

Strength Inside

January 23, 2015

Close your eyes and watch your breath.

The breath is our life, so the quality of the breathing is going to have a big impact on the life of the body and the life of the mind.

So try to breathe in a way that feels really good, feels really nourishing right now. And allow your awareness to stay there.

This is your real refuge inside. If you take refuge in things outside, they're not dependable. They change all the time. You need a place inside the mind that you can depend on.

Of course a lot of things in the mind change, too, which is why we have to train it.

So try to keep it right here.

As for the things of the world outside, just let them go, let them go. After all, they're going to let you go at some point, so you might as well learn how to practice letting them go right here, right now. Give the mind a space where it can be by itself on its own terms and not having to depend on things outside.

This is the kind of mind that's really strong. If the mind needs to have things this way or that way in order to be happy, then it's pretty weak. It's spent all its time arranging conditions to be just right, and it's spent so much energy on that there's not much energy left for itself.

And of course the conditions keep changing.

What you want is a mind that can put up with any conditions, that can have a sense of well-being, a sense of solidity inside no matter what things are happening outside.

Because the way of the world is that things come and they go. There's gain and there's loss, there's status, loss of status, praise, criticism, pleasure and pain. These things come and go all the time. And as you notice, they're in pairs. You can't have one side—the desirable side—without the undesirable side coming along at some point.

So if your happiness depends on that sort of thing, it's pretty rocky. But if there's a center inside that you can really depend on, then no matter what happens outside—things go up and they go down—you don't have to go up and down with them. That's when the mind is really secure. That's when the mind is really strong.

So try to develop this quality of strength inside.

It requires a good foundation, which is why we stay with the breath. As long as you're alive, you've got this breath right here to watch. And even when the breath stops, you still have your awareness that you've trained to be centered right here instead of scattering it out in all directions. That's something you can really depend on.

So try to develop this centered awareness right here, right now, because it's going to see you through a lot of difficulties and make them not difficult. In other words, as long as the mind isn't put to hardship, then the things of the world can change as they like but the mind doesn't have to be afraid of them because its happiness isn't invested there.

It's like learning about a country where they're having economic troubles. If you have money invested in that country, you're going to be reading every report that comes in. Your state of mind is going to go up and down with the reports. But if you have no money invested there or anything connected with it, then you can read the reports and that's just another part of the world.

You see that the difference is the amount you're invested in things.

So try to invest as much as you can in your own mind because that's an investment that really pays off. That's something you really can depend on.