

## *The Perfection of Truth*

*September 22, 2013*

Close your eyes and make up your mind that you're going to stay with the breath. You're going to watch the breath as it comes in, watch the breath as it goes out. Then you watch the next one and the next one. You really stick with this. Once you've made up your mind, you want to stick with it.

This quality is called the perfection of truth. When you think about truth, there are two kinds: There are statements that report what's true outside and then there are statements that *create* what's true. In other words, when you make up your mind you want to do something and you really stick with it, you've created a new truth.

That's really the important part of the path, because the whole path to the end of suffering is a truth that you make happen.

It's not that it goes against the way things are in the world. In fact, for the path to work, it has to go in line with the way things are. But whether you're going to follow the path or not depends on you. It's not just going to happen on its own.

So you look at the world and you figure out what's good and what's bad in the world, what you should and shouldn't do in regard to the world, and you make up your mind to really stick with what you should do. Then you try to be true to that determination.

So right now you're going to practice some truthfulness here. You make up your mind to stay with the breath and you really stick with it, each time it comes in, each time it goes out. When you realize you've slipped off, you come right back. Of course, to stick with it requires a little bit of ingenuity, too. The determination on its own is not going to make it happen. You've got to find ways to make it easier to happen. That's why we watch the breath to make sure it's comfortable coming in, comfortable going out. That way it gets easier to stay with. It's more pleasant to stay with.

Think about this as you go through the day. You make up your mind that something really should be done and the next question should be, "What's the easiest way to get yourself to do that and to stick with it?"

You don't use just the force of your will. You try to figure out ways in which you can use your discernment to make the task easier. It's in this way that the various perfections—such as the perfections of discernment and determination and truth, patience—all come together.

And they strengthen one another: That's how they get perfect.

So you want to look at your life to see: What really needs to be done in your life? What needs to be changed? Okay, make up your mind you really do want to change it and stick with that determination.

Otherwise, you become a traitor to yourself, a traitor to your own wisdom. You don't want that. If you're a traitor to yourself, how can you trust anybody outside?

So you make up your mind to stay here. If something is good, you stick with it. That quality is what will see you through. Otherwise, life has a lot of forces coming from outside that will buffet you around, blow you around different places. If you can't remain true to your own understanding of what the truth is or what is right and wrong, then you just get blown around with everybody else.

So look carefully at what's skillful and what's not skillful in your life. Make up your mind that "Whatever's unskillful is not good for me, is not good for anybody else: Why do I keep doing it? What's the pleasure I get out of it? Why don't I stop?" Then you make up your mind to find a better pleasure than that: a pleasure that doesn't harm anybody at all.

That's when truthfulness really becomes a virtue. You're not just reporting the truth. You're *creating* really good truth in the world. After all, the truths you report might be good or bad, but the truths you create: You want all of those to be good, and it's in your power to make them good. It's something you can do.