

*training in being fully present by holding view that this is fresh*

[00:05:43] When we sit down to... turn our minds to refuge... in the three jewels of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha... when we do that, there is of necessity, a very small kind of split second when... we are reminding ourselves what it is that we're about to do. Or worse... we're not reminding ourselves and we don't do what we set down to do. ... We could have recited the refuge liturgy a million times. But all of that, of course, is something that happened in the past. And sometimes, unfortunately, when we engage in the meditation itself, we are recalling previous meditations. Maybe that were better or for worse. But one thing is for sure. When we rely upon the recollection, we're relying upon the past. And our meditation is given to us with the... specific intention... that we would go deep... into our understanding of ourselves. ... And in order to go deep today... we have to be present. Because the extraordinarily good meditation we did earlier this morning... is of no benefit... to go deeper into understanding ourselves. The *best* we can do in that situation is to recall something that we previously experienced. In other words, as is so common for us as human beings... we just revert to the easy space of recalling... the profound insight we had yesterday. Which is... completely not... a method for going deep into understanding... who and what we are.

[00:10:17] So this morning's meditation... when we began the refuge recitation... do your best to remain completely present with your experiences as they arise. Put aside yesterday's understanding. It will never be better than yesterday's understanding. So as we recite the refuge prayer... we are meant to bring ourselves completely present. And completely free... of conceptual understanding. So that's a long... path to get to. But it's 100 percent available to us in any moment that *we just are present*. Without comparisons to... other traditions or other times... and so, to the best of your ability... seed your effort... by imagining that you have never done this before, which in fact is true. And so when you begin... let go of all of the preconceptions and the things that actually sink our little ship. Wade into it and swim easily. So we'll recite the prayer.

**sangha** [00:12:42] *reciting Refuge & Bodhicitta Prayer*

[00:14:40] In order to understand ourselves deeply... we have to treat that as an ever-present endeavor. But also, to not trick ourselves... which were so good at... to imagine that effort through a conceptual lens. The best way... to understand ourselves more deeply... it's important, actually, to... hold the view actively... that any experience I have, including the one... I'm having currently, has never occurred before and will not occur again. And when you recite the refuge prayer and you think of refuge in the awakened mind... we tend to think that we will... work diligently towards recognizing that nature of mind. And then we'll have it. ... From the very beginning, that is a profound mistake. And we all know that experientially. Every time you sit down to engage just in the practice of shamatha... it's never the same as before. But we are miraculously capable of convincing ourselves... that it's the same every time we sit down. And we do that by reminding ourselves in the middle of our meditation... that once again, I am distracted. The best antidote to take for that is to remind yourself that you may be distracted in this moment. But this *particular* distraction has never occurred before and never will again. You remind yourself of that often enough, you begin to see the freshness of what used to be something stale.

[00:18:02] In order to do it most effectively with ourselves, whether it's simple shamatha... or some complex meditation practice with multiple visualizations and all of that. In order for us to remain present, we need to have a sense of the freshness of the experiences we're having. Because it is actually true. The cup of water I'm drinking this morning has never been drank before. And it won't be in the future. Even the cup that holds the water is not the same from one moment to the next. Best not to rely on our conceptual understanding. Because that conceptual understanding is always, without exception, yesterday. ... Today, while your experiences arise... without any effort on your behalf... I have to repeat, I think a hundred thousand times for myself... that the great master Kalu Rinpoche in 1973 said... the nature of mind is an experience machine. It continually... turns out experiences. Even when you're asleep. And even when you're dead, he says. [laughs] It's hard to verify that, but we're working on it. [laughter] I think it wasn't meant to be... a material truth, but rather, if you hold that view, you have a sense of the grandness... of your own... *potentially* completely awakened mind just by virtue of the unbounded... experiences that arise in every moment.

[00:20:59] And it's best... as soon as you are able... to bring your awareness to *every* experience you are having, in every moment. Without trying to stabilize any of them. Since by now, we should have discovered... you can't stop them anyway. So they need to become the path... where our awareness of those experiences and feelings as they arise, we just continually... bring our awareness to it or rest our awareness there, whatever your ability is. Without naming it. Naming is a problem. It follows us into the past. We forget that we aren't there. ... So, as we sit, just... recall that we turned our minds to refuge in the awakened mind itself, the Buddha. The teachings. Our own experiences. We just continually come back to that. Let go of it and rest in the raw experience, whatever it is. Over and over.

[00:22:37] *period of meditation*

[00:34:58] Just a short rest, if you would like to stretch. Or even stand up and take two or three minutes. Kind of refresh your stream of consciousness.

[00:36:54] In order to understand the nature of mind... we have to live with it. ... And live with it, not in the past... with some.... stale understanding. But rather... a living understanding... where we neither attempt to hold on to our experiences nor reject the ones we're not comfortable with. And at the same time... making no effort to recall... any of the experiences. Especially while we're... making an effort to be still and meditate. ... And since, we cannot dictate to the mind... what experiences will arise, nor how many and how often. In order to know ourselves deeply... we need to go deeper in our... understanding in each moment. Not just to come to a place where we have a clever name for an experience that we had 10 minutes ago or 10 years ago. In the practice... of shamatha, using our experiences as they unfold, as the object of our awareness... we want to be fresh... with each experience arising. While neither encouraging nor discouraging. And if you are disappointed. Rejoice. *Be* disappointed. ... Be curious. ... So continue in this way... relaxed and awake.

[00:40:57] *period of meditation*

**sangha** [00:46:18] *dedicating the merit*