

## *Tranquility & Insight*

*March 1, 2012*

When we meditate, we're trying to develop both tranquility and insight.

The tranquility comes from getting the mind to settle down and stay with one thing, as when we're staying with the breath. Watch the breath coming in, watch it going out, and try to stay just with this one object.

To gain insight we have to see how the mind fabricates things, how it changes its experience, how it shapes its experience. To see that, we shape the breath, adjust the breath, play with the breath consciously. Notice how the breath is moving in different parts of the body: where it's comfortable, where it's not. Notice what you can change to make it more comfortable.

That involves the different kinds of fabrication that are involved in insight. There's bodily fabrication, which is the breath. There's verbal fabrication, where you're talking to yourself about these things. And there's mental fabrication, the perception of the breath and the feelings you're trying to create as you play with the breath. They're all right here.

In this way the Buddha teaches us breath meditation not to just to sit there and watch nothing but the breath in and out, in and out. He also has us adjust the breath, work with the breath, develop full-body awareness. He gives us a lot of things to do. It's in the doing that we gain our insight, gain our understanding.

Try to keep this point in mind. That we're not just here to nail the mind down to the breath. We're also trying to understand how the mind shapes things: through the breath, through its perceptions. So you're watching some really interesting things happening here.

In the beginning, it's hard to get any clear vision of what's going on. But if you stay with it longer and longer, you begin to understand your mind more and more. And as you understand the mind more, then you can understand exactly where it's causing unnecessary stress and what you can do to put a stop to that. That's where insight is valuable.

So don't think that the breath is just for tranquility. It's for tranquility and insight. We're learning here as we watch, as we get the mind to settle down. So try to keep these two qualities in balance. We're here to know and to understand and to be quiet. They all go together.