



The Healing Buddha

Awakening to Sanity (letter 1)

Introduction

“Awakening to Sanity” unites the path of dharma practice with the path of healing.

Dear friend,

The central theme of this website is “Awakening to Sanity”. These two terms could actually be considered synonyms, since true Awakening should always be a state of all-encompassing sanity. “Awakening” stands for the experience of “bodhi” which in Sanskrit means to wake up from sleep. The Buddha used this term to describe the waking up from a lack of awareness to the vast and profound awareness that is the experience of complete freedom. “Sanity” stands for becoming someone fully integrated, a fluid and compassionate person acting in a wholesome way. We have not met Buddha Shakyamuni, but still today there are people who are inspiring examples of such an awakening to complete sanity. One such example was Lama Gendun Rinpoche to whom I owe whatever little understanding might have arisen.

I use the term sanity in connection with spiritual practice since I have been a witness to the development of well-intentioned spiritual practitioners that have remained imbalanced over years of intensive practice. Sometimes I even had the impression that they became more imbalanced in some areas of their life with the years of spiritual practice. While their intellectual understanding of the spiritual path and its methods increased, their relationships with friends, family, community members and their body became unnatural or dysfunctional. This is not the liberating spiritual practice as I understand it from the teachings. My conclusion is simple: Our spiritual practice has to be “sane”, which means balanced.

Dharma practice should heal all areas of our life.

For this we need to include all aspects of our life, not excluding some because they seem less ‘spiritual’ to us. Spiritual practice is not only reading, praying and meditating. Especially I feel the need to address the necessity of a more harmonious relationship with our body, with the people around us, with society, and also with nature. “Mother” nature is the very basis of this

precious human existence and neglecting it creates deep imbalances. In the same way, our parents as well as the society around us are the very basis of this existence. They enable us to pursue our spiritual journey. True dharma practice is actually the highest form of ecology, a true “ecology of awakened mind”. Dharma (the path to Awakening) is based on respect and a caring attitude and so is ecology – they are same. This dharma is not practised in the sky; it is lived on this earth – of which we are an integral part for as long as we live in this body.

I hope to write more about “Awakening to Sanity” in the years to come. There is nothing truly new in what I wish to explore and share with you. It is about the good old question of how to become truly happy and not to create more tension or suffering for anyone. It is absurd, but spiritual practice seems at times to become a source of stress – how is that possible? How can we avoid becoming lop-sided in our spiritual pursuit? It is this question that I wish to examine.

All the best for now, Tilmann Lhundrup