

# The Path of Joy

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*If my sickness is of benefit to living beings,*

*let me be sick.*

*If my death would benefit them, may I die.*

*But if my recovery would help, may I be cured.*

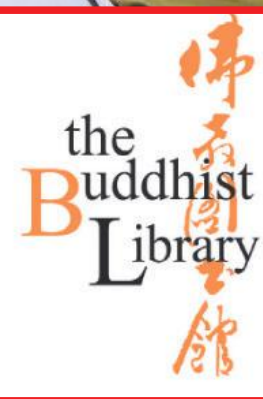
*Bless me to accept whatever happens with*

*JOY and use it as my **PATH** .*

Gyelsay Togmay Sangpo

Kathina & Robes Offering, 2016

Photo Credit: Tan Yew Beng



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# Bhante Says

## THE TWO ASPECTS OF MINDFULNESS

I am going to talk to you about mindfulness.

When we talk about mindfulness, there are two aspects to consider.

One is plain mindfulness which we have in our daily lives. This aspect is about being aware of things happening around or within us whether we practise meditation or not. This is a very essential part of our lives although sometimes we may be lacking in this aspect. At other times, though, we may be quite good at it.

Some people have a good level of this awareness but there are others who don't have much awareness of what is happening around them.

Sometimes when we talk about our health, for example, this aspect of mindfulness is quite important. Our bodies always communicate with us, not by words but through feelings or sensations or by way of certain signs. But sometimes we don't understand our bodies' language. We don't understand the way our bodies try to communicate with us.

For instance, our bodies send us symptoms of illnesses, whether they are clear to us or not. When things get serious, somebody brings us to see a doctor. The doctor conducts some tests and then we discover what is wrong with our bodies.

But certainly before that, our bodies would have sent us some signals which may take the form of pain or other sensation or feeling that something is wrong or not quite in order.

And so such awareness is important. If we don't possess such awareness, we might not go and

consult the doctor until it is too late. Nevertheless it is important to differentiate this from mindfulness meditation.

I would like to relate to you a story about a Zen Master and a young man to illustrate my point.

One young man heard about the famous Zen Master and wanted to become his disciple and practise mindfulness meditation under him. So he went to see the Master. It was a rainy day and the young man brought with him an umbrella. Before he entered the Master's room, he left the umbrella at the entrance to the monastery.

The Zen Master welcomed the eager young man and asked him why he came.

The man said that he wanted to practise Zen mindfulness meditation. The Zen master then proceeded to ask him some questions.

The young man thought that the Master was going to ask him questions about mindfulness meditation. Since he had some background in mindfulness meditation, he felt confident that he would be able to answer these questions with ease.

However, the Master asked the young man whether it was raining when he came to the monastery.

The young man replied, "Yes."

The young man smiled, thinking to himself that things were going to be alright if the Zen Master just asked him such simple questions which were not really relevant to the occasion.

*"Were you carrying an umbrella?"*

“Yes.”

“Where did you place your umbrella?”

“Oh, I just placed it outside.”

“Can you tell me whether you placed it on the left hand side or the right hand side of the entrance?”

Suddenly, the young man was caught off-guard. He thought and thought but could not answer the question.

Finally, the Master told him that before he could qualify to practise meditation under him, he needed to have more awareness of what was happening around him. So he told the young man to come back when he was better prepared.

The kind of mindfulness that the young man lacked in this simple story is mere awareness or attention. It is different from mindfulness meditation but if we have a good sense of what is happening around us, we will find it easier to practise mindfulness meditation. Our daily lives would also be much better because we can perform our day-to-day activities in a much better way.

Before we practise mindfulness meditation, we need to know four things about ourselves very seriously.

Firstly, we need to know what is happening with our bodies in a very deep way.

Secondly, we need to know what is going on with our feelings in a serious way.

Thirdly, we have to know what is going on with our minds. We have to know the thoughts rising and falling.

As ordinary people, we do not know what is going on in our minds. We know we are thinking and thinking every minute of the day. We may even have problems sleeping at night because our thoughts are working non-stop. In short, we think too much.

But if we are really aware of what we are thinking, the possibility of making mistakes is very much reduced. We can even avoid making any mistake at all if we are deeply aware of what we are thinking because we cannot do anything without thinking. And so, the thinking process can be controlled or disciplined by way of mindfulness.

Finally, we have to know about the *dhammas*. Here, ‘*dhammas*’ means the reality of things as they are. The Buddha taught us that the reality about ourselves is impermanence, discomfort (or uneasiness or suffering) and non-self.

We have to be aware of the fact that, as a result of our being impermanent, we undergo a lot of discomfort. Then we have to be aware of the real nature of the self. Although we are so much attached to the idea of self, one day we will have to realise that there is no permanent self. So mindfulness about *dhammas* means being mindful about these characteristics which are related to us.

Thus mindfulness meditation is the second aspect of mindfulness, different from mere awareness or attention. Mere awareness or attention is just what is going on within or around us as I said earlier. Mindfulness is more serious. More seriously, we have to be more mindful about things related to ourselves. Anyway, if we have attention or awareness of what is going on within us, it is easier for us to go on to the next step.

I would like to tell another story. In the *Dhammapadam*, there is a story about an old monk called *Bhagineiya Sangharakkhita* and his disciple.

The senior monk was a great practitioner. He had attained arahantship. His nephew used to attend to him occasionally. Later the young monk ordained under his uncle and served the teacher very attentively. He provided all the necessary things and looked after him very well.

One day, when the young monk went outside, someone offered him a very valuable robe. In the olden days, talking about valuable robes was very difficult because it was very difficult to find good material to make robes. But one rich family made

a good robe and offered it to the young monk. However, the young monk was not attached to robes and decided to offer it to his teacher.

When he offered the robe to the teacher, to his disappointment, the teacher told him that since it was offered to him by people, he should wear it himself.

When we give something to somebody wholeheartedly, we feel some kind of pain if the person refuses our gift. And so the young monk felt very sad.

This is a very common thing even nowadays. I can still remember some thirty years ago, one lady bought a very valuable handbag as a birthday present for her mother-in-law. But the senior lady refused the present. Maybe they did not have a good relationship. The daughter in law could not take it and cried for days.

After refusing the young monk's offering, the senior monk asked the young monk to fan him as it was a hot day. The young monk used to do this frequently for his teacher.

The young monk could not get over his teacher's refusal. He felt that he was not being appreciated despite his good work. He thought it would be better for him to disrobe and go home. His parents would surely accept him. In time, he could get married and then after a while his wife would bear him a son. The two of them could even come back to the temple to visit the senior monk. He pictured in his mind his wife and himself taking turns to carry the child. Suddenly, his wife slipped and dropped the child to the ground. The child cried. The young monk lost his temper and scolded and beat his wife.

At that very moment, he unwittingly hit the senior monk on the head with the fan. The teacher, being an arahant, was aware what his nephew was dreaming about all this time and he told the young monk. *"You are afraid to beat your wife so you beat me instead!"*

As a result, the young monk felt very ashamed.

He threw the fan aside and ran away.

Later, the senior monk sent some people to fetch the young monk back. He asked him to stay and carry on his duties as usual.

This is a good story for us to understand about awareness or attention. We are aware of things happening within us but sometimes our minds travel far, far away with outside things. When this happens, we do not know what is happening around or nearer to us. We then lose our awareness and make mistakes.

Of course, the best thing is to practise mindfulness meditation. Then we can have both awareness of things happening around us and also be able to be mindful of thoughts arising and falling within our minds.

I would like to end by quoting in full a short sutra called the *Ajita-manava-puccha Sutta: Ajita's Questions*, in which the Buddha talked about mindfulness. The sutra is reported in the form of a dialogue.

[The Venerable Ajita:]

*"By what is the world enveloped? Because of what is it not known? With what do you say it is soiled? What is its great fear?"*

[The Lord:]

*"The world is enveloped by ignorance, Ajita. Because of wrongly directed desire and heedlessness it is not known (as it really is). It is soiled by longings and its great fear is suffering."*

[Ajita:]

*"Everywhere flow the streams. What is the obstruction for the streams, tell me the restricting of them, by what are they cut off?"*

[The Lord:]

*"Whatever streams are in the world, it is mindfulness that obstructs them and restricts them, and by wisdom they are cut off."*

[Ajita:]

*"It is just wisdom and mindfulness. Now mind and body,*

*sir, explain this: where does it cease?"*

[The Lord:]

*"This question you have asked, Ajita, I will answer for you: where mind and body completely cease. By the cessation of consciousness they cease."*

[Ajita:]

*"Those who have fully understood the Dhamma, those who are training and the other individuals here, explain their (rule of) conduct."*

[The Lord:]

*"Not craving for sensual pleasures and with a mind that is pure and tranquil a bhikkhu should mindfully go forth, skillful in all situations."*

I wish you all the best results and greatest benefits in your mindfulness and meditation practices.

**Bhante B Dhammaratana**

**Religious Adviser**

**Buddhist Library**

Reference:

*Ajita-manava-pucchaSutta :Ajita's Questions*.SN 5.1.Translated from the Pali by John D. Ireland.

# BL EVENT

**BL Event: 'Healing Prejudice' : Talk by Ven Thubten Chodron**

Date: December 6, 2016

Venue: BL Auditorium

Photo Credit: Yeo Koon Teck



# BL EVENT

**BL EVENT: MEDICINE BUDDHA PUJA 2016**

Date: November 5, 2016

Venue: BL Auditorium

Photo Credit: Yeo Koon Teck



# Editorial

## Internet Dharma - Transferring Merit and Rejoicing

*Sometimes, the Internet can feel like a middle-school playground populated by brats in ski masks who name-call and taunt with the fake bravery of the anonymous. But sometimes - thank goodness - it's nicer than real life.*

*Susan Orlean (from BrainyQuote)*

When you picked up this Issue of POJ, you probably would have witnessed, on the front cover, a transference of merit ceremony conducted on Kathina Day at BL this year.

It is an interesting photo. The participants look serious and highly focused, united by a strong sense of purpose. What better image to grace the front page of Issue 52 of POJ than this?

Transference of merit has been practised by the followers of the Buddha for a long time.

But doubt persists to this day as to whether or not merit can really be transferred from one person to another, deceased or otherwise. Why? Well, as I found out, because the texts are ambivalent.

In some sutras, the Buddha said very clearly that our actions are personal to ourselves and their results, good or bad, cannot be transferred to others, deceased or otherwise.

For example, in the *Upajjhatthana Sutta*, the Buddha suggested that people should reflect as often as possible on five things, one of which is their actions or karma.

*'... I am the owner of my actions, heir to my actions, born of my actions, related through my actions, and have my actions as my arbitrator. Whatever I do, for good or for evil, to that will I fall heir.'*

And, as if that wasn't clear enough, in the *Dhammapada*, the Buddha proclaimed -

*By oneself is evil done, by oneself is one made impure.*

*By oneself is evil undone, by oneself is one made pure.  
Each one is responsible for purity and impurity  
No one can cleanse another.*

So why has the practice continued unabated all this time?

Perhaps because in the *Tirokudda* (sometimes spelt *Tirokuddha*) *Sutta*, the Buddha, after describing the wretched condition of *petas* or hungry ghosts in their realm, suggested that it is far better for their relatives and other well-wishers to offer *dana* to the Sangha and then transfer the merit accrued to them than to moan and groan.

*'He gave to me,  
she acted on my behalf,  
they were my relatives, companions, friends.*

*Offerings should be given for the dead  
when one reflects thus on things done in the past.*

*For no weeping,  
no sorrowing,  
no other lamentation benefits the dead*

*whose relatives persist in that way.*

*But when the offering is given  
well-placed in the Sangha,  
it works for their long-term benefit  
and they profit immediately.'  
In this way the proper duty  
to relatives has been shown,  
great honor has been done to the dead,  
and monks have been given strength:*

*The merit you've acquired is not small.'*

So how should we, as educated, practising Buddhists, respond to this anomaly?

I decided to delve into the Internet, the only English language resource for Dharma research available here in Chiangmai where BL has no branch library!

In *Buddhist Ceremonies and Rituals of Sri Lanka*, A.G.S. Kariyawasam describes what happens during a typical ceremony for the transference of merit and its significance.

*'... the close relatives of the deceased sit together on a mat, assume a reverential posture, and together they pour water from a vessel into a cup placed within a plate until the cup overflows. While the water is being poured, the monks intone in unison the following stanzas extracted from the Tirokuddha Sutta of the Khuddakapatha:*

*Just as the water fallen on high ground flows to a lower level,  
Even so what is given from here accrues to the departed.  
Just as the full flowing rivers fill the ocean,  
Even so what is given from here accrues to the departed.*

*'The basis of the practice is the belief that if the dead relative has been reborn in an unhappy existence (i.e., as a peta or unhappy spirit), he or she would expect his or her living relatives to transfer merit in this manner as these departed spirits or petas are incapable of performing any meritorious deed on their own. Even their hunger and thirst, which is perpetual, subside only in this manner. Hence they are referred to as 'living on what is given by others' (paradatta-upajivi).*

*This custom can be traced to the Buddha's own time when King Bimbisara was harassed by a group of his departed kinsmen, reborn as petas, because the King had failed to give alms to the Buddha in their name. Once this was fulfilled as requested by the Buddha, the petas became happy and ceased to give any more trouble (KhpA. 202f; PvA.19ff). This was the occasion on which the Buddha preached the Tirokuddha Sutta referred to earlier, which further says that once these rites are performed, these contented spirits bless the donors in return.'*

Traditionally, Buddhist monks and teachers explain away the anomaly between the standard Buddhist notion of karma and the practice of transferring merit by saying that the general principle is that transference of merit is not possible but with one important exception – where merit is transferred to *petas*.

This is a skillful escape from the dilemma except that King Bimbisara's case may just happen to involve *petas* and it does not necessarily follow that any transfer of merit to other forms of sentient beings (i.e. other than *petas*) is not possible. Unless, of course, the Buddha had said that that was indeed the case which, apparently, he did not. But I stand corrected as my research facilities are limited.

In another online article, *Transference of Merit in Ceylonese Buddhism*, G. P. Malalasekera first explains the practice from the perspective of the person transferring the merit.

*'The method of such transference (the Pali term for which is pariva.t.ta) is quite simple.*

*The doer of the good deed has merely to wish that the merit he had thereby gained should accrue to someone in particular, if he so wishes, or to 'all beings'. The wish may be purely mental or it may be accompanied by an expression in words. This could be done with or without the particular beneficiary being aware of it.*

*Also, the fact of 'transference' does not in the slightest degree mean that the 'transferor' is deprived of the merit he had originally acquired by his good deed. On the contrary, the very act of 'transference' is a good deed in itself and, therefore, enhances the merit already earned. The act of 'sharing' one's good fortune is a deed of compassion and friendliness and, as such, very praiseworthy and 'meritorious'.*

Then he talks about the beneficiary of the transference of merit and throws a new element into the mix – rejoicing.

*'Where the beneficiary is aware of the transference, another very important element comes in. This is called in Pali anumodanaa, which means 'rejoicing in'; the 'joy of rapport'.*

*Here, the recipient of the transfer becomes a participant of the original deed by associating himself with the deed done. Thus, this identification of himself with both the deed and the doer can sometimes result in the beneficiary getting even greater merit than the original doer, either because his elation is greater or because his appreciation of the value of the deed done is more intellectual and, therefore, more 'meritorious.' The Pali Commentaries contain several stories of such instances.*

*Anumodanaa can take place with or without the knowledge of the doer of the meritorious act. All that is necessary is for the 'beneficiary' to feel gladness in his heart when he becomes aware of the good deed. He could, if he so desires, give verbal expression to his joy by saying 'saadhu' once or several times. The word corresponds to 'amen' and almost means 'well done'. It thus becomes a sort of mental or verbal 'applause'. What is significant is that in order to share in the good deed done by another, there must be actual approval of it and joy therein in the beneficiary's heart. The doer of the good deed cannot, even if he so desires, prevent another's anumodanaa, because he has no power over another's thoughts. Here too, as in all actions, it is the thought which, according to Buddhism, really matters.'*

Keeping the act of rejoicing in mind, it is possible to infer that if the transference of merit in King Bimbisara's case worked, there were two possible ways it could have done so.

One, the ceremony worked and merit was indeed transferred to the *petas*, as the Buddha indicated; and

Two, the *petas* received the merit because they rejoiced in the transference. (Indeed, they more than rejoiced. They instigated the transference by creating a disturbance at the palace and, after they had received the merit, they applauded their relatives).

In this second scenario, it would be irrelevant whether they were *petas* or not or even whether the ceremony was conducted properly or at all. All that mattered for merit to be shared or gained by rejoicing was that there was any kind of virtuous deed performed and, in the words of G. P. Malalasekera, the beneficiaries felt *gladness in (their) heart(s) when (they) bec(a)me aware of the good deed.*

Rejoicing in a positive action (even if the doer of the good deed did not intend or wish to share the merit) is well-established as a meritorious practice in itself in Buddhism as was made clear by the Buddha in the *Kaladana Sutta* –

*'... Those who rejoice in (the) gift or give assistance, they, too, have a share of the merit, and the offering isn't depleted by that.'*

To summarise, it would appear that it is not possible

to transfer merit from one person to another in view of the fact that, according to the Buddha, our actions or karma are personal to ourselves and cannot be transferred. If at all, merit can be transferred to deceased relatives, the traditional Buddhist view based on King Bimbisara's case is that merit can be transferred only to deceased relatives who are reborn as *petas* although the Buddha in that case did not appear to have actually ruled out non-*peta* cases.

However, in cases where the beneficiaries of the transfer of merit are aware of the transfer and rejoice in it, it is possible for them to share in the merit but only because they created the merit in their own minds by virtue of the rejoicing and not because of any ceremony of transference or their status as *petas*.

Finally, I would like to share a wonderful story that I heard in a podcast on Youtube.

Ajahn Achalo, an Australian-born Theravada monk in the lineage of the forest meditation master, Ajahn Cha, was in England when he received an urgent message from his twin brother in Australia for him to call back instantly. Their father had had a stroke and the doctor gave the patient only five hours to live.

After Ajahn Achalo had recovered from the shock, he decided to perform a *puja* for Dad and dedicate merit to him. Then he called his mentor, a senior Thai monk, who was in Thailand at the time, with a request to bless his father for an auspicious rebirth. Ajahn Anan agreed.

Soon after Ajahn Achalo resumed his *puja*, he received another call from his brother who said, *"I don't know what happened but Dad just became conscious again. He just walked to the bathroom."*

Ajahn Achalo commented on the experience thus -

*"What I think was occurring on that occasion was you know when you live a virtuous life and you have a certain amount of merit and I was dedicating the merit to my father and someone like Ajahn Anan has the skill to make sure the file gets through. I suspect he was using his*

*samadhi to get that merit I was dedicating to that situation.*

*... This is the amazing thing. (My father) can't remember anything. To me and to all my friends in Thailand it's so obvious that my doing the puja and Ajahn Anan helping was involved. No one in my family has any faith at all. The doctor described my father's recovery as miraculous. He said he had never seen such a thing before. My father still drives. He has no paralysis. He had a huge frontal lobe bleed. He had some damage in the area of numbers and dates. It was a miraculous recovery.*

*... My mum had a vision of Ajahn Anan standing in her room smiling at her. Since that time, she developed some faith. She had never met him and she asked to look at his photograph and she said, "Yeah! That's him! That's him! That's him!"*

*... I asked Ajahn Anan what he was doing. He wasn't sending his divine body. He was sending loving kindness. Apparently what happened was that if someone has very deep metta when they send their loving kindness, it's like a carbon copy, an image of the person goes with (the loving kindness)... and apparently my mum had enough sensitivity to see it."*

I do not ask you to believe in miracles. That's not so important. But simply to gaze at the wonders of loving kindness, compassion and the power of the enlightened mind. And, yes, to rejoice!

As always, I wish you pleasant reading.

**ChweeBeng**

**Editor**

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*The Dhammapada.* Translated from the Pali by Ven. Balan-goda Ananda Maitreya.

*Buddhist Ceremonies and Rituals of Sri Lanka* by A.G.S. Kariyawasam (<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/kariyawasam/wheel402.html>).

*Tirokudda Kanda: Hungry Shades Outside the Walls* (Pv 1.5) Translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

*Transference of Merit in Ceylonese Buddhism* by G. P. Malalasekera.

*Ghosts, Devas, Merit, Rebirth etc, Metaphor, Metaphysics or Matter of Fact* - a teaching by Ajahn Achalo  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ySkqvOHL7qY&t=382s>).

## BL EVENT

**Event : Postgraduate Diploma in Buddhist Studies and MA Examinations & Celebrations thereafter**

Date: December 10, 2016

Venue : Buddhist Library Seminar & Samatha Rooms

Photo Credit: Leila





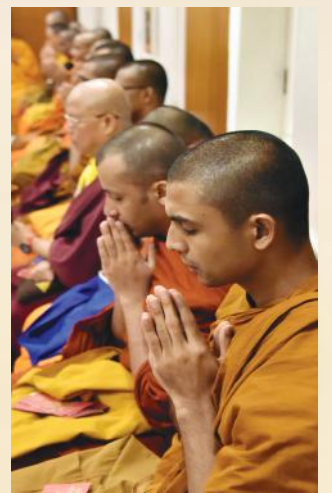
# BL EVENT

KATHINA AND ROBES OFFERING 2016

Date: November 12, 2016

Venue: BL Auditorium

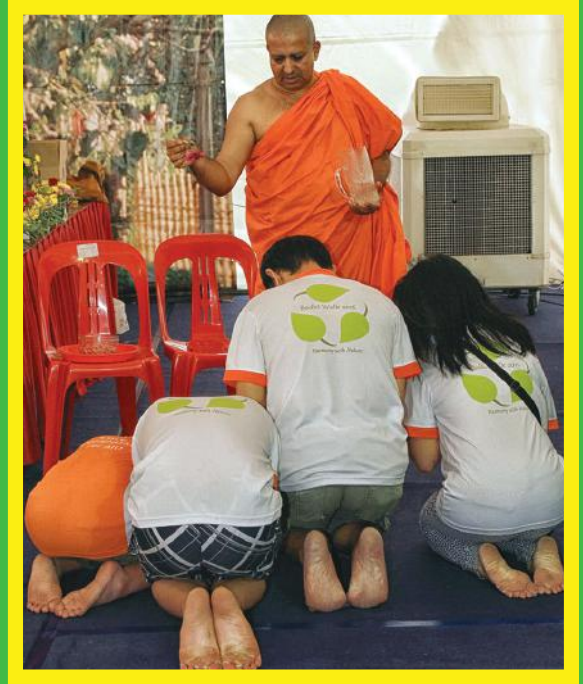
Photo Credit: Tan Yew Beng





# BL EVENT

BL EVENT: FAMILY DAY & FUN FAIR 2016  
Date: November 20, 2016  
Venue: Vacant Land adjacent to Aljunied MRT Station  
Photo Credit: Ricky Tay, Leila



切众生”。这个心愿可以存粹是心理想的或用语言表达出来。这可以是在受益者知情或不知情的情况下办到。而且，迴向并不代表功德主会散失他原有累积的功德。相反的，这迴向本身就是一桩好事，更能提升已经得到的功德。这种“分享”自己利益的行为是一件慈悲又友善的事，非常值得表扬和殊胜的。

他继续谈关于迴向的好处，还介绍一个新的元素叫做随喜。

“当受益人知道这个功德回向时，另一个很重要的元素就进来了。巴利文叫做anumodanaa，指的是随喜。

在这里，受益人变成参与迴向功德的人因为他与此功德有了关系。因此，联系这件好事和功德主的身份有时能让受益人得到比功德主更好的功德。因为他的喜悦更强烈，或是他对这件功德的价值看得更有智慧，因此更殊胜。在《巴利语法句译注》里有许多这样的故事。

(Anumodanaa) 随喜可以在功德主知情或不知情的情况下发生。这只需要“受益人”意识到善举时而感到满心欢喜。如果他说的话，也可以用言语表达出来，比如说出“善哉”一遍或三遍。这句话跟“阿门”同义也和“做的好”相似。它变成了一种心理或言语上的“称赞”。重要的如果要善举与他人分享时，受益人一定要满心欢喜的接受。

功德主无论如何也不能拒绝他人的随喜，因为他没有左右他人思想的能力。在这里，根据佛法，有如所有的行为，都是念头所牵引。

在随喜的基础上，我们可以推断迴向功德在频毘娑羅王的案例里行得通的话，有两种可能性。

其一，有如佛陀所说，仪式办成功而功德的确迴向给饿鬼道的众生。

其二，饿鬼道的众生因为满心欢喜的接受功德所以成功。(的确，它们非常喜悦。它们在 宫廷制造麻烦，为了就是得到功德迴向。而当它们接受到功德后就会赞扬它们的亲戚。) 在这第二个情形下，它们是不是饿鬼道的众生或仪式有没有顺利完成已经没有关系了。有如 G. P. Malalasekera 所说，重要的是受益的众生是否满心欢喜的接受所迴向的功德。随喜是个正面的行为（即使功德主不愿迴向功德）是佛教教义里殊胜的操行，也是佛陀在《应时慈善经》所说；

“。。。那些随喜功德或给予协助者，他们都会分享到功德，而功德也不会因此而被消耗。”

总的来说，要把功德从一个人传到另一个人身上看似不可能。因为根据佛陀言，我们的行为和因果都是跟随我们和不能转移的。即使可以，以传统佛教看法，根据频毘娑羅王的案例，功德只能传给投胎为饿鬼的

众生,虽然佛陀并没有直接排除非饿鬼众生的可能性。当那些收益的众生知晓并因接受迴向功德而感到欢

喜时，他们是有可能接受到功德。这是因为功德是由他们自己发出的欢喜心而不是因为仪式或他们是否是饿鬼道的众生的缘故。

最后，我要分享一个在Youtube视频所听到的美妙故事。

Ajahn Achalo 是个生于澳大利亚的南传法师。他的师父是森林禅师Ajahn Cha。他在英国的时候收到了双胞胎兄弟的紧急短信，说在澳大利亚的父亲中风。医生判断父亲只有五个小时可活。

Ajahn Achalo从惊吓中复原后，便为父亲办法会并迴向功德给他。之后他联络上师，身在泰国的资深泰国法师，要求他为父亲祈福能投胎在吉祥地。Ajahn Anan答应了他的要求。

随后当Ajahn Achalo继续办法会时，他又接到兄弟的来电说“我不知道发生什么事，但父亲清醒了。他刚才走向洗澡房。”

Ajahn Achalo对此经历发言-

“我认为事情的经过是这样的。。。你知道当一生言行举止，心地善良、道德修持会累积一定的功德。而我正迴向功德给我父亲。又有像Ajahn Anan这种有能力确保迴向成功的人。我怀疑他在运用他的三昧来助长我那时迴向的功德。

“。。。这是一件奇妙的事。我父亲什么都记不起来。对我和我泰国的那班朋友而言，很明显那是我的法会和Ajahn Anan的功劳。家里其他人没有信仰。医生称我父亲的康复为奇迹。他说他从来没有看过这种事。我父亲还能驾车。他没有半身不遂。他耳垂内大量流血。他在数字和日期的范围记忆有些损伤。。这是一个奇迹般的康复。

“。。。我母亲看见一个影像，Ajahn Anan 站在她房里对她微笑。从此之后，她就有了信仰。她从来没有见过他，向我要求看他的照片，并连声说“对！就是他！就是他！就是他！”

“。。。我问Ajahn Anan他做了什么。他不是把他的法身传递过去,而传递的是慈爱。原来当一个很有爱心的人传递他的慈爱时，就好像复印本，那个人的影像（和他的慈爱）都传递过去。我母亲刚好够敏感能看到。”

我不是要你相信奇迹。那不重要。但请见证慈爱所带来的微妙，慈悲和开悟的能力。

对了，还有随喜！

一如既往，我希望您阅读愉快。

Chwee Beng

编辑

# 主笔言论

## 网络弘法 - 功德随喜

“网际网络有时感觉上像是中学生的游乐场，挤满了戴着面具的小鬼，借着匿名勇敢的到处嘲讽和给人取外号。幸好有时候，它比现实生活更好。” Susan Orlean (from BrainyQuote)

当您收到这期的POJ时，您大概会注意到封面是今年佛教图书馆所举办的供僧仪式。

这是一张有趣的照片。参与者都满面严肃，非常发心的护持这项活动。还有什么照片会比这张更适合这期的封面？

佛教徒实行迴向功德已有很长的一段时间了。

但至今还是有人怀疑到底一个人的功德能不能传到另一个人身上，无论是往生者与否。为什么呢？以我所见是因为相关的经典里带有所矛盾。

在一些经典里，佛陀说明了业是随身而无论善业或恶业，无论是往生者与否都不能被传到他人身上。

举个例子，在《UpajjhatthanaSutta》，佛陀建议人们应该时常观察五样东西，其一就是业或因果。

“。。。我是主宰我自己的业，承受我的业，生于我的业，因为我的业而有了关系，并且与我的业为中介。无论我做的是善业或恶业，我都必须得承受。”

如果这还不够明确，在《法句经》，佛陀还说-  
“自作孽者，自身不净，自作善者，自身清净，净与不净都因自身，无人能为他人净身。”

那为什么这个习俗还一直流传下来？

可能是因为在《户外经》里，佛陀讲述了饿鬼道的惨景，并建议亲戚和其他善心人士一起供僧并把功德迴向给这些众生。

“他给我，她为我，他们是我的亲戚，同伴，朋友。”  
“当人回顾以前所做过的事，供品应该赠予往生者。”  
“因为哭泣，悲哀，和其他的哀叹都不能利益往生者。”  
“但当供养僧众时，往生者会立刻长期的受惠。”  
“这样一来，亲属该尽的责任已尽了，莫大的利益已属于往生者，僧众也从旁助力。”  
“你累积的功德不小。”

那我们身为正信的佛教徒要如何回应这个异常的情形呢？

我打算从网际网络寻找答案。因为这是清迈唯一的英文佛学资料库。毕竟，佛教图书馆在这里没有分行啊！

在A.G.S Kariyawasam的《In Buddhist Ceremonies and Rituals of Sri Lanka》，描述了一般迴向功德的仪式与它的意义。

“。。。往生者的亲属一起坐在地席上，带着虔诚的心，把容器的水倒在一个有碟的杯子里直到水从杯子溢出来。与此同时，僧众会一起念《TirokuddhaSutta of the Khuddakapatha》的句子；

“就如水从高处流向低处，愿以此功德迴向往生者，就如急流的河水流进大海，愿以此功德迴向往生者。”

“这基本做法来自一种信念，如果死去的亲属投胎在一个不开心的空间（比如；饿鬼道），他/她会期望在世的亲戚用这个方式为这些无法自己累积功德的饿鬼做迴向。就连他们的饥饿和口渴也会因此而减缓。所以他们被列为“活在他人给以的份上”《paradatta-upajjivi》。

这个习俗可以追踪到佛陀的时代，当频毘娑罗王被一群已故，并堕入饿鬼道的亲属纠缠。原因是国王没有以他们的名义布施佛陀。当这个布施佛陀进行后，饿鬼们都感到欢喜并不再找麻烦了。《KhpA. 202f; PvA.19ff》就在这时候佛陀便开示讲解《户外经》。这进一步说明当这个仪式完成后，这些满意的幽灵还会保佑功德主作为回报。

依照传统，佛教法师和居士都会草草的解释迴向功德，因为佛教的因果论并不能成立，除非是迴向给饿鬼道的众生。

这是一个取巧的方法来逃避纠纷。只不过在频毘娑罗王的案例里刚好涉及饿鬼，但并不能否定迴向功德给其他众生的可能性。当然，除非是佛陀亲口所说，但他并没有这么说。由于我的研究资料有限，所以在这里有待纠正。

在另一篇网上文章，《锡兰佛教迴向功德》，G.P. Malalasekera首先从功德主的观点解释这个做法。

“这种回向的方法挺简单。”  
功德主只需把自己累积的功德迴向给某一个人或“一

我们需要了解的实情是无常所带来的苦。然后我们要了解“我”的本性。虽然我们对我执很执著，但总有一天我们会意识到没有一个永恒的我。所以正念在佛法指的是要注意关于我们的特性。

所以说正念禅修是正念的第二方面，与意识和注意力有所分别。纯粹意识和注意周遭有如我之前所说。正念是更严肃的。严格来说我们需要对关于自己的事情更加注意。无论如何，如果我们注意或意识我们内心所发生的事，我们就会更容易晋级到下一步。

我想说另一个故事。在《法句经》，有一个关于一名叫Bamineya Sangharakshita 的老和尚和他的徒弟的故事。

这位老和尚是个伟大的修行者并修得阿罗汉果。他的侄子曾不时拜访他。后来，这个年轻人便皈依他的叔叔并尽徒弟的义务服侍师父。他无微不至的照顾师父，也准备一切所需要的日常用品。

有一天，当年轻和尚出外时，有人送他一件名贵的僧袍。在古时，名贵的僧袍是可遇不可求的。因为要找到好的布料来缝制僧袍是相当困难的一件事。但有一户富裕的人家却缝制了一件这样好的僧袍供养年轻和尚。可是，这位年轻和尚对僧袍没有执著并决定献给师父。

当他献袍给师父时，师父却对他说既然僧袍是大众供养他的，他就该留着自己穿。这让他感到失望。每当我们全心全意的送一样东西给人却被拒绝时，我们都会经历一些痛。同样的，这位年轻和尚也感到非常伤心。

这年头，这是一件非常普遍的事情。我还记得三十多年前，一位女士送了一件非常名贵的手提袋作为她家婆的生日礼物。可是老妇人不肯接受。可能她们的关系不好。导致媳妇不能接受而哭了好几天。

拒绝了年轻和尚的供养后，由于天气炎热的关系，老和尚便要求年轻和尚替他搨风。年轻和尚以前也经常为师父搨风。

年轻和尚放不下师父对他的拒绝。他感觉自己做了很多事都不被赏识。他觉得最好还是还俗回家。他的父母肯定会接受他。假以时日，他还能结婚生子。他夫妻二人还能返回寺院探望老和尚。他脑海里还浮现妻子和他轮流抱着孩子的情景。突然间，妻子摔了一跤并把怀里的孩子给跌在地上。孩子大哭起来。年轻人大发脾气，对妻子又打又骂。

就在这时，他无意中用扇子打了老和尚的头。由于师父是阿罗汉，他意识到侄子这段时间一直在做白日梦便指责他“你害怕打你老婆所以就打我出气！”

结果，年轻和尚感到很惭愧。他扔下扇子便跑掉了。

后来，老和尚找了一些人把年轻和尚带回来。他把他留在身边继如以往。

这是一个让我们了解意识和注意力的好故事。我们意识到周遭的事情但有时念头却会跑到遥不可及的地方。当这种事情发生时，我们就会不知所措，失去警觉并开始犯错。

当然，最好就是修持正念禅修。这样一来我们才能既对周遭的事物敏感，也能观念头的生起和灭亡。

我想以一部短的经文《弥勒菩萨所问本愿经》结束这篇文章。这是一部佛陀谈关于正念的对话。

阿逸多尊者问：“世间是如何被封闭？是因为无知？您如何视它为污染？它最惧怕的是什么？”

佛陀言：“阿逸多，这世间被无知封闭。因为错误的欲望和无明。它被颠倒梦想所污染而它最大的恐惧是苦。”

阿逸多尊者问：“到处溪流。是何物阻挡溪流，何物限制它们，何物断送它们？”

佛陀言：“世间的任何溪流都是正念阻止和限制它们。由智慧断送它们。”

阿逸多尊者问：“那只是智慧和正念。现在请世尊说明它如何停止？”

佛陀言：“阿逸多，你问的这个问题，我会回答你。当心和身完全停止时。当意识停止，它们便停止。”

阿逸多尊者问：“请您解释，哪些已经完全了解佛法的修行者，哪些还在修行和其他个别众生的操行。”

佛陀言：“不贪图色身的乐趣，比丘应以一颗平静和纯洁的心，灵巧的对待任何处境”

祝愿你们在正念禅修上得到最好的结果和回报。

## 达摩拉啞那法师

### 宗教顾问

### 佛教图书馆



Wat Pha Sorn Kaew, in Phetchaboon, Thailand  
Photo Credit: Cherdasak Yupao



# 达摩拉哒那法师开示

## 《两种正念》

我要和你谈关于正念的话题。

当我们谈到正念，就有两种正念需要注意。

一种是我们日常生活中的正念。这种正念关系到我们对周遭事物或内心深处的意识，这不关我们是否在禅修。我们可能经常会忽略它，但这种正念在我们日常生活中也扮演了举足轻重的角色。有些时候，我们在这方面也做的很好。

有些人在这方面有很好的意识，但有些就对周遭发生的事情没有什么觉知。

举个例子，当我们谈到健康时，这种正念就相当重要。我们的身体经常和我们沟通。但沟通的方法不是通过语言而是感觉或是身体出现的一些征兆。但我们有时不了解我们身体的这些语言，也不知道我们的身体正在与我们沟通。

比如无论我们了解与否，我们的身体都会发出病情的症状。当事态严重，就有人会带我们去看医生。医生会进行一些测试来诊断我们身体出了什么毛病。

但肯定在那之前，我们的身体就已经发出很多讯息，比如疼痛或其他的一些异常感觉。

所以说意识非常重要。如果我们没有这种意识，我们可能都不会去求诊，直到为时已晚。无论如何，重要的是把这种意识和正念禅修分辨出来。

我要以关于一位禅师和一位年轻人的故事来说明这点。

话说有一位年青人慕名而来想向一位禅师学习正念禅修。当他去拜访禅师时正好下着雨，年轻人便带着雨伞去见他。在他进入禅师的卧房前，他把雨伞留在寺院的入口处。

禅师欢迎兴致勃勃到来的年轻人并问他到访的原因。年轻人说他想学习正念禅修。禅师便问了他一些问题。

年轻人以为禅师会问他关于正念禅修的问题。由于年轻人对正念禅修颇有了解，应对这些问题便胸有成竹。

可是禅师却问年轻人，他过来寺院时是否下着雨。

年轻人回答“是”。

年轻人面带笑容心想，如果禅师继续问这般简单和与禅修无关的问题的话，那事情就好办了。

“你带着雨伞过来了的？”

“是的。”

“你把雨伞放在哪？”

“哦，我把它放在外面。”

“你可否告诉我，你把它放在入口的左边还是右边？”

突然间，年轻人愣住了。他想了又想却答不出来。

最终，禅师告诉年轻人，在认为合格学禅修前，他必须对周遭的事情有多一点意识，并嘱咐年轻人准备好后才回来。

故事里的这位年轻人，缺乏的纯粹是意识或注意力。这和正念禅修不同。但如果我们对周遭的环境更敏感一些，我们会发现修持正念禅修时会比较容易些。我们日常生活也会因此变的更好些。

在我们修持正念禅修时，我们需要注意四个要点。

首先，我们需要很明确的了解我们身体的变化。

其二，我们需要很严肃的看待我们的感观。

其三，我们需要了解我们的念头是怎么一回事。我们要知道念头是如何生起和消失的。

生为凡人，我们不知道我们的脑子是如何运作。我们只知道我们无时无刻都在想事情。甚至我们会因为脑子里不停的想而失眠。总的来说，我们想太多了。

但如果我们很清楚我们脑子里在想什么的话，犯错的几率就会减少很多。如果我们能很专注的意识我们的思维，我们甚至能完全避免错误的发生。所以说，正念是能控制或调教思维的方法。

最后，我们需要了解佛法。“佛法”在这指的是世间的真理。佛陀教导我们实相就是无常，苦，和无我。