

Study and Reflection on the Fifth Mindfulness Training

The Fifth Precept: (pg. 112 in the Mountain Lamp Sutra book)

Do not cloud your mind with intoxicants. Maintain clarity of mind.

From the sutra on the White-Clad Disciple (pg. 76 in the Mountain Lamp Sutra Book)

Lay students of the Buddha refrain from drinking alcohol, put an end to drinking alcohol. They uproot from within themselves the habit of drinking alcohol. In this way, lay students of the Buddha study and practice the fifth of the Five Precepts.

The Fifth Mindfulness Training: (pg. 112 in the Mountain Lamp Sutra Book)

Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful consumptions, I vow to cultivate good health, both physical and mental, for myself, my family, and my society by practicing mindful eating, drinking and consuming. I vow to ingest only items that preserve peace, well-being, and joy in my body, in my consciousness and in the collective body and consciousness of my family and society. I am determined not to use alcohol or any other intoxicant or to ingest foods or other items that contain toxins, such as certain TV programs, magazines, books, films and conversations. I am aware that to damage my body or my consciousness with these poisons is to betray my ancestors, my parents, my society and future generations. I will work to transform violence, fear, anger and confusion in myself and in society by practicing a diet for myself and for society. I understand that a proper diet is crucial for self-transformation and for the transformation of society.

Nourishment and Healing

Aware of the suffering caused by sexual misconduct, I am committed to cultivating good health, both physical and mental, for myself, my family, and my society by practicing mindful eating, drinking and consuming. I will practice looking deeply into how I consume the Four Kinds of Nutriment, namely edible foods, sense impressions, volition and consciousness. I am determined not to gamble, or to use alcohol, drugs, or any other products which contain toxins, such as certain websites, electronic games, TV programs, films and magazines, books and conversations. I will practice coming back to the present moment to be in touch with the refreshing, healing and nourishing elements in me and around me, not letting regrets and sorrow drag me back into the past nor letting anxieties, fear or craving pull me out of the present moment. I am determined not to try to cover up loneliness, anxiety, or other suffering by losing myself in consumption. I will contemplate interbeing and consume in a way that preserves peace, joy and well-being in my body and consciousness and in the collective body and consciousness of my family, my society and the Earth.

Study Questions for the Fifth Mindfulness Training:

Consider the precepts as expressed in 4 different forms:

- a.) in its most simple form as expressed in our sutra book
- b.) as expressed in the sutra on the White-Clad Disciple
- c.) the precept as written in the Mindfulness Training in For Future to be Possible and
- d.) the latest version of the Mindfulness Training. (Nourishment and Healing)

As you reflect on these different expressions of the same ethical principle, how does this principle support your practice and your self-understanding? What are your struggles with the precept? How do you best maintain your clarity of mind? How does the expression(s) of this mindfulness training support you in maintaining a clear mind?

In your daily meditation this week, contemplate “interbeing”. Let that contemplation spill over into your life throughout the day. What does this mean in your life? Please write in your journal ways that you see “interbeing” manifesting in your life and through your actions. How does this relate to your peace, joy and well-being? Within your family? in the world?