

Continuity

August 5, 2014

The mind's been running around all morning. Give it a chance now to settle down, because when you run around you can't see things clearly. You look at this, look at that, jump from here, jump from there: You don't really see anything sharply. And you don't see the connections between things. It's only when you stick with something for a long period of time that you can start to see the details, and the connections become clear.

Ajaan Maha Boowa's image is of a vine. You have follow the vine bit by bit by bit. You don't know where the roots are, so you keep following in from the ends. Eventually you find something that's connected to the root and that nourishes all the vines. You pull out the root and that's it. That's the end of the problem.

So it's important that we see the connections. What connections do we want to look for? We want to look for the connections between the actions we do and the results we get, particularly with the actions of the mind. When you decide to think about something or decide to like something or decide to dislike something, what goes into that? And when you've done that, what follows on it? You want to see those connections clearly.

When a little tiny thought comes in right now and then five minutes later it reappears as a huge overgrown case of anger or overgrown case of grief, what was that little thought? Where was the connection? Where did it go in the meantime?

If you're not really, really quiet, you can't see these things. And if your quietness isn't continuous, you can't see them either.

This is why mindfulness and concentration have to go together. You stay with one thing and then you just keep, keep, keep coming back to that one thing. Make it continuous. It's only then that you can see things clearly.

Without the stillness, what you see is a blur. You may be able to catch a few details here and there, but they're not connected. When you don't understand the connections, the knowledge isn't for sure.

Real discernment sees connections between causes and effects. If you know the cause and you know the effect, or if you know the effect and you know the cause: That's discernment. Just knowing causes but without being sure about their effects, or vice-versa: That's not really discernment at all. That's just what everybody does all the time.

So you want to get the mind as quiet as you can and as observant continually as you can. That's when you begin to understand what's going on inside. And that's

when you can do something about it.

So it's good to let the mind have this time to be still. If you ask, "How long does it have to be still?" or, "How strong does your concentration have to be?" the answer is: Just keep doing it. It's not that you do concentration and then just leave it and go do something else. You try to carry your concentration into everything you do.

This way, as Ajaan Fuang said, your day isn't divided up into little times. It's one big time to meditate.

That's when the meditation develops momentum and can give rise to discernment.