

## *Value Your Speech*

*July 19, 2016*

Close your eyes and stay with the breath.

Try to make this the one object you're focused on.

Other things come in the range of your awareness but you don't have to comment on them. You don't have to, as they say, clap their hand. There's the sound of the birds but just let it be there. You don't have to comment on it.

Try to make the mind quiet. That's what the monastery is all about. It's a place to be quiet. Ajaan Suwat used to call this our "quiet corner" here. People come here for the peace and quiet but then they make a lot of noise.

It's like a family that came to Wat Dhammasathit one time. I was living alone at the top of the hill there. They came up and they were exclaiming over how quiet it was. Then they pulled out a boom box and turned it on.

So we all want quiet but then we just destroy the quiet.

Ajaan Suwat's image was of water buffaloes that like to have nice clean water to drink, but then they lie down in the water and get it all muddy.

So an important part of the practice is not just what you do when you're sitting with your eyes closed but also as you're going around and engaging with other people. If you're going to break the silence, make sure that it serves a real purpose.

Ajaan Fuang's test was, "Is this necessary?" If it's not necessary, don't say anything.

You're safer when you're quiet. You have less chance to say things that'll disturb other people, less chance to get into arguments. We can maintain some of the quiet that we all come here for.

There are places out in the world where you can talk. There are lots of places. You can sit home alone and turn on your computer and just chat away.

Here, though, is a place where everybody wants to be quiet. That's part of being an admirable friend to the people around you: You set a good example and you also don't disturb their peace of mind.

So try to be extra careful, extra scrupulous about when you open your mouth and when you don't. Make sure that what you say is true and beneficial and timely. Those are the three tests it has to pass before it comes out your mouth. It should take some time before it comes out.

Otherwise, everything just turns into the world again. Look what the world is like outside: people shouting at each other all the time. Nobody can hear themselves think, and that's why they can't think straight.

If you want to think straight, you have to understand your mind clearly, and to do that, you've got to be as quiet as possible. Your gift to other people is that you're quiet as well.

When you do say things, make sure the words are valuable. Otherwise it's like fruit in a market. If there's lots and lots and lots of fruit, it begins to lose its value. If there were only one avocado in the whole market, that avocado would have a very high price. But if the tables are piled with avocados, sometimes you can't even give them away.

It's the same with your words. The more things come flowing, flowing, flowing out, the less value they have. So be very parsimonious in your words and they'll have more value.

Also remember that silence is often the best thing you can give to someone else, to help them maintain their silence. That's how we maintain the quietness of this quiet corner that Ajaan Suwat and all the people who built the monastery went to such trouble to build.