

The Baits of the World

October 8, 2015

We live in the world, and all too often the world takes over. In other words, it dominates our awareness so that we're hardly aware of our own minds.

This is why we need to take some time out, to be in a place where issues of the mind can be more important and the issues of the world can be far away.

Because the state of your mind is what's going to determine how you live. When things like aging, illness, and death come, it's the state of the mind that's going to determine whether you're going to suffer or not.

So you really have to work on the quality of your mind so that you don't let the world take over. Even when you leave the monastery, you don't let the world take over. The mind has to be number one. The affairs of the world have to come after.

Otherwise, there's no time for the mind. The mind gets involved in trying to fix up the world and it develops some pretty bad qualities in the course of doing that. It may develop some good ones, but all too often it develops bad ones. We give rein to our anger or our greed or delusion or lust, whatever because these things seem to work in the world. But they're not really good for the mind.

So you have to learn how to keep the mind separate, give it its place right here with the breath. Stay with the breath coming in, going out. Know that this is your territory. Don't let anyone else come in and move into your territory. Then when you're solidly here, securely here, that's when you can deal with the world from a position of strength.

After all, what does the world have to offer? It has gain and loss, status, loss of status, praise, criticism, pleasure, pain. That's pretty much it. That's what it uses to lure us out from our sense of being securely inside. But once we're out there it's pretty insecure.

After all, those are the world's things. We want the gain, we want the status, we want the praise, we want the pleasures, but they're not really ours. Even though they may come our way, they're not ours for sure. The world can take them back very easily any time at all.

So don't let your happiness depend on things that the world can take back. Have it depend on something that you're in charge of. You're in charge of your awareness, you're in charge of your breath, you're in charge of your mindfulness—if you train these things. So these things need to be trained. Give their training top priority.

Then you can live in the world without being destroyed by the world. Your

goodness doesn't get destroyed. The sense of being solidly here in the present moment: That doesn't get destroyed. That's your inner strength.