



The Asian Classics Institute



Diamond Mountain University

In-Depth Course 1
Teachings of the Future Buddha

Homework and Quiz Master, Class Six: Nine Images for the Concealed Buddha

In traditional explanations of Buddha-nature, or the fact that we are devoid of any nature of our own, there are a group of famous verses which are often quoted from *The Commentary on the Latter Part*. These verses present nine images to describe how our true nature is concealed. State each one of the images and then explain it, remembering to give the specific obstacle which prevents it from being revealed to us. (Tibetan and Sanskrit tracks give the name of the image in these languages.)

1) [The image of a Buddha statue within an ugly lotus. An ugly and foul-smelling lotus represents the dormant form of the first of the three poisons: liking things in an ignorant way. This desire is similar to a lotus because, although it makes you happy at first, later it always makes you unhappy. It conceals within it the splendor of a Buddha's form, with all the marks of enlightenment. The Enlightened Ones can look even at the beings in the lowest hell and see their ultimate nature, which is their Buddha-seed.

སངས་རྒྱལ་པད་དན་ལ།

sanggye pengen la

बुद्धः कुपद्मे

buddah. kupadme

2) [The image of a bee with honey. The bee represents the dormant form of the second poison: disliking things in an ignorant way. This is because one would not want to be or remain in contact with a bee. A skillful beekeeper can successfully separate the bees from the honey, which represents our true nature: just as sweet, all one flavor, within each and every living being. A skillful yogi can separate off the negative emotions which keep us from getting to the honey.

སྒང་མ་ལ་སྒང་ཉི།

drangma la drantsi

मधु मक्षिकासु

madhu maks.ika-su

3) [The image of the essence laying within the husk of piece of grain. The husk of a

piece of grain represents the dormant form of the third poison, ignorance itself. The inner essence is our Buddha nature, which like a piece of grain still locked in its husk cannot be enjoyed or experienced. And so the Buddhas help us remove the husk—the impurity of the mental afflictions—by teaching us. But as Gyaltsab Je points out, in the end the one who must actually strip the husk off is none other than ourselves.

སུན་ལ་སྒྲིང་པོ།

bunla nyingpo

तुषेसु साराणि

tus.esu sa-ra-n.i

4) [The image of a gold coin dropped in a cesspool. The cesspool represents the three poisons in their strong, manifest form; they are lumped together in this form because each of them when manifest inspires us to do the same bad deeds. If a person were hurrying down the road and accidentally dropped a gold coin in a cesspool, the gold's essence would never in hundreds of years be polluted, nor would the gold melt away. Someone with supernormal vision could come and tell us where it was, and we could fish it out, clean it, and get rich. We can do the same with the Buddha within us, by relying on the teachings of Lord Buddha.

མི་གཙོང་ནང་ན་གསེར།

mitsang nangna ser

अशुचौ सुवर्ण

as'ucau suvarn.a

5) [The image of a treasure buried under the floor of a poor man's hut. The earth here represents the seeds of ignorance, and the levels at which it is found. A poor man may have an inexhaustible treasure chest buried under the floor of his house. He doesn't have any idea that it's there; and neither does the chest announce itself, saying “I'm under here.” Just so, all living beings have possessed, for time with no beginning, a Buddha-nature consisting of the two kinds of a lack of self-existence. This nature does not announce itself, and because people don't perceive it, they suffer the poverty of all forms of pain. And so the Buddhas come into the world to inform them of their true wealth.

ས་ལ་གཏེར།

sa la ter

निधिः क्षितौ

nidhih. ks.itau

6) [The image of the sprout for a tree being contained within a small fruit which acts as the seed for the tree. Here this small piece of fruit is like the negativities within us which we eliminate at the path of seeing. As this path grows within us, these negativities are destroyed, just as a small piece of fruit which acts as a seed for another sprout disappears as the sprout comes forth. In this image, sunlight and rain and fertilizer fall upon a small

fruit, inspiring the seed within it to shoot forth a sprout. Just so, the Buddha-seed within us all—covered by the flesh of the fruit of negative emotions—is made to grow as we go through the cultivation of learning, thinking, and meditating.

སྐྱུས་སོགས་འབྲས་ཚུང་།
nyuksok drechung

अल्पफले ऽण्कुरादि
alpaphale 'n.kura-di

7) [The image of a statue of the Victor within a ragged cloth. The statue is made of a precious substance like gold or jewel, and it lies at the side of a busy road wrapped in a filthy, smelly cloth. A deity appears and tells the people travelling by that within the cloth lies the holy being. The cloth represents mental afflictions eliminated by the path of habituation, because they are destroyed then like a cloth ripped to pieces, with nothing substantial remaining. The statue inside is our Buddha-nature, which holy beings perceive exists within all creatures travelling on the road: even animals and so forth.

གོས་རྩལ་ནང་ན་རྒྱལ་སྐྱེ།
guhrol nangna gyelku

प्रक्लिन्नवस्त्रेषु जिनात्म
praklinnavastres.u jina-tma

8) [The image of a world emperor in the womb of an ugly and impoverished woman. She sits alone and unprotected in her poor home, not knowing that she is pregnant with a baby who is to become the King of the World. The beings of the three realms are the same, suffering in a place with no protection and unaware that the highest protector lies within them—a protector which will slowly but surely be produced from themselves, as the Buddhas teach them and reveal what they have inside. Here the ugly and impoverished woman, along with her foul clothes and poor house, represent the obstacles which exist at the “impure” bodhisattva levels: the first seven, which are all tied up with seeing things as self-existent and prevent you from knowing yourself.

བུད་མིང་ངན་མའི་ལྗོན་མི་བདག
bume ngenmay tona midak

जघन्यनारीजठरे नृपत्व
jaghanyana-ri-jath.are nr.patva

9) [The image of a statue made of pure gold, but covered with mud or clay. The statue of gold here specifically refers to the true nature of our minds. The obstacles represented by the mud are those of the last three bodhisattva levels, known as the “pure” levels, since one is already free from the perception of things as self-existent and its seeds. That is, one still possesses obstacles but they are very subtle, like a very fine smearing of mud. The wise are aware of what's inside and work to clear away the covering.

ས་ལ་རིན་ཆེན་གཟུགས།

sala rinchen suk

मृत्सु रत्नबिम्ब

mr.tsu ratnabimba

Homework assignment: 15 minutes per day, analytical meditation going through the nine images and thinking about all the details of what they mean. Try to visualize each image in your own room, in your own being.