

2016-04-10 Wisdom About Delusion

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SPEAKERS

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Good morning. This morning I wanted to, I'd like to give a little bit of a Zen inspired teaching. And you know, I think Buddhist teachings can be presented for many different perspectives, often pointing to a similar teaching similar idea. And I was, I spent a lot of years practicing Zen and so it comes out sometimes. So I thought I would try my mind. And includes telling a story because I don't think there's religions without stories. And Zen has a lot of stories. And this one I think of as a fable, and you'll even hear it you'll probably agree that's probably more like a fable than historical account. And in the butt introduced it, I would like to, quote, the Zen master Dogen, very important Zen teacher in Japan, in the 1200s. And in one of his famous writings, he wrote that Buddha's are enlightened about delusion. foolish people are deluded about enlightenment.

And I certainly noticed that when people are new to practice, and also sometimes, you know, idealistic, there's a great interest in the light in enlightenment, and who's enlightened and you know, I'm going to get enlightened, or, you know, if when, when I get enlightened, then I'll live happily ever after. Or I'll get the badge, that I could go around and show people that I'm successful person, or whatever. And, but right of entry, you know, and interest in enlightenment. And I've noticed that as people mature and practice, many people get less and less interested in the topic of enlightenment, the more mature they are, and find themselves more than just being content, to just be who they are, be as they are, and deal with delusions deal with attachments as they come up and understand the nature of those. And that seems to support them more to become be free than it is to kind of keep focusing on the ideal of enlightenment itself. And, you know, I've known I know, a lot of Buddhist practitioners have been practicing some of them for close to 50 years, 40 50 years. And more than 50 years, some of them I know. And one of the things that characterizes them, is they're very relaxed about their foibles, their so called shortcomings. You know, they have them and but they they're not defensive around them, or they're not upset about having them they're not, you know, they're responsible for them, they engage with them, they practice with them, for sure. But sometimes they're so easy to kind of say to, to, you know, admit, you know, this is, you know, have this, had this quirk, I do this thing, and, and, but they don't seem to be caught by it or pushed around by it, or they seem but but they're also not, you know, they're not embarrassed by it, or defended by it's just like, Oh, you know, and this is ease and willingness just to be and be someone who has maybe shortcomings or and they're not stellar examples of, you know, spiritual Olympians. So to be enlightened about the illusion instead of deluded about enlightenment.

So there's a story. It seems to be that once upon a time, there was a great gathering of Buddhas to have a Buddha conference. I'm not sure what Buddhas do when they come together for conferences, but Buddhist teachers often have meetings. You know, part of the nature is to get together and talk about teaching and the issues that come up. So these Buddhas had a big conference, but not invited to

this meeting, where the Bodhisattvas. Bodhisattvas are beings that are not really human anymore. They're kind of like they're sometimes called celestial lists, as opposed to dieties. But there are the most highly developed beings just short of being a Buddha. And some of them embody certain characteristics, certain good qualities, and one of them is Mañjuśrī and Mañjuśrī is the Bodhisattva, the celestial being, that personifies wisdom, it's the great wisdom bodhisattva. So the bodhisattvas were not invited to this conference of Buddhas. So maybe that's okay. And, however, when it was over all the Buddhas, except for Shakyamuni Buddha, left. Shakyamuni Buddha being the Buddha, of our kind of our Buddha. And so then Mañjuśrī, went into the place, and sitting there next to Shakyamuni, Buddha was in a place of honor right next to him, was a woman. And the woman was sitting in Samadhi, deep state of concentration. So Mañjuśrī said Shakyamuni, you know, what's a woman doing in the place of honor, sitting in Samadhi, when this was supposed to be a conference of just Buddhas? And bodhisattvas, who were not even invited? So you know, it's a, maybe a little bit misogynist.

And, you know, there is that streak in all cultures, right, some Buddhist, some has that as well. And but then kind of pushes against that misogyny sometimes, and this is like one example of that, playing itself out. And associate manager said, What is she doing sitting up there in the place of honor? And so the Buddha says, Why don't you ask her. And so he, or she's sitting in Samadhi, meaning deep state of concentration. And so he goes in, he walks around her three times, it usually thinks I'm going to do and reach out of respect and, and snaps his fingers. And, you know, and tries to get her to come out there with somebody and nothing works, he can't get her out. And so he says that to the Buddha, not it's not working, and why can't I get her out? And then the Buddha said, well, there is a great bodhisattva. Deep down underneath isn't far distant place. Oh, no. And then to tell the story a little more, so he tries to snap your fingers and get around, he also tries to, he also lifts her up into the air. Because he has great psychic powers. So he lifts her up into the air and she's up there, but he can't still can't get her to come out of Samadhi. So then, the Buddha said, well, there is this other bodhisattva far the in the realms below us, called the Bodhisattva wisdom about delusion. And let's see what she can do. So she comes up out of the ground, out of the earth. And she goes and stands in front of the woman in Samadhi. And sits down in front of her and boughs, and snaps her fingers, and the woman comes out of Samadhi. That's the end of the story. So this is a koan. It's a koan that's in a book called The Gateless Gate. It's also a nice wonderful title, the Gateless Gate. So it's the gate we're supposed to walk through, to become liberated. But it's gateless. There's no gate. So why do you walk through a gate where there's no gate, the gateless gate. So there's a whole bunch of these stories like that. And then then students sometimes will take one of these stories and live with it for a while and reflect on it, and then try to present their response, the reaction their understanding of it to their teacher. So what is your understanding? What comments do you have about this story? What do you think is going on there?

I noticed that, um, the bodhisattva that came from down below, was depicted as female, and she didn't just chin desse the woman in Samadhi like Mañjuśrī did, like why aren't you you know, there's a person of great wisdom for the widow but Well, you just need to have the wisdom to say it was okay for a woman to be sitting there. Maybe. Okay.

So the bodhisattva, from way down below was bodhisattva wisdom about the delusion. And so I was, I was wondering if bringing the woman out of Samadhi was bringing her from a place of non delusion into delusion, or maybe the other way around? And I've I haven't formed an opinion one way or the other about that. Great, so. So is the woman sitting in Samadhi, which she was there's kind of delusion in being in Samadhi or not. And if she wasn't in delusion, was the bodhisattva about illusion bringing her out of her delusion? or was she not in delusion, but the bodhisattva about delusion brought a handful of delusion along with and got her diluted. Yesterday? Is our mic over there? beside him? Oh, yes.

Well, it seems to me that the male monk who tried and failed to bring her out of Samadhi, was in delusion, as to his attainment of a certain level. And he was operating from some sort of spiritual identity.

So there you go. So he was offering some delusion, and maybe the woman Samadhi was so wise about delusion, that she knows not to respond to it. So to be enlightened about the illusion means you don't get caught by it or pushed around by it. So maybe. So why did she respond to the other body thoughts about the one who was called the wisdom about delusion?

I think in line with that, what I was thinking is that the first person was coming from a place of lacking knowledge or lacking peace, and almost demanding, maybe from a desperate place almost wanting her attention. And the Bodhisattva, who came when she bowed, she immediately showed respect. And to me, it was a mere request or suggestion to come out of it. Nice. So maybe the mind body sought for wisdom on judiciary was insecure, because he'd been left out of the conference with a Buddhist like, Mañjuśrī is like the highest kind of like, bodhisattva, just short of a Buddha. So it's like, pretty good, right? So he's, but you know, he's still not fully enlightened. So he still has some foibles and more of the maybe some insecurity that he was left out and, and sitting right in the right hand side of the Buddha should be him. But there's a woman and so that really stirred him up. So he was Yeah, so maybe he was insecure or arrogant or cotton, those things, but the woman who came earlier out of the ground, she didn't have that she had the respect.

Yes. And I think the woman came out because she was more in harmony with a suggestion, rather than a demand came out of Samadhi, because he was in harmony with the request rather than demand. Nice. I like that. Thank you. Pass it over there.

I wasn't really sure that I understood that the whole part about what was happening in that situation for him, but what struck me about the story is that he had this expectation that it should have been a man sitting there.

And instead, what he found was a woman.

And so often, it struck me there's a parallel there for me anyway, that so often, you're looking for something and you think it's going to be in a certain place. And it's not actually in that place. I call it looking for shoes in a bakery. You keep going to that place and you keep looking and you think it's going to be there and you send it and I think that that's what I got is that this man is saw her sitting there and, and thought, but but that's not where it should be. That's not the right store, that's not the right place. So he, I think that was the delusion that he woke up from. Because it's so often in a place where you least expected rather than in a place where you do expect it nice.

So the police for wisdom had an expectation of how things should be. And it didn't work. But the woman who came there was a woman who came out of the ground, she respectfully paid respect and sat down in front of the woman in Samadhi. And the idea of sitting down in Buddhism also has a sense of like in meditation, you just sit there and you're open to what comes. And even if he couldn't, maybe she was going to be willing to stay there and be open and for however long it took,

I mean, how many times do we go running and looking for something that we want in you know, and we think it's, it's gonna definitely be in that place, or definitely be from that person. And he found out that, you know, that that, that his expectation was, yeah, just was, was a different source.

Great. Very nice. Thank you. Behind you, Camille. Oh, right.

I was struck by how he lifted her up into the air, it just seems like such a controlling gesture, and also like, so dramatic kind of getting at what you were saying before about, like, well, enlightenment is this powerful, fancy, magical thing. And, you know, and that just had no effect on her. Whereas the bodhisatta of the wisdom about delusion comes up from the ground like seem so humbled to be somebody who's who's normally you don't even see because she is below the ground and connected to the to the grounding. And then, you know, all she does is humbly bow and then snap her fingers. She doesn't have to do something so fancy.

Nice. Very nice. The little bit, you know, going aside, but what you're saying reminded me of what why one of the reasons I was so impressed by my first teacher, Mel Weitzman was that he was so ordinary. And, you know, you saw if you saw him in a supermarket, you wouldn't be you wouldn't think much of you know, wouldn't occur to you that he's a Zen teacher.

Yeah, my, my Zen teacher in LA likes to say, in our practice, we become ordinary, but what you think of as ordinary is actually really diluted?

Yes, please, is. straight back behind you, Phil.

What, what interested me, when the second bodhisatta came up? My inclination would have been to just sit in front of the woman in Samadhi, and not read, not make a request for her to leave it. What Why bring her out of that state, as opposed to just be with her. I think the motivation they can get him and get her out of there was to ask her why she was sitting there. Who are you to sit there. And in the story, at least, that's, you know, but I appreciate your, you know, your respectful way of sitting there with her. Very nice.

So I was struck by by just what you said, Go, which was the, the initial question is, what is she doing there? What is she doing there? And, of course, she was doing nothing. She was being there. And she was being there in this deep state of Samadhi.

And, and she was teaching, she was a teacher, by just being just by being there. Yeah. So how often are we or do we think are we are we asked to be accountable? What are you doing? Or we feel like we have to be accountable to prove to people I'm worthy. I'm doing something and you know, and to sit and meditate and people say, What are you doing? You could be doing important things. There's television programs to watch. Yes, because I thought some about the Buddha and how this whole Thing played out, in that he allowed the bodhisattva to just try to get the woman man out of Samadhi. Right? Just let him do that, right. And then suggested, well, let's have wisdom about delusion come up. And it struck me kind of as a lesson also for the first device, in the sense that he was actually encouraging this thing, play out, and suggest that the wisdom about delusion come up, right. And the lesson that I get from it also is that wisdom on its own is, is not enough, you have to be the true wisdom is knowing both sides at the same time, the wisdom and the delusion nice. So the first one was only wisdom. And he was not quite there yet, where wisdom about illusion brought something else to learn, which is it has to be those two, very nice wisdom about illusion is makes it real in our lives much more. I was thinking about the story earlier. I remembered, you know, I got involved in Buddhism and Zen in my early 20s. And there were a lot of other men in their early 20s, in my scene at the time. And so I think some of the times, the conversations were all about the subtle nature of emptiness, you know, enlightenment and the true nature of existence and reality and ultimate reality and, and a little bit idealistic. And, with no grounding

in the world that we live, and apart from it almost. And so little bit that way that, you know, there was no, it was it wasn't that delving into this world and delusion, understanding how we act and behave. But rather, it's, you know, kind of apart from it as if it could be a part. Very nice. Great, thank you for that was great to have your responses. The Zen masters would have been very happy with you. engaging with it. So the so the Zen master Dogen who made this quote, he wrote this piece about the Buddha's are enlightened, enlightened about delusion, and foolish people are deluded about enlightenment. In the same work, he has a very nice, another, his very, very nice little quotes in this famous piece of is, and one of them says, to care about the illusion, to carry oneself forward. And recognize things in the world is delusion. So to bring oneself forward to assert oneself forward into the world, and to be the one who recognizes what's happening is delusion. That's the first half. The second half is to allow all things to come forth. And reveal themselves is awakening. So two different ways of operating. So one way is asserting oneself. And using oneself as the measure for what we want, what has to happen, what we're going to do, using one's own criteria for recognizing and assigning what's there. And the other is, is a willingness to kind of be open allowing reality to show itself or allowing reality to bubble up and just reveal itself. And there are two different modes of being. And I think in Buddhism, that divide is likened to the divide between being too clinging to being attached something to something, and not being attached, not clinging. Because to move yourself forward, or wait, so it's actually the word works is to go forward with the self.

So your self identity, you know, your little self idea me myself in mind, I have to prove myself I have to attain something, I have to get something. I I there's very little room sometimes when there's a bigger preoccupation with me and myself in mind, for reality, that kind of unfold and open and show itself. And the reality that opens that comes forth is not only the world around us, that also the reality within us, the life within us. And one of the beautiful things to discover and practice is I think one of the profound things is how much wisdom how much beauty how much process And unfolding, can happen if we create the conditions to allow it to come forth and move through us. And if we are in charge, if we think it's up to us, it's only up to our efforts only up to our proving herself or defining ourselves or getting what we want, we actually limit the space in the heart or the inside, for something to bubble up to swell up to move through us, and appear in a wonderful way. So and also around us in the world, if we are the ones who assert ourselves and say, This is how it has to be, then there's enough space to allow something else to come. And I think we had a little demonstration of this just here in the starboard talk. Because if I with all my wisdom, infinite wisdom, like, you know, like Medusa Ray had, I had just kind of was gone forth and explain to you what the story really meant. I think we all would have been limited by that, you know, my, my ideas, but I felt enriched and enriched by the fact that I opened it up and to hear from all you and get different perspectives. And I heard perspectives I hadn't thought about. So I was delighted to have it to have these understanding come forth, and be revealed in this room and the situation. And so, you know, today we have this earth care. Fair, and, and we have the story of the woman coming out of the earth, they got revealed. I think that in how this plays, that plays itself out with the environment, is that if we are self centered as human beings, and it's all about our desires, and our comfort and what we want, and we're asserting ourselves in our life and our lifestyle on the planet, that that's, that's a certain kind of delusion, it might bring comfort, it might bring a sense of safety to us, it might bring some kind of things that we feel good having all that power, and whatever we do, but it also limits us and it limits our planet, that kind of confined, could confines things, it doesn't allow for things to come forth and reveal themselves. And you know, we live in a beautiful planet, a beautiful nature, where I think that it's pretty simple to say that human beings have have limited dramatically, the natural, unfolding the natural worlds revelation of how things unfold and grow. You know, an amazing dramatic degree over, certainly over the last hundred and 50 years. But other times in human civilization, they've done it as well. I grew up in a little part of my upbringing was on the Adriatic coast in Italy. And all the way it used to be a slob down the coast, there was Yugoslavia, we used to get on visit sometimes, and, and beautiful, beautiful islands, that the Romans had completely denuded. There used to be trees and

forests and soils there. And now they're just, you know, they're kind of beautiful, but they were bare rocks, you know, everything most of the plants are gone, because this deforestation that happened the ancient world. But you know, so we have animals disappearing, we have plants disappearing, we have whole ecologies disappearing, the natural world that unfolded, grew up to be in harmony, and homeostasis. And all this profound way in which things are in balance has gotten disturbed in our planet because of human activity in human desires and human consumption. So is some of that delusion, some of it has to do with the sheer number of human beings, you know, and aggregate of it all just planet can't handle it. But I think there's a fair amount of what Buddhism would call the illusion or clinging or desire.

And to, to learn not to assert oneself all the time. But to learn this radical other thing of allowing things to come forth on their own is one of the profound beautiful things I think comes from practice. And I think it allows for a wiser way of living in the world. I think it supports us being content with what we have, rather than having to change and get and improve and do you know, in order to you know, consume more, get more friends or have more Facebook connections. You know, all this doing all this wanting all this kind of building, creating and creating a sense Self and showing oneself and proving oneself and apologizing for oneself and doing all the self thing that we do limits us. And it isn't necessarily that it's bad to do it. But one of the really great things, is to appreciate how much delusion and clinging, limits things, limits limits the wonderful, free movement of the heart of the mind of the world around us, that connect the free movement of the connection to the world. And so they'll learn this step of getting out of the way of allowing things to reveal themselves to come forth on their own, can begin in meditation practice itself, to start becoming wise about how we are not doing that, how we get in the way of the free flow, how we get how we interfere, how we're trying to control how we're trying to avoid, how we're trying to fix how we're trying to attain something, all that that's to understand how we do that is the wisdom about delusion. If we're in a hurry, to get concentrated, get into Samadhi, if we're in a hurry to get completely full of loving kindness, and emptiness and cosmic consciousness or whatever, you know, wonderful states, without doing the work of understanding the delusion and how we get caught, and what we're doing, then we're only seeing half the picture. For this wisdom of Buddhism to be portable, and to be applicable, in all ways, takes a willingness to recognize what we're doing, that the limits the limits to holes down our experience in who we are, our delusion or clinging or attachments we have. And to be able to look at it with honesty and humility and, and okayness it's not, you know, you're not a bad person, because you have clinging. Look at me, I'm clicking. And, you know, but then hopefully, we're not caught by that or, or, you know, asserting that on top of other people. But, you know, we've made look, you know, I'm doing the best I can, and I have this foible, I have this thing that I do. And I'm trying to look at it and understand it. And then by looking at it and understanding it going through it, that's the wisdom of delusion. And then your wisdom, I think is much more stable, is much more usable, and much more realistic in this world. So I encourage you, if I may, to allow the wisdom about the illusion to emerge in you. Not just wisdom, become a student of delusion. Becoming student of clinging, and be happy. So we have a couple of minutes. Any comments on that anyone would like to make? Yes, please do if you could wait for the mic, please.

So I'm raised in an Asian society, Japanese and they always say, you know, don't speak out, you know, you you you need to speak less. But I think what this fair is about is advocacy, activism, speaking out, not waiting for it to happen. Yes. And I think that there is out there somewhere, there's a little edge where you, you take the wisdom of Buddha, but at the same time you realize that not everything can be done if the whole world were buddhistic. Yes. But it isn't they there are times that you need to speak out.

Yes, I agree. So yeah, so Buddhist cultures, and nothing Japanese is very much influenced by Buddhism and other kind of religions. Had, there's a lot of wisdom that's embedded in these cultures, quite beautiful, beautiful. But it's also kind of, there's also if it's done too, too much or too blindly or too, idealistically it has its limitations as well. And so this idea that you don't speak out, you kind of don't stand out is something in some Asian cultures is kind of like you don't supposed to stand out and be different from everybody else, because they fit into the group is kind of that it's a beautiful value in the right in the right context. But if it ends up that then that the in, you know, allowing things to come forth. And reveal themselves also includes our desire for social change also includes a desire to improve this world so that people don't suffer. And those include arising of strong voices and a willingness to take a stand. And so sometimes that gets limited. And so different cultures have, you know, it's always kind of sometimes you can never kind of get the sweet spot. cultures are kind of, you know, a little bit to the right a little bit to the left. And I think they're kind of popular American culture that we're most familiar with perhaps tends to swing a little bit too much in the selfs, individual assertion side. And perhaps Japanese culture is one of those that swings a little bit more to the other side, maybe. But we need both. Is that a fair response? Or is that okay with you what I said, or you want to say something more.

I mean, I do agree that in Buddhism, if everyone was in sync, the world would be better. But I also know on the other side of that dissonance has its place, and that it's truth, and truthful and beautiful as well. But sometimes I feel that Buddhism, I mean, the Buddhism is used as a way of controlling the

culture, it is, it's true, every but every every religion is used, the cultures of people, the people in power will use whatever is available. And so in, in, in Buddhist culture, sometimes they use Buddhism. So you have to be aware of this. And so one of the things so cultures always have their shadow side. And so Buddhism as a culture has a shadow side is the challenges. It's the function of the practice, to bring out the shadow. So we can see that illusion. And so ideally, we have both, we can't avoid having a culture, IMC has a little bit of a culture. But we also have a practice, and hopefully the practice come how corrects for any of the limitations of the culture. So the practice is important. And I hope that my only hope is that Buddhism Buddhist practice, develops very mature individuals, who at the same time as being kind of ordinary, not asserting themselves, you know, their ego, they're also can take very strong stance in our society and stand for things that are important need to be done, that we're not pushovers. And oh, it's all okay. And one of the things I like is, I'm actually quite fond of certain kind of conflicts. Because conflict is actually a wonderful way of if there's an art to staying and not avoiding conflict, but staying in conflict in a respectful, useful way. That if we can stay in conflict, sometimes, then sometimes a solution comes out, that is more wise, more brilliant, than if we didn't stay in the conflict. And I've seen that done many, many times, like a disagreement about what should happen. And so one person says, A, and I say, B, and, you know, we're at loggerheads. And I say, they're, they're ready to say, No, no, you know, I give up, you know, whatever you want. There's no, no, don't do that. This is really important if you have if you have a really important point. And this is really great. And I'm just want to, and I have an important point, and let's engage and see what happens. And then after a while, it turns out the Z is the right answer. Not A or B. So I think that you know, avoiding conflict is not sometimes is a problem. But knowing how to be in conflict wisely, have differences wisely. Is, is part of the art of it. So we have this wonderful Earth care fair and people that brought their examples of their concerns and work and what they do and it's a chance to the beautiful thing that says, Come forth. We're just sitting here quietly at IMC and what comes forth is our community has come forward with their offerings for us to learn a bit about this. So if you want to if you have time to stay, please stay and have tea and hang out. And I thank you all