

Verse 2

Stopping (Shamatha) means to be still In order to recognize, to be in contact To nourish, to heal, To calm, to soothe and to refocus the mind

Guided Meditation - Week 2

Breathing in, I know I am breathing in.

Breathing out, I know I am breathing out. In – Out

Breathing in, I experience that my breath naturally is becoming deeper.

Breathing out, I experience that my breath naturally is becoming slower. Deep - Slow

Breathing in, I experience that my body and mind is calming.

Breathing out, I experience that my body and mind is easing. Calm – Ease

Breathing in, I feel alive and I smile.

Breathing out, I release all tension and pain in my body and mind. Smile – Release

Breathing in, I come back and dwell in the present moment.

Breathing out, I am able to touch the wonders of this moment. Present Moment – Wonderful Moment

Sutra Reading - Week 2

Discourse on the Better Way to Live Alone Discourse on Taking Refuge in Oneself

Reflections for Week 2

How do you manifest stopping in your daily life? What is the experience like for you? Do you notice any changes?

What does it mean to you to take refuge in oneself?

Gatha for Daily Practice - Week 2

Listen, listen This wonderful sound Brings me back To my true home

Sitting Meditation Exercise:

Counting the Breath- 1 to 10, 10 to 1



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Discourse on Knowing the Better Way To Live Alone

I heard these words of the Buddha one time when the Lord was staying at the monastery in the Jeta Grove, in the town of Savatthi. He called all the monks to him and instructed them,

"Bhikkhus!"

And the bhikkhus replied, "We are here."

The Blessed One taught, "I will teach you what is meant by 'knowing the better way to live alone.' I will begin with an outline of the teaching, and then I will give a detailed explanation. Bhikkhus, please listen carefully."

"Blessed One, we are listening."

The Buddha taught:

"Do not pursue the past.
Do not lose yourself in the future.
The past no longer is.
The future has not yet come.

Looking deeply at life as it is in the very here and now, the practitioner dwells in stability and freedom.

We must be diligent today. To wait till tomorrow is too late.

Death comes unexpectedly.

How can we bargain with it?

The sage calls a person who dwells in mindfulness

night and day

night and day

'the one who knows

the better way to live alone.'

"Bhikkhus, what do we mean by 'pursuing the past'? When someone considers the way her body was in the past, the way her feelings were in the past, the way her perceptions were in the past, the way her mental formations were in the past, the way her consciousness was in the past; when she considers these things and her mind is burdened by and attached to these things which belong to the past, then that person is pursuing the past. "Bhikkhus, what is meant by 'not pursuing the past'? When someone considers the way her body was in the past, the way her feelings were in the past, the way her perceptions were in the past, the way her mental formations were in the past, the way her consciousness was in the past; when she considers these things but her mind is neither enslaved by nor attached to these things which belong to the past, then that person is not pursuing the past. "Bhikkhus, what is meant by 'losing yourself in the future'? When someone considers the way his body will be in the future, the way his feelings will be in the future, the way his perceptions will be in the future, the way his mental formations will be in the future, the way his consciousness will be in the future; when he considers these things and his mind is burdened by and daydreaming about these things which belong to the future, then that person is losing himself in the future.

"Bhikkhus, what is meant by 'not losing yourself in the future'? When someone considers the way his body will be in the future, the way his feelings will be in the future, the way his perceptions will be in the future, the way his mental formations will be in the future, the way his consciousness will be in the future; when he considers these things but his mind is not burdened by or daydreaming about these things which belong to the future, then he is not losing himself in the future.

"Bhikkhus, what is meant by 'being swept away by the present'? When someone does not study or learn anything about the Awakened One, or the teachings of love and understanding, or the community that lives in harmony and awareness; when that person knows nothing about the noble teachers and their teachings, and does not practice these teachings, and thinks, 'This body is myself; I am this body. These feelings are myself; I am these feelings. This perception is myself; I am this perception. This mental formation is myself; I am this mental formation. This consciousness is myself; I am this consciousness,' then that person is being swept away by the present.

"Bhikkhus, what is meant by 'not being swept away by the present'?

When someone studies and learns about the Awakened One, the teachings of love and understanding, and the community that lives in harmony and awareness; when that person knows about noble teachers and their teachings, practices these teachings, and does not think, 'This body is myself; I am this body. These feelings are myself; I am these feelings. This perception is myself;

I am this perception. This mental formation is myself; I am this mental formation. This consciousness is myself; I am this consciousness,' then that person is not being swept away by the present.

"Bhikkhus, I have presented the outline and the detailed explanation of knowing the better way to live alone." Thus the Buddha taught, and the bhikkhus were delighted to put his teachings into practice.

Bhaddekaratta Sutta, Majjhima Nikaya 131

Discourse on Taking Refuge in Oneself

I heard these words of the Buddha one time when the Lord was staying in the Mango Grove in the cool shade of the mango trees along the bank of a river in the land of Magadha. The elders Shariputra and Maudgalyayana had recently passed away. It was the full-moon day of the Uposatha Ceremony and the precepts were recited.

The Buddha spread out his sitting mat and sat facing the community. After looking out at those gathered, he said, "As I look at our community, I see a large space left by the Venerables Shariputra and Maudgalyayana. In our Sangha, these venerables were the monks who were the most eloquent in giving Dharma talks, encouraging and instructing all the other monks, nuns, and laypeople.

"O monks, people seek two kinds of riches — material riches and the riches of the Dharma. In their search for material riches, they can go to worldly people. In their search for the riches of the Dharma, they could always go to the Venerables Shariputra and Maudgalyayana. The Tathagata is someone who is not searching for anything, whether it is material or the Dharma.

"O monks, do not be sad or anxious because Shariputra and Maudgalyayana have passed into nirvana. On large trees, filled with leaves, sumptuous fruits, and flowers, the largest branches always die or are broken first. On jeweled mountains, don't the highest peaks always erode before the smaller ones? In the Sangha of the Tathagata, the Venerables Shariputra and Maudgalyayana were the greatest students. So it is natural that these venerables would enter nirvana first. Do not give rise to feelings of sorrow or anguish.

"All phenomena that are born, exist, and are subject to the influence of other phenomena, in other words, all phenomena that are composite, must abide by the law of impermanence and eventually cease to exist. They cannot exist eternally, without someday being destroyed. Everything we cherish and hold dear today, we will have to let go of and be separated from in the future. In not too long a time, I will also pass away. Therefore, I urge you to practice being an island unto yourself, knowing how to take refuge in yourself, and not taking refuge in anyone or anything else.

"Practice taking refuge in the island of the Dharma. Know how to take refuge in the Dharma, and do not take refuge in any other island or person.

Meditate on the body in the body, nourishing Right Understanding and mindfulness to master and transform your cravings and anxieties. Observe the elements outside the body in the elements outside the body, nourishing Right Understanding and mindfulness to master and transform your cravings and anxieties. That is the way to take refuge in the island of self, to return to yourself in order to take refuge in the Dharma, and not to take refuge in any other island or thing."

When the bhikshus heard the Buddha offer this teaching, they were all very happy to put it into practice.

Samyukta Agama 639 Taisho Revised Tripitaka 99