

Module V, Class One, Jan. 8, 2015 “Working with Emotions” mod5-1handout
pdf online *Traveling from Confusion to Original Sanity*: read last two chapters (3 and 4)

Overview

Please review fall 2014 course: Module IV Foundation of Buddhist Study

We want happiness but somehow we get suffering.

Four noble truths.

1. Suffering is inevitable
2. Suffering has specific causes
3. There can be a genuine and lasting end to that suffering
4. The transcendence of suffering also has specific causes (the path)

Module V: we are continuing with the teachings on the cause of suffering and the path.
How can we find an end to suffering?

Buddha nature is in everyone. This buddha nature is our awake nature even when we don't know it is there. It is covered over by defilements and confusion. Image of sun and clouds.
What is the root of this confusion?

Two obscurations:

1. Knowledge obscurations: not realizing egolessness (nonself) and emptiness of phenomena.
2. Disturbing emotions (kleshas) such as attachment, aggression, ignorance.

Very hard to understand egolessness and emptiness so we start with the kleshas. The easiest point of access is through the emotions.

What are the kleshas? Sanskrit word which means conflicted emotions, disturbing emotions, afflicted states of mind, neurotic upheavals.

“What is understood in Buddhism by what we in English call “emotions” is equivalent in a general sense, but there are also notable differences. Both notions refer to states of mind in which **feeling** is predominant, in contrast to **cognitive** functioning; both describe these mind states as characterized by greater or lesser degrees of **agitation**, which may be accompanied by various physical responses. Thus, from the Buddhist perspective, emotions are often called “disturbing emotions” or afflicted states of mind. This includes not only our ordinary, confused experience of emotions, but also the basic cause of suffering, which is **ignorance** or fundamental unawareness. Buddhism speaks about three primary such afflictive emotions--**passion, aggression and ignorance**. From these three, **jealousy and pride** develop, and together, these five are called “the five poisons.” These afflicted mental states obscure the natural clarity of mind and are the causes of many unskillful and negative actions. Thus, generally speaking, when unattended by mindfulness and awareness, these emotions are regarded as destructive mental states or forces that produce and increase suffering.” Class 3 DPR

Kleshas=energy + storyline (with attachment to the story)

K= energy arising + “all about me”

We are triggered by something in the environment. React in a habitual way. SELF important.

Three different views of emotions.

1. Emotions are enemies or poisons: In meditation we see them and do not indulge or suppress. We try to distance ourselves from the klesha. Focus is on working with ourselves first.
2. Emotions are friends and supports for our development on the spiritual path: We see how the emotions permeate our life and how clinging to self causes pain for us and others. We relate to others by dropping our self focus and arousing compassion. This desire to help others comes directly from our own meditation practice. Open heart. Shift of view from self to other.
3. Emotions are enlightened wisdom itself: We see that the kleshas are actually wisdom like the alchemical process of turning lead into gold. The five poisons are actually the five wisdoms when we can see them directly as pure energy without the overlay of self and our story. They can be transmuted from poison to enlightened energy.

Homework:

During the upcoming week, pay attention to disturbing emotions. Write about your experiences and what you notice. Please bring your experiences to the next class.

Use these questions (or your own questions) to explore and learn about the conflicted emotions that you experience.

Observe the klesha as it arises.

How does it manifest?

Where do you feel it in your body?

Can you hold the energy and observe the arising emotion?

Can you separate the “me” from the klesha?

Can you feel the energy without the storyline?

Five poisons

Passion (attachment)

Aggression

Ignorance

Jealousy/envy

Pride

Can you think of any other kleshas? Do you see one type coming up more than others for you?