

Safety Inside

January 9, 2018

With the wind and the rain and the cold, or relative cold at least, it's a good day to be inside. And it's a good day for your mind to be inside too.

As you're sitting here meditating, as soon as any thought comes up that's going to take you away from the body, just drop it. Say, "This is my safe place in here." Go outside and you're going to be subject to all kinds of things.

The mind is like a child. You want to give it a good place to stay inside so it doesn't keep wandering outside. When it's wandering outside, it's subject to all kinds of dangers. Strangers can come up and offer it candy. Cars can run over the kid. Dogs can bite it. It can find things that it thinks are food and make itself sick. It's the same way with the mind. We think we can find food in our thoughts. A lot of it, though, is going to make us sick.

So give the mind something good to play with. You can play with the breath inside, make it a comfortable place to be, a snug, warm place to be on cold days, and a cool place to be on hot days.

In Thailand I know a lot of Ajaan Fuang's students would talk about having their little air-conditioned room inside. On a day like this you want to think of a nice warm place with a heater inside. But either way, you've got your safe place. You're trying to make it comfortable, trying to make the mind used to being here inside. Make this its default mode.

Otherwise, you find yourself getting caught up in things outside. When you come back into the body, you realize that the breath has been a mess. And when the breath is a mess, the other properties in the body are going to be a mess as well.

But you can remind yourself that even when you open your eyes and there's the visual range, you don't want to leave the sense of the body as you feel it from within. It's so easy to get out into your visual range and forget the body. But here you can stay inside and still be aware outside. This snug place you've got has windows. You can see the world outside and also see how the body's reacting, and make sure that, at the very least, things inside are calm. Things coming from outside may not be calm, but at least inside you've got some calm.

That way, not only are you safe, but you're also in a position where when you have to act, you're coming from a place of security, a place of strength. You're much more likely to be able to do the skillful thing.

So get used to being inside. Don't let anything pull you out.