

## Impulse as sneeze or reaction and First Thought – Best Thought

Q. Rinpoche, you said that the impulsive afterthought is ego, while the immediate thought is buddha-nature. How do you distinguish between the impulsiveness and the spontaneity?

R. To begin with you could say impulse is not spontaneous. It may seem spontaneous, but it doesn't have the relaxed quality of spontaneity. The impulse comes out like a sneeze, as the result of some pressure. Whereas you could say the spontaneity is like yawning: it has less pressure; it takes its time. The glimpse of buddha-nature is not violent, whereas the impulse is very violent; it's desperate.

Q. Is the impulse buddha-nature?

R. No. The spontaneity is buddha-nature.

Q. Then the impulse is ego?

R. Yeah.

Q. What you react to first, then, is the ego?

R. Not necessarily. Impulse never reaches the first stage: impulse always trails behind. Impulse is never up to date. It is the rebound. First you see, then you react. Impulse never comes first hand. It's a reaction.

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Ask yourself that question, "Who am I?" You may find that you do not have an answer. From that non-answer, that simple gap or open space, you may experience a flash of who you are. I refer to that glimpse as "first thought."

That first thought is not regarded as a particularly enlightened thought, but it *is* a true thought. It is your raw-and-ruggedness. It might reflect confusion or insight... Don't ask too many questions about it. Just let it be there as your first thought.

We're usually more circumspect about the first thought we come across, so we drum up a second, more reasoned thought. This second thought reviews the first and makes us feel safer, more legitimate. Sometimes we don't even trust *that* thought. So we go out of our way to ask someone – a parent, teacher...

... After the first thought, you begin to change your mind which is second thought. You begin to make it into something else, rather than acknowledging what you have already seen.