

A Sense of Inner Worth

March 27, 2017

When we meditate, it's food for the mind. As the Buddha said, there are three things that nourish the mind: There's contact at the senses, awareness at the senses, and then there are our intentions.

The intentions are the important things. If we feed the mind with good intentions, it becomes a healthy mind. If you look at your actions, you look at your intentions, and can see that there's nothing to criticize, that gives you a sense of well-being, a sense of inner worth. Which is what puñña or merit is all about: that sense of inner worth, that we live on this Earth and we're not just taking, taking, taking what we can. We think about the other people around us, in the sense that we want to make sure that our happiness doesn't cause any harm to anybody else.

So take a good look around you. When you look for happiness, what is the impact it has on other people? If you see that you're causing harm, you can change. That food for the mind is the kind that saps your strength. You get a little bit of pleasure but there's nothing left after the pleasure's gone—nothing good left: just more hunger, along with the karma of having harmed others.

So you want to make sure that your happiness is good all-around. And that gives nourishment to the mind, that gives you a sense of well-being, a strength inside.

This is why the Buddha placed conviction in the power of your action as one of the first strengths that keeps the mind strong. Otherwise, you do things and you tell yourself it doesn't really matter, but after a while it begins to pile up and you begin to see that it does matter.

So make sure that when you look for happiness, you're looking in the right way. Look for a happiness that'll keep you strong over time. That's the genuine good food for the mind. We do that by being generous, by being virtuous, by meditating—all the things that are really good for the mind.

So look for your food here, look for your happiness here inside in an area where it doesn't harm anybody at all. When you find this happiness, you'll find that you'll have more to share: like a person who's strong and then uses that strength to help other people. That's something that's good all-around.