

2004-04-04 Inclusive Heart

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SPEAKERS

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So there's a teaching

that appears a number of places in history of Buddhism keeps popping up from here to there, here and there. And most recently in in the lineage of our mindfulness tradition coming from Ajahn Chah. Ajahn Chah said once everything occurs within the heart, kind of like a secret kind of keyboard teaching, that everything occurs within the heart.

And, you know, it's one of these many kinds of pithy statements kernels of statements that kind of tries to encapsulate encapsulate some of the essential aspects of Buddhism or Buddhist practice. And it's, I find it very touching is teaching. Everything occurs within. Another variation of this teaching is the one that says don't exclude anything from your heart. Don't keep anything out of your heart.

But the first people

will say it, you can't really do that. Because everything happens within your heart whether you realize it or not. Now the word that's translated as heart in English is the word.

And citta

is a little bit ambivalent word in that

it could equally well be translated as

mine. In number of Asian languages, Buddhist Asian languages,

the word for heart and mind is often the same.

And so you could say, everything occurs within the mind.

But

I think that that lends itself too easily to

unfortunate associations for many people in the west where the mind maybe he's

thinking mind or

the ruminating mind. And I don't know what we think about the mind is in the heart, you know, As a different Association,

that's a cognitive, analytical.

And maybe the mind might appear.

But both aspects, I think, work equally equally well.

Talking about don't exclude anything from the heart or the mind.

Everything occurs within the heart and the mind.

As I want to talk about a little bit about these two aspects of the word citta. And so, the first thing is, everything occurs within the mind.

The mind

in this context,

tends to mean not

the functioning of the mind and its details,

the grander, the broader frame of mind within which we the mind functions or psyche functions, the broader kind of frame or the container

that holds our experience

of the room. And often people will point to

consciousness or awareness. as being this cheetah.

And so when I just says nothing, everything occurs within

the cheetah,

it could be understood as everything occurs within awareness. And we have a lot of people who claim one mystical kind of vein, perhaps,

would like to point out that

our whole experience of the world,

our direct experience of the world, not the imagined or

read about or whatever

the immediate experience of the world, happens within the sphere of our perceptions. And

so that

whatever we're looking at what happens when a sphere what we perceive, and so it's within the sphere of our awareness. Where Where does our awareness reside? is awareness reside in here with behind the eyes? Or does it reside somehow in a broader sphere of things that we're

aware of.

And some people will say that was clearly physiologically the weirdness happens in here. behind the eyes, and somehow in the neurons that travel to the brain, and, but some people point out that there's a way of experiencing the world where it seems as if awareness is broader than the limits of our body, that awareness, it goes to extends out

to the objects, that awareness that perception

proceeds. So, if you see a person,

that person can be seen as distinct from you out there, or it can be seen within the sphere of your awareness, as the awareness extends out there for order then

then limits of your body.

In independence,

in some people report

in concentrated states or altered states of various times, that the sense of them as an individual disappear, and who they are becomes what they're looking at.

Respond Chinese political something like

first there was

me in the mountain.

And then I disappeared,

all that was left was the mountain or some people talk about becoming one with something and,

and feeling as we

kind of disappear just that experience there becomes who we are. The this the sense or the perception

of perception is a kind of alterable thing. It's not

a fixed thing, how we perceive things, how we perceive any experience at all, is filtered through various frames of mind various understandings what it means to perceive, and if we just take the given way of perceiving as the only way of perceiving, then we limit the possibility of various ways of receiving this experience of life itself. And part of the function of Buddhist practice is to begin in a healthy and wise way to expand the variety of ways in which we allow ourselves to perceive the work we're in. So it's not just simply, you know, one way, I'm here and you're there. But there's also I'm there, and you're here, or other ways that and it isn't so much a matter of necessarily of constructing this kind of view of manufacturing. But sometimes when the mind gets very, very deeply relaxed,

then sometimes are concentrated,

then sometimes a normal perception of how we

engage in the world

is altered changes or relaxes also. So everything occurs within the mind.

So there's all kinds of interesting questions.

That sometimes mind bending.

One question is,

is your mind within your body? Or is your body within your mind? What do you think?

Which do you give priority to? Someone?

You might mind isn't your body.

So it's a kind of subset of the body

Someone else? Yes.

So the body is a subset of the mind maybe?

How would you know that?

And how would you know yours? And

so, one answer here was using logic in a sense. And the other answer was using your sense, your sense of how it is. And I'm not going to suggest that either one is right or wrong, but it's using different kind of logic with different kind of freight and different orientation to come to an answer to that question. And depending on how we engage in this world, what senses or what logic we kind of use for

this idea that everything occurs within the mind,

within the heart. It's not meant to be it's not meant to be A

literally true statements,

you know scientific statements or something, it's meant I think to be kind of a sense or self censor way of experiencing that can be helpful or can describe a certain way of being in the world.

I have friends see teachers who

like ask the question

are you in this room? Or is this room in you?

And

little bits when you say the rooms in you, they're pointing to the idea that your experience of this room, physically you're inside the room, but your experience of experiencing in this room itself as an experience happens within the sphere of your awareness. How awareness is registered in the eyes in the brain, the field of

awareness itself.

And so there's a way

there's a way

that this works. happens. This occurs within the mind within awareness. Even though we don't want to say it's literally true, perhaps in other way of asking these kinds of questions is to ask, Where does the mind rest? What's the focus on the folk guy for the attention of the mind.

And often it's with the objects

of awareness, where we're listening to words and we're focusing on the words or we're looking at an object and focusing on that object. Or when we're thinking and we're focusing on our thoughts or our preoccupations, we have feelings, we focus on those feelings. And often awareness is focusing on objects of awareness. And that seems like completely innocent thing to do, the obvious thing to do to focus on but there's another half to what awareness is there's the objects of awareness, and then there's the awareness that is aware. And some people find out that that awareness

can exist independent

of the objects of awareness. So that's the sense that awareness can exist, it's feel like very broad and spacious.

And then object just arise into that

awareness.

One image of this

is that of clouds and endless sky kind of clouds drifting peacefully and easily in a,

in a sky. So in the same way, obviously, awareness arising

awareness, they float there, in, in rising float through. And that's one possibility. One way in which the psyche can be it can be very relaxed and open, and soft, and not fixating on anything.

And it can seem like sounds and thoughts

and feelings just arise and flow through. Another way of being with the objects of awareness is to fixate

on them.

And I think anybody who does a little bit of mindfulness training practice, we realized a great extent to which the mind the awareness, or psyche for six seconds on

things gets pulled

around by the objects that gets

preoccupied or compulsiveness to kind of trying to solve things or thinking about things to review the past to find the future, or kind of heightened awareness of environments because we're very worried we're trying to make sure we're safe. Or

maybe we're ambitious, we have desires.

We're going on the streets. And we're looking at stores, always fixating

on the store that might have the latest

palm pilots, you know, and so we're just looking for Palm Pilot stores in mind fixated. And the mind is often very concerned about things, wanting things to be a certain way of fixing things. And so that's one way of being. And there's no there are other ways of being that is to let

go of that fixation of

the mind and have the mind rest in itself,

rather than

focusing or resting in the objects, so the mind that rests in itself, then the world seeps just arise within the mind

is one way that it's described.

This idea of

the sense of the world existing within the mind, within our awareness, in our experience to the world that we experienced exists within the sphere of how we experience our perceptions. And I don't know if this works for you, but a little exercise to kind of opens my mind circumstance is,

is

if I try to see

what is behind my eyes,

I just get this sense immediately as infinite space.

I don't know maybe it's for other people. It's different. Maybe it's blank,

or nothing or sneakers done in order to be but

for me, I kind of look behind my eyes, see what's behind my eyes.

And it's, it seems like it's an infinite space. It's very spacious, very broad. And

what is that what is back there?

The idea of everything occurring within the mind

There's a thing that happens on retreats that I often talk about

that points to this

is on retreats,

things are not always optimal. And

we would like things to be perfect on retreats. And just like we'd like baby things to be perfect in life. And just like in life, things are not optimal. It seems to be that retreats are not optimal. And sometimes I've been accused of ensuring that retreats are not optimal.

But I've never done this intentionally.

But it's very important. I think that retreats not be to obstacle

because there's things to be learned and when when we're up against that interface between our ideals and we think we should think how we want things to be and how things actually are. And so one common experience on retreats is, someone will come to interview and say, some variety of

you'd have to do something about that person said Next to me,

the person is, you know, you can't believe what this person is like. The person always comes in late, they have a lumberjack, way of walking into the mutation Holy Father, and then the person sits down next to me. And, and I don't know first must be running a marathon because in the next 10 minutes, the person's breathing really hard.

And then at some point a person decides to take off his or her

Velcro coats, and just rips it off.

And then,

after a few minutes later, the person has to blow the nose,

and then starts moving around and then gets up sitting the chair right behind me.

And, you know,

and this person is making all this noise. And this is not as disrespectful of me. I'm sitting here and you know, I'm on the verge of my enlightenment.

And this is the one thing that's in the way

and, and you have to do something about that person. And so Teachers,

like myself will usually kind of nod appreciatively, understandingly and say, Okay. And maybe you should go back and kind of investigate, have some more Look at that, or take this as an opportunity to practice we've decided to carefully so they don't punch us out. Maybe she didn't look at this, you know,

and then maybe we tell

them something about us, you know, about how to work with it and look at it.

And then what happens often,

is some days later,

the personal, especially if she tweets long enough, so

they can really work through it, come back and say, Oh,

I'm no longer troubled by all that noise. Because now it doesn't seem like the noise is outside on me. It's just noise passing through. And before that, that noise in that sound when it came to my ears, and in my mind was

meant with all kinds of attitudes, that noise is out there.

That noise is interfering with me. I have this agenda, just need some time to do and this gets in the way I have ideas about who I am was being respected is and this person and what other people's behavior is like. And all these attitudes and ideas are wrapped into that experience of hearing that sound. It's not just an innocent hearing of Velcro coats being, you know, ripped open.

And as the mind begins to relax,

and is not prone to kind of

activated all these attitudes and ideas, and dropping all this extra stuff, and even the sound of a Velcro coach or someone blowing the nose or whatever, can just be like a breeze going through like a sound of a bird chirping outside. It just passes through and doesn't have to meet anything.

And the mind stays open and relaxed.

And it doesn't disturb the peace of the mind

doesn't create any waves or ripples

in the surface of the mind, which is sound, you know, clouds

going through the sky.

So in a sense, what they reporting is that they're no longer treating that sound is something outside the mind, is now included within the mind and occurs within the Mind and the mind is not ruffled by it.

And if we're limiting ourselves to

the what we think is scientifically true,

we might be limiting the possibilities of how the mind can relax or how the mind can be at peace with itself.

But if we kind of broaden the view of what is going on right now, to hold the idea that everything occurs within the mind, then maybe that allows a chance for the awareness to relax enough. So there is no outside in a sense.

And when there's no outside,

the hope is in Buddhist practice, that we relate to the objects of awareness, without clinging, without either trying to push it away, or subtracting around it holding on to it. The movement of contraction in the mind and movement of resistance in the mind is one of the primary movements that Buddhist practice is trying to free us from and as a mind, which is holes, things kind of within the sky of the mind is one in which is not for or against objects. But objects arise in the mind. And they're just they're

part of

the challenge of doing this. It's letting things be getting things to freedom, just be as they are. And not contracting the mind around things or resisting things, is to have some kind of deep trust or faith or wisdom

of trusting

what emerges or trusting our innate intelligence, allowing things to arise somewhat freely. I

have some sense that it's okay

to let things just be there that

how we respond to it will be wise somehow we respond to it will be wise enough that we can take care of ourselves in that kind of situations.

We can speak what is true and speaking what is true perhaps

we can take care of we have to always plan ahead, plan our conversations. We don't always have to protect ourselves and defend who we think we are. We can just be transparent

in some way, in this transparent mind,

and that a transparent mind, just like a cloud, swift if it's freely into the mind,

so our, our responses

to the world, how we act and say,

we say, can arise also can bubble up

by itself also in that, in that endless mind, that open mind.

And

I think the maturing of Buddhist practice involves a maturing of this kind of trust, that we don't have to always plan, think ahead or defend. We don't have to be anything for anybody. And we can just

somehow be ourselves in a more complete way we see ourselves freely. If we can't be ourselves, then Buddhism can't be Buddhism.

There is no Buddhism unless we are ourselves first.

And so have some kind of faith in that or trust that we can relax into that.

So nothing occurs. Everything occurs within the mind is one way of translating into English, this phrase of attention. The other way of translating into English is that everything occurs within the heart. And I like this formulation of it because the heart is a seat of love, or

kind of the emotions of one emotions.

The mind can lend itself to this kind of

sometimes the kind of just embodied spirituality Are you talking about endless awareness and awareness was open includes everything that's transparent. It kind of lends itself to kind of focusing on something ethereal or something. It's not quite there kind of emptiness of the mind or the clarity of the mind. And whereas the heart we're talking about something very different in the sense of pointing towards something for us in the West, at least, the hardest is the seat of wholeheartedness or warm heartedness are heartfelt qualities of love and compassion,

caring for others.

And so, when we say everything occurs within the heart or don't exclude anything from your heart, it implies a little bit different feeling to me than they do. Everything occurs within the mind. Don't, don't turn anybody away from your heart. Keep everybody within your heart. No one should be excluded from your hearts

from your care from your concern from your respect.

And on Friday, we've had here a day long on loving kindness practice, which is one expression of this part. And,

and one of the things that

strikes me is that

most people, if you if they take

most of us, I think if we take the time

to really be present for someone

else, to pause long enough to take them in as a human being that I think I, I think that heartfelt qualities of understanding appreciation that person

have

a chance to surface and arise. So the example I use instead of going to the market and shopping, and if we, if we kind of judge the shopping center

checkout clerk superficially,

you know, we could have a very quick

superficial take of who they are and treat them that way. And we're waiting in line, the person in front of us is being checked out. The clerk is going too slow. And she you know, doesn't this clerk relies on important places to go to and for things to do and,

and, you know, how could they be so slow and so sloppy?

And how could the store have hired someone who's so slow? And you know, and we kind of have this cricket and maybe quick attitude judgments about who they are. But if you really kind of stood in front of the person and really looked at them and took them in and probably paused and dropped kind of surface judgment. You pick up something different from them, you see their humanity, you see, oh, here's a person perhaps Who has sorrows and joys and challenges just like you do? Someone perhaps who is struggling in various ways

in your life or has a capacity for joy and happiness.

And

at least you know, for me, if I pause long enough to take in the humanity of someone, my heartfelt connection to them begins to grow. The longer that causes, the stronger that sense is, maybe some of you've done the kind of kind of exercises where you have dyads and you sit, and you just sit with someone in silence for 10 minutes, and just look with a beat with them. Look at their eyes and look at their chest, just kind of taking that person in silence for 10 minutes.

And I've done that a number of times

and after 10 minutes, I'm in love with the person and,

you know, much, much deeper sense of heartfelt connection, probably than what if I talk to that person for 10 minutes.

If we pause,

allow ourselves to be present

for some people. person as a person,

the suggestion I have

is if we give a chance for heartfelt qualities of connectedness to arise. That won't happen if we don't pass. If we carry on a monologue or interrupt someone, it's most most important to say what we think is important to say in the conversation. And don't really take time to recede and take the other person as a person, then we shortchange the opportunity for this heartfelt connection to arise.

The suggestion I'd like to make is that

if we take enough time to pause and take in the humanity of someone else,

everybody, no matter who

will elicit some kind of heartfelt warmth or love or care for so my suggestion

is even

some of us, you know, really smelly, horrible person, you know, EDM in, you know, if you came across Ed and men in jail,

and no one said him for three or four

days and he was just miserable state and you had next to a loaf of bread. You know, maybe you can, okay, it's kind of a big A human thing to offer this person you know, some food or something you don't want that person just to suffer unnecessarily. I hope that's the case. Though in other circumstances,

you might treat the person differently. But in certain circumstances, your heartfelt connection would be as part of who we are said that the proximate cause for the arising of loving kindness is seeing the loveliness

in other people is a beautiful

statement to see the loveliness in others, and even taking the time to

look into other people and see their loveliness.

Is it there for other people?

You believe it's there for strangers and people you don't know.

People you don't like it didn't people you don't like

what is it this lovely? What do you look for? What do you see when you see the loveliness and

other people

the proximate cause of compassion which is different form of love? Seeing the suffering in people

and and then the question is how is a wise way of

receiving or seeing suffering and others?

Is Love is healthy from the love and matter of who the other people are you other people are? Or is it more a matter of who you are. And often when people fall in love, it's about the other person. The other person has just the right kind of here, you know, whatever.

You know something about the person. Tell you

the curse, the NSA is sitting here. I once fell in love with a woman and during a scene during a Zen retreat, because she was sitting next to me, and I fell in love with the way she breathed.

Seven days you know, breathing together is where her breath

The relationship worked out okay for a while.

But you know, is it about is it about something about the other person? Certainly is if you see the loveliness in someone else, but there's also something very important about who we are. Are we a person who is has paused long enough, we a person who's been open enough to really see the other person? Are we the kind of person who's not preoccupied so much by our fears

or thoughts or concerns

that we can we are available to see above leanness, and other people are the suffering of others. And I suggest that's more about how we are then about how other people are

the whole thing

of lovely schools in terms of the Buddhist form of loving kindness and compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. Both are true, but we can do them what we have the most chance to work with is ourselves. selves, we can be someone different. Or we are is something we can change and work with how other people are, you know, we may be trying to change them. I don't know how useful that can be. Or I know plenty of people, including myself at times,

there's sometimes there's a hesitation

to take in

another person as a human being as a huge full human being or the pause long enough to really see them honestly, fully. So there's kind of a heartfelt quality arises. Because the concern is if I do that, other things will follow. If I do that, then I'm gonna have to invite the person home to dinner, I'm gonna have this person's going to ask me for a favor or this person is going to just not want to leave me alone. You know, once we don't want to talk to me, and I'm in a hurry or, you know, something.

And

some fear that you know, it's not, you know, their conflict unnecessary or on

wanted consequences from

opening up to someone else.

At times it can be that. But what I'd like to suggest is that there are ways of living wisely while keeping our hearts open, while including everyone in our hearts, there were revised ways of saying no enough now, I can't do that. I'm here for you and present, but I can't bring you home for dinner. I can't do this

favor for you. Learning take care of ourselves, and set limits as part of what allows us to keep our hearts open. And the famous story Navy's been told to mine too many times with the famous story of,

I think was one of the foster teachers when she was young, she was practicing in India. And some, some guy tried to cluster in the streets of India.

And she fended him off and

went back to her teacher and said,

You know, you're teaching me all this loving kindness practice

and how to be kind and everything and you I was accosted by this guy. You know,

how do I, you know, what should I do? What should I do?

And the teacher said, with all the loving kindness you can muster for this person,

hit him over the head with headphones head with your umbrella.

So, you know, I don't know if that was that was the wisest answer either, but,

but it points to the idea that the Star Wars perhaps ways that's taking care of us doesn't require shutting down our hearts. So everything occurs within the heart is a statement

of how things are in the sense.

And then

the practice issue is,

are there ways in which

we exclude things from the heart or exclude things from my mind? Do we create a division? And if so, is that division or that separation or those barriers? Are they healthy for us? Are they wise? Or did they cause suffering in the channel Are that's most of the kind of sense of separation, the kind of exclusion, when we exclude something from our minds exclude something from our hearts, this is unacceptable.

I'm not going to open this, I'm not going to be aware of this. When we do that, that we just add sufferings like adding salt to a wound, it might seem like it's useful to do. But in the long term, it doesn't, it doesn't lead to our liberation to our freedom doesn't lead to the maturing of this good heart that is within all of us. So the practice issue then is how do we begin understanding how we exclude things? And how do we work with us and how do we begin to relax it? So we can

bring things in or include things,

not only things outside, not leaving anything outside? And as I say, often in the introductory courses I teach that what is most sacred for Buddhists, is that awareness which has nothing outside

when there's no outside When everything's included, that is what's sacred. As soon as we have inside and outside was acceptable for awareness, and what is not what we're willing to open our hearts for and what we're not willing, then we no longer in touch with which is most sacred with the sacred ground. So everything occurs within the heart. Everything occurs within the mind.

And I think

my my belief or my sense is everyone will have this experience if we relax deeply and remain alert. So those are my thoughts for this morning. Do you have any thoughts in reply? Comments or questions? Please

It's fun to

be around someone who is something Am I not?

Questions. The question is, if she's not able to be around people who are difficult and abrasive to be around, is she not practicing her deepest

fulfilling the deepest forms of practices something wrong with her

If you have a headache

when you're with this person

nothing's outside the mind including the headache.

The boundaries. Yeah.

That seems right. I mean, what a part of what's included within the

accepting awareness is our

limitations in our, in the ways in which we do claim or resist or contract. And so that's a very wise approach towards our so called limitations are the places where we do claim. We set up as some kind of ideal. I'm supposed to be open to everyone, you know, some kind of idealistic way and we're not that way. And we criticize ourselves for it. And we're going against the grain and occurrence of what

the practice is trying to do for us.

And so you won't be very careful how you hold ideals. But if you see the ideal and see it as a kind of highlighting how you actually are, and then you realize I'm supposed to accept how I am to, these are my limitations, and I have to work with this. And if I stay in proximity, this person in a certain way,

I just end up with this horrible headache doesn't work for me.

And I think what I need is to titrate. However, this person who moderates his views on occasionally or I need to go away for a few, a few months or a few years until I work on my own reactivity or something. I think the only having a strong sense of one's own limitations and, and taking this seriously into account is very important part of a wise life and not to override it because it's not. It's not, you know, what the practice is supposed to look like. The practices, you know,

the practice occurs at the juncture of who you are

not beyond that.

So fast.

I'm not sure.

asking the question is a great question exploring for yourself. The answer I think is very, very important. And I'm mostly gonna encourage you to keep asking the question exploring, I do know that it's important to know, to pay attention to the consequences of our activities or actions. And when we do it the consequences of reading the paper too much you may science with too much of it, is the heart closes and we feel depressed.

And then probably it's not useful to read the paper so much.

Unless you really have a strong sense that by you can really practice you know, you can engage in a practice away with your reactivity to what's happening within the paper. So you working that edge, so that you can understand, you know, Is it fear that's causing it? Is it what's the what's the nature of that distress, then it's okay to kind of ride the edge and see what's happening.

But if you find yourself kind of drowning,

then then we need to kind of figure out how to take care of ourselves. And so

sometimes reading a paper lesson

will help us keep our hearts open.

But if we only protect ourselves from having a heart kind of close up,

then it is not so realistic in terms of practice

of incense. One way of understanding practice is practice real practice occurs as a practice is at that juncture between that juncture where we start contracting, if we think we're supposed to just kind of be spiritual people and just relaxed into the big mind,

that's we're supposed to live all the time.

That's nice. I mean, the great if you could, you

could snap my fingers, and all of us could just live there, right? It'd be great. But that's not our practices. And one of the most precious things we have

his practice and practice occurs a little bit at that

at the interface between maybe the big mind

and the small mind or the place where we're

contracted in places where we're not.

So it's, you know, so you might want to kind of

not read the full paper but read just enough.

So you can kind of begin kind of exploring that edge

and start understanding what's going on within you

with this experience,

What what what what is it that gets triggered inside of you. And as you understand yourself better, then maybe there's less reactivity and you're able to be open more fully.

Sure, metaphors, we

can help a lot, confession practice can help. There's a lot of practices that can help.

And those are really great to do.

And it's important also to have

the willingness at times and the ability assigns to just have a broken heart. And part of a part of practice, I think is part of having a heart includes everything is to have a heart

that also is willing to be hurt. Your pain.

And if you haven't okay with okayness with

that, we're not expected to have a heart that's always blissed out,

joy or relax,

that I think a healthy heart is one that at times feels pain, the suffering, you know, feels the payment or was broken in some ways by what happens in the world and doesn't try to resist that or run away from that or it's just part of what the point the clouds like rips through

the endless sky.

My heart gets broken, it gets broken a lot.

So you might try today, as you go about your day,

to pause long enough

to see if you can get a sense

of things in a different way than how you

usually sensor experience your life.

Maybe pause long enough

to see some way that you can include this experience

in your heart

or pause long enough Just some way that you can include this within your awareness in your mind for positive long enough to realize it, maybe it's all occurring

within this big mind.

So thank you all. If anything today doesn't make any sense to

just leave it here.

Leave it in my mind. I'll keep it