

## *Goodwill for Those Near to You*

*April 24, 2015*

We begin each meditation with goodwill to remind ourselves of why we're meditating and to set our intentions straight, reminding ourselves that the wisest thing to do with your mind is to train it, because you want a happiness that's lasting and that's not going to harm anybody.

For the mind to have a sense of how important that is, you really do have to train it. You have to remind it of the dangers that come from all the different pleasures that we tend to pursue through life. Regardless of what kind of pleasure you're pursuing in the world, you've got to put up with the fact that you're going to end up with some pain, too. If the mind isn't trained, it's going to take that pain and do more unskillful things, and those unskillful things are going to lead to more unskillful, undesirable results.

So you've got a mind that's very busy here. It keeps on churning out ideas, churning out intentions. You want to make sure it's churning out good ones, so you want to set your compass straight to make sure that you're not going to hope for anybody's suffering.

Especially when we're living together in a large group like this. This for us is large. There's a Thai saying that "The tongue and teeth lie very near to each other so it's very common that the tongue gets bitten."

So you have to be careful about that. Spread goodwill not only to people on the far ends of the earth but also to people right around you. When the texts talk about all beings in all directions, it tends to get very large and vague and indefinite.

First think of the people around you and then work out in ever-widening circles as the people get more and more faceless. Often the more faceless they are, the easier it is to feel goodwill. But the people right up around you: Those are the ones that you've really got to feel goodwill for, because you've got to be careful of your actions as you go through the day. You want to make sure that nothing unskillful slips out in your thoughts, in your words, in your deeds. If it does slip out in your thoughts, make sure that it doesn't come out in your words or your deeds in any way that would cause other people to suffer even a just little bit. Now, there is the question of people's feelings getting hurt, and that's normal. But you don't want to harm anybody. That's something else.

Make sure you don't do anything for anybody's harm and don't wish for their harm. Make sure that you have goodwill for them, reminding yourself that we're

all looking for happiness.

Here in the monastery we're all trying to train our minds. It's like being in a hospital: Different people have different diseases. They're all trying to get well but just because your heart rate is at one level and the person next to you has a heart rate at another level doesn't mean you're better than they are. You may have a different disease.

So keep this in mind. Make sure that your goodwill is not just vague and all-extensive but that it's also very personal and up close.