
topic is being brought up because our nature is important and effects us all the time. If we develop a good nature, then the benefit is everlasting.

Question and Answer

Q: I was thinking about Geshela's point about facial expressions. Part of the trouble is that we don't know how we look to other people. If our mind is good, will our facial expressions become good?

A: It is right that if you have good will from your heart then naturally this will appear in your expression. If someone is angry, then others can tell from that person's face. When we talk about a good facial expression, we don't mean to fake it. People realise that pretending doesn't come from the heart, but from some obligation to observe a social convention. It is different when people express genuine loving feelings from the heart.

Certainly, our inner feelings are often expressed in our outer expressions. We can observe the difference by looking in the mirror and comparing how our faces look when we have a strong mind of anger, with when we are in a happier mood. This difference is a result of the mind. So it is better not to look in the mirror when you are in an unhappy mood or have strong anger, you might get a fright!

Q: What are the conditions that support a daily meditation practice?

A: We need a good understanding of our meditation practice. For example, know the benefits and advantages of doing your meditation practice, and understand the disadvantages and shortcomings of not practising meditation. This knowledge has to be clear in our minds in order to have a good, strong and genuine motivation. A strong motivation is needed to keep doing the practice all the time.

In order to do the actual practice, we need an understanding of the practice itself. Learn how to go about the meditation if some obstacle arises. Know what type of obstacles are likely to arise in meditation. Once we have prepared ourselves with the knowledge of the meditation, then we are well equipped when sitting in meditation, able to remove and solve any obstacle or problem that arises.

Another important condition for the meditation practice is to have a contented mind, that is, having minimal desires. Meditation is a practice that involves some mental discipline. This can be very hard if one's mind is not content. If the mind has too many desires, then this can be a cause of distraction in our meditation practice. So being content and having less desire is an important condition for meditating successfully.

Also we have to follow the meditation according to our own limit, and judge according to our own level of progress and development. That is why initially it is better to make the meditation session short, otherwise it is said that high expectations and greed for meditation can be an obstacle to development. It is not so much the length of time spent meditating, but the quality of the practice that counts. We have to make sure that it is

helping our minds sit with a given object. If in a longer meditation session there is no proper concentration and the mind intermittently rests on the object, i.e. sits with the object, wanders away, and then back again, then there is no discipline being developed and we are not gaining any control over the mind. In such a meditation not much progress is being made.

Now we will recite Buddha Shakyamuni's mantra seven times. Try, as before, to draw the mind inward, away from all the outer objects. While we are reciting the mantra the mind is focused on the mantra.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA

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