

## *To Gain Inner Wealth*

*May 22, 2016*

Close your eyes and watch your breath: all the way in, all the way out. Each breath as it comes in and out.

Try to get your mind to settle down right here. You can let go of everything else you've been thinking about: all your responsibilities from yesterday and tomorrow. Your only responsibility is right here, right now, to develop some inner wealth.

So much of our activity in life is centered around getting outer wealth. It's time that we looked inside and developed some inner wealth right here. That comes from being generous, being virtuous, developing discernment through meditation. These things are the wealth that protects you, that protects the mind.

Outer wealth can protect you only up to a certain point and then it's always going to leave you. But if you've developed inner wealth, that doesn't leave you at all. In fact, it sticks with you all the way through your life and on into your next life. So it's wealth that's really worth looking after.

When we come and ask for the precepts it's as if asking for a big hunk of money. When we're generous, it's as if we're trading our material things for wealth inside.

The quality of the mind that comes when you're generous is very wide-open, spacious. It's much nicer living in a spacious, generous mind than living in a stingy, narrow mind. No matter how large your house may be, if your mind feels narrow, if your heart feels narrow, it's a very confining place to be. So we practice generosity as a way of opening up the mind, expanding the home of our mind.

And then with the precepts we protect ourselves. What we give up here, what we're making a trade for, is that we're not going to act just on our moods. We've got some principles in our actions. There are certain things we just will not do under any circumstances. And that's wealth. There's a sense of self-esteem that comes with that. You realize you've been born into this human world, you've got all these good human qualities, and you're using them well. You're not using them to harm anybody at all, whether it's in terms of your body or in terms of your mouth.

Our human mouth is very special. As the Buddha said, when you're born, you're born with a sword in your mouth. It can cut both ways. You can cut through a lot of problems by the way you speak. But you can also cut your own throat or stab other people with the way you speak.

So you have to be very careful. This sword of the tongue is a very sharp weapon. If you use it well, it becomes an instrument for good. It's like any kind of knife: Things that need to be cut, you can cut through them very clearly. You've got something good there.

So you've got this human mouth. It's much better than any other mouth that there is. So make sure that you use it well, maintain it. You went to a lot of trouble to become a human being, now make sure that you maintain your human status and don't lose this treasure.

And then meditation: You sit here and you give up all your other concerns right now, all your other responsibilities. You focus directly on the mind, looking after the shape of the mind.

How is the mind right now? Is it mindful or is it mindless? Is it discerning or is it muddled? If it's muddled, what can you do to clear it up? Get it to settle down and be still. Once the mind is still, you've got a really good noble treasure in there, because that enables you to see what's right and what's wrong and to be able to trust your judgment.

As we come to the monastery, as we practice the Dhamma, it's all to gain inner wealth. So have a sense that these things really are important. Inner wealth is much more important than exterior wealth because exterior things can be taken away from you: either through natural causes or through other people or else you have to leave them. But with inner wealth, nobody can take it. Nothing can destroy it—unless you destroy it yourself.

So it's up to you to take care of your inner wealth. You've got the precepts now, so treat them like gold. They're something very precious. People who have the precepts are a light to other people in the world.

We look around us and we see so many people breaking the precepts one way or the other. And look at what it does to the human race. It creates all kinds of trouble. We can be a beacon, we can be a light to other people: showing that this is how you live a human life, this is how human beings should behave.

Whether they take the example or not, at least we're setting a good example. We're doing this for our own benefit, for the benefit of others. That's like taking your wealth and sharing it with others, and in sharing it in this way, your wealth is not diminished. In fact, it increases.

So make sure that you look after your virtue, your generosity, and your meditation, because these are forms of inner wealth that will keep you from being poor, that will keep you from suffering hardship wherever you go.