

9th Contemplation of the Mind (*Citta*) Tetrad

...Sensitive to the Mind...

WHAT IS THE MIND?

3 fold classification – Body, Speech and Mind

Mind as one of the 6 senses. Mind as a sense organ is conscious of thought (like the ear is conscious of sound).

In Buddhism mind is a process rather than a thing

5 khandas (skandhas, Sanskrit)

Classification used in Pali Canon

Also a Mahayana teaching, featured in the Heart Sutra, with an emphasis on the khandas themselves being sunya or empty of any independent nature

- form (rupa) – 1st tetrad
- feeling (vedana) – 2nd tetrad
 - perception (sanna, Pali; samjna, Sanskrit) – mind tetrad
 - volitions (sankhara, Pali; samskara, Sanskrit) – mind tetrad
 - consciousness (vinnana, Pali; vijnana, Sanskrit) – mind tetrad

The mind interacts with form and feeling so all 5 khandas can be experienced from the vantage point of the mind tetrad.

5 omnipresent mental events or constants (sarvatraga caitta dharma) from the Yogacara abhidharma (Mahayana).¹ What we call the ‘mind’ consists of five aspects:

1. Contact (sparsha in Sanskrit) – meeting of a sense faculty with an object, together with the consciousness that arises from that meeting (e.g., the eye registering forms)
2. Feeling (vedana)
3. Interpretation (samjna) – the mental act of picking out a particular object, recognizing its distinguishing features, and then assigning a label to it
4. Will (cetana) – the way we respond to contact, feeling and interpretation, generally by either moving towards the object or away from it
5. Attention (manaskara) – the union of the four other constants in the “act” of consciousness, an act that is performed afresh in every moment, and is cast in the form of a subject attending to an object

View of the mind from the Vajrayana Mahamudra and Dzogchen traditions:

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|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Its essence is: | 2. Its nature is: | 3. Its activity is: |
| sunya | knowingness | responsiveness |
| empty of color, | luminosity | compassionate |
| shape, solidity | cognizance | creative |
| not fixed | radiance | uninhibited |

"This mind, O monks is luminous, but it is defiled by adventitious defilements. The uninstructed worldling does not understand this as it really is; therefore for them there is no mental development." – *The Buddha, Anguttara Nikaya Suttas of the Pali Canon*

WHAT ARE WE BECOMING SENSITIVE TO?

¹ From Subhuti’s article on mindfulness in the Spring 2003 Madhayamavani, also see Sangharakshita’s book Know Your Mind

Thought

Knowing if and when we are thinking and when we're not and the quality of thought

From the *Satipatthana Sutta*:

The kilesas – defilements or poisons. Is the mind caught up in the or free from them?

1. Greed, craving (raga)
 - The hindrance of craving for sense desire
 - Wanting
 - Addiction
2. Hatred, aversion (dosa)
 - The hindrance of ill-will
 - Not wanting
 - Anger
3. Delusion, confusion (moha)
 - The hindrances of sloth & torpor / restlessness & anxiety / doubt & indecision
 - Running in circles, don't know what we want or don't want
 - Being lost or astray
 - Dimness

Vipasyana bhavana versus samatha bhavana: in the former, rather than trying to correct the five hindrances (nivaranas) or coverings of pure mind, we experience and learn from them

Learning – What ways of being conduce to peace, ease, liberation?

Learning - What ways of being conduce to tension, contraction, samsara?

What's is like when the mind is free from kilesas? Beginning to learn about and trust other ways of being. Not just an “absence of” but a rich, active, experience in itself.

Noticing, is the mind:

Contracted or open?

Distracted or stable and present?

Great or narrow?

Surpassable or unsurpassable?

Concentrated or not?

Attached or liberated from attachment?

We can try to find security through making the mind and mental states “me” and “mine” (just as we can do with our body and our feelings and emotions)

Mind states, like everything are impermanent, always changing, arising and passing away

Mind states arise in dependence on other conditions

In Buddhism mind is a process rather than a thing

Vajrayana approach: meditating on the view (see above). Resting the mind in its natural state.