

Your Own Space

April 6, 2016

The mind needs its shelter because we live in a world where we're bombarded on all sides. And you look inside and you find the mind bombarding itself. That's what we've got to put an end to, because that's the pain and suffering that actually weighs the mind down. The stuff from the outside wouldn't weigh it down if it weren't for the fact that we have this tendency to pull things in.

It's as if someone's shooting arrows at us. They don't quite reach us, so we pick them up and stab ourselves with them. This is what we've got to watch out for. And this is the habit we've got to learn how to put an end to.

So when things come from outside, remind yourself: It's just outside. It doesn't have to be in the mind.

Ask yourself, "Why is the mind reverberating?" To use another analogy: It's as if they try to hit us with a mallet. And the sound is not just one little "pink," it's a sound that reverberates for a long time.

So you've got to train the mind so that it can see its own habits. That's why we get it really, really still, so that we can begin to see where we're adding to the problem.

The situation of the world is bad enough. We look around us and there's all kinds of killing and stealing and cheating and illicit sex and lying and people getting drunk and intoxicated all the time. All the five precepts are being broken all over the place. That's why the world is in a lot of trouble.

So you look around at the world and you can make up your mind, "Am I going to fall in with that or can I maintain my own integrity?" That's one way you can pull yourself out of the world.

Realize that you are something of an outsider. If you're practicing the Dhamma, that's what you are: You're an outsider in every culture, standing outside its typical ways of running things in the world.

You begin to realize: There are a lot of other things that you've absorbed as you've grown up that you don't really have to continue to absorb.

This is where we get into concentration and discernment, for the mind to have its own space inhabit your body. This is your space, and you can see more clearly where the mind is picking up those arrows and stabbing itself.

So try to get the mind still. This is something of a shelter already, just having the mind have its own still place inside.

You can inhabit your territory. Other people don't have to inhabit it with

their ideas, with their emotions, with their opinions. This is your space. Once you have a clear sense of your space, you can notice where something is crossing the line: in other words, where you've taken that arrow and brought it in over the line and stabbed yourself with it.

So try to get a sense of your space right here, your own integrity right here.

When you start drawing lines like this, you start seeing things clearly.

As the Buddha said, it's not a matter of seeing things as all being One. It's more that you see that you're something separate from things, and that things out there are separate, that you begin to see the unskillful ways in which they get put together.

So have some time for yourself, by yourself. This is your own space. Get this as solid as you can and then you'll be able to see things clearly.