

# 2004-05-26 Foundations of the Buddhist Spiritual Life: Letting Go (Week 5 Part 1)

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

exhale, people, concentration, relics, developing, body, relax, feeling, bit, mindfulness, bones, breathing, thinking, daily life, breath, mind, release, stability, helpful, soften

## SPEAKERS

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We can start again with questions if anyone has any questions from last week or anything that's been on your mind related to the class.

There's two easy and obvious interpretations of the silence. One is that it's so crystal clear everything I've said, Does leaves no room for questions. And the other is they're all totally confused when I said that. There's no possibility of question because you never know. Maybe the other interpretations of the silence

Last week we talked about the path of cultivation, the aspect of Buddhist practice that emphasizes developing ourselves cultivating ourselves. Yes.

Probably said that I probably don't say some other days I would say some different things. Yeah, one of things I said not always so

first of all,

So mindfulness and concentration are really central to the whole Buddhist endeavor. And cultivating and developing is something that Buddhists do. And it can be done, as you said, it's certainly meditation practice, which is kind of one of the primary places for it to be done in. And it's kind of like, meditation is kind of like being in a gym kind of workout, in a good way. And in daily life, it doesn't mind itself most people to kind of work out the same way. And so we go to the gym, go to meditate, because it kind of works out and develops the mind, or the heart, or whatever you call it. The and some people will go on retreats, you know, do longer retreats for the same purpose. The but it certainly can be

developed in daily life. And it's very important to try to develop in daily life. Mindfulness is pretty simple daily life, just noticing what's happening while it's happening. And it doesn't take a lot to realize how much of the time we're not in the present moment. We're not here. So much And even if we're kind of here, we're not really here. And kind of half here, we're here just enough to be able to drive down the street not to hit any other cars. But qualitatively, you know, the radio or talking about a cell phone or talking with someone or talking, you know, do something. But to really be here in a very full, complete way, and really know that you're here when you're here is something to be developed and strengthened. So some people practice that in daily life, though. It'll take all kinds of opportunities to just to wake up to pay attention to what they're doing while they're doing it. Some people will do it in certain areas of their life. Like only when they're dry, or only when they're cooking, or only when they're walking, where they park their car to the place of work and they really try to minute situation to be mindful. Some people do it and things like whenever the telephone rings, if they have rings a lot, they don't answer as quickly as they can, but they take a few minutes just to check in and see what's happening right now. What's going on. That's been waiting for. Some people like to develop it conversation when there's probably talk, it's very hard for the hardest places for many people to be mindful. It's also one of the most useful places to learn it. Because you can make big mistakes, if you're not mindful. And you learn a lot about yourself by paying attention to what motivates your speech, what you want to say. So there's many people here at IMC who, who was a very important part of their life to develop their mindfulness in their daily activities as much as anywhere else. And then there's the concentration is a little bit harder in daily life because some people have work that kind of is conducive for some activity that's really conducive to developing concentration. They're musician. They have a hobby or a program or something that requires a lot of concentration. If for people who are doing a lot of different things, and it's kind of all over the place, kind of it's hard to develop concentration or stability. It can be done. One of the ways to do it is when you do something, do one thing at a time. So really put yourself you can focus on that one thing when you're doing it. And doing that on a regular basis develops stability, concentration, and can be very useful.

In Buddhism, word for concentration and the word for calm are almost anonymous. Buddhists often see them as synonymous. So, instead of maybe thinking about developing concentration in daily life, we think about developing some sense of calm or ease or tranquility in the midst of what we do. So if we notice that we're always getting agitated in regard to our car, then maybe there's a different way of driving your car. And so we tried to find out a way to drive the car that keeps us calm and we drive or you know, in other other situations like that.

Bringing Yeah, it's a little bit too loud, maybe Yeah, territory. That's good. Yeah here too. I'm really glad you brought it up because we want to Yeah, it's still now as you're still here right now. Anything else? It's a better now than any better now. Can you do better? Is it natural enough? Much more natural? Yes.

I don't know so much about why for political reasons why it was given now. I think there's a lot of I don't know I don't be the story but Went from China to Hong Kong. I think a lot of lot of Buddhists in Hong Kong and so they, you know, they're trying to appease them or do something nice for them. The you know, seems like a lot of religions are have relics, they're important, or certain certain religions have them. And so like Catholicism has relics really important to Catholicism. And Buddhism also has relics. And they're said to be a certain kind of power. And you can you can debate or interpret what that power might be in relics with things like left behind, and they're kind of relic queries. They're created here in America by Bruce in America. Tibetan Buddhists are really into it. There's a relic query right here in Santa Cruz Mountains of great Tibetan teacher and

So videos are like in Sri Lanka, there was a very famous relic there that's kind of a national treasure which is the truth of the Buddha. And I never heard of the finger the Buddha but two different things you know that people say they have and then sort of highly revered misty seemed valuable people kind of inspires them and connects them to the tradition in all kinds of things that religious people do. The it's possible that if you took together all the different relics of the Buddha, all that bones that survived and put them together, more than skeleton of one person. Yeah, but since cremations often bones combined, it doesn't turn to its creation doesn't turn bones into fine powder, even the reduced commission. Now, the crematorium will grind the bones afterwards. So you can Give them back and in some crematoriums do it really coarsely and something you would find her and depending on the crematorium, you get it back, you know, ground different textures. And sometimes, you know, if you just burn the bodies, oftentimes bones leftover. So Other questions? Yes.

The benefits of concentration, there are a lot of benefits that come from concentration. What is that, when when, when the mind body are concentrated, it tends to be calm, and it tends to be a kind of a harmonized concentration is a harmonizing effect on the body in the mind. It can be very healing, when there's a lot of strong concentration tends to be a lot of rapture or joy or bliss that arises and for some He's somebody who is very healing to have those effects, the joy, the rapture, the bliss, the harmony, the sense of well being that comes in concentration is a wonderful antidote to people's lack of well being or fear that they have or trauma they're holding in their body. And so it can kind of recondition reteach us kind of how to be in a cellular level, because it's really a cellular, cellular kind of muscular or deep, deep kind of embedded thing that happens when you get really well concentrated. It's not just a mental thing. It's a whole embodied, change that happens. And that can be very healing for some people to do that. That's one reason for the purposes of mindfulness concentration can be very helpful because for one thing, it gives stability to the mindfulness so that it's like having a tripod, but it's having a taking a train, it's hard to say you're trying to take a picture and you're, you know, and, you know, it's you're kind of shaky or whatever, you can't quite get it straight. stable, but if you put the picture on the camera on a tripod, you can get a stable picture. So, getting minus, well concentrated, it's like getting a really good tripod or base for the observation and mindfulness is, so you can see much more clearly. And for some of the deepest kind of work that mindfulness can do the path in the process of liberation, you need to have a lot, a lot of inner stability and be able to really be able to see very deeply clear, penetrating way. If the mind is agitated and moving around, it's just simply not going

to go and create very deeply. So taking a comfortable and alert posture. Sometimes you need to focus more on the comfort. Sometimes you need to focus more on the alertness. not sacrificing one for the other. It can be helpful to let the tension travel up the spine to feel the spine awaken it or and live in it. And as you're feeling this fine to see if there you can be a little more alert, they're upright. Be careful how the weight of your body travels through the spine. So it seems kind of balanced, even spread on your vertebrae rather than being pulled forward or sideways or collapsing backwards. Even if you're sitting in a chair with a backrest, you might sit forward a little bit. Adjust your posture to sit a little straighter

The eyes gently closed.

You might take a moment to like your mouth dropped open, relax it, Cracow open and then gently kind of let your now your teeth together gently. your jaw is a little bit more released.

Often often helpful in the beginning of a meditation to take a few long slow, deep breaths, relaxing as you exhale

can be helpful to release your shoulders little bit, just teeny softening. As you exhale, relaxing your shoulder blades become a bit heavier moving down your back

As you exhale, soften your belly, release any holding that you can hear of your belly. Be at ease with how things are. No need to be for or against anything. And if you can soften and relax the belly good thing

breathing normally, letting your breath be interfered with your breathing.

taking a few moments to feel your body global experience of the body from the inside, being aware of how the body experiences itself

being aware of the tensions or agitation that might be in the body. Some people brace themselves against life. Brace himself the whole body is braced very subtly

healing attentions, agitation and then as you exhale for the next few exhalations, see if you can soften. Relax, let go of the tension.

Let's go into your body, you settle into it so you feel perhaps more at home in your body. As you exhale, release

And then check in and see how you're feeling now. What's your mood or your emotional state? Calm agitated. Happy. Content irritated you know how you're feeling. Again from the inside kind of from the body's experiencing your how you feel from the body's point of view the body experiences your noon

And as you exhale, see if you can let go, release. Soften around what you're feeling or you are not there be a release.

letting yourself be at ease with how you feel

And then become aware of your mind is your thinking mind being very forgiving or allowing the thinking mind is to tie the pressure to loose, relax. There's a lot of energy for thinking or are you tired

thinking mind can sometimes feel like a muscle. Sometimes it's so active that if you pay attention to if you discover the thinking mind is actually tired, weary all the effort.

As you exhale, can you release your thinking mind. Relax, breathing in, and then as you breathe out, soften, relax.

Feeling the breath within the body, the breathing of the body expanding and contracting of the torso, the rising and falling of the chest to the belly, the sensations of the air going in now through the nostrils. Whatever way you experienced your breathing becomes sensitive to the breathing the greater sensitivity, a lightness in the experience of the body breathing

Each time you exhale relax, let go of your thinking. Let go of the past thinking about the past. Let go of the future, thinking about the future. release yourself from the grip of thinking fishes for a moment just for a moment at the end of the hour Breath. You're thinking disappear for that moment. As the exhalation comes through, it's

Breathing in and breathing out. Feeling the vibration, the vitality, the sense of presence in your body. The energetic Body

a sense of presence in your body that has no sharp boundaries.

As you exhale, Let go. Let yourself let go or dissolve beyond the fixed boundaries of the body. Relax, let go into the spaciousness around the bye

As you exhale letting go letting go of any need to think of anything or to understand anything and then go have any need to be anybody to accomplish anything just as you exhale that go into simplicity of being just here. Nowhere to go nothing to get know when to be

Letting go with the breath and then go is if the next step breath, your very last breath letting go of everything coming to the end Each out breath like little very last. You can let go of everything can like your concerns, your worries, regrets. Great job, your activities.

last breath. last breath of your life just go into the simplicity not being anything, not holding on to anything.

If you feel any sense of peace, you can release let go of everything but the peace everything but a stillness within

And then feeling your body against the chair or the cushion for

yourself here in this room

taking again, few long slow deep breaths, feeling your body connecting to your body from the inside. And when I ring the bell and you're ready, you can open your eyes and the city