

Venerable Sudhammacara's Mindfulness Teachings (December 2008)

Wow! Today I had the opportunity to attend a teaching with an amazing Japanese Buddhist Monk, Venerable Sudhammacara at Radhika Rawley's home in Delhi. Talk about coming at exactly the right time—the weeks before the Holidays must be the most insane! On my way home after the teaching I shared a cab with some lovely women into the dharma. One was from Ireland and we just bonded over our love for my teacher Thay. I love Thich Nhat Hanh so much. I'm at a loss for words. She was sharing with me how Thay's books seem to lift her out of the darkest places and how his teaching on Emptiness on the last day of the Delhi retreat blew her a way. I still remember someone yelling, "Don't Go!" and all of the monastics singing..."No coming, no going..." I saw a lot of Thay's teachings in Ven. Sudhammacara's talk on Mindfulness. I feel so blessed to have my teacher Thay. I just love him so much. What follows are my notes from today's teachings:

Mindfulness

freedom from our own mind...anxiety or fear is the strongest negative emotion, not even anger.

the purpose of meditation is to stop suffering

why do we observe the breathe to stop suffering? we need to investigate the nature of suffering

only one kind of suffering (not only suffering from ager, relationships etc.) YOU ARE ONLY SUFFERING FROM YOUR MIND!

we need to understand the nature of suffering and we realize we only have the suffering of our own mind.

you are not suffering from not having enough money. you are suffering from anxious thoughts of not having enough \$.

if we check our mind we find we are suffering from fear

we are constantly speaking in our heads.

non stop thinking is the essence of suffering

stop anxious thinking to end suffering

we can't stop thinking unless we use some kind of meditation

thinking and watching the breath cannot be done at the same time

if you feel mental agony you are doing something wrong, instead of stopping thinking you are using thinking.

the situation doesn't change but you feel peace and stillness and a fundamental shift occurs in your consciousness

meditation should be joyful effort

thinking vs. awareness

when you are thinking your mind goes everywhere but the present moment

the mind doesn't go to the present moment because you can't think in the present moment.

you can only observe the breath, you cannot think, only think in the past and future

all our suffering is from nonstop thinking which is torturing us

to free ourselves of torture we must go to the present moment

completely new consciousness and awareness

for hindus the thinking mind in maya (Ramana Maharshi)

stop thinking and you see the world as it is

we are wearing very thick glasses and we see the world through our crazy thinking and believe this is reality

we must take off the glasses and stop thinking when we do this we see the world as it is which is peaceful, beautiful, joyful

we have misery as long as we wear the glasses

breath is a crystal clear method, no excuse or ambiguity

clear difference between thinking and awareness

(Thay) if we do things as a means to an end then we are not present

we must do things for the sake of doing

blue sky, white clouds (thinking mind) the breath helps us make a gap in nonstop thinking

(Krishnamurti) in a teaching he once said, "I will share my secret" his secret was that he doesn't mind what happens, he knows the blue sky! we have to see the blue sky in order to have understanding—emptiness

thinking, emotion and body are part of it—we are an emanation of the blue sky

His master from the Soto school said that when he attained Enlightenment his body and mind dropped

people suffer because people are greedy

human beings are deceived by our own mind

we are full of fear

without a spiritual practice we can't have any real solutions to the worlds problems—the env, spiritual, and political movements must join together into one movement

fear and cynicism is the problem

oprah promoted both eckhart tolle and obama—she listens to her heart and just knows