

2015-09-02 Dharmette Papancha Proliferation of Abstract Thoughts

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SPEAKERS

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For those of you who don't know, I would like to introduce you to a Buddhist word. And that word is there wait one more moment while hearing system devices are going on.

Maybe start over again.

So, I want to introduce you to a Buddhist word and the word is Punjab, pa pa Sure, and in my little mind long ago, I connected it to this, I guess it's a song from England, but Britannia Britannia rules the world punch, punch, punch rules the world and apologies My apologies to the English that and the punch ah is usually translated to English as proliferation of thought and the kind of the expansion of thinking into abstract thought and thoughts Gone Wild the so there's thoughts there's thinking, ordinary thinking, that is ordinary part of life. And then we get caught into our fantasies, our imagination, our abstract thinking. And we kind of rush off into discursive thought into conversations into imaginary worlds. And this movement into this proliferation of abstract thinking and ideas that loses touch with a little bit with reality is called papañca in Buddhism. And in a big part of Buddhist practice is learning how not to get lost in that world of punch in that world of obstructions abstract thinking. That turns out that the word papañca comes from the word at the heart of his word papañca and papañca, in in Pali means five. And some people think it means like going off thinking in five different directions at once. That kind of, you know, rushing off and breakout breaking. They sometimes thinking is very fragmented and jumping around to all kinds of places. the proliferation of thinking. So some people, someone told me recently in their family, that they have adopted the word papañca as something they tell each others, hopefully just the right way. That's a punch. You know, like that's, that's just kind of you're spinning out into thinking and thought. I don't know if they tell it to each other, but maybe I'm punchy. That'd be better, right? So sometimes someone who cares for you a lot might do your big service by saying, I think you're caught up in papañca right now. And it's taking over. So it's one of the interesting things that I, that happens to some people about when they get caught up in papañca and a lot of abstract thought and thinking is kind of like the center of gravity of where their physical energy is, where their attention is, where they're, where their life is kind of you could feel it almost is up in the neck and up in the head. Sometimes you can feel it in their voice, somehow they will contract it around the maybe the voice box and because a lot of energy, they're kind of the center of gravity of when and where the attention is, is maybe in the control tower, which some people think is in their head. And so they put a lot of attention up there. And so the kind of like everything kind of goes up, it's kind of top heavy, in the in the mind. And it's interesting to just feel the physical effect of a punch of the physical way that when we really lost or caught up in thinking, where our center of gravity is where we kind of reside, where we think we are,

where the energy is, where the attention is, where the stress is, where the tension might be within us, and how much of it can go up in the head. And then the alternative is one alternative is, this can be very healthy is to be, like I said earlier in the morning, be in your torso in the trunk of your body to kind of be centered.

When I was I did Zen training, there was a lot of emphasis on keeping your attention in your heart, just just below your belly button, kind of just not only kind of two inches below the belly button and two inches back in because of the kind of a being grounded and centered kind of like having a kind of like become blue but they had this stall in Japan. Kind of like a really plastic blow up Maybe clown dolls that they have in the West. But they have this Bodhidharma doll, which is this ancient Buddhist Chinese monk named Bodhidharma. And so he's sitting there in meditation and wearing his clothes but he has a rounded bottom. And so no matter how much you push Bodhidharma over, he always comes up upright. And so because it has this firm, firm, rounded, and you know, heavy bottom, like a sailboat that has a, you know, like a keel, it's heavy and so it brings the boat back up again when it gets pushed over by the wind. So by keeping your attention or keep having a sense of your weight or your presence or your, you feel kind of settled in relaxed into your lower torso, you have this ballast you have this more resilience. It's easier to kind of kind of be be pushed around by the winds of society. in a way that is much more hard, much harder. If you're kind of top heavy, a sailboat which is top heavy all the way to the top of the mast, it's not gonna last very long, it's gonna fall over. And so either I think for top heavy with a lot of papañca, one or two things are likely to happen. Either you're going to be pushed around by the winds of society and words and activities of other people what's going on, and be kind of, you know, overwhelmed by it. Oh, you're not going to notice.

Because you're so kind of caught up in your own inner landscape and thoughts and world and, and there's a fair amount of time where we don't really take in what goes on around us well enough because we're in punch our thinking too much out thinking the world around us and lost and fantasy and ideas and fears and concerns. So papañca. So this proliferation of thoughts and it's fascinating to watch you know you're minding your own business having a good time, whatever and we're single thing happens, a an event, the phone call and email. Someone says something, something happens. And then to watch, to go from a state of little papañca to a lot of papañca and the watch the world of imagination come into play, and to be to recognize what is it imagination, what's imaginary, it could be have good. You have really good imagination for the future. And you're, you have a great ability to predict the future. So your imagination is really reliable. Maybe you're one of those people. And so maybe it has a role do you know but but most people find that the world of imagination when they They don't recognize it as imagination. They think it's the truth. So to recognize, oh, I'm imagining what's going to happen imagining tomorrow or the next day or I'm imagining if I'm going to be homeless if this goes any further and, or whatever, and so to recognize what's an imagination as opposed to what's a little bit more grounded, imagination might be accurate, but the future but to not see it as imagination sometimes gives it too much authority and we get weighed down by it. And to see is to watch and see what kind of thinking goes on the kind of ways in which we rush off and jump around and bop around to different ideas and what what gets triggered inside of us that's fuel super papañca. Is there a lot of emotion is there shame? Is there anger is there. fear, anxiety, that's part of it. What is it that comes along with this papañca What are the beliefs about how we solve our life problems? If we just sit there, you know, that if we think about things long enough, we'll find the solution. And some of you, I think the track record of succeeding that way is very low. Given how much time you spent thinking, then but we keep trying, keep trying. And, but this idea of being grounded, and being kind of in your body, in your torso, in your belly, learning to have a relaxed belly. And in exams, I don't often do this not everyone finds this useful to feel themselves resting and, and at ease and relaxing into kind of like the pelvic cavity can hold you and receive you. If you just kind of release yourself. You're not to hold yourself up

out of the pelvic cavity. You can relax and let the pelvic cavity hold you and receive you, that to be there. And to feel like that's more the center of who you are. Rather than the world of thoughts, then our thinking becomes much wiser than thinking as a chance to be a little more relaxed, more open and, and have a different source of wisdom source of what kind of informs it. Then if we're up in the head and jumping around and kind of filled with papañca, because generally a punch is not a source of wisdom. And it's a wonderful thing, to be a human being. It's a wonderful thing to be breathing and have a heart and to have a mind to have all these capacities we have. And this idea of being careful with papañca is a way of safeguarding what's really wonderful about who we are and what can really move through us in a very nice way. So learning to see through the tricks of papañca is not meant to be a little you are, but it's meant to kind of enhance you and enrich you and your life. So I hope that understanding your papañca better is in fact enriching. So thank you