Opening Night Talk

Three refuges: Buddha, Dharma, Sangha

Buddha is the potential for Awakening. Each moment of internal stability and serenity sets the stage for vipassana practice which leads to Liberation from distress and confusion.

Dharma has two aspects: the natural order of the universe (very complex and dynamically operating); and the concepts and practices that support the process of Awakening to the natural order of the universe.

Sangha is the community of people who are actively engaged in understanding the concepts, virtues and practices that produce Awakening.

Five precepts: Harmlessness, Respect property of others, Noble silence, Avoid addictive distractions, Honesty.

Harmlessness begins with avoiding harm to your body and mind. By extension, this creates the foundation for harmlessness in the world.

Respecting the property of others involves not only avoiding theft, but the “space” of practice. No eye contact unless during interviews.

Noble silence begins with no talking except during specified times and only about the dharma (unless logistical support is needed from Sharon). No notes to others, except for logistical reasons. This creates the conditions that lead to internal silence, fundamental to cultivating the Dharma.

Avoiding addictive distractions. We live in a culture that maximizes opportunities for distraction through drug abuse, internet abuse and other behaviors that “cloud the mind”.

Honesty is at the core of the practice. It begins with mindfully investigating the “selfing story” with curiosity: Do I have to believe these thoughts just because they popped into awareness? The nature of the selfing story is not a true rendering of reality—at best, these thoughts are beneficial and functional in virtuous ways.