

DB 01: Mind and Its Potential

Class I Homework, January 7, 2019

1. Read pp. 4-8 in the Discovering Buddhism Materials readings, "What is the Mind" by His Holiness the Dalai Lama
2. Chose and set-up your meditation space. Ideally it will be clean, private, and peaceful, an environment that is conducive to sitting quietly and looking at your mind.
3. Sit in meditation for 10 minutes 6 days this week. Begin each session with a motivation and end with a dedication. Spend the rest of the session in watching the breath.
4. Subject for contemplation during the week: how would you describe the mind/consciousness? Be specific as to the words you would use.

Class II Homework, January 14, 2019

1. Read pp. 9-14 in the Discovering Buddhism Materials readings, "Happiness, Karma, and Mind" by His Holiness the Dalai Lama
2. Sit in meditation for 15 minutes 6 days this week. Begin each session by generating the altruistic motivation. Follow this with several minutes of concentrating on the breath. Then meditate on the continuity of consciousness: the uninterrupted flow of mental events both forward and backwards in time. End the session by dedicating the merit you have created.
3. Topic for analysis: If I had a strong belief in the reality of past and future lives, would this life be different? If so, how?

Class III Homework, January 21, 2019

1. Read pp. 15-16 in the Discovering Buddhism Materials readings, "Everything Comes From the Mind" by Lama Thubten Yeshe
2. Sit in meditation for 15 minutes 6 days this week. Begin each session by generating the altruistic motivation. Follow this with several minutes of concentrating on the breath. Then meditate on the pure nature of the mind: the empty space in between the thoughts. The analogy of a clear blue sky may be helpful here. End the session by dedicating the merit you have created.
3. Topic for analysis: What is personality? Can I find it anywhere in my mind / consciousness?

Class IV Homework, January 28, 2019 (same homework as week before)

1. Read pp. 15-16 in the Discovering Buddhism Materials readings, "Everything Comes From the Mind" by Lama Thubten Yeshe
2. Sit in meditation for 15 minutes 6 days this week. Begin each session by generating the altruistic motivation. Follow this with several minutes of concentrating on the breath. Then meditate on the pure nature of the mind: the empty space in between the thoughts. The analogy of a clear blue sky may be helpful here. End the session by dedicating the merit you have created.
3. Topic for analysis: What is personality? Can I find it anywhere in my mind / consciousness?

Class V Homework, February 4, 2019

1. Read pp. 17-38 in the Discovering Buddhism Materials readings, "Understanding the Mind" by Lama Zopa Rinpoche
2. Sit in meditation for 15 minutes 6 days this week. Begin with 3 cycles of 9 round breathing and then simply watch the breath. After 5 minutes, turn your attention to the flow of thoughts. Don't get caught up in the content of the thoughts, just notice how they arise and then pass away in the clarity of the mind. Notice the quality of the different thoughts: loving, generous, irritated, grasping, and so on. Are there patterns that you can distinguish? End the meditation by focusing on the underlying clarity of the mind and dedicate the merit.
3. Based on the material we've covered in this module, bring one question for discussion next week (you don't have to bring the answer).

"According to the Buddhist definition, mind (*sems*) is mere clarity and awareness (*gsal-rig-tsam*) and refers to the individual, subjective mental activity of experiencing things (*myong-ba*). *Clarity* means giving rise to cognitive appearances of things (*'char-ba*), similar to mental holograms, and *awareness* refers to cognitively engaging with them (*'jug-pa*). *Mere* implies that this occurs without a separate unaffected, monolithic "me" that is either controlling or observing this activity. The "I" exists, but merely as an imputation based on a continuity of everchanging moments of experiencing everchanging things."

-- Alex Berzin

Completion Exercise, February 11, 2019

Write a short essay (no more than one page) answering the following question:

If I completely accepted the Buddhist model of the mind that we have studied in this module, how would my life be different?

Please turn in no later than March 4, 2019, the beginning of the next module. Make sure your name is on your paper.