

Outline for Class 1

The Three Jewels

Buddha

Buddha Nature is the ground.

1. We are all basically awake. Positive qualities do not have to be imported from any external source or Being, but are already within us. Nontheism.
2. Confusion, kleshas are due to bad habits and can be overcome. Obscurations are temporary. The Buddha Nature has never been damaged by bad habits of mind in its own true nature.
3. The Buddha, a human being, realized these things and took them as the ground for his path to realization.

Dharma

Meditation practice and study is the path.

1. Lung and Tokpa. Lung is the “Dharma of Scripture.” It is what we hear, study, and contemplate.
2. Tokpa is “Dharma of Realization.” Meditation practice is necessary — in addition to hearing, studying, and contemplating the Dharma — for there to be realization. Therefore, Buddhadharma entails both teachings and the realization of those teachings. It is not just an intellectual exercise.
3. Hearing. The teachings must be heard and understood through talks and tapes given by teachers and advanced students, and through the use of selected study materials. It should be possible to trace the content of all of these teachings to the words of the Buddha and realized Buddhist teachers in history. Hearing the teachings in this way is like receiving the map.
4. Contemplating. It is important to relate what one has understood personally to one’s own experience. One must investigate whether what one has heard is really true. This is like studying the map.
5. Meditation. As well, one must realize the teachings through applying the approaches to meditation and conduct presented by the teacher. This is like actually traveling to one’s destination.
6. It is not so useful to read a lot of books, but rather to develop oneself through a graduated approach to practice and study as presented by an authentic teacher with an authentic lineage.
7. This process is not based on blind faith. Everything must be chewed, questioned, and digested.

Sangha

The sangha is the community of student-practitioners who support and practice Dharma.

1. They are essential as support to Buddhist practice. They host the teachings, and follow the teachings as path. The sangha makes the teacher and the teachings available.

Note

This is not a discussion of the refuge vow. It is an introduction to Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Arya sangha, specifics about Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche, and the way KTD and the KTCs function should be postponed until Class 4, “Understanding Lineage.”

Handout

Dharma Dictionary