

Shoyo Sensei's Dharma Message

Buddhism and Recent Studies in Neuroscience: All Phenomena Are Manifestation of Amida

The Buddha discovered the law of Causal Conditionality 2500 years ago, wherein he declared that he was enlightened. The Buddha's general formula of the law is:

*When A is present, B is present;
From the arising of A, B arises;
When A is absent, B is absent;
On the cessation of A, B ceases.*

This formula illustrates the causal conditional relationship between "this" and "that" both in the material and mental phenomena.

The Buddha, after discovering the Law, applied it solely to solve the issue of human problems, *Dukkha*. "The Four Noble Truths" is the application of the Law to *Dukkha*. Buddhism is information of relationships between an action (physical, verbal and mental) and its reaction. But, it is not mere information, but insightful and compassionate information, since it brings positive changes, happiness and wholesomeness. One of them is:

*When self-centeredness is present, dukkha is present;
From the arising of self-centeredness, dukkha arises;
When self-centeredness is absent, dukkha is absent;
On the cessation of self centeredness, dukkha ceases. A.I. 156-157.*

Understanding and becoming aware of the relationship between Selfishness and *Dukkha* (stress, anxiety, worry, frustration . . .) and using it, we will be able to have life with less *Dukkha*.

Today, it is interesting that some neuroscientists and psychologists are finding new data on the relationships between "this" and "that" in their fields. And this is what I have been sharing with you through my Dharma messages for the last several months in the *Golden Chain*. Some of them can be re-stated as follows following the Buddha's expression:

When we give to others, or act cooperatively, a region of the brain known to have many dopamine receptors and to prove rewards, lights up.

When we perform behaviors associated with compassionate love, oxytocin, a neuropeptide that floats through the blood stream increases.

When we become compassionate, we become even more compassionate.

When oxytocin is enhanced, trust and devotion are enhanced.

In a society where self-centeredness is regarded as the key factor for happiness, recent scientific findings by neuroscientists and psychologists definitely have persuasive power. The Law of Causal Conditionality that the Buddha discovered operates both in the material (body) and the psychological world. Therefore, it is not surprising that new scientific data and Buddha-Dharma arrive at the same conclusion. The Buddha taught

2500 years ago: “Self-benefit and benefit for others go hand in hand.” Self and others are interconnected, interrelated and interdependent. And this is also those scientists are finding these days.

Some may think that the Law of Causal Conditionality is just a law and nothing more. It is indeed the law simply. But, the law offers positive data, knowledge, information and messages. They are characterized with deep wisdom and compassion. Therefore, the Law rather should be called vows, hopes, and wishes. I cannot help appreciate the Law as Amida. All phenomena are manifestations of Amida, the eternal and highest wisdom and the eternal and highest compassion.

Namu Amida Butsu

Shaku Shoyo