

## PREFACE TO PORTUGUESE EDITION OF *BEING RIGHT HERE*

Ideas flutter through the mind like butterflies in a forest glade — intriguing, unpredictable and difficult to catch. And yet we do try to catch them, chasing our hopes, following after memories, day after day, year after year. Life goes by as we react to events arising from the conflicted interplay of factors, economic, political, racial and so on. In the turbulence of the social world it is difficult to find peace as agitation arises in those around us and this sets us whirling in reactivity.

Nature, which once offered a degree of solace, is undermined by climate change and the greed and stupidity that leads to forest fires and wasteful clearance of the magnificent Brazilian jungle which offers hospitality to so many species. But the mad cry of "Me First!" rings out establishing self-interest as the key concern of our times.

Where can we find peace? Peace, beauty and truth seem so elusive that it is easy to give up hope and then to turn to the oblivion of addiction or the vapid wasteland of consumerism.

This book points to a little-known secure refuge that will both nourish us and support our functioning in the world without our being deceived or battered by circumstances. Taking time out from the futile task of trying to control events, we can start to get to know our own mind. We each have our mind, our 'own' mind full of our familiar memories, dreams, facts and fantasies. The patterning of the content of our mind gives us a sense of identity and a predictability to our personality and behaviour. Each mental event seems to confirm or unsettle our sense of who we are — and so, in the service of our 'self', we have to manage and edit the content of our mind just as we try to manage and edit the world around us.

Yet there is a paradox in all this busyness. Moment by moment the content of our mind is changing. And so although the ingredients of our 'self' are transient, we remain sure that we are just who we are, confident in an unchanging me-ness of me. So how is it that this flux of experience can generate a stable sense of self?

From the Buddhist point of view our sense of an enduring personal self is a delusion. When we look for the self there is no stability to be found in experience — each moment is unique, specific and vanishing. When I think about something, the thinker, the thought and the object of thought are all transient mental events. They arise as they do with their flavour of something-ness because this is how dualistic consciousness makes sense of what occurs. Subject, object and their connection are all contents of the mind, merely patterning of the movement of thoughts, feelings, perceptions, memories and so on. The patterning both evokes and is evoked by moods such as desire, anger, joy, loneliness and gratitude.

Well, if the content of my experience, all that occurs for me and as me, is an ever-changing patterning devoid of inherent existence, what is the actuality of this enduring presence that I take to be me? In fact it is our awareness, the simple illuminating brightness of our mind itself forever untouched by its fleeting content.

Awareness is not a thing, not a personal essence nor the private basis of an individual existence; rather it is self-arising presence offering illumination, revelation and clarity. Awareness is not like thinking – it is not effortful nor does it produce knowledge. Instantly, easily, infinite detail is apparent yet is ungraspable and self-vanishing. Awareness and what occurs are both ungraspable, yet awareness is unchanging while consciousness, appearance and experience are fleeting.

Just as the sun rises in the sky revealing a multitude of colours and shapes, awareness is the brightness of our open infinite mind, vast and empty like the sky. Instead of striving to find stability in the flow of experience we relax and open to the stable, unchanging presence of awareness inseparable from each moment of movement. Then we start to see that what we take ourselves to be is simply the radiance of awareness. Moment by moment the movement of our body, voice and mind is the display of awareness shining as the ever-changing co-emergence we refer to as 'I , me, myself'. I am not an entity. I am the sky, the sun and the ceaseless play of rays.

This short book gives a clear outline of how our mind is and how to trust it and relax into it, as it. This is the ancient tradition of dzogchen, the great completion, the intrinsic integrity of everything. The openness of awareness is inseparable from the undivided non-duality of the field of experience showing itself all at once. To open to this is to dissolve the binary opposition between stillness and movement. Then life rolls on as it does yet we are present in a relaxed, responsive and unstriving way. There is no need to change any of the patterns of our current life since this intrinsic freedom, once tasted, starts to dissolve all our habitual knots and limitations.

This is the basis and potential of our life and it is always already here and available. We need simply relax and be with our intrinsic presence which has always been our essence although un-lived in our anxious striving to find happiness as if it were a commodity.

It is a great source of pleasure that these ancient teachings are becoming available in Brazil and Portugal. Many thanks to all those involved in making this edition. *(Names to be added)*

May your own unborn presence bring you clarity, peace and joy!

*James Low*

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