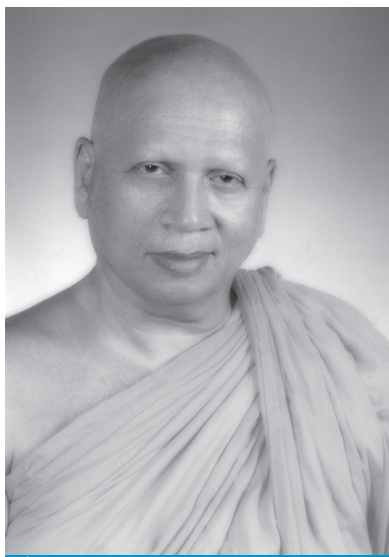


the Path of Joy

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Bhante says

Seven Ways to Happiness

Sometimes, we do things for our own convenience, not caring whether or not they also cause inconvenience to others. We may not realise it but, in the long run, such things can also cause inconvenience to ourselves. This is because all things that happen in this world are inter-connected. So our words and actions have an impact not only on others but ourselves as well.

Creating happiness in this world is very important as everyone wants to be happy. No one likes to suffer.

So I would like to talk about the 7 ways in which we can create happiness, according to the teachings of the Buddha.

Metta (Loving Friendliness)

The 1st way to happiness is *metta* or friendliness. The traditional translation of *metta* is loving kindness but, in my opinion, friendliness is better.

Friendliness creates happiness. The opposite is hatred or unfriendliness. We know how miserable we can feel if we have to deal with unfriendly people.

We generally expect other people to

be friendly to us. But we hardly ever check ourselves to see whether we deserve to have friendliness. It's very important to see whether we deserve the friendliness of others from the way we behave, work or associate with people or the way we live.

Some people think that being friendly means not interfering in other people's affairs. In a way, this is true. But it's a negative approach. We think – 'We don't harm or offend others so we deserve happiness.'

But this is not enough to gain a friendly environment or to inspire others. There's a positive aspect in life also. Whenever possible, we should try to perform positive actions to bring about happiness and to inspire others to do so. Friendliness begets friendliness.

The Buddha regarded friendliness as a great quality. In the *Dhammapada* he said – 'The friend is the greatest relative'.

In this world, it's possible to have relatives who nevertheless don't possess the qualities of relatives. That is the problem. Nowadays, we can even have mothers who don't qualify to be called mothers. They may be mothers because they give birth to the children but they lack maternal love. These people are therefore not the greatest relatives. Only if they have love and compassion can they be considered the greatest relatives.

Friendliness has 2 aspects – friendliness towards ourselves and towards others. Both aspects should be developed. Some people are not very friendly towards themselves, yet they are not aware of that also. They destroy their own health and they don't take care of their own lives.

Friendliness is even more important in spiritual practice.

In one sutra, Ananda, the Buddha's attendant, said to the Buddha, "Sir, fully half of this religious life is

friendship with what is noble, association with what is noble."

But the Buddha said, "Not quite so, Ananda, not quite so. It is the whole, not the half of this religious life: this friendship, companionship, association with what is noble."

What I want to emphasise here is that we should practise friendliness spiritually in 2 ways.

We can help other people to study the Dharma and assist them to go to places where they can get proper guidance and good facilities for studying the Dharma. But if we are not doing much to study the Dharma ourselves, we may be practising *metta* towards others but not towards ourselves. There are many people like this.

I have come across such a case myself at a previous temple. Some people came to the temple regularly. They did good work for the temple. They attended *pujas*, recited the sutras and even took precepts. They introduced their friends and relatives to the temple as well. But besides that, they did not do anything to improve their own knowledge of the Dharma. They did not attend Dharma lectures or meditation retreats. This is a great pity.

Karuna (Compassion)

This is the 2nd way to happiness. It's the opposite of cruelty. Compassion is very necessary for everyone.

In general, we don't want people to act in a cruel manner towards us. Take criminals, for example. They can be very cruel people. There was a case recently. A man killed his wife in a very cruel manner. She was a good lady but she made her husband angry many times. The man attacked her with a knife. She experienced a very painful death. He admitted his guilt but asked for pardon to escape the gallows. So you see, even hard-core criminals, those involved

in serious offences such as murder, robbery and serial killing, ask for compassion.

Sometimes, we think we don't need compassion from others. That's how we tend to feel when we're strong and healthy. In a way, this is understandable. We all like to be independent. But in reality, it's not the truth. At that very moment, we fail to see that compassion is a two-way thing. We cannot expect others to be compassionate towards us if we're not ourselves compassionate towards others. Even animals deserve our compassion.

Compassion is such a beautiful quality that it's very nice to see it being practised. Recently, I had such an experience.

One gentleman was travelling in a train with his 2 boys. They were very hyper-active children. Running here and there, they made a lot of noise disturbing the other passengers. One man was very tired so he closed his eyes to sleep. Naturally, he could not sleep and became very angry. He asked the boys' father gruffly, "*Are these your children? Where are you going?*"

The father replied softly, "*Yes, they're my own children. My wife just died. I'm going to the hospital with my 2 kids to collect the body.*"

On hearing this, the man realised that the poor man wasn't able to control the boys at that time and his anger turned to compassion.

Teaching Dharma to others

This is the 3rd way to happiness, according to the Buddha.

We can only teach Dharma to others if we have a good understanding of the Dharma ourselves and have confidence in our Dharma knowledge.

That's why I say that learning the Dharma is easy but teaching the Dharma is more difficult. We may prepare hard to give a Dharma talk for a couple of hours but after 10 minutes, we may have nothing more to say. This can happen if we don't have confidence and if we're nervous. My teacher related to me his experience when he gave his first sermon.

Someone had passed away and his relatives came to the temple to invite a monk to recite sutras and give teachings. In accordance with Sri Lankan tradition, a monk is invited to give

teachings at the wake on the 6th night after the death of the deceased. Traditionally, on such an occasion, monks administer the 5 precepts, recite a Dharma text, usually a *Dhammapada* stanza, and give a teaching based on the text.

My teacher was then a teenager. Unfortunately, no other monks were available then. So he had to get ready himself. He thought of a stanza from the *Dhammapada*.

The people offered my teacher tea and a tray of betel nuts and leaves. My teacher took a long time to administer the 5 precepts because he had to use up the allotted time. When it came time to give the talk, he completely forgot the stanza he had picked. He tried again and again and perspired a lot. But nothing came to his mind.

The audience realised that he was having a problem. They thought that he had eaten too many betel nuts and had become weak. And so, they asked my teacher to transfer merits and sent him back to the temple.

So it's like that. When we have to teach, we need a lot of confidence. Confidence can only be gained from thorough learning and practice.

Explaining the Dharma to others is a way to happiness because we feel happy when we witness the spiritual progress made by those we teach. Those being taught also gain happiness by practising the Dharma that they study.

Leading an exemplary life

But no matter how skilful we may be as teachers, the best way to teach the Dharma is by example. Being a popular teacher alone is not enough. If we follow the Buddha's way, we have to lead an exemplary life.

In the *Dhammapada*, the Buddha said –

*A man is not considered wise
Because he talks a lot
But he is secure and called wise
Who is free of hate and does no harm*

*A man cannot be regarded well-versed in the Dharma
By his rhetoric
However, even with little learning
A man who does not neglect the practice of virtue
May be considered well-versed in the Dharma*

We cannot inspire people to practise the Dharma

The Path of Joy Editorial Board

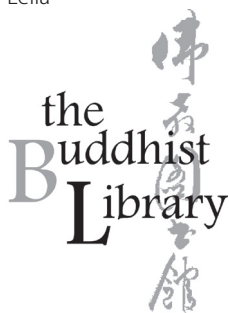
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if we ourselves do not practise it. For example, if we harshly judge and criticise people, we may even cause them to become so disgusted that they turn to other religions.

The best role model is none other than the Buddha himself. He led an exemplary life from the beginning to the end. He practised what he preached.

Rejoicing

Even if we cannot help others, we can learn to be happy when we see other people making progress either in their work, business or spiritually. Without making any effort, we can be happy. This is called *mudita*. Above all, we should not be envious.

As the 8th century Indian sage, Shantideva, put it –

*All deeds (of others) are the source of a joy
That would be rare even if it could be
bought with money
Therefore, I should be happy in finding
this joy
In the good things that are done by others*

*(Through doing this) I shall suffer no loss
in this life
And in future lives shall find great happiness
But the fault (of disliking their good qualities)
will make me
unhappy and miserable
And in future lives I should find great
suffering*

Dana

Charity is the 6th way to happiness.

Happiness as a result of gain is very vulnerable because when we gain less or we make losses, we're bound to be unhappy. But happiness arising from giving to charity without expecting anything in return is stable and won't change in this way.

Giving money and material things, our time and effort, even parts of our bodies, like donating blood or a kidney, are highly praiseworthy and virtuous deeds. But the greatest gift of all, according to the Buddha, is a gift of truth, namely, sharing the Dharma teachings. By doing this, we help others to gain relief from suffering, not only temporarily, but permanently

when they gain enlightenment.

Of course, the best way to share the Dharma is to be a Dharma teacher but this is not necessarily the case. We can share knowledge by making available Dharma texts and books to others. That is why BL organises a Dharma book offering every year as an opportunity for all of us to participate in the sharing of Dharma.

Equanimity

The 7th way to happiness is *upekkha*.

Buddhism alone among the world's major religions espouses equanimity as a great virtue. This perhaps explains why there has never been a religious war in the 2,550 year history of Buddhism.

Equanimity acts like a rudder of a boat that steers the boat through all kinds of currents, tides and weather. If the weather is fine and the sea is calm, the rudder is there to direct the boat forward. If the weather is foul and the water choppy, the rudder helps to stabilise it and enable it to plough to safety.

It's the same with equanimity. Equanimity steers us through all the good, bad and neutral events that we face in life. No matter what happens, we can remain happy whether we are rich, healthy, famous, lead exciting lives or otherwise.

With equanimity, it's possible for us to offer unconditional love (*metta*) to all beings, whether they are humans or not, relatives or strangers. Without it, even if we try to do good deeds like engaging in charity work, when things get rough, we may get discouraged and even give up.

And so when the Buddha was asked to explain what 'the greatest happiness' in life is, he said in the *Mangala Sutta* –

*If when experiencing worldly conditions,
one's mind is not shaken, but remains
fearless, free from sorrow and passion;
this is the greatest happiness*

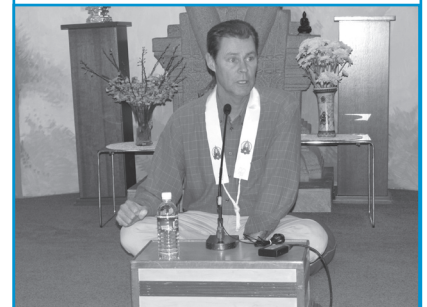
I wish you all a happy life.

Bhante B Dhammaratana
Religious Advisor
Buddhist Library

BL Activity

TALK on "Consciousness as it relates to mental stress, depression, dementia, etc. science and Buddhism"

By SILADASA (Dr Mark Newton), a well-known Australia Neurologist and member of the Western Buddhist Order on 7 & 8 July 2007.



Talisman COEs and Cookies

'Although gold dust is precious, when it gets in your eyes, it obstructs your vision'

Chinese Zen Master

In June 2007, just a few days into the new academic year, I asked a class I was teaching who their class leader (monitor) was. He was not there.

Downstairs, after the lesson, I bumped into the class leader and asked him where he'd been. He produced a talisman and said, with a smile, *"I went to the shop to make a frame for this."*

The talisman was that of a popular deity the Thais call Jatukarm Ramathep.

A Thai friend explained to me the way the system works. Temples make the talisman, then sell it, say, at 99 bahts each (S\$4.50) to their devotees. Owing to the demand, the more popular temples even issue coupons (talisman COEs, if you like) to purchasers who collect the actual items later.

The talisman then enters the market. Many claim that the talisman has saved their lives in serious traffic accidents, even from bullets. Others say they have become rich.

As a result, the prices of the more popular *'models'* skyrocket to dizzying heights.

'Jatukarmania' has indeed become a huge, sophisticated industry. Sales turnover of talismans and related products in Thailand are expected to reach 22 billion bahts (S\$1 billion) in 2007 and the Jatukarm talisman is said to be a *'major contributor'*.

Not surprisingly, movie stars and other luminaries get into the act, even participating in talisman making rituals.

Impressed by the talisman's success, one man regretted not believing in the stories of its power. He told the Nation newspaper, *"If I did, I would*

have become a millionaire by now. I could not believe that an amulet I purchased for 99 baht could be worth 1,000 baht just after taking it from the temple grounds on the same day. Now I can see its miracle immediately."

Yes, indeed. It's the age-old miracle of money, fuelled by greed and ignorance

Interest in the talisman became so intrusive that, as the Bangkok Post reported, *'(t)he rituals have certainly interrupted the normal schedule of those who wish to study and practise Dharma. One nun and her followers had to move their classes from the main Vihara of the temple to a kitchen'.*

I was mildly amused to see a junk email sent to BL by an individual in Thailand offering the talisman for sale. He was even prepared to conduct a tour to the Great Stupa of Nakhon Si Thammarat, where the talisman first gained prominence. (Ironically, this southern city is also the site where Theravada Buddhism is believed to have been first introduced into Thailand from Sri Lanka).

But, in the midst of all this frenzy, things can get dangerous. In one incident, a 51-year-old woman was crushed to death and many others injured when thousands of people forced their way into a technical school to buy the COEs. The crowds reportedly caused a 5 km traffic jam.

Recently, the Nation newspaper carried an article by Michael Wright claiming to disclose *'the facts behind the Jatukarm Ramathep talisman nonsense'*.

According to Wright, the Jatukarm deity arose out of a confusion involving 2 guardian deities, Khattugama and Ramadeva, who guard the stairs leading to the Great Stupa.

What Wright says is that there's no such deity called Jatukarm Ramathep (or its equivalent in Pali or Sanskrit) known in Buddhism or even Hinduism.

But other reports claim that the 2

deities did exist long ago but only as princes of the Srivijaya empire which once ruled southern Thailand.

But whatever may have been the origin of the talisman, one thing is clear. Worshipping gods who, according to Buddhism, are themselves trapped in the same cycle of birth and death as we are is not a very intelligent thing for Buddhists to do. How can they save us if they can't save themselves?

I'm reminded by all this much-ado-about-nothing of a story often told in Dharma class. You've probably heard it before but I'll relate it for those who may not have.

One morning, a Tibetan master met a man walking around a stupa. *"What are you doing?"* he asked. *"Circumambulating,"* the man replied. *"That's nice. But wouldn't it be better if you practise the Dharma?"* the master asked.

The next morning, the master again met the same man. *"What are you doing?"* he asked. *"I'm performing 100,000 prostrations,"* the man replied. *"That's good. But wouldn't it be better if you practise the Dharma?"* the master again retorted.

On a 3rd occasion, the master again chanced upon the man. *"What are you doing?"* he asked. *"I'm reciting the sutras,"* the man replied. *"That's great. But wouldn't it be better if you practise the Dharma,"* came the stock response.

In exasperation, the man pleaded, *"I thought I was practising the Dharma. What should I do?"*

"Practise renunciation," the master explained.

This is not, of course, to say that circumambulating, prostrations and chanting are wrong. But they should not be performed to achieve worldly fame and fortune. Nor, for that matter, even for a long life *per se*.

The Tibetan monk, Geshe Jampa Tegchok, states the position succinctly –

'When we are advised to give up attach-

ment to the happiness of this life, it does not mean that we have to become beggars or that Dharma practitioners should forget all worldly activities... It means that we must emphasise the next life above the concerns of this life. In fact, the less we cling to the things of this life, the happier we will be, both now and in the future...'

The Dhammapada says it more pithily –

*'Do not follow low practices
Do not live carelessly
Do not hold wrong views
Do not prolong the suffering of the world'*

For sure, some Thai monks have criticised the participation of Buddhist temples and monks in *Jatukarmania*.

Phra Wudhijaya Vajiramedhi, for example, reminded Thais, *"The rightful way to make a living is to use our brain and two hands, not the talisman."*

Another revered Thai monk, Phra Phaisarn Visalo, in a Bangkok Post article entitled 'Buddhism at a critical juncture' said, *"...when people hold the talismans without thinking of the Lord Buddha's teachings to remind them of their faith, they tend to be obsessed by worldly desires...The big question for all of us Buddhists is whether we are losing our way or not. Whether Buddhism will last or whether it doesn't is not about it being in the written word, but in the way we live our lives."*

But these cries are few and far between, probably unheard and certainly unheeded. The country badly needs a strong spiritual leader in the mould of the late Ajahn Buddhadasa, the

reformist monk who dedicated his life to distilling the essence of the Buddha's teachings and living it.

In the meantime, it seems that all hope is not lost.

A well known monk, Phra Payom Kalayano has come up with a unique tongue-in-cheek way to combat *Jatukarmania*. He's selling his new 'Bear in mind 4 bites and you will be super-rich' cookies for 60 bahts each. Each cookie bears the face of the deity on the top side with 4 Thai letters and the Phra's signature at the bottom. 'Ou' means diligence, 'Ar' is about saving money earned legally, 'Ka' refers to associating with moral friends and 'Sa' involves leading a modest and simple life. Phra Payom deserves to succeed in his mission but he's swimming against the current in a torrential river.

Thailand's problems though are not unique. We can see in Singapore too mundane beliefs and practices being taught by Dharma centres and adopted by Buddhists as if they were part of the Buddha's message.

Ultimately, as the *Thai Rath* newspaper says –

'In a free society, individuals have full freedom to conduct religious activities so long as they do not harm public peace and harmony... However, such rituals must not create a misunderstanding about the true essence of Buddhism...'

In this issue, our Bhante B Dhammaratana talks about the 7 ways to happiness as taught by the Buddha.

One of these is teaching the Dharma. Bhante stresses the important point that, besides willingness to impart knowledge of the Dharma to others, which, of course, is a great virtue, the pre-requisites of a Dharma teacher are a good knowledge of the Dharma and confidence in teaching it. *'We can only teach Dharma to others if we have a good understanding of the Dharma ourselves and have confidence in our Dharma knowledge.'*

It goes without saying, of course, that a Dharma teacher must himself or herself practise what the Buddha taught. On our part, it's vital that we, as Dharma students, should carefully select our teachers.

In the words of Geshe Gedun Choephel, whose interview we're also very pleased to bring in this issue, we *'need to observe and investigate properly'* before choosing a spiritual teacher.

"You should not just go after a guru with high qualifications. Of course, you should not just go after someone well dressed.... It will be too late to investigate after you have already chosen him as your guru. If you were to do it in that way, you would create negative karma."

As always, I wish you all pleasant reading.

Chwee Beng
Editor



Interview with Geshe Gedun Choephel

Buddhist Library
 April 16 2007
 Interviewed by James
 Chinese Translator – Venerable
 Tenzin Gyatso
 English Translator – Tenzin Namdrul
 (Michelle Ng Swee Teng)



What are the essential differences between the Gelug school headed by HH Dalai Lama and to which you belong as compared with the other 3 major Tibetan Buddhist schools?

Basically, there are no substantial differences. Just a difference in terminology. It's like universities as centres of learning. All universities are the same. It's just that they specialise in different courses. Also, like aeroplanes. The purpose of a plane is to ferry passengers from point A to point B. They just have different colours (brands). The core teachings have to be the same. Otherwise, they would be considered incorrect.

Let's talk about merit. To gain enlightenment, we have to accumulate wisdom and merit. What is merit?

We need to practise the qualities of the Buddha, including wisdom. To attain wisdom, we have to practise *vipassana* and *samatha* (meditation). We also need to practise renunciation and *bodhicitta* (the wish to attain enlightenment for the benefit of other sentient beings). With these qualities, we can get rid of all our defilements and gain enlightenment.

So when I make offerings (dana), what should I do to ensure that by this positive deed, I'll make progress along the path towards enlightenment, rather than just gain a happier rebirth within samsara?

When we practise any positive actions, we wish that we can have a

better future, say, a precious human birth. We have to keep our precepts and vows, say our prayers, dedicate our merit etc. The best is to practise the 6 *paramitas* (perfections).

By way of an example, as citizens of a country, we have to obey its laws. Also, as family members, we have to be co-operative with other family members. Then, we extend that co-operation to our friends, colleagues and other sentient beings.

Most importantly, we have to be happy ourselves. Only then can we make others happy and attain a precious human rebirth.

In order to be liberated, we have to fully understand and practise renunciation. Renunciation is very, very important. Then, with *bodhicitta*, we can attain enlightenment. We have to get rid of this 'I' notion, the ego, and work not for ourselves but for all sentient beings. Then, you have the chance to attain enlightenment.

Some Buddhist centres ask their followers to make donations on auspicious days because on those days, the merit created will multiply. Please explain how this works.

The merit will multiply because when you do prayers or practise *dana* on auspicious days, you are inspired by the examples of the Buddha and other holy beings to practise the Dharma better.

Shouldn't we ask people to be virtuous on all days, not just on auspicious days? Aren't we encouraging people to only practise positive actions on auspicious days?

There are 2 types of practitioners. One type will not discriminate between auspicious and ordinary days. The other type will practise more positive acts on auspicious days in order to create more merit. However, if you do that, it will make a difference in your future lives. It's better not to discriminate.

Actually, a real practitioner would not discriminate between auspicious days and ordinary days. If you have

this 'wishing heart' (to multiply your merit), you are just a very ordinary practitioner.

Why is guru devotion so heavily emphasised in Tibetan Buddhism?

We need to have gratitude to the guru because only he will show you the way to liberation. Only he will show you the Triple Gem. Say, you are in a (burning) house, the guru is the person who will lead you out.

In our worldly life, the most important to us is our parents. So we have to be grateful to our parents because they bring us up. Our guru is like our (spiritual) parents.

How do we go about looking for a guru?

You have to observe and investigate. In Mahayana Buddhism, there are 10 qualifications a guru has to satisfy. You should not just go after a guru with high qualifications. Of course, you should not just go after someone well dressed.

In Tibetan Buddhism, we are taught to look up to the guru as a Buddha. How do we investigate if we do that?

Before you take someone as your guru, you need to observe and investigate properly. It will be too late to investigate after you have already chosen him as your guru. If you were to do it in that way, you would create negative karma.

Tibetan Buddhism is unique among Buddhist traditions in that you have reincarnated lineages of gurus like the Karmapas and the Dalai Lamas. How is it possible for them to choose to be reborn as particular individuals?

For this reincarnation to happen, there are certain conditions to be met. The practitioner must have reached a high level of realisation. This means that he's able to select where he wants to be reborn. Ordinary people like us can't do this. We'll be reborn in accordance with our karma.

The Gelug school is well-known for its practice of debate. What other schools of Tibetan Buddhism share this practice?

..continued on page 9 **6**

BL Activity: Bodhiwalk 2007



Mind Training

by Ringu Tulku

Edited by B M Shaughnessy

Published by Snow Lion Publications (2007)

160 pages

Reviewed by Chwee Beng

'Perhaps you know the story of the man who arrived in heaven and when asked by God where he wanted to go replied that he wanted to see both heaven and hell. First, he went to hell. There was a large table with all the inhabitants of hell sitting around it. The centre of the table was full of delicious food. Each person had two very long chopsticks. They could reach the food but they could not get it into their mouths because their chopsticks were too long. They were miserable. No one was eating and everyone went hungry.

Next he was taken to visit heaven. All the inhabitants of heaven were also sitting around a big table full of delicious food but they were happy. They too had very long chopsticks but they were eating and enjoying themselves. They used the chopsticks to feed each other across the table.'

This well-known little parable related by Ringu Tulku in his book is obviously not a Buddhist story. As every Buddhist knows, or should know, there's no creator God in Buddhism and the idea that heaven and hell are the be-all and end-all of human existence is also alien to Buddhism. So, of course, Rinpoche does not tell the story for its truth.

Rinpoche relates the story to illustrate the importance of being unselfish. 'A truly holy person is dedicated to others.' But there are other powerful Buddhist themes that can be gleaned from the story as well.

One is that heaven and hell are not externally different. It's our mind that projects their heavenly or hellish aspects and create for us happiness or misery respectively. Similarly, it's said that samsara and nirvana are not 2 different places. An ordinary sentient being looks at the world and sees samsara; an enlightened being, looking at the same world, sees nirvana. To put it in another way, as the Buddhist scholar, Professor Asanga

Tilakaratne says in his book *'Nirvana and Ineffability'*, unlike the rest of us, enlightened beings *'experience nirvanically'*.

And so, as Rinpoche points out, if we want to progress along the Buddhist spiritual path, we have to learn to deal with the world as it is, good, bad or neutral. *'Rather than excluding negative and disturbing things, we do the opposite – we accept them. This turns our problems into possibilities.'* Hence, the critical importance of mind training or *lojong* (in Tibetan), the subject matter of this book.

But, as Rinpoche also says, there's more to *lojong* than this. *Lojong* has another important goal *'We are not just learning to be unselfish for the sake of it. We are also confronting the ego – the source of so much of our pain.'*

The original text – *The Seven Points of Mind Training* – was written by the Tibetan master, Geshe Chekawa during the 12th century. Since then, it's been adopted by all traditions of Tibetan Buddhism. There's clearly a dire need for such a concise text. *'The teachings of Buddhism are so vast and complicated that it would be impossible to study them all. Lojong contains, in a very condensed form, the essence of all Buddhist thought'*.

The sub-headings of the Seven Points given in the book help to give the reader a bird's eye view of the practice. They afford the reader a sense of direction and help to avoid confusion. These sub-headings – *Preparing for Practice, Practising Wisdom and Compassion, Transforming Adversity, The Essence of Practice and Life and Death, Evaluating the Practice, Discipline and Guidelines* – also tell us something about the breadth and scope of the mind training practice.

The text consists of short slogans. These slogans may sound simple but they're as contrary to our normal way of thinking as they're difficult to practise. This is because they comprise at their very core the bodhisattva practice of *bodhicitta*, both relative *bodhicitta* (compassion) and absolute *bodhicitta* (wisdom).

Although we can read and understand the slogans quite easily

– they're written in simple, straightforward language – being able to accept them at all is quite a different matter. Why? Because, as Rinpoche points out, the meditation practice that's involved (*tonglen*) *'totally contradicts our normal behaviour and puts us on a collision course with our ego'*.

'Tonglen' literally means *'giving and taking'* – giving away all our happiness and taking all the suffering of sentient beings. A difficult pill for our ego to swallow, for sure.

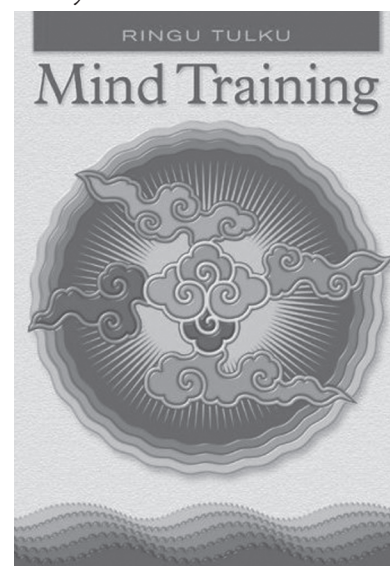
Take the slogans in the Third Point (*'Transforming Adversity'*) –

'Drive all blame into one' (the *'one'* being as Rinpoche explains, our *'self-cherishing ego'*).

'All activities should be done with the intention of helping others.'

It's normal to reject such slogans off-hand as being too idealistic or impractical, even dangerous or harmful. But before we do that, it's important to view them in the proper context. Rinpoche explains –

'Accepting and enduring negative things and daring to let them happen to us dispel both their harmful effects and our own anger and hatred. It makes adversity less frightening. We do not cause suffering or seek it out. We take up whatever suffering is around us, transforming it in the 'giving and taking' exercise so that no one else will be injured by it and the negativity which already exists in the world is reduced.'



There are also other slogans in the text – in the Sixth Point (*Discipline*), for example – that are not quite as revolutionary. They may even be applicable both at work and at home.

*‘Do not ponder others’ faults’
‘Do not strike at the sore point’
‘Do not transfer the ox’s load to the cow’*

I remember a time when I’d just moved into an apartment some years ago. For some reason, my new neighbour was hostile from the outset. She objected to my pet dog. She complained that my plant was blocking the way along the corridor although her own plants lay just a few feet away and I’d made sure my plant did not block the way. And she objected to a small porcelain figurine of a bulldog which a friend had made and given to me. I’d placed it in a pot of plant and forgotten all about it. The reason for her objection – her daughter, a 19 year old, was afraid of it.

I tried my best to refrain from arguing and took steps to comply immediately with her demands. Peace was kept but I could not help feeling like a *‘born loser’*.

But if I’d followed my instinct by reacting adversely against my neighbour, tempers would have flared and the environment would have become intolerable. As it turned out, some months later, when I got home, I heard from my maid that my neighbour wanted to talk to me. Soon, there was a knock on the door and I opened it fully expecting a barrage of new complaints. Instead, there stood in the doorway, my neighbour holding my letter box keys. I’d left them downstairs.

Not exactly mind training, of course. But if even this simple act of forbearance can yield positive results just imagine what a proper practice of the mind training slogans can bring.

Rinpoche writes simply and clearly but also very directly and in a no-nonsense *‘telling it as it is’* approach. He relates many anecdotes not only from the teachings but also from his own life (including his experiences as a refugee from Tibet). Wherever

applicable, he highlights differences in approach between Tibetans and westerners. Singaporeans, having a mindset more akin to westerners than Tibetans generally in many ways, will probably find these comments interesting and instructive.

And he comes up with his own slogan – *‘Do your best, prepare for the worst, and expect nothing’*. Wise words indeed that encapsulate the quintessential Buddhist antidote to living in this egocentric, money-driven, 21st century world.

The publishers wisely made this a pocket-sized book, handy enough to have around at all times. So leading a busy professional and personal life is not a good enough excuse for not reading this book when it can be so easily accessed on the move and read, say, while standing in queue for the bus, taxi or train or while waiting for that all-important business meeting with clients to commence. Indeed, keeping in mind some of these slogans may well increase the chances of success in that meeting, although it’s also important to bear in mind that business success is not a good enough reason for practising the slogans.

This little book is worth reading and reflecting upon over and over again. It’s a power pack of wisdom that has the potential to make a sea change in our lives and make them happier and more meaningful, come rain, shine or tsunami. But we do need to keep an open mind.

JOY

*“Do your
best, prepare
for the worst,
and expect
nothing”*

Interview (With Geshe Gedun Choephel continued)

All 4 Tibetan schools do debate, even the Bon tradition. But of course, the Gelug school is the most prominent.

What is the purpose of debating?

Debating is very important. It’s like opening a house to Buddha knowledge. Today, even scientists are studying this debating practice.

The monks not only debate but they also perform certain actions when they debate. What is the purpose? Is it to frighten their opponents? (Laughter)

The person who claps must do it in a prescribed manner. Similarly, he must wear the yellow robes in a certain way. When you use these techniques, this helps you to consolidate your wisdom.

When a debater paces up and down, he’s trying to gain the wisdom to come up with the right answer.

The person who’s answering sits down. His opponent who asks the question stands up. If the answer is wrong, the questioner will shout *‘Cha!’*.

If a debater uses a hand signal as if drawing a circle, he means that his opponent’s answer is wrong. He’s saying that his opponent is not answering his question. *“I’m asking you this, why do you answer that?”*

Who sets the topics for debate?

The debate topic is in accordance with what is taught by the teacher on that day. There will be 2 sessions, one in the afternoon and one in the evening.

Do the students take turns in the positions they assume in the debate?

There’s no fixed rule. When the students are tired, they can stop or change their debating positions.

Thank you very much, Geshe-la.

JOY

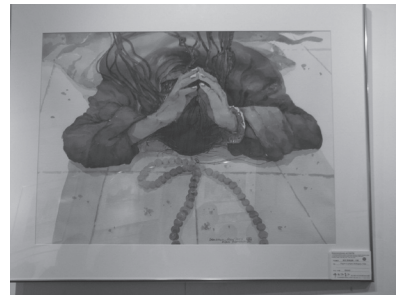
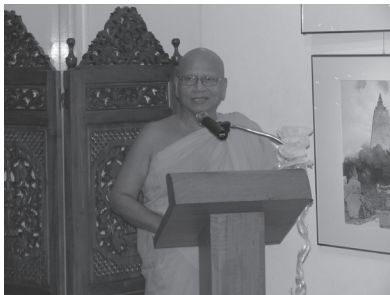
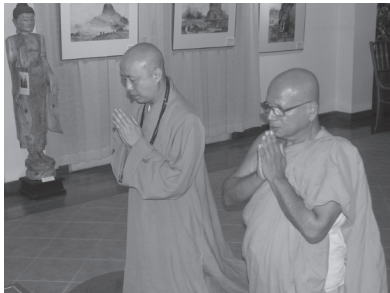
BL Activity: Graduation Ceremony

July 31st 2007 was an auspicious day for the Buddhist Library as it held a convocation ceremony for 10 students of the Postgraduate Diploma in Buddhist Studies. This is the first time that the Postgraduate students of Buddhist Studies ever received the Diploma from the University of Kelaniya. The Graduation Ceremony was for batch 2004 i.e. students who studied for the Postgraduate Diploma in Buddhist studies in 2004. In all 10 students received the Diploma but one was away.

It was a happy day for everyone. Bhante B Dhammaratana as Principal, Graduate School of Buddhist Studies signed the Memorandum of Understanding with the Vice-Chancellor, Prof MJS Wijeyaratne and the Director of Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, Professor GD Sumanapala to effect the exchange of knowledge of Dhamma between Buddhist Library's Graduate School of Buddhist Studies and University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka.



BL Activity: Art Exhibition



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佛教图书馆

十六日四月二零零七年

访问：刘瑞明

中文通译：天经耶索法师

英文通译：米雪

你所属的由达赖喇嘛带领的曷鲁派和其他的三大藏传宗派有什么显著的分别吗？

基本上没什么太大的分别的。只是名词上的不同而已。就如大学一样是学习的中心。所有的大学都一样，只是不同的大学有不同的课程而已。还有，如飞机，飞机的作用是把乘客从A点送到B点。它们只是颜色不同（品牌）。学习的核心要一致，不然的话就不对了。

让我们来谈有关于功德吧！要证悟，就必须累积智慧和功德。何谓功德呢？

我们必须修佛陀的美德，包括智慧。要得智慧，必须修内观禅和修定（静坐）。我们也必须修出离心和菩提心（发愿证悟后利益一切众生）。有了这些资粮，就能够灭除所有的一切烦恼而证悟。

当我在修供养时，我将如何确定这正行有助于我在修行道上有增长而不只是会更幸福而已呢？

粮食

当我们在修任何正行时，我们都希望有个美好的未来，比如得宝贵的人身。我们必须守戒和发愿，颂经和回向我们的功德等等。最好是修六波罗蜜（善行）。

举例子说吧！一个国家的公民，应该守法。还有作一个家庭的成员，必须与其他的家庭的成员合作。然后再延伸和朋友，同事和其他的众生之间的合作。

最重要的是我们自己必须感到快乐。只有这样才能使别人也快乐和得宝贵人身。

如要得解脱，我们要完全了解和修出离心，出离心是非常非常的重要的。再来，联合菩提心，我们就能够证悟了。我们必须灭除这个“我”的概念，我执和不是只为自己而是一切都是因为要利益一切众生。这样，你才有机会证悟。

有的佛教中心呼吁它的信徒在吉祥的日子供养，因为这样功德就会加倍。请解释怎样形成的呢？

当你在吉祥的日子里，颂经或修供养，功德会因此加倍，是因为你从佛陀和其他圣人树立的榜样中得到激励而更精进地修行佛法。

我们是不是应该呼吁人们每天都行善，而不只是在吉祥日里而已呢？

有两种的修行者。一种是不去区分吉祥日或平常日。令一种是为了加倍功德而只在吉祥日才行善。然而，如此的做法将影响你的来世。所以最好不要去区分。

其实，一位真正的修行者并不会去区分吉祥日或平常日的。如果你的“愿心”是（加信功德），那也只不过是一个非常普通的修行者而已。

为什么藏传佛教那么注重祈祷上师呢？

我们有必要感恩上师因为只有他才能够指引我们走上解脱之道。只有他才能够告诉什么是三宝。举例说，你被困在被火（烧）着的屋子里，能指引你逃出来的人就是上师了。

在世俗生活里，我们的父母是最重要的。所以我们要感恩父母，因为他们把我们养大成人。我们的上师就如我们的（精神）上的父母亲。

我们要如何去寻上师呢？

你必须观察和调查。在大乘佛教里，一位上师必须符合十项品质。你不应该只追逐高尚的上师。当然，你也不应该只追逐穿著华丽的人。

在藏传佛教里，教导说要把上师视为佛陀。如果这样的话，要如何去调查研究呢？

在你选择某位作为你的上师之前，你必须仔细调查清楚。选择他为上师之后，才来调查为之已晚了。如果你这样做，会为自己造恶业的。

藏传佛教与其他的佛教传统不一样就是如你们有转世传承的大宝法王和达赖喇嘛等上师。他们是怎么能够自己选择转世为某个人呢？

转世是需要某条件的。修行者一定要达到相当高的觉悟。意思是说他能够选择自己所要转世的地方。象我们这样的凡人是不行的。我们只能随业力去投胎。

曷鲁派的辩经是很有名的。其他藏传宗派也有辩经吗？

藏传的四宗派都有辩经，甚至是苯教也有。不过当然，曷鲁派是最为显著的。

辩经的目的是什么呢？

辩经是很重要的。它好象是打开通往佛教知识之门。现在科学家也正在研究有关辩经的修持。

僧侣们在辩经中也时常做出某些动作。为什么呢？是不是在吓唬对方呢？

那个拍掌的人一定要依指定的动作。同样的，黄色袍的穿法也是有规定的。运用这些技巧是为了帮助集中智力。

当一位辩经者上下走动时，他是在寻找智慧的答案。

答辩者是坐着的。问问题的对方是站着的。

如果答案是错的话，问者就会喊“噫”。

如果辩经用手势画个圆圈，是表示对方的答案是不对的。他是说对方答非所问。“我是问这个，为什么你却答那个。”

是谁准备辩经的题目呢？

辩经的题目是依当天老师所教的内容来定的。有两轮的辩经，一次是在下午而另一次是在傍晚。

学生们是不是轮流互相对换位置？

没有一定的规则。当学生们疲倦了，他们可以停止或者对换位置。

谢谢曷西。

（Sunanda译）

(接自第14页—编辑说)

有位有名的僧侣芭勇·卡拉严诺法师出了个抗衡扎突堪狂热的幽默主意。他开始售卖“四口就可致富”饼干，每个饼干六十泰铢。每片饼干上面印有天神的面像，背面则有法师的签名和四个泰字。它们的意思是勤劳、储蓄正当赚的钱、交正当朋友以及过朴实和简单的生活。芭勇法师的使命是应该成功的，但他毕竟是在逆水行舟。

泰国的问题并不独特。在新加坡我们也有看见一些佛学中心教导世俗的信念和习俗，并被佛教徒当作是佛陀的教诲采用。

最终，有如泰国拉特报说：

“这是个自由的社会，只要不危害公众的安宁和谐，人们有完全的自由举行宗教活动...然而，这些仪式可不要把佛教的真正意义让人误解。”

在这期，我们的达摩拉达那法师会谈到佛陀所教过的七种幸福之道。

其中一个教导佛学。法师强调除了有意把佛学传授给他人（这当然是极大的功德），佛学导师的先决条件必须是要拥有很好的佛学知识以及有信心去教导它。

当然，佛学导师不用说也必须实践佛陀的教诲。当佛学的学生，我们必须细心选择我们的导师，这很重要。

对于选择一位宗教导师，我们这一期访问过的葛顿卓别葛西说：“之前你必须仔细调查清楚。”

“你不应该只追逐高尚的上师。当然，你也不应该只追逐穿著华丽的人。选择他为上师之后，才来调查为之已晚了。如果你这样做，会为自己造恶业的。”

跟以往一样，我祝你们阅读愉快。



(接自第15页—法师说)

平常心也一样。平常心帮我们度过我们人生中各种事件，好的、坏的及非好坏的。无论什么事发生，我们可以维持快乐，无论我们是富裕、健康、有名、有精彩的生活等等。

有了平常心，我们可以把慈爱给于一切众生，无论他们是不是人类，亲属或是陌生人。没有了它，即使我们去尝试做善行如慈善工作时，一旦遇到波折，我们可能会灰心甚至放弃。

所以当佛陀被要求解释什么是人生的“极乐”时，他在祝福经里说：

“当人面临世俗的起落甘甜时
心不动摇，处变不惊
不怀哀伤懊恼，不起贪婪欲念
这就是最高的幸福”

我祝大家人生快乐。

达摩拉达那法师
佛教图书馆宗教顾问

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编辑说

神符拥有证与西饼

在二零零七年六月，刚进入新学年几天，我问我班上的同学谁是班长。他当时不在课室里。

下课后，我在楼下撞倒班长，便问他刚才去了哪里。他拿出一道神符，脸带笑容地说：“我刚才去了店里为这个东西镶框。”

这是泰国有名的天神的神符，叫做扎突堪·拉马贴。

有个泰国朋友向我解释这些过程的操作。有些寺庙制造这些神符，然后以每个比方说九十九泰铢（约五新元）卖给它们的信徒。由于需求量大，有些比较受欢迎的寺庙甚至要印发固本（可以说是神符拥有证）给有意购买神符的人，以让他们这些日子来领取实际的物品。

这些神符过后进入市场。很多人声称神符曾在严重意外中救过他们一命，有些甚至说它能帮人避开子弹。则有其他人说他们因而致富。

结果，比较受欢迎的“款式”的价钱飙升到令人头昏眼花的高处。

“扎突堪的狂热”以形成一个庞大而复杂的工业。在泰国，神符以及相关物品的销售营业额在二零零七年有望达到二十二万亿泰铢（约十一万亿新元），而扎突堪神符可说是给予最大的贡献。

不惊奇的，有些电影明星以及其他名人也加入一份，甚至参与神符制造的仪式。

有一个人因神符的业绩而留下深刻的印象，他后悔先前没有相信神符威力的故事。他告诉国民报：“如果我有我的话，我现在已经是百万富翁了。我真的不相信我以九十九泰铢购买的护身符在我离开寺庙那天就可马上值一千泰铢。现在我马上能看见它的奇迹。

的确，它就是基于贪婪和无知的古老金钱奇迹。

人们对神符的兴趣侵入了许多地方，曼谷邮报报导，造神符的仪式的确干扰了那些想学习和实践佛法的人的正常时间安排。有位比丘尼和她的信徒必须把佛课从寺庙的精舍移到厨房。

佛教图书馆最近收到一份由一位泰国的人发的垃圾电邮，说他售卖神符，令我学得有点有趣。他甚至会安排你到洛坤府的大佛塔旅游。洛坤府的大佛塔是神符引人注意的起源地。（很讽刺的，这个南部城市相信也是南传佛教从斯里兰卡传入泰国的第一站。）

在这狂乱中，危险的事情是会发生的。在一起事件中，当成千入争先涌入一所技术学校购买拥符证时，一位五十一岁的妇女被践踏而死，而许多人也受了伤。报导说，人群造成五公里的交通阻塞。

最近，国家报有一篇由迈克·赖特写的文章，声称要揭发“扎突堪·拉马贴神符背后的事实”。

根据赖特，扎突堪天神的出现是人们混淆了两个守护大佛塔阶梯的天神—卡度迦马以及拉马德瓦。

赖特所说的是其实佛教或甚至是兴都教都根本没扎突堪·拉马贴（或在巴利文或梵文有相等名称）的天神。

其他报导却说那两位天神很久以前的确存在，但只不过是当时统治泰国南部三佛齐王朝的王子。

无论神符的起源究竟是什么，很明确的是，奉拜那些难逃生死轮回佛学中的天神，对于佛教徒来说，并不是一件聪明的事。这些天神都自身难保，怎么来保佑我们呢？

我记得一个常在佛学课中讲的故事。你们也许有听过，就让我说说给那些还没听过的读者。

有一个早上，一位西藏导师遇到一位男子绕着佛塔走。导师问：“你在做什么？”那男子回答：“我在绕寺。”“那很好，但是如果你去实践佛法不更好吗？”导师问道。

隔天早上，导师又遇到同样的男子。导师问：“你在做什么？”男子回答：“我在行十万大磕头。”“那很好，但是如果你去实践佛法不更好吗？”导师回答道。

第三次，导师又偶然遇到那男子。导师问：“你在做什么？”男子回答：“我在颂经。”“那很好，但是如果你去实践佛法不更好吗？”导师同样问道。

恼怒地，男子反驳：“我以为我正在实践佛法。那我该做什么？”

导师解释：“实践舍吧！”

这当然不是说绕寺、大磕头和颂经都是错误的。但是修炼这些不应该是为了达到名利，或是为了长寿。

西藏僧人蒋巴帖却格西简明的说：

“如果要我们舍弃执著于这一生的幸福，这并不是说我们都要成为乞丐，或者是说实习佛法的人都得忘却世间的活动…我们必须强调来世超出今世的事物。其实，我们越少依附今世的事物，就会更快乐，当前以后都一样。”

法句经更是措辞简练：

“不要遵守低俗的习尚
不要肆意恣情地生活着
不要守持邪见
不要延长世间的苦难”

肯定的，有些泰国僧侣会批评那些参与扎突堪狂热的佛寺和僧侣。

例如武迪迦耶·维杰基拉美迪法师，提醒泰国人：“找生活的正确方法是利用我们的脑子和双手，而不是神符。”

另外一位受尊敬的泰国僧侣拍善·维萨罗，在一篇刊登在曼谷邮报题目为“佛教处于关键交界”的文章里说道：“当人们拿着神符时没想到佛陀的教诲，他们会沉迷于世俗的欲望。要问我们佛教徒的大问题是我们是否已失去方向。佛教的存亡并不在于它的文字，而是我们如何生活之道。”

然而，这些呼声是极为稀少的，也许没人回应，更令人忽视。泰国急需一位坚强精神导师，有如已故佛使比丘，他把一生献给了提取佛学的精华，并以身作则实际它。

在这期间，并不是统统都绝望的。

（第13页续）

(接自第16页)

最近有这么一个个案，一个男子以很残酷的方式杀死他的妻子。她是个好女子，但她很多次都惹丈夫生气。那男子用刀子攻击她。她经历一个很痛苦的死亡。他认罪，但为逃过死刑而求情。可以看到，即使是无可救药的罪犯，那些犯了有如谋杀、抢劫以及连环杀人的严重罪行的人都会求慈悲。

有时候，我们认为我们不需要别人的慈悲。当我们觉得坚强和健康的时候，我们会觉得这样。某方面来说，这是可以理解的。我们都喜欢独立。然而，在现实里，这却是不真实的。在那个时刻，我们发现不到慈悲是双向的。如果我们自己对别人没慈悲，就不能指望别人对我们有慈悲。即使畜生也应受我们的慈悲。

慈悲是这么一个优美的美德，能看见它被实践是很宜人的。最近，我就有这么一个经验。

有一位男士带着他的两个儿子乘搭列车。孩子们特别好动，在车里到处乱跑，呱哩呱叫，骚扰了其他的乘客。有另外一个男子由于很累，本打算闭眼养神，但自然的是做不到，就很生气。他生硬地问孩子们的父亲：“他们都是你的孩子吗？你要去哪里？”

孩子的父亲小声回答：“是的，他们是我的孩子。我的妻子刚去世。我正和孩子们去医院领她的遗体。”

听了这断话，那男子了解为什么当时那可怜的男士无法控制他的儿子们，而他的愤怒便转变成同情。

教导佛学

根据佛陀，这是达到幸福的第三法门。

要教导别人佛学，我们自己必须先对佛学有很好的了解并对自己的知识有信心。

所以我会说学习佛学是容易的，但要教导佛学是比较困难的。我们可以努力的花几个小时准备讲佛法，但是可能讲了十分钟，便没什么可再讲下去了。如果我们没信心并且紧张，这样的事情是会发生。

我的导师曾对我讲述了他自己第一次说教的经历。

有一个人过世了，他的亲属来到寺庙邀请僧人去念经授佛法。根据斯里兰卡的传统，往生人去世后的第六个晚上，僧人会被邀请到吊丧处来授佛法。传统上，在这种场合，僧人主持五戒仪式、念佛经，通常是法句经并根据该佛经教导佛法。

我的导师当时是个青少年。很不巧的，当时其他的僧人都没空，所以他必须自己准备，打算教导法句经的其中一段。

人们供给我的导师茶水及一盒槟榔和槟榔叶。我的导师用了很多时间主持五戒仪式，因为他必须用完所给予的时间。当到了说法时，他之前选出来的那一段佛经已经完全忘记了。他屡次尝试回想那段佛经，并汗流浹背，可是脑子空空。

听众意识到他有问题。他们以为他吃了太多槟榔后变虚弱。结果，他们只要求我的导师做点功德，并送他回寺庙。

所以就是这样。当我们要教导别人，我们必须要有很多自信。只有通过仔细的学习和练习，才能增强信心。

给他人解说佛法是达到幸福的法门，因为当我们看到那些我们教导的人的修行有进步时，我们会觉得快乐。那些学习佛法的人也会因实习佛法而快乐。

以身作则

不过，无论我们是如何熟练的导师，教导佛法的最好方法还是以身作则。当一位受欢迎的导师是不够的。要跟随佛陀的法门，我们必须以身作则。

在法句经里，佛陀说：

“一个人不是因为多言而被被誉为‘智者’，
而是因为他心地平稳
一个没有嗔恨无害性的人
人们才称誉他是‘智者’，

一个人不是因为他的花言雄辩
而成为精通佛法者
倘若人实践德行不放逸
纵然他胸无点墨
也可被视为精通佛法者”

如果我们自己不去实践佛法，我们是不该激励他人去这样做的。举个例子，如果我们恶劣的评估及批判他人，我们可能就会导致他们觉得厌烦而跑去信奉其他宗教。

最好的榜样当然是佛陀了。他由始至终以身作则，言传身教。

随喜

要是我们帮不了别人，当我们看到别人在工作、商场或修行中有进步，我们可以学习为他们快乐。无需费力，我们就可以快乐。这就是“喜”。更重要的，我们不应该妒忌。

第八世纪的印度贤人寂天说：

“如果从他人的（善）行中我感觉到喜悦
这份喜悦即使能用金钱买得到
也是稀世之宝
所以我应当感觉到无比的幸福
能在他人的善行中找到喜悦

我这么想这么做，今生不会因此而有所损失
未来的生生世世还能得到无比的快乐
反过来说，嫌恨他人的善行
今生让我过得痛苦不乐
未来的生生世世还要得到无比的苦恼”

布施

慈善是达到幸福的第六法门。

因获利而得到的快乐是很脆弱的，因为当我们获得太少或是有损失时，我们肯定就不快乐。然而，从供给慈善而不求回报所得到的快乐是稳定而不会改变的。

给予金钱及物品，我们的时间与精力，甚至我们身体的部分如捐血或一个肾脏，都是值得赞扬和善良的行为。然而，根据佛陀，一切最珍贵的礼品是真理，那就是分享佛法。这样做，我们帮助他人解脱痛苦，当他们证悟时，已经不只是短暂的，而是长久的。

当然，分享佛法的最好方法是成为一位佛学导师，但这不一定是需要的。我们可以通过让他人能够接触佛学经文和书籍而分享知识。这就是为什么佛教图书馆每年都举行供书活动给大家一个机会分享佛法。

平常心

达到幸福的第七法门是舍。

在世界各宗教中，佛教相信平常心是个重要美德。这也许可以解释为什么佛教两千五百五十年的历史中都未曾发生过任何宗教战争。

平常心就有如船的舵，帮助船只在各种波浪、潮水及天气中行驶。当天气风和日丽及海水平静时，舵引导船只向前进。当天气恶劣及波涛汹涌时，舵帮助稳定船只并让它破浪航行直到安全地带。

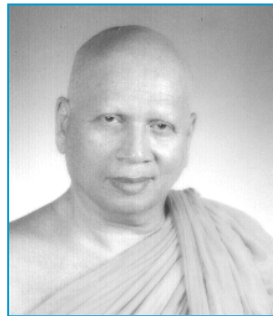
(第13页续)



极乐之程



法师说



幸福之道七法门

有时，我们为了自己的方便做某些事，却没顾及到底会不会给别人带来不便。长远来说，这些事情也会给我们带来不便，这我们也许是不了解到的。这是因为世间万物所发生的每件事都是息息相关的。所以我们的言行不止会影响他人，也会影响自己。

能在世间制造幸福是很重要的，因为每个人都要幸福。没人喜欢受苦。

所以我打算谈谈，根据佛陀的教诲制造幸福的七个法门。

慈

第一道法门是慈。慈的传统解释是慈爱，但是，我认为用友好来解释比较好。

友好会制造幸福。相反的就是憎恨或有敌意。我们都知道如果要应付不友好的人是有多么的难受的。

一般来说，我们都指望别人对我们友好。但是我们几乎从不留意自己到底应不应受别人的友好对待。从我们的举止、工作、与他人的关系或者我们生活的方式，可以很重要的看到到底我们应否受别人的友好对待。

有些人会认为友好的意思就是不去干涉他人的事情。某个方面，这是确实的。不过这是个消极的处理方式。我们认为：“我们不去伤害或得罪他人，所以我们应受幸福。”

然而，要增强一个友好的环境或是激励他人，这是不够的。人生也有积极的一面。一有机会，我们应该为幸福而行正业并激励他人这么做。友好态度自然会带来更多友好态度。

佛陀认为友好是一项很大的美德。在法句经里，他说“朋友是最好的亲属”。

在这世上，有些亲属没有亲属的品德是有可耻的。那就是问题。当今

，我们甚至能够看到一些不配做母亲的母亲。她们也许因为生育孩子而是母亲，但却缺乏母爱。所以这些人不是最好的亲属。只要是他们有爱心和慈爱，他们才会被认为是最好的亲属。

友好有两方面一对自己友好以及对他人友好。这两方面都必须培育。有些人对自己不怎么友好，却没有感觉到。他们伤害自己的健康并不照顾自己的生活。

友好在修行中其实更重要。

在《杂阿含部》第七二六经里，佛陀的侍从阿难，对佛陀说：“世尊。我独一静处禅思思维。作是念。半梵行者。所谓善知识·善伴党·善随从。”[“世尊，我在禅定中思维时，这么想：（有了）善知识、善同伴、善随从是修梵行（成功）的一半。”]

然而，佛陀说：“莫作是言。纯一满静。梵行清白。所谓善知识·善伴党·善随从。”[不是的，阿难，不要这么说。善知识、善同伴、善随从是修行纯净圆满梵行的全部，不是一半。”]

我要在这里强调的是我们要双方面在修行中实习友好。

我们可以帮助别人学习佛法，并且协助他们去那些学习佛法有正确引导及良好设施的场所。但是，如果我们自己则没什么去学习佛法，我们也许对他人有实习慈，但对自己却没有。有许多人是如此。

我在先前的寺庙就碰到这么一个例子。有些人经常到寺庙来。他们为寺庙做事。他们参加共修会，念经并甚至守戒。他们也会介绍朋友和亲属到寺庙。除了这些之外，他们对增进自己的佛学知识却没做出什么。他们没有参加佛学讲座或者静坐修养。实在是太可惜了。

悲

这是达到幸福的第二法门。它跟残酷相反。每个人都非常需要悲。

一般来讲，我们不要别人以残酷的行为对待我们。就拿罪犯为例，他们可以是很残酷的人。

（第15页续）