

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

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Bhante Says

Removing Grudges

Today, I am going to talk about how to remove or subdue grudges (sometimes referred to as *hatred* or *annoyance*) based on a short sutra called the *Aghatavinaya Sutta: Subduing Hatred* delivered by the Buddha and published in the *Anguttara Nikaya* or the *Numerical Sayings*.

We always talk about anger but we hardly talk about grudges.

Actually, a grudge is another way of looking at anger. When we have unhappiness or anger towards somebody or something and we keep on thinking about that again and again, we get stuck in our negative mental energy. Thus a grudge can last longer and can be more dangerous than anger. Anger may arise and then disappear after a while but a grudge lasts much longer than that.

One way to describe a grudge is to say that it is a very hard feeling. We feel uneasy, like suffering from a very painful disease. Another way to describe it is to say that it is a sort of bitterness. It can destroy our peace of mind.

Some people even carry their grudges to their death beds. Others try to repent at the last minute. They feel that they won't be living very much longer so they ask their close friends to invite the persons against whom they have grudges to visit them so that they can talk to them and ask them for forgiveness.

Actually, the best thing to do when we get angry is to simply let the anger pass.

But the unfortunate thing is that even parents sometimes harbour such hard feelings against

their own children.

A more common problem involving grudges is that of sibling rivalry.

One child may feel that he has been unfairly treated by his parents who always seem to favour his sibling. This feeling of unfair treatment, if left to fester and grow, may develop into a full blown grudge against the parents (and the favoured sibling) and linger on even after the parents have passed away.

There is an old story that clearly illustrates the power of sibling rivalry.

An old yogi was widely known for his great prowess as a meditator. He could remain in deep concentration for days and days. One day, Mara, the Evil One, decided to test him so Mara dispatched his minions to interrupt the great yogi in his meditation. They tried to tempt him in every possible way they could think of including invading his mind with scenes of voluptuous women, sumptuous food, gold and other treasures and the like but all to no avail. So they finally gave up and reported their failure to their boss. Mara was outraged and decided to accomplish the mission himself.

So Mara appeared before the great yogi, smiled and told him, "*Hey, I have come to tell you some wonderful news. I heard that your brother has been promoted by the King to be the kingdom's top general and ...*"

Before Mara could even finish his sentence,

the great yogi exploded into a terrible tantrum.

Of course, you don't have to accept this story as gospel truth but this simple story does serve to remind us to be very wary of developing or harbouring grudges especially against those we are normally supposed to be close to.

The Buddha taught his monks five ways to deal effectively with grudges. The sutra is a very short one and the Buddha's words were very clear and concise so I am going to quote it in full below so that you can have the benefit of reading the Buddha's own words yourselves.

There are these five ways of subduing hatred by which, when hatred arises in a monk, he should wipe it out completely. Which five?

When one gives birth to hatred for an individual, one should develop goodwill for that individual. Thus the hatred for that individual should be subdued.

When one gives birth to hatred for an individual, one should develop compassion for that individual. Thus the hatred for that individual should be subdued.

When one gives birth to hatred for an individual, one should develop equanimity toward that individual. Thus the hatred for that individual should be subdued.

When one gives birth to hatred for an individual, one should pay him no attention. Thus the hatred for that individual should be subdued.

When one gives birth to hatred for an individual, one should direct one's thoughts to the fact of his being the product of his actions: 'This venerable one is the doer of his actions, heir to his actions, born of his actions, related by his actions, and has his actions as his arbitrator. Whatever action he does, for good or for evil, to that will he fall heir.' Thus the hatred for that individual should be subdued.

These are five ways of subduing hatred by which, when hatred arises in a monk, he should wipe it out completely.

Although the Buddha was there referring to monks, it is clear that the advice he gave would be equally applicable to lay persons.

I shall now share with you some brief comments on the sutra.

Practising *metta* (loving kindness or goodwill)

is not easy on the best of days. And, of course, we also know that it becomes extremely difficult to practise *metta* when anger is developing in the mind. The reason is that we lack the actual experience of *metta*. We may have studied *metta* intellectually but we neglect to put it into practice. Simply reciting some words from the sutras once in a while, say, at the end of a *pūja* session, is not sufficient for us to truly develop *metta*. This is too superficial. What we need to do is to try and make *metta* a quality of our minds or lives. We must make it part of our mental energy so that it becomes a quality within us. When anger has already arisen, it is usually too late. We would probably find it almost impossible to practise *metta* if we have not developed it to the required level.

Loving kindness and compassion are quite difficult to differentiate but sometimes compassion is more effective. We may find it quite difficult to practise loving kindness but, whether we realise it or not, we do occasionally practise compassion.

Let me give you a simple example.

In our Sri Lanka monastery we have at least two dozen dogs which devotees have left behind. People love dogs when they are adorable puppies but when the dogs grow old or develop health problems like skin diseases, they don't look so cute or loveable anymore. So people leave the poor animals at the temple. From the temple's point of view, of course, we can't do anything but accept the dogs and, at least, give them food.

One way to look at it is to say that these dog owners are selfish, irresponsible or cruel to abandon their pets like old clothing that are no longer in fashion. But a more positive way of viewing this problem is to look at the bright side and say that, at least, the dogs are not put to sleep. We can say that these people have practised compassion by bringing the dogs to the temple. In Singapore, I have also met nuns who take care of cats left behind by people.

Compassion is something which we have, an inner quality within us. In certain circumstances, it comes to the surface. But under other circumstances, it is hard to practise compassion. But still we should remember that we are born with

compassion. Even a very cruel person can have compassion under certain circumstances.

When someone says something negative against us or deprives us of something we need or want, we may feel bitter. At such times, we should try to bring out our inner quality of compassion. That needs practice too.

I have met people who quarrel very often but they still help other people when they see them suffering. In Sri Lanka, for instance, when there is a fire, people who stay nearby will rush to help put out the fire even though they don't talk or socialise with each other under normal circumstances. Why does the compassion arise at the moment when help is needed? This is because compassion is an inner quality which is easier to develop than loving kindness. So when we practise compassion, we can prevent grudges from taking root in our minds.

Equanimity or *uppekha* is the ability to view things in a matured way, making an effort to maintain the balance of our mind. When something good happens, we can be happy but we don't have to get overpowered by it. On the other hand, if something negative happens, we don't have to feel that the world is coming to an end either.

In life, many things can go wrong. Health may fail. Good friends may leave us. Our boss may say or do negative things against us even when the circumstances do not warrant such negative behaviour.

When such things happen, if we cannot maintain our mental balance, things can be much worse. In other words, things can go wrong but we ourselves should not do wrong. This is a very good thing we should always try to remember.

And so equanimity is a particularly important quality in a leader. Good leaders should stand very firm even in very bad circumstances.

If we are unable to actually develop loving

kindness, compassion or equanimity, we should at least try to pay no attention to the person who does something negative against us. If we think of the bad incident again and again, it can develop into a grudge. By ruminating about it, we are allocating great importance to the bad action. We may then even carry it to our last breath.

The fifth and final way that the Buddha recommended is to keep in mind that the wrongdoer is bound by the actions that he has created in the past and that in the future he will experience the results of the actions that he now performs against us. There is no necessity for us to get upset with him or to retaliate against him. By doing so, we will only create problems or suffering for ourselves in the future.

In a sense, retaliating against people who perform negative actions against us is like taking the law into our own hands when someone commits a crime against us. It should be sufficient for us to report the offence to the police and let the law take its own course. If we instead take the law into our own hands, we ourselves will be committing a crime. What difference is there then between us and the person who committed the offence against us in the first place?

As sentient beings we are all fellow travellers in the same boat called *samsara*, subject to old age, sickness and death and subject to the law of karma, as the Buddha taught. If we can consistently bear this in mind, we may come to accept that life is too short to be wasting time on things that will not promote our own happiness in the long run. In that way, we can make our own small contributions towards making this troubled world a more peaceful and happier place to live in, a world which is getting smaller and smaller in more ways than one every day.

Bhante B Dhammaratana

Religious Adviser

Buddhist Library

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Editorial

Confronting Fear

In the immediate aftermath of the terror attacks in Paris in November 2015, a small boy expresses his fear of being killed by the *'bad guys.'* His father tries to assure him that there is no need for fear.

But *'they have guns, they can shoot us because they're really, really mean, daddy.'*

"It's okay, they might have guns, but we have flowers."

"But flowers don't do anything, they're for ... they're for ..."

"Of course, they do. Look, everyone is putting flowers," Daddy continues *"It's to fight against guns."*

"It's to fight against guns?" asks the boy, incredulous.

"Exactly."

"And the candles too?"

"It's to remember the people who are gone yesterday."

"The flowers and the candles are here to protect us?"

"Yes."

A reporter then asks the boy whether he feels better.

"Yes, I feel better," the boy finally admits.

I watched the video, which went viral on the internet, several times, enthralled by the innocent freshness of the little boy but also tinged with some incredulity of my own. *Really? Flowers and candles can protect against guns?*

Taken literally, of course, flowers and candles are no match against lethal weapons.

But flowers and candles do serve as powerful symbols that can have enormous psychological impact on human beings. And so we use them to convey our innermost, heartfelt feelings of love, compassion, empathy, joy and the like as the occasion demands.

We also employ them in religious ceremonies and rituals not only to make offerings to our chosen God (or Gods) but also to symbolise and celebrate values we hold dear and choose to live by.

Buddhists are, of course, no exception.

When we attend *pujas*, for example, we offer, among other things, flowers and candles to the Buddha and chant appropriate verses. Whatever for? The Buddhist Library's *Book of Puja* informs us.

*Reverencing the Buddha, we offer candles
To Him who is the light, we offer light
From His greater lamp, a lesser lamp we light within us
The lamp of Buddha shining within our hearts.*

*Reverencing the Buddha, we offer flowers
Flowers that today are fresh and sweetly blooming
Flowers that tomorrow are faded and fallen
Our bodies, too, like flowers, will pass away.*

And so every time we repeat the words of the chant, we remind ourselves that the purpose of chanting is not so much to worship the Buddha as a Creator God (which he never claimed to be) or to propitiate him (which he never required us to do) but to reinforce in our minds that the spiritual values that these objects represent are essential ingredients of the Buddhist spiritual path to enlightenment, the ultimate goal in Buddhist spiritual practice.

Thus the light of wisdom represented by the candles and the impermanence of the flowers with their fleeting beauty and fragrance help us to reflect on our own transience and ultimately lead us to some level of understanding of how, despite outward appearances to the contrary, the whole of what Professor Y Karunadasa calls 'sentient existence' is governed by three principles - impermanence, suffering and not self.

As Professor Y Karunadasa notes –

Fundamental to Buddhist teaching is the emphatic assertion of impermanence: "Whatever has the nature of arising, all that has the nature of ceasing." As one Buddhist discourse stresses: "There is no moment, no instant, no particle of time when the river stops flowing." This is the simile used to illustrate "the eternal flow of happening, the unbroken continuity of change."

As the first (logically, but not chronologically) of the three characteristics of sentient existence, it is in fact impermanence that provide the rational basis for the other two characteristics. What is impermanent is suffering, ... what is suffering is not self. Thus the concept of not self is a necessary corollary to the fact of suffering.'

According to the Buddha's teachings, ignorance is the root of suffering. We suffer because we fear and we fear because we are ignorant. We are ignorant of how the 'system' works and, being ignorant, we are unable to navigate the three characteristics of sentient existence skillfully to progress along the spiritual path in much the same way as we had no clue how to operate the first computer or smartphone that we ever set our eyes upon until we learned how to make them work for us.

Thus, according to the Buddha's teachings, only when we truly understand that we, and all other conditioned phenomena, are subject to impermanence, suffering and no self, will we be able to release our overpowering addiction to clinging. This is well illustrated in the *Adhimutta Sutra*.

In that discourse, a bandit chief demanded to know why a monk was not trembling with fear unlike the other prisoners whom he had captured and killed.

The bandit chief:

*Those who
for the sake of sacrifice
for the sake of wealth
we have killed in the past,
against their will
have trembled (and) babbled
from fear.
But you —
you show no fear;
your complexion brightens.
Why don't you lament
in the face of what's greatly to be feared?*

Venerable Adhimutta:

*There are no painful mental states, chieftain,
in one without longing.
In one whose fetters are ended,
all fears are overcome.
With the ending of [craving]
the guide to becoming,
when phenomena are seen
for what they are,
then just as in the laying down of a burden,
there's no fear in death.*

*I've lived well the holy life,
well-developed the path.
Death holds no fear for me.
It's like the end of a disease.*

*I've lived well the holy life,
well-developed the path,
seen states of becoming
as devoid of allure,
like poison spit out
after it's drunk.*

*One gone to the far shore
without clinging
without effluent
his task completed,
welcomes the ending of life,
as if freed from a place of execution.*

*Having attained the supreme Rightness,
unconcerned with all the world,
as if released from a burning house,
he doesn't sorrow at death.*

*Whatever's compounded,
wherever a state of becoming (is) obtained,
all that has no one in charge:
so says the Great Seer.*

*Whoever discerns this,
as taught by the Awakened One,
would no more grasp hold of any state of becoming
than he would a hot iron ball.*

*I have no 'I was,'
no 'I will be.'
Fabrications will simply go out of existence.
What (is) to lament there in that?*

*For one who sees, as it actually is,
the pure arising of phenomena,
the pure seriality of fabrications,
there (is) no fear.*

*When seeing the world with discernment
as on a par with grass (and) twigs,
finding no 'mine-ness,'
thinking, 'There's nothing of mine,'
he feels no sorrow.*

*Dissatisfied with this carcass,
I'm unconcerned with becoming.
This body will break up
and there will not be another.
Do as you like with this carcass.
From that I will feel
neither hatred nor love.*

Needless to say, attaining such a profound level of wisdom and renunciation is a long term project, to say the least. It begs the question – *how do we, as ordinary lay people, confront the challenges in our daily lives with the minimum of fear, particularly in troubled times?*

In the *Kumara Sutta: Boys*, the Buddha was performing alms rounds near the city of Savatthi one day when he came across a group of boys who were fishing. He asked the boys whether they were afraid of pain. They boys admitted that they were. The Buddha then gave them this advice -

*If you fear pain,
if you dislike pain,
don't anywhere do an evil deed
in open or in secret.
If you're doing or will do
an evil deed,
you won't escape pain
catching up
as you run away.*

This reminds me of an advice given by His Holiness, the 14th Dalai Lama in Sydney, Australia, a few years ago.

Living, as I do, in Thailand, a traditional Buddhist country, it is common to see people resorting to amulets, pendants, tattoos, holy water and the like for protection against misfortune.

During his teachings in Sydney, His Holiness advised the assembly instead that the best protection that anyone can reliably depend upon for protection is their own good karma.

As always, I wish you pleasant reading.

Chwee Beng

Editor

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Kumāra Sutta: Boys. Translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu, Ud 5.4 (Access to Insight webpage)



Wat Phra Sri Rattana Mahathat, Thailand

FAMILY DAY FUN FAIR 2015

SUNDAY 22 NOV 2015 • 9AM – 5PM • IN FRONT OF ALJUNIED MRT

BL EVENT

FUN FAIR 2015

Date: November 22, 2015

Venue: Vacant Land in front of Aljunied MRT Station

Photo Credit(s): Weng Fai, Yew Beng





BL EVENT

BL VOLUNTEERS LUNCH 2016

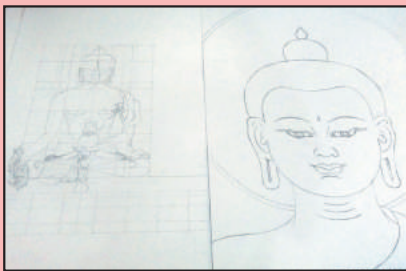
Date: February 21, 2016

Venue: Buddhist Library

Photo Credit(s): Yew Beng



BL EVENT



TIBETAN ART WEEKEND COURSE

Date: January 9 & 10, 2016

Venue: Buddhist Library

Photo Credit(s): Koon Teck



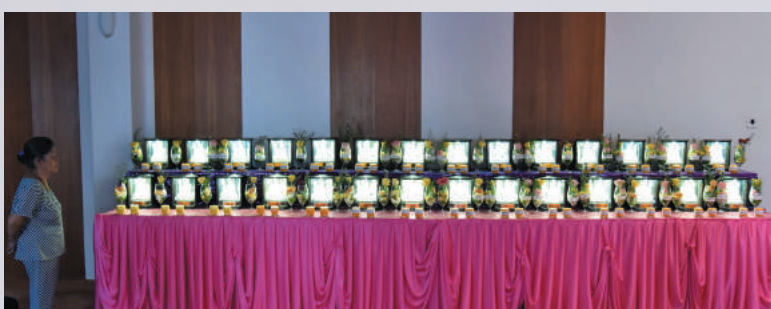
BL EVENT

KATHINA DAY 2015

Date: October 25, 2015

Venue: Buddhist Library

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BL EVENT

TAI PEH OLD FOLKS' HOME VISIT 2016

Date: February 20, 2016

Venue: Tai Peh Old People's Home, No.10, Jalan Ampas Singapore 329510

Photo Credit(s): Koon Teck



BL EVENT

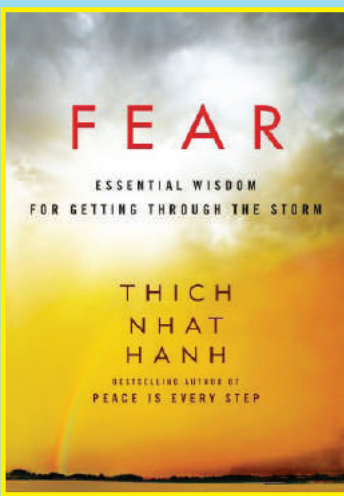
DHARMA DAY 2015

Date: July 19, 2015

Venue: Buddhist Library

Photo Credit(s): Yew Beng





BOOK REVIEW

Fear~ Essential Wisdom for getting through the Storm

Author: Thich Nhat Hanh

Published by HarperOne (2012) ~164 pages

Reviewer: Yeo Koon Teck

Fear!

A four letter word symbolising a feeling we experience so commonly that we sometimes don't even realise it. From a cockroach flying towards your face to watching your loved ones getting old, sick and eventually die. The title of the book alone was attractive enough for me to pick it up and start browsing. Having read a few books by Thich Nhat Hanh, I knew this would be a good one as Venerable is well known for his ability to explain complicated matters using simple words and everyday life examples.

To me, this is the difference between a scholar and a practitioner. Buddhist scholars tend to use jargon and scientific terminology in their books on the assumption that all readers are well versed in those terms. This unfortunately gives readers the impression that they are simply not the target audience. Practitioners, on the other hand, employ simple words to expound even the most profound phenomena of the universe; yet readers can relate to almost every sentence that they are uttering.

A speed reader can probably finish the book within half an hour or so but I will not recommend you to do that. Take your time with this book, reflect on yourself and relate those stories to your own experiences. I'm pretty sure you will benefit more in this way.

The book starts with an introduction on fear and a real life example of how the author could have been killed if he wasn't able to calm himself in the face of adversity. Through using fear as the main topic, Thich Nhat Hanh uses his personal

experiences to link it to many Buddhist teachings such as *No Self* and *No Coming, No Going*, which are the core teachings of the *Heart Sutra* and the *Diamond Sutra*. Having the *Right View* to begin with when dealing with life's problems was emphasised many times in this book although the actual term was never used. This again showed the understanding of the author on this subject and how ingenious of him to impart Dhamma knowledge emphasising on the content rather than terminology.

In addition, Thich Nhat Hanh provided methods for readers to practise in order to get rid of their fears. This is another reason why I enjoyed reading his books. Many authors tend to leave readers with more questions after reading their books and do not offer methods for finding answers. For readers who are going through a tough time and/or are seeking for some answers in life, this book is highly recommended.

Many books on Buddhism for beginners go straight to the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, the Five Precepts and the like. It is good that they deal with these topics but I feel that it will be better if they can relate the content to our daily lives so that readers can understand how to practise the Dhamma rather than just have an intellectual understanding. If you are not a Buddhist and would like to know about more Buddhism, this is an excellent book to start with.

In our lives we deal with fear every day. This is a real problem as there are different levels of fear - from fear of loneliness to fear of death.

At different junctions of our lives we have different types of fear. In recent years, terrorism has been a worldwide problem that everyone is concerned about. But in reality, as Venerable stated in the book –

‘Terrorists’ are everywhere. They’re not only the people who blow up buses and markets. When we are angry, when we behave in a very angry, violent way, then we are not so different from the terrorists we demonise, because we have that same knife of anger in our hearts. When we’re not mindful in our words, we say things that can hurt others and cause a lot of pain. That is a kind of intimidation, a kind of terrorism.

I totally agree with Venerable as there are people who use words to instill fear and ‘terrorise’ others just to sell their products and services - Insurance policies, safety products, funeral services, medicines, slimming pills, whatever for profit.

In Buddhism, the noblest form of *Dāna* (generosity) is *Dhamma Dāna* followed by *Fearless Dāna*. As Buddhists, we should be mindful not to intimidate others, nor to be intimidated by others, and to provide both *Dhamma Dāna* and *Fearless Dāna* to those in need. As most of us are lay people who might not be skillful enough to do so through counseling, we can help by recommending this book as it clearly explains the origins of fear and how one can overcome it.

I end the book review with the five remembrances from this book that we all can and should practise daily:

I am of the nature to grow old. I cannot escape growing old.

I am of the nature to have ill health. I cannot escape having ill health.

I am of the nature to die. I cannot escape death. All that is dear to me, and everyone I love, are of the nature to change. There is no way to escape being separated from them.

I inherit the results of my acts of body, speech, and mind. My actions are my continuation.

Looking deeply into each remembrance and breathing in and out with our awareness of each

one, we engage our fear in an empowered way.

Do recommend this book to your friends and family members, especially those who are going through a rough patch in their lives now. I sincerely hope that after they read this book, it will help to ease their pain or at least shed some light on the problems they face and offer a lasting solution .

Through this book review, I hope you will be inspired to read more Dhamma books and even do a book review for the next issue of the *Path of Joy* (POJ) .

Let us do our best in propagating the Dhamma in any way we can.

May all beings be Well and Happy!

With *Metta*.



Wat Pra Sorn Kaew, Phetchaboon, Thailand

Sound Sanna BL

*STORYTELLING : BUDDHISM Cultures and Values Revisited
The Very Quiet Studio Launch of Story Kasina.*

by Ng Wei Chin

Saññā

It is a well known fact among Buddhists that we are but *nāma rūpa* (mind and matter). In other words, our five aggregates comprise nothing but mind and matter. All beings consist of these five aggregates, namely, *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, sankhāra, viññānam*. However, depending on the realm each being dwells in, and past kamma, the degree and sensitivity to each of our six sense doors are what differentiate beings from one another, physiologically and psychologically.

Saññā is a Pali word which is often translated in English as *perception*. However, the Chinese character 想 (*formation/impression/thoughts coming from the heart*) seems to be closer in meaning to *sanna*.

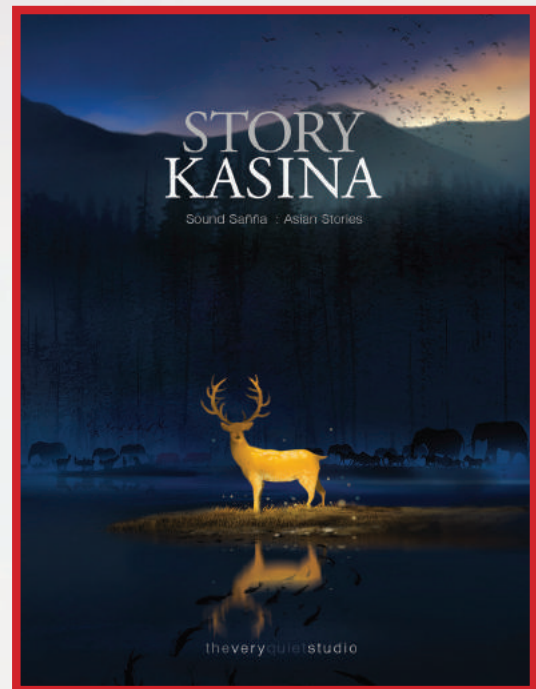
In simple terms, Sound Saññā refers to Sound Perception and this project is about evoking imagination to 'see the (Dhamma) story' through our auditory sense organ.

In this debut album called *Story Kasina Album*, ancient Buddhist stories are retold by renowned Sangha members of all three traditions - Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana. Bhante Dhammaratana Thero, Venerable Mujin Sunim, Sayalay Dipankara Theri, H.H. Phakchok Rinpoche, Ani Choying Drolma, and Dr Lee Foong Ming provide the six voices in the project.

The wealth of stories in Buddhism is both apparent yet largely unknown to many local Buddhists, especially Asians except perhaps the Life of the Buddha which seems to be the most popular and widely cited story.

The Life of the Buddha is repeatedly taught in Dhamma classes and Sunday schools. During Dhamma talks, everyone regardless of age, brightens up when a story is told that is not necessarily *The Life of the Buddha*.

Asian cultures and values in its various aspects such as novels, folklores, legends, poetry, even ghost stories are highly influenced by Buddhist stories and precepts. There are countless freely distributed books telling these stories.



The stories are carefully chosen so that they are relevant to present day problems and misconceptions about Buddhist rituals and thoughts.

Sound Sanna is a new genre invented to relinquish our over dependency on images and visuals, so we may train our hearing faculty.

Music and story were recorded separately so no Sangha member was exposed to 'pleasurable' sounds in the process.

Story Kasina has the potential to rebuild spiritual resilience through edu-tainment. With the help of imaginative teachers, it is hoped that children will be able to appreciate old values. The stories were not targeted at any special group but were intended to keep Asians interested in their own heritage and wisdom.

Among the soundtrack composers are Imee Ooi, Frank Steiner Jr, Sri Ghanaventhana Retnam, Fero Aldiansya, Nathan Madsen and Pianist Elaine Wu. Ms Imee Ooi is the only Buddhist. Nevertheless, the other composers from other faiths were just as supportive of the project. Many thanks to the artists and collaborators for their steadfast trust and good spirit.

Story Kasina CD has been on sale since March 2015 at The Buddhist Library counter at S\$25 each. The debut CD was launched at the Parliament of World Religions 6th Meeting at Salt Lake City USA on 12-19th October 2015 with 10 000 attendees.

For more information visit:
www.theveryquietstudioasia.org or contact
wq@theveryquietstudioasia.org if you wish to support the project.

Stories in Story Kasina Album

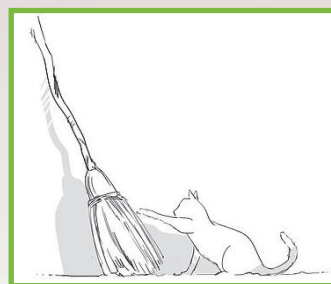


Asanga

Asanga was first heard and transcribed from a Chinese Dhamma talk but here, it is retold by Phakchok Rinpoche in his own words as it is a well known legend in Tibetan Buddhist history. Asanga aspired to meet Maitreya Bodhisattva during his lifetime and so retreated into a cave to meditate. After three years, he was still unable to succeed and he left the cave. Although he was discouraged, he did not give up but returned to meditate and his compassion developed until one day ...

Retold by H.H. Phakchok Rinpoche

Music by :Fero Aldiansya



Do cats listen?

Do Cats Listen? is a story taken from a Dhamma book by Phra Rājsuddhiñānamongkol entitled *The Law of Kamma*. A woman was irritated by a cat who came around the temple all too often for mischief. Everyday she scolded the cat. Unperturbed, the cat aggravated the situation further by bringing dogs as well. This is a contemporary, light-hearted Thai temple story. It may help us to understand our furry friends who react to abuse and respond to kindness.

Retold by Venerable Mujin Sunim

Music by : Nathan Madsen



Wat Pra Tan Sila-ard, Utaradit, Thailand

根据佛陀的教义，愚痴是苦的根源。我们受苦是因为恐惧，而恐惧是来自愚痴。我们不了解“系统”的操作，也无法引导有情众生存在的三种特性并精进的走向心路旅程。就如我们不懂的如何使用有生以来接触的第一台电脑或智能手机，直到我们学会如何让操作它。

所以，根据佛陀的教义，直到我们真正领悟我们如同其他现象，都被无常，苦和无我主宰，方能释放自己过于上瘾的执著。这一点在Adhimutta Sutra. 写的很清楚。

在这部经典里，有一个土匪头子强求的要知道为什么和尚不像他抓过和杀过的其他囚犯一样，面临死亡时会吓得颤抖。

土匪头目：

那些为了牺牲，为了财富，而被我们杀过的人都不由自主吓得心惊胆跳。

而你，为什么能在面临如此可怕的情形之下还面不改色，毫无畏惧。

Adhimutta法师：

头目，没有奢求也就没有痛苦的精神状态。

当束缚的枷锁被打开，所有恐惧就被克服。

当贪念结束时，万物的真相便会出现，就有如释重负，无畏死亡。

我过着纯洁的一生，光明的道路。

我无畏死亡，就如疾病要结束。

我过着纯洁的一生，光明的道路。

目睹不同境界的形成，脱离欲望，有如喝醉酒和把毒吐出来。

一个到了彼岸，没有执著，没有流失，他的任务完成，欢迎生命的结束，有如从绞刑台被释放。

当达到至高无上的正觉，与世无争，就如从燃烧的屋子逃脱，他对死不伤心。

任何事物的形成，无论是任何形态，这一切都无人做主，欲知者道。

若有悟文者，如佛陀所教，不会再形成，有如热铁球。

我没有“我曾经是”，没有“我会是”，创造会绝迹，那还有什么好留恋？

对能看到实相本质，现象的升起，创造的顺序，此人无恐惧。

当用心观世界，平等如草和树枝，找寻不到“我执”，心想“没有任何东西是我”，此人便无悲哀。

对这皮囊不满足，我对再来没兴趣，这色身会损坏，而且也不会有另外一个，想对这皮囊做什么随你，我会感觉不到任何怨恨或爱意。

不用说，悟到这种超凡境界的智慧和出离心至少会是一个长远的计划。问题是像我们这种凡夫要如何能在日常生活中，尤其是在逆境时以最少的恐惧面对这些挑战？

在Kumara经之男孩，佛陀在Savatthi城附近托钵时遇到一群在钓鱼的男孩。他问男孩子们怕不怕痛，男孩子们都承认怕痛。佛陀便给他们这个忠告—

如果你怕痛，如果你不喜欢痛，不要去造恶业，无论是公开或隐藏，如果你做或会造一件恶业，你不会逃离痛苦，想跑也跑不掉。

这令我想起第14世达拉喇嘛几年前在悉尼给我的忠告。

身在泰国这个佛教国家的我，看到人们通过护身符，佛牌，刺青，圣水等法器来辟邪和保护自己是件很平常的事。

在悉尼受教的期间，法王劝请在座的大众，最好的保护方法就是依赖自己行的善业。

一如既往，我希望您阅读愉快。

Chwee Beng

编辑



Wat Klong Ruea, Pitsanulok, Thailand

主笔言论

面对恐惧

在2015年11月的巴黎恐怖袭击之后，一个孩子表示他被”坏人”杀害的恐惧。孩子的父亲试着安抚他弱小的灵魂。

“爸爸，但他们有枪，他们可以枪杀我们，因为他们真的真的很坏。”

“不用担心，他们有枪，但我们有鲜花。”

“但是鲜花不能做什么，它是。。。它是。。。”

“当然可以。你瞧，大家都在摆放鲜花”。父亲接着说“这是为了反抗枪械。”

“反抗枪械？”孩子惊讶的问。

“正是。”

“蜡烛也是吗？”

“是的。”

这时，一名记者问孩子是否感觉好点。

孩子终于回答“是的。我感觉好多了。”

我看了好几次这个在网上被传疯的视频，也被孩子的童真感动，但自己也难以相信。真的吗？鲜花和蜡烛能反抗枪械？

按照字面来看，鲜花和蜡烛当然不可能反抗致命武器。

但鲜花和蜡烛在人们心里是很强的象征，起着很大的震撼力。所以在不同的情形下，我们便会用它们来抒发我们内在的情绪；比如爱情，慈悲，同情，喜悦等。

我们不仅在宗教庆典和仪式上用它们来供奉我们选择的神（或诸神），也象征性的庆祝一些我们坚信的价值观。

佛教徒当然也不例外。

举个例子，当我们参加法会时，我们会向佛陀供奉鲜花和蜡烛并且诵念一些适当的经文。做什么呢？佛教图书馆的法会经书告知我们；

弟子以灯火，供养佛世尊，
佛乃大明灯，点燃千万灯，
以此无尽灯，代代传慧灯。
我以此鲜花，供养佛世尊，
花开花凋谢，色身如同花，
缘生缘亦灭，有生亦有死。

所以每当我们重复这段经文，我们提醒自己诵经的意义而非崇拜佛陀为创世神（他未曾自称过）或奉承他（他也不曾要求我们如此）而是加强我们心里的精神价值。这些东西象征着佛教徒悟道的精神旅程，佛教徒的终极目标。

所以蜡烛象征着智慧之光和鲜花象征无常的道理，最终牵引我们到某个层次的了解，无论外表如何，就如Professor Y Karunadasa所说“有情众生的存在”是由无常，苦，和无我这三个原则所主宰的。

有如Professor Y Karunadasa所记载：

佛教的核心教义是强调无常；“有生必有灭”。有如一个佛偈强调；“河水是没有一刻，一瞬间的停止。”这个明喻是用来描述“事件永恒的流动，绵绵不断的变化”

以有情众生的存在特性，在三甲排名第一(根据逻辑而非顺序)的是无常。因为无常造就了其他两个特性的逻辑基础。无常是苦，苦是无我。所以无我的概念对于苦的实相是有关系的。

As the first (logically, but not chronologically) of the three characteristics of sentient existence, it is in fact impermanence that provide the rational basis for the other two characteristics. What is impermanent is suffering, ...what is suffering is not self. Thus the concept of not self is a necessary corollary to the fact of suffering.'

我现在把我对这部经的理解分享给你。

修慈心（慈爱或善心）是件不容易的事。更何况在怨恨升起时还要修慈心是更加困难的事。原因是我们缺乏慈心的实际体验。我们虽然读过慈心的修法但忽略了修持它。在法会结束前，仅仅诵念几行经文是不足以让我们开发慈心的。这样太肤浅了。我们需要做的是尽量把慈心变成我们心里或生活里的一部分。我们得把它变成我们心里的一种能量。当怨恨升起时，往往已经太迟了。我们要是达不到指定的要求就大概不可能修持得了慈心。

慈爱和慈悲是很难分辨的，但有时慈悲会比较有效。我们会发现很难修慈爱但无论我们有没有意识到，我们偶尔都有修慈悲。

让我举一个简单的例子。

在我们斯里兰卡的寺院里至少有两打狗是被信徒遗弃的。狗小时候长得非常可爱，讨人喜欢。但当狗老后就开始出现些毛病如皮肤病，导致它们不再长得像以前一样可爱或讨人喜欢。所以人们就把这些可怜的狗流放在寺院。从寺院的想法，我们除了接受和给它们食物以外，也做不了什么。

用一种看法来说，这些狗主人很自私，不负责任或残忍至把他们的宠物，像不流行的衣服一样给遗弃掉。但用一个正面的方法来看这个问题，就是看它好的一面，起码那些狗没有被安乐死。我们可以说这些人把狗带进寺院是有修慈悲心。在新加坡，我曾经也见过比丘尼照顾被人流放的猫。

慈悲是我们内在的本质。在某些情形之下，它会浮现的。但在其他情形下是很难修慈悲心的。不过我们要牢记慈悲心是与生俱来的。即使一个很残忍的人在某种情况下也会发慈悲。

当有人对我们说了一些负面的东西或阻止我们拿我们需要或想要的东西时，我们便会觉得苦。在这时，我们应该尝试把内在的慈悲心带出来。这也需要练习的。

我见过有些人经常跟别人争吵，但见到他人受苦时还是会伸出援手。打个比方，在斯里兰卡，一旦有火患，住在附近的居民虽然平时不多话也不交际，在这时却会赶去救火。为什么慈悲心会在最需要帮助的时候升起呢？这是因为慈悲心是内在的本质，比慈爱更容易培养。所以当我们修慈悲心时，我们能避免怨恨在心里生根。

平等心或uppekha是用成熟的眼光去看事物，精进的保持心理的平衡。当一些好的事情发生时，我们可以开心但不可以乐过头。另一方面，当负面的事情发生后，我们也不该感觉像世界末日一样。

人的一生会有很多事情可能出错。健康可能会受影响。好朋友可能会离我们而去。即使在不应该被谴责的情况下，上司也可能对我们说或做一些负面的事情，。

当这种事情发生时，如果我们不能保持心理平衡，事情会更糟糕。换句话说，事情能出错但我们自己不能出错。这是一件我们应该牢记的忠告。

拥有平等心是身为领袖所需要的特别重要的本质。好的领袖应该在最坏的情况下保持立场。

如果我们不能开发慈爱，慈悲或平等心，我们至少要尝试不要去理会对我们做负面事情的人。如果我们一直重复去想着不好的事件时，它便会发展成怨恨心。反复思考这件事件，会让我们注重坏的行为。我们甚至会含恨而终。

第五也是佛陀推荐我们用的最后一个方法，就是记住犯错的人因为前因后果，而会遭受因果的处罚。我们没有必要对他伤心或向他报复。这样做的话，我们只会为我们将来制造麻烦和痛苦而已。

在某种程度上，报复对我们制造负面印象的人就如同对一个犯法的人采取私刑。向警方举报并让法律去制裁对方就已足够了。如果我们采取私刑，那我们也犯法。这样一来我们和威胁我们的罪犯又有什么分别呢？

生为有情众生，我们都是坐同一艘叫轮回的船，如佛陀所说，会经历老，病，死和因果法。如果我们能时刻记住这点，我们就会接受人生苦短，而不会把时间浪费在无法长期让我们开心的事情上。这样一来，我们可以为这个乱世做出我们小小的贡献，让它能一点一滴的累积，把世界变成一个更和平与开心的居住地方。

祝愿所有众生幸福快乐！

达摩拉哒那法师

宗教顾问

佛教图书馆



达摩拉哒那法师开示

《消除怨恨》

今天，我要通过一部佛陀所说的佛教经典 AghatavinayaSutta，谈关于如何消除怨恨（有时也被称之为仇恨或烦恼）。这部经典也被出版成 AnguttaraNikaya 或数字语录。

我们经常谈论嗔心但很少聊到怨恨。

其实，用另外一个角度来看，怨恨就是嗔心。当我们不开心时，或对某个人或某件事升起嗔心，我们便会重复的回想而陷入悲观的精神能量里。由此可见，怨恨会比嗔心更持久和危险。嗔心升起时会逐渐消失，但怨恨却会维持更久一些。

怨恨是一种非常难受的感觉。我们感到不自在，有如生了一场严重的疾病。也可以用苦来形容它。怨恨能破坏我们平静的心。

有的人甚至含怨而终。有的就想在最后一刻忏悔。当他们知道自己活不久时，便会要求身边的朋友帮他们邀请和自己有过节的人见面并向他们忏悔。

其实，嗔心升起时最好的方法就是让它过去。很遗憾的是有些父母亲甚至对自己的儿女抱着不好的感觉。

另一个普遍的怨恨是兄弟姐妹反目成仇。

孩子可能会觉得父母亲偏爱其他兄弟姐妹多过于自己。这种不平等待遇的感觉，如果长期没有处理里就会变成怨恨父母（和被宠爱的兄弟姐妹）偏心。这种怨恨甚至会持续到父母亲过世后。

以下的旧故事充分的展现出兄弟姐妹反目成仇的力量。

据说有一名年长的修行者，因为禅修时一入定就能维持好几天而享誉盛名。有一天，天魔打算考验他便派遣魔子魔孙去干扰他的禅修。它们尝试用各种方法诱惑修行者；包括把美女，美食，和各种金银财宝投射进他的心里，但全都无效。最

后，它们只好放弃并把失败的消息禀告天魔。天魔大怒，便亲自出马诱惑修行者。

天魔出现在修行者面前便微笑的对他说，“让我告诉你一些好消息。我听说你的兄弟被皇上封为国家的大将军并且。。。”

天魔还没来得及说完，修行者便大发雷霆。

当然，你不需要把这个故事当真，但这简单的故事警惕我们要小心不要培养或抱着怨恨，特别是对我们身边的亲人。

佛陀教导僧众五种有效的方法来克制怨恨。由于这部经典很短，佛陀的讲解也非常清楚和简洁。所以，我将一字不漏的把这整部经引用出来，让你能亲眼阅读佛陀说过的话。

有五种方法能克制怨恨，而当怨恨在僧众的心理升起时，他应该把它彻底的消灭掉。是哪五种方法呢？

当你对某人升起怨恨心时，你也应该对此人升起善心。如此，你对此人的怨恨心变会被克制。

当你对某人升起怨恨心时，你也应该对此人升起慈悲心。如此，你对此人的怨恨心变会被克制。

当你对某人升起怨恨心时，你也应该对此人升起平等心。如此，你对此人的怨恨心变会被克制。

当你对某人升起怨恨心时，你不要理会他。如此，你对此人的怨恨心变会被克制。

当你对某人升起怨恨心时，要想起凡事都有因果；‘这位尊者是自己行业力的人，是自己受业力的人，是由自己业力所生，跟业力有关系，和被业力主宰的。任何因果，无论善恶，他都得受。’如此，你对此人的怨恨心变会被克制。

这五种方法便是当僧众怨恨升起时，彻底克制怨恨的方法。

虽然佛陀教的是僧众，但很明显的这忠告对在家人也一样有用。