

The Path of

Joy



Vesak celebrations on 2 June 2004 at BL began with a morning puja conducted by Bhante Dhammaratana and Bhante Nigrodha. Then, Bhante Dhammaratana explained the significance of the most important day in the Buddhist calendar, a day marking the Birth, Enlightenment and Parinibbana of the Buddha. A Chinese service, led by Venerable Yuan Qing, followed.

On 2 Jun, at 11am, Bhante Dhammaratana and Venerable Yuan Qing were the first to 'bathe' the baby Prince Siddhartha, an act signifying the vital necessity in Buddhism of purifying our body, speech and

mind. Three statues of baby Prince Siddhartha stood amidst a beautifully decorated pond. A thick mist, created by dry ice, carpeted the water surface and exuded an aura of cool serenity. Devotees patiently took their turns bathing the baby Prince.

Lunch was served at 12 noon. Everyone tucked into a delicious vegetarian buffet, skillfully prepared by Wong King Hwa. Activities in the afternoon included special blessings by Bhante Dhammaratana.

The celebrations concluded with an evening service. It was indeed a blessing to have been able to participate in the celebration.

*James Chiang
Editor*





The Importance of Training the Mind

Three Steps to a Skilful Buddhist Life

Bhante Says

Mental development is extremely important. We always talk about training the mind and making an effort to train the mind. But most of the time, we fail. That's why people think they're not able to do it. But it's not that we're unable to train our mind. It's just that the mind is extremely difficult to train.

In the *Dhammapada*, the Buddha says:

*Like a fish taken from the safety of its watery home
And cast upon the dry land
So does this mind flutter ...*

*How good it is to rein in the mind
Which is unruly, capricious, rushing
wherever it pleases*

*A wise man should pay attention to his mind
Which is very difficult to perceive
It is extremely subtle and wanders wherever it pleases*

These, then, are the characteristics of our mind. You may be physically here but your mind can travel very far away. And it doesn't need even a second to travel very far. Our mental energy is the fastest moving energy known to us. So it's no surprise that it's so difficult to train.

Still, it's necessary to train the mind because only through mental development can we achieve lasting happiness. In this regard, the *Dhammapada* tells us:

*The mind, well-guarded and controlled,
Will bring... happiness*

One who keeps a rein on the wandering mind

*Which strays far and wide, alone, bodiless
Will be freed from the tyranny of the tempter*

When we talk about happiness through mental training, it's necessary for us to pay attention to the discomfort that we experience when our mind is restless.

Our mind can be restless for many reasons.

It may be dominated by defilements or negative emotions such as anger, greed, jealousy and so forth. If jealousy, greed or anger dominates our mind, it can torment our body as well. Let's say we need something very badly. Whether it's really necessary or not, we think - *I want to gain this thing very badly. I need it so much.* If we can't get rid of such a thought, all we're doing is to gather a lot of tension. What then happens to us? We feel uncomfortable.

The trouble is that some people can retain their anger for a long time.

able, we suffer. That's why I use the word 'discomfort'. In one way or another, we have to release that discomfort or tension. Until that happens, our mind remains very restless. We cannot do anything properly, Our muscles also become tense. Sometimes, we even have difficulty breathing.

The trouble is that some people can retain their anger for a long time. We may even imagine that others are going to harm us, even if that's not true. We don't realise that by accumulating tension, we're opening the door for more and more suffering for ourselves.

In order to overcome this suffering, we need mental training. But many people think - *If I have big houses, expensive vehicles, bigger bank balances, etc, I can lead*

a comfortable life. These things are, of course, helpful but real comfort only arises when we're free from tension. As long as our mind is tense, we cannot experience lasting comfort or happiness. Training the mind through meditation is the only way to get rid of tension or discomfort. But, as I've mentioned earlier, this is an extremely arduous task.

Let's say a farmer wants to cultivate padi. He cannot achieve any success just by *wishing* the padi to grow well. Even if he goes to the padi field every day and wish - *I want to have padi within a few days' time. May I have a very big harvest in a few days' time* - he will achieve nothing. In order to have a good harvest, he has to prepare the padi field, uproot weeds, irrigate or supply water, plough the field, fertilise the field, protect the place from insects and so on. Even after he's done all that, he still cannot expect to harvest the padi the next day, can he? He must still wait for the appropriate length of time. In the same way, if we want to develop our mind, there's no magic to help us. Just by wishing it to happen, we cannot achieve mental development. If someone sits crossed legged for hours, and wishes - *May I be able to have mental development. May I be able to achieve higher levels of concentration* - that's no use. On the contrary, his mental tension may even increase simply because he may have become impatient by expecting immediate results.

There are three requirements for achieving mental development:

1. We must practise higher moral principles. In Pali, we call them - *sila*. Developing mental development without *sila* is impossible. But some people think *sila* is quite simple, it's not something important, we can get by without practising *sila*. This is mere wishful thinking.

As Buddhists, we all know about the five precepts. A meditator who wishes to achieve mental development must at the very least observe the five precepts. But people say it's very difficult to observe precepts. This may be true. Even if we try to practise them, we're likely to fail. Don't think you can observe the pre-

cepts perfectly just because you want to practise them. We're all human beings, after all. The important thing is that when we fail, we must know that we've failed. And we must know *why* we fail. Then, we must make an effort to correct ourselves, again and again. That very effort is essential. Even if we breach our precepts under certain circumstances, if we know that we've done wrong and we sincerely determine not to repeat the mistake, that's a great thought. That alone constitutes mental development. We don't make excuses, we admit we're wrong. When we have that kind of attitude towards moral precepts, one day, we'll be able to succeed.

So moral precepts are very important for us to achieve discipline. Once we have discipline, it becomes quite easy for us to go for mental development. Actually, by practising *verbal* and *bodily* discipline, we also maintain our *mental* discipline. For example, we may feel inclined to tell a lie under certain circumstances but if we reflect – *I'm trying to improve my mind. If I tell a lie, it's not helpful for my mental discipline* – that's also part of mental discipline. When somebody is tempted to kill, he can have a second thought – *I'm not supposed to destroy a life. Life is precious to all living beings. Therefore, I must refrain from killing*. That's why when we observe precepts, we're also automatically developing our mind. And that's why *sila* or morality is very important for mental development.

2. The second requirement for mental development is developing higher thoughts for mental discipline. We need to meditate. We must first choose the right kind of meditation practice to discipline our mind. There are some common practices like mindfulness meditation but a person who gets angry very easily should practise *metta bhavana* or meditation on friendliness. Sometimes, parents get angry easily with their children when they use the telephone very often. But what do we gain by getting irritated? Nothing. Getting angry does not help anyone, either the 'offenders' or us. On the other hand, if we're not careful, we can get angry for nothing and this can become quite harmful.

If we have too much attachment or aversion, there are meditation practices that can help us to understand impermanence or realise the reality of our lives or the world in which we live. In that way, we can discipline our mind.

3. The third and most important requirement for mental development is wisdom.

Through *sila*, we can overcome certain mental defilements but to achieve total freedom from suffering, we have to develop wisdom. According to Buddhism, wisdom means realising the true nature of ourselves and the things around us. In other words, wisdom means *changing our attitude towards ourselves and the things around us*.

Difficult as it is to train our mind, the advantage of disciplining the mind is, conversely, very great too. A disciplined mind enables us to choose what to think. It's something very precious. On the other hand, if we're unable to choose what we think, we can become victims of depres-

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sion. For example, if depressing thoughts arise, we should know that they are negative thoughts. We should know that if we entertain these thoughts, we cannot help but become depressed; so why should we become victims of such a situation? Why can't we think of something else? Why can't we have pleasant thoughts instead?

But in our ordinary frame of mind, we even get fixated with things we cannot change – our appearance, our age, growing old, becoming sick, separation from people or things we like and having to associate with people or things we dislike. What's important is that we must recognise which problems we can solve and which we can't. If we can solve the problems, then by all means, do so. But if we try to solve problems that are impossible to solve, we only create problems for ourselves.

In the Buddha's time, King Suppabuddha, the Buddha's father-in-law when he was Prince Siddhartha, was very upset when Prince Siddhartha left home and renounced the world. He felt that Prince Siddhartha had deserted his daughter, Princess Yasodhara. With a negative frame of mind, he committed many evil deeds during his lifetime. As a result of that, when he reached old age, he developed a fear of death. So he tried to avoid death by staying in the palace all the time for his own safety. He strengthened security and arranged everything necessary for his voluntary confinement. But one day, his favourite horse, which missed him very much, went wild. Hearing this, the

king rushed down to see the horse, fell down and died.

We cannot live forever or make this world permanent; nor can we remain perpetually healthy. We have to admit that death is a problem for us but it's not a problem we can avoid. So, as the saying goes, *let it be*. Leave such problems aside. In that way, we avoid unnecessary tension and discomfort. And with consistent and sincere practice, we can achieve freedom. For, as the Buddha says, freedom can be achieved in this very lifetime.

May you all have a happy and tension-free life. **JOY**

Ven B. Dharmaratana
Religious Advisor

A BIG THANK YOU!

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May the Blessings of the Triple Gem be with you always.

Sadhu! Sadhu! Sadhu!

Are Buddhist Parents in Singapore Myopic?

Why are they neglecting their children's spiritual education?

Once upon a time, an illiterate housewife struggled to raise her five children on her husband's meagre salary which was hardly sufficient even to pay the rent or the children's school fees. She could not read a word in any language but she realised the value of a good education as a ticket to financial security in the future. Not only that, she was also mindful of the crucial importance of a moral education. When a nearby temple opened, she lost no time in enrolling her children in their Sunday Dhamma class. And she followed it up by ensuring that the kids did not miss their Dhamma lessons, even if she had to chase the mischievous boys round the house, cane in hand. She even tracked one boy down to his favourite hiding place, a kampong drain.

Today, despite Buddhist parents being educated and affluent, their concern for their children's education is restricted to helping them acquire fame and fortune in this world. By contrast, Christian parents require their children to join them in church every Sunday. And Muslim children study the Koran without exception. Have you ever wondered why Buddhist parents are sorely lacking in this way?

Perhaps, it's the absence of a creator God who commands his followers to obey strict rules or commandments, one of which is to bring children up in the same religion. Or maybe it's the spirit of tolerance and open-mindedness of the Compassionate Buddha, which leads some parents to believe they're bringing up their children in the best Buddhist tradition by leaving them free to choose their own religion when they become adults. However, these parents forget that education is

the first pre-requisite of informed choice. And that the Noble Eightfold Path – the Buddhist guide to a meaningful life – begins and ends with 'right view' or 'right understanding'.

Mostly, though, I suspect that the reason is plain myopia, the inability to see that their children's future is not limited to this world or this life. Of course, the overwhelming desire for their offspring to 'beat the Joneses' in worldly pursuits helps them to believe that they would have discharged their parental duties brilliantly if their children excel in studies or other worldly pursuits. And so, there's always time and money enough for music, dance, cultural and sports lessons. But a few hours a week for junior to attend Dhamma class is detrimental to junior's performance in the all-important school examinations. A convenient but false assumption, surely. Otherwise, Christian and Muslim students would invariably have done badly – or at least worse than offspring of Buddhist parents – in examinations.

When will Buddhist parents learn their lesson from their Christian and Muslim counterparts?

What a great pity! A genuine religious or spiritual education – be it Buddhist or any other – can be a reliable safeguard for junior to live a meaningful life. A Straits Times report – aptly entitled 'He just couldn't say no to friends' – about a youngster forced into crime by his peers is a timely reminder of what can happen if junior is left to his own devices without moral guidelines, despite all the material comforts money can buy. The boy in question was sentenced to six months' imprisonment for house breaking. He now has to live down his criminal record. But, more

importantly, he's learned his lesson and now stays away from dubious friends. When will Buddhist parents learn their lesson from their Christian and Muslim counterparts?

Our Bhante B Dhammaratana hit the nail on the head in a past edition of this newsletter [No 7 (July to September 2003)] when he wrote -

"Education is the greatest gift parents can ever give to their children. But parents need to remember that education has two aspects – ethical or moral development and material development – and not just one ... How many parents today give attention to both these vital aspects?"

... If we ensure that our children get the benefit of, not only the best, state-of-the art education provided by our regular schools, but also a sound moral and religious education supplied by Dhamma and other religious centres, we'll be able to produce well-balanced and mature people for the benefit of our society. An education devoid of ethical development will not bring any gain to anyone, least of all, to the child being 'educated.'"

Looking back, I count myself extremely fortunate – that my illiterate, financially deprived mother had 20/20 eyesight and was tireless in discharging her duties as a parent. And thanks to her, I've since learned that the Triple Gem – the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha – is an infinitely more reliable refuge than a kampong drain.

Taking about Bhante, in this issue, he talks about the all-important topic of how to train our mind. He clarifies that we can do this skilfully in three steps – by leading a moral life, by developing higher mental discipline and by cultivating wisdom. In the process, he explodes some convenient misconceptions e.g. that the

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PROFESSOR Y KARUNADASA

Professor Y Karunadasa has become a well-known face in BL. A world-renowned expert on Early Buddhism and Theravada Abhidharma, he's frequently invited to lecture in many countries. Professor does not just inform, he provokes and challenges his students' preconceived notions. Above all, he inspires his students – at least those who're prepared to do so – to respond to the Buddha's unique call in the Kalama Sutta to think, reason and act independently and skilfully. A rare and precious quality in a teacher indeed.

Here, Professor talks about *The History of Buddhist Thought*, a course he taught recently, the BL's diploma and postgraduate diploma courses which he also taught, Buddhist philosophy and Buddhist spiritual practice.

Editor

BL 1st April 2004
by James and Chwee Beng

'History of Buddhist Thought' Course

Professor, what was this course about? What was the aim of teaching it?

People, especially in Singapore, are exposed to many Buddhist traditions – Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana. These are different conceptual models.

We may confuse them (because) we tend to understand the teachings of one school in the light of another, later school. This gives a misleading message. We have to keep within the parameters of each tradition. We must not try to understand Theravada teachings, for example, in the light of the Mahayana tradition. The *History of Buddhist Thought* will clarify the situation because (we learn) how each tradition gave rise to the others.

When Buddhism was introduced into Asian countries, what's very important to remember is this – unlike other religions, Buddhism did not level down cultural diversity. The Dharma remains the same but it can be presented in different ways and Buddhist culture can be adapted.

But there's (also) a unity that transcends all the various schools, a historical unity. That's why they are all called 'Buddhist'. They can all be traced to the teachings of the historical Buddha. Buddhism is not some kind of esoteric religion, it can be expanded. The implications can be unfolded. That's why it gave rise to so many schools. This is not a sign of weakness. It showed that the (Buddha's) message was taken very seriously.

I suppose we see this in the way that Buddhist deities appear in different cultures. Avalokitesvara, a male with a thousand arms in India, for example, became Guan Yin, a beautiful female with flowing robes in China.

That's right. The form may change but the essential message (compassion) remains exactly the same.

Was the course too academic?

In a way, you can say that.

You know your own religion better if you know other religions.

Couldn't we have restricted attendance to students who have some basic knowledge of Buddhism?

We don't have to be very finicky like that because they're not sitting for examinations (in this particularly course). The course was intended just to expose them (to the subject).

Some students could have taken the course as a starting point to know that there's diversity of thought, yet there are also certain common fundamentals. Then, if they're interested they could have gone on to study more on their own?

Yes, that's right.

Was it necessary to study these philosophical details if people just wanted to practise the Dharma?

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BL Wishes all mothers " A Happy Mother's Day " 9 May 2004 (Grand Court, People's Park Complex)



Photos by James Chiang, Jasmine Foo.

That's a very important question. In a way, it's true. But, remember that in the east, historically, every philosophy is a religion and vice versa, unlike in the west. They developed together. (So it becomes necessary to study the philosophy to understand the religion properly).

But couldn't we say that there is also a practical basis for this course? That understanding the different Buddhist philosophical systems can help students to appreciate better their own Dharma practice in their own traditions. For instance, Tibetan practitioners will know why their own Dharma practice stresses so much on visualisation and emptiness, why they offer water (representing offerings – flowers, incense, light etc) and mandalas (representing the universe) and visualise deities in their prayers.

Yes, that's correct. They can better understand their own systems (of practice).

Max Muller, the father of comparative religion, said that if you know only one religion, you don't know any religion. You know your own religion better if you know other religions. This applies both to different Buddhist traditions as well as to non-Buddhist religions.

Do you think there was anything we could have done to make the students more mentally prepared for this kind of course?

Now that we have the postgraduate diploma and diploma courses, we may not need to repeat such courses. But if we do conduct such courses, maybe, we could confine them to one or two lectures conducted by guest lecturers who come around from time to time.

Talking about the postgraduate and diploma courses, are students meant to take them on a strictly academic basis or as part of their spiritual practice?

In our introduction (to the courses), we did say that these courses serve many purposes – to advance their knowledge of Buddhism or as part of a liberal arts education i.e. just to know but not necessarily to practise. Like learning philosophy as an intellectual pursuit. Our approach is academic.

Buddhist Philosophy

It seems to me that some of the arguments raised by Buddhist philosophers to justify the tenets of their school are very artificial, though they're supposed to have been based on rational grounds. For example, the theory of momentariness.

Personally, I am not very happy about momentariness. Yesterday, I was reading 'Clearing the Path' by Venerable



Nanavira, one of the greatest books on Buddhism. When you read that book, you get the feeling – *what's the use of all these theories about momentariness?* They look very technical, very difficult to justify even on paper.

Take the doctrine of dependent origination (*paticca samuppada*). According to the traditional view, it involves three births. That's really a very mechanical way of explaining *paticca samuppada*. Venerable Nanavira was perfectly correct when he says that the commentators are wrong. That the Buddha never intended it to be understood as a theory of rebirth. What *paticca samuppada* explains is our present situation. At this very moment, I have the twelve links. It's not a case of temporal sequence. It must be understood as a structural principle. Actually, even in the early sutras you don't get direct evidence to justify the view that the doctrine of dependent origination is a doctrine that explains rebirth.

The traditional explanation accepts paticca samuppada on a three lifespan basis. The word 'birth' is taken literally.

It was Dr Paul Dhalke, a German doctor – a Buddhist, he wrote two books – *Buddhism and Science* and *Buddhist Essays* – who interpreted *paticca samuppada* on the basis that at every given moment, you experience it. I remember reading that book about thirty years ago. His ideas were subsequently adopted by others such as Vener-

able Nanavira and the Thai monk, Venerable Buddhadasa.

So how does he interpret 'birth'?

'Birth' is not biological birth. The arahant is free from birth. When an arahant attains enlightenment, birth has been exhausted for him. That means, birth as a separate individual. The idea that '*I am born*' or '*I will die*', how do you get that?

From the idea that there's a person called '*I*'. The moment you can get the *I* or *self* notion, that precedes the notion of birth. You experience the idea of birth and death only after this. That's why in *paticca samuppada*, they say *upadana paccaya bhavo, bhava paccaya jati* (conditioned by grasping, becoming arises, conditioned by becoming, birth arises). *Upadana* refers to the *I* notion.

Clinging to the notion that there's a separate self. That gives you the idea of your present existence, the idea of birth and death. The moment you eliminate that idea of separate self, then these other two notions won't occur. *Nibbana* is defined as '*freedom from birth*'.

The whole of Buddhism must be understood in a psychological sense. The Buddha never refers to things, only aspects of our personality. Now take '*matter*'. For Buddhism, matter means how we experience matter. Not matter as it is. Buddhism is not concerned with the constitution of matter. That is for the scientist. Buddhism is concerned with our present human predicament or condition. In order to liberate ourselves from our human predicament, we have to have a penetrative knowledge of the human experience. *Samsara* means nothing very mysterious but conditioned experience, that's all. So *Nibbana* means unconditioned (experience). So the transition from *samsara* to *Nibbana* is from conditioned experience to unconditioned experience.

What does 'conditioned' actually mean?

It can mean many things. All our volitional activities are conditioned

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by ignorance. We simply do things without any idea, motivated by self-interest. That's how the *paticca samuppada* begins. So when we say our experience is conditioned, it can be understood from many perspectives. Conditioned by greed, hatred and delusion (*raga, dosa, moha*). Conditioned by ignorance (*avijja*). Because if you don't have *avijja*, you won't have *raga, dosa, moha*. They all come to the same thing. The same thing can be approached from different perspectives. That's why when the Buddha explains *paticca samuppada*, he begins from the beginning, the middle or the last link. It doesn't matter.

How do you explain the change from conditioned to unconditioned?

It's a complete transformation, a sort of 'rebirth', you die the present birth and you are reborn. To borrow a Christian term, it's a resurrection. A noble birth. You are no more an ordinary worldling.

It cannot be explained but must be experienced?

It must be experienced but still we must try to intellectually understand it. Although we may not realise it as much as possible. Although they say that Nibbana is not something to be intellectually comprehended but to be realised.

Buddhist Practice

Is meditation essential for attaining Nibbana?

Actually, the path to attain Nibbana is the Noble Eightfold Path. There, meditation is represented by the last factor – *samma samadhi* - concentration of the mind. It does not directly refer to *jhana*. It's a controversial matter. Whether it's necessary to have *jhanic* experience to attain Nibbana, I'm not in a position to pronounce judgment on that. I personally believe that to have a high intensity of concentration, you should be able to grasp the message. The Buddhist books talk of *panna vimutto arahants* who don't have the ability to attain any of these higher *jhanas* but still they attained Nibbana. So the *jhanic* attainments are not indispensable.

How do we develop compassion? Can we do that by jhanic experience alone?

When the mind is concentrated, it's uni-

fied. A unified mind is strong. A strong unified mind can develop *metta* better than a dissipated mind. That's also empirically observable.

Do you need a separate kind of practice to develop compassion?

You must be happy. A person who is unhappy cannot develop *metta*.

In the Mahayana, there are specific practices to develop compassion and bodhicitta.

Samsara means nothing very mysterious but conditioned experience

Bodhicitta and Buddha nature are not foreign to early Buddhism. The Buddha himself said this in a different way. He said –

*In this fathom long body endowed with consciousness,
I declare the world, the origin of the world,
the cessation of the world
and the path that leads to the cessation of the world.*

The third one – *the cessation of the world* – is Nibbana. So Nibbana is within me. There are three fires burning within me. The fires of greed, hatred and delusion. If you can extinguish these three fires, that is Nibbana. *Nibbana* means extinction, extinction of these three fires. So the Buddha nature idea can be traced to early Buddhism.

What is your view on mantras?

I think mantras can have a tremendous psychological effect. The religious level of people differs from person to person. So depending on their religious level, we have to cater to them. There can't be only one standard for everyone. Even the Buddha said that the path to Nibbana is something gradual. I'm not against rituals – they have their place but they must be understood in their proper context. When you go higher and higher, you leave behind some of these (behind). It's a kind of skilful means. In Japanese Buddhism, Shinran understood that the common people – fishermen, prostitutes etc – could not understand the Dhamma and so stressed

the practice of mantra recitation.

What is your opinion on the ordination of women in Buddhism?

I am always for that. I was arguing with some conservative monks in Sri Lanka. One of my students, who has a Ph.D, writes very well and can compose poetry, has ordained as a Buddhist nun. Buddhist nuns are more educated than Buddhist monks because only educated women become Buddhist nuns. The conservative monks are not happy but I don't think they can stop this movement. In Thailand, a university professor also became a Buddhist nun.

If we want to save Buddhism, we must support the ordination of women because the nuns as a rule are more committed than the monks.

What about the lineage problem?

I don't think it's a serious problem because the *Vinaya* can be interpreted to suit present conditions.

But even that (lineage) problem does not arise because we have the nuns in China who have an unbroken lineage. Theravada can link up with them. Actually, an ecclesiastical council can be held to provide for the ordination of nuns.

Thank you very much indeed, Professor.
JOY

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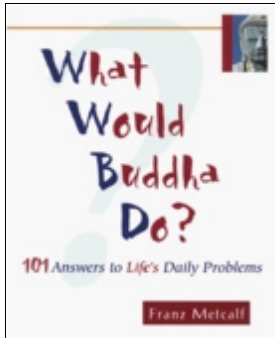
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WHAT WOULD THE BUDDHA DO AT WORK? 101 ANSWERS TO WORKPLACE DILEMMAS

By FRANZ METCALF and B J GALLAGHER HATELEY

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Reviewed by Swee Peng



Most of us know or read about the Buddha's teachings on topics such as killing and eating meat, just to name a few. But have we ever asked ourselves other – less common but no less relevant – questions such as ‘*What would Buddha do when feeling frustrated or disappointed?*’ or ‘*What would Buddha do about dieting or about making money or doing a boring job?*’ These are questions which each one of us often faces in our daily trials and tribulations in life and which we've often taken for granted.

This little book aims to provide a guide and advice on queries regarding the various aspects of life, be it relationship problems, materialism, personal conflicts or moral dilemma. The author, Franz Metcalf, holds a doctorate in religion in the University of Chicago. He challenges his readers to reflect especially when faced with issues pertaining to daily dilemma - *What would Buddha do if he were in our shoes?*

As Metcalf mentioned in his introduction - *This Buddha mind is at once transcendent and within each of us at every moment. Just as Buddha pervades the universe, so Buddha nature pervades us as well, making each of us, in a sense, a Buddha. If we are Buddha already, ... why do we still feel frustrated and disappointed? Perhaps this is because we haven't yet realized we are Buddhas. We won't realize this by indulging ourselves... We have all had moments of awakening when we lived not for ourselves, not in ourselves, this is our real*

nature coming out, breaking through the crust of ego and consciousness we have layered upon it over the long days of our lives. How meaningful these words are!

There are altogether 101 questions put forward and answered in this book. Questions such as - *What would Buddha do in the heat of argument?* and *What would Buddha do about modern science?* - to questions so close to our hearts and so much part of our contemporary life like - *What would Buddha do about the coffee habit?* and *What would Buddha do when his*

This little book aims to provide a guide and advice on queries regarding the various aspects of life, be it relationship problems, materialism, personal conflicts or moral dilemma.

cards are maxed out?

Instead of discussing these topics in a dry, stifling and lecturing tone, the author uses a very simple and straightforward manner to highlight his answers. He draws parables and quotations from the sutras and early teachings of the Buddha along with the teachings from the various other Buddhist masters to support the discussions. The answers are often short, light hearted and yet precise. As such, it makes this book very readable and enjoyable. In fact, it made me re-read each passage to discover new treasures and gems within the words.

This book however will not be adequate in providing the reader more information on the various teachings of the Buddha. It is not meant as an academic book. But it does open up channels of interest to stimulate us to explore more. Take this question - *What would Buddha do about trusting the media?* To which the given answer is - *One's ears hear a lot; one's eyes see a lot. The wise person should not believe everything seen or heard.* Spoken 2,548 years ago. Yet even more relevant and timely today than

ever before.

So what are you waiting for? Spare some time, read this book and explore for yourself. Enjoy reading! **JOY**

(Continued from page 4)

moral life is dispensable. He highlights a cardinal principle - how to distinguish between things we can control and things we can't and how to respond skilfully. As someone once pointed out - if we try to control things we can't control, they'll end up controlling us.

In February-March 2004, BL conducted a course entitled “*History of Buddhist Thought*” taught by Professor Y Karunadasa. It was not an easy topic. Some students even questioned the need to study such a ‘*scholarly*’ topic. So we decided to speak to the Professor to examine this and related issues. In this issue, we're proud to bring you the interview,.

In our usual book review segment, we bring you two book reviews – one by James Chiang about Ten Thousand Miles without a Cloud - *An Epic Journey by Sun Shuyun*. The book's interesting on many counts, not least the fact that the writer was a child of the Chinese Cultural Revolution of the 1960s, brought up in fact to denounce religion and persecute believers. Yet, as an adult, she risked life and limb to re-trace the steps of the famous Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang from China to India and back.

The other book is a short, very readable, non-threatening book called – *What would the Buddha do at Work? 101 Answers to Workplace Dilemmas*. The authors tackle questions about modern life and suggest answers that the Buddha might have given if he had been faced with those issues. It's reviewed by Swee Peng in her usual frank, disarming fashion.

As always, I wish you pleasant reading.

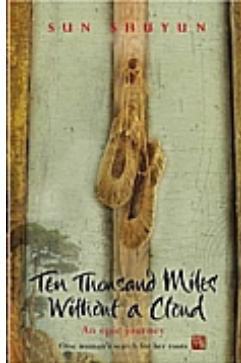
Chwee Beng
Editor

If we try to control things we can't control, they'll end up controlling us.

TEN THOUSAND MILES WITHOUT A CLOUD

by SUN SHUYUN
HarperCollins, 2003
Paperback, 464 pages

Reviewed by James Chiang



Ten Thousand Miles Without a Cloud recalls Sun Shuyun's journey as she retraced the route taken by the well-known Chinese monk-translator, Xuanzang, more than a thousand years ago from China, through Central Asia, to India.

Born in China, the author grew up during the tumultuous times of the Cultural Revolution. Her early memory of Xuanzang was that of the "kind and pious, but weak, bumbling" monk from the novel *The Monkey King*. It was not until she met a fellow student at Oxford University that she was introduced to the real Xuanzang who "embodied determination, perseverance and wisdom".

The discovery of a genuine character completely at odds with the fictional image she'd known all those years captivated her attention and drove her to find out more about Xuanzang. The more she read, the more amazed - and puzzled - she became. "Why had I known so little about him?... What was it that had kept him away from me, and from most Chinese?" The Cultural Revolution was sweeping across China like a wild fire, destroying many things denounced as being against Chairman Mao's ideals. Buddhism, dubbed one of the 'Three Feudals' became, with its emphasis on compassion and non-violence, a prime and easy target in this ruthless campaign.

Shuyun was not satisfied with reading alone. She felt a compelling need to experience the journey for herself, just as Xuanzang had done those many years ago, believing that "a pilgrimage to India would give (him) direct knowledge of Buddhism and clear all (his) doubts". Before Xuan-

zang left China in the year 629 CE - a pilgrimage lasting 18 years - he was already a very distinguished monk, having mastered all the Buddhist scriptures from the different schools. However, he still harboured some doubts regarding the disparity between the various schools. Above all, he was troubled by the lack of authenticity and accuracy of the earlier texts, some of which had been translated by

Born in China, the author grew up during the tumultuous times of the Cultural Revolution.

monks who did not speak Chinese.

Xuanzang also hoped to learn more about Yogacara, a school of Buddhist thought whose fundamental thesis is that all phenomenal existence is fabricated by the mind. The development of Buddhist thought can be classified into two stages - early Buddhism (i.e. the discourses of the historical Buddha, Sakyamuni Buddha and covering the first five hundred years after the Buddha's parinibbana before the rise of the schools); and the subsequent period covering the rise and development of the different schools of Buddhist thought. These different schools emphasised, interpreted and developed different aspects of the Buddha's teachings and so they appeared vastly different outwardly. Yet, they grew from the same shared roots of the core Buddhist teachings (such as the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path, Dependent Origination and the Three Characteristics of Existence). And their ultimate goal - enlightenment - is also the same. Known by almost unpronounceable names prompted by their principal philosophical tenets - Sarvastivada, Sautrantika, Madhyamaka and Yogacara - these philosophical schools in time bred religious traditions bearing the more well-known names of Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana and greatly influence their religious and ceremonial practices to this day.

It would be rather perplexing if one were to try to understand and reconcile the differences between the various Buddhist traditions without a clear picture of their historical development. Xuanzang was determined to overcome this obstacle. His thirst for

knowledge fuelled him to brave hostile deserts, gave him strength when his party was almost completely wiped out in an avalanche and redoubled his courage when he nearly lost his life to a band of pirates. His spirit was indomitable.

The visible fruit of his labour was the countless volumes of Buddhist scriptures that he brought back to China, of which he personally translated seventy-five. He also recorded the geography, history, manners and religions of the peoples and places that he encountered during his journey. Xuanzang's *Records of the Western Regions* is so detailed and accurate that it enabled the nineteenth century archaeologist, Alexander Cunningham, to discover many important Buddhist sites, such as that of the Buddha's parinibbana, at that time completely covered by jungle and foliage.

Sun Shuyun's knowledge of Buddhism was limited, as she herself honestly admitted. In places, she even accepted popular misconceptions of Buddhism. Nevertheless, her preference for the pursuit of knowledge over mere belief is commendable indeed. She wanted to understand the "fundamental law(s) of Buddhism, karma and rebirth...rather than just to believe". Speaking personally, a good place to start learning about Buddhism would be to concentrate on the fundamental tenets (such as the Four Noble Truths) which are observable empirically in this very life, rather than to pursue concepts such as rebirth that, by their very nature, must remain in the realm of belief.

Sun Shuyun's book is slightly more than four hundred pages thick but written in a fluid style, which lends itself to easy and enjoyable reading. As I unwillingly turn the concluding pages of this book, I register a mental reminder to make it my companion when I take up the pilgrimage myself some day. **JOY**

The discovery of a genuine character completely at odds with the fictional image she'd known all those years captivated her attention and drove her to find out more about Xuanzang.

Sometimes, it seems, kids possess greater wisdom than adults. So, to find out the answers to some of the most earth-shattering questions in life, we send our cub reporter, Si Rong, to speak to his Sunday School classmates. Here are the answers, expressed in the honest, inimitable and disarming manner that only kids are capable of.

Si Rong, a 10 year old boy, has been attending BL's Sunday School for the last

one year. He's a pioneer in our new project to get students to write about students. You can see the difference children make in the questions asked in Si Rong's interview and the replies given by his interviewees.

Kids, if you would like to contribute to POJ like Si-Rong, please tell your teacher or you can email me directly at blindturtle@fastmail.fm.

Chwee Beng
Editor

THE CUB REPORTER



SI RONG

Age 10 years ,
Hobby: Roller blading, playing golf.

Si Rong: Do you listen to dharma talks?

Zhen Hong: Ah? Not always. Sometimes. I listen to stories about the Buddha. I don't learn about God because I'm not a Christian. (giggling). I benefit from (listening to) Dharma talks because they teach me to be a better person. No, I haven't become a better person. Not yet. Because I'm always mischievous. Because I like being mischievous. No, I don't want to change my mischievous character (giggling).

Si Rong: Why does the Buddha Smile?

Zenn: Because ... I don't know... because he's happy.

Maureen: To just show that he's cheerful.

Kian How: Because he is happy.

Beatrisa: Because he's happy.

Si Rong: Are you forced by your parents to attend Sunday school?

Belinda: Huh!... No, I come willingly to learn Buddhism.

Sara: No, because I want to learn meditation.

Sze Chuan: Ah...Not quite. Ah... My father just wants me to come.

Zhen Hong: No. I like the Sunday class... sometimes. When the teacher does not scold me!

Si Rong: Why do you come to Sunday school?

Kian How: To have fun.

Amanda: Fun. I learn about the Buddha, what happened in his life and his teachings.

Si Rong: Why do monks wear yellow robes?

Mun Pin: Because they just can't go naked

Mun Foong: The light of... I don't know... I think it represents the light of the sun.

Sze Chuan: Maybe because all the monks must wear (robes). Maybe the Buddha said so.

Si Rong: Why do we do meditation?

Rebecca: Ah ... to gain enlightenment. To know the right path to Buddhahood. The right path is doing right things.

JOY



THE KIDS



ZENN

Age: 6 years.
Hobby: Playing Beyblade.



SARA

Age: 11 years.
Hobby: Dancing and singing. I don't attend any class. I learn dancing by myself.



ZHEN HONG

Age: 8 years.
Hobby: Playing badminton and computers and catching spiders. But I let them go after that. I don't harm them.

(Continued on page 12)

WALKING TOWARDS ENLIGHTENMENT—Family BODHI WALK 2004, Marina Promenade 23rd May. by James Chiang

I'd volunteered to photograph this inaugural event and was delighted to have the weather on my side. "You couldn't have asked for a better day to take pictures", I told myself as I gazed at the distant cityscape, basking in the orange glow of the morning sun.

The warm-up started around 8am, led by an energetic group of young people from Singapore and Nanyang Polytechnics. At 8.30am, the VIP flagged off

the walk with Bhante Dhammaratana, Venerable Yuan Qing and Ajahn Brah-mavamso leading. The crowd, numbering a few hundreds – members and friends of BL, young and old, even the canine variety - moved in sync with the beat of *Gimme Hope, Joanna*, chatting away merrily.

The 3.5km route wound along the mouth of the Singapore River, past a group of Tai Chi practitioners, to the roundabout under the Benjamin Sheares Bridge. There, we turned back towards the Esplanade Theatres.

Back at the starting point, volunteers distributed refreshments. I helped myself to a few cups of chilled Milo before joining my friends on the lawn in front of the stage. "How did you find the walk?" I asked Sidney, a French expatriate whom I'd invited along. "Great! We're very lucky to have this weather. The walk along the river was very scenic. You know, what I really enjoyed? The happy atmosphere!"

(Continued on page 12)



(Continued from page 11)

On the stage, Ms Quinine Tao and her students deftly executed a series of impressive yoga moves. Following that, the famous Lee Wei Song School of Music showcased some of their young talent, entertaining crowd with the latest pop offerings.

What a meaningful, enjoyable and healthy way to spend a Sunday morning! Instinctively, I found myself already looking forward to the next Bodhi Walk. Later, I discovered that my wish could well come true. For Bhante had decided to make it an annual celebration of Vesak Day. **JOY**



Photos by: James Chiang,
Tan Yew Beng, Ong Thiam
Kim, Jasmine Foo.

FAMILY BODHI WALK AT A GLANCE

(Continued from page 10)



MAUREEN
Age: 13 years.
Hobby: Swimming.



MUN PIN
Age: 7 years.
Hobby: Computer and board games.



KIAN HOW
Age: 10 years.
Hobby: Playing computer.



BEATRISA
Age: 8 years.
Hobby: Jogging at Pasir Ris Park.



AMANDA
Age: 10 years.
Hobby: Singing. I sing Chinese songs at school.



MUN FOONG
Age: 10 years.
Hobby: I don't have any hobby. Too busy.



BELINDA
Age: 13 years.
Hobby: Collecting currency notes.



REBECCA
Age: 11 years.
Hobby: Swimming and collecting stamps. I have stamps from Malaysia, Australia, USA and Egypt.



SZE CHUAN
Age: 8 years.
Hobby: Swimming and bowling. I bowl at NTUC Safara Resort. My average score is 90-something. I enjoy bowling more (than swimming).

Organisers:

BL (led by Ong Yee Sin),
Buddhist Societies of Nan-
yang Polytechnic, Singapore
Polytechnic, NTU and NUS

VIP:

Mr Chan Soo Sen, Minister
of State for Education, Com-
munity Development and
Sports

Guest of Honour:

Ajahn Brahmavamso

Contributors:

Quinine Tao (yoga), Lee Wei
Song School of Music
(entertainment)

Sponsors:

Main sponsor	Aerospec Supplies Pte Ltd
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迈向证悟...
家庭菩提义走
-James Chiang

我自愿当这次的义走的摄影员。望着远处被早晨金黄色的阳光普照着的城市景色，我自言道：“这景色最适合拍照。”

早上八点，由新加坡和南洋工艺学院的一群充满活力的青少年们带领着大家做热身运动。八点半贵宾挥旗后，在Bhante，远清法和Brahmavamso法师的带领下义走正式开始。参加的人数有几百人——佛教图书馆的会员和朋友们，其中包括了年青人和老年人——甚至还有很多不同种类的狗也加入了队伍。大家浩浩荡荡的随着“GimmeHope, Joanna”的节奏下兴奋的向前走。

这三点五公里的路程，绕过了新加坡河的河口，经过了一群正在练习太极拳的人们，再走向薛尔斯桥下。在那里再转回头到滨海艺术中心。

回到了起点的地方，自愿工作人员正在分发饮料。我喝了几杯冰冷的美绿后，就到台前的大草场和我的朋友们会合。“您觉得这次的义走如何？”我问Sidney，这位被我邀请参加的一位居住在我国的朋友。“好极了。我们太幸运了。天气是如此的好。河边的风景又优美。你知道我感觉最愉快的是什么吗？是这欢乐的气氛。”

在台上MsQuinineTao和她的学生们正在落力表演一系列的动人的瑜伽动作。随后著名的LeeWeiSongSchoolofMusic介绍了他们才华洋溢的年青歌手为大家演绎时下最流行的曲子。

这个星期日的早上，真是过得又有意义，又愉快又健康。我很自然地盼望着下次的菩提义走。我也发现我的愿望将会实现。因为Bhante已经决定把义走列为每年卫塞节的庆典之一。

(Sunanda译)

(接自第15页)

如果我们有许多的执著或愤恨，有静坐法门来帮我们了解无常，领悟我们生命的意义，或我们生存中的世界。如此，我们可以修心。

三·第三个主要的条件是智慧。通过持戒，我们能够克服烦恼，但如果要完全解脱，那就要启发我们的智慧。依据佛法，智慧是了解我们的本性和我们周围的一切事物。换句话说就是改变我们的态度对待自己和周围的一切事物。

修心固然很难，但调伏我们的心所得到的益处，反而更为重要。一个被调伏的心，使我们能够选择如何去思考，这是很珍贵的。另一方面，要是我们不能做到的话，那我们就会成为精神忧郁症的受害者。比如说，当烦恼生起，我们应该知道那是负面的想法。如果我们捉住这个念头而不放，我们将会意志消沉。我们为什么要成为这种情况的受害者呢？为什么我们不要去想别的事情来让我们过得快乐呢？

但是在我们的般人的脑海里，我们执著于不能改变的事实，如我们的容貌，变老，生病，和心爱的人离别，或跟我们不喜欢的人或事物有关系。最重要的是我们应该认识到某些问题是我们能解决，而某些是我们办不到的。如果我们能解决的问题，那就要尽力地去做。可是如果去解决一些不能解决的问题，那我们只是在自寻烦恼。

在佛陀的时代，当佛陀还是太子身份时的岳父Supabuddha王，对悉达多太子离家去修行的行为感到很反感。他觉得是太子抛弃了他的女儿，耶苏陀罗公主，有了这负面的想法，在他的一生中，就做了很多坏事。结果当他年老的时候，他生起了对死亡的恐惧心。因此为了安全，他试图躲在宫里来逃避死亡。他加强安全设备和安排一切在他自愿封闭自己时所需要的事物。然而，有一天，他那匹心爱的马，因为太想念他而发狂。当他听到这个消息后，马上冲出去看他的马，但却不慎地跌倒而死去。

我们不能永远地活着，不能把这个世界变成永恒，也不能永远健康。我们必须承认死亡对我们是一个问题，但却不是我们能避免的事情。正如所谓：「就这样吧！」。把这个问题放一边。这样我们就可以避免烦恼或感到不自在，而且在我们不间断和真诚地去修持，我们将得到解脱。如佛陀说的「在今生就得解脱」。

祝愿大家快乐和过着无忧的生活。

达摩拉达那法师
佛教图书馆宗教顾问

(Sunanda译)

编辑说

身为父母的新加坡佛教徒缺乏远见吗？

从前有一位妇女，靠着丈夫那只足够还房租和几乎不够缴孩子们的学费的微薄薪水，辛苦地带大了五个孩子。她虽然目不识丁，但却了解到良好的教育是未来经济保障的标签。不只是如此，她也注意到道德教育的重要性。所以当附近建了一所寺院后，她马上替孩子们报名，让他们加入了寺院的佛学周日班。

为了确保孩子们不会逃学，她甚至手拿藤条绕着屋子，追打那些调皮的孩子们，还追踪到一个男孩的最爱躲藏处——甘榜里的阴沟。

今天，虽然佛教徒身份的父母们都受过教育，而且生活富裕，但是对孩子们的教育却只是限于协助他们争取世间上的名誉和财富而已。反观基督教的父母们，每逢星期天都要孩子和他们一起上教堂。而回教的孩子必须学习可兰经。您是否有想到为什么佛教徒的父母亲们却非常缺乏这样的正确行动呢？

可能是因为没有一个造世主在命令着他的信徒们必须服从严格的教规或戒律，而其中之一就是强制性要使孩子们信仰同一个宗教。或者是因为慈悲的佛陀的容忍和宽容的精神，使有些父母亲误以为佛教最好的传统教规，就是让孩子们自由选择自己的宗教信仰。但是这些父母忘记了教育是他们选择知识的先决条件。再入正道里——佛教之有意义的生活之道——都以正见和正思维来做为开始或结束。

我怀疑大多数的人，都是因为短视，无法看到孩子们的未来并不只限于这个世界或这一世而已。所以在充满着要使他们的子女们能成龙成凤的欲望里，他们相信只要子女们在学业上或一般世俗的学术上能突出，就是已经实行了作父母的责任了。因此，永远都有时间和足够的金钱去花在音乐，舞蹈，文艺和运动方面的学习上，但是让孩子们在一星期里只一次的上几个小时的佛学课程，却会影响他们在学校里考试的成绩。可是这只是一个方便假设的想法而已，要不然基督教和回教的孩子一定是考得很差，至少比佛教徒的孩子差。

真可惜啊！一个真正的宗教或神圣的教育，是佛教或其他宗教也好，是能保障我们的下一代能过有意义的生活。海峡时报的一则新闻，用了很贴切的题名「他对朋友不会说“不”」的报导里说：有一名青年是怎样地被朋友逼着去犯罪，这正好提醒了我们，如果让我们的下一代，没有以道德观念去选择自己的生活方式的话，以上的事故也会发生在他们

的身上。这个问题少年因为破门行窃而被判入狱六个月。他从此以后就要在有案底的记录里活下去。但是，最重要的是他吸取了教训。佛教徒的父母亲要等到何时才能从他们的基督教或回教朋友们那里了解到宗教教育的重要性呢？

我们的达摩拉达那法师在过去的简报（二零零三年第七月至九月刊）里，就针对这个问题写道：

“教育是父母送给儿女们的最佳礼物。可是作为父母的要记得教育有两个方面——论理或道德的开发和物质性的开发，而不只是单方面而已……今日有几对父母重视这些重要的问题呢？如果我们能确保孩子们不但在一般的学校里能受到最好的教育，而且也能在佛教和其他的宗教中心得到道德和宗教教育，那我们就能为社会培养一批又明智又成熟的人仕了。缺乏道德启发的教育将不能带给任何人好处，更不必说孩子们会得到好的教育了。

我觉得自己非常幸运——我那不识字，又贫困的母亲却有二十／二十的视力，不厌倦地履行为人父母的任务。感激她让我认识了三宝——佛、法、僧——是真正的归依处而不是那甘榜里的阴沟。

祝大家阅读愉快。

（Sunanda译）

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(接自第16页)

可能是被烦恼所困扰或都是受到负面的情绪所影响，如无知、贪、妒和其他因素等等。假如我们的心充满妒忌、贪或无知，那我们的身体就会受到折磨。比如说我们很想得到某种东西，而不管是否需要，我们只是想——我真的很想得到它。我真的需要它吗？假如我们不能除去这个念头，我们就会累积很多的压力，那么该如何呢？我们感觉到不自在，我们受苦。那就是为什么我用不自在，这个字眼的原因。不管如何，我们都应该除掉不自在和压力，否则我们的心都不安定，那我们就没有办法去做任何的事情。我们的肌肉开始紧缩，有时还感觉呼吸困难。

麻烦的是有些人可以把怒气埋藏很久。我们甚至想象有人想伤害我们，我们没有了解到累积下来不安情绪会给我们带来痛苦。

所以要克服我们的痛苦，我们必须学修心法。但很多人却想——如果我有大房子，名贵的汽车，大笔的银行存款...，我就会过着安逸的生活，这些东西当然是有助于改善我们的物质生活，但真正的自在，是在我们的不安情绪消除后才产生的。只要我们的内心一直紧缩的话，我们是无法得到永远的自在和快乐。只有通过静坐修心才能消除我们不安的情绪，但是这是一件艰难的任务。

比如说有一个农夫要种稻米，但只是祝愿稻米长得好，是不会成功的。即使他每天跑到田里许愿——我要几天内就可以收成，愿我在几天内有大丰收——他将得到什么成果？要有大丰收，他必须准备稻谷，除根，灌溉，耕田和施肥和昆虫破坏的预防等等的准备工作。即使这之后，他就能够在隔天有收成吗？他还要等待适合的时机到来。同样的，如果我们要学修心，我们不可能只是在等待，假如我们只是盘腿坐着许愿，愿我生起殊胜的定解，愿我修心增长，我们的不安情绪会因而更加深，因为我们想得到快速的成就而感到烦躁。

修心要得到成就有三个条件。

一、我们应该持更高清净戒。修心而不持戒是不可能的。有人以为戒规是非常简单，没有什么了不起，不戒持也一样可以成就。这只是一相情愿而已。

一个修行者，如果要修心，他必须持五戒。但是很多人都说戒很难持，这可以是事实。注意我们尝试持戒，却好像都失败。不要以为想要持戒，你就能够把戒持得圆满，怎么说我们还是凡夫呀！

重要的是当我们失败时，我们一定要知道我们失败了，而且也一定要知道我们为什么会失败，然后尽力的去改进我们自己，而且必须很尽力去做才行。即使在某种状况下我们破了戒，我们要知道犯了错，而且诚心坚定不再犯同样的错误，这就退不起了。这也是学习修心的开始。我们不要找借口，我们承认犯了错。当我们以这种行为来持戒，有一天，我们就会有成就。所以持戒是对我们要修心的人非常重要的。一旦我们有纪律，我们也就很容易修心。其实，修口业和身业，我们也就是在保持我们的心的定力。比如说谎吧！在某种状况里，我们很想说谎，但如果我们观想——我在尝试修心，如果我说谎，对我修心是没有好处的，那也是在修心的一部份。当我们很想去伤害众生，我们应该想——我是不应该去杀害生命，生命对每个众生都是宝贵的，因此我们不应该去杀害任何生命，这就是为什么我们要持戒，因为这样我们也自然的同时在修心，所以戒规对修心的增进是非常的重要。

二、修心增进的第二条件是：增上思维来修心，我们需要静坐。第一我们选择静坐法门来修心。有几种的常见的静坐法门，如正念静坐法门，但如果一个人很容易发怒，那他应该修慈心观的游善观。

有的时候，有些家长对他们的孩子时常用电话来聊天感到很不满。但发怒对我们又有什么好处呢？没有。愤怒并不能帮助任何人，不能帮助违法者或我们自己。另一方面，我们有时也在无意间莫名其妙的发怒，这对我们是非常伤害的。

(第13页续)

所有于此发表的意见都属个别作者和受访者的个人意见，绝不代表佛教图书馆或其编辑的立场。我们对于此刊登的任何组织、产品、服务或其他物品内容都不加负责。

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极乐之程



法师说



修心观

修心或者是启发我们的心是极为重要。我们都一直在讲修心法，也会尝试努力地修，但很多时候，我们都失败。因此很多人都认为他们无法做得到。然而不是我们无法修我们的心，而是我们的心很难被调伏。

在法句经里，佛陀说：

「如取出栖于水中的鱼，投掷在陆地上，以这颗战慄的心…」

「智者应该注意自己的心。」

「应防护极难察见的，极微细的，随从欲爱活动的心。」

这就是我们的心特性。你的身体可呆在这里，但你的心却跑到很远的地方去了。不须一秒钟就跑到那么远。我们的心能力是我们所知的运行能力中最快速的，所以对修心法的难度不兴惊讶。尽管如此我们还是修我们的心，因为只有通过启发我们的心，才能得到永远的快乐。

法句经里说到：

「已经制御的心，能引至安乐。」

「制御独行远去的，无形迹的，隐藏于胸窟的心，能制御的人，解脱魔王的束缚。」

当我们谈通过修心来得安乐时，我们必须注意到当我们心散乱时所经历的不自在。有很多的情况下能使我们的心散乱。

(第15页续)

庆祝卫塞节—2548

- James Chiang

二零零四年的卫塞节在早上开始庆祝而首先由Dhammaratana法师和Nigrodha法师普佛上供。之后，法师讲解这一天在佛教里的重要意义。这一天是庆祝佛陀降世，证悟和涅槃。随后，远清法师举行汉传佛教仪式。

在早上十一点，Dhammaratana法和远清法首先上前浴佛，这在佛教里是表示在消除我们的身口意的业障。三尊悉达多太子的塑像站立在一个装饰得很漂亮的池中。由于冰散发出来的浓浓的雾盖满了水面，形成了一片清凉的气氛。信徒们耐心地轮流上前浴佛。

中午十二点，午餐招待开始。大家兴奋地吃着由WongKingHwa精心为大家准备的美味素食。中午的活动还包括了法师为大家祝福。

庆祝会在晚间的颂经后结束。我很庆幸能够参与这次的庆典。

(Sunanda译)

(庆祝卫塞节的照片刊在第一页)