

2020-04-08: Samādhi (3 of 5) Unification of Mind

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

settling, gathering, mind, unification, coming, fragmented, magnet, whispering, breathing, meditating, conflict, hold, word, teacher, peaceful, sit, meaning, include, palms, idea

SPEAKERS

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To continue the theme of this week: samādhi. It's a little bit funny to speak after meditating, and being so still. The theme is concentration or samādhi. And the word samādhi is more or less a noun. It is related to two verbs. One is 'samahāda'(?). My Pali pronunciation is not so good, but then 'samahita'(?) is the other one. And these two words, that are more the activity that samādhi speaks to, have the meaning of placing something together, bringing together unifying, gathering together.

The idea is that samādhi is not this laser focus of the mind, but a gathering together, bringing together. I like the word compose. Everything gets composed. All of who we are, gets composed together, ends up coming into harmony, into unity. One of the words related to samādhi is 'ekkōdi'(?) sometimes translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi as unified, and by another monk, Thanissaro Bhikkhu as unity. This idea of unification, of bringing into harmony, is a very different feeling of for samādhi than the idea that it's a laser focus of the mind.

The dictionary definition of samādhi has two meanings. One meaning is the action or power of focusing one's attention or mental effort, The other meaning is a close gathering of people or things -- the action of gathering together closely. Both of these meanings are related to what samādhi means in the Buddhist tradition. One of the ways that this comes together is that we're building on the idea of settling the mind, or settling our experience, settling into our experience. So rather than a laser focus so much, it's that everything settles into the bottom like the bowl, with all the marbles. The marbles settle into the bottom of the bowl and sit there at rest.

So there's a settling a gathering together, of all the desperate parts of who we are. It's very easy to end up living a life that's fragmented and to have So for example, if I tripped this morning and somehow injured my foot and in the dark, I could part of my body sitting here could, in theory, still kind of feeling

that mild trauma of the trip of the fall or the fear part another part of me might sitting here just feeling delighted to be together with all of you this way and sharing the Dharma with you. My mind might be thinking about what's for lunch, and wondering what I could find the refrigerator. And, and then that might be with a conversation I had yesterday and maybe the challenges or the delights of that conversation and, and then I'm wondering about this and that and the mind kind of emotionally, physically, intention. And then my intent intention is to try to be focused on my breathing or something. So there's all these different things that are going on at once and are almost at once kind of swimming around, bouncing around. And, and often the mind is fragmented. divided, agitated spinning around. And, and so the, the process of samādhi is settling and gathering together. So all the disparate parts of ourselves are no longer fragmented, but are gathered together and work together.

So that our attention, our intention, our physicality of our body, the physical sensations of our body, our emotional body, our emotional experience, our cognitive experience, the thoughts we might be having. All of it is gathered together for the same purpose in meditation. So for example, if we're concentrating on breathing, all these different parts of us are coming together being gathered together, to hold the experience of breathing, or to be together with experience or breathing to be in harmony. This gathering together.

Now you don't have to work too hard at this. It helps maybe enough just to say that we're trying to overcome any sense of conflict with anything when we meditate. So there's nothing which is considered wrong, or something to be gotten rid of just something else to be held, "You to come here, come here and let me hold you, let me include you here." Not including like, like the thoughts that we're going to keep thinking, but just a thinking mind is relaxes inside. So here, it's okay. Be here.

When I was when my son was quite young, my older son, he went to a preschool. So he was probably three years old at the time, and with really marvelous teachers and they were kind of my heroes and the goodness they brought to the children was just so like one of the best things going and you know, I feel like these these are the people who are creating the foundations for a wonderful society. And they were really kind and generous and wise. And they were there was one thing that I really loved to watch when sometimes I go into the classroom. These three, four year old kids were running around like crazy yelling and screaming, doing what three year olds do and playing. And when it was time for something different to happen, one of the teachers would stand in the middle of the classroom, stand tall, and just begin to whisper and not try to stop the kids from playing or, you know, anything. Just stand there started whispering. And the kids who were nearby would notice, and they would come and sit next in front of the teacher. And then other kids slowly, the whole class would hear the whispering and they'd all gather together and sit around the teacher and then the teacher would sit down and tell the story. It's possible the kids knew that that's what was coming was a story but but this idea of, of not forcing the kids to be quiet, forcing them to stop what they're doing and come back, but rather to harmonize, to gather together in this kind of peaceful way, and everything gets settled, the whole classroom got settled and quiet.

Or it's a little bit like when I was also when I was in elementary school, I remember having a little red magnet U shaped magnet, and I would pull it across the sand in the sand box. And there were little kind of flint metallic iron flint particles in the sand. And if I'd go back and forth in a straight line, the little flint pieces little iron pieces would line themselves up, and it kind of aligned kind of and this idea of coming to the breathing and let the breathing maybe be the whispering. Breathing be the magnet and everything begins to settle there. Everything gathers together.

So, coming together settling together holding together. So what I talked about the earlier in this week about this, settling the mind and centering the mind, as the as the attention gets centered as the attention gets, gets steadied and settled and then it becomes kind of the gathering place, the magnet the support, if we don't kind of keep giving our energy of our mind, to distractions and to other things in the wrong way. So this gathering together, this settling together, this unification that this harmony. The consequence of that, for the Buddha is that we become peaceful that the That the direction that samādhi takes us is peace. And one of that intense of peace is this sense of lack of conflict.

And so if you find yourself in conflict with anything, anything at all, while you're meditating, you might want to see if there's some other perspective to which to hold it. Maybe this can be forever and just hold it and include it and, or maybe there's a way of being not in conflict with it, but also not caught up in it involved in it, where you make room for it, hold it in the palms of awareness. This too, is included. This too.

You know, for me, the this image of the palms, holding something. The palms themselves are silent, silent of words and ideas. And so let something to be held in the palms of awareness is to allow things to kind of settle into a kind of quiet Or stillness, my mind still might be thinking, but I'm not living in the thoughts I'm not identified with the thoughts are so interested in the thoughts. I'm interested in this holding of everything this everything coming together settling in. And to have that happen with something like the breathing, that does become kind of a one pointedness that happens. But it's kind of like the one pointedness of everything coming together into that one place as opposed to forcefulness of the mind.

A lot of what meditation concentration samādhi has to do is letting go relaxation and and so this movement like of yesterday of applying oneself and then sustaining attention, it's a little bit like coming back to rest in awareness and then stay there for a while. Open. Include everything.

And so, finally, this idea of, "This too," instead of having conflict with anything, this too in some way should be included, this too is held in awareness, this too is brought together into this harmonizing this gathering together this being coming composed, unified into the present moment. So samādhi as the unification of mind.

So, just keep, you know, should, you know always as I said before and the earlier weeks, most of the time are beginners So, keep coming back, letting go. Center yourself over and over again on your experience. Once you can do that little bit, then you can really get into this idea of connecting and

sustaining attention. And as that continues just over and over again connecting and sustaining, and the sustaining becomes longer and longer, then it naturally begins to be like a magnet that pulls everything else together, things settle and let go and come together. And so over time with samādhi, then you'll experience more and more of this really being here and settled.

And, and one, one word for this kind of unification of mind, that maybe is more meaningful for some of you is calm, the calming of the mind. Everything becomes calm.

So thank you and Buddha said that the support for deepening concentration is happiness. And that'll be the topic for tomorrow. So until then, I want to thank you again and I hope this idea of unification, and "This too," including everything is also a way of being in the world where your presence promotes non conflict in this world supports everyone else to find some peace and settledness. May all beings be peaceful. Thank you.