

RECOGNITION, REALIZATION, AND ENLIGHTENMENT

It's important not to confuse these three dharma terms.

"Recognition" is a once-in-a-lifetime experience as pointed out to us by our root dharma teacher, who is the first and only teacher who points out the true nature of the mind to us so that we get it that first time. It changes us forever. As for Enlightenment, it was what the Buddha achieved. We haven't done that yet, but hopefully are working at it. Which, leaves Realization. What's that?

Realization is what happens to us AFTER "Recognition," after we recognize the actual nature of the mind for the first time. "Realization" is the long journey from Recognition to Enlightenment, which will probably take many lifetimes to achieve.

Realization is the incremental process of extending the initial realization achieved at Recognition, forward. It is traditional to expand and extend realization until it embraces more and more of our life and everything we know. It's like the ever-expanding rings when a drop of water is dropped in a still pond.

Perhaps for some it is easy, but for most (I would imagine) the process of realization is difficult. It's easy to understand in principle. "Recognition" is a break-through, a pinhole or puncture into non-duality. You could almost say it is like looking through a keyhole at the nature of the mind, except with Recognition we are already on the inside of the hole we are supposed to be peeping through. LOL.

The differential is that wherever we broke-through or punctured through at Recognition is just one aspect of Samsara that we are realizing, and not the whole enchilada. That original point or area of insight has to be expanded (like opening our eyes) and extended from where we broke through to include more and more of everything that is. Enlightenment is where we have realized everything there is to realize.

Thus, realization is the process of extending and expanding realization and it takes a lot of work and constant work at that. If we don't expand our realization after Recognition, our realization doesn't expand. We stay just where we are, peeping into a world we now belong to. By continually expanding and extending our realization, we walk the path toward our eventual enlightenment.