

## *What You Can Change*

*January 22, 2012*

The Buddha tells us to look for blessings not from outside but from inside, from the qualities that we develop in the mind.

This is why we meditate. It's our own way of blessing ourselves. When we looking for blessing from others, they're happy to give them. But the simple fact that someone says nice things about your life and expresses good wishes for your life doesn't necessarily make your life good. If that were the case, then everybody would have a good life.

It has to come from our own intentions. And where do our own intentions come from? They come from the mind. So the mind has to be trained. This is why we train it: developing mindfulness, developing concentration, developing all the good qualities that we know come from sitting down here and just being in the present moment. That way the mind has the strength to deal with whatever's going to come up. Every year.

We're starting the Chinese New Year now. We had the Western New Year just a few weeks ago. In a couple of months, we'll be having the Thai New Year and then Songkran, which is the Indian New Year. So we've got plenty of chances to start the year right.

But don't wait for the last chance. You can start it right, right now. Look back on your life, look back on the past year, and see if there's anything that needs to be corrected in your thoughts, in your words, in your deeds. Then make up your mind that you've got the ability to do that. Because you do.

If people couldn't change their habits, couldn't change their ways, the Buddha wouldn't have taught anybody. It would have been a fruitless expense of energy. The fact that we *can* change our ways and make ourselves more skillful: That's why the Buddha taught. And that's why we can use his teachings to take charge of our lives.

Someone was telling me yesterday that Buddhism teaches you that you simply have to accept things as they are, you can't change them. But that's not the case at all. His teachings are all about what you *can* change and the change that starts by changing your own mind: the power you do have to make your life better.

That's the greatest blessing of all.