

The Weather Inside

October 7, 2011

As you try to focus on the breath: try to get a sense of what the weather is in your mind. Is it stormy? Is it foggy? Hot? Cold?

There's not much you can do about the weather outside, but you can make a change in the weather inside.

If the mind is all stirred up, if there's a lot of wind inside, what can you do to calm things down? If it's foggy inside, what can you do to clear up the fog?

There are the techniques for working with the breath. There are themes you can think about, such as the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, as a way of brightening things up.

When things are lazy in the mind and the air is stagnant, remind yourself: You could die at any time. Do you want to die in this state? Or would you rather die in a better state of mind? Then you work on that state of mind.

These are the encouragements.

Also learn how to work with the breath. The breath energy in the body can do all kinds of things. It can be good for you; it can be bad for you. There are certain ways of breathing that give you headaches. Other ways of breathing get you all tired out. Others are so soft that they put you to sleep.

So you have to be careful to adjust things just right, to figure out what's needed in the body, what's needed in the mind so that you can clear up the foggy weather, you can calm down the storms.

As Yom Taem did one time when she knew that that storm was approaching. So she got in meditation and said, "Well, how are storms happen?" And, with no background in science, she saw a column of air lifting up from the ocean surface, with winds spiralling around it. So in her mind she just thought, "cut, cut, cut, cut, cut the spiralling column of air," and the storm disappeared.

Well, you can do the same with your mind. Figure out what it is that's driving the storms of anger, the storms of fear. And try to cut those forces. Tell yourself you don't really believe them.

Even if the danger is real outside, you say, "Why do you have to get all worked up about it?" You can plan for it, but facing danger when you're worked up is not the wise way to face it. You've got to calm things down in the mind.

This is where the weather of the mind is different from the weather outside. The weather of the mind is very unpredictable, a lot more unpredictable than even the weather outside. But there's something we can do about it. When we know

that a storm is coming outside, all we can do is just batten down the hatches, go inside, and wait for the storm to pass. But with the storms inside, you actually can do something about them. You can breathe through them and cut the forces of the winds. In this way, you can get perfect weather inside.

So keep these thoughts in mind. We spend a lot of time listening to the weather reports outside. Well, make a constant report to yourself on the weather inside your mind, because there's something you can do about that.