



Buddha, Dharma and Sangha

By Lakha Lama (April 2006)

It is my experience that many people have a great interest in Buddhism and are searching for a way to obtain a more peaceful mind as well as to create peace in the world.

I grew up in Tibet, a Buddhist country, and for a period in my life I studied Buddhist philosophy deeply. Later, I have had the experience of becoming a family man, which gave me the chance to use my knowledge in everyday life.

Many people perceive Buddhism as a religion that is very different from other religions. I see Buddhism as a valuable philosophy for all people, no matter their religious differences. A philosophy that provides a deeper understanding of our own mental actions that create suffering or peace.

As long as we do not use our ability to observe our own minds, and recognize the suffering we are creating ourselves, and when we do not appreciate the harmony and happiness we have achieved in our lives, our minds become preoccupied with disharmonic thoughts and feelings.

In Buddhism we talk about three basic values, known as the Three Jewels: Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Deep faith in these is considered to be very beneficial for oneself and for others.

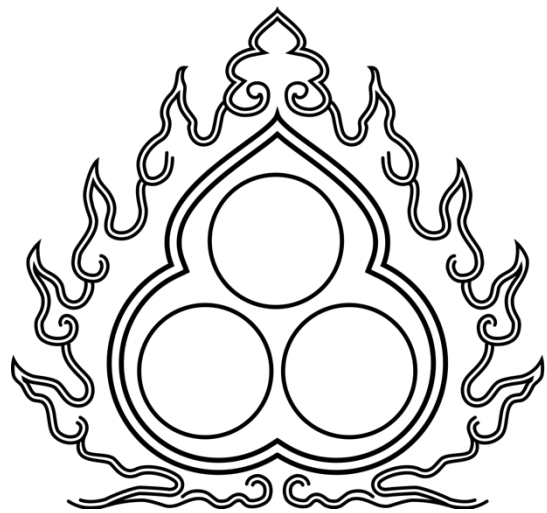
The Buddha

The Buddha became a great master by recognizing what suffering is, what is the cause of suffering, what is the antidote to suffering, and what is the true path. He obtained his deep wisdom from a human basis, using his basic human capacity and his abilities to reach a deeper truth without fighting disturbing emotions and illusions.

The Buddha found that the strong selfish egoism is the main cause of misfortune, whereas true love together with firm compassion are essential to achieve deep peace and happiness. Thereby one can develop one's own wisdom into enlightenment. A person who has attained full wisdom and become a great master, we call a Buddha. But for me, this is not the same as saying that Buddha is a great Buddhist master, because Buddhism came after Buddha.

The Dharma

Dharma has two meanings: everything that exists we call dharma, and the philosophy that explains the deeper nature of existence and its functions is also called dharma – or the Dharma.



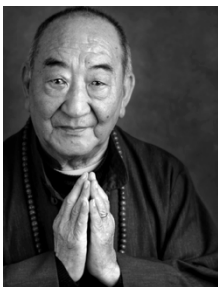
The Three Jewels
Buddha, Dharma and Sangha

The deeper philosophical explanation is not the same as modern scientific explanations. The Dharma shows us how to be aware of our own mental functions and see how thoughts and illusions can create unpleasant feelings. By acknowledging this, you can make an effort to reduce the disturbing illusions and thoughts. For example, you can acknowledge that there are many other living beings who have much greater suffering than us, and that realization can awake deep compassion, leading you to wish that they may become free from suffering and achieve happiness.

When you have a compassionate attitude in your heart, you develop a deeper relationship with other beings. It reduces strong feelings of enmity, hurt, conflict, and so on. But you should not mix compassion with naivety and emotional attachment. Compassion is a dynamic energy that has the capacity to protect you from disturbing energies. Compassion makes us feel richer and more fortunate. Buddhist philosophy is a tool to save oneself and others from suffering. Ultimately, compassion will lead to the attainment of the highest wisdom.

The Sangha

If we want to practice the philosophy, we need a spiritual environment. Those who share a spiritual environment that supports the development of each other, and who are more attentive to performing harmonious actions, are called the Sangha. Among them are highly developed individuals we call Bodhisattvas and also ordinary people who may not be particularly highly developed, but are determined to develop their wisdom. In common parlance, the Sangha is most often perceived as monks, nuns and monastic communities. However, the Buddhist definition of Sangha is broad, with no discrimination between nationalities, races and religions. A warm heart is the essence of the universal religion.



Lakha Lama, born Thupten Dorjee in Tibet in 1942, was appointed as a spiritual leader for around 100,000 inhabitants in eastern Tibet at the age of five. In 1959 he fled to India as a refugee and then came to Denmark in 1976, where he settled and started a family.

Based on basic human needs, Lakha Lama shares the Dharma and its message in a unique and simple way that makes the philosophy and methods accessible to all.

Lakha Lama's many humanistic and cross-cultural activities have attracted thousands of followers within Scandinavia and throughout the world. One Swedish follower commented: "*Lakha Lama is to Scandinavia and many Tibetans what the H. H. Dalai Lama is to the world.*"

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