

Why Are You Looking Outside?

January 19, 2017

Today's a good day to be inside, to keep warm and dry, and to look inside your mind as well.

We tend to see the problems of life as coming from outside, but the real problems come from within. When the mind gets infected by greed, aversion, and delusion, it's not just that the germs are coming from outside. It also has its own lack of resistance inside. Sometimes it even welcomes them in. At times in which we should keep our windows and doors closed, we tend to open them up and invite everything in inside. This is the habit of the mind that we've got to learn how to bring under control.

The mind doesn't just sit there and react to things. It's out there actively looking for things. You want to make sure it's looking for the right things. That means you have to get back inside and say, "What's causing you to look outside? What lack do you feel? What hunger do you feel? What need do you feel that has to be fulfilled? And how do you understand how it's going to be fulfilled?"

We practice concentration to get a clear view of what's actually going on. Then we try to develop right view, so that we understand where our misunderstandings are causing the problem.

As the Buddha said, in some cases all you do is have to look at what's going on in the mind, you see what the problem is, and that solves it. Other times, though, you have to fight it, actively go against what the mind is telling you. You have to tell it other things so that it finally comes to its senses. So take a good look inside and see what needs to be straightened out here.

As for things outside—like the cabinet's swinging open right now—take care of those when they need to be taken care of. Like right now <laugh> somebody!

Otherwise try to stay focused right inside, because this is where the real issues are.