Put Your Knowledge Away

October 10, 2021

In John’s entitlement, he used to say that when you’re going to meditate, take what knowledge you’ve learned from the books and put it away in a trunk. In other words, focus on what you’re doing right now. Don’t focus on what you’ve remembered from what you’ve read. No, they didn’t mean that you would lock the trunk. It’s just that your main focus is right here. You’re right here with the breath. Right here with your mind, your awareness in the present moment. And you’re checking to see if they’re willing to stay together. If they do, you can give 100% of your attention right there. If they’re not staying together, that’s when you have to start thinking about what have you remembered from the past, from your own actions, from your own meditations. What have you remembered from the past in reading books? That’s when you open up your trunk. Open up the chest. And take just enough to help you with what your problem is right now. For example, with the breath, we have John Lee’s teachings on how to adjust the breath using directed thought and evaluation. Directed thought is focusing your thoughts on a topic. Evaluation is contemplating it, considering it. Asking questions, trying to find answers. In other words, it’s the active side of the mind. As you try different ways of breathing, try different ways of focusing, until you find something that works. When it works, then you maintain it. And as you maintain it, then you put it to use. You try to think of ways to spread that sense of well-being around. So it fills the whole body. At this point, again, you can put your knowledge back in the chest, back in the trunk. And focus on what you’re doing. ’Cause that’s what concentration is. That’s how you use maps, anyhow. If you’re driving along, you don’t keep your nose in the map all the time. You look at the map just enough to know where you’re going. Then you focus your attention on the road. As you think of the Buddhas, he was meditating. He didn’t have any books to go by. All he had was his own honesty and his willingness to observe what he was doing, pass judgment on what he was doing, holding it to a high standard. As he said, he maintained that he would not let his efforts lapse, and he wouldn’t rest content unless he’d found the ultimate happiness. It’s this element of discontent that kept him going. He kept saying, “Is there something better?”Is there something better? “Is there still any stress?”Is there still any suffering right here, right now? “If there is, what am I doing”that’s contributing to that?” It’s by watching himself that he found the Dharma. Watching himself steadily, watching himself truthfully. So that’s where our attention should be focused, on what we’re doing. Remembering just enough of the Dharma to help us nudge it along. And otherwise, giving as much attention as we can to how we’re experiencing the present, how we’re shaping the present, and how we can do it better. Because remember, the Dharma is a reality. It’s not just words. The words came from the reality in the Buddha’s heart and the heart of the teachers that we respect. They put it into words as pointers for us to look into the reality in our own hearts, ’cause that’s where the Dharma’s gonna lie. So keep your attention right here at the breath, right here at the heart. Pulling out your knowledge when you need it. Otherwise, gaining your knowledge from what you see right here, what you’re doing right now. ’Cause that’s the kind of knowledge that’ll be for sure. As long as it’s just knowledge in books, there’s always gonna be some doubt. What do the words really mean? Did the people who write them really know what they were doing, what they were saying? But when you see that you do something and you get certain results, and you’re sure that you’re mindful and alert enough to be a good judge of what you’re doing and what the results are, then you can cut through your doubts. And you see that what the Buddha taught was really true. It is possible to find true happiness inside. And the deeper you go, the better it gets.

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