



Stuff and nonsense

What is the Buddhist approach to dealing with all our inner stuff?

Let us take the example of present moment awareness as directed through the eyes. If we look with anger, what arises inside is the result of our anger. What arises is not the anger itself, that is in the eyes, in the way we look. This is an important distinction that is rarely made. What it means is that we do not have to work with the stuff that is arising, that would be nonsense. Instead we take it as feedback and alter our gaze accordingly. When we look with kinder eyes the result will be a kinder mind.

How do we fail to see this? What fools us is that the karmic reaction, the inner voice we trigger with our angry eyes, does not sound like an inner reaction because it takes over our spoken voice, so quick is the mind to follow it. If the mind becomes calmer we begin to be able to see such things arise without following them straight away, but it is still normal to take what is arising as an aspect of our minds rather than as karma. We consequently miss the first and most important beat. If we are not careful we then end up in the endless inner dialogues of the proliferating mind. We are caught inside rather than dealing with the real issue of our relationship with the outer world that is the origin of it all.

The other complication is the arising of memory along with all the stuff. If we see clearly, however, we can see memory as part of the outer world rather than the inner and relate to it in the same way. With mindfulness, seeing the movements of the mind as well as its contents, we will come to see what is really inner and outer and this will naturally show us the way.

I offer this for your reflection.

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