doesn't have to be physical, it can be mental as well by imagining "All my body wealth then even my merits". If you practice from your heart that you are giving away to people you're



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giving away to those who are needed, you're giving away for the sake of enlightenment, you're giving away so that you can achieve enlightenment to benefit others, then actually, you're practicing generosity.

In fact, in many cases that can be much more powerful, that can be much more helpful in reducing the selfishness and in reducing the greediness. Because when we offer something physical, it is possible that one may have a certain amount of ego by thinking that “Oh I have given this and that”, it is also possible that one may have certain amount of attachment towards the thing that you are giving. In many cases when people give something that is very much likely that you expect something in return. So then it is not that effective to reduce the greediness because you are wishing something in return. For example, the child is cooking a food for father, if a child is expecting something in return; or in some cases if you are being volunteer at, let's say, elderly, old age home, if you are being volunteered there, then sometimes I've heard that “They are there as the volunteers, nobody is forcing them, but there are some volunteers”. If the old people don't behave nicely or treat them in a bit different way or if those old people don't talk politely, they get mad by thinking that “I'm doing something for these old people at least, they should be grateful for what I'm doing”

From a Buddhist practice, from a Buddhist perspective, it is very good to be volunteer in such a place, this also can be a practice of generosity and a practice of kindness, obviously. But if there is a certain amount of expectations that “When I'm giving something to them, whether it's my skills, whether it's my time, they should behave this way, they should be grateful to me, they should be just doing this and that”. If as long as there is certain amount of expectations, the effectiveness of the practices is not as much as it is without expectation because the purpose of practicing generosity is to reduce the stinginess, selfishness and greediness.

The first one of the main practices that Buddha practiced in the six years when he was meditating to achieve enlightenment was practice of **generosity**. Of course, it doesn't mean that he was going out there and giving something to others, but mentally he was practicing generosity. So that he can be free from attachment, he can be free from greediness so that he can be free from stinginess, he can be free from selfishness which is the practice of generosity and that is the first among the six perfections.

The second of six perfections is the perfection of morality. So now the perfection of morality and this tool is to reduce the untamed mind or undisciplined mind and also to be mindful of each and every action taken by our physical body is in every words that we may speak, is in every thought that we may generate within ourselves. The perfection of morality generally can be divided into three:

- the perfection of morality related with the physical body,
- the perfection of morality related with the verbal,



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- the perfection of morality related with the mind.

So what Buddha was doing was to keep the mind within subsiding sudden disciplines and restraining the body and speech from saying or doing any wrong things, any unwholesome deed. So that is what Buddha was practicing the second one.

Of course, you may think “how that can be a mental practice?” Yes, it can be a mental practice because to refrain the speech as the wrong like lie, slender, harsh, wordiness, negative action of speech, when you eliminate the intentions to say those or to engage in those negative actions. So, Buddha was literally taming his mind from being a motivation of such unwholesome deed of body and speech.

In other words, for you to understand it or you may have heard about the individual liberation vows, Bodhisattva vows and Vajrayāna vows. Individual liberation vows are mainly to avoid the wrong doing of body and speech. So the monks, the vows: eight vows, one day vow, monk’s vow, nun’s vow, whether it’s a novice monk or novice nun, or a fully already monk or nun and all these vows come into individual liberation vows and there is another one which is Bodhisattva vow, and there is the highest one which is Vajrayana vow. These are some certain precepts or a vow as a practice of the perfection of morality. So that's what Buddha was practicing, the second one, the second perfection.

The third perfection is the perfection of patience, of course it is to eliminate the anger and the ill will, desire to harm others. So that's what Buddha was practicing the third one.

The fourth one is the perfection of diligence. One of the main hindrance that avoid us to achieve enlightenment is the laziness. I think I've mentioned in one of our previous classes about the three types of laziness. In a simple words, I would say one of the laziness is the one that everybody think or know that “I'll do it later, or I'm postponing for a later time”. One of the laziness is a lack of confidence like “I won't be able to do this. No, it's not for me, I won't be able to”, so that is also a kind of laziness. And then one of the laziness is to be busy with worthy mundane things. You might have something important, but you're just keeping busy, keeping yourself busy with things which are not that importance, so there is also consider as one of the laziness. So to get rid of laziness, Buddha was practicing the three which is the opposite, the three diligences.

By understanding that we have to achieve human life and it is such that it can end anytime, at the same time, it has a potential, the whole potential to achieve everything, even the state of Buddhahood can be achieved in this human life. But what majority does is just a little maybe similar those animals in many ways, all we think of is a foot, a place to live. If a person has a place to live and a food to eat, a clothe to wear, if a person has those three things, then maybe try to be a bit fame famous. This happens when a person doesn't realize how precious this



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human rebirth is, how hard this is to achieve, it's very subtle, but it can end anytime, any moment. If we don't practice, if we don't take it seriously, we may lose this wonderful chance that we may not achieve again easily. By thinking those things we have to practice the perfection of diligence and to work hard. So that's what Buddha was practicing the fourth.

The fifth one is the concentration. Yes, the perfection of concentration which is basically the practice on keeping the mind on a single topic without being distracted. We have been through this in many classes that distraction, one of the reason why we are not able to study something nice, one of the reason why we are not able to remember things easily even if we have studied, one of the reason why it is very hard for us to focus on something is because of the current state of our mind which exactly acts as a monkey. So the concentration is very important, so that's what Buddha was practicing.

And the last and the final or the sixth perfection is the perfection of wisdom. At that time, this is a practice of emptiness or the nature of phenomena where the suffering comes, the nature of suffering where it can be eliminated if it comes from such causes that are those causes removable, if it can be removed and what are the antidotes which can help to remove these negative emotions which act as a cause of suffering.

When a person realizes that it is all negative emotions and the negative emotions arise from ignorance, ignorance of what? Ignorance of the nature of phenomena and what is that nature of phenomena? It is empty of inherently existing. We see everything as it exists inherently by itself without depending on anything. Even ourselves, even emotions, even the happiness, sufferings, everything, when we think of those things, we think that there exists by itself inherently.

By understanding everything as such an illusion or exactly like a dream and by understanding that general people live in an illusion, by understanding the real mode of existence, one can able to get rid of that illusion. So that is what Buddha was practicing the sixth one.

Buddha taking like 500 rebirths in the upper realms and 500 rebirths in the lower realms as a Bodhisattva to serve sentient beings

So there is from one angle, from other angle, yes it is not just that six years that Buddha practiced in order to achieve enlightenment, but there are much more, for example, Buddha has taken 500 lives as a human or a God and 500 lives as an animal or in a lower realm, so all those practices are the reasons why Buddha achieved enlightenment. So 500 rebirths in upper realms - upper realm basically means there is human realm, human rebirth or a rebirth as a God realm, *Devas* - Or lower realms whether is an animal or whether is in hell or hunger ghost. So Buddha is taking like 500 lives, rebirths in the upper realms and 500 rebirths in the lower realms



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as a Bodhisattva to serve sentient beings, he spend all these time practicing so that he achieved enlightenment.

One of the thing which is really weird to me, I would like to say, Buddha in one of his previous life, he was born as a Prince. There was a king who had three sons, three princes, and Buddha was the smallest one. So long story shorts: Once when the three brothers, that three Princes, went for a hunting in a forest, they saw the very weak tiger, totally in the body was very weak and the tiger was almost dying. But the tiger has five cubs, the small five babies - in some texts it says seven or in some text two, but generally known five cubs, 5 babies. So the youngest, who was one of the rebirth of Buddha, asked the elder brother "What happened to this mother?". So the elder brother, brother of Prince, told the younger one that "The mother is weak, the mother is dying".

Then he asked "No, why is dying? Because it haven't had any food? There could be few possibilities, if the mother tiger don't get any food either, the mother tiger could have been killed the babies, or if the mother tiger dies, the baby may also die". Then he asked the elder brother "What they eat?" and the elder brother said "They eat meat".

Then they went back to the Palace, so right before they reached the Palace, the younger one said them to go first, "I will follow later". Then the younger one which was the rebirth of Buddha, went back at the place where he saw the tiger. Out of compassion, out of desire to help the tiger to survive, he went there. When he's been there, he lay down right in front of the tiger so that the tiger can eat him, his body, and before that he thought that "All these lives, all these past lives I have died. When I die my body was a waste, the body that I have raised, the body that I have nutritious, the body that I have taken care of whole time goes to waste if I die. So perhaps this is a time I can use my body to help some sentient beings". With the motivation to save the tigers, the mother and also the five cubs, Buddha thought that "Yeah, it is a right time that all the Bodhisattvas once gave up their own body to benefit others. So this is a time that I can also, I should also give my body to save this tiger and cubs". By having such a motivation, he laid down in front of the tiger, and then tiger was so weak that it was not even in a situation to cut or bite. By seeing that he literally cut his own flesh and let's the tiger drink the blood, then slowly he cut his own flesh and feed the tiger. And then slowly, when the tiger gain some strength, then tiger was able to eat slowly, then he also fed this those cubs along with their mother. This is how Buddha achieved enlightenment.

When the general people literally kill others even if it hurts you a bit, for example, if a mosquito comes in, and draw a little bit of blood from the skin, generally many people they kill mosquito even if the mosquito is not killing them. The reason why we are here and Buddha has achieved enlightenment is because of the practices. Although we have the same potential, there was once when Buddha and us were all similar, but the reason why Buddha is Buddha now and we



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are still in Samsara is because of our own negative emotions, because of our own karmas. The reason Buddha achieved Buddhahood is because of such practices.

So the place where Buddha in one of his rebirth gave his body to save this tiger, the female tiger and the five cubs, it's not really far from through the city of Nepal. If you ever visit here, that's what visiting, it's a very inspiring.

CONCLUSION.

So basically this is how Buddha has achieved enlightenment and the happy news is that we all have exactly the same amount of potential, our mind is also exactly same capable. I know all of you personally and I know that you all practice in your own different ways, I truly appreciate. It is not just practice of this life, if you practice compassion today, if you practice compassion this year, this compassion will leave a certain amount of seed within your own mind. And that seed will remain in our mind as an imprint. This will not only help to receive such a loving compassion in future, but also you will be able to practice. The karma, if you practice certain thing, if you kill an animal today, you not only suffer from sickness and a short life in the future, but also you will like to kill, you will find easier to kill; if you practice love and compassion, you not only receive love and compassion and happiness in return, but you also would like to practice love and compassion in future. So you must rejoice your own practices.

All right, so perhaps if there is any question you can go on, otherwise we'll conclude today's class. Really I'm happy and I didn't think that I will be able to have this class while I'm at Nepal. I will be here for some more days, few more days and then I will head back to India.

So please pray for Ukraine, pray for World Peace. Because each and every prayers matter, you may think that you are nothing, you may think that you are not really powerful, you may think that "My prayers are not powerful", but if you think that you're wrong, because each and every our prayers are powerful, because there could be lots and lots of people in Ukraine as well who might have karmic connection with you, who might not have karmic connection with those who are praying for them, so your prayers matter.

With this I would like to conclude today's class. It's really nice, I'm really happy to see all of you after quite a bit of time. Looking forward to see you again and next time. Yeah, I don't know maybe the next Sunday, but still looking forward to see all of you.

Source.

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/12wQ6OxBiC35Ua_mXgMm4w45_VZn3o4Zs?usp=sharing