

Clay: our ground, our source, our mother, our potential

The potential of clay to take on many forms can be taken both as a symbol of separative limitation and as a symbol of the integrating of the diversity of non-dual appearance.

Regarding being a symbol of limitation, when there is unawareness of the open empty nature of the ground, it is as if the ground, the clay, is something to be acted on and made something of. In the wheel of becoming the first link or nidana is a blind old person representing unawareness.

1) The link of ignorance



The second link is that of the potter's wheel. This potter's wheel is big, close to the ground and carries a huge mound of clay. The potter spins the wheel then works at the top of the mound, creating a shape. Due to some one no thing becomes some thing.

2) The link of volitional factors/impulses



If he or she is the shape is eased into clay so that it sits atop is not separate from its mother. But then the the mass and so that it is cup. This illustrates how world are constructed from the ground by and action. The potter sees what can be made and 'releases' each item from the mass. The mass is clay, the cup is clay — yet with the separation the cupness of the cup supercedes our sense of the clayness of the cup. The clay has become what we take it to be.

making a simple cup form from the mass of the mass — a cup that source, ground, potter cuts it 'free' from an isolate, an entity, a all the things of this from items separated identification, intention

Similarly our mind itself is like the source, the ground, the potential. When we are unaware of it as it is, we focus on the potential of the isolated, reified thoughts, feelings, sensations and so on that arise and pass in the mind. Our attention is not on their self-arising, self-vanishing actuality but on what we make of them. They are, for us, what we take them to be — and this confirms our status as a thing in a world of things, of delimited definable entities.

However the clay as source, as unformed potential, shows forms which can help us see the non-duality of the source and the display of the potential of the source. When we make tsa-tsa we press clay into moulds which shape the clay without adding or subtracting anything. When we ease the moulded shape free of the mould we see a clay Buddha. The clay and the Buddha are non-dual: it is a Buddha, yet it is only clay; it is only clay, yet it is a Buddha. The open, empty potential of the clay shows diverse forms without ceasing to be clay. The forms taken on by the clay are not intrinsic and not definitive of the potential of the clay. This diversity of appearances which are unseparated is the middle way between there being only one thing or many different things.

Creating tsa-tsa while holding clay and form in mind simultaneously lets the actual unborn non-dual nature of the tsa-tsa be revealed — even in the face of the tendency of dualising consciousness to establish the delusion of existence in appearances which are intrinsically free of both existence and non-existence.

Non-duality is the actual; duality is the imagined. By the practice of creating, dedicating and spreading tsa-tsa may we fill the six realms with images of the undivided whole, the truth of Dzogpachenpo!