

CLOSING THE OPEN DOOR

[Notes: I had a chance to wait in the doctor's office for 1-1/2 hours today until the doctor was free. They had no magazines, so I browsed through my Facebook stream of friends with my iPhone. It was like a waterfall. I did have a chance to see what everyone is writing about and you folks are doing great. There is enough that you cover that it is OK for me to drone on about my recent health episode. I got a complete neuro exam and the doctor declared that he could find no damage from what was an actual stroke, which he said was unbelievable. So, forgive me while I complete the autopsy on the shattering of my Self over these last two weeks.]

Those of you who have tired of this health theme, I apologize. Come back another day. These are my notes on the breakdown of the sense of self during my recent health attack. I am still learning from the experience and am not done examining it. However, the corner has been turned. My Self has come back, returned. I don't know whether to laugh or cry.

In each of our lives there will come times when sudden events are so upsetting or disrupting that the stability of the Self is lost, even shattered or vacated, exposing us more to the nature of our own mind for either a short or longer time, the time it takes for our Self to reform and reanimate itself. This can be caused by any shocking event, an upset, a death in the family, loss of job, whatever stuns the self into vacating its function of protecting us from being vulnerable.

My recent self-shattering time, something less than two weeks, has come to an end. For those interested, I would like to sum that up with yet a few MORE words about that shattering of the self, its closure, and eventual reanimation. I.e. the self's coming back together again. It happens to all of us sometime. It's only a question of when and for what length of time the Self has vacated. This recent vacation was a good long time, in my experience.

For many of us, it does not take all that much to upset our apple cart and certainly having a stroke qualifies. In a manner of speaking, when that happens, our inner-slate is

just wiped clean, our Self abandoned. From time to time, under duress, we all become creatures of the moment, wanderers in the instantaneous present and we can easily lose track of the ties that bind us to the past and instead find ourselves cast ourselves out on the sea of voyages.

It's a bit like when we see lightning strike in summer and wait however many seconds until we hear the thunder clap which tells us how far away the lightning strike was. The shattering of (and loss) of the sense of self is similar. How long does it take for the Self (which is very industrious) to get itself together and reanimate? Is it hours, days, weeks... or longer?

In the case of my recent health-event, it took just shy of two weeks for my Self to bridge the gap between how I used to be and how I am now. That's a long interval. For that many days, the dualism of the mind was laid open before me and if I could stand to look, which was hard, much was there to be seen. Vulnerability was the nature of the day. At least this is true in my case.

Like a self-sealing puncture wound (or a hive of bees), the Self is incessantly busy around-the-clock covering its nakedness as if its life depended on it. It is almost comical. And while we may welcome the return to normalcy (when the self returns), it is not often that the very void (like a pair of eyelids) is held open to our vision whether we like it or not. There is an enormous amount that can be learned about the nature of our mind in that short period when the Self has been vacated and we are at a loss... of Self.

And while I am glad to be of one-mind again, who knows how long before I will again be privy to such a view of the mind laid out for me to see. By now, it's zipped, all closed back up and I like the security of that feeling of a secure self, but at the same time I no longer have any reference to go by, past or present.

IMO, the point here is that with no reference there is, well, no reference. I can't know what I was then or am now, what is missing or was lost. That solves a lot of problems, but is not all that comforting. Belatedly, I realize that when the Self was vacated, there was a lot of information available that is no long visible now. Self-sealing is a fact; it's inexorable.

So, while on the one hand I am glad to finally feel more secure, at the same time my own desire for security has once again closed and locked the doors to the mind. Go figure!

“As Bodhicitta is so precious,
May those without it now create it,
May those who have it not destroy it,
And may it ever grow and flourish”

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