

Dharma Talk – BODHICITTA

Khenpo Drimed Dawa – 8-1-21

BODHICITTA – usually translated as: “mind of enlightenment” or perhaps...

1. the mind that strives for awakening and
 2. compassion for the benefit of **all** sentient beings...the two wings of full awakening
- **BODHI: several translations...**
 - **Enlightenment (an event):**
 - A European intellectual movement in the late 17th and 18th centuries emphasizing reason and individualism over tradition
 - In Buddhism – *bodhi* = the action or state of having attained spiritual knowledge or insight, esp. awareness that frees one from rebirth (linked to karma)
 - There is suffering, dissatisfaction called “samsara” – this world
 - We can achieve “insight” or understanding of the cause(s) – our fundamental delusion or ignorance of the “true nature of things” (self and other) ... basically, the world is not as it appears to be – we are deluded. (Buddha said – it is like an illusion, a dream...from which we can wake up to a state free from all suffering and dissatisfaction. That *moment* is “enlightenment”.)
 - **Awakening (a process, a path):** “Buddha” – *literally* one who is awake! (Awaken to the true nature of things, like from a dream – seems real, until you wake up!) ... follow the path:
 - the Middle Way between extremes (too indulgent in pleasures, too indulgent in extreme asceticism, etc.)
 - or 3 trainings of ethics, meditation and wisdom;
 - or the 8-fold path: right actions, speech, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, concentration (meditation), thought, and view!
 - We are told there are 84,000 others!
 - **Liberation** from samsara/suffering/dissatisfaction: 3-6 poisons (esp. delusion, hatred, greed **or** ignorance, aversion, attachment, ie., extinction of the 3 fires), and other lists of kleshas (afflictive emotions and mental obscurations), and many other lists
 - **Realization** of the true nature of “things” or “insight”
 - **Awareness**: consciousness
 - Being awake, alert, aware of, cognizant of, informed, knowledgeable
 - In Buddhism, various ways:
 - sensory perceptions, e.g., seeing, hearing...(all senses¹),
 - mental perceptions, e.g., thinking, remembering...

¹ “Senses” vary somewhat among animals, e.g., colors, degree of smell, type – sonar, infrared...

- awareness itself (ability to be aware of...)
 - rigpa – *ability* to be aware; pure awareness (same); being aware, the sense of being aware; so a sense, a knowing, also a presence/stillness/peace
- **CITTA:**
 - **Mind (West):** the set of faculties, including cognitive aspects such as consciousness, imagination, perception, thinking, intelligence, judgement, language, and memory, as well as noncognitive aspects such as emotion and instinct
 - to experience (manifest by the brain as thoughts, memories, emotions, etc.)
 - (subconsciousness: part of mind NOT in focused awareness)
 - (unconsciousness: being unresponsive to sounds or shaking, inaccessible to consciousness but affects behavior, emotions, etc)
 - **Mind (East):** consciousness, awareness
 - to be aware of sensory or mental perceptions: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching AND thoughts, memories, and emotions (but mind is not a “thing”)
 - 12-Links of dependent origination: #5 – six sense faculties (abilities), #6 – **contact** (an object, sense, or conscious), #7 – **sensation** (pleasant, unpleasant, neutral), #8 – craving, #9 – grasping (seeing, recognizing, judging)
 - In practice, the critical point is between “contact” and “sensation”, stop before judgment!
 - **Awake** – actively aware; alert, attentive, paying attention
 - (mindfulness: intentional awareness)
 - **Mind vs. brain?** (East vs. West)
 - **East:** mind is our consciousnesses: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and thoughts (about the same as West); as well as storehouse consciousness (stores karma) and fundamental consciousness – the “heart essence” of mind
 - **West:** mind is a function of the brain, period (considerable evidence...)
 - **Fairly similar, except** the last two consciousnesses in Eastern view have an existence (undescribed) independent of the body (even Buddha had difficulty trying to explain after he asserted there was “no soul”; still an issue)...how does it move from body to body?
 - **The “hard problem”** in research – how does the brain manifest our perception of empirical reality?
 - **Heart vs. mind?** Not a physical heart, but heart-center or chakra (psycho-physical)
 - Lovingkindness & compassion; altruism; ethics – do good or at least do no harm for the benefit of *all* sentient beings
 - Life-essence (heart-drop, indestructible drop – tige, bindu)

- **“Heart-mind”**: both/and, literal description of **“citta”**
- **Three approaches**: relative, ultimate or absolute, and transcendent
 - **#1: The Relative**:
 - **Relative**: in relation or proportionate to something else; relationship; or compared to
 - Lovingkindness and compassion or “skillful means” ... helping others
 - **Lovingkindness**: The wish that (**action** to help) all beings have “happiness” and its causes (the good – relatively; liberation – ultimately; or “ordinary and supreme”)
 - **Compassion**: The wish (**action** to help) all beings not have “suffering” and its causes (the bad – relatively; also liberation – ultimately; again, “ordinary or supreme”)
 - **All beings?** – “sentient beings”
 - **East**: “sentient” means those that desire **“happiness”** and do not want “suffering” (how know – mosquito?); basically all visible beings
 - **West**: “sentient” means has senses – seeing, hearing, smelling...
 - **#2: Ultimate/Absolute**: wisdom – understanding the **“true nature of things”** (self and other) – all things are interdependent, impermanent...**emptiness** (various explanations ... another time)
 - **a: Ultimate**: the end, final; best, utmost, highest, pinnacle, **but is still relative** to everything else!, eg, “highest mountain” – **relative-ultimate?**
 - **b: Absolute**: not qualified or diminished in any way, total; viewed independently and not in relation to other things, not relative or comparative; complete, total, universal, fixed (*permanent*); **but is still being compared with “the relative”** – **relative-absolute?**
 - **Prasangika** – can’t say anything about what it is or is not, beyond words (you might confuse them)
 - **Shentong** – must say something to point in the right direction (you need a map)
 - **Jamgon Kongtrul & Mipham** – both are helpful in different ways...
 - **#3: Nonconceptual or transcendent mind**: also wisdom – no mental concepts or ideas (but not “unconscious”!) **An experience beyond cognition**. Three examples:
 - **Koan** – “What is the sound of one hand clapping?” ...
 - **A paradox** (a logically self-contradictory statement or a statement that runs contrary to one's expectation). It transcends “reason” – *via negativa* or what it is not, instead of what it is.
 - One hand can’t clap? ... Wrong
 - No sound? ... Wrong
 - Slap your thigh? ... Wrong...etc.

- **Heart sutra** –
 - “Form is emptiness; emptiness is form. Emptiness is not other than form; form is not other than emptiness.”
 - No eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind...
- **Nagarjuna** – tetralemma
 - “emptiness” is not a thing, not no-thing, not both, not neither.
- **Bodhi = citta???**
 - If **Bodhi** = awareness = consciousness, and
 - **Citta** = mind = awareness = consciousness
 - Is it all ONE TASTE? A common heart-essence? Heart-mind? Are they essentially the same?
 - “The heart-mind of Awakening” ... full awakening! 😊

Contemplate this during the next week!