

Spiritual Practices

Gratitude

Facilitator _____

Date _____

Chalice/Candle Lighting

Opening Words:

Gratitude is the state of mind of thankfulness. As it is cultivated, we experience an increase in our “sympathetic joy,” our happiness at another's happiness. Just as in the cultivation of compassion, we may feel the pain of others, so we may begin to feel their joy as well. And it doesn't stop there.

— Stephen Levine in *A Year to Live*

Check-in/Sharing

Topic:

Luminous Mind by Kyabje Kalu Rinpoche draws together the teachings of one of the greatest living exemplars of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition of meditative contemplation. Here is one of his stories about the dangers of attachment to possessions.

At the time of Buddha Sakyamuni, a monk found himself in possession of a marvelous jewel that granted any wish — all the gold, silver, and precious stones you could ask for. The lucky owner thought: “I am a monk and have no need of all these riches. Better to give this jewel to a poor person. But there are so many of them, why favor one over another? Buddha is omniscient. He will tell me whom to give it to.” So, going to Buddha, he explained his difficulty and asked him to designate a fitting recipient. Buddha Sakyamuni recommended that he give it to the king of that area, a very wealthy and powerful monarch. The monk made the offering, and the king accepted it, inquiring about the reason for the gift. The monk explained, “I thought I should give this gem to a poor person, but not knowing whom to choose, I asked Buddha Sakyamuni. He advised me to bring it to you.”

The king thought that was quite strange, since there probably was no one on earth richer than he. So he went to Buddha Sakyamuni for an explanation. The king asked why Buddha had chosen him when the monk had asked which poor person would best be provided for with the gem.

“It's true,” Buddha said. “Without a doubt, there is no one wealthier than you in the world; but there is also no doubt that there is no greed as great as yours. That is why I told the monk to give you the gem.”

Questions: King Faisal of Saudi Arabia displayed a flask of petroleum on his desk with a card saying "Allah's Bounty." What would you put on your desk as a constant reminder of gratitude?

Check-out/Likes and Wishes

Closing Words:

You say grace before meals. All right. But I say grace before the concert and the opera, and grace before the play and pantomime, and grace before I open a book, and grace before sketching, painting, and swimming, fencing, boxing, walking, playing, dancing, and grace before I dip the pen in ink.

— G. K. Chesterton quoted in *Different Seasons* by Dale Turner

To Practice This Thought: Begin each new activity with a brief grace.

Based on resources from www.spiritualityandpractice.com.