

Some Key Buddhist Psychological Assumptions

Basic Sanity/Goodness

At the fundamental level of our psyches, we're wholesome. We're happy, with an unassailable capacity for clarity, bliss, and a sense of limitless freedom. Moreover, we find a limitless source of love and compassion for self and others within this. Synonyms include *alaya*, *ground mind*, and *buddha nature* (with a lowercase "b").

Obscuration

Our own mental activity (ego) obscures the view of basic sanity much of the time. We identify with this activity and it generates negative emotions (*kleshas*). This is because identification generates territoriality. Territoriality, in turn, generates an estimate of wanting and aversion, depending on how we interpret events at the moment. It also generates apathy toward anything outside our sphere of identification. We could label the overall picture of attachment, aversion, and apathy as *materialism*.

Identity Shift

We're all capable of shifting from a narrow identification with ego to the more expansive experience of Basic Sanity.

Meditation

...is the practice of making this shift. Two kinds: *tranquility meditation* is the practice of restful attentiveness. *Insight meditation* uses the focus and quiescence of tranquility meditation to see things discerningly (Truth, in an ultimate sense). Think of a glass of water with mud mixed in. If you stir the water it becomes very opaque. But if you let the glass sit for awhile, the water becomes crystal clear. You can compare the settling with tranquility meditation. The clarity aspect is like insight meditation. The two are ultimately inseparable.

Mind Training

..., *Lojong*, focuses especially on how to bring the practice and view of meditation into postmeditation practice by extending a warm, unconditionally kind attitude toward all beings without partiality. It directly targets ego identification and synergizes with formal meditation practice.