

If we don't understand the assumptions embedded in our language, it's very difficult for us to understand buddhism.

One of the assumptions we have is that there shouldn't be contradiction. Something is either one thing or another. Alive or dead. Active or passive. Good or bad. Fundamental or peripheral. High or low.

This leads us to misunderstand familiar buddhist metaphors like space, or mountains, or the ocean. We think that space is a metaphor for something - tranquillity, say - rather than the container and enabler of everything.

And not just buddhism. When 19th century European sanskrit scholars were translating tantric texts, they rendered 'Supreme Being' as 'The Supreme Being'. It seems innocuous, but it's not.

'Supreme Being' is an expression of being, not an entity. Just like the deepest depth of the ocean is part of the ocean. It's not separate. Everything is working together in full expression. Like a real person. Not a corpse, tethered to a ghost.