

Meditation 43

Trying to Find Our True Nature

Explore and contemplate to see if you can find a thing called essential purity, the sacred, and, if so, where is it? Does it have a beginning and an end, a color, a size and a shape? Then rest the mind.

Does it live in our body, and if so, where? If our true nature is a sacred state of purity, is there a place inside our body we can call “the sacred” and, if so, where does it live? When the body dies, does the sacred die with it? Explore, then rest the mind.

If our true nature isn't a thing, how could it come to be? Why are we exploring bodhicitta if there's no such thing as our true nature to wake up to? We must believe there's some thing to be achieved, and we're trying to learn methods to discover that thing. So, what is it? What does it look like? What are its characteristics? How could the sacred be in everybody and not be the same in all of us? Is it like the oxygen that everyone breathes? Is it like the space in which endless appearances arise? Contemplate, then rest the mind. If you can't find the sacred, if it's not a thing that's identifiable, with characteristics, does that mean it doesn't exist? If it doesn't, what accounts for the boundless positive qualities in our minds and hearts and those of others? What accounts for spiritual, meditative, and religious experience? Contemplate and rest the mind. If our true nature isn't in the body but in the mind, where, within the endless stream of thoughts, emotions, memories, and mental events, can it be found? Is it in the beginning, the end, or the middle of any particular thought or emotion? Before each thought arose, was there no sacred, and, after the thought dissolves, is there no sacred? If that were so, the existence of the sacred would be dependent on causes and conditions, unstable and impermanent, so how can we say everything is sacred?

Examine these lines of reasoning, alternated with rest, compassion, commitment, and prayer.