No Matter Where You Go

December 29, 2017

When you meditate, you're providing a home for the mind, a home that you can take wherever you go, no matter where you are on Earth. You've got your breath, so you can feel at home in any situation. You've got your territory here inside. Even when the situation outside gets threatening, your breath is your breath, and you can do with it as you want.

So meditation is an opportunity to learn what kind of breathing really is good. Some people have trouble in the very beginning, saying, "Oh, I don't know what a comfortable breath is." Well, experiment. Change the breath around. Notice things,. Learn how to develop your powers of observation.

Think not only of the breath but also of the other properties in the body. There's warmth, there's coolness, there's solidity. When you get very attuned to the breath, you can get attuned to these others as well. It's a good vocabulary to have in mind.

It's like when they're training people who taste things for companies. They have to develop a really elaborate vocabulary to describe all the different kinds of tastes there are. The larger the vocabulary they have, the more they begin to notice, "Well, there really is a difference between this and that."

It's the same with the breath. You can learn all different ways of dealing with the breath, and if Ajaan Lee's vocabulary isn't enough for you, you can make up your own words for what kind of breathing you really like. When Ajaan Fuang was teaching, he often would ask people, "How does the breath feel?" They would have their own ways of describing it, and he would use their language to teach them.

So learn to familiarize yourself with what's going on inside and become a connoisseur of good breath energy. Develop your discernment, develop your ability to see the differences between one kind of breathing and another, and the effect that each has on the body and on the mind.

That way you turn this house of the body into a home—a place where you want to return, a place that's yours no matter where you go.