

Thursday, March 11

The Roots of Anger

Anger is rooted in our lack of understanding of ourselves and of the causes, deep-seated as well as immediate, that brought about this unpleasant state of affairs.

Anger is also rooted in desire, pride, agitation, and suspicion. The primary roots of our anger are in ourselves. Our environment and other people are only secondary. It is not difficult for us to accept the enormous damage brought about by a natural disaster, such as a earthquake or a flood. But when damage is caused by another person, we don't have much patience. We know that earthquakes and floods have causes, and we should see that the person who has precipitated our anger also has reasons, deep-seated and immediate, for what he has done.

... I am not saying that someone who viciously attacks us should not be disciplined. But what is most important is that we first take care of the seeds of negativity in ourselves. Then if someone needs to be helped or disciplined, we will do so out of compassion, not anger and retribution. If we genuinely try to understand the suffering of another person, we are more likely to act in a way that will help him overcome his suffering and confusion, and that will help all of us.

*Thich Nhat Hanh, from **Peace is Every Step***