

Transformation

In the absence of awakened teachers what tends to happen is that we do not realise the potential of the practice to completely transform the mind. Then we go ahead and redefine Buddhism as a way of working with the ordinary mind rather than achieving this kind of transformation. Worst of all is when we go as far as redefining the ordinary mind as the enlightened mind or believe that we are all enlightened already. As a consequence we never even see the benefit of practice or its real urgency.

The first thing that we might need to admit is that in spiritual terms people are not all the same. Even the essence of their minds may not be the same. In modern egalitarian society, already this can be difficult. But it is made more possible, perhaps, by adhering very strictly to the idea of equal rights on the conventional plane and by preventing any abuse of spiritual knowledge or position for unjust worldly gain or advantage, (this is an important reason for having a mendicant community at the centre of it all). In this way we make everyone the same on the conventional level and can then open to our differences on the spiritual level without risk.

Still we need to be careful how we communicate on spiritual matters. We are best advised never to boast; and to talk about the practice in general rather than personal terms. This behaviour is what is natural to anyone with any real insight or depth of practise. They will be very humble in themselves, realising that wisdom and samādhi only came about when they went beyond themselves. It can also help others not to feel intimidated or jealous if they know that to arrive at such a transformation it takes an enormous, indeed heroic, amount of effort. Also the result may not be so apparent to the worldly eye. It is only after long association with someone that we may realise that their minds are profoundly different from the ordinary.

What can we really know?

What we really can know is our own minds and the sense impressions (mind objects) that we gather from the world. Those two are all we can really know. We can arrive at this conclusion philosophically (fairly easily) and through meditation (through a lot of hard work) but if we arrive at it through meditation our experience of life is transformed. In meditation we can strengthen mindfulness, the knowingness of the mind, until the sense of knowing, really knowing, is completely tangible to us. Then the world will appear to us as mind objects within a bright field of knowing and we will never be the same again.

I offer this for your reflection.

Ajahn Kalyāno

<http://www.openthesky.co.uk>