

Quick Dharma Series

Lineages

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Most Buddhist congregations (Sanghas) are associated with a specific lineage, which is like one's genealogy in that it shows the connection of a succession of teachers and students down through great expanses of time to the present-day. Most lineages claim to reach, unbroken, back to the Buddha Himself. For many sanghas, lineage is important because, especially in these dark times, it is easy to deceive oneself and be deceived, so a long tradition back to the Founder is, in a sense, preferred by many Buddhists because it's seen as being vouchsafed. However, nothing in the nature of Wisdom, as such, requires an historical lineage/heritage/parentage. For many seekers of the *Inner Way* (the Buddha's own term for his body of teachings), detailed instructions are preferred: some of us like to follow a recipe with intense precision. Besides, having faith in a tradition handed down over the ages instills confidence that others who have tried this before have succeeded by doing so.

On the other hand, Karida is one of many congregations that, while respecting these lineages, is not connected to any particular lineage in the traditional sense. In Karida Sangha we feel that the most important lineage for us is called the "short lineage." This "short lineage" comes about through the limitless compassion of the Buddhas directly touching the heart/mind of the individual thereby giving rise to Bodhichitta. In Theravadin Buddhism, for example, only the "Long" lineage is recognized. In Tibetan Buddhism, both long and short lineages are recognized as valid. Short lineage has its basis in Padmasambava, or Guru Rinpoche, and is more closely associated with the Nyingma school or lineage. As His Holiness Penor Rinpoche (head of the Nyingma lineage) put it in a teaching in Tucson, experiential awareness of the Truth, or Transcendental Wisdom, arises spontaneously anywhere and everywhere, and anytime, as needed.