

- I. Welcome, Introduction, and Outline of the Format of the Evening
- II. Opening Remarks by Rev. Baker and Lama Marut
- III. **“BUDDHA NATURE”**

- A. From the *Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life* by Shantideva (ca. 800 A.D.)

Never allow yourself the feeling of being discouraged, of having the thought, ‘How could I ever become Awakened?’ The Buddhas, the ones who speak the truth, have spoken the following words of truth: ‘Those beings who are flies and gnats or bees and even those who live as worms can reach Awakening, so difficult to reach, if they develop the force of effort.’ Someone like me, someone born as a human being, can tell what helps and what hurts. Assuming then that I never give up the bodhisattva’s way of life, why shouldn’t I reach Awakening? (7.17-19)

- B. From the *Uttara Tantra (Ratnagotravibhaga)* attributed to Maitreya and Asanga (ca. 200 A.D.)

All beings are said to have Buddha nature because the wisdom of a Buddha is carried within all of them, and because of the non-duality of its immaculate nature, and because the propensity to Buddhahood takes the name of its result. . . . If there were no element of Awakening (= Buddha nature), there would be no dissatisfaction with suffering. There would be no desire, striving, or aspiration for nirvana. Since the propensity (to Buddhahood) is there, one can recognize that suffering mars existence and happiness is the quality of nirvana. Were there not this propensity among us, this would not be. (1.27, 40-41)

Because of its inexhaustible qualities, in nature it's like nothing else. Limitless, it acts as the only real refuge for living beings. It is always non-dual, beyond conceptualization. Its has an indestructible quality since its true nature is uncreated. It is not born because it is permanent. It does not die because it immovable. It is not harassed because it is in a state of peace. It does not decay because it is eternal. . . . The ultimate nature of that which is self-arising is be known only through faith. The orb of the sun may shine brightly, but the blind do not see. There is nothing whatsoever that needs to be removed from this, and nothing whatsoever than needs to be added. It is from seeing reality that the seer of reality is really and completely liberated. (1.79-80, 153-54)

Comments by Rev. Baker with Response by Lama Marut

IV. LOVE

A. Matthew 22:35b-40

A lawyer asked [Jesus] a question to test him. ³⁶Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?' ³⁷He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." ³⁸This is the greatest and first commandment. ³⁹And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.'

B. Matthew 5:43-48

'You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." ⁴⁴But I say to you, **Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,** ⁴⁵so that you may be children of your

Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. ⁴⁶For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax-collectors do the same? ⁴⁷And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

C. John 13:1, 4-5, 12-16, 34-35

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. . . . [Jesus] ⁴got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. ⁵Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.

12 After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? ¹³You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. ¹⁴So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. ³⁴**I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.**³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'

D. Matthew 26:31-40

31 'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ³²All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³and he

will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.³⁴ Then the king will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;³⁵ **for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,³⁶ I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.**"³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink?³⁸ And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing?³⁹ And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?"⁴⁰ And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

Comments by Lama Marut with Response by Rev. Baker

V. **AWAKENING AND BUDDHAHOOD** – From the *Uttara Tantra*

Because they have seen reality as it is, they are freed from birth (sickness, old age and death). But because they are the very essence of compassion, they display birth, death, old age, and sickness. Just as the lotus grows in water but is not tainted by the water, so too is such a person born in the world but is not tainted by the things of the world. . . . Due to the power of his previous virtue and because all self-consciousness has been destroyed, he exerts no effort in bringing living beings to spiritual ripening. He knows exactly what is to be taught, and which teaching, appearance, body, conduct, and method to use. The one with unimpeded intelligence thus always acts effortlessly for the benefit of living beings as limitless as space itself. A bodhisattva who has

reached this level acts in the world in a way equal to the way Buddhas take living beings to liberation. But the difference between a bodhisattva and a Buddha is like that of an atom compared to the whole earth, or the puddle of water in a cow's footprint compared to the ocean. (1.68, 72, 74-78)

Buddhahood has been declared to be the natural lucid clarity which is covered by the incidental mental afflictions and obscurations to wisdom, just as the sun and sky are covered by a blanket of thick fog. It possesses all the qualities that come with being a Buddha and is stainless, permanent, fixed, and eternal. It is attained on the basis of both nonconceptual and analytical wisdom. Buddhahood, although undifferentiated, appears with pure qualities. It has the two-fold characteristic of wisdom and removal (of incidental defilements), like the sun and space. It is endowed with uncreated lucid clarity. It manifests in an undifferentiated way with all the properties of a Buddha, greater than the sands on the banks of the Ganges river. (2.3-5)

Buddhahood is a state which is unafflicted, with a nature that is all-pervading and indestructible, fixed, at peace, eternal, and imperishable. It is like empty space, the arena in which the experience of objects of the six sense takes place for those who have found reality. It is the condition of possibility for perpetually seeing amazing visible objects, for hearing pure and beautiful sounds, for smelling the pure morality of the Buddhas, and for tasting the supreme flavor of the true Dharma among the great realized ones. (It is the condition of possibility) for perceiving the blissful feeling of samadhi, for the realization of the profound structure of one's self-nature. When considered in a very subtle, deep, and ultimate way, Buddhahood and space are without cause. . . . Buddhahood, like space, is inconceivable, permanent, fixed, at peace, eternal, tranquil, pervasive, free of conceptual thought. Unattached, it is perpetually unobstructed and free from all coarse sensations. It cannot be seen nor grasped. And it is virtuous and immaculate. (2.18-20, 29)

VI. **The Dream of God**

A. Luke 17:20-21

²⁰ Once Jesus was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, and he answered, “The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; ²¹ nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There it is!’ For, in fact, the kingdom of God is within you.”

B. John 17:10-23

²⁰ [Jesus said,] “I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹ that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, ²³ I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

C. Revelation 21:1-4

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“See, the home of God is among mortals.
He will dwell with them as their God;
they will be his peoples,
and God himself will be with them;
⁴ he will wipe every tear from their eyes.
Death will be no more;
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,
for the first things have passed away.”

D. Isaiah 2:4

They will beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks.
Nation will not take up sword against nation,
nor will they train for war anymore.

E. Paul's 1st Letter to the Corinthians 15:50-55

⁵⁰ What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹ Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled:

“Death has been swallowed up in victory.”
⁵⁵“Where, O death, is your victory?
Where, O death, is your sting?”

Comments by Lama Marut with Response by Rev. Baker