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SHINAY MEDITATION
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As all of you have requested, I am teaching very basic, very simple “shinay” meditation. And afterward then I will give you some time for questions and answers. Are you happy with that?

Always during our Dharma practice have refuge and bodhichitta at the beginning, and the dedication at the end, and in between the actual practice we should do. So this is 3 sacred steps, and we must have those 3 steps we always follow.

Before and after the practice if you have time you should just sit for a few minutes or seconds according to your time to calm down. That will be very beneficial, because before the practice you might be doing other activities, and you might go working, or you might go walking or you might be cooking and etc, and etc. Therefore, sit down and calm down for a while and your practice should go well. After the entire practice, and you also sit down for a little while; and that also will help you to carry the effect of the practice into your life much better, rather than just finish the practice and then get up and do things. So keep that in mind. Now let us do the Refuge and bodhichitta first.

(Chant the Refuge prayer)

When you have time you should do that 3 times, other times you can do it also 1 time. Now the Bodhichitta; actually the Bodhichitta is the last sentence (of Refuge prayer) which we have already read, but then there are four limitless thoughts that separate the bodhichitta when we say that prayer.

(Chant the Bodhichitta prayer)

Also we can say 3 times when you have the time otherwise you can say it only 1 time. Is everything working well?

Now we will do the first very simple basic practice that is “breathing”. Because breathing we have to breathe all the time. And then also breathing is very important, because according to breathing balance, our emotions, and our physical and mental conditions will also be affected. Therefore, have a balanced and complete breathing will be very helpful. On many occasions it also prevents unnecessary mental disturbances which can develop into very big problems, because if you look in this world there are so many sufferings everywhere. And they are caused by mental imbalance. And if we are able to have a balanced mind then all of these problems, perhaps most of them can be avoided or actually transformed into good things instead of being bad things. So, that is, in general and personally also, have a tremendous effect.

Therefore, the very simple basic 21 breathing practice. We are sitting properly in a meditation posture, comfortably of course, and then we should have a mattress to sit on and also a cushion, a meditation cushion that will help us to be more comfortable. Now we do 21 sets of breathings. We breathe from the nose and the mouth together. That is according to Mahamudra “Ocean of Certainty”. And many times also one breathes only from the nose, so if you have problems breathing from the nose and mouth together then it is okay to breathe only from the nose. Because some people find it difficult, I don’t understand why; but it is difficult for some people, which we are not practicing Mahamudra “Ocean of Certainty”, then it is okay to breathe from the nose only if you prefer that. And we have 4 steps for the breathing:- 1st out and then 2nd is pause out, and then 3rd in and the 4th pause in. These are the 4 steps of the breathing. We do this smoothly as possible, slow as possible, complete as possible. And we don’t make it difficult for ourselves by trying to breathe too slow and by trying to pause too long etc. which if we find difficult then we make it as comfortable as possible. Otherwise long as possible, each step long as possible, breathe out slowly and completely and then gently pausing out; and then breathe in slowly, completely, smoothly and pause in. That is 1 set, and we will do this 21 times. I hope you understand; now we begin.

(Do 21 sets breathing)

Now we should have done 21 sets of breathings, our body, our mind all become calm. And as a result of that, we feel more clearly. First we feel the water element in our body especially around our nose and our mouths: - the wetness, the water element.

(Meditate)

And then the earth element, our body as we breathe in and breathe out, body itself is in one place and it is stable, it is solid, it is grounded: - the gravity element, the earth element.

(Meditate)

As we are practicing the breathing then we feel the warmth especially around our nose and our mouth as we breathe especially out it's warm: - that is the fire element. Also inside our body is warm.

(Meditate)

As we practice breathing, the breathing itself is wind, and also all kind of energies all around our body inside, outside, moving. And this is wind element. These 4 elements we don't create, but as a result of basic breathing "shinay" practice when our mind is calm, then we are able to feel it. We don't have to create it; we shouldn't create it, it is already there. Maintain our focus on each one of them gently. Not as if some kind of magic, but just natural.

(Meditate)

The 5th element is space. Now who is breathing? Who is feeling all of these elements? It is our mind. Mind is not like any one of the 4 elements. It does not have any solid, limited characteristic or material; it is limitless, it is just like space. It is not there like something, but very much there, more than there beyond any description, any limitation. The space is a lead towards it, a gateway towards it. But then through this lead, through this gate we

experience the mind which is essence of everything; but it is not limited to any one characteristic. I say experience, because we are now practitioners. The practitioners have experiences. Experience comes and goes. The ultimate goal of the practitioner is not to have experience, but reach beyond experience which is described by words: realization or becoming. But we presently experience, and through constant practice then we step beyond experience, and have some basic realization which will gradually transform and become deeper and deeper until Buddhahood of course.

(Meditate as long as time allows)

Now let go of all of our efforts of focusing on breathing all the 5 elements.

(Rest)

We dedicate the merit of this practice for the benefit of all sentient beings.

(Chant the dedication prayer)

Let's sit quiet for a little while.

(Rest)

Now we have completed a very short practice which is breathing practice as well as 5 elements practice which lead to some experience of our mind. Now if you have some questions you are welcome to start.

Questions and Answer

- 1) Can you give some instructions on how to meditate on loving kindness and compassion and also how to extend those states in meditation to daily life?

Actually at the beginning of our practice we have done refuge and bodhichitta. That bodhichitta is the essence of loving kindness and compassion. After that we have done 4 limitless thought prayers. The first is loving kindness, the second is compassion, the third is joy, fourth is impartiality. So you recite them very clearly by knowing the meaning of those words and then try to implement them in your everyday life, in a gentle, and genuine and sincere, practical way. Why I say that is because sometimes we like to pretend things. We like to pretend that we are absolutely beyond any limitations right now which is a little bit self distorting because we have lots of limitations. And therefore we face those limitations at the same time we should not lose our sincere or limitless thought and sincere bodhichitta towards all sentient beings. Of course, sometimes, ourselves as well.

- 2) You mention about relaxing before beginning the meditation. Is it also a good idea to read some Buddhist literature?

Not necessarily right before the meditation. You can read Buddhist literature whenever you have time, but before the meditation just sit quiet and relax. That is more effective. Because literature is of course if you have received the Buddhist literature lineage and it will have lots of blessings. Otherwise it is just literature, interesting literature, literature with truth but it stirs up your mind because it makes you think and makes you, it is philosophy and it is maybe a story, maybe a biography, maybe meditation instruction of another meditation. It can be all kinds of things. So that way it is not very helpful right before the meditation for the sake of the meditation. But of course other times it is very beneficial to read Buddhist literature whether you have the lineage or not. If you have the lineage then the reading itself is practice.

- 3) In Silicon Valley everyone is really busy and aggressive. And some friends of mine are not Buddhist, but they all ask me, is there any very short effective meditation. I say I don't know, I wish I know if there is one. Do you have any advice for non-Buddhists to begin with?

I can first make a joke about it. Ask them to adopt a fully grown tiger at their home. Then it will be very good meditation for them. They have to be mindful all the time.

Do some practice like what we have done which is very short. I'm sure they definitely have that much time.

- 4) I'm not too clear about how to meditate with the 5 elements. Do you mind explaining a little bit more again?

It's very simple because you know, we are I don't know how much percentage, 90% or something water so we feel some of it in practice so through the breathing like around our nose and our mouth we feel water. And then the earth and our body is solid. We are not levitating, so that is the earth. And fire it is warm. If its not warm then it is bad news. Our body is not warm then it is bad. And also when we breathe we can feel around our nose and mouth we can also feel the warmth. And then air of course breathing itself is air. And also our body is full of energy. As soon as we close our eyes for example we feel like we are floating many times. And all of these are the wind, air element in our body. And the air element is very powerful because the earth is so big and it has such a huge atmosphere and gravity field too, our little heart, fist sized heart is able to pump blood to our brains unless we are standing on our heads. It is more powerful than the whole earth. So our wind energy is very, very powerful. And then space of course. Because of space we can exist. Because of the space the earth can exist, because of the space the whole galaxy and universe can exist. Otherwise you know if the space does not have special quality, miraculous quality, then it will be empty space where nothing can happen or it will be full space where it is completely full. So space is allowing everything to exist and dissolve. So it is miraculous. And then this is very close to the quality of our mind.

- 5) Could you say something about living in this world and the difference between real and unreal, and I guess that means maybe absolute vs. relative?

Absolutely nothing is happening, relatively everything is happening. Therefore I being a pragmatic person I would think that 99% of people on this earth are absolutely living in relative. Therefore absolute is something that we should cherish and uphold, but relative is what we should feel it.

And relative truth is what we should uphold and cherish. Relative also have truth and relative also have false. Falsehood of the relative truth we should not indulge and the truth of the relative truth we should uphold and cherish. For example, stealing is the false of relative truth and giving is the truth of the relative truth. And being kind is the truth of the relative truth and being cruel is the false of the relative truth. So therefore we deal with the relative truth for the time being. And ultimate nothing is happening therefore we should uphold it and cherish it and believe that of our heart, as foundation of our practice. Goal of our entire Dharma practice is ultimate truth. Everything is unreal but it is real in the relative sense. And when we are dreaming whatever we are dreaming is real. And when we wake up and we find out that's not real. So only we can realize the illusion of the relative truth when we have some realization. Until that we should not really get confused about ultimate truth and relative truth in a relative way, in the relative atmosphere.

6) Are there two types of meditation – meditation on loving kindness and compassion and meditation on emptiness?

Not necessarily true. There is countless meditation because there is countless mental activity. And then every meditation has to have loving kindness and compassion as the foundation. Otherwise meditation on emptiness does not make any sense. So emptiness or anything else does not make any sense. Emptiness is one thing, clarity is another thing, all kinds of terminologies we can use, but the bodhichitta is the foundation. Loving kindness and compassion is some aspect of bodhichitta. You can have lots of loving kindness and compassion and have no bodhichitta. This also happens all the time.

All the best for all of you and I hope that today's teaching and our communication is beneficial for you. That is the only reason for this. So I sincerely pray to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattva for their blessings so that it's beneficial to all of you. Thank you, all the best