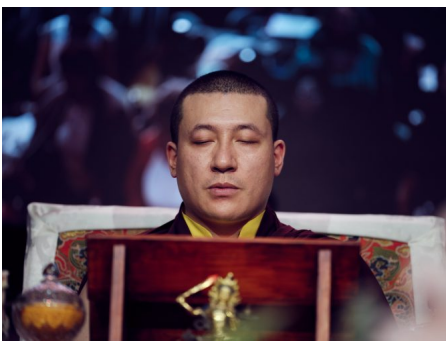


26.04.2020

Thaye Dorje, His Holiness the 17th Gyalwa Karmapa, examines the idea of 'ordinary' and 'extraordinary' in his latest meditation for our times.



When we try to apply the Bodhisattvas' methods, to think of others and benefit others, we might feel overwhelmed.

We might get the sense that we are too ordinary.

If we are ordinary, what is wrong with that?

Weren't all Bodhisattvas in that position at one point? They must have felt utterly helpless and useless.

Nevertheless they achieved their extraordinary qualities – simply by accepting their ordinary state.

How did this happen?

First, they tried in ever so many ways to find this extraordinary state, just as Prince Siddhartha had done. But in the end, when all hopes had been dashed, they accepted their ordinary state.

They finally saw that aging is natural.

They finally saw that it's also natural to get sick and to die.

It's not at all wrong to experience age, sickness and death, no matter how ordinary they may seem.

Such experiences have taken place countless times.

These ordinary experiences have never stopped other experiences from happening.

It's not as if these ordinary experiences are like a finale, cutting short any extraordinary experiences.

After all, this present experience is still possible.

So it is this simple acceptance, which stopped the quest to save everyone from dying and all of the other natural, ordinary experiences.

Instead, the quest to save everyone from dying transformed into the quest to help everyone embrace the acceptance of this ordinary pattern.

That's how the Bodhisattvas became Bodhisattvas.

We too are in exactly the same position as the Bodhisattvas.

If we compare ourselves with the Bodhisattvas, we won't find a single shred of difference.

So, let's not burden ourselves with climbing a pinnacle-less mountain.

That's no mountain at all.

When we climb mountains, we climb down.

That's not inauspicious.

That's most natural.

The descent of the mountain is essential to our enjoyment.

If there is such a thing as an advantage, then ours is that we can make use of the Bodhisattvas' realisation that we do not need to look for a separate, extraordinary state.

Buddhahood is not separate from the ordinary state.

It was never meant to be.

If you superstitiously believe that the ordinary state is, in fact, ordinary, then consider this: pristine lotuses are born out of mud.

This is not just a saying.

It is a reality.

That is exactly how we are.

Ordinary-like compositions of physical and mental mud have produced a pristine experience like this one: Us. Or you. Or me. What's wrong with this?

If there is anything wrong, it is our resistance to this natural way.

We can't separate this pristine wisdom from this mud.

If we try, all we will get is either a lifeless statue or an idea of who we are.

That's all we will get.

But it is that lifeless statue or idea that is the real death.

So this is not what we want. At least, if we are sane.

Therefore, my dear dharma friends, if you wish to benefit others, try to accept this ordinary state.

When I say 'accept', I do not mean in the sense of 'take on this burden' or 'do nothing'!

Instead, accept it in a way that there is no other way.

There is no extraordinary way.

There never was.

We have that advantage.

We don't have to try and flatten every mountain for the sake of all beings, in the name of finding this extraordinary way.

If there is an even path, we walk it.

If there is an uneven path, we walk it accordingly.

Our feet do not burden themselves that they have to walk the ground.

The ground does not burden the feet to walk on it.

There is just walking.

Nothing more, nothing less.

Extremely ordinary.

Yet, if viewed in a theatrical manner, it is extraordinary because we can't find words to describe why these feet are walking the ground.

Left. Then right.

From beginning-less time.

Now that's extraordinary.

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