

Group Harmony

June 12, 2016

Close your eyes and watch your breath. As the breath comes in, watch it coming in. As it goes out, watch it going out. Try to stay with it all the time.

Try to be in harmony with the breath. Keep a harmony between the mind and the breath and the body. In other words, make sure the breath feels comfortable in the body, and that the mind and the body stay together on good terms. When they're not in harmony, they go their separate ways. You're sitting here meditating, the body looks like it's meditating, but the mind is off someplace else. Or there are times when the mind wants to meditate but the body doesn't seem to want to cooperate: That's actually a lack of harmony within the mind itself. So try to bring everybody together here.

It's when everybody comes together: That's when goodness can arise. The same with the world outside: It's hard for us to build anything, to accomplish anything, without a lot of cooperation, a lot of harmony. This monastery wouldn't even be here without the help of a *lot* of people.

Even as you're sitting here meditating right now, the fact that you have clothing, food, shelter, and medicine to take care of the body and to allow you to meditate: That depends on other people, too. If people cooperate, then you can build a lot of goodness together. If you don't cooperate, then the goodness doesn't really happen much: little bits and pieces. but it never really goes anywhere. So try to do your best to cooperate inside and then take that lesson outside.

As the Buddha said, for a group to get together and stay together with a sense of well-being, a sense of happiness as a group requires six qualities. The first three are that you act towards other people showing goodwill, you speak to other people showing goodwill, and you think about other people showing goodwill. In other words, you wish for their happiness and for your happiness too. You think of the happiness of the larger group.

The fourth quality is that when you gain things, you share your gains. You don't just keep them all for yourself.

And then in terms of your views and in terms of your virtue, you try to be on par with everybody else. This doesn't mean that we go for the lowest common denominator. It means that at the very least to have the five precepts that we took just now.

This is why we keep repeating the five precepts every week. It's not that you don't know what they are. Everybody sitting here knows what they are. But we

sometimes need reminding about how important these things are for us to live together here in the community and to live together in the society at large. We need to have standards that we can all abide by.

Our understanding about what's right and wrong, what's skillful and unskillful: As long as we're on the same wavelength, the Buddha's wavelength, then it's very easy for us to live together and work together and build a lot of goodness together.

So remember that goodness isn't something you do all on your own. Even when you're meditating off under a tree, the fact that there is a tree there: Somebody planted it; somebody looked after it. You've got clothing: Somebody provided that.

Even if you did the work yourself, you had to cooperate with other people in order to do that work, in order to gain some reward from it. So think about the fact that all of our goodness comes from being in harmony.

So have harmony inside. Make sure your body and mind and breath are all in harmony. And do your best to develop harmony outside for the sake of what's good. This is what makes human life worthwhile: the goodness we can build together.