

Neurosis as an unrecognized Buddha quality

In this article, I would like to offer the reader an in-depth view in the structure of our minds. I shall make an attempt to describe the origin of the I-cramp as a - psychologically necessary - solidification of the radiation of Being.

Unfolding this vision is a milestone to me, a new phase in the development of the working methods in the school¹. I hope the reader may experience something of the depth of this approach in this article.

To start with, I would like to use the fairy tale of 'the ugly duckling' as an illustration.

The Ugly Duckling

(freely rendered from Hans Christian Andersen)

In some mysterious way, a swan's egg has ended up in a duck's nest. The ugly duckling born from this egg, cannot quack as well as the other ducklings. Moreover, it moves in a different way and it is clumsy because its body is too big. It is mercilessly teased by the other ducklings : "It is too big and too strange, that is why it must be bullied."

The ugly duckling is treated so cruelly that it runs away. It wanders about and meets several animals, which are sometimes kind to it, but invariably take it for an unsuccessful copy of their own kind: an ugly goose, an ungrateful chicken etceteras.

So it wanders on alone and one evening it sees a group of beautiful, large birds. They are the most beautiful birds it has ever seen. It goes into ecstasies at the beauty of these birds and even though it does not know what kind of birds they are, 'it loved them all the same, in a way it had never loved anyone before.'

The duckling grows up in solitude and then, one day, it meets another group of swans.

'The duckling recognizes the birds and it feels peculiarly sad. "I would like to go to those majestic birds. They might kill me because of my ugliness, but rather that than have to live with all these cruelties".'

It swims towards the swans, which approach it with their feathers raised high.

'Kill me if you must', the ugly duckling says and it bows its head onto the water to wait for death.

In doing so, it sees its reflection in the clear water. With a start it recognizes itself: it, too, is a beautiful, graceful swan.

¹The school of Being Orientation; an institute that is specialized in offering long term (5 to six year programs) traininggroups. The school has a department which offers a training to become a professional guide and trainer, and a department which is for students who seek personal growth.

The swans stroke it with their bills. 'The duckling was blissfully happy, but not proud, for a good heart knows no pride.'

The Wisdom in the Fairy tale

I think the story of 'the unhappy ugly duckling' is a beautiful, inspiring fairy tale which makes our psychological and spiritual situation clear to us in a very simple way. The story reminds us of some very profound truths about ourselves.

In essence, in our true nature, we are all beautiful, free, graceful swans. We have all had the experience that our 'swanhood' is not recognized by the environment in which we grew up, or is even considered an unsuccessful copy of people's own limited 'duckhood'. The things which make us so special as a swan are often not appreciated by the ducks which think we are ugly and clumsy.

Even we ourselves have forgotten who we really are. We have come to believe that we are a duckling and rather an unsuccessful, unpleasing copy of one.

As long as the ugly duckling believes it is a duckling and tries to find shelter with and acceptance by the other ducks or geese, chickens etcetera, it cannot but feel itself very unhappy and rejected. Not until it recognizes itself as a swan can a happy life be possible.

The first recognition of swanhood arises in this story when the duckling sees these beautiful birds and 'loves them like it had never loved anyone before'.

Our hearts open spontaneously when they are touched by the beauty and love of the essential, free, spiritual dimension. This awakens in us the longing to be a part of it. At this stage we do not yet realize that we ourselves are so beautiful and loving. The only thing we feel is that we want to be near it. This might be considered as the phase in which we as ducklings would like to be one of the swans. The identification with being a duck is still intact. Swanhood attracts us as something inviting, something which evokes homesickness.

The second and final acknowledgment arises when the duckling abandons all its desire for life and is prepared to die. It bows its head and at that very moment it discovers its magnificence: its swanhood is reflected in the water.

Our investment in being a duck must die away completely before we can recognize our magnificence. We have to give up the idea of succeeding as a duckling: a beautiful duckling, the best duckling, a sweet duckling. We even have to give up our desire to be one of the swans!

We will know who we really are when we make contact with the great dimension of Being in which we already existing the fairy tale it is the water is the symbol for this Being dimension, our primordial ground. When we see ourselves reflected in this primordial ground we recognize our swanhood. The great primordial nature reflects our swanhood. That recognition is direct, without any mediation of abstractions, concepts or images. If the swans should say to the duck: 'you are a swan', it would not help the duck to recognize its own nature. Then it would only be a concept, an image to the ugly duckling. Such an image would be an addition to the other social self-images and concepts it already has and so be a

variation of duck-images. But a socially acquired self-image is quite different from the reality of who you are.

The self-image which is reflected in the water, is an immediate realization without any mediation of an abstractive, classifying, image-creating ability.

Another important feature in this story is the fact that the duckling does not change into a swan gradually. It does not better itself into becoming a swan, it recognizes itself as a swan at once. This does not take a lot of effort or growth. In a way, it cannot even be attained: it is a sudden breakthrough which has become possible by completely abandoning all duckidentifications and accompanying patterns. The duck cannot stretch its self-image to swan size!

In Being-oriented work, recognizing identifications and abandoning all psychological investments is called: working from the first perspective². In the fairy tale we can find this specific moment when the duckling abandons its struggle and is prepared to die. This is the important phase of 'acceptance of loss'. Then it bows its head and, in doing so, it abandons its hold on the world. This is the moment of 'the fall'. In the fall, one falls, as it were, through the foundations of the old world. One falls into a hole, an emptiness, into the non-being. The abyss in the old world appears to be the foundation of Being. Here, one will find one's true, unconditioned form of Being.

Who will not recognize the swan?

The swan in this story begins its life as a swan that is not recognized by a family of ducks. There is an analogy here with our situation as a child, when our parents could only partly recognize our being because of their psychological limitations. This is an intensely painful psychological drama: 'my parents didn't understand me!' This not being recognized will lead to all kinds of neurotic splits and a never-ending search for the contact that was lacking.

But the analogy goes further and cuts deeper: our being a swan cannot be recognized by our own map-consciousness² which needs a stable self- and world-image.

We are not discussing the fact that we have not been mirrored by our parents in the right way, we actually reduce ourselves to a reflection in the mirror!

So even if the swan had grown up in a family of swans, it would still have become an ugly, clumsy cygnet, because it would have developed a self-image on the basis of the social reflection of its fellow swans. The point is that an image is always created, and an image, even a 'swan-image' is by definition too restricted to incorporate actually being a swan. However, there will always be a field of tension between the need for a self-image on the one hand and our true nature on the other. Our true nature cannot be captured in an image.

²Map consciousness is a term I coined to denote the map we construct as a result of all our experiences and learning processes of how the world looks like and how we can deal with it. The map guides us and informs us and is an indispensable tool, but creates also its own problems, some of which will be expounded in this article.

Further on in this article, I will discuss the mechanism of creating (self)images and our attachment to them.

Who are we actually?

But how will we be able to know ourselves if self-images cannot mirror us?

Every answer to this question can also become an image in the gallery of images and can therefore basically not be given. Yet there is a way of 'recognizing' your true nature which does not occur through creating images, but through immediate realization.

In the fairy tale recognition occurs because the duckling sees its reflection in the water. In Existence-oriented work we can experience these recognition's of the self after 'the fall' and in working from the second perspective³.

This recognition of the self always occurs when the wish to be mirrored has been abandoned.

As soon as a person is no longer attached to the images he has of himself, a fundamental openness reveals itself. This openness is translated as fullness, happiness, radiation and love in the emotional body. When one attempts to translate this fundamental openness and radiation of feeling into a form of image, 'swan'-images arise. In Existence-oriented work they are called 'second perspective' images or 'inspirational' images.

This fundamental openness was given, not produced. One cannot become fundamentally open. One cannot stretch one's 'I', one's self-awareness which is based on self-images, to this openness. This openness is the primordial condition of ourselves. This is what we are like when we do not model ourselves via self-images based on our past.

This primordial condition has various names in the spiritual traditions: child of God, Buddha nature, Atman etcetera.

As soon as one has recognized oneself in this state of fundamental openness as a radiating being, one is liberated at once from all the images one had in relation to oneself. At such a moment, we know that we have always been this radiant being and that our self-images have not described this reality in any way.

Who makes self-images?

It is tempting to have a negative opinion about our image-creating tendency and the self-images arising from it. We might even develop the ambition to live without images completely. As soon as we, with our I-cramp, experience this attractive 'open' reality, we long to go there, away from existing reality.

This way of thinking assumes there is a division between fundamental openness on the one hand and the 'I' living in images (in short: I-cramp⁴) on the other.

We act as if there is no continuity between these two states. As if they are two separate selves which work independently and as if we should learn to choose for the radiant self.

This is a serious fallacy which will make our work with all psychological mechanisms and events in ourselves a lot more complicated, if not impossible.

It is the swan which believes it is an ugly duckling.

It is the child's openness itself which is translated into creating fixed and belittling self- and world-images. It is the openness itself which believes it has become a 'something'.

Let us look at this in more detail.

Flowing and freezing

Our essential nature, our being a swan, is very alive and flowing. Therefore, it is called our 'radiant nature' in Being oriented terminology. Each time we remember who we really are, an increase in flow, liveliness and well-being occurs. Our sensory perception becomes more colorful, intense and exact. Our mind becomes clear and wisdom appears.

Compared to this, our habitual state is a state of cramp, unease, solidification, of being closed.

Apparently, we are able - like all elements in nature - to flow as well as freeze, or solidify.

This difference between flowing and solidifying can be found at every level of incarnation: at the level of our spirit, of sensory perception, of energy or flow of feeling and finally at the level of our physical body.

Let us take water for example

Although ice looks quite different from water and behaves in a different way, it is not difficult to see the continuity between the material state of liquidity and solidification.

We are not amazed when ice melts or water turns to ice. We know they are two conditions of the same substance.

We can easily observe this, because we do not identify ourselves with either the one or the other condition. We have a more or less disinterested view of ice and water.

Although to us, as outsiders, it is evident that ice is made of water, it is plain that, if ice should have self-awareness, it could forget that it is actually water, because it differs from water in so many ways.

We can also understand that, as soon as the ice were to have an investment in its own form: 'I am an important piece of ice, I'll take good care of myself', it is no longer interested in that loathsome liquid water and would reject the possibility of having its own hardened form dissolve and melt.

This describes almost precisely the relationship between our state of I-cramp on the one hand and the state of openness on the other. In this state of I-cramp, we lose sight of our connection with fundamental openness and flow. We have forgotten that our habitual self-sense is a solidification of our flowing nature. Although our I-cramp came forth from this

flowing nature, it develops, as soon as it has solidified, an aversion to this possibility of flowing. The I-cramp even feels its existence is threatened by this flowing nature. The I-cramp fights against its own flowing nature!

FROM RADIATION TO SOLIDIFICATION

The metaphor of the different physical states seems helpful

Although the main subject of this article relates to the solidification from radiation to I-cramp, it is also possible to distinguish different levels of condensation or density in the open state. Although this is of a different order than the defensive solidification and freezing which take place in the I-cramp, we can say there are different levels of manifestation of the openness of Being. I could not resist the temptation to describe this in this article as well, the more so because this will shed light on the way in which Being is present in every form (also the neurotic form).

I shall begin with describing the different levels of condensation in the free state and will then continue with describing in detail the further solidification of states of Being into I-cramp.

LEVELS OF condensation IN THE OPEN STATE

I distinguish three levels of density in the open state: Being, the level of creation of Being qualities and the materialization of Being qualities.

Being: the absolute, non dual

With Being I mean the absolute, the One, which manifests itself in everything and as everything. Being does not have any characteristics in itself, for every characteristic would make it impossible for Being to be present in everything.

In that sense, Being can be compared to physical light which only becomes visible when it shines on something. Before the light is reflected, it is already there only it cannot be perceived because it has not yet met a form on its way. The light itself does not seem to have any characteristics. The characteristics appear when a form is encountered.

In this way Being can only be known in the encounter with forms. The only thing we can know of Being is the way in which it reflects itself, or rather expresses itself, in all that is. The entire world, the whole of creation with everything in it, is the countenance of Being.

Being can also be compared to the element of space. Space is a condition for manifestation: everything takes place in great endless space. But everything which takes place is also made of space. No matter what we put under a microscope, we will see that every apparent solidity consists of space when magnified more strongly. In this way, space is both the condition and the substance of every manifestation.

Being is not really the creator, ruler, or judge of creation. It is creation. Life itself in all its aspects. There is no Being apart from creation, apart from forms!

Nothing can rise above creation or life. There is no creator, there is only creation.

Being is not exceptionally kind. Nothing is intrinsically meaningful about creation, it does not serve any purpose. It just is.

In that sense, Being does not look anything like the God in the Old or New Testaments. Being is not an entity. It has no meaning, it has no power, no special care or love for chosen ones. Being cannot be tempted, you cannot pray to Being, you cannot please it. You cannot get attached to it. Being neither offers safety nor shelter. It is totally indifferent to any form of manipulation, or to anyone's personal wishes.

Strictly speaking, Being does not even exist as a dimension that can be described separately!

Being is the existence of every form. There is no Being apart from the form.

The metaphors of light and space used above are taken from the physical world. As such they are illustrative, but they cannot describe the feelings which arise when one actually perceives Being in forms. When one recognizes that all forms are Being, the Heart rejoices. One is liberated from any compulsiveness, and can see an incredible beauty in everything. One is as happy as a child.

It feels like coming home, like being at the Heart of everything. Like living in Truth. The isolation, the severed contact between ourselves and the world, has been removed. One is naturally connected and in touch with everything. One even feels identical to everything.

Meditating on Being

The realization that Being is not something that is apart from manifestation has tremendous consequences for the way in which we meditate. For when we think that there is a Divine dimension which is apart from forms, we would like to train our attention in such a way that it turns away from the sensory world and directs itself to a kind of transparent subtle condition,

the condition of clear bright light, or something similar. We will then try to remain there all the time, in the hope that we will be distracted as little as possible by coarse forms.

I often come across this form of transcending meditation when I meet people who meditate. Whatever the blessings of such meditation may be, it is contrary to our intention as regards meditation in Being-oriented work.

If Being is not separated from form, we cannot meditate on Being either!

Being is not present in anything in particular. It cannot be localized, cannot be found. There is not a form that is closer to Being than another form. So it makes no sense to focus on something in particular. You can never get any closer, you can never get away from it.

When you realize this and your attention can relax its fixated and searching character, Being becomes apparent in everything that exists. The pure ease, the effortless playfulness of the free spirit can then be experienced.

Forms will no longer distract you. They are the lively expression of Being.

We no longer need to go anywhere. We are no longer interested in collecting and fixing special spiritual experiences, visions, insights. Everything is complete and perfect in itself. Everything can be exactly what it is. Everything sings the praises of creation.

Not only will our meditation practice become totally different because we no longer focus on 'something spiritual' but recognize Being in everything, this insight also has far-reaching consequences for the way in which we handle our I-cramp neuroses.

Being able to work with our neuroses

When we think Being is something that is separated from our form, our body and our cramps, we will never be able to recognize our cramp as a form of Being. We will never be able to see the Being quality in our neurosis. Then there will always remain two areas: the so-called spiritual area and the so-called profane area, the free and the cramped part of ourselves.

We will fanatically try to rid ourselves of our neurosis and try to improve our 'good sides' by exercises, meditation etcetera. If we use the terms mentioned in the fairy tale, this would mean that we try to distance ourselves from 'being a duckling' in order to acquire further qualifications in 'being a swan'. It will be immediately clear to the reader that every attempt to become a swan emphasizes the idea that you are, in fact, an ugly duckling.

The most beautiful part of the fairy tale is that the ugly duckling recognizes itself as a swan at once. There is nothing from which the swan has to distance itself. Every aspect of that which was the ugly duckling at first, appears to be 'swanhood' in reality.

The ugly duckling is an unrecognized swan. In the same way, our neurosis, our cramp is unrecognized radiation. It would be very damaging if we should try to distance ourselves from our neurosis, our craziness, our perverse sides!

As soon as we try to distance ourselves from all of this in an attempt to be spiritual, we intensify our identification with it and lose contact with the openness of Being.

Besides the fact that fighting the neurosis only intensifies it, we are also blind to the dynamic Being qualities which are hidden in the neurosis itself.

I will explain this further on in the article under the heading: the hidden Buddha quality of the neurosis.

The seed-level of being qualities

The non-dual Being translates itself in human consciousness as open mindedness, a fresh, playful, almost childlike interest in the colorful happenings that are taking place. One's orientation and attitude is not limited by concerns and investments

Our original openness contains a primal intelligence, a primal knowledge, a clear sensitivity with which we know immediately (without the interference of analytical thought processes) what the truth of a situation is. We often call this 'the wisdom spirit' in the school. Everyone knows these moments in which he or she is relaxed and all of a sudden realizes what is going on in a certain situation. At that moment, 'the wisdom spirit', the original knowledge, was allowed the possibility of manifesting itself in our consciousness.

This open form of being present which arises from 'Resting in Being', is the seedlevel for Being qualities. This being-present-in-openness can become even more visible in the images which represent this open state.

For example, when I ask someone: 'can you call up an image of yourself in your original, open state', most people will see an image of an open, lively and loving person. This image is the formfield³ that can materialize further into thoughts, feelings, impulses, communication, actions etcetera.

Everything we can perceive about ourselves and in ourselves as Being qualities such as joy, love, strength and so on, are materializations of an underlying openness which consists of not being afraid to have your form dissolved in Being and having yourself born again from the complete openness of Being. The open, original image of ourselves, the 'icon of God' which we can remember (explicitly or not), is the seed-level from which the Being qualities can arise.

³With formfield I mean the Idea, the forming directing inspiring principle which informs energy, feeling and body and incarnates thus. This is comparable with the idea of an artist which takes form in a a painting, a sculpture or music.

In the 'second perspective' method of working we use in the school, we tune in to that level of creation. We create an inspirational image which reflects us in our free nature of Being.

We can only tune in to this level of creation if we can let go of the investments we have in experiencing Being qualities. It is therefore necessary to no longer orient on feelings and qualities but to tune in solely to this image of inspiration.

In this sense we have to go beyond an experience-directed orientation. To many students, this is an important step because the orientation towards feelings has a prominent place in our experience-directed work.

The Materialization of Being qualities

Being qualities like love, radiation, strength, dignity, compassion and so on are relative expressions of the absolute when we allow ourselves to be born from it.

From the remembrance of our 'original self' we will manifest Being qualities dependent on the situation. For example, in some situations we can be extremely vigorous and sharp, whereas in other situations we are more yielding, we are warm and loving.

Now the 'word has become flesh'. The inspiration (word or form field level) has materialized into flesh, the physical level.

So, Being qualities do not exist separately from the relative, relational field. They are not absolute platonic values or fields of inspiration which exist somewhere in the subtle worlds independently of us. Being qualities arise as a person's open answer to a situation in which he or she find themselves.

The levels described above belong to the realm of openness. The feelings flow, the spirit is open and mobile. One does not fix anything and is open minded..

After this exploration of levels of manifestation in the open state, it is time to explore how radiation can solidify into I-cramp.

LEVELS OF SOLIDIFICATION IN THE I-CRAMP

Justification of the Theoretical Method

I have been working for some time using the approach of the 'unrecognized Buddha quality'. It proved to be possible to liberate every feeling, every thought and every cramp into a Being quality. Later, when one has arrived in a state of freedom and looks back on the

cramp, it becomes clear that the Being quality had translated itself into a defensive neurotic pattern.

Although we have now experienced that this is the way it works, it remains a mystery that is difficult to understand. We do not know why it happens. Why on earth does a Being quality seek for something, become cramped, frightened, compulsive and a producer of unhappiness?

It is an important question and it can be compared to this question: if God created all there is, where does sin come from? Or: How could Eve be tempted if she was created by God and where did the devil come from anyway? Or in Buddhist terms: If our basic being is good and open in essence, how could we have ever forgotten this; where does ignorance come from?

Now we might look upon this as an unfortunate design error in creation which places us in a state of sin and ignorance, but such an argument supposes an independent malicious factor (design error, devil, ignorance) which is responsible for the spiritual degeneration of the human being.

This does not seem to be a very creative answer to this important question.

It is more interesting to see if we can understand whether the cramp is an intelligent act of the Being quality. In other words, that the Being quality itself decides for one reason or another to become cramped. If we can find this reason, we might be able to handle the cramp better and approach it with more respect instead of regarding it as an enemy.

I have therefore posed myself the challenge of understanding every aspect of the psychological formations from the viewpoint of radiation, of goodness and of Divinity.

I do not know if I have succeeded in finding an answer to 'the important question'.

The starting point is still the most difficult one: how can something which is pure become confused and divided?

Although I have not been able to formulate a complete answer, I have gained a lot by this thinking exercise. I realized that I - by thinking it over so thoroughly - have become much more experienced in recognizing the Buddha quality in all kinds of neuroses.

In this way, the vision that all our craziness is a form of wisdom occurred to me ever more frequently and ever faster. I realize now that Being qualities are the foundation, the substance and the motive of our neuroses. The basic assumption which states that the basis of our being is open, complete and loving, has now received a further theoretical and methodical explanation.

trying to understand from the position of a child

I find it helpful to understand the solidification of the I-cramp from the position of the very young child.

For the basis of our psyche has been formed in our early youth. Our later so-called adult psychological functioning will still use the assumptions dating back to those days. The way in which we function is therefore, to a great extent, an extrapolation of a childish relationship to the world. There is little direct information about the way in which our psyche was formed in childhood. In this sense it will remain speculative.

In this article, I would like to illustrate this theory with the help of an imagery experiment in which ones imagines oneself to be a child.

One may wonder about the sense of this kind of speculative approach. Of course, there are many drawbacks: we do not really know what it is like to be a child. We try to put ourselves in the child's position with the mind of an adult. A child might experience things in a totally different way from the one we can imagine. Moreover, I shall start the experiment in empathy on the assumption that the child is able to experience the Being quality in its pure non-dual state. We do not know whether this is possible, it has an aura of romanticizing the innocent state of a child.

It is therefore better not to see this as a developmental psychologically correct analysis, but as an experiment of thought in which the child acts as a metaphor for the openness of the Being quality on the one hand and, on the other, for the fact that we are, to a large extent, dependent on our surroundings.

imagery experiment

A child is dependent in almost every aspect on the nourishing environment. The inherent radiation of the child will need to manifest itself in this situation of dependency. How will the radiation act when dependent?

I would like to invite the reader to explore this through their powers of imagination.

Imagine that you are a child of, for example, one year old.

Now imagine that you are experiencing the Being quality of radiant joyful Love. This quality of Love simply exists and it radiates for no particular reason. It is an inherent autonomous quality.

Also imagine the presence of your father and mother. Notice how you respond to them from the Being quality. Try to notice also whether any impulses arise in their direction.

Imagine further that your parents are in a different mood from yours, what impulses now arise from the Being quality?

Finally, imagine that your parents do not or barely respond to you for a long period of time, or see them apparently in a totally different mood from your own.

Conclusions on this imagery.

Longing to share in abundance

The reader will probably have noticed that, as a child, you long to reach out to your parents from that feeling of Love. You would like to play with them and share your feeling of Love. This reaching out has nothing to do with need. It arises from the abundance of the radiation of Being.

Seeking togetherness

You probably also experienced that, if your parents are initially in a different mood, you will try actively to get your parents into the same state as you are. Apparently, it is important to a child to experience togetherness in this feeling of Love. This trying to create togetherness will now get a somewhat more compelling, needy character.

Abandoning radiation

You may have noticed in this experiment that, if the surroundings consistently fail to respond or barely react or are in a different mood, at a certain moment, the radiation of Love will become less. The child will abandon radiation because it needs to be close to its surroundings. Apparently, the need to be together is more important to the child than the need to live from the Being quality.

BEING QUALITIES IN THE CHILD'S BODY

The great question

We are faced now with the important question: how can a Being quality, which is intrinsically full, free of needs and unconditional, transform itself into a conditional, needful searching? Why does a child look for recognition and support when it already experiences the Being qualities? Or to put it differently: Why does it not remain in the bliss of the inherently complete and autonomous radiation of Love?

Let us think about this, for the answer to these questions will give us the key to understanding our actual theme: how can the I-cramp arise from the radiation of Being?

Being qualities are 'spontaneously social'

Being qualities are of a connecting nature in the sense that a Being quality is not only a condition or a mood in the inner world, but an overall experience which includes both the inner and the outer world. It can be compared to the state of being in love: not only do you feel happy inside, but everything around you also looks more beautiful. That mood of being in love colors your perception and makes you more communicative with your surroundings. Being qualities are autonomous (in the sense of having arisen from the absolute, unconditional Being, and not from a reaction to certain conditions), but do not function in an isolated way. On the contrary: as soon as a Being quality becomes manifest in us, we will be more sensitive to the quality of our surroundings than before. We will feel continually connected to our surroundings. Being qualities are 'spontaneously social' in that sense, and want to express themselves in their surroundings.

In the same way, the Being quality in the child wants to express itself in its surroundings. This corresponds to the first phase of the experiment in empathy in which we may have felt that the quality of love reaches out to the parents in order to share that feeling of love with them.

Being qualities want to persuade and help the other

We have felt in the experiment in empathy that the Being quality in the child is not only spontaneously social, but also has a tendency to persuade its surroundings into the same openness. We can see this persuasion as coming from a need based on dependence in the child to be together with the mother. We can also see this persuasion, and in my opinion this is more correct, as a lively and compassionate aspect of the Being quality.

From the openness which arises when Being qualities manifest themselves, we feel sympathy for the state the other person is in and we would like to change it for the better. We would like to remove the pain, to open someone who is closed, to lighten the burden etcetera. We can feel the other person's pain and therefore suffer ourselves.

This shows us the sensitive and compassionate aspect of the Being qualities. On the one hand, the Being qualities have an autonomous and unconditional, absolute, non-dual source but, at the same time, they react very sensitively to all kinds of relative conditions. There even appears to be a direct relationship: the more we rest in the absolute, the more sensitive and involved we will become in that which is relative. The happier we are from the ground of Being, the more we suffer because of the unhappiness in the world.

Now we can also understand the second phase, searching for togetherness and trying to persuade the mother to the same condition, when we use the analysis mentioned above. This insight brings the mother into focus.. The child cannot experience any Being quality without being immediately aware of its mother's state-of-being. It will feel sympathy for its mother to such an extent that it will want to persuade her to that same openness it is living in itself.

We can also see that when the mother does not or barely responds, the radiation will diminish. How can this be explained?

Being qualities in the vehicle of the child's body

Being qualities arise from the basis of Being, from being rooted in Oneness. They manifest themselves, however, through the vehicle of the child's body, through the form, through duality.

Being qualities need the body in order to manifest themselves. Therefore, we can easily imagine that it is 'in the interests of' the Being qualities to stimulate the body to grow and develop.

In my opinion, it even goes one step further: the Being qualities themselves want to grow and develop. In other words: there is no organic urge for survival on the one hand and an inorganic Being quality which stimulates this urge for survival on the other. No: a Being quality becomes dynamic in the relational field and manifests itself as an urge to let the form (in this case the child) grow to an optimal state.

In the body the Being quality will take on the form of a dynamic 'urge to develop': the urge to grow to an optimal form. 'Being' wants 'to become'!

The Being quality will begin to interact with its surroundings and this will stimulate the child's growth. The Being qualities turn into needs and an urge to grow.

Being qualities have both a faces of Being: autonomous and inherent radiation; and a face of becoming: the urge to develop into an optimal form.

I used to express this more coarsely: Being in motion is sex, sex at rest is Being. (With 'sex' I mean the pleasure-displeasure orientation). But the basic thought is the same: there is no division between Being qualities and the urge to become. These two - apparently very different - states belong together. They are two forms of one and the same life energy. I can see that inherent autonomous Being qualities exist thanks to a dependent organic basis and that, vice versa, needs are expressions of the radiation of Being.

This view is the basis of the working method of the unrecognized Buddha quality. It is the theoretical basis of the current fact that every need, cramp or impulse can be traced back to a Being quality.

In this view, the needs, the forming of the ego and the urge for individuation are not viewed as the enemies which alienate us from our nature of Being and which must therefore be suppressed. We can see that these phenomena - although binding if they are not approached from the perspective of Being - are also the expression of our free nature of Being.

The Child has to ensure that it survives

When we assume that Being qualities translate themselves in the child as an urge to become, we may begin to understand why the child abandons its radiation when the mother permanently fails to respond to the Being quality of the child.

To the child, physical and affectionate nourishment are localized in the mother. It will have to learn to survive by making 'use' of her as effectively as possible. The child will therefore learn to recognize the smells, sounds and forms that belong to the mother. This is what it needs! Some forms are associated with nourishment, others are not. The smells and forms which are associated with mother have a greater value for survival than the smells and forms of a non-mother. The child will learn to distinguish between mother and non-mother and will also attach a higher survival value to the form of the mother. By recognizing her and being directed towards her, the child can more or less ensure its need for satisfaction. The child's creed is therefore: mother first, then the rest!

Seen from the radiation of Being's point of view: in order to be able to manifest itself in the dependent situation of the child, the radiation of Being will translate itself into a mother-oriented being in order to ensure a basis from which it can manifest itself further.

In this way, we can see that the child's urge for survival is the start of learning to distinguish the sensory perceptions coming its way. Besides the child learning to distinguish perceptions (this is mother, and this is a non-mother), an investment in interest in the mother's form will also emerge.

'Mother' is more important than 'non-mother'. A libidinous investment in mother arises, the start of pleasure and displeasure orientation.

The Buddhists would say that here we can already see the manifestation of the three poisons: pleasure, displeasure (anger) and indifference. According to them, the baby has already fallen victim to ignorance.

From the dependent child's point of view, however, the meditative orientation such as disinterested perception, being free from choice, renunciation and panoramic attention is a totally impractical, even dangerous way to orient itself. If the child were to do this constantly, it would die within a couple of days. I think it is therefore more attractive and more correct to assume that it is our wisdom itself which turns into so called 'ignorance' and that it is our love which translates itself into needs.

And more than this: it is an intelligent and compassionate act of the Being qualities themselves to transform into these dual, more restricted forms, because that is a necessary condition if they want to manifest themselves as Being qualities in a relational field.

Let us return to the imagery experiment: when the mother constantly fails to respond to the Being quality, the Being quality will no longer manifest itself directly but will transform itself into a need-orientation which, at that moment, may be effective. The child will adapt its form to that of the mother in order to secure the experience of togetherness with her. The necessity of being together with the mother takes here the form of remaining in resonance with her. That is to say, the child resonates with the mother's mood and adapts itself to her because togetherness with her is a vital condition for the child.

Let us look in more detail at this orientation -on-mother which I have outlined above.

FORMATION OF THE I-CRAMP

The radiation of Being becomes able to distinguish and starts to choose

When the radiation of Being in the child looks for the necessary conditions to be able to manifest itself, the child will begin to orient itself through the so-called pleasure-displeasure principles in its surroundings. It will begin to explore the world by tasting and feeling in order to discover what is pleasant and what is not (painful). That which is pleasant is something to reach out to and to swallow, but that which is threatening, is something to back away from, to 'shrink from'.

Satisfaction of pleasure resembles radiation (but is not the same)

The pleasure-displeasure orientation helps us to make a primitive distinction between that which is good for us and that which is not: if it is pleasant it will be positive, if it is not pleasant, it will be damaging.

We can also explain this orientation towards pleasure as searching for the reflection of your own nature of Being in a dual field.

Viewed in this way, the radiation of Being seeks recognition of its own nature in its surroundings. In dual organic terms, pleasure (or satisfaction) is that which resembles radiation the most.

The experience of pleasure is a relative and conditional one, a sensory imitation of the inherent, unconditional and, in that sense, 'super-sensory' radiation.

Because it wishes to find a supportive basis for inherent Being qualities, the child will direct itself to that which resembles the Being quality in the sensory, relative area.

Because the mother offers so many pleasant stimuli (nourishment, warmth, touch etcetera), the mother will resemble the ground of Being to the child.

The child becomes attached

The child will try to make the distance it perceives between itself and the object of pleasure dissolve. This longing to make the distance dissolve, to make 'duality', into an experience of togetherness, 'oneness', is the movement of seeking symbiosis.

When the child has found a pleasant 'object', it will try to connect itself to that. It wants to get close to it, it reaches out for it, pulls it towards it, puts it into its mouth etcetera. In that sense, symbiosis goes one step further than pleasure-displeasure orientation. Symbiosis is an attempt to secure pleasure by making a connection (removing the distinction) with the object of pleasure. This is the mechanism of symbiotic attachment.

Looking for symbiosis or merging is the dual attempt to find Oneness by trying to remove duality. This is the basic movement of the neurosis and is also called spiritual materialism or pre-personal spirituality⁵.

The radiation becomes solidified

The child would like to connect itself symbiotically to the mother. This is also called attaching. Attaching is a way to consolidate, to fix something which was formerly subject to change and instability. Attaching yourself to something is the same as making yourself, the other and the relationship into something solid.

But how can a child fix and create solidity which is not there? It must find a way to have the volatile nature of perceptions solidify into something which seems to be permanent. Its mind has this possibility: it can create an image which is more stable than flowing reality. So the child develops an image, both of the mother and of itself. Now when the energy of Being attaches itself to these fixed images, its vibration level will be reduced.

The energy can no longer run freely, for now it is tied to the two images, the points of suspension, of object and subject, of mother and child. The cord between the two points of suspension is the symbiotic connection, a subtle equivalent of the umbilical cord.

In this context, the psychoanalytical term 'object of love' is descriptive. The child actually makes an 'object' of its mother through its symbiotic move towards attachment. It makes the open, unknowable and changing reality of the mother into a 'thing', a stable and solid form of image. It will ensure its need for safety by attaching itself to this materialized imaginary experience of reality.

In this attitude of fixing the mother and connecting itself to her in this way, we can find the basic pattern of the I-cramp. As soon as the 'object' is fixed, the 'subject' is fixed as well and the 'subject' is hung up to the quality of the 'object'.

The flowing reality, the radiation, have given way to solidification, fixed images and solidity.

The child builds a castle in the air and begins to live in it.

Symbiotic attachment and the ability to build up a stable image of mother and self, are closely connected to each other as we have seen. The child can only attach itself if it is able to recognize the 'object' (the mother) always and everywhere. In order to be able to recognize the mother always and everywhere, an inner image of the mother will have to be created which corresponds to the sensory perception the child has of its mother.

Let us now examine the survival value of this image-forming in more detail.

I have already described how important it is to the child to develop a stable image of mother and self. The repeated experience of the soothing attachment to her will result in an elementary image of mother and self. This elementary image of mother and self becomes gradually more stable. The child needs the attachment to the mother and to fixed images because it is completely dependent on its surroundings. Only because of the assumption that its needs will be satisfied, so that it will be safe, warm, nourished, held and cuddled, in short, that there is a mother, will the world become safe enough to explore further.

The child reduces the fear of the great, overwhelming and unknown world by creating an image of the mother which will satisfy its dependence on her at the image level. It is no longer necessary for the child to attach itself to the real mother, it becomes attached to her image.

This does not make the child less dependent, it camouflages its dependence on the assumption that its needs will be satisfied. The child just pretends that its mother is present everywhere. It projects its mother as being everywhere in the whole wide world and then feels that world is safe enough to explore.

In this way, the child creates a stability that is not there at all. It constructs, through the image of the mother, a complete world image which is predictable, stable, familiar and clear. So it denies the open, variable, bottomless Being quality. It wants certainty.

The child succeeds (when the psychological growth process works) in building a constructed world which will offer this certainty. This is the world of images. The child uses these images as the basis from which it lives. In that sense, the child lives in images rather than in open reality.

This is a wonderful and necessary step in development which will offer the child an enormous freedom of action. By having the safe ground of the real-life mother changed into an image to which it can become attached and which it can carry along, the child ensures a basic (although in a way, an illusory) safety.

Even if the radiation of Being's frequency is reduced because it is fixed in images, this image world will still provide the child with the necessary basis to develop itself further.

The adult will elaborate on this image-forming. The repertoire will extend, the images will become more refined and detailed, but the fundamental need to create safety by living in a world of images will remain completely intact in the 'daily consciousness'.

From an open, but also unpredictable and unsafe reality, we have come to live gradually in a safe, but illusory castle in the air. Our flowing nature cannot manifest itself in this castle in the air. Our swan nature cannot be recognized by the map consciousness with its fixed images to which we have become attached. We seem to be safe, we have been able to develop, but we have also been impoverished. The radiance and magic of open reality have been reduced to a flat, insensitive, narrowed and limited experience of reality.

From solidification to flowing

My intention was to take the reader on an exploration in which we try to understand how radiation translates itself into fixation or solidification.

I know that the analysis is sketched in broad outline and is not comprehensive, but I hope that the most important point has become acceptable, namely that there is no unbridgeable division between radiation and cramp, between flowing and solidification.

In my opinion, the solidification is a necessary step in development which is not unspiritual, but actually arises from a spiritual urge to manifest itself as a Being quality in this world. It is appropriate, therefore, to approach solidification with respect. Only in this way can we come into contact with the Being quality that is embodied within it.

LIBERATING SOLIDIFICATION INTO RADIATION

After this extensive description of different levels of aggregation of Being it is time to examine how solidification can be transmuted into radiation. By transmuting I mean obtaining a higher frequency, starting to thaw, and flowing again. As we will see, everything can be transmuted into radiation, except for the assumption system that gave rise to solidification.

Assumptions cannot be transmuted

As soon as the child is able to develop a fixed image of mother and self, it has taken an enormous step in its development. It can - as we have said - carry the mother within it as an inner basis and extend its range of action in the world.

However, these self- and world images came into being in a situation of complete dependence. Because the images and repertoire of behavior have been developed on the basis of these images, the adult still carries the assumption of a deep dependence. As soon as you assume that you are your parents' child and that life at present is a continuation of your earlier life, you will activate former assumptions of dependence. In Being-oriented terminology we call this 'living in the parents' house'.

The ability to create stable images and to become attached to these, is an enormous step forward in the development of the child but, in later life, it becomes a millstone around the adult's neck.

As long as the adult clings to that, he or she will be captured in an orientation on dependence and can never perceive his or her 'swanhood'.

Continuity

I have tried to show how the different mechanisms which will eventually lead to solidification, all arise from the zest for life of the Being qualities themselves.

I have postulated the starting point of this solidification process in the tremendous dependence of the child, through which the Being quality gives the impulse for survival behavior. It is from there that the pleasure-displeasure orientation arises, the mechanism of attaching, the mechanism of image-forming and living in that world of images. In that sense there is a continuity, that is to say, Being is present in all these mechanisms. It is Being itself that forms itself in this way.

Discontinuity

With respect to our fundamental assumptions we can see a discontinuity. There is a gap between our self-definition seen from the I-cramp and the one seen from the states of Being.

In the states of Being one recognizes oneself as being a creation of the ground of Being and as a result of that, one experiences richness, abundance and beauty. In the I-cramp,

however, one considers oneself as an historical person and because of that one will feel dependent, one will look for nourishment, is frightened and, consequently, on the defensive. Here we can see that something different is happening from what we have seen earlier in the above-mentioned forms of solidification; there, transmutation is possible, that is to say, every form can become radiation. But the assumption system of the I-cramp cannot be transmuted and should be abandoned.

The built-up self-images that we as adults have of ourselves, all the identifications with 'the child in us', should be abandoned. We will have to give up all our attachments, settle our accounts, let go of our striving for emancipation on the basis of former humiliations and we will have to accept our losses. It is necessary to abandon our past completely and say farewell to that which is familiar.

When we do all this, the radiation of Being which has expressed itself in survival mechanisms, can liberate itself in its radiant form. Passion and the will to live translated in the I-cramp can be liberated. However, the form field: 'the parents' house', in which the Being qualities have translated themselves into solidification, has to be abandoned to let this happen.

The ways in which the Buddha can hide himself

Before we explore the methods of transmuting solidification, it may be interesting to examine where the richest mining fields of Buddha qualities in us can be found. The 'swanhood' or 'Buddhahood' in us can be found in the most improbable nooks and crannies. There where you least expect Buddhahood, it will be hiding. I will now successively discuss suffering, cramp, neurotic splits and emotional crisis as places where we can find our 'sources of Being'.

The Buddha in suffering

Our radiant Being cannot function in its pure form in our parents' house. It has translated itself into solidifications, but these do not feel at all pleasant!

The dissatisfaction we feel, the constant feeling we are not functioning optimally, the suffering from our cramps and fears - they are all reminders of our open state.

So we have not completely 'forgotten' our radiant being even though we are living in our solidified condition. Something in us can still remember the original impulse (the manifestation of Being qualities) which once was the start of the maneuver to have the world solidified into a safe place.

The first truth of 'the four noble truths' taught by the Buddha is: 'Life is suffering'. This should be further specified: life in the I-cramp is suffering.

It is a noble truth because, when you are ready to admit to yourself that you are fundamentally dissatisfied and frustrated, you will have heard the voice of your original, free self. It is our radiation which feels frustrated and not free.

The Buddha in the cramp

The attempt to live in the parents' house will lead to a cramp at every level of functioning: the mental, energy, emotional and physical levels.

HELP, I AM IN A CAGE!

The cramps will become firmly fixed in our 'habitual body' and because of that, it will seem at first as if we no longer cause these ourselves. We feel as though we are the victims of our cramps. The cramp will gradually start to act as a shield, a prison in which we are constantly captured. We will begin to hate our cramp and consider it as an alien, hostile element which is not prepared to co-operate in our genuine attempt to be an open and beautiful human being.

For instance, many people feel locked up like a tiger in a cage. In that case, it is tempting to identify yourself with the tiger and look upon the bars as if they were an alien element. The unrecognized Buddha quality, however, can actually be found in the bars of the cage. But why?

The bars have a higher grade of solidification than the tiger which can still move to some extent.

Apparently, the tiger still has some permission from our cramp-consciousness to manifest itself. The tiger is - surprisingly - very close to our everyday self. Our everyday consciousness feels at ease because of the assumption that it is the victim of something. It will build further on the assumption that it is dependent on - and therefore a victim of - the surroundings. There is not a single fundamental assumption with regard to ourselves or the world that will be challenged with this impression.

The tiger's fierceness might be an aspect of this image that is somewhat difficult to integrate, but the overall view, the setting, the stage, is familiar. The bars, on the other hand, seem to be somehow alien, for they are not recognized in any way as an aspect and even an activity of ourselves. We are completely unaware of the fact that we create the bars ourselves and we do not know how we do this.

Because of that, we have lost sight of an essential and vital aspect of ourselves. We are now faced with the question: which aspect in us creates the bars?

Anything that does not fit in the parents' house, will have to become cramped if the attachment to the mother is not to be endangered.

It is our magnificence itself which becomes cramped to be able to function in the restricted space of our parents' house. This 'being unfit' partly arises because the parents have their psychological and spiritual limitations but, as has been said before, on a more fundamental level, we do not fit into our image of the external world. It is our being greater than our image of ourselves and the surrounding that must be hidden. We hide our wisdom, our truth, our liveliness, our independence.

The swan tries very hard to become a duckling. This action of reducing our size can be called shrinking. This shrinking will become permanent: we no longer feel we are doing so and will then experience the cramp as bars in relation to the liveliness which is still possible. This makes clear why it is so interesting to recognize the bars particularly as being radiation. This is where the most potential is imprisoned.

It is important to see that the bars do not serve to protect the sensitivity or our nature of Being, no, the bars are the sensitivity itself which shrinks in order to be able to survive.

Therefore, when working on cramp in practice, it is important to understand from the beginning that the cramp itself contains Being quality, and that we should not focus on the sensitivity, defenselessness, and primary liveliness (like that of a tiger) which can be found in or behind the cramp.

If we should do that, we would sympathize with the victim consciousness of the I-cramp in which the cramp is the alien and we would direct our sympathy and loyalty to the suppressed and captured victim and annexed part of our childhood.

Then, we will not recognize that it is precisely in this act of shrinking that the ability and the intelligence of a person can be found to optimally correlate with its surroundings. In other words, an important self-regulation and ego-function are present in the cramp.

But there is more: in the act of shrinking, the Being-Being quality decides to no longer manifest itself in a direct and open manner, but to reduce itself - for the sake of togetherness - to a size that fits. This can only happen when the Being quality-quality can

distinguish between the state in which it finds itself and that of its surroundings. So implicit in the cramp is an experience of differentiation, of being separate, of being different, which is too threatening to allow it to exist and to live in the dependent situation of the child.

However, this realization is very essential in the individuation process: bringing your own form into flower.

If we should direct ourselves to that which is in or behind the bars and sympathize with that, we do not make contact with the strength, intelligence and individuation potential which are actually present in the bars. In doing so, we would undermine the client because we would confirm his victim status in relation to the bars. In my opinion, this is a mistake which is consistently made in therapeutic circles.

The question was: who creates the bars? The answer is: our magnificence and our realization that we are different. So where do we find our magnificence and uniqueness? In our attempt to shrink, in our cramp!

The neurotic split

As soon as radiation translates itself into behavior that creates conditions, it will split up into a part that searches the world for favorable conditions or tries to create these (the strategic self) and a part that will wait until these conditions are fulfilled (the withdrawn self).

The unrecognized swan will be disappointed and hurt and will leave the duck pond. We could consider this as a metaphor for the withdrawn self which withdraws emotionally from the level of contact.

The swan begins to wander and tries to find new possibilities for attachment with the geese and the chickens etcetera.

We can see this as a metaphor for the activities of the strategic self.

It is not right (and this bears repeating yet again) to suppose that the fragile, sensitive and withdrawn self would be closer to radiation than the unscrupulously striving strategic part.

Both (the strategic and the withdrawn self) are an attempt to manifest radiation in a dependent situation. Both are a (solidified) form of radiation. Our neurosis is the attempt of our radiation to create a form for itself in our parents' house.

To recognize a crisis as a signal of an unrecognized Buddha quality

If we embody the free state again and again, it will gradually become more dynamic and stronger in the person.

The genie has escaped from the bottle and will not be put back very easily. You will become much more aware of discomfort and unhappiness in the moments when you do not live out the expansion of the radiation of Being. The contraction of the Being quality which you do not live out will be felt much more strongly. In that sense, this is not without risk. You owe it to the spirit to give it space, otherwise it will become an evil spirit! The transmutations which have been explored want to be lived out.

However, there are still areas which have not been explored and which still function in a cramped way. When the spirit touches these areas, it will be translated into an intensification of the dynamics in that psychological area.

For instance, where dignity is concerned, the person will notice that he will try harder to obtain it, he will feel dependent and need confirmation, he will experience the lack of inherent dignity and will translate that as inferiority. Experiencing this lack of inherent dignity is the signal that the spirit is becoming active in that area.

Almaas has described this mechanism very precisely and extensively.⁶ As soon as this is recognized, it is usually no longer difficult to help the person to abandon the attachment to the mirroring - in this example the mirroring of dignity - and to have him discover an inherent dignity in the emptiness of Being which then arises.

Another mechanism which plays a role here is that the person often chooses for a neurotic translation of a Being quality, because he or she does not want to experience the fact of being completely free, which is inherent in the Being quality.

There is still a refusal to accept the loss. In the example of dignity it could be that this particular person is able to experience inherent dignity, but is still so angry with his parents because they did not reflect this to him, that he purposefully ignores autonomy and wants to complain about this to the surroundings.

The need for revenge is often stronger than the need for freedom, beauty and love.

We can also find this mechanism in situations in which someone does not dare to confess to himself that he has already made a choice in some matter and will therefore show a neurotic disability to choose. Every tendency to undermine yourself can be considered as a defense mechanism against standing alone in your emotions, insights and impulses coming from your free self.

In the examples mentioned above, the free state is already dynamic, but the person cannot or dare not accept the consequences of these messages. At such a moment, the neurosis will become extra active. The person 'translates' the released energy of the free state into the framework of the I-cramp. Then the I-cramp will be energetically charged, as it were, and the neurosis becomes more dynamic. This often happens after having had an experience of openness. Sometimes the open state and the cramp state will alternate quickly.

We have now recognized the unrecognized Buddha in four areas: suffering, cramp, splits and crises. We can also discover the Buddha in feelings, patterns of habit, the superego, transfer phenomena etcetera. I hope, however, that the reader now has an impression of how the view can be applied at the level of insight with regard to various phenomena which are apparently far removed from Buddhahood.

Insight might be important, but it is often not enough.

In the course of time, we have developed numerous empirical methods in the school whereby the solidification is transmuted into radiation. In the framework of this article, we will restrict ourselves to the method of the 'unrecognized Buddha quality'.

THE METHOD OF THE UNRECOGNIZED BUDDHA QUALITY

Devotion is essential in the method of the unrecognized Buddha quality. Devotion can be compared to the feeling the ugly duckling has when it sees the beautiful swans. It trembles all over and is in ecstasy when it beholds them and it loves these swans as it has never loved anything before. This is an excellent description of the state of devotion. Devotion is full of respect. You feel as though you are touched by something which you experience as infinitely magnificent, impressive and of an overwhelming beauty. A deep love will appear. It is important that we distinguish this respectful, devotional attitude from an 'accepting attitude'. In an accepting attitude you will experience yourself as being more open or greater than that which you accept. Seen from the form field of the I-cramp, it has an aura of playing 'the good mother' in relation to something which is pitiful and imperfect.

In devotion, however, you realize your own smallness in comparison with the magnificence you perceive. It is not a matter of acceptance; you are compelled to bow your head and surrender.

Only by a devotional attitude can the Buddha qualities of a cramp appear. The most that an accepting attitude will achieve is to create space for that which we experience as being smaller than ourselves. No Buddha will appear, but a child that has been hurt. When the client is encouraged to identify himself with that - which, unfortunately, normally happens in therapy - he cannot abandon the assumption system of the I-cramp, and the Buddha quality will not be able to manifest itself.

After these introductory words, we can discover how this method of working is established.

The first phase

In the first phase we will look for a subject, an aspect of ourselves of which we feel that it absolutely does not fit into 'Buddhahood'. This may be a physical aspect (pain, tiredness), an emotional state, a cramp, or a pattern of behavior.

Second phase

In the second phase we will explore what the reaction of our I-cramp is with regard to this emotion, pattern etcetera. We may express ourselves in gestures. We will invariably see that the I-cramp will make a gesture of creating distance, of suppressing, repressing, isolating etceteras.

Third phase

In this phase we will notice in what way this chosen aspect of ours reacts to this I-cramp attitude. Here, too, we will always see that the reaction of the I-cramp intensifies the cramp, increases the pain etceteras.

Fourth phase

After having explored the reaction of the I-cramp and its effects, we will change the I-cramp perspective into a perspective of Being. This is the phase in which we will awaken our devotion

Several means are possible.

- * A very powerful means is to look into the eyes of a visualized inspiring image⁴ and continue to look until you feel that that way of looking is now in your eyes also.
- * Another means is to realize that you are going to meet a Buddha quality and prepare yourself for this in devotional openness and humility.
- * Sometimes we use sentences such as: look at it with the most deep respect, with deep appreciation, or see its essence.

Fifth phase

In the fifth phase we will direct our devotional openness to the subject chosen. We will now recognize the unrecognized Buddha quality. Buddha meets Buddha. In this encounter the solidified Being quality will be liberated.

⁴We make extensive use of visualizations in which the open state is allowed to take on an inspiring human form. There are often images of Buddha, Jesus, light-Beings, which radiate the Being qualities that are relevant at that moment. We have devised a number of ways of working with these images.

The Being quality has a complete, encompassing character. The entire person and the atmosphere of the place are imbued by it.

The qualities that are liberated often take the person completely by surprise (and the therapist as well). There seems to be no unequivocal connection between the cramp and that which was solidified in the cramp. The Being quality cannot be encountered and recognized from the map consciousness. The Being quality can only manifest itself in a respectful opening up and after surrendering the manipulation of the I-cramp.

The duckling will not receive any swan's feathers. The swan's strength which is hidden in the cramp will appear and will cause the duck image to dissolve completely. One feels oneself magnificent, autonomous, royal, radiating instantly.

It is touching to experience this. It is a sacral happening, an initiation.

Sixth phase

Sometimes, after the Buddha quality has been recognized, we look back on the form the I-cramp gave to this quality in order to learn to recognize how - through the cramp and the neurosis - it has tried to express itself in 'the parents' house'.

In this way a person gains more respect for his neuroses and learns to understand himself better.

The danger and the importance of working with Buddha qualities

The danger of working with Buddha qualities

I have already mentioned earlier that, after having liberated the Buddha qualities, a person will open up at every level. This opening up will move the person deeply.

Dormant tendencies, feelings, insights etcetera will appear. Inspiration may increase, but so may the intensity of neurotic tendencies. The 'shadow' is lured from its hiding place and starts to harass the person with extremely negative emotions and destructive impulses. This will unsettle the relative stability a person has obtained. It will ask a lot of the person to learn how to handle this and to learn to recognize the shadow as being a Buddha quality.

Such a disruption and an opening to hidden powers in the person takes place not only when working with Buddha qualities. We can see the same effects in every in-depth psychodynamic approach like bio-energetic bodywork, Gestalt etcetera. Nevertheless, it is wise to realize that, in using such an approach, the client will have to have certain qualities because otherwise he will not be able to handle the openness and will close up again. Among other things, the client will need the ability to restrain himself and not hurt another person (or himself) with uncontrolled expressions of destructiveness.

Positive transfers, amorousness and so on will appear in full force. The person will have to restrain himself in this regard also and recognize the liberated emotions and impulses as an expression of his own Buddha quality.

In other words, this requires the ability and preparedness for self-control, self-reflection, and a differentiated perception of psychological states.

A second danger of working with Buddha qualities is the temptation of assuming that the liberated qualities can be added to the possessions of the 'I'.

Knowing that the I-cramp will never disappear as a habit, we can even assume that working with Buddha qualities (and every other work which will open one up) will be misused and can even intensify the I-cramp! You may create a kind of spiritual self-image which will be colored by all the experiences of opening up and all the qualities that were liberated. You will then become proud of these and will use this spiritual self-image to ward off negative self-images, for example.

This is a serious matter for you run the risk that the neurosis will intensify!

The work itself, however, is self-correcting in the sense that you will not be able to attain the free states of Buddha qualities on the basis of the I-cramp: first you, as a duckling, must die. But after the states have been liberated, it nearly always happens that you will try to fit these states into the existing map of the I-cramp. You may develop a kind of flexibility, as it were, to step in and out of the 'I-cramp'. For instance, you are willing to give yourself up within the framework of exercises, but the richness which is then released will later be used for the I's interests.

There are several ways of dealing with this danger in the Existence-oriented method. One way is to sacrifice the Being quality, after it has been liberated, to Being. We will ask the person to give the quality back to the primal ground from which it stems. A second way is to work with the image-form of the Guard. The Guard is a personification of our wisdom spirit in its aspect of unrelenting truth. All that we are attached to, everything we hide behind, or identify ourselves with etcetera, will have to be sacrificed to the Guard before we can and are allowed to enter the 'House of Being'⁵. In the end we will have to sacrifice our reason for living and with that all I-centeredness. If you practice this often, you will learn what it means to live without seeing yourself as the center of everything.

In my opinion, the most important way of guiding yourself and avoiding the dangers of spiritual materialism is to practice 'resting in Being'.

In this 'resting in Being' one can see everything as originally open and pure and nothing needs to be transmuted. A sense of humor and an ability to put things into perspective will arise. It no longer matters whether you are neurotic or radiant. You are able to see through all phenomena, as it were, and you can see that they are relative.

No progress can be made. You will no longer take yourself seriously. You are no longer on your way. You have begun an eternal holiday.

The importance of working with Buddha qualities

Why should we continue to work with unrecognized Buddha qualities when this 'resting in Being' is possible?

There are some pragmatic reasons:

- * As long as we can still be bewitched by the I-cramp, it may be of help to create a way to transform the I-cramp into the Buddha quality.
- * Moreover, the realization of the continuity between radiation and solidification, between Buddha quality and neurosis, will make it easier to be open and interested in all the dark, ugly sides of yourself.

But there is also a fundamental reason, something that I started to realize lately me lately: by liberating the Buddha quality, you will begin to get in touch with the dynamic aspect of Being. Out of the Being qualities there is a deeply human concern for the world. Love as primal intention can be felt. The feelings, the heart, the free will awake in this approach. In that sense, this approach is richer in feeling than the approach of 'resting in Being'.

The way in which resting in being and Buddha qualities relate

⁵The house of Being is another frequently used image, it represents a sacred environment and is frequently visualized as a temple a church a inspiring pace in nature, or sometimes just a place made of light.

The 'unrecognized Buddha quality' method is based on the recognition of Being qualities. These will arise when the unformed Being orientates itself as a form onto its surroundings. Being qualities are therefore inherently full of contact and committed. They refer to being in relationship.

The state of consciousness of 'resting in Being', however, will only be released if every assumption of I, someone else and relationship, so every orientation based on form is abandoned. In that sense, this state seems to be fundamentally without relationship.

'Resting in Being' is based on making contact with the most subtle level of aggregation of Being: the unformed Being, the primal ground. In that sense, resting in Being is a more free state of consciousness than working with Being qualities and is therefore also more cutting through and in a way more effective in freeing a person from his identifications. However, as soon as this primal freedom starts to move in the world, it will become incarnate in the form of Being qualities. There are therefore two levels of aggregation which alternate continuously in the free state.

We can now understand how the two approaches of resting in Being and the unrecognized Buddha quality can complement each other.

If you take the radiant states of feeling, the forms of the world and your relationship to these, too seriously, you will become too solid, too serious. Then you will attach too much credence to the actual existence of a separate form: 'the Buddha-ego'. This is a dangerous form of spiritual materialism.

The radical cutting through of 'resting in Being', will liberate you from this fixation.

But working with the unrecognized Buddha qualities will open up the way to the incarnation of Being-in-relationship. This is always an application of the inspiration of the open state in everyday life.

In that sense, working with the unrecognized Buddha qualities will prevent the possible fixation on freedom, on being without relationship or form which may arise from 'resting in Being'.

Recognizing the Being qualities will help us to find a compassionate answer to everyday situations. In that sense, it is a form of integration and actualization of the open state in our lives.

Epilogue

Neurosis or confusion appears to contain our wisdom. To see this is a wonderful liberation. It is the culmination of a spiritual development. It makes working with ourselves quick, easy and simple. It is a blessing.

Hans Knibbe

October 1996

footnotes:

1 Hans Christian Andersen: The Ugly Duckling

2 The first perspective is living from the assumption that the present is a continuation of the past. A more detailed description of the perspectives can be found in the article 'The Three Perspectives' in the book 'Resting in Being'.

3 Hans Knibbe: 'Resting in Being', with special reference to the article 'The Three Perspectives'.

4 I-cramp is the name of the process of identification with a self-image and the accompanying cramp of the emotional body.

5 Spiritual materialism is a term of Chogyam Trungpa. In short, this is the wish to permanently connect oneself with pleasant emotional states or to further build up the ego with spiritual qualities. Pre-personal spirituality is a term which is used by Ken Wilber, for example, and it means that one wishes for a symbiotic merging, and therefore an elimination of duality, with the mighty spiritual dimension. This is then a regression to symbiotic, pre-personal forms of psychological development.

6 Almas: 'Pearl beyond Price'

7 'The shadow' is a Jungian term which I use here to indicate all suppressed negativity.