The Gift of Our Actions

September 6, 2014

Close your eyes and watch your breath coming in, going out.

Think *bud-* with the in-breath, *-dho* with the out-.

Think of the quality of the Buddha. That's a quality you want to infuse into your heart. A quality of being awake. And other qualities as well: You want to be mindful, alert, compassionate, wise, pure.

These are all things we want to bring into our hearts and then bring into our actions, because our actions are like our contribution to the world. What are we contributing? There's not much we can take with us when we leave the world but we do take our actions.

That's something worth thinking about. Usually we do things to get things out of the world and then hope that we can hold on to them, that we can separate from the world. But actually, you have nothing to take with you except the actions you've done to take things away from other people. But when you give to the world, those actions become your real possession and those you can take with you, too. So you don't lose anything by doing what's right, by doing what's good. In fact, you gain. Everybody gains.

As we were saying last night, this is a special principle in the Buddha's teachings: There is a happiness possible where everybody gains. So we want to pursue that happiness as much as we can, because there are no drawbacks to it. You gain; the people around you gain as well.

When you're virtuous, when you're generous, when you meditate: The fewer defilements you have in your mind, the less greed, aversion, and delusion, then the less these things come out in your actions. So the people around you don't have to suffer from them, either.

Always remember that point: that genuine happiness is happiness all around. It's the kind of happiness that doesn't create boundaries. In fact, it erases them. It's in pursuit of that happiness that we can live together with one another in this world, and everybody can take away something really good: the goodness of their own thoughts, words, and deeds.