

Introduction to Mahayana, Module XIII Class 4
Talk #1 Hinayana and Mahayana
May 12, 2016
The Complete Teachings of Mahayana
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Overview:

Three Yanas: Yana means vehicle; path

Hinayana: The Path of Individual Liberation (narrow)

Mahayana: The Bodhisattva Path of Wisdom and Compassion (open)

Vajrayana: The Tantric Path of Indestructible Wakefulness (indestructible: Vajrayana is within the Mahayana but uses special practices that lead to awakening)

The mahayana path: main topics presented in text

Hinayana and Mahayana: bridge from hinayana to mahayana

Buddha Nature

The Spiritual Friend: Maitri

Compassion

Skillful means: Bodhisattva in action

Personal Identification with the teachings

Eight worldly dharmas:

Hope for pleasure and fear of pain.

Hope for gain and fear of loss.

Hope for praise and fear of blame.

Hope for fame and fear of obscurity.

Themes in Talk #1 Hinayana and Mahayana

Spiritual materialism. Using spiritual practice to build up ego. Solidifying concepts. Trying to get something out of it. "Gain"

Instead, spirituality is discovering the tendencies toward being awake. An uncovering process. Hinayana and Mahayana are different process. Hinayana is cutting down chaos--narrow path. (Mahayana is the open path.)

"The narrow path involves experiencing that life is dwelling in pain, growing up in pain, experiencing pain. The whole process of life is wrapped up in pain because the basic tendency of ego is to yearn so much towards pleasure." We try to ward off pain. (See eight worldly dharmas above) (Remember the first noble truth: the truth of suffering)

Importance of accepting chaos, irritations, life situations. One phrase: **ego pain**.

"Unless we realize the narrowness of life--narrow in this case meaning that we can't escape from those basic things, ego or the pain--we can't have the greater vision of mahayana, the great vehicle at all."

“Existence is based on the continual birth and death of pain, and ego tries to make that process continuous and hang on to it.”

“Life consists of the notion of escape, trying to avoid pain, and the notion of giving one’s existence an identity, trying to increase ego.”

This agitation, constant **dissatisfaction** brings us to the **quest for enlightenment**: potential for enlightenment. **Spark of intelligence**.

“The fact that you are dissatisfied with your life is the message of **mahayana** coming through.”

The intelligence coming through is **bodhicitta**, the heart/seed of enlightenment.

“Instead of constantly cutting ourselves down, condemning ourselves, purely seeing the negative aspect of life situations, we come to another conclusion, which is that we are already awake.”

Tathagatagarbha: buddha nature. buddha-mind. the essence of enlightened mind. the good news.

First is the bad news: we are trapped in pain, hopeless; the message of hinayana.

Mahayana approach is good news: yes, you are trapped in pain but how do you know that? Something in you is able to see that. buddha-mind.

Hinayana and mahayana are reciprocal. First you have to see the pain and not try to escape.

Mahayana approach is based on sense of self-respect, a sense of openness or hope.

Maitri is starting point for mahayana.

Buddha-nature is embryonic enlightenment--inspiration. Looked at with suspicion. You have to awaken it. Have to acknowledge your buddha nature as if you were completely awake.

Trusting in the heart. Acknowledge that you could love yourself, appreciate yourself.

ACCEPTANCE, APPRECIATION, LOVE

Foundation of mahayana is that life is workable.

Need warmth and sympathy for yourself.

But first have to start with hinayana approach to pain.

Q & A

Renunciation: accepting you are trapped in samsara.

Life has only one track: suffering and ego. You dance on the one track.

Hinayana: you have to cut down your indulgence. Indulgence creates further pain.

Acceptance of both positive and negative situations.

The dissatisfaction is the ground.