

Looking with the Eyes of a Buddha

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[[Master's Teachings](#)]

The Buddha tells us that everyone has the Buddha nature and that it has just been obscured by his or her inner impurities and afflictions. Yet, it is often hard to see the Buddha nature in others and easy to lose faith in them, especially when it seems as if they just keep repeating their mistakes no matter how many times we have spoken to them about it. It can be very frustrating and upsetting to think that they refuse to listen.

But, is that true? Do they really refuse to listen? Perhaps they did listen to us and do want to change; it's just that their habits are so ingrained that changing is not a quick process. Though on the surface, it may look like they have not taken in anything we have said to them, it is really just that they are gradually making changes and the changes made so far are not yet very noticeable.

When we become upset at the thought that a person hasn't changed at all, however, afflictions and unwholesome thoughts fill our mind. In that moment, we ourselves are moving farther away from our Buddha nature. With regards to the people we are exasperated with—they are moving closer to their Buddha nature as they work on their unwholesome habits. Yet we, in becoming upset with them, are accumulating afflictions and have widened the gap that lies between us and our own Buddha nature.

Therefore, it would be better for us to try and see the Buddha nature in people and keep in mind that habits take time to change. Even for those who do things that border on the unforgivable, we should still remember that they are not irredeemable and at the very least, they provide us an opportunity to practice patience and love. Since our goal is to return to our Buddha nature, we should learn to practice the kind of sincere and all-embracing love that the Buddha has. Knowing the suffering that living beings have created out of ignorance and delusion, the Buddha is committed to guiding all living beings and does not give up on anyone. This is the love of a Buddha and the love that we, in possessing the Buddha nature, are inherently capable of.

If we can learn to look at everyone with the eyes of a Buddha, we will understand that no one is beyond hope. Everyone has the Buddha nature; it is just that their unwholesome habits have become very deeply entrenched. That is why we need to learn patience, and if we can realize this, a sense of gratefulness will fill our hearts—for it is through such people that we practice patience and love and gradually recover our own Buddha nature.

From Dharma Master Cheng Yen's Talks
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