

Bodhicitta, Bodhisattva ~ Shinzen Young

00:00:00 Bodhicitta

00:00:04 The bodhicitta spontaneously wells up in people,

00:00:08 and they just know that their job is to love and serve,

00:00:12 which I relate to pre-Buddhist shamanic things.

00:00:19 I mean, I've been in sweat lodges with fully traditional Lakota, Sioux,

00:00:26 talking about their experiences in vision quests,

00:00:31 where they would have this vision of all of humanity,

00:00:35 and they would see the people suffering,

00:00:39 and they could see the whole world.

00:00:42 They had this calling, they knew it was their job to care, etc.

00:00:48 I think this is something that is by no means distinct to Buddhism.

00:00:55 But in Buddhism, it's sort of codified as the bodhisattva ideal.

00:00:59 There's the arising of Mahayana Buddhism,

00:01:03 historically, about 2,000 years ago,

00:01:06 so about 500 years after the Buddha.

00:01:09 The Mahayana literature has two themes.

00:01:14 There's this sort of like,

00:01:16 okay, karuna is as important as prajna,

00:01:19 in other words, compassion, meaning broadly, service, love.

00:01:24 What you put out into the world is now philosophically

00:01:29 on an equal footing with the liberating wisdom.

00:01:33 That's one thing that was characteristic of Mahayana literature.

00:01:39 The other thing that was characteristic of Mahayana literature

00:01:42 is everything's empty. There's no one to save.

00:01:45 That's the prajna paramita, that's Mahayana text,

00:01:49 the Mahayana critique of early Buddhism.

00:01:53 In other words, they say, well, there's two things wrong with early Buddhism.

00:01:57 One is that although the practice of service may have been there,

00:02:06 it was not philosophically emphasized,

00:02:10 so early Buddhism sounds like a spiritual selfish,

00:02:15 hence the term Hinayana, or small vehicle.

00:02:19 The other thing they say that was wrong with early Buddhism is

00:02:23 that they thought that you get to know self

00:02:28 by teasing apart the skandhas, right?

00:02:32 But you have to realize that the skandhas themselves are empty,

00:02:36 as is everything.

00:02:38 It's not just that there's no thing called the self, there's no thing.
00:02:42 That's the shunyavada, or teachings about emptiness.
00:02:46 So those two co-arise.
00:02:49 It's like, we've got to save the world that's really not there.
00:02:55 Getting those two clearly, that's the bodhicitta.
00:03:02 After the night comes the dawn.
00:03:08 It's a natural cycle.
00:03:13 After the impersonal comes the personal.
00:03:20 The return of the human, the same, but changed for the better.
00:03:30 Focus on positive, if possible,
00:03:34 directly from the nothingness and the energy.
00:03:41 Let the self be remade, resurrected,
00:03:55 kinder, more fulfilled,
00:04:14 rejoicing in service at all levels.
00:04:21 Bodhicitta, bodhicittotvada,
00:04:26 the spontaneous upwelling of the bodhisattva aspiration.
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