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taking refuge in the nature of mind itself, allow body to still itself and place awareness on whatever experience arises using short time many time method

[00:04:49] So, first of all... the practice of calm abiding... is very important to not only understand, but to engage in the practice of calm abiding... is in essence the foundation of all of our practices... without exception. And so, it also is a prerequisite to almost all of our understandings of the more or less straightforward, easy to understand things all the way up through the very difficult things to understand. It is *imperative*... that we develop the skill to rest our awareness... on our experiences.

[00:06:18] Normally, we don't notice our awareness. Normally, we barely notice our experiences. Unless... someone sticks a pin in us or something like that. And even then... we don't really notice... the experience so much as our *reaction* to it. We need to work on bringing our awareness to the *moment* of the experience itself. And *that* will lead to understandings that free us... from the bondage of confusion and misunderstandings about the nature of things, including the nature of our own minds.

[00:07:24] When we practice shamatha we often... have the instruction... in various forms and various methods to... allow our minds to settle... naturally, free of distraction. ... If you're new to this, or even if you are... tired of it, after a long time, [laughter] it is still... the case... that we are probably not yet aware of our own experience as it unfolds.

[00:08:17] And so, this morning... perhaps we could take a shot... at what *must be* the most meaningful thing in our lives. Which is our ability to cognize or to understand things and to experience things. ... Since as Buddhists, and you don't need to be one to be sitting here... might even be a good idea if you're *not* all the time... as Buddhists, we... have an understanding, which is by and large conceptual, but nonetheless helpful, that our nature is exactly the same as the Buddha's nature. Which is to say that the nature of mind itself... for each one of us, no matter how confused we are... at nature, is *identical*, exactly the same... as the Buddha's nature. So, that should give us a clue that we are actually not trying to put something inside of us that is not already there. ... The awareness of our own nature. It cannot be improved upon. Cannot be replenished, nor can it be exhausted. ... Once we begin to discover... what we could reasonably say is the miracle of awareness... we can begin to engage on the path in a very robust way... by virtue of giving rise to our curiosity about this. What is it about us that is the same as the Buddha?

[00:11:10] So, this morning, first of all, then... as we usually do, we recite the liturgy for going for refuge. Before we know what refuge is, we recite the liturgy for going for refuge. Refuge *in* the Buddha. Which unfortunately is sometimes confused with refuge in a human being. Here we are talking about refuge in the very *nature* of mind itself, which is the nature of our own mind. ... That is the *only* genuine refuge. Since it is not so easy to recognize and not so easy to turn ourselves in the direction of refuge *in* that instead of refuge in our... interesting things in the world. ... If we can engage in this practice with a sense of curiosity... which makes sense, we should be curious about our own minds... and when someone says that your mind is... not distinguishable from the Buddha's mind... that should be a curious thing to say. ... Mind itself in its pristine form... or formless... is the object, if you will... that will lead us out of confusion... and into transcendent awareness.

[00:13:31] So first, let's turn our minds, then to... even if only the *idea*... of awakening and the nature of mind... with the *intention* of setting aside all of our usual refuges, such as a new car or a great lunch... hardly worthy of what we're talking about. We set those aside. We turn our minds to refuge in the nature of mind itself, that we call the Buddha. So, we'll recite that liturgy three times together.

sangha [00:14:15] *reciting Refuge & Bodhicitta Prayer*

[00:16:03] If you are familiar with the practice of shamatha... then... follow your own instruction... having received it many times, perhaps. If you're not familiar with it... then start by... settling your body. ... Settling the body requires very little. Just an ability to let go. ... Avoid trying to change too much... in your... physical sitting. But do what you need to be comfortable. ... You can sit cross legged. If you need to, sit in a chair. In essence, this makes little difference. What makes the difference is the willingness... to engage in this way of... allowing the body to still itself.

[00:17:52] When we stop trying to make it something other than it is... we are then in a place where... we can rest our awareness upon whatever experience is arising. ... When we recognize an experience... could be a physical experience, pleasant or unpleasant, could be a memory of something that happened long ago... but the point here is to... merely... remain aware of the experience. Without making any effort to change... the experience or to *get rid* of the experience or to embellish it in a... favorite way. Our objective, recall... is to rest our awareness... on that experience.

[00:19:25] You should find, even if you have not done it before, that this is... completely easy. It's not easy to *maintain* it for a long duration. Possibly even impossible to maintain it for half a minute... or even 10 seconds. ... So, if you fall off, and the awareness slips away... in the very moment that you remember what you intended to do... bring your awareness back. Place it on *whatever* experience happens to be... in your mindstream at that moment. Nurture... just a pinch of curiosity. ... What could be more interesting... than our own mind? The seat... of all of our experience. What could be more interesting?

[00:20:55] So, like that... I mean, rest... having rested your body... placed your awareness on the movement of experience. When you realize you've lost your place, sort of... just bring your awareness back... and place it again upon *whatever* experience is occurring... in that moment. And repeat that... over and over... as necessary.

[00:21:33] *period of meditation*

sangha [00:48:50] *dedicating the merit*