

Winter 2010

Trust In Mind

A compilation of Byakuren's Dharma Talks, Fall 2009

The radical nature of Buddhism is a deep challenge to how we normally see the world. This is the radicalness of living in the present moment. Our ordinary way of life expresses itself through the bondage of our mentally constructed stories about who we are and what we need. We live in the world of our internal chatter. This alienation from the true reality of life in the present moment creates our suffering. The unending challenge is to cut through our stories and return to life through the actual experience of the moment.

This fall, our community studied the "Trust in Mind" poem (Hsin Shin Ming by our third ancestor in China, Sencan). We used the book with the same title by Mu Soeng and in his commentary, Mu Soeng states:

The core of the *Trust in Mind Poem* is to

- ▶ Realize an experiential deconstruction of all concepts, categories, preferences and views about things
- ▶ Allow existential ease in this deconstructed space without wanting to fill it up with another construct of whatever kind.

In order to deconstruct our concepts, categories and preferences, we have to look at the role of language. The poem, *Trust in Mind*, strongly states that language and naming things, does not express the true reality. We are brought to an awareness of how language shapes our experience. It goes through 34 opposites in language such as; like and dislike, for and against, one and many, etc. and shows how the opposites are constructs of our language. Furthermore it states:

***The more you talk and thing about it,
the further astray you wander from the truth.
Stop talking and thinking,
and there is nothing you will not be able to know.(Clarke)***

What is really going on in the present moment is more than our “name” of the “form” of this moment. There is an unnamable underlying “current” or “source of life” that runs through all things – Buddha nature. But even to say the word “current” or “Buddha nature” puts a name (or makes a “thing”) on something that is boundless and is not touched by a concept. The appearance of the form world and this “source of life” often called “emptiness” are one.

***To return to the root is to find the meaning,
but to pursue appearances is to miss the source.
At the moment of inner enlightenment,
there is a going beyond appearance and emptiness.(Clarke)***

At the moment of enlightenment, appearance and emptiness are indistinguishable. The mind is not working in such a way as to discriminate this from that. Nor does it annihilate the “form”. The present moment’s appearance is the portal or cipher through which the source expresses itself. We move from conceiving life (mentally or conceptually understanding it) to perceiving life (becoming one with life, knowing life directly through the senses). We do not annihilate the forms of life but we change how we perceive them.

***From Mu Seong:
The purpose of meditation practice or investigative insight is to perceive
the absolute nature of things while immersed in countless encounters with
their provision appearances.***

This is an expression of the bringing together of appearance and source, of subject and object, of the one and the many.

In order to change how we perceive life, one essential change forms the base. We have to change our idea of a “self”. We change what we think is solid, unitary, and independent, to experientially knowing a self that is not centralized, is fluid, and is interdependent with all other things. In understanding the basic change in “self”, then we can confront our desire system (likes and dislikes) that stems from this deluded conception of a solid “self”.

***The great is not difficult
for those who have no preferences. (Clarke)***

The way we protect our “selves” is to believe that our desire systems are necessary. We protect ourselves by trying to get what that “self” wants and trying to push away what that “self” doesn’t want. The whole poem is about clinging and aversion and how to free ourselves from this great addiction to an independent Self. The teaching in this poem is a restatement of the First and Second Noble Truths, that attachment and aversion causes our suffering. And the third Noble Truth, that there is a way out of this human predicament.

If you want to know the One,

Let your senses experience what comes your way

But don’t be swayed and don’t involve yourself in what comes.(Hsu Yun)

This is imperturbability and an unbiased mind. You are able to stay right with the moving present moment with a still mind. This is Radical Acceptance or Radical Inclusion.

Whatever appears, whether you like it or not, can be received as the expression of the moment. Subject (the “I”) and the object (the appearance of the moment) are merged.

***When thought objects vanish, the thinking subject vanishes,
as when the mind vanishes, objects vanish.***

Things are objects because of the subject (mind).

The mind (subject) is such because of things (object)

Understand the relativity of these two

and the basic reality: the unity of emptiness.

In this Emptiness the two are indistinguishable

and each contains in itself the whole world. (Clarke)

If we are aware of our freedom **TO NOT** appropriate any experience to our conception of a “centralized self”, if we are aware of our freedom **TO NOT** make a story out of our conditioned matrix of likes and dislikes, then we are free to **be as it is**. This is going back to the second core principle of the *Trust in Mind Poem*:

2. To allow existential ease in this deconstructed space without wanting to fill it up with another construct of whatever kind.

“To let things be as they are” is a basic principle of Zen Buddhism. We can let things be wholly themselves and also see the “mystery of life” in them and through them. This perception comes from an unbiased mind.

***Just let things be in their own way
And there will be neither coming or going
Obey the nature of things (your own nature)
And you will walk freely and undisturbed. (Clarke)***

We can see the “wholeness” in each moment. A phrase I have been using for the last 6 months is: *This moment is complete*. This “interdependent wholeness” or “network of interdependent co-origination” allows us to relax into the Trust-mind. In order to have ease in a non-constructed space, we have to take refuge in Trust-mind. We are completely the universe itself. We are the microcosm of the universe and the macrocosm reflects us. Everything inside and outside works completely together. When you are coming from that place, you can trust things. You can trust your life. You can allow things to be “natural”. We don’t feel the need to control things through our desire system. We can meet what is actually happening with equanimity. Instead of struggling to control what comes into our life, we switch to simply wishing to truly connect with what is.

***All is empty, all is clear,
No effort is made for none is needed.
When there is neither “self” nor “other,”
Awareness simply is. (Dunn & Jourdan)***

The idea of no preferences doesn’t mean we don’t have to decide things all the time in our life. But those decisions are based on an unbiased mind, a mind that is in connection with the network of interdependence and a mind that is thinking from the whole body and universe. Katagiri Roshi, my teacher, beautifully writes:

***“A religious life with an unbiased mind is in the heart of everyday affairs
where it is necessary to discriminate and choose.
So, in our daily life, we have to discriminate but what we must not forget is
the fundamental attitude grounding this discrimination:
Everything we encounter is our life.
This is the attitude of Big Mind.***