

The Energy of Conviction

March 1, 2017

Just as the body has to have food, the mind has to have food as well. Food for the mind is primarily the good intentions you have. That's health food for the mind.

Junk food for the mind is all the things that the mind goes running after in terms of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, tactile sensations. "This is pretty, this is nice. I like this. I don't like that": That kind of stuff is junk food for the mind. If you keep feeding the mind with junk food, its energy is going to fall.

Energy here is the energy of conviction, conviction that your actions really do matter, that your actions make the difference between whether you're going to be happy or not happy in this lifetime and lifetimes to come. Based on that conviction, you do your best to be as skillful as you can in what you do and say and think: mindful to keep this principle in mind, concentrated on what's really of good value in your life. And finally, you have the discernment to know that there may be things that you like to do but are going to give bad results in the long term, so you have the discernment to say No to yourself and make the No stick. As for things that you don't like to do but are going to give good long-term results, you have the discernment to talk yourself into wanting to do them.

When you have these qualities, then your mind is strong. You can live anywhere and be in any condition and you can maintain your inner strength.

The meditation here is food for that inner strength, for giving rise to a sense of well-being inside. You stay with the breath when it's comfortable, you make it comfortable if it's not. And then stay right there.

As for the mind whose sense of irritation would make it do unskillful things, that irritation is going to go. You're feeling good inside. You start thinking about going with your greed, aversion, and delusion and you begin to wonder why. You can see the long-term results and you realize you don't want them. You've got something better right here: the well-being that you can create inside.

So you want to stick with this. This conviction is strength for the mind, and you feed it through the practice of generosity, virtue, concentration. That way, the strength of the mind will be able to stay stable and solid even though strength of the body may ebb and flow. You want the strength of your mind to be solid, and you're in charge of making sure that it is.