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Arriving

Good morning, and welcome here in the temple. We will have a short meditation on ARRIVING.

Arriving here in Amaravati, in the temple, arriving where you are now. I would suggest that you start with silently letting your eyes wander and taking in what you can see: the Buddha statue, shrine, people, oak structure, light ... - the space.

Allowing awareness to be spacious, allowing reactions and questions to arise.

If you like, you can close your eyes now, that helps directing your attention more to sensing or listening to body sensations. ---

Breathing IN space, breathing OUT into space ...

Breathing happening in space. - Feeling your body breathing ...

Feeling the body resting on the ground, arriving where you are now:
grounded in space. ---

How is it to sit silently here in this wide and open space?

How does your heart respond?

Is your heart excited, or a bit anxious because everything is so new, or can it relax and open into this space, trusting?

Whatever your heart or mind is telling you right now - can you be aware of that?

With all what is going on for you right now - take a deep breath --- and welcome yourself in this breathing space.

And please, silently welcome all of us, all family camp members, friends and new people.

Make yourself feel at home with every breath. -

Bless you. Bless yourself.

--- bell ---

WITH THE FRUITS OF PAST GOOD DEEDS

The second stanza of the blessing chant starts with
"Living in places of suitable kinds
with the fruits of past good deeds ...
these are the highest blessings".

This is a guided meditation on "WITH THE FRUITS OF PAST GOOD DEEDS"

Please come near with a mat or cushion and sit down, everybody on their own.

For small children it may be better to sit with one parent. -----

Find a position in which you can sit comfortably for about 5 minutes, with the back rather straight, and give yourself a bit time to RELAX into this upright position:

feel your base, your sitting bones, resting on the ground, giving the spine a good foundation.

Allow your back to find the vertical alignment of all vertebra's. The head finding balance on the first vertebra. --- Breathing into this position, into the space between ground and head.

Finding a meditation posture which allows energy to flow freely and ease-fully is already a good deed, because, as you can find out for yourself, the fruit of it is good: you will feel alive in yourself and more at ease.

That is already KAMMA and its RESULT: what we do and the result of it. - CAUSE and EFFECT.

If you haven't closed your eyes yet - it would help if you close your eyes now, so that you don't get distracted by what you see. - With eyes closed, you can focus more easily on what you are hearing and the responses which arise in consciousness.

We call that CONTEMPLATION.

I will put some questions into space, and I ask you to listen and allow your answers to arise from your mind space. - It can be words, sounds, images, memories ...

- Imagine a delicious, really yammy fruit.
- Imagine a disgusting, really yacky fruit. – Any preference?

- What was the best thing that happened to you today?
- Are you pleased about something you did today?
- What was the worst thing that happened to you today?
- Do you have regret about something that you did (or didn't do)?
- Can you see that something you did today had already a good result?
- Can you see the that something you did or didn't do today had already a bad result?
- Is there anything that you could do this evening that will bring good fruit?
- Is there anything you would like to avoid right now because it would bring bad fruit?
- Who will be the first person to have joy if you do something that feels good and skillful?
- Who will be the first person to suffer if you do something which feels bad or unskillful?
- Bring somebody to your mind who is really unhappy because of past unskillful deeds.
-
- May all beings be happy and know the causes of happiness.
- May all beings be free from suffering and free from the causes for suffering.

Are you still breathing? Just open into this breathing space – including all sounds.

--- bell ---

Forest Meditation

Short reflection before entering the woods:

Can we please stop here and remind ourselves that, when we go into the woods, we are entering the living space of many sentient beings. I would suggest that you silently ask the spirit of the forest for permission to enter. That you respect the beings who are living here. That you are rather silent. When we enter the forest in silence, the beings here will speak to us, and we can listen and understand. - Thank you.

Standing around the old beech tree in a big circle, small people in front ...- after Thai Chi

This is a guided meditation on LISTENING, listening to the forest.

Where you are now, just close your eyes - to discover the world through LISTENING.

Allow yourself to forget what you have seen, and just sense with open awareness into the

space around: what do you hear?

- Is there any sound that indicates where you are?
- Are there sounds which indicate that there are trees nearby?
- Are there sound impressions which give you a sense of space? – How can you HEAR space?
- Can you listen with your heart?
- Can you hear birds? – Different bird songs?
- Can you hear similar bird songs from different angles, distances - birds talking to each other?
- Is there any sound indicating that you are not the only person here?
- Can you hear what the ground under your feet is like?
- What is the most distant sound you can hear?
- Can you hear a sound moving in space?
- Is there a sound which you would rather not like to be here?
- Listen to what your mind is saying.
- Is there a sound which can touch your heart?
- Is there a moment of NO sound? - What do you hear when there is no sound?
- What is the sound of one hand clapping?
- What is the sound of two hands clapping?
- Thank you.

--- bell ---

LISTENING

Let's have a meditation on LISTENING.

Please find your own place and settle into a position with back upright and relaxed.

If you close your eyes now, you can detect what is happening around you by just listening.

Listening connects us with the space around and with what is happening in this space:

Can you HEAR that you are not alone here?

Can you direct attention to a certain sound on your left / on your right?

Can you hear somebody breathing? Can you hear your own breath?

Can you stay for a while just concentrated on the sound of your own breath?

Can you try NOT to hear the sounds around you?

Can you open up to ALL the sounds around, listening to space filled with sound?

Can you stay open to all the sounds without being drawn to one sound in particular?

Is there a sound you don't like? – How do you know that you don't like that sound? –

Where in the body do you feel your reaction to it?

Listen what your mind says in reaction to this sound.

Like this, we can listen to the outer sound and to our inner response to it.

Allow your mind to respond to a few more sounds you can hear in this room, and just listen to what your mind is saying.

Like this, we can become aware of how our mind is reacting on impulse from outer sound,

And learn to take an interest in our mind's response. The Buddha listening to the Dhamma.

To know the reactions of our mind right in the moment when they are

happening – this can give us the freedom to choose our responses to the present situation instead of reacting blindly. –

We can then choose, what is skillful, what has a good result, a good fruit.

May be, this is, what the phrase of the blessing chant is about:

“... and guided in the rightful way.

These are the highest blessings.”

Just for a moment, open your attention again to all sounds in space, inner and outer –

CHOICELESS AWARENESS in listening.

--- bell ---

Discipline

This will be a guided meditation on DISCIPLINE.

It's part of our blessing chant:

"Accomplished in learning and craftsman's skills, with discipline highly trained, ..."

Please find a place on your own, and – no: DON'T sit down – stand up with feet close together, body upright, eyes closed or open.

Now, try to stand still, NO MOVEMENT AT ALL, for one minute. ---

Who could stand absolutely still for all the time? – Hands up. – Ohh ...

Does that come as a surprise to you? – May be, it's the same as with discipline:

We try hard, and most of the time, we can't do it, and then we give up or start hating it ... ?

So, could you please sit down again, ready for meditation.

What does the word 'discipline' do to your mind - "with discipline highly trained" - ?

Do you have a kind of longing for more discipline?

Or do you hate the idea of discipline?

Or both?

The word discipline comes from 'disciple' – so, who's disciple are you when you try to be disciplined? For example:

When you hear me saying: "ready for meditation" – what happens?

Do you try to remember how you SHOULD sit in meditation?

What you SHOULD do?

Or do you try to find out for yourself which posture is helpful to feel awake and at ease for a while? –

Who is your teacher here?

So I ask you now to find out by yourself, which posture feels alive for you and is comfortable enough to stay like this for 5 minutes or so.

Direct your breath towards one part of your body which is at ease right now. And, as if you would have nostrils there, breathe in through that part of the body and, as you breathe out, allow the breath to radiate the good feeling from there to the rest of your body, ... relaxing the whole body more and more with every breath...

Does that feel like discipline?

Does that feel good?

So, may be, it's good discipline: good to know and good to do because you like to be happy and at peace? If it works for you, my be, it's a skill you'd like to learn?

Could you please bring a memory to your mind, a situation where you were asked to have more discipline and DO what you were asked to do, but where you were actually HATING what you were asked to do, where you didn't want to do it? -

Remember, how did you feel? What did your mind say? –

What were your needs in that moment? What would you have liked to do instead? -

Was it completely bad what you were asked to do? Or was it just not the right moment?

What could have helped?

And now bring to your mind a memory, a situation where you were ENJOYING the discipline of the work you were doing. – What was the difference to the previous situation?

How did you feel? What was your mind saying?

Was that, what you were doing, fulfilling some of your own needs in that moment?

What were those needs?

What were the skills you were learning in that situation?

Why would you like to work in a disciplined way?

So what do you learn from this reflection?

When can discipline be joyful and rewarding?

And when does it bring up resentment and unwillingness?

Is there a way for you to influence that?

Is there anything you would like to do in this moment which would be rather undisciplined?

If you can guarantee that it doesn't harm anybody or mess up the shrine room, I allow you to do it, for a few seconds, RIGHT NOW! --- ???

Relax and come back to the breath. Breathing in and out in space. --- bell ---

Generosity

Please find a good place, and allow your body to settle into an easeful posture for meditation.

You can close your eyes.

What is going on in your mind right now? What is happening in your belly?

– Just notice for a few moments.

And then come back to the breath, in, out – body breathing.

Breathing in space, listening in space ...

Please remember a situation when you were generous and caring – did this make you feel good or bad?

Remember a situation when you felt you HAD to be generous, you SHOULD care for somebody? – How did you feel then?

Can you accept that you sometimes don't want to help? Do the others accept that as well?

Do you remember a situation when somebody else was refusing to help you?
How did that feel?

Remember a situation where it was difficult for you to respond to somebody's needs, but you still decided to do it. –
How did you feel afterwards?

Is giving done because we want to get something back or want to be praised? - Do you remember a situation when you didn't get anything back or your giving was not received with thanks? – How did that feel?

Can giving be done for the sheer joy of giving?

Joy of responding to somebody's needs?

Is it possible that giving is an expression of our human nature?

Is it possible that giving is reminding us of our own richness and abundance?

Can giving free ourselves from the fear of not getting enough? –
How do you know?

Just let go of thinking for a moment, and come back to the breath, relaxing into breathing.

Imagine, that from your breathing center arises a bright flower bud, slowly opening to the
light ...

May you and I be happy.
May all beings be happy.
May all be free from suffering.

--- bell ---

Acceptance

Would you be WILLING to come nearer for the guided meditation, so that you can hear what I say? Take your cushion ... and settle into a position that helps to feel awake and comfortable.

Just direct your attention to the sounds you are hearing, listening into space.

And slowly close your eyes so that you can just be with sound. A world of sound.

What images are coming up inside when you hear all this?
Is it something you feel comfortable with?

Or would you like to be somewhere else right now?

That pujas should be in a quiet environment, ... that people should be completely silent, ... that everything should be perfect - the way YOU LIKE?

Can you please listen for a moment to what your mind is saying right now?

Can you be willing to accept this all, noise, wind, your own irritation may be, ... and hold it

in spacious awareness for a moment?

You don't need to LIKE it. But are you willing to bear with it, to make peace with something that isn't what you would like?

This is a meditation on WILLINGNESS.

One line in our Blessing Chant goes:

"Patience and willingness to accept one's faults"...

Please think of a weakness you have, some may call it a 'fault'.

Think of a situation when somebody was criticizing you for this weakness, or where you yourself were ashamed of it or just couldn't bear it ...

That's suffering, isn't it?

Is it true that it would be better to be without fault, to be perfect?

Is it possible to be perfect at all times?

To meet your expectations at all times?

To meet other's expectations at all times? –

Do you know somebody who really thinks or pretends to be perfect? – Is

it a nice person to be with? Is it peaceful to be with that person?

If you see a weakness in the way you deal with things or people, what would help you to accept it, to be at peace with it? –

Would criticism help? – Would hiding it help? - Would forgiveness help?

Would willingness to look at it and to understand yourself help?

Could asking for understanding and advice help?

Is there anybody who would love you the way you are?

How are you able to learn with confidence and joy?

Where does pride come from? - Where does shame come from?

Where does humility come from? – Where does compassion come from?

Where does love come from?

There is a SONG I like to share with you – I don't know the melody, but the text goes:

“Ring the bells that still can ring,
Forget your perfect offering,
There is a crack in everything,
It's how the light gets in,
It's how the light gets in ...”

--- bell ---

Cessation

It's Saturday already, and this will be our last guided meditation for this summer camp ... - so the theme is CESSATION, the ending of something.

So please sit down in a way that helps you to be awake and focused on what is happening for you in this moment ---

Open awareness, and the willingness to receive what is coming in through the sense doors. – Centred, grounded in the middle of awareness.

It may help to start with closed eyes, focusing attention around the sensations of breathing, being aware of the body breathing, the movement of breathing in the body. ---

In-breath beginning, in-breath ending, short pause, then out-breath beginning, out-breath ending, pause, ... beginning, ending, beginning, ending ...

What are the subtle sensations of in-breath beginning?

And then, how do you feel the change towards the end of it, changing from breathing IN to breathing OUT? ---

Beginning and ending – do you know anything which has a beginning and NO end? –

And what happens after ending?

What are your feelings around the summer camp ending? –

Is there any sadness coming up with this thought? – Is there anything you will miss?

Are there things which you find annoying here and look rather forward to see them ceasing?

Just stay with these memories, see them ending and allow feelings to arise.

Can we celebrate ending? – How would YOU celebrate the ending of that which you would miss? Would you become aware of how important certain things are if you wouldn't feel sadness or a sense of missing it? –

Can you just be in silence with this for a moment?

Can you find ways of celebrating, really honouring that which is important for you here? – People, certain places, experiences ...?

If you have time for this today, what would you do – on your own or together with somebody else? Speaking about it or rather in silence?

Just reflect on this for a moment.

And now, please allow these thoughts to cease and be aware of the space

behind thought. Open up and listen into space, ... allowing sounds to come in, ... listening with the heart. Listen into this space we all share ... Allow your heart to respond and with every breath, send out your light, your love, big or small ... It's limitless, really, because that is what we are.

--- bell ---