

The Important Work

February 7, 2017

Today's a good day to stay inside. It's raining outside: cold, wet, muddy. So find a good place inside where you can focus on the work inside.

Even though we can't do work outside, there's still plenty of work to be done inside. In fact, that's where the important work happens. Work on your greed, work on your aversion, work on your delusion.

The duties the Buddha set out in terms of the four noble truths: Try to comprehend where there's stress, so that you can abandon its cause. Develop the path so that you can do that and realize that there is an ending to stress.

Because the big problem is inside. There are unpleasant things happening outside all around, but the Buddha's solution is not to make the unpleasant things outside stop. If there's something that you can change, you go ahead and change it. But a lot of things you can't change. So instead of wasting your time on the things you can't change, focus on the things inside that are causing you to suffer.

After all, even when things outside are bad, there's no need to suffer. The mind can learn how to talk to itself and find an alternative source of happiness. Then it can live in this world without throwing too many tantrums. So learn how to talk to yourself to realize that the important work is right here, what you're doing right here, right now.

The media keep telling us that the important things are things that other people are doing someplace else. But for you, the important work is right here. This is where your duties are right here.

So you take care of the situation around you as best you can, and then focus on the real cause of the suffering inside.

In that way, whether the weather's good or the weather's bad, whether it's going to be inside or outside, the real work is getting done.