

Clear Light Meditation and Looking Within

Hi Friend,

That last part with the coconut made me chuckle. No need for brain trauma. Just continue to practice and be patient with yourself. It sounds like you already are starting to grok the reality of inherent Buddha nature. Practitioners of the first form of Tibetan Buddhism, dzogchen, take the focus on this inherent nature to the ultimate level. For them meditation is relaxing in the ocean of dharmata, what they call rigpa, the primordial, uncreated mind of clear light. So really just letting thoughts rise and dissipate naturally and continuing to focus on the clear light. Since one's Buddha nature is already present, it's not matter of doing, it's a matter of clearing away obscurations. Like what the pilgrimage of the 88 Temples of Shikoku is about.

I think it makes total sense to reference Shingon Buddhism in the creation of new statues for the 88 Shrines. The 88 Temples and the statues in them are at the heart of the Shingon way. A really big mandala. As you probably already know Shingon is one of the two forms of Vajrayana Buddhism (the diamond vehicle, - true reality, the essence of all being, the dharmata being indestructible like a diamond). Shingon Buddhism and its art is rich in symbolism and should provide a lot of inspiration for artists.

Of course form and formless are one (you must have read about the Buddha's teaching "Form is emptiness, emptiness is form"). The shrine statues resonate for me because I feel the formless spiritual energy emanating from them.

My very last thing about the deity matter. I think there is a real difference in paradigms between Buddhism and monotheism. Monotheism seems to emphasize the distinction between earthly and heavenly, that there are humans on Earth and God above - separate. Buddhism as you know says the root of suffering is making the distinction between self and other, thinking there really are two separate objects, when the reality is everything is interconnected. Buddhists don't look outside for truth and their spiritual path begins within and the focus is realizing one's inherent Buddha nature. You look deeply inside your own being to see a Buddha smiling back at you, and realize that Buddha is you. So that's that.