

## *The Mind's Own Inconstancy*

*October 2, 2013*

The world spins around: goes up, goes down. It's supposed to be cold for the next two days, then it's going to get hot for another three days.

If your happiness depends on the world that's the kind of thing you've got to put up with: the ups and downs. It's funny: When the Buddha says that there's something better than that, something beyond the ups and downs, a lot of people living in the world say, "That sounds pretty pessimistic. Doesn't the world have its nice times?" Of course, it does have its nice times, but then they turn on you. Then they turn around and they're nice again and then they turn on you again. If you make your happiness depend on things like that, you're going to go crazy.

So you've got to find a place inside that you can rely on, something you can depend on that doesn't go up when things outside go up and doesn't go down when they go down.

This is why we work with the breath. The breath has its ins and outs, but the ins are no better than the outs necessarily. But you can adjust both the ins and outs to make this a good place to stay.

Then you can dig deeper down into the mind to find something that's really of great value. But it's only when you're here solidly that you can do the proper digging. Otherwise, you dig a little here and dig a little there and never get very far. Then you say, "There's nothing down there." It's because you haven't stayed and really looked for long periods of time.

Which is why it's important to meditate long periods of time so that you can really see. Otherwise, you get just a little tiny taste. Sometimes it's a good taste and sometimes it's not a good taste. It seems to be just as unreliable as things outside. Well you have to make *yourself* more reliable as you stick with the breath.

If you're not doing formal meditation, then make sure to stay with the breath as you go through the day: when doing walking meditation, talking, eating, cleaning up. Whatever the activity, try to be grounded inside. The more reliable *you* are, the more reliable a happiness you're going to find inside.

So when you're disappointed by the ups and downs of things outside, tell yourself that the really problematic ones are the ones going up and down inside your own mind.

We say that things are inconstant and stressful, but the real problem with inconstancy is the mind's own inconstancy, the stress it creates itself.

Someone from Singapore wrote a letter to Ajaan Fuang talking once, talking

about how his practice was just simply watching things being inconstant. And Ajaan Fuang told me right back, “Say, ‘The fact that things out there are inconstant: That’s not the problem. Turn around and look at who’s saying they’re inconstant. Look at that one. Look at its inconstancy and learn how to make it constant.’”

That’s when you can find a happiness you can trust.