

## EMPTINESS

90. Emptiness is present everywhere. Everything in all circumstances is inseparable from emptiness. These statements are true, and yet emptiness is ungraspable and words cannot encompass it for it lies on the very edge of language. When we speak, we create partial truths, little gestures or hints which indicate that at this moment what I say is the view from 'here', the ever-changing site of my unfolding life. We all act as if our words can constitute the whole story; that life can be summed up. In this way we find ourselves in a kind of theatre, the theatre of 'as if', of make-believe. Theatre begins with the suspending of disbelief. When we go to the theatre we know that, on one level, the people who appear on the stage are actors and are paid money to pretend to be somebody else. However when they come on to the stage we are happy to believe that they are the characters whom they present themselves as being. We want to be taken in. We want to get lost in make-believe. This is very profound. It illuminates the ego's desire to merge with the object, to get rid of the burden of lonely isolation. The relief of seeing this, however, is short-lived. Being a worldly person and being a spiritual person are both delusions if we are not present to and as the ground of being. Merely changing the shape and colour of our delusions will not bring awakening. But seeing the delusion as an illusion reveals the non-duality of form and emptiness.

91. All buddhist cultures seem to have developed a deep aesthetic sensibility. As reliance on conceptualisation falls away, beauty becomes very important. For example, if you go walking in Himalayan valleys, you will see lots of little stupas exquisitely placed in the environment. You could imagine that Cézanne or Monet had been wandering there and had given some advice, *"No, no, over to the left a bit, higher up a little ..."* – they are so perfectly placed. The feng shui is exquisite.

In the beginning our practice requires conscious motivation and intentional effort. As we become more at home in the practice and see it as an integral part of our lives, we find ourselves more integrated in our world. We find ourselves speaking and behaving in ways that 'fit' the situation.

Emptiness is seeping through every aspect of our lives and dissolving the solidity of concepts. Effortless co-emergence, the play of emptiness, becomes how we are. Emptiness shows life as simple and precise. Opening to this intuitively is the end of striving.

92. Samsara is a network of concepts and ideas which we seem to find infinitely seductive. Some of these thoughts may appear to be very important. Important or not, however, thoughts are always empty. When we were translating our texts in India, CR Lama always ended his foreword with the words, *"If there is any merit in this book, we offer it to all beings. If there is no merit in this, we put it back into emptiness."* Either way it doesn't make any difference. We just do what we do and having done it, something else will happen. The key thing here is to practise activity without investment, without hope of a return. We give each moment precisely what is required for that moment.

We don't try to make a profit. We don't try to fill a doggie bag that will carry over into the next moment. Just this, then this, then this... Each moment is sufficient unto itself.

*Excerpts from Transcripts*