

Pure Land Teachings

Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche

January 8, 2015

We think we need to go far away to get to a pure land. We don't need to go! This is all our pure land: the earth and rocks, trees and water, the elements themselves, have none of our passions. No desire, hatred, jealousy, delusion—nothing like that. Their nature is primordially the pure vast expanse. 'Pure land' it is not referring to something we get by purifying. The fundamental nature is ultimately, primordially pure. You don't need to purify the pure lands—don't tell such lies! Nobody made them pure. Their nature is primordially pure, because they have always been free of the five poisons. What do we need to do? Recognize that nature.

We are the ones who are impure! To us, all things are impure. The earth is impure, water is impure, wind is impure, fire is impure, all the elements are impure. Maybe here or there is a mountain that we consider pure. Then we call it a sacred mountain. Who made the sacred mountain? Who made sacred water? Their nature is as it has always been, yet we have this idea that some things are sacred and some things are not. That is our conceptualization, we stupid guys—this is how we make them sacred and not sacred. If we want to see the pure land, that purity is beyond some ordinary concept of pure and impure, sacred or not. If you want to see the pure land, you need to recognize the nature of things. The pure nature of earth, water, fire, and air: this needs to be recognized. That nature is primordially pure, but its purity needs to be recognized. When recognition of the pure nature is stable, there is no need to be attached or to focus. There is no need to do any such thing! Upon the nature of phenomena, one recognizes the pure vast expanse. There is no other pure land than this, the fundamental nature.

The many different appearances of roads, houses, temples, statues—are these pure? In one way, yes. Their nature is pure. Their form as it arises is dictated by our concepts. Our concepts of desire, aversion, and ignorance shape them. We have no idea of their nature—therefore, of course, we shape them with delusion ... there's nothing surprising in that. If we shape them with desire, it is also because we do not know their nature; likewise if we shape them with hatred, jealousy, pride, or any other of the 84,000 categories of passions. As long as we are shaping them, it means concepts are involved; as long as concepts are involved, it means we are within the dualistic framework; and no matter how pure we might make something, there is always something impure, which would be dualistic grasping, mixed in. The pure land is the genuine fundamental nature, or buddhahood, primordially free of dualistic contrivance or modification—nothing impure has ever mixed there. It is unspoiled, untouched by any contamination.

What is that? Something hopeless, dumb, or inert? No. It is the wisdom mind of all the buddhas. What do we do with it? We use it as the basis of invoking the five poisons.

This lady is ugly, that guy is stupid, this lady is pretty, that guy is handsome—are these true? No. We make these with our dualistic mind. Handsome and wonderful or ugly and bad, all of these are the projections of dualistic concepts. The fundamental nature itself is none of these. It is the enlightened mind of all buddhas, their enlightened body, speech, qualities, and activities; and it has been from the beginning. This is Kuntuzangpo. He isn't some naked guy; Kuntuzangmo isn't some naked lady with no pants. "Kuntu" means "primordially" or "throughout time," "always." "Zangpo" means "excellent" in general, and here it means "pure." Therefore, "Kuntuzangpo" means "always pure." At this moment, this nature is pure; from the beginning, this nature has always been pure; and in the future, this nature will always be pure. That is Kuntuzangpo, primordial purity, enlightened mind, or the wisdom of all buddhas.

Generally we think that all buddhas have wisdom mind, and all sentient beings have ordinary mind. That's ultimately not the case. If you recognize the nature, mind is buddha mind and the pure land is the nature of one's own awareness. Even the hells and so on are the nature of one's own awareness, never departing from that. Even doggies are the nature of one's own awareness. Through not recognizing the nature, and instead grasping to it, then stage by stage the impure develops, dualistic clinging develops, and the three poisons develop. It is our conceptualization that develops the impurity of things; they are not impure in their nature. They appear to us as impure, but they are not truly established as being impure. If appearances were substantial, solid, and truly established, then impure things would be primordially impure—their nature would be impure, which means no amount of painstaking work could purify them. Nobody could make such things pure.

However, appearances are not truly established; therefore, impure appearances can have a primordially pure nature. The fundamental nature of all phenomena is pure; nobody can say that it is impure. We call that pure nature dharmakaya. What we call enlightened body, speech, and mind are merely how that nature abides. What we call a buddha or enlightenment, the most precious of things, they are this nature, too. For us, enlightened body is impure; enlightened speech is impure; enlightened mind is impure; all forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and feelings are impure. This is what we hold to; this is our fixation. It is from this that we need to be liberated or freed. Therefore, we need to study, contemplate, and meditate on the dharma; this is how we free ourselves from our ignorant fixation.

We speak of the Great Perfection teachings, of the practices of generation, completion, the union of these two, and so on. What is primordially so does not need to be generated for generation stage, but people always give rise to a great many concepts. It does not need to be perfected for completion stage; completion stage does not require you to create anything, but again people have many ideas. Likewise for practicing these

two inseparably, people again have many concepts, but actually the practice is to recognize and abide in the fundamental nature. When you are no longer caught in ignorance, or dualistic grasping, then what are you going to generate? What are you going to perfect? That is the pure land—nothing needs to be created or accomplished, and nothing needs to be completed or perfected. Do you want the pure land? You need to recognize your nature.

What is our ignorance? Our most basic ignorance, the root of all samsara, is our failure to recognize our nature. What is wisdom? The wisdom of all buddhas is recognition of that nature. The nature doesn't change either way. Our failure to recognize it doesn't harm it; the buddhas' recognition of it doesn't improve it. You don't need to recognize the fundamental nature for the nature's sake, but for your own! If you want to experience a pure land, you need to recognize the nature. It is already there, pure; you don't have to wait for anybody to build it or clean it up for you. You do have to recognize it, though, or for you the pure land will continue to be the impure land filled with impure beings, and you the king or queen of the impure.

If we need to connect to the body, speech, mind, qualities, and activities of all the buddhas, they are nothing other than the nature of our own mind, our own buddhanature. The pure land is the same thing. Our time in this life is short. If you want to reach the pure land before you die, you don't need to make some long journey. You need to be more firmly in your own place, stand up on your own feet, look more clearly at your own actions and thoughts. I don't think anybody will reach the pure land on an airplane or a boat or in the car. You have to be more honest in your own place; don't run here and there always looking outside, but focus on your own nature. Look inside. Look inside the elements—earth, water, fire, wind—at their nature; look inside other beings' nature; and particularly look inside your own nature. It is the same nature. The same purity. The same pure land. Actually we have it with us all the time. Why do we have to go running in every direction, desperately? I think the pure land is something we have. We have buddhanature—of course everything pure is there. I think there is nothing we are looking for that we don't already have, and better. Or so it seems. I don't know anything. I am like a child babbling. Don't listen to this funky old man; he is just full of crazy talk, talking about he doesn't know what!

Tashi delek!

-Gyatral

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