

## Empty-of Other (Zhentong) The view that bridges the Sutra and the Tantras

### Thrangu Rinpoche Day 8 Magic Key teachings transcript<sup>1</sup>

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This afternoon we will be talking about the view of the Madhyamika great empty-of-other school. So generally, when we talk about the Madhyamika empty-of-other school this is a view that some scholars have called the view that joins together/bridges the sutras and the tantras. So, in terms of bridging the views, there is the view of the sutras and there is the view in the secret mantra of Vajrayana. This is like the view that bridges these two. There are the four different classes of tantra but when we practice what is it that we practice? We primarily practice the instructions on Mahamudra and Dzogchen. So, we do the completion stage practice of mahamudra and Dzogchen. So, the view that accords with this, is the view that bridges the sutras and the tantras. That is what we will talk about this afternoon.

#### ***The importance of bodhicitta motivation***

So, yesterday we had a wonderful question and this was the question about the difference between the great vehicle and the foundation vehicle. So, what is it that makes someone go down the foundation vehicle path what is it that makes someone go down the Mahayana vehicle path? This is a really wonderful question because generally when we are talking about these philosophical schools and are coming to understand and internalize the view of the sutras through listening and reflection, or whether we are doing the secret mantra of

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<sup>1</sup> Video on Youtube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qPwieQNZilc>. Overview and introduction to the teaching here: <https://dakinitranslations.com/2023/08/17/buddha-nature-is-not-like-the-child-of-a-childless-woman-the-clarity-aspect-of-buddha-nature-and-mind-the-importance-of-bodhicitta-devotion-and-recognising-the-nature-of-mind-as-a-union-of-clar/>

Vajrayana practice, in terms of the two different vehicles, the foundation vehicle, and the great vehicle, this is the great vehicle.

The reason for that is our motivation, we need to have a vast motivation, and that vast motivation is bodhicitta. Now when we say bodhicitta this is not something that comes up a whole lot in these teachings on the philosophical schools, there is not really any direct mention of the motivation, or the interest in doing this. It does not really come up but it is still important for you to develop that a truly pure motivation. So, I thought for that reason that the subject of bodhicitta is really extremely important, so I thought that I would like to start by talking a bit about bodhicitta and the correct motivation.

Generally, when we talk about the motivation for the Hinayana vehicle the motivation is primarily too free oneself from the suffering of samsara, and to attain liberation that is the primary motivation. Is this a bad motivation? It is not a bad motivation; it is a wonderful motivation. We need to free ourselves from samsara, it is important to do so. Also, when we talk about the listeners the people who practice the Hinayana vehicle, do they really only work for their own just relieve their own suffering? They don't actually. They teach their students how to live their life, they take care of students, they teach students how to practice and get them to practice and help these other students. But when they give their Dharma talks, they basically they say you need to free yourself from samsara. They primarily say this, but they do not say "Oh you need to develop the ability to free all other sentient beings from samsara as well," they primarily say you need to free yourself from samsara. So, for this reason we do not say that this is a vast sort of motivation this is why we say that this is a smaller, and limited motivation. So, what is it that is lacking here? Well, what is lacking here is the compassion there is not quite enough compassion there. There also is not quite enough of the of the full knowing, shesha the wisdom that goes with that. So, because of that the motivation is somewhat smaller, limited.

Of course, we ourselves have not yet attained the state of Buddhahood and so we are not able to perform the vast amount of help to sentient beings, but it is still important for us to have the vast motivation of bodhicitta. So, in comparison to that attitude of bodhicitta of the Mahayana vehicle, the motivation of the Hinayana vehicle is a bit limited.

It is like when you have a family and everyone is living together in a family and if you prepare the food and then one person sits down and eats all by themselves then you know it is not so nice, it is not so pleasant for the whole family unit. So, it is the same way with all sentient beings. All sentient beings want to be happy, all sentient beings want to be free from suffering, and so because all sentient beings want to be happy and free from suffering, if we just say "okay, I'm going to work for me I'm going to free myself" it is not quite okay, it is like a little bit shameful. It is not the greatest of motivations. So, for that reason we need to have the view that all sentient beings need to be brought to liberation from suffering, we have to realize that in the Mahayana, we are working to bring all sentient beings together so that they may all have happiness, and so that they all may be free of suffering. So, we are working at methods to bring this about.

## ***Two aspects of the meaning of bodhicitta: benefiting others and attaining enlightenment***

When we say bodhicitta, what is the main thing that we mean by that? Bodhicitta actually has two characteristics and these characteristics are to bring benefit to others and to wish for perfect enlightenment. So, here when we talk about bodhicitta it has to have these two characteristics bodhicitta, wanting to benefit of others and to wish for perfect enlightenment. So, it has these two characteristics and the first of these characteristics is compassion. If we have that then of course, we have to have compassion but it's a compassion for all sentient beings. What type of compassion do we need to have? We need to have the unbiased compassion. If there is a bias there then of course it is still compassion, and all sentient beings actually do have compassion within them because all sentient beings have buddha nature. However, that compassion is often obscured by veils and obscurations, and there comes to be a bias.

For example, some people have compassion for humans but not compassion for animals, or it might be the other way around. Some people might have compassion for animals but only for those fuzzy ones that live on the land and not for those scaly ones that live in the water. Or they might only have compassion for the scaly ones that live in the water and not for the fuzzy ones that live on the land, or even the creepy crawly ones that live on the land. So, there are different sorts of compassion that we might have. Some people might have compassion for like among humans you might have compassion for your countrymen the people in your country, but you do not have compassion for all those people in those foreign lands. So, there is a bias that comes about in our compassion. So, because of that bias, even though there's compassion, there often comes to be a sort of malice, hatred, or evil thoughts. Or there is pride or a jealousy that comes up and so we need to have the unbiased compassion. We need to work for the benefit of all sentient beings who are the same, to bring sentient happiness to all sentient beings and free them all from suffering. They all want to be happy and free of suffering and they all want it together. So, we need to have that compassion that is unbiased. But is compassion alone enough? It is not, we also need to have the wisdom, or the prajñā.

## ***Immeasurable Equanimity as the first aspect of benefiting others***

In the *Words of my Perfect Teacher* by Patrul Rinpoche it says that when we meditate upon love, compassion and the four immeasurables, the first of the immeasurables that we meditate upon is immeasurable equanimity towards all sentient beings. So, for all sentient beings we do not try to increase or develop our compassion or our love, but we also do not let ourselves stray into hatred or malice instead we just have a sort of neutral and even equanimous feelings for all sentient beings. Then when we develop that unbiased feeling, so we gradually train in not feeling like we have compassion for one side, and malice for another, rather we train in having an equanimous feeling for others. As that develops, then we will be able to have a compassion that is truly unbiased, and a compassion that is vast. This will be a peaceful sort of compassion it will not be that combative sort of compassion, with a competitive sort of nature and so on. This is the compassion for

all sentient beings. This is the first aspect of the two characteristics of the Mahayana vehicle, to bring a benefit to all sentient beings.

The second aspect of aiming towards complete enlightenment is the wisdom, the full knowing aspect of aiming towards complete enlightenment for all sentient beings. So, when we have compassion, we might be able to help sentient beings in various ways, we can give them food, we can give them clothing, we can give them wealth, we can give them medicine, we can do all of this, and this does benefit sentient beings. Is that good? Oh yes of course it is good, it is helpful to them but there is an end to it, it will run out at some point. It also only helps a few sentient beings it does not permeate all sentient beings. So, we need to have a kind heart that pervades everything. So, this is the wish that until such time as all sentient beings are freed from samsara, we will try to attain this ultimate result of omniscience. So, whether we are able to at this point actualize and accomplish that a state of omniscience, or whether we are not actually able to accomplish that, we have to have that motivation and if we have that vast motivation then we will gradually be able to bring sentient beings the vast benefit. This is the really wonderful motivation, the superior motivation of bodhicitta which we need.

### ***The power of a single, virtuous act with bodhicitta – Buddha's previous life-giving rise to bodhicitta***

So, this bodhicitta motivation can really produce tremendous vast results. For example, the buddha appeared in India and when he appeared he taught the dharma, the dharma spread through it throughout India there were many people who practiced the dharma who accomplished the dharma. There are many people who through their practice of the dharma were able to engage in great activity they were able to attain the ultimate results of their dharma practice not only that because of their dharma practice they were able to tame their minds subdue the afflictions and so and they were able to practice generosity, practice, discipline, practice patience and diligence and the others.

Then later the dharma likewise also spread into Tibet and now and then it also spread to many different parts of the world and this happened over the course of two thousand five hundred years. It has been two thousand five hundred years since this happened not only has it spread and stayed accident for 2500 years now in many parts of the world especially in America the dharma is spreading and it is spreading in such a way that in the future, it is just going to keep getting stronger and stronger. So, whose activity did this come from? This came from the activity of one buddha, the one buddha taught the dharma. If there had not been one Buddha teaching the dharma none of this would have come about. None of this activity would have been able to happen.

Because the Buddha appeared in the world and the Buddha taught the dharma then look at how the activity has spread all throughout the world. So, this is this but this all came about because of what the buddha talked about in a Sutra. The Buddha said "when I was a when I was a poor brahmin, I offered a bowl of soup to the Buddha and through that I developed the mind of bodhicitta." So, this is the first time that the Buddha developed bodhicitta. When he first developed bodhicitta he had been born as a poor brahmana many eons ago.

At that time there was also another buddha and that buddha back in those many eons ago was also named the buddha Shakyamuni. So, the poor brahmin met this Shakyamuni and felt great faith for him and wanted to make an offering for him but he was so poor that he did not have anything to offer except for a bowl of soup. So, he offered this bowl and poured it into the buddha's alms bowl. The buddha accepted the offering and ate it and was delighted. This brahmin was so overcome with faith that he is said just that he developed the mind of bodhicitta and he made an aspiration at that point the aspiration that he made at that time is "just as your body, just as with a name just like yours a body, a lifespan, with activity, may I be just like you are." So, he made the aspiration that just as you this buddha Shakyamuni, the same size body that you have the same lifespan that you have, the same retinue of people, the same sort of activity, so too will I awaken to Buddhahood." So, this all came out of offering one bowl of soup and on generating bodhicitta. This is the benefit of it, so this all came about because of that one thing. What was that first virtue? That virtue was offering one bowl of soup and because of that the dharma has been able to spread throughout the entire world.

So sometimes we might wonder whether bodhicitta has power, or if it does not have power, but we can see that actually it can have that much power. So, when we are sitting here and we think to ourselves, we have to develop bodhicitta and we might wonder well "Is this really bodhicitta? Is this really doing anything, does this do any good at all? Am I doing really anything at all?" Well, you just have to remember this and realize in the future this will have vast results.

Whether we are doing our practice or whether we are doing study or whether we are just going about our normal affairs in our daily lives, if we can have this motivation of bodhicitta, if we can have this kind mind then it really has an inconceivable benefit. For that reason, in particular, when we are studying and are practising, we must have a good motivation. If this motivation just naturally and spontaneously happens that is wonderful and if it does not then you should sort of fake it and make it happen. So just meditate upon it over and over again, it is important to do this. In particular, it really asks you to please develop this Mahayana motivation that in the future you be able to engage in the vast activity to help limitless numbers of sentient beings who are as limitless as space.

### ***The nature of mind: there is no mind in mind***

Now, we have come to the main part of our teaching today and here as it says at the beginning of the last paragraph on page five, it reads here:

"You might ask whether the self-essence of that inconceivable Dharmata is something or nothing?"

So, this is something that I have talked about before, When we think about the dharma nature, the buddha nature, the nature of mind, all of these things, is it something or is it nothing? It is possible that we might have that sort of doubt and so here Khenpo Gangshar gives the answer, and the answer is basically what I have said before:

“It is not completely non-existent emptiness, mere nothingness like space, or the child of a barren woman.”

It is not nothingness, not like just blank empty space, it is not like the child of a childless woman who does not have a child can't exist. It is not just blank emptiness.

Then, you might wonder then if it is not nothing, is it something, is it permanent? The text continues:

"It is not truly existent, non-empty permanent thing, such as the self of the non-Buddhist."

So, is it something truly existent like the self of the non-Buddhists? it is not like that either when we look for it, we cannot find it is also emptiness.

“As it says in a Sutra: “There is no mind in mind” (མིམས་ལ་མིམས་མ་མཛིན་ཏེ་).

So first we have a mind and in the mind instructions when we look at the mind as it explains in Khenpo Gangsher's mind instructions: we first have to decide what is most important our body, our speech, or our mind and when we look at these, we see that the most important one is the mind. Well then if we look for that mind well where is the mind? Where can we find it when we look at the essence of the mind, we cannot find the mind there is no mind in mind, so we cannot find it in any way. is it just that we do not know how to look for it is not there rather it is because the essence of the mind is emptiness, it naturally cannot be established, it is empty. So, there is no mind in mind but the nature of mind is luminous. So, the mind may be nothing it may be emptiness but at the same time is its inanimate emptiness is it nothingness and blindness? It is not just nothingness at all, it also has the luminous nature the nature of mind is luminous, that means it has the clear the aspect of clear wisdom and it is able to know.

This is as it is said in the sutras, that the mind is not something, it is not nothing, so it does not fall to the extreme of being something, it does not fall to the extreme of nothing. It does not fall into the eternalist extreme, it does not fall into the nihilist extreme, it is free of all extremes such as something, nothing, eternal or nihilist. It is the wisdom (ying) and expanse indivisible. So here it is the wisdom and the expanse indivisible.

### ***Emptiness vast as space but permeated by awareness (yeshe)***

Generally, we talk about all phenomenal things as being unborn from the very beginning, emptiness. That emptiness is this expanse, this emptiness of all phenomena is as vast as space, just as there are no limits to space as it is vast. So this expanse, the empty expanse of the dharma expanse, is similarly vast. So, the nature of the way the dharmadhatu is this expanse, it is vast it permeates everything. This is the unborn emptiness, the non-arising emptiness That is the empty essence. ,

When we think about that emptiness of space what is it like? It is inanimate, there is no clarity to it in any way. But when we talk about the essence of the dharma expanse (cho-

ying) and awareness (ye-she), these two are indivisible. So there is the expanse (ying) but it is permeated and pervaded by the awareness (yeshe), this is the clear aspect of the mind.

So, when we look at the mind is there some sort of a thing that is a solid thing that we can find? We can't find it from the very beginning it has been it has been unborn non-arising it is emptiness but is it nothing at all it is not. It has the clarity, it can know and see everything, it can understand anything, it is always clear, it is this union of the clarity and of the emptiness. The clarity and the emptiness are indivisible so it is not like you can say "okay this is the clarity and this is the emptiness in there together," it is not like that. there is no way that you can divide the clarity and the emptiness, there is no way you can separate or divide them in any way."

It is inherently empty by essence and clear by nature and so the clarity and the essence are together the essence of the clarity is empty, the essence of the emptiness is clear. So, this is what we find if we establish it and prove it through logic and reasoning and inference, and when we experience it through our meditation then and look at the nature of the mind then we see that there that these there is the clarity and there is the emptiness but these two are indivisible. It is not like there is some solid thing, something we can identify as the mind. So sometimes when we meditate, we emphasize the clarity aspect sometimes we emphasize more primarily the empty aspect of the mind. But the essence of the clarity is empty, the essence of the empty is clear, there is no way you could divide them in any way. So, it is inherently empty by essence and clear by nature.

### ***Meditation and resting in the nature Nothing to add or take away from the nature of mind***

As it is said here, Maitreya explained the way to rest in equipoise within the nature of that dharma nature as follows. So, what Maitreya said in both the *Ornament of Clear Realization* and in the and in the *Supreme Continuum* and it reads in this:

“ There's nothing to dispel nor anything at all to add, by viewing rightness rightly, and by seeing rightly liberation. “

So, when we look at the nature of the mind, or we talk about the dharma nature the union of clarity and emptiness is there something that we need to get rid of? There is nothing that we need to get in there. Is there something new that we need to add to it in any way? There is nothing new that we need to add to it. The nature of the way it is the nature of how it is right it is perfect, so by viewing rightness rightly and by seeing right liberation so if we just know the nature as it is without altering it, then we are liberated. So, this is what Maitreya's wrote in the *Ornament of Clear Realization* and in the *supreme continuum*.

This is also actually the same as what it says in the short Vajradhara lineage prayer in the third verse where it says:

“Whatever arises rest simply, not altering it and just that fresh essence of thought.”

We do not need to change it or need to alter it; we just rest right within it just right in there. We loosen and relax directly into that. The essence of thoughts it is not something

that we need to do, the nature of the mind, it is not something we just rest without altering it right in there. "So please bless us with meditation that's free of conception." This is really the same meaning as the quote from Maitreya.

So, the first of these is presenting the view as established through inference and reasoning. The second presents it in terms of the meditation experience but they are the same meaning. So, as it continues:

"The reason to rest in equipoise is within the right limit of non-fixation, free of all dispelling, adding, refuting, and established. Unsoiled by mental fabricated stains appears briefly in text of the paramita vehicle, such as Prajnaparamita sutras, as well as in the supreme continuum, in a way that is compatible with the vehicle of profound mantra."

So, this is not something where "okay my mind is something that I need to make into something good, nor is it something like it is bad now and I have got to do something to it." It's just the nature as it is. We just let it be as it is, relax into it as it is, and rest in that, and if we do that, we will be able to realize the nature of mind.

So, when we do the meditation, what is it that we need to do the meditation well? We need to do the meditation in a way that is compatible with the vehicle of profound secret mantra. So, we need to be able to practice in a way that is compatible with the secret mantra of Vajrayana, and the instructions on Mahamudra and Dzogchen. This also comes from the paramita vehicle, the sutra vehicle such as the prajnaparamita sutras, as well as in the Supreme Continuum, so it does appear in those texts as well. So, we need to establish this view, we need to understand it is important for us to study it, and listen to it. If we do so, then when we do meditation there will be that clarity, there will be the certainty of the meditation, and this is a really important point. We need to have this understanding in order to have the clarity and belief in our meditation.

### ***The importance of gathering accumulations and following a qualified guru.***

Then Khenpo Gangshar gives a bit of advice, which reads:

"Until one's intelligence (lo-dro) reaches the profound intent of the dharma nature of equality."

So, until such time as this wisdom, whether this means the certainty that comes out of inference, or whether it means the actual, direct experience that comes from meditation, until we have that real certainty, that sort of wisdom, we need to train in this way.

"One should follow the glorious guru, pleasing them in the three ways: through gathering merit, purifying obscurations and so forth."

So, we need to gather the accumulations of merit, and how is it that we do this? We do this primarily through the practice of the six transcendences. We gather the accumulations of merit. Among these, what is our own particular special way of doing that? Well, if we want



to gather the accumulation of merit, we make mandala offerings and we also do the Chod practice of offering our body."

Whether we are actually able to give something now, or whether we can just imagine it now, we are not able, then when we make offerings of mandala offerings. For example, we imagine offering the entire universe, and we gather vast amounts of merit through that. Or we do the practice of Chod, by giving the chod practice we give away that which is most important to us. We visualize giving away our body we think that we are giving it away to everyone and through that way we gather vast amounts of merit.

We also should purify obscurations. Generally, we talk about misdeeds and obscurations but primarily we are talking about obscurations, and among these they are primarily the coarse thoughts in our mind. When we have strong afflictions coarse thoughts. Generally, the way we need to deal with these is through having mindfulness and awareness and meditating upon emptiness.

Doing that is a way to eradicate them entirely but it is nice to have a little method to do this to sort of make them a little bit smaller until such time as we are actually able to do that, and that method is the visualize the meditation on Vajrasattva. So, we visualize Vajrasattva above the crown of our heads, we visualize that nectar flows from in into our bodies and purifies us of all our misdeeds and obscurations. We rely on the four powers of the antidote that are described in the Way of the Bodhisattva and in other texts.

So, when we are accumulating merit in this way there is the referential accumulation of merit and there is the non-referential accumulation of wisdom the non-referential equal accumulation of wisdom. Here wisdom is the Tibetan word yeshe or Sanskrit, jnana. This non-referential accumulation of wisdom comes through doing shamatha meditation insight meditation realizing the nature of the mind resting in equipoise within the dharma nature resting in echo poise within the nature of the mind these are the non-referential accumulation of wisdom.

The referential accumulation of merit is when we make the offerings and give and practice generosity and so forth. We do these and we train in these relatively in the secret points of the path, it is important to train 'in accord with your own experience', you train in the secret points of the path it is important to try to train in accord with your own experience until you attain mastery in the meaning of the dharma nature. We need to do this in accord with our own experience. Of course, the best thing is if we were all superior practitioners, we were all able to go up into isolated mountain retreats and live like Milarepa by eating nothing but nettles, but we cannot all do that right away. We have to do this training in accord with our experience. Our diligence, our study we need to do the study we need to do that in accord with what we are able to do. We need to gather merit we need to do that in accord with what we can do. When we purify ourselves of misdeeds and obscurations, we need to do that as in accord with what we are able to do. When we meditate on samadhi we need to do that in accord with our own abilities. When we study, we need to do it in accord with our own abilities. So, if we do that then we need to train in this way until we can really realize the nature the meaning of the dharma nature. If we do this then this will

be helpful to helpful for us in realizing the dharma nature and the nature of the mind. So, we need to train in this in all different ways, or as much as we can. 58

In this way we can practice according to this. In particular, the view of our own tradition if we can combine this with the view with the secret mantra of Vajrayana and it is really wonderful to be able to practice like that. It is an easy way to practice, it is a way we can handle. So, this is a description of how to practice that really fits with our own particular tradition it fits with the practice of mahamudra, it fits with the practice of Dzogchen. So, to study like this and to practice like this is really beneficial. So that is enough for this afternoon we have a time for a few questions.

### ***Question and Answers***

Q: Rinpoche, is devotion also an expression or aspect of bodhicitta as well as compassion? It seems that to me that just as compassion would be the mind's natural reaction to some sorrow or suffering, that devotion would be the mind's natural reaction to nirvana or enlightenment, and that both would be connected in that way as part of bodhicitta?

Generally, when we talk about compassion that is the aspect of bodhicitta that is focusing on the benefit for others, this is the vast benefit for others. So, devotion is included within bodhicitta but primarily we talk about the intelligence, or the full knowing aspect of it (sherab). So, when we see the qualities of the state of Buddhahood then we develop interest in it, we develop the devotion and when we have devotion. Sometimes we generate devotion in the dharma, sometimes we generate devotion for the lama, sometimes we have more devotion for the practice. We have that devotion, that devotion is an interest, it is that strong interest in there. Like when we see the lama, we see that from the lama we can get the dharma that this dharma helps us, and because that dharma has helped us, then we feel a devotion for that. So, it is in this way included within this aspect of the intelligence or the full knowing of it but it is not directly, it is not explicitly mentioned in there. It is not explicitly labelled as an aspect of bodhicitta.

Q: Rinpoche, in light of the third turning teachings that you have been giving today that one's fundamental nature is the buddha nature, and that this is fully manifest in us, would it be correct to say that the path, in light of that view, is experientially recognizing that, and then stabilizing that recognition through our practice, through our actual ritual practice of meditation and mantra and so on?

That is right. That is right it is recognizing the buddha nature and once you have recognized it, then stabilizing it, nurturing it, and stabilizing it, meditating on it, and practicing it, and then coming to attain the ultimate result. Whether you call it the dharma nature, or the buddha nature, that is exactly what it is.

Q: When talking about the nature of mind in terms of luminous emptiness and the example given is space being empty and luminous, or clarity is wisdom. When we look at cosmology, I am told by the experts that 95 of the space, or cosmos is dark matter or dark energy and

sentient beings are very late arriving on this planet and in this cosmos. So, I'm wondering where is the wisdom in space? Where is that luminous quality? Or could a sceptic say that we made it up, that humans made up this wisdom quality? Or, is it as the teachings say, it is all-pervasive including in inanimate space.

A: When we talk about the inanimate emptiness, the material emptiness of the dark matter, the vastness the material aspect of it, that is the confused way that it appears. What is the nature of that confusion? T=The nature of that is as I said earlier, it is like the poor person who has the huge hunk of gold under the house, the nature is right there, but we are not finding it. So, it is there. It seems like there is the inanimate emptiness but behind it, or inside or behind it someplace, the wisdom is present. So, when we meditate, we can extract that wisdom, we extract that wisdom by meditating.

Q: I feel very happy to see you looking so healthy and fresh, and it astonishes me that you can keep up your schedule and so much travel and still look that way. I supplicate that you continue to do that as long as it is good for you. I had a question about bodhicitta you said that in the future our practice will have vast results and I am wondering if our practice has any results in the present because often when I say the dedication of merit it implies that maybe it does have a little bit of benefit even now, and I wonder what we ought to do if we are very impatient?

A: Well, it is like I mentioned the other day, the Buddha appeared in India a place far away, a long time ago and now the dharma is spreading in America which is another place. So as it is spreading here you know all of you students here you're practicing and you're doing this and it's really difficult for that to happen but it's happening isn't it? So isn't that the activity of the bodhicitta now? So, you all of you who you have faith in the dharma, all of you have devotion in the dharma, you are diligent about it, there is the power of the dharma and the activity of the dharma and because of that the dharma is spreading here. So, because of this many people are doing a lot of practice and this is actually a really incredibly vast result, isn't it? So, this is something that every year it is getting better, every month and next month there are going to be more people meeting, and the year later more and more people and that is wonderful, isn't it? So, when talking about this you know we talk about the Buddha, the body of the buddha, the speech of the buddha, the mind of the buddha and when are these going to happen these are going to happen in the future but the activity of that I already happening now.

Q: In our sangha, an email came through I think quoting you about how the mind's clarity aspect can obscure its emptiness aspect, and I wonder if you could say a few more words about that?

A: The reason for saying that is sometimes people ask "well you know we have the nature of the mind, if that's present within all sentient beings and they all have buddha nature, how is it that we get so confused?" The answer to that is that in the mind there is the clarity, and there is the emptiness, there is these two. The clarity has both positive/qualities and negative (faults) aspects and the faults of it is that sometimes it is a little bit too clear. First, the clarity is just merely there, then we have too many appearances, too many perceptions.

First, there's just mere clarity and then there are all these perceptions and then we get confused about those. Through getting confused, we get fixated on them, we fixate on things as being true. We get confused by that and then we have all the afflictions that happen. So, what is the fault, the negative thing that allows that to happen? We do not recognize the emptiness. By not recognizing the emptiness, then it is just too clear and there are too many appearances, we cannot handle them, there are too many afflictions. So, what is it that we need to do and how do we need to practice? We need to recognize that emptiness, and that it is the union of clarity and emptiness, and then sort of bring that clarity back and meditate upon that. Through meditating upon that union of clarity and emptiness together, then we will be able to free ourselves from samsara.

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