

Dharma Talk

Teacher: Samu Sunim

Date: January 23, 2011

Location: Toronto

Event: Sunday Meditation Service

Transcriber: Zack, Toronto

Date of Transcription: June 25, 2024

Opens with three strikes and chanting

Good morning.

Please sit comfortably.

I'm just recovering from my cold so my voice isn't clear, so [unclear].

[poem in Korean]

Speech silenced, thoughts destroyed. Turmoil of consciousness is the great samadhi of Naga.

Here, Naga means, in the Buddhist context, dragon or dragon king. It's a kind of another epitaph of Buddha. Actually it's a synonym for Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who have gone beyond their concepts, (which) means beyond their delusions. So the turmoil of consciousness is the great samadhi of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

Now, speech silenced, thoughts destroyed, that's referring to Zen meditation. Thoughts destroyed, it's, you don't, you know, while sitting in meditation, and meditation is concentration, it's samadhi, it's the power of samadhi using hwadu, you don't strive to destroy your thoughts. That would, if you do that your thoughts would multiply. So basically it refers to your concentration. You strive to concentrate instead of striving to destroy your thoughts. Because you can never destroy your thoughts unless you drop dead.

So it's, and of course in, when it comes to meditation and concentration, thoughts, whatever it is, in Buddhism there's word called vikalpa. It's, actually this is wide range. It's any kind of thoughts, it's simply unimportant. Not relevant. You just learn to concentrate your mind using hwadu. And it's, also another favourite reference to zazen or Zen concentration, is sitting in meditation, in Zen meditation, you cut off, zazen cuts off past and present. So it's, in other words, you leap through and go beyond time and space. That's, Zen teachers would love to refer to that. And in order to do that, kind of, the preparation is, it's more like surrendering everything.

Sometimes, I used to like to use the word dismantling ego, including spiritual ego. You may think, oh well it's, well the **obstacles** are gone then you can, all of a sudden you come up with a spiritual ego, you know. And, so it's dismantling of ego. And in the **Diamond Sutra** it says, sanskrit word is laksana or usually translated into English as forms or marks or signs. Any sign, any form, any mark, is simply not relevant here.

But it's, this kind of high talk is actually monastic consumption for monks who are supposed to have renounced the worldly stuff. But to lay people it's more like, use more words that would mean more **value** to you is true and sincere heart. So it doesn't matter who is the guy sitting in meditation. He could be a good person, Samaritan, or crackpot, or outlaws, or weirdos, or sinners, it does not really matter. But the person has got to be a true person. If you are being true and truthful means it's ethical awakening. So you have to be true to yourself, and true to your neighbours, true to your family members, true to the world. So it's got to be true person.

And then the second quality is sincere. Not phony or, you know, it means genuine, you have to be genuine. True and genuine, sincere person, has to be the one sitting in meditation. Then the meditation becomes a true meditation. So, you know, you come here motivated, hopefully motivated, for sitting. In group sitting. Because you don't sit alone in your apartment. So then you develop collective healing energies for our world, for our community. That's why we are here, that's what we need. Helping each other and helping, in turn, helping the community and our society.

Now, sometimes when in retreat I use, I like the word, excuse me, awakened heart. You have to **[unclear]** with awakened heart, called Bodhicitta. And then comes, the next task is constant practice.

In the last Yongmaeng Jeongjin in Mexico I used the word, you know, someone, it's easy to lose hope, you know, people can get in despair. So okay, it's more obstacles. You see, what happens is even though you come for retreat determined but, you know, we accept all kinds of people, you know. Sometimes you can spend, sitting for the retreat, spend your whole time going over your laundry list.

Well it is, in a sense, understandable. You know, I sympathize. You know, there has to be enlightenment and salvation for inferior people, you know, medium quality people, and superior people. But it's, humility is important. In order to be true person, you have to be humble, you know. Arrogance is the worst. So arrogance and humility, whatever, is the subject of dismantling the ego. So okay, well, we do laundry, that's okay.

Also, the other thing is what we call purification, which I sometimes call free therapy, you know. That's also going on too. But it's, here the mantra is constant practice. The power of constant

practice. So more obstacles, more practice. That's the only answer, there's no alternative. Well, you can always go to church or, you know, other places, but here there is no other alternative. You've got to help yourself. If you fail to help yourself of course you have to seek other help.

So the power of constant practice is, if you get distracted, you know, of course distraction comes in many forms. If you get distracted forty-five hundred times, you know, forty-five thousand times, then forty-five thousand, what do you call it? Forty-five thousand and one times, then you're back into practice. So it's just the power of constant practice. So like, you know, sunlight breaking through the clouds over and over again in order to shine. That's the power of constant practice, always doing just this. You know, if you sit together it's collective healing energy. Going around, helping each other, like Dharma rain.

Once, you know, doing the interview, of course, doing the interview I have to deal with all kinds of questions. But one time someone said I'm just so angry and upset. You know, just cannot concentrate. You know, it's like, usually, you know, if you do a list it's something about your ex or something like that (laughter). Just whatever is still burning, you know. And then it's, so I said well, then you can do angry concentration (laughter). So she said, how? So I actually showed her how you can do angry concentration. It's powerful, you use your negative emotions, negative feelings. That's also power too. It can be transforming agent, you see.

So it's, in the olden times, you know if you go to Korean countryside, I mean the, these temples and monasteries, they are located not in the great towns and cities (but) back in the mountains. Of course, Buddhism was persecuted. They were, the monks, they were not allowed even to gain entry into the city. You know, I mean, it's members of ruling class, they were also, it's walled town. You know, they erect walls so that, you know, for security from the invasion, in case there's invasion. So inside the walled town and cities, you know, the members of ruling regime, they would live, and then the outcasts, they would live outside the wall. In the fields and up in the mountains.

So that's where Buddhism has come in contact with common commoners, you know. Peasants. So this peasant couple, you know, husband and wife, they would, you know, after the early morning breakfast they, you know, pack lunch and go out into the fields and spend all day, back-breaking work, you know, tilling the land, harvesting, and planting. And sometimes, very often the, you know, the babies and children, they were left alone to take care of themselves. So there were monks going around, you know, providing, you know, daycare centres, you know. They would play with the kids.

And then the, when they come home, you know, at sundown, then they fix dinner. And after dinner, they have to, you know, there are these common wells in each village. So have to go and fetch water for the breakfast, you know, the following morning, you know. So it's quite late. So they do that for their drinking water.

And, so it's, there's a lot of stories here. Water is, of course, you know, it's life sustaining and life supporting. And sometimes Zen practice is called the Watercourse Way. That's called because running stream or river. But here it's well. So they go and fetch water from the well, so the water from deep down the well. And so the monks would compose a song. Okay, well, make sure when you carry water, your water jug, you carry the moon too. Then you [overhead?] this moon, and moon shines where the water is. So make sure you carry your mind-moon along with your water.

And so, during the retreat I mentioned this, in Mexico. You know, okay well, of course, going over your laundry, because whatever has to be disturbed has to be disturbed. Because otherwise you cannot concentrate, that's very true, you know. It has to be all worked out, you see. It's still waiting to be resolved. If you thought that has been gone but it's still there, waiting in your basement, you see.

And so, and, so better make sure, so that's like, you know, drawing water and carrying it home, but make sure you also take the moon, mind-moon. That's what we call Wisdom Mind or Wisdom Heart. That's very, very important part. All of a sudden, suddenly you realize what it is all about.

Three strikes and chanting to close

Teacher: Samu Sunim

Date: June 26, 2011

Location: Toronto

Event: unknown

Transcriber: Monyeom Kym Anderson, Ann Arbor

Date of Transcription: May 27, 2013

(Korean Chanting)

Good morning.

(Korean)

In the still of the night, the valley stream sounds close by.

In the winter garden, the moonlight is deeper still.

In the still of the night, the stream sounds close by.

In the winter garden, the moonlight is deeper still.

It is said that the blind can hear things, the deaf can see things. When the dust over your body-mind settles in the still of the night, the stream sounds close by. And in the winter garden, the moonlight is deeper still. So in the quiet, in silence, in emptiness for peace of mind, you can see yourself, you can hear yourself better. So this meditation is an inner journey. There is a saying, "If you wish to know the path on the mountain, you should be the one who comes and goes on it." So, in your inner journey, in your meditation practice, if you have your wisdom eye open, you can see yourself better. How would you get distracted? How is it that you go astray? How you can refocus and concentrate when you go wrong, like in discipline?

So, there is this story. The master of this large, public monastery passed away without naming his Dharma heir. So, first, the community of a couple of hundred monks, they were thrown into confusion. Well, first, they were vigil, going through the funeral service and mourning period. Then, the whole community was thrown into confusion, wondering who would be the leader, their next leader of the community? So the senior disciples, they got together. So, and then, finally, they were able to come up with three monks to recommend to the community, to pick one, one of them. So, still, they were unable to decide on one, because one of them was ... The least popular one was the one monk who had been working in the kitchen as a cook for 30 years. So the consensus was, how could one, who spend just 30 years as cook in the kitchen, could lead the large community, let alone teach it? He said, "You never know." So anyway they were put to test. So the test, if they passed the test, each of them were given different tests, actually. And so the test that was given to this kitchen cook, who was in charge of culinary affairs of the monastery. That's like, in the remote monasteries, the kitchen was like a social service centre. It was in charge of feeding the community well, in a healthy way. Because there were very few ingredients. So that's quite a task. With few ingredients we have to provide healthy and tasty meals. Not only to the elderly monks, but to young, new monks as well. Mind you, cooking rice is, ... there is 36 different ways of cooking rice. So you have to be well versed, according to different seasons, you have to provide different ingredients. And, of course, for the supply of winter food you have to ... some vegetables, some greens have to dry in the sun and the others have to be parboiled or dried in the shade. It's quite a task, you see. So, anyway, the task given to this chef monk was, one practice you notice was, one of the virtues he displayed was he was known as a practicing monk, not just working in the kitchen. But his practice was peculiar since he was not formally admitted to the training hall, meditation hall. One practice he did, ... well he was busy all day long, you know, well there was several other server cooks under his command. So, in the evenings he would disappear, and then he would show up in the pre-dawn hours and was getting ready for the breakfast. Monks have a breakfast. They wake up at 3 o'clock in pre-dawn hours, you see, because when the sun rises, the first rays of the sun hit the highest spot in the mountain tops. So, they were curious, and then they sent out some monks to find out what he was doing overnight. And so the monks, they hide themselves in the forest, you know. They found where he goes. But what they found out...

(Admonishing a listener: "Excuse me. Sit up please? You are still a young man, right? You have to learn to be respectful. To hold yourself high.")

He would carry a basin full of water, this mountain path. So, the path is not even at all, you see. There were rocks. And so he would carry that, without spilling. So, of course, he has gone back and forth many times, so he knows the path very well. Still, it's quite a task in the dark. Sometimes, of course, there's moonlight. So that was his meditation practice, concentration. So, he goes to the, where the kind of graveyard, they called it, when monk dies his ashes were buried in a stupa, a kind of little stupa. So that's a graveyard for monks. So he would go over there and take about a couple of hours and then back, carrying this brimful of water, not spilling. So that was kind of a curious practice he was doing for meditation, to keep his concentration. And then, so the test was they placed several monks along the path, and then they picked moonless night. So, you make sound, you see, like animal sound or tiger sound or awful sound to scare him. So they did that. But, you know, so he carried the water, brimful full of water, big basin, both hands. And then, so he carried that to the end where the graveyard was located. And he say, "Wow, that's scaring me." And then he carried it back home. So the community met and the story was told and they were impressed, and then finally, he was appointed to the master of the community.

And the thing is here, of course, being able to carry the big basin with both hands, brimful of water, and back and forth, you know, for hours, is quite an achievement. But, of course, he has been doing it quite a number of years. But that, the thing is, "Oh, I was scared." That's human. So he was aware of the danger, not ignoring it. Not ignoring the water, too. So samsara is nibbana, nibbana is samsara. So, monks think he is ok, but he should also understand the community, how people can get scared.

So here too, when you really go into your inner journey, it requires a little discipline, to get to know you. Who is this guy running my mind? How he reacts. How he gets or she gets easily distracted. Looking this way and that way. But the inner journey is all here. Enlightenment is inherent. Peace is inherent. Danger's inherent. It's all here. No need to look outside. Or outside your body-mind. It's in the still of the night, the stream sounds close by. Or the sound of birds sounds close by. And in the winter garden, the moonlight is deeper still. So you go on a inner journey. Getting to know you. Understanding you. With your unknowing minds. It's called unknowing mind and constant practice. Of course, distractions are many. And this monk, too, there are a lot of distractions. Fears and scares. He went through that in his journey. But he stayed the course. That's called constant practice with your meditation light. Cultivating great awareness. You need that in your everyday life. Wisdom eye. With helping hand. For your family. For the society. For your college, co-workers.

(Korean chanting.)

Dharma Talk

Teacher: Samu Sunim

Date: September 11, 2011

Location: Toronto

Event: Sunday Meditation Service

Transcriber: Zack, Toronto

Date of Transcription: April 04, 2024

Opens with three strikes and chanting

Good Morning.

[Poem in Korean]

When your seeking mind ... when your seeking mind comes to rest, then there is nothing in particular.

[reciting in Korean]

The withered tree ... the withered tree flowers in spring, beyond time.

When your seeking mind comes to rest, there is nothing in particular. You come across this kind of Buddhist message many times in Buddhist teachings and scriptures. The same message could come in many different forms, diverse forms. But the message, the pointing out, is always the same. We have also down here, when you take a step, watch. And your feet, watch when you take a step. Your ordinary, everyday mind is the way of Buddha. So apart from your ordinary, everyday life there is nothing special. There is no other way of Buddha.

So that means whatever you seek, in other words, your liberation, your salvation, your emancipation or enlightenment, it's close-by. Right where you are, in your ordinary, everyday life. The Zen Buddhists even say, "Nothing comes from outside your door, outside your gate. It's your treasure." So don't look for Buddha or Dharma or Sangha on the outside, further away. When you are true, when you become true to yourself, you become familiar with the way of Buddha. It's the same message. That's why we meditate instead of praying to somebody.

Today, our neighbour, USA, south of the border, they are celebrating the 10th anniversary of 9/11. And actually, many countries. Celebration may not be the right word, depending upon how you look at the 9/11 situation, but they remember. They remember the 9/11. And many died. So it's, well, in this regard our meditation is a silent prayer for peace of world and happiness of all beings. Those who perished and those who have survived. That's why we say you meditate with a helping hand. When you meditate, you try to help yourself. But you meditate with a helping hand for our community, for our country, and for the world.

Now the second **kara** or verse, “The withered tree.” The withered tree is a reference to a meditator. Traditionally, it was a reference to Zen monks who spent long retreats or three months long retreat in summer and winter. Particularly in winter. Then old attachments are gone. So whatever you are holding onto, your relationship or job security or bank account or your couch or [laughter] **[unclear]**, are gone, all gone. And **[unclear]** like with a tree, having shed all the leaves and even some branches to prepare itself to go through hard winter to survive with the minimum. So, Zen monks, it’s like that. So it’s called “Withered **Tree**.” The meditation hall is called “**The Hall for the Withered Tree**.” Almost, on the outside, it looks lifeless, so the monks become almost invisible. They are there, they are not there. But when the spring comes, the withered tree flowers, almost like a miracle. On the barren branches, flowers blossom.

But this spring is called “Beyond **Time**.” So this is a timeless experience. So awakening or enlightenment, opening your Wisdom Eye. This timeless experience. Awakening or enlightenment experience is in a split-second, your opening Wisdom Eye is experienced in a second. But that instant, that second, is a timeless experience. Infinite experience. Sometimes it’s called a sudden awakening. It happens suddenly, like flowers blossoming on a barren tree. That’s why it’s called spring beyond time. But that means only when you become completely free from your seeking mind.

We have a ... Our temples have a Dharma Guardian program. I know in Toronto we have ... how many Dharma Guardians right now? Six people are doing Dharma Guardian. Some of you know we have been running Maitreya Buddhist Seminary to train people to become qualified Buddhist teachers, either as a priest or Dharma teacher. But then, it’s not for everybody. So people who don’t like to become, you know, an ordained Minister or ordained Priest due to their own circumstances because they have to raise family and **seek career**, but still, they are serious practitioners and they like to seek some meaningful participation or, actually, meaningful path of the Buddhist movement which is still in its making in the West. So in order to respond to this request, demand, we came up with the Dharma Guardian program. Sometimes we call it “Applied Buddhism”. You know, they like to apply Buddhist teachings in their professional lives. So it’s a year and a half program. So about a couple months ago, it’s popular in Chicago, **Bopkong**, the priest running our temple in Chicago, she asked - they have these, they keep journals Monday through Friday. And, you know, I always give weekends off to Westerners [laughter]. So that, you know, it means something actually if, you know, two days a week, you know, they can be with family or different social obligations or just fool around [laughter] or goof off [laughter]. Like that. You know, there are different ways of goofing off. Many people go to parties to goof off, but then depending upon what kind of parties you’re going to, it may not always turn out to be such a good experience [laughter]. You know, something like, you get invited to a wedding. Then, you know like, you come across people you would rather [laugh] not be **[unclear]** [laughter].

Okay, anyways, and then they keep journals and there are about four or five entries. Like, so here, since these are not monastics, so it’s lay-people. And so, what do you call, informal

practice, that's "Applied Buddhism." The practice they can do, they can sustain, in the midst of activities. So that becomes important. Monastics, they have lots of time. They can goof off. But, you know, the lay people, they have a hell of a time [laughter], you know, coping with everyday, you know, stressful situations. So this practice is important. So sometimes they ask for practice while staying in line at the bank. People get depressed [laughter]. And also when you go to dentist, when you sit in dentist's chair [laughter]. When they say, when you, "ahh" and "bite, bite" [laughter]. So someone asked me, "Can you give me a practice when I sit at dentist appointments?" And when you're out on the street, you know.

So it's very important to develop practice, because there are always moments here and there which you can use, you know, to stay awake. To become more energetic. To be alert, with a helping hand. So this, you say, the entries, "What made me happy for the day? What troubled me most? And how much time did I waste, like, you know, watching television and also worrying about certain things?" We waste a lot of time worrying about things. You know that. Almost a favourite pastime [laughter]. So keeping that in. And then the entry is a reflection. But then, too, to these things, I mean the senior Dharma students, they have a reflection, a self-reflection. But this time, I said, "selfless reflection" to distinguish from the other reflections Dharma students would be doing, Senior Dharma students. Here it's selfless. That's one thing and implies many [unclear]. Two things combined. Here selfless means, well, we all live a self-centred life, you know. And we are selfish, most of the time out of necessity. But when you undertake this kind of training, you have to be a little bit selfless. In other words, you have to sacrifice your selfishness to some extent, otherwise you cannot take this kind of program. So let's say selfless 20%. You have to be selfless 20%, so then you can keep 80% of [laughter]. So you say, "Oh, that's a great relief, so I can keep 80% of selfishness. Keep my old habits, that's good." But 20% selfless. Now this is the thing. But then 20% versus 80%, 20% selfless, this is important. It's important for your salvation, for your happiness, for your peace of mind, and for the world. So that's the trick. It's important. It could be more important than 80% of your selfish pursuits. So that's where you have to pay attention. 20% selfless. What you do in the everyday life with 20% of selflessness.

So think about that, even though you are not Dharma Guardian. Okay 20% of being selfless in my everyday life. And this is important. Has something to do with peace of mind. Peace and happy. And then, as you apply that to your relationship, to your workplace activity, that will give you a helping hand. You meditate, but with helping hand.

So here are three things you can remember. So the message, you know, it's, in Buddhism, it's said, "Everyone is Buddha." So you don't seek Buddha, you know, further away. Right where you are. So no matter how unhappy or miserable or hateful sometimes about yourself, about your old habits, but you say, "There must be something, maybe 5% Buddha." 5% Buddha is Buddha. So then you have to accept yourself. You have to accept your 5% Buddha. And that's important. So you have to accept the way you are. That's 5% Buddha. That's the message.

And then, there, whether you learn to go forward, move forward, with this 5% Buddha, take an important step in the right direction. So that's why Buddhists, you know it's very, you know like,

your old habits prevail, so you have to learn to empower yourself. Empower your 5% Buddha. So Buddhists, they come up with an empowerment practice. Because many people, you are more used to praying while sitting. So it's meditating to help yourself. To empower yourself. To become true to yourself. To become more familiar with the way of a Buddha or Bodhisattva.

Three strikes to close and chanting.

Dharma Talk

Teacher: Samu Sunim

Date: September 18, 2011

Location: Toronto

Event: Sunday Meditation Service

Transcriber: Zack, Toronto

Date of Transcription: April 05, 2024

Opens with three strikes and chanting

Good Morning.

Please **sit comfortably**.

[Poem in Korean]

There is no shame more shameful than having many desires.

There is no joy more joyous than non-seeking.

So this is a good one, you can take it home [laughter].

There is no shame more shameful than having many desires. You know, if you have many desires, your many desires will produce a lot of anxiety. We all know that. And few desires will bring you freedom, so that you could enjoy freedom from few desires or even no desire.

There's this fellow, Larry Rosenberg. He used to teach at Harvard University. Then he gave up his teaching and went to Asia to study Buddhism. So he visited Thailand, Japan, Korea, and even Tibet. So he studied under a variety of teachers. Then, when he came home, instead of relying on all these different texts and scriptures he studied from different teachers, he focused **on** one text, one Buddhist text which is called "Ānāpānasati." It's "Ānāpāna" - it's breathing in and breathing out, but you do that mindfully. So mindful breathing in and mindful breathing out. And then he

opened a center in Cambridge, where he used to teach. And he felt that these students, or graduate students, more than PhD they're aiming to acquire this breathing in mindfully and breathing out mindfully. And breathing into silence to cultivate awareness. Teaching - that's much more important than PhD. PhD is...

Now as you know, I spent more time in New York City. More precisely, Manhattan. And mainly due to the economic situations, President Obama has been trying very hard to create more jobs. Unemployment rate is so high, and many people simply give up looking for jobs. And so his administration has been lengthening the period of benefits, unemployment benefits. First I think it used to be six months, and then a year, and then, you know, now more than a year, and so on. And so much so, now these Republican presidential candidates – they have quite, so many [laughter] - and all of them, they are pouring buckets of criticism on Obama at that time. And then I think the, I think Rick Perry, the Texas governor, his, you know, latest [unclear] very popular. And I think he, I think it was him who used to say this country is a “food stamp country,” because many people rely on food stamps to feed the family. But also many more counting discount coupons. Collecting discount coupons. So the old good American Dream is gone and they invented a new word called “new normal”. In other words, counting discount coupons is the new normal. So if there is any recovery, economic recovery, apparently it's very slow, so there are many people that are trying to cope with this slow economic recovery. Or even there are, many people are, fearful that the economy would slide back into another recession.

So given this situation, many people they are trying too hard, hard, to make minimum with less. So it's like, to make more out of less in a variety of ways. So that's, I mentioned Larry Rosenberg, he's not the only one teaching, you know, as you all know Buddhist meditation begins with Ānāpānasati and breathing in and breathing out mindfully. And that's good enough. If you do that well then first you would enjoy good bowel movements [laughter]. You don't have to eat a lot and also you can lose weight [laughter]. And then you can think more clearly and see better. And wonderfully you gain awareness. So this is good enough. And that's also “new normal”. And the story goes on and on.

So it's, well as Larry Rosenberg I think, I met him a long time ago but he's still out teaching the same thing because this is what Americans need, you know. Awareness. Mindfulness. With more bright eyes. Really, with eyes to see things. Instead of ending up, you know, consumers. So everybody is trying to reduce their consumption. This worries the administration. The administration, the President, [has worked hard?] to spend because Capitalism is sustained by spending money. But it's kind of a stalemate - it's called stalemate. But of course he's now, for now, he's focusing on creating more jobs. And, even, he created incentives to those who hire people. So they give, I think, offer some amount, dollar amounts actually, if you hire persons. Even that, I mean, these, even corporate behaviour. But anyway those people, they are afraid to hire people because they are afraid that maybe the economy is sliding into another recession. So they are very hesitant.

And in this process there is something emerging, because peoples' behaviour, even corporate behaviour, is changing. So it would be not just United States. In Canada – well, our economy is doing much better, so they say – but we are all interrelated. And also, this Canadian economy is very much tied to US economy. So, used to say if US economy collapsed, we **cannot hold**. But luckily we are doing much better. But that aside, it's, I think something, we think something very good that come out of it, both environmentally and we have been depending so much on consumption, whether it's oil or energy and all these things. And something positive will come out of it because people are traveling less and people are looking around, "Well, just have to get away, you know, have to get along with what we have." Instead of **borrowing** money or using credit cards. And, I mean, this is good enough. And you don't have to go far **away**, go to Mexico - and actually Mexico **presently has world's biggest number of** tourism coming from North of the country - and just get along with what we have. And that awareness, you know, we really have enough. But just look within, look what we have. And just breathing in and breathing out. And breathing into silence to cultivate awareness.

And also when we were like mindless consumers, or even lifelong addict to therapy, and many people go to therapy. Or, you know, something else. So those times are gone. So people are, you know, **look at** inner resources, this is what Buddhists call empowering yourself. With awareness, with being content with what we have. So that goes with meditation and then you bring that kind of spirit to home and to community. That's empowering. And then, what was the word ... harnessing, you know. Harnessing what you have. Your ability and your skills, you know. To create, you know, happiness. And to create awareness. And even opening Wisdom Eye. That's where we are. So it's, that's I think, that's a really simple **idea** coming out of this gloomy world situation.

When I was young, when I first entered the monastery, they said, "When you are cold and hungry, that's the best time for attaining enlightenment." Because you cannot attain enlightenment with a full stomach. The other day, you know, we just started an introductory meditation course and at the end I invited a question. One question is, "Someone told me that I should not come to meditation after eating." So obviously if you come to meditation with a full stomach, you fall asleep. And you become numb. So it's like, empty stomach, or half-full stomach, that's better. So the **culture of** consumerism is gone. So that's when you are hungry, and cold, then you wake up. You have to do something to help yourself. So that's, so when you are - at first I didn't like that. Because everybody was cold, monastery was cold, and we are hungry all the time [laughter]. So it was like a mantra [laughter]. When you are hungry and cold, then you can practice better. That's not true! And I hated it! [laughter]. But now it's time that you rise up to the situation and learn. It's like, you know, it's **Bodhisattva's** appearance, it's a blessing in disguise. So seize up the opportunity, and rise.

Three strikes to close and chanting.

Dharma Talk

Teacher: Samu Sunim

Date: September 25, 2011

Location: Toronto

Event: Sunday Meditation Service

Transcriber: Zack, Toronto

Date of Transcription: April 06, 2024

Opens with three strikes and chanting

Good Morning.

[Poem in Korean]

When your ten thousand impulses have come to rest, there is a melody without your private tune.

Ten thousand impulses. Ten thousand means, it's figurative, it's numerous. So have you ever counted your impulses [laughter]? Maybe you have to try hard to count to ten thousand. Anyway, count 108 impulses. That's better. Maybe you can count that if you keep a journal.

So when your numerous impulses have finally come to rest, there is a melody, and this melody has no private tune. That means this melody is not tainted. Not tainted by your ego or self or person. So here, pure melody means vast and infinite, with no obstructions. So it means really perfect, like a saint. But do you really want or do you really need that kind of perfection or saintly holiness? No, that's not the Buddhist teaching.

Now hear this. "When there is no clouds, when there is no cloud for ten thousand miles, even the blue sky gets a **taste of the stink**." You get that? So that's more close to Buddhist teachings, Buddhist wisdom. So when we say Dharma, the Buddha Dharma, the way of Buddha without blame, it's not that kind of perfect, perfectionist, or perfectionism. Blue sky needs clouds. Painters should know that. There is this saying, there is this teaching, if you're an artist or painter. "In order to paint the moon, first you have to learn to paint clouds." Without learning to paint clouds, you cannot really paint moon. Okay now, also we say, "Even fish cannot stand swimming in the pure, clean water."

So here, you have hope. You live in the world of conflict. Nobody is perfect. So that means you are okay. Why? If you could not be okay, because, if you feel helpless or if you feel despairing or if you rely on **therapies** or if you fall victim to culture of consumerism, then things become hopeless.

Now first when we say, “Everyone is endowed with Buddha. All beings are Buddhas.” Or there’s the saying, “Everyone is grass-root or underdog.” That each of you, each and everyone, is uncommon. Uncommon underdog, uncommon grass-root. Does it make sense? So when you hear all beings are Buddhas, everyone is endowed with Buddha-nature, without exception, without discrimination, then you should be able to accept the way you are. But a lot of people, they have difficulty accepting the way they are. Because you feel badly about something. You feel getting stuck, and create obstacles and impediments. So here, the thing is, when you hear this, kind of, you take it as **[improvement?]** practice. Maybe it means 10% of your being is okay, it’s perfect. Or 5%. So it means, you know, I’m 5% Buddha. So there’s nothing wrong to start as 5% Buddha. You know, so that means I’m 5% perfect. That’s how you start out. But here, the wisdom teaching is this 5% or 10% of my being Buddha or my being perfect or my being blameless is important. And your 80% or 85% or 90% or 95% of being bad, you know. Old habits. It’s unimportant. That’s the key to enter the way of Buddha.

The thing is you keep dwelling on what is unimportant. Not only that, you even turn what is unimportant into what is important. That’s your disease. So you have to kick that habit. So, you know my 5% of being Buddha or being awake or being blameless, that’s good enough. This is important. So you turn that, cherish it and cultivate it, and you go from there. Move forward with that. That’s Buddhist practice.

There’s this word, “many-in-one.” So when you come to temple to practice meditation in a group, as a temple, together, with my fellow beings or fellow Buddhists or fellow **travellers**, Bodhisattvas. That’s many or multitude or fellowship. And I am one of them. So together we empower ourselves to become uncommon grass-root, uncommon underdog, for the cause. We have a cause. You don’t just come and sit, you know, with others. So meditation, or your Buddha-hood, it’s a movement. Buddhism is small. Buddhists **grow**. It’s new. And you are part of it. That’s also, this awareness or consciousness is important. You don’t come and sit, you know, daydreaming. You come to wake up, so that you can relate to the cause, to the movement. So then, not just many-and-one, not just me being one of the many. It’s many-in-one, one-in-many. So, am I making sense to you?

So that’s waking up. Meditation is all about this practice of waking up. Practice of waking up from being deluded. From being complacent. From being procrastinating. It’s **now** to wake up. It’s called Buddha Practice. If you set out on the journey of, as, Bodhisattva, it’s called “Wisdom Eye.” When you are told that each of you, there is, you know, each one is endowed with Buddha-hood, or Buddha-nature. Well that’s actually, one thing. You know, we are holding

foreign membership meeting, twice a year. We organize membership meetings in spring and in fall focusing on certain topics. So the topic of this, “What is missing in our everyday life?” And do you have feelings, you know, feelings are important. Everybody has feelings. We have a lot of negative emotions, negative feelings. But also, you know, we have good emotions, good feelings, good wishes, good explorations, which need to be cultivated. They just stay latent or even dormant, so we have to wake them up. To channel it. So do you have feelings about your Buddha-hood, Buddha-nature?

So it starts this coming Monday, right? Oh this one, okay. Following this service, actually. How many of you are members? Could you raise your hands? Here it means, kind of, we have practicing members, because also we have ten other members and supporting members or life members. If you are a member of any category, you can attend.

So sometimes, on your way home or when you step out, think about that. Remembering, reminding you, there’s something, I’ve got something important with my being. It comes with my being. It’s endowed with, means it comes with my being. So like a natural birthright. So you’ve got to do something with this thing that you have been endowed with. Activate it. From time to time, sometimes inadvertently you might feel the urge over that. I’ve got to help myself spiritually. That thinks, “I can do it and I’m capable of it.” So sometimes you feel the urge to do something. But if you have three meals a day, you must have some urge to do something good, right? Otherwise, we end up, you know, in the monastery it’s called “rice ball.” You just eat rice. Rice is usually mainstay food in the monastery.

Three strikes to close and chanting.