

Samādhi (24) The Inner Pleasure of Samādhi

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Hello, and welcome to this 24th talk on *samādhi*. This week, the topic is the pleasure of *samādhi*.

Pleasure can take different forms at different times. Sometimes it can feel like pure pleasure, or physical pleasure. It can also morph into the pleasure of delight, gladness, or joy. It can feel like the pleasure of happiness, tranquility, or equanimity. It can be the pleasure of release and freedom. It can be the pleasure of refuge and knowing that we have a home that brings a degree of safety and care. It can add orientation and meaning to this life of ours, which are aspects of refuge.

Pleasure is an important part of dharma practice. Maybe we can call it Dharma pleasure. In the teachings on mindfulness, the Buddha makes a distinction between two kinds of pleasure. There's a pleasure that comes from what we might call sensual pleasure. We understand this to be when an external source is stimulating our senses. If I eat tasty food, it would be called sensual pleasure because the taste comes from the food. Feeling the pleasure of standing in the warm sun on a cold day would be called sensual pleasure. The pleasure comes from outside and touches the nerve endings. It does something nice.

If we are thinking about things, there is a way in which the thinking mind represents something outside of ourselves. I can have a fantasy about something. The fantasy can bring a lot of pleasure. The thinking is kind of on the outside. Certain kinds of thinking are on the surface, and they stimulate the surface pleasures of the mind. Many of us do not think the mind is part of the external world, but certain kinds of surface thoughts are part of the external world and provide an external stimulus to things.

There is nothing wrong with any of this, but there is an alternative. There is a pleasure which is not of the senses. It is not of these sense doors that take in the external world. There is the pleasure that arises in a more diffuse way. It swells up, emerges, and arises inside for no particular external reason. This comes from meditation. It is a radically different pleasure because it doesn't depend on the world. It doesn't depend on getting the world in shape or getting everything in the world just right. It is not dependent on feeling content and happy with the world or our external relationships.

It arises from coming into harmony with ourselves and from a deep inner sensing of the beingness of our life as that beingness comes into harmony. That beingness can arise in meditation and lead to a kind of tenderness, wholeness, or orientation that feels deeply meaningful. There are pleasures in meditation that certainly well up. I am sure some nerve endings are stimulated. They are not stimulated from the outside in, but rather from the inside in. There is a deep welling and inspiration.

There are also unpleasant sensations that are of the senses that come from the outer world or thinking about the outer world. There are unpleasant sensations that can well up that are not exactly of the sense world. They come when we feel something is profoundly out of alignment in this world. There is a feeling of it in the saying, "Something is not right."

In the language of the Buddha, in meditation, we are beginning to give birth to a deep wellspring of pleasure, or well-being. This sense of well-being is closely connected to many things. It is connected to faith, inspiration, or confidence. This is represented with a big yes, I am here. This is good. I know this world. I'm inspired by it. I have refuge in it. Then we are more inclined to be present here for our experience.

This is instead of continuing to be present in the thinking mind, thinking about the external world. This thinking mind has this external relationship with everything, or a disconnect from things. Perhaps, we are thinking about something that we did yesterday. Perhaps we did something wrong, and we feel remorseful. If we spend too much time imagining that event, we are removed from something deeper here. The idea is to come into this deeper place.

In meditation, there can be a sense of well-being. There can be a sense of being at home, and goodness here. There can be inspiration about what it is to meditate. There can be a wonderful sense of yes to being present for the effort and energy of faith. Look for how to apply oneself in meditation, so the very application is enjoyable. Perhaps it's a very light touch. Maybe it is with inspiration, and it is just a delight. Sometimes we can put a lot of energy into meditation, and it feels almost like play. It feels delightful to do it.

Sometimes we need to make very little effort to get the best results from meditation. Find out how we can enjoy being focused. How can we enjoy being present with attention?

Consider mindfulness. Mindfulness brings joy because it brings safety. With mindfulness, we see everything clearly. We learn not to pick up and continue our involvement with things that are harmful to us. Mindfulness creates the open space in which things can just be, evolve, and change. We can learn to delightfully trust that if we are present, things move towards health – maybe not directly, but over time.

Then there is *samādhi*. We begin to feel absorbed and connected here. It can be like the joy of a cat that is being petted and stroked. We can center ourselves here and begin to feel more whole, settled, and calm. There's a strong correlation between *samādhi* and calmness. As we get calmer in meditation, we start to appreciate that pleasure.

There is the more subtle pleasure of wisdom. We are happy that we can see clearly enough to find the path and to find our way.

Meditation is onward leading. *Samādhi* is an onward leading path. We are not expecting something or trying to make something happen, but it is here where we can see, feel, and sense, "Here's where the path opens up. Here is the top of the slide that will take us deep into that wonderful dharma slide." Here is the path in the forest. It may not be so easy to see at first, and we feel lost. Then we start seeing traces of the path. Ah! There is delight in knowing the path after being lost in the wilderness. There is a great joy, lightness, and pleasure in finally having seen the path.

The function of wisdom is to help us find that path. The path is between getting caught in attachments, expectations, aversions, or desires, and what is wholesome, good, and healthy for us. It is a healthy way of being present. It is a supportive way of entering the world of *samādhi*.

There are many forms of pleasure, goodness, rightness, and wholeness. One of those words for this pleasure that comes along with time is harmony. *Samādhi* is entering into a state of being in harmony. All things are harmonious here and now.

Part of what we are doing in developing *samādhi* is to become an expert or a connoisseur of the pleasure within us. We can find that onward leading pleasure, which is there not because the world is in any particular way, or a fantasy of the world is any particular way. It is something that is deeply connected that wells up from within. We discover that to be alive is wonderful. To rest in our being-ness without needing anything else to happen is meaningful and significant.

In considering the *samādhi* of pleasure, you might go around today with a smile on your face. It may be with the lightest touch of beingness. See if you can smile when you feel a different kind of pleasure that is not there because the world is providing pleasure. It may be the wholeheartedness with which you wash the dishes, or the full embodiment as you walk down the street. You are really there for the walk from the inside out rather than studying the world around you.

May this day be a day of deep, buried pleasure, so that you learn more about this world. May this be one of the ways that our wonderful YouTube community steps into care for this world. Thank you.

