

Responsiveness of the Three Kayas

Dear Friend,

At the end of our talk yesterday I said something like "that's what happens" when describing how, if we stay open and present, life provides us what we really need. For a Buddhist using the phrase "that's what happens" is somewhat inelegant. The actual term is "the spontaneously arising responsiveness of the three kayas". What that means is the the energy that is the essence and the ground from which all phenomena arise - enlightened awareness, spontaneously arises over and over, as Buddhas, as bodhisattvas and dakinis and dharma protectors, and just the life force - the dharmakaya (pure primordial awareness), in response to the needs of sentient beings in whatever way best helps them exactly where and how they are right now. Buddhas don't have to accomplish anything. Their sole aspiration is to help all sentient beings attain liberation from suffering and the flowering of enlightenment. With omniscience and overflowing bodhichitta (loving kindness and compassion) they use skillful means to respond ceaselessly to the needs of beings to ease their suffering and bring them lasting happiness. So you can see from that complicated explanation that, "that's what happens" kind of understates the scope, and scale, and heart of the how the universe, awakened mind, primordial awareness, the three kayas, essential nature, or whatever term you choose to insert, really engages with the world and its beings.

A more concrete manifestation of this energy is Kannon, Kuan Yin, Tara, Avalokiteshvara - some of the bodhisattvas of compassion's many names. For Tibetans, Tara is "she who hears the cries of the world". But it doesn't stop at empathy and compassion. That energy, that union of compassion and wisdom, spontaneously responds to those cries for help and beams forth whatever is needed to help those who are suffering.

Whew! That's a long way to say, be open and present, and the universe will provide you what you need. Because the essential nature of the interconnected web of energy that is the universe is loving kindness and compassion. Realizing that this is the nature of our reality liberates one to keep one's heart open, to face challenges before us, and to build loving connections with other beings and the world. That's why Buddhists who are deep along the path have those gentle smiles. They are springs of benevolence, there to help everyone she or he can. It's not about hope or fear. It's realizing and trusting your true nature, and then living that realization, that bodhichitta, every moment.

Be well, be who you want to be, be the bliss that is your true nature. David