



Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center

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October 2022 Newsletter



Waking up from the Dream-Like Existence

The environment we live in is composed of impermanent things such as this body, material possessions, the weather, relationships, and the world. Our thoughts, feelings, emotions, and perceptions arise and pass away, they too are impermanent. The roles we are playing are also in flux and change: we play a young person then an old person; we play the part of being healthy then we play the part of being sick; the role of student changes to that of teacher; and so on. The environment and the life we act in are constantly changing and are unstable, like a rainbow or a mirage. It is in this sense that we live a dream-like existence.

This dream-like existence is suffering because the elements of the dream are unstable and constantly changing. The elements lose their integrity, are on the brink of falling apart, and energy must be supplied to maintain the forms. Bodies must be fed or they will become sick and die. Houses and mechanical and electrical devices require constant maintenance and repair. Much effort is required to protect our self-image and the roles we play. Living the dream requires work and that is suffering.

The dream-like existence can be relatively happy or it can be a nightmare. We create a happy dream by living an ethical lifestyle; i.e., we try not to cause harm to others or to ourselves; we practice meditation in order to bring peace and calm to the mind; and we investigate the nature of the dream and what lies beyond the dream.

In the course of creating a happy dream we cultivate skillful mental faculties, such as, mindfulness, concentration, patience, and loving-kindness. We study to understand and train in the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. When we have proficiency with the skillful mental faculties, the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path then we will wake up from the dream.

The dream-like existence is a nightmare when we cause harm to others or to ourselves; i.e., the nightmare is a war in which we fight the world, others and ourselves. We live a nightmare when we are overwhelmed by the pursuit of sensual pleasures which are impermanent and cannot satisfy our longing for stability, refuge, home, love, and contentment. There is violence and destruction when we hunger for power and control over others and the world. Maintaining and protecting the illusion of a separate individual self; i.e., identifying with the body and mind, produces fear; the fear of sickness and death, the fear of being attacked by others, the fear of losing power and control over ones' body and mind, and so on.

By cultivating a happy dream we create the conditions and the means for waking up from the dream and to experience perfect happiness and freedom from suffering.

We cultivate a happy dream by being happy. Happiness is love and love is experienced when we dissolve the illusion of a separate self. The boundaries and defense mechanisms we utilize to protect the separate self, the individual self, prevents us from the love and happiness that is available to us now. Love is the feeling recognition of the other as not being separate from oneself; in reality there is no other.

Love and happiness is the experience we have when we identify with the field of experience and not with the contents of experience. The field or screen of experience is consciousness, that which is aware. Consciousness is not the contents of experience. The physical forms, objects, thoughts, feelings, emotions, and perceptions are the contents of experience. That which is aware

of the contents of experience is consciousness. Just as space is the same in this room and outside this room even though the contents in this room are different from the contents outside this room, so is consciousness identical for all beings even though the beings are of different bodies and minds. The universality of consciousness is the thread that connects all beings in love.

We are more alive or real when we are with love. Love is our essence and our very being. Love is experienced when we connect with others. When we experience consciousness and know that consciousness is the same in all beings then we connect with others. The universality of consciousness is the pathway to love. The experience of love is the evidence that consciousness is our essence and the essence of all beings.

Every being is driven or propelled towards happiness, happiness is love, and love is experienced when we connect with others by identifying with consciousness. Our true nature shines forth by acting with courage to dissolve our individual boundaries and defense mechanisms; simultaneously we strengthen our identification with consciousness. The intensity of the experience of love is in direct proportion to our ability to remove personal boundaries and defense mechanisms.

There is a practice that may help to cultivate the happy dream, to experience happiness and love now. The practice is to recognize and identify with consciousness in silence. Silence like space is all pervasive, and like consciousness it is boundless, eternal, and permanent. Silence is that which surrounds and holds spoken and written words, thoughts, feelings, emotions, and perceptions. Just as love is related to consciousness, silence is also related to consciousness; there is silence in consciousness. By being quiet with a silent and calm mind, consciousness is experienced profoundly when the clouds of mental activity dissipate.

The cultivation of internal silence is conditioned by external silence. Speaking little helps with reducing mental chatter. Withholding public and private expressions of ones' views, opinions, and judgments are helpful with the cultivation of internal silence and shines the light of understanding on the illusion of the separate individual self. Views, opinions, and judgments serve to support the insubstantial separate self and as they are reduced the separate self-view diminishes.

Our minds are limited in what they can know because our physical senses filter the data that impinge upon the sense organs and our minds massage the information to support underlying beliefs. We do not have complete information or see the big picture. Therefore, it is wise not to trust our perceptions, to withhold passing judgment on anyone, and not to rely on our views and opinions as trustworthy.

Try sitting with the other in silence, walking with the other in silence, and working with the other in silence. Perhaps a silent smile or the holding of the other's hand would help you to bound with the other. However, be sensitive that the other may have too much fear to receive your love, smile, or hand; such behavior may be perceived as a sexual advance or some other misperception. Experiment with silence and discover how it is a skillful means for developing the happy dream.

Of course, there are situations that require speech and the expression of ideas. I am suggesting that one turn towards silence as the norm.

My grandmother came from a small farming town in Austria-Hungary and came to this country during the great depression. She knew very little English and did not speak to me. Sometimes, I would sit with my grandmother in a quiet and dim room, holding her hand in silence for a long time. I felt connected and there was peace and love between us.

Another practice that is helpful in developing the happy dream is that of forgiveness.

What you perceive in the other is an indication of how you perceive yourself. The errors you perceive in the other is a reflection of the errors you perceive in yourself. If you cannot forgive the other's error then you will not be able to forgive yourself. We forgive others so that we can forgive ourselves and be at peace. This is why forgiveness is important.

To forgive is to remember only the loving thoughts you gave in the past, and those that were given you. All the rest must be forgotten. For the present is forgiveness.

To forgive the other is to join with the other, for there is nothing of value that stands between you and the other. Forgiveness is the healing or the correction to the perception of separation.

You suffer and are not at peace because you perceive and believe that you are separate from the other. Consciousness is the essence of being and is the link that joins you with the other. Consciousness cannot be harmed or changed in any way. Therefore, forgive what the other says and how the other acts because words and actions cannot harm you. Your suffering is not caused by the other but is caused by forgetting that your essence is consciousness. Peace is achieved by identifying with consciousness and forgiving the other.

If you were willing to forgive other people's misperceptions of you, they could not possibly affect you at all. Those misperceptions cannot affect your true nature, which is consciousness. When you forget your true nature and do not forgive other people, then their misperceptions can hurt you. What caused you to feel hurt was not the other's attack, but your own misperception of the other's attack. You failed to realize that beings attack out of habit and frustration due to their inability to experience love. All beings want love more than anything else. In truth, attack is a call for love.

Withhold forgiveness from the other, you then attack the other. Forgiveness is the answer to attack of any kind.

To forgive is to overlook. Look beyond error and do not let your perception rest upon it, because you will believe what your perception holds. Accept what the other is in truth, if you would know yourself.

Perceive what the other is not, and you cannot know what you are, because you see the other falsely. Your identity is shared, and that its sharing is its reality.

Those you do not forgive you fear, and no one experiences love where there is fear.

As long as we are caught in a dream we have roles to play that entail responsibilities. Kamma operates in the dream; there is cause and effect, where wholesome causes produce wholesome effects. Therefore, it is prudent for us to act out our roles in the drama we call life with skillful mental faculties and loving-kindness.

We live a happy dream with the attitude of loving-kindness towards all beings and oneself; by having patience and trust in the process that cultivates skillful mental faculties. The conditions of the happy dream will allow us to wake up from the dream.

When we cultivate silence and forgiveness, we will identify with consciousness and not with the body. As we mature in identifying with consciousness and not with the objects of consciousness or with the separate personal self, our ability to connect and grow closer to others will increase. As we become fearless in removing our boundaries and defenses, our ability to grow ever closer to others will result in greater experiences of love and happiness. By cultivating skillful mental faculties and training in the Four Noble Truths and Noble Eightfold Path we will experience happiness.

Perfect happiness and freedom from suffering will be realized upon waking up from the dream. We wake up when we learn how to love well; i.e., to be fully conscious.

Activities of the Meditation Center

- Sitting meditation is held everyday at 6:30AM and 5:30PM. After meditation, Ajahn Kumāro is available to answer questions and discuss the Dhamma. Please sign up on Meet-Up or send an email mittameditation@gmail.com on the days and time you would like to participate.
- The days of the full moon, new moon and the two half moons are called in Pāli: The Uposatha, and is a Buddhist day of observance. A lunar calendar is available at <https://cal.forestsangha.org>. Ajahn Kumāro will perform the ceremony of giving the eight precepts on the full and new moon days after the 5:30PM meditation. You may elect to take the five precepts instead of the eight and may determine to keep the precepts as long as you see fit (one night, a week, a lifetime, etc).
- Meditation Workshop on the first Sunday of each month between 11:00AM and 1:00PM. The workshop will provide instruction and practice for sitting and walking meditation. There will also be

- an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the Dhamma. Please sign up on Meet-Up or send an email mittameditation@gmail.com on the days and time you would like to participate.
- Question and Answer Tea on the third Sunday of each month at 3:00PM. Please sign up on Meet-Up or send an email mittameditation@gmail.com on the days and time you would like to participate.
 - Everyday at 8:40AM Ajahn Kumāro leaves for alms-round in order to give residents of Asheville the opportunity to earn merit by practicing generosity of giving food and placing it into the alms bowl. Ajahn does not accept or handle money. Ajahn usually arrives at the Whole Foods Market, 70 Merrimon Ave. just before 9:00AM and stands in front of the store for alms.
 - Ajahn is available at other times during the day to meet with individuals or groups when requested.
 - For more information please send an email to mittameditation@gmail.com. We also have a presence on Facebook and Meet-Up social media.

Request for Support

The Meditation Center is in need of support in order to accomplish its' mission and vision. The support may take various forms. You will support the Meditation Center by:

- Being present at the Meditation Center for group meditation.
- Giving alms during alms-round.
- Bringing to the Meditation Center items that are listed on the support page of the website: www.mittameditation.com.
- Volunteering your skills, energy and time at the Meditation Center.
- Informing your family and friends about the Meditation Center and encouraging them to participate in the activities.
- Donating financial contributions for the Meditation Center's expenses. Kalyana-Mitta Meditation Center is recognized as a tax-exempt organization by the IRS under section 501(c)(3). Donations are deductible in accordance with IRS regulations. Financial contributions may be made on the support page of the website: www.mittameditation.com and additional means for making financial donations may be discussed with Elisha Buhler at (910) 922-1549.