

Discussion Questions: Mahayana Class 3

(Pages 45-69 “Heart of Daring”)

- 1) Why is it important to discuss the idea of “ordinary mind” or “bare awareness” at the beginning of our mahāyāna path? What misconceptions about our mind might this address?
- 2) What are the five incidental stains? How do they affect our minds?
- 3) Why is tathāgatagarbha described as being “self secret”?
- 4) What are the three kayas and what aspects of mind do they represent?
- 5) Explain the “water moon” analogy of appearances and phenomena.
- 6) How is the concept of tathāgatagarbha used to explain the difference between saṃsāra and nirvāna in the mahāyāna? How does this differ from the hināyāna?
- 7) What are the five reasons that buddha nature or tathāgatagarbha is taught?
- 8) What are the three stages of purity and how do they relate to the mahāyāna path?
- 9) How does the text explain the delusion that results in saṃsāra? What is deluded?
- 10) What are the three permanences? How do they relate to buddha nature?
- 11) Why are saṃsāra and nirvāna both described as being of the nature of shūnyatā?
- 12) What purpose does the spiritual friend serve on our journey?
- 13) What are the three qualities that make a human birth precious?
- 14) What role does renunciation play on our spiritual journey?
- 15) What are some indications that our spiritual journey and interpretation of the dharma may have become ego-centered?