



# Buddha Nature Worksheet

“The significance of the Buddha’s life stems from the fact that he was a human being like ourselves, and we can therefore follow in his footsteps. His life story makes us realize that it is possible for us, too, to find liberation from suffering. It may take many lives but it is possible; indeed, it also took many lives for the Buddha himself to reach the point when he became a fully enlightened buddha. The important thing is that there is no unbridgeable gap between the Buddha and ourselves, and to this we can attribute the warm and relaxed spirit of Buddhism.

Mahayana Buddhism develops this point through the theory of ‘buddha nature’ or tathagatagarbha, the potential or seed for enlightenment that exists within every single being, both human and non-human. Just as we can never squeeze oil out of an ordinary stone, in the same way we would never be able to become enlightened if it were not for the fact that we have the seed of enlightenment within us already, and under the right conditions that seed can blossom into full buddhahood. That seed, or potential, is called buddha nature. This is a deeper way of understanding that there is no radical separation between the Buddha and ourselves.”

*Discovering Buddhism*, Dominique Side (pp. 29-30)

“Finally, the doctrine of buddha nature or tathagatagarbha explains why Mahayana emphasizes that nirvana is not something that we lack and are trying to attain, but rather it is something that is there all the time and that we realize once we have purified our ignorance and confusion. In other words, what we need to do is get rid of our ignorance, not gain a new wisdom that we lack. Following the Buddhist path is useful because it helps us to do just this. The path is seen as a process of abandoning not a process of acquiring. The buddha nature is with us always, we simply have to uncover it and realize it, so Mahayana carries a sense that enlightenment is immanent and fundamentally accessible.”

*Discovering Buddhism*, Dominique Side (pp. 160-161)

**Answer these questions using the text above:**

1. What is buddha nature?

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2. According to Buddhists who has buddha nature?

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3. Is buddha nature something that Buddhist go out to look for and acquire?

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**Video: Buddha nature – Mingyur Rinpoche**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srRcHz9jVrg>

Here Mingyur Rinpoche explains buddha nature...

1. What analogies are used to describe buddha nature?

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2. Think of your own example of something precious that is hidden but can be uncovered (and has been there all along) ...

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**A moment of personal reflection...**

If you had a strong belief in your inner goodness and your capacity to become free from suffering... What difference do you think it would make to how you see yourself? And to your life?

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