

The Problem Is Inside

January 26, 2018

Gather your attention here at the breath. Gather all your thoughts here at the breath. You don't want them to go running around. If they're running around a lot, the mind wastes a *lot* of energy—energy that could be put to much better use. So instead of looking outside or thinking about things outside, think about things inside.

As for things outside, the Buddha says to develop a sense of contentment. The situation may not be perfect, but it's good enough to practice. Where your lack of contentment should be focused is on the mind itself. Why is the mind still creating suffering for itself? Where is the ignorance? Where is the craving that's causing this? You want to look inside to try to get really quiet. As for the ups and downs of the world, try to keep everything inside on an even keel.

Today it's relatively cool. In a couple of days it's supposed to be warm again and then cool again. Try not to let your mind be affected by the ups and downs of things outside, because it's got work to do inside. This is where the real problem is. The problem is not with the weather; the problem is not with the society. The problem is with the mind's tendency to create suffering even when it's trying to find happiness. So you've got to look into that. That's where the real issue is.

This is one of the reasons why we bow down to the Buddha. He reminds us that the problem is inside. He shows us how you solve the problem. After his awakening he could have talked about all kinds of things for years and years and years—about all the wonderful things he saw in his awakening. But no, he focused mainly on what would be of use to the people he was talking to. So we should have a sense of respect for that, a sense of gratitude that he left a teaching that would last for thousands of years and would still be useful for thousands of years.

So here's our opportunity to apply it, to figure out, now that we're looking at the right place, i.e. inside, what we can do to change things inside, so that in our efforts to find happiness we really do find happiness. Here's the opportunity.

As I said, the situation outside may not be perfect but it's good enough. A lot of issues in the world stay unresolved but if you can resolve *this* issue, you've taken care of *the* main problem. The problems of the world outside will never be solved. No matter how perfect a society you design, there are still going to be people dissatisfied with it, who will try to take it apart. But when something really solid is found in the mind, nobody can take that apart at all. That's what we're looking for. Always keep that in mind.