

MEETING 5 - Applying Our Spiritual Practice

What are ways that our practice can help carry us forward, individually and together? How might Buddhist practices and social and racial justice movements merge, inform, and infuse each other?

Preparation:

- [Making the Invisible Visible: Healing Racism in our Buddhist Communities](#) (60 pages; 2000) Accounts of People of Color's experiences in Western Buddhist Sanghas; please read with an eye on your own possible internal reactions of white fragility, and notice how you can practice with that. Section three is about practical strategies for your community.
- [Encountering Grief](#) a 10-minute guided meditation with Joan Halifax Roshi.
- [The No-Self of Identity Politics](#) by Katie Loncke - How can the identities of people who suffer oppression continue to be honored in light of anatta (no-self)? "Can we befriend identities without reifying them?" (8 pages)
- [Call Me By My True Names](#) by Thich Nhat Hanh (1 page poem)
- [On Spiritual Bypass](#) by Robert Augustus Masters (8 pages)
- [How Mindfulness Can Defeat Racial Bias](#) by Rhonda Magee JD (3 pages)
- Spiritual Activism & Liberation Spirituality: Pathways to Collective Liberation by Claudia Horwitz & Jesse Maceo Vega-Frey (6 pages)
<https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/horwitz.pdf>
- [Radical Dharma – Interview with angel Kyodo williams \(38 minute Podcast\)](#)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ac_bHwOWyw

Additional Suggested Reading:

Book: *The Way of Tenderness: Awakening Through Race, Sexuality, and Gender*, by Zenju Earthlyn Manuel; intro to the book (and a previous course) <https://vimeo.com/216552060>

Practices (Homework; please do before session)

1. Using Lovingkindness (metta) and Compassion (karuna) as skillful response

Thich Nhat Hanh says, "According to Buddhism, compassion is the only source of energy that is useful and safe. With compassion, your energy is born from insight; it is not blind energy." Seeing our own suffering clearly can awaken the compassion necessary for transformation and wise action.

Assignment: Consider your own narrative of race and your suffering within it. Use your daily sitting practice to cultivate compassion for your suffering, and to reflect on its relationship to the suffering of others.

2. Seeing "identity" as constantly arising from unfolding causes and conditions. Meaning that it is impermanent, impersonal.

"Oppression is a distortion of our true nature. It disconnects us from the earth and from each other. Awakening from the distortion of oppression begins with tenderness: we recognize our own wounded tenderness, which develops into the tenderness of vulnerability and culminates in the tenderness that comes with heartfelt and authentic liberation..."

"But if we were to simply walk past the fires of racism, sexism, and so on because illusions of separation exist within them, we may well be walking past one of the widest gateways to enlightenment."

- Zenju Earthlyn Manuel, in *The Way of Tenderness*

Assignment: Reflect on "The No-Self of Identity Politics" and other readings. Has this allowed you to see both the power and the impermanence of your racial/cultural identity? As compassion is cultivated for self and others (practice #1), notice whether or how it frees you up to move toward skillful action.

FACILITATION

A. 6:00 - 6:10 Sit (5 minutes)

B. 6:10 - 6:15 Move to Small Groups

C. 6:15 - 7:30 Mindful Sharing (70 minutes)

Instruction: Mindful sharing involves each participant sharing from personal experience. There is no discussion or cross-talk during this time period, only personal sharing.

Each person in the group can share 3-4 minutes on each question (gauge the time depending on the number of people in your group). Speak to whatever questions are most salient

- 1) Can you give an example of how you have used spiritual bypass to avoid your own pain around racism? Are we hoping for a life where we are free of pain?
- 2) Practice 1: using **lovingkindness and compassion** as a skillful response: As you reflect on your own narrative of race, what has come up for you? How has your cultivation of compassion affected your ability to stay with these reflections?
Practice 2: seeing “identity” as constantly arising from unfolding causes and conditions: In what ways has this series of readings/conversations allowed you to see both the power and the impermanence of your racial/cultural identity?
- 3) Please share anything else that you have learned or discovered through the material and your reflections this time.

D. 7:30 - 7:35 Sit (5 minutes)

E. 7:35 - 7:45 Group Reflection (10 minutes)

- a. Instruction: Group Reflection is like Mindful Sharing in that there is no discussion or cross-talk, however the focus is on what kind of experience the participants had during the meeting rather than on the content covered.
- b. Each person in the group can share 2-3 minutes about what it was like to participate in the group (gauge time based on number of people in the group)
PROMPT: What was it like to engage in *Mindful Sharing* today? How has this been for you so far

F. 7:45 - 7:50 Next Meeting (5 minutes)

- a. When will you meet next?
- b. Who will facilitate next?

G. 7:50 - 8:00 Move to Large Group