

Sogyal Rinpoche (April 10, 2009)

Last summer when I was in Ladakh I read Sogyal Rinpoche's Tibetan Book of Living and Dying which is easily one of the most important texts I've ever read. Sogyal Rinpoche was in Delhi a few weeks ago. Before I knew he would be in Delhi I had already planned a trip to Bali (which was amazing—I went to a surfing/yoga retreat for women). What follows are notes one of my Dharma friends took from his talk. Many of my friends who attended the talk said that Sogyal “woke them up.”

The Nature of Mind

The main purpose of our life – the heart of being human – is being happy

“My crown is in my heart, not on my head” Shakespeare

In the longing to be happy, we destroy our happiness as if it is our worst enemy – Shantideva, The Path of the Bodhisatva

The mind can make a heaven out of hell, or a hell out of heaven - Pascal

The 3 Vehicles of Buddhism convey the essence of Buddha's teachings:

1. Peace: “Commit not a single unwholesome action”; “At least do no harm” (Hinayana Tradition)
2. Compassion: “Cultivate virtue”; loving-kindness, bodhicitta (Mahayana Tradition)
3. Wisdom: “Tame this mind”; purification, transformation (Vajrayana Tradition)

True mind is already present in us but encased in the ordinary mind

The fault of the mind is that it sees self and experience as:

- Permanent
- Singular
- Independent

Samsara: Mind turned outward, lost in its projections

Nirvana: Mind turned inward, recognizing its true nature

Understanding the nature of your mind gives you the opportunity to “own your mind” not in an outwardly grasping way. . .but from inside

To see a painting in the dark, you need a candle that is still and bright

Shamata > creates stillness

Vipassana > creates brightness

Shamata with support: use of an image, mantra, breath, chanting, bell, senses, thoughts, emotions, as focal points, has effect of calming mind, like putting a baby to sleep

Shamata without support: Mind is rested, “chilled out”, in a state of non-distraction, just being

In using thoughts and emotions as focus of meditation:

1. In the beginning, it becomes like watching a movie, where you are looking at your life but less entangled
2. Later, the thoughts and emotions dissolve, there is a gap

When meditating:

25% mindfulness

25% awareness – loving vigilance, looking out

50% abiding spaciously

Just as water when you don't stir it will become clear, so with mind, when it is left unaltered, it will find its true peace

“Machupa” natural, authentic, unaltered

“Manzupa” not grasping

The key is not altering. Mind in its natural state is like a crystal, luminous

Just as space is not defined by what passes through it, so mind is not defined by the thoughts or emotions passing through

It is not the appearances, the phenomena, that bind us. It is the grasping.

Emptiness is not nothingness. It means pure experience, empty of projections, concepts, storylines, unaltered

“Death is like a mirror reflecting the true nature of life”

When we die we touch the ground luminosity of our deepest nature, the mother luminosity.

The teachings are like the path luminosity, the child luminosity that leads us, gives us a glimpse of the great luminosity. So when we die, if we have been fortunate to receive the teachings of the path or child luminosity, we will recognize the ground, the mother luminosity.

There are 3 kinds of faith:

1. eager faith: longing, like thirst in a desert
2. vivid faith: recognition, inspiration; like finding an oasis in a desert

3. confident faith: trusting that one has found something essential; like trusting that drinking water will restore health, quench one's thirst

For more on Sogyal Rinpoche's teachings:

Rigpa Center for Tibetan Buddhism

<http://www.rigpa.org/>