

Venerable Pannavati
“Guided Meditation—Week 4”
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So welcome back. This is our fourth and final week. It's really been wonderful for me. You know, there's something about consciousness. It is truly non-local, and if you really tap in, really just getting still and allowing that bare awareness to ripple out you'll find that you're in a very large expansive space.

Mentally, we confine ourselves by our thoughts, our limited thinking. This is a practice of relaxing our limited thinking so that we can access this non-local feel that is forever present and always around us. So have you been practicing this week? If you have then I'm sure you're noticing in your daily interactions, something is shifting your way of meeting people where they are. Your availability, showing up, being there, maybe coming with an agenda but finding that you can relax your agenda and really give a listening ear to what the other person is saying, or that you can relax your notion or idea of what should be happening in this moment.

Relax your planning, it's not sticking to your plan and you can more easily go with the flow. All of this comes about by just sitting here training the mind and letting go of our preconceived notions and our agendas and we find that it's wonderful.

So we're going to go into our last meditation, and as we go into it I'd like to add one more little piece. We've got our outward posture, we have our inward focus, we have our object of meditation. When we start to really unify with that object it becomes more and more subtle until we actually lose the breath or seeming as if the breath has stopped, but with that comes the core rising of a feeling of contentment. The Buddha calls it rapture and pity, so that means it is a great feeling. So we should really not move much further past that step until that feeling is particularly strong and present with us and if it's not just keep staying right there, staying with the breath until that feeling of contentment and bliss begin to arise, and when it has become strong enough you just sit there with it.

In the beginning it may be a little exciting, you may notice some things happening like you might see some swirling colors behind your closed eyes or the sense of being jettisoned into space or it seems like you see stars or the universe, but that's all just natural occurring perceptions based on how chemicals are being released into the system and our whole mood is shifting into a sense of well-being. So just allow that to happen. Don't stop and try to capture anything or look at anything or oh or ahh behind anything. Just let that all be there and just staying with that feeling of contentment and well-being, then you'll find that whether you encounter praise or blame, loss or gain, pleasure or pain, fame or shame, you'll be able to handle all of it with the same equanimity.

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Okay, are we ready to go inside? You know the way.

And then the final thing is, the Buddhists that practice going in and coming out, going in and coming out, so that you know how to quickly get there. You know the way, it's not like a little linear way, but there still is a dropping into this expansive space, leaving this narrow space, going into this expansive space. So just closing your eyes and purposing to just be there right now and you'll find how quickly you drop in and sit. Let's begin.

Sorry, it's time to come out. You know, in the beginning this will feel like being in an altered state of consciousness and then having to come back and you may feel a little groggy. It feels difficult coming back because you feel like you could just stay but after a while you'll recognize that as your natural state of consciousness and that other state we used to be in when we were in a tizzy and we had anxiety, you will recognize that that was of the altered state.

And so just continue your practice in this way and as you feel it arising naturally to extend your time, extend your time longer and longer. Remember when you come out to examine, to review what just happened and the time will come when you will know instantly when your mind is teetering off in an unwholesome direction. You'll know when a clear mind is present, when an unstable, an unsteady mind, when there is a confused mind and when the mind is not confused, when there's a happy mind and when there's an agitated mind.

You'll know your own mind, and you'll also know the minds of those that you encounter and in this way you're developing your wisdom. You're developing your patience and you'll develop in your compassion.

Thank you so much. May you be well and happy and peaceful. May no harm come to you and no danger. May you always be able to meet with the inevitable difficulties of life.