

...Siddhartha quietly gestured for the children to all back up and he said, "You are all intelligent children and I am sure you will be able to understand and practice the things I will share with you. The Great Path I have discovered is deep and subtle, but anyone willing to apply his or her heart and mind can understand and follow it.

"When you children peel a tangerine, you can eat it with awareness or without awareness. What does it mean to eat a tangerine in awareness? When you are eating the tangerine, you are aware that you are eating the tangerine. You fully experience its lovely fragrance and sweet taste. When you peel the tangerine, you know that you are peeling the tangerine; when you remove a slice and put it in your mouth, you know that you are removing a slice and putting it in your mouth; when you experience the lovely fragrance and sweet taste of the tangerine, you are aware that you are experiencing the lovely fragrance and sweet taste of the tangerine. The tangerine Nandabala offered me had nine sections. I ate each morsel in awareness and saw how precious and wonderful it was. I did not forget the tangerine, and thus the tangerine became something very real to me. If the tangerine is real, the person eating it is real. That is what it means to eat a tangerine in awareness.

"Children, what does it mean to eat a tangerine without awareness? When you are eating the tangerine, you do not know that you are eating the tangerine. You do not experience the lovely fragrance and sweet taste of the tangerine. When you peel the tangerine, you do not know that you are peeling the tangerine; when you remove a slice and put it in your mouth, you do not know that you are removing a slice and putting it in your mouth; when you smell the fragrance or taste the tangerine, you do not know that you are smelling the fragrance and tasting the tangerine. Eating a tangerine in such a way, you cannot appreciate its precious and wonderful nature. If you are not aware that you are eating the tangerine, the tangerine is not real. If the tangerine is not real, the person eating it is not real either. Children, that is eating a tangerine without awareness.

"Children, eating the tangerine in mindfulness means that while eating the tangerine you are truly in touch with it. Your mind is not chasing after thoughts of yesterday or tomorrow, but is dwelling fully in the present moment. The tangerine is truly present. Living in mindful awareness means to live in the present moment, your mind and body dwelling in the very here and now.

"A person who practices mindfulness can see things in the tangerine that others are unable to see. An aware person can see the tangerine tree, the tangerine blossom in the spring, the sunlight and rain which nourished the tangerine. Looking deeply, one can see ten thousand things which have made the tangerine possible. Looking at a tangerine, a person who practices awareness can see all the wonders of the universe and how all things interact with one another. "Children, our daily life is just like a tangerine. Just as a tangerine is comprised of sections, each day is comprised of twenty-four hours. One hour is like one section of a tangerine. Living all twenty-four hours of a day is like eating all the sections of a tangerine. The path I have found is the path of living each hour of the day in awareness, mind and body always dwelling in the present moment. The opposite is to live in forgetfulness. If we live in forgetfulness, we do not know that we are alive. We do not fully experience life because our mind and body are not dwelling in the here and now...