

## *What to Respect*

*August 27, 2014*

You may have that noticed we do a lot of bowing around here.

The reason for that is we want to develop an attitude of respect.

Why do we respect the Buddha? Because he teaches us something worthy of respect in ourselves: that we have this desire for true happiness and we shouldn't ignore it. We should respect that desire.

The world tells you that the things it has to offer, the experiences it has to offer, are good enough. Don't think about true happiness, think about just-good-enough happiness: That's how they keep us enslaved to their stuff.

The Buddha says if you want a way out of that, you have to respect your desire for a happiness that really is true, that really is reliable, that harms no one.

So when we're bowing down to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha: we're bowing down to good qualities in ourselves, the qualities we want to develop. We have to have respect for these things because it's so easy to ignore them and so easy to step on them as we run off looking for something else.

So keep this in mind: that true happiness is possible and it can be attained through your own efforts. That's why we're meditating: We're showing some respect for that desire.

We're also showing respect for the power of the mind. It can shape all kinds of things in life. As we see all around us: lots of good things, lots of bad things. The human realm is really good for seeing a wide variety: all kinds of people, all kinds of intentions, all kinds of things shaped through their intentions. It's up to us to decide: Are you going to go down with the general run of things, which is downhill, or are you going to try to go up?

The mind has that power. It can climb high. But it also can go down very low. It can do a lot of damage that goes down low, too. So you have to respect that power.

This is why the Buddha teaches heedfulness together with respect: that our choices really do matter and they really do have large consequences.

It's like playing with fire. The fire is good for some things but you have to keep it under control. If you use it well, you can cook your food, you can accomplish all kinds of things. But if you don't keep it under control, it spreads out and can burn your house, burn your neighbor's house, spread out to areas that you don't even know.

So have respect for these things: respect for the power of the mind and respect

for your desire for happiness. When you put them together, that's when that happiness becomes possible.