



# 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**.*

Vesak Day @ BL.

Photo Credit: Yew Beng.

Gyelsay Togmay Sangpo



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# Bhante Says

## Effort and Mindfulness

Mindfulness has multiple purposes, many results. We can never experience the end of the results of mindfulness because mindfulness is closely linked with our lives and with everything.

Sometimes when we practise certain kinds of virtues taught by the Buddha, we may feel a bit restless.

For example, effort or *virīya* is a very important quality. Whatever we do to achieve success, we need some kind of effort. It is hardly possible for us to achieve good results without exerting effort. Thus when we study or work, listen to the Dharma, perform charity or practise meditation, we need to exert effort. But sometimes without our realising it, we may get so caught up in trying to achieve our goal that we exert too much effort. This can be a hindrance.

We want to do things very fast. We want to do so many things at the same time (some people call this *multi-tasking* so that it sounds like an achievement) or we attempt to do things too fast. This makes us restless or we end up making mistakes. To prevent such mistakes or to accomplish things productively we need somebody to look after our effort, a kind of guard. That guard is mindfulness.

Mindfulness should be with us all the time even when we are trying to do good deeds because mindfulness will alert us that we are going too far, that we are going in the wrong direction or that we are going to extremes. So we should avoid going to extremes. This is the limit.

Even if we try to practise virtues like the Ten Perfections, we need mindfulness. In order to

attain enlightenment, we have to practise these virtues to a perfect level. But no matter how hard we practise, say, charity, we won't be able to achieve it without mindfulness.

Something can be very good but being good is not the same as being perfect. To be perfect, we need mindfulness. Charity or *dana*, or ethics or *sīla*, for example, are like that. Sometimes, we can go to extremes.

For example, during the Buddha's time, there was a religious sect called Jains. It is still a minority religious group in India today. This small community started during the Buddha's time. Its founder was a contemporary of the Buddha.

Take, for example, non-violence or *ahimsa*. Jains totally abstain from any kind of killing or destruction by covering their mouths and noses with masks. When they walk along the road, they use a broom to sweep the floor before placing their feet on the ground because they do not want to trample upon and kill or hurt tiny insects which may not be visible to the naked eye. So to avoid killing or harming these insects they use these brooms.

Of course, I am not saying that their practice is necessarily bad. To avoid killing any living being should be considered a good thing. But doing it to this level is not practical and creates inconvenience for the practitioner. That is why the Buddha did not ask the monks to practise *sīla* to this level. The Buddha considered intention as the most important ingredient of any action or *karma*.

As Professor Y Karunadasa explains in his excellent book *‘Early Buddhist Teachings – The Middle Position in Theory and Practice’* –

*‘The term ‘kamma’ literally means action. Yet despite this, the Buddha gives it a psychological meaning when he defines it as volition, or willed action (cetana): “I declare, O Monks, that volition is moral action. Having willed, one acts by body, speech and mind.” It is not action but the intentionality of the action that is recognized as moral action per se. If I simply raise my arm, that is not kamma. Though if I raise it with the intention of assaulting someone, then that intention translates that action into kamma. For any action to be morally responsible, it has to be carried out with a purposeful intention. Only willed action produces an effect that is eventually experienced by the actor, while the nature of the effect will be determined by the intention with which the action is performed.’*

In normal, everyday situations, when we walk, we do not normally harbour any intention to kill insects. When we light a fire to cook our meals, we do not necessarily have any intention to harm or kill any housefly or bee that may be flying or crawling around.

We need to perform our daily activities mindfully. We can only practise virtue to a perfect level if we do it mindfully without going to extremes. That level can be maintained with mindfulness.

Let me end by quoting some words of the Buddha from the well-known Sona Sutta where the Buddha explained to Venerable Sona the critical importance of practising the Dharma skillfully and mindfully without going to extremes.

*“Now what do you think, Sona. Before, when you were a house-dweller, were you skilled at playing the vina?”*

*“Yes, Lord.”*

*“And what do you think: when the strings of your vina were too taut, was your vina in tune and playable?”*

*“No, Lord.”*

*“And what do you think: when the strings of your vina were too loose, was your vina in tune and playable?”*

*“No, Lord.”*

*“And what do you think: when the strings of your vina*

*were neither too taut nor too loose, but tuned to be right on pitch, was your vina in tune and playable?”*

*“Yes, lord.”*

*“In the same way, Sona, over-aroused persistence leads to restlessness, overly slack persistence leads to laziness. Thus you should determine the right pitch for your persistence, attune the pitch of the [five] faculties [to that], and there pick up your theme.”*

May you all attain wonderful results from your practice for the benefit of yourselves and all sentient beings.

Bhante B Dhammaratana  
Religious Advisor  
Buddhist Library.

*References:*

*Nibbedhika Sutta: Penetrative* (AN 6.63). Translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

*Sona Sutta: About Sona* (AN 6.55) Translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu

*Even a single day of a life lived virtuously and meditatively  
Is worth more than a hundred years  
Lived wantonly and without discipline.*

*A single day's life of a wise and contemplative man  
Is worth more than a hundred years  
Lived wantonly and without discipline.*

*A single day's life of one who puts out great effort  
Is better than a life of a hundred years  
Lived in idleness and sluggishness.*

*A single day's life lived by a man who grasps  
The impermanence of all conditioned things  
Is worth more than a hundred years lived  
In blindness and ignorance.*

*A single day's life of one who sees the deathless state  
Is worth more than a hundred years  
Lived without perceiving it*

*A single day's life of one who sees the truth  
Is worth more than a hundred years  
Of not seeing the truth.*

(The Dhammapada – Translated by  
Venerable Balangoda Ananda Mautreya Thero)



# Editorial

## *A Matter of Life and Death*

*Remember when we said when we turn grey,  
when the children grow up and move away.  
We won't be sad, we'll be glad,  
for all the life we've had.  
And we'll remember when.*

*Remember When?* Composed and sung by Alan Jackson

Saturday, March 19, 2016 was an extremely hot and dry day, something which Chiangmai residents are used to during summer but not quite so early in the year.

My house mate, Yuda, and I were on our way home after our usual leisurely lunch and coffee break. Along the way, my smartphone beeped. I took a peek.

*'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.'*

A message from Thanakorn Jampamoon (‘Top’), POJ’s layout designer.

In the midst of designing Issue 50 of POJ, Top read this stanza highlighted in Yeo Koon Teck’s review of Thich Naht Hanh’s book - *Fear-Essential Wisdom for Getting Through the Storm*. He loved it so much that he simply had to share it with me immediately.

I had read these famous words of the Buddha several times before. This particular translation, however, struck me as remarkably clear, simple and, so far as I could tell, accurate.

As the car approached the car park, we were accustomed to being welcomed home by Juno, my pet French Bulldog. But this time he was not there.

I entered the house and saw him lying motionless under the dinner table. I touched him but he did not respond. Parts of his body were already cold.

“Juno is dead,” I murmured to Yuda. Yuda rushed in, shocked.

Juno’s demise hit me harder than I had thought possible.





I had, of course, suffered the loss of loved ones before including both my parents and relatives, and other pets. Their deaths, however, were, in one way or another, expected.

Juno, on the other hand, had always been healthy and tough. His toughness came from his genes but probably, so did his weakness - eye problems.

At an early age, he developed juvenile cataract in both eyes. The operations were successful but glaucoma later almost blinded him. He required regular medical attention for the rest of his life. Then ulcers came along and took their toll on his eyesight from time to time.

I worried constantly about his eyesight but Juno took everything in his stride without a whine or whimper. Perhaps it was because dogs, as the famous *Dog Whisperer*, Cesar Millan, says, live in the moment.

Juno was, from all accounts, a 'handsome' dog and elicited smiles and greetings from total strangers wherever he went, even at the hospital. He also received, on a couple of occasions, inquiries for stud services!

It took me quite a while to get over Juno's death. In the meantime, my mind kept ruminating with lots of regret, doubt and guilt on a regular basis.

I also developed the habit of regularly talking to Juno at his grave in the garden. I wasn't sure who, if anyone, was listening but the habit consoled me quite a bit and so I did it.

Over time, I gradually accepted the fact that the 'Juno' that I knew and loved had ceased to exist and that we would never meet again either in this life or in the ones to come. Later, I read the *Salla Sutta: The Arrow* where the Buddha said -

*'By not abandoning sorrow a being simply undergoes more suffering. Bewailing the dead he comes under the sway of sorrow ... Look at the nature of the world! ... (H)aving listened to the arahant, one should give up lamenting.*

*Seeing a dead body, one should know, "He will not be met by me again.'*

According to my understanding of the Dharma, our paths may or may not cross in the future - it all depends on prevailing causes and conditions - but for sure, even if our respective streams of consciousness were to bump into each other in whatever forms we take in the future, we would not be able to recognise each other as the pet and owner we were once upon a time.

In that sutra, the Buddha also reminded his followers not to harp on the death of someone even though we may love and miss them greatly. Instead, it would be more fruitful for us to try and practise, in the best way possible, mindfulness, loving kindness, compassion and renunciation.

*'The young and old, the foolish and the wise, all are stopped short by the power of death, all finally end in death. Of those overcome by death and passing to another world, a father cannot hold back his son, nor relatives a relation. See! While the relatives are looking on and weeping, one by one each mortal is led away like an ox to slaughter.*

*In this manner the world is afflicted by death and decay. But the wise do not grieve, having realized the nature of the world. You do not know the path by which they came or departed. Not seeing either end you lament in vain. If any benefit is gained by lamenting, the wise would do it. Only a fool would harm himself. Yet through weeping and sorrowing the mind does not become calm, but still more suffering is produced, the body is harmed and one becomes lean and pale, one merely hurts oneself. One cannot protect a departed one ... by that means. To grieve is in vain.'*

Another of the Buddha's discourses that I found particularly meaningful to me at this hour of grieving was the short *Bahiya Sutta*.

In that sutra, Bahiya, a renowned meditator in his own right, was one day somewhat rudely told that he had not attained enlightenment and that if he wanted to be enlightened, he ought to find a qualified teacher. Flabbergasted, Bahiya sought out the Buddha and met him on his alms round in a distant city. Tenacious as ever, Bahiya would not accept *no* for an answer.



The Buddha finally relented and enunciated these famous words –

*‘Then, Bahiya, you should train yourself thus:*

*In reference to the seen, there will be only the seen. In reference to the heard, only the heard. In reference to the sensed, only the sensed. In reference to the cognized, only the cognized. That is how you should train yourself.*

*When for you there will be only the seen in reference to the seen, only the heard in reference to the heard, only the sensed in reference to the sensed, only the cognized in reference to the cognized, then, Bāhiya, there is no you in connection with that. When there is no you in connection with that, there is no you there. When there is no you there, you are neither here nor yonder nor between the two. This, just this, is the end of stress.’*

This was for Bahiya a pivotal moment in his life, what he had travelled many miles across the country to experience. It was as if the Buddha had handed him a telescope through which he could behold clearly with his own eyes the planets and stars in the night sky with crystal clarity and in exquisite detail, a moment of awe which jogged his mind into complete understanding and realisation of reality and the inter-connectedness of all existence. Upon hearing the Buddha's words, Bahiya understood perfectly and instantly attained enlightenment.

What an inspiring story, if ever there was one.

Unfortunately, few, if any of us are modern Bahiyas.

Nonetheless, even mere mortals like us can read. And even if we can only take the Buddha's words at their face value, those words will remind us, particularly in challenging times, to steer away from our habitual tendency to project our own ego into every situation we encounter and thereby avoid creating unnecessary suffering for ourselves.

And so the Buddha's exhortation to Bahiya that *‘there is no you in connection with’* whatever circumstances we bump into on a daily basis was a great help to me as I struggled to keep in check

the ruminations that bothered me. It opened for me the space to realise that Juno's death really was not about me but about him and that the sooner I got my wits about me to try and make something positive out of this horrendous event, the better it would be for him and me.



And so in due course, Yuda and I arranged for donations to be made to animal shelters in Juno's name. We even ended up adopting two adorable and mischievous puppies from one of those shelters. In this way, Juno's loss morphed into their gain in their own hour of need. His life had ended. But their new lives were just beginning.

As always, I wish you pleasant reading.

Editor

Chwee Beng

References:

*Salla Sutta: The Arrow* (SN 3.8). Translated by John D. Ireland.

*Bahiya Sutta: Bahiya* (Ud 1.10). Translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

You may also be interested to read the article - *Researchers Explore the Science of Awe* by Jordan Rosenfeld about the latest research on *‘self-transcendental experiences’* which include prayer and meditation. (<http://edition.cnn.com/2016/06/01/health/science-of-awe/index.html>).



# BL EVENT

*2016 Vesak Day Celebration*

Date: y, May 21, 2016

Venue: Buddhist Library

Photo credit: Yew Beng & Koon Teck







# BL EVENT

*2016 Dhamma Day Celebration*

Date: Sunday, July 17, 2016

Venue: Buddhist Library

Photo credit: Dr Wong Weng Fai







# BL EVENT

*Bodhi Walk 2016 - Harmony with Nature*

Date: Sunday, June 26, 2016

Venue: Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park, Activity Lawn 1

Photo credit: Ricky Tay









# BL EVENT

## *Certificate Course in Buddhist Counselling*

conducted by Dr. WasanthaPriyadarshana

Date: Monday 23 to Sunday 29 May 2016

Venue: Buddhist Library

Photo credit: Koon Teck



# BL EVENT

## *2016 Labour Day Meditation Retreat*

conducted by Ven B Dhammaratana

Date: Sunday, May 1, 2016

Venue: Buddhist Library

Photo credit: Koon Teck





听，但这个习惯让我得到一点安慰，所以便持续下去。

过了一段时间，我逐渐接受了我认识的这只 Juno 和我对它的爱已经不存在。无论是今生或是来世，我们也不会再相遇了。后来，我读到《SallaSutta: The Arrow where the Buddha said》

“众生因为不舍去悲哀而受苦。为亡者哀悼而被悲哀所牵引。。。看世界的实相。。。听从尊者的教导，众生应该放弃感叹。看见尸体，众生应该知道，“他与我不会再相见”。

据我对佛法的理解，我们是否还会再相遇，都凭因果和因缘。当然，如果我们来世再相遇，无论投生六道的哪一身，我们都不可能再以主人和宠物的关系认识对方。

在那部经里，佛陀也提醒徒弟们不可执著，即使死者是我们深爱和非常挂念的人。我们反而应该要多修慈悲喜舍，才有帮助。

“无论年幼或年长，愚者或智者，都逃不过死亡的力量而最终面临死亡。那些能克服死亡的往生者去到另一个世界，即使父亲也不能留住他的儿子，不能维持亲属关系一样。看吧！当亲属无奈的哭泣，众生一个接一个有如牛一样被带去宰杀。”

世人以这种方式被死亡和腐坏折磨。但智者因为了解世间的实相而不哀悼。你不知道他们来或去的路。因为无知而哀叹徒劳。如果哀叹有益的话，智者就会去做了。只有愚者才会伤害自己。通过哭泣和悲伤，内心不但不能平静反而会制造更多痛苦，身体消瘦脸色苍白，只会伤害自己而已。用这种方法不能协助往生者，哀悼只是徒然。

我发现佛陀的另一部经典《BhāhiyaSutta》对我现在悲伤的心情有着重大的意义。

在这部经典里，有一位著名禅修者Bhāhiya被人指出他还没有证悟。若是他想要证悟的话，就必须寻找一位有资格的师父教导。惊讶的Bhāhiya立即在遥远的一个城市里找到正在化缘的佛陀。坚韧不拔的Bhāhiya最终得到佛陀的认可并收为徒，而佛陀也因此留下这些名言：

“所以Bhāhiya，你应该训练自己；

对于所见，唯有见之。对于所闻，唯有闻之。对于所认，唯有认之。这是你应该训练的方法。

而当你所见只有见之，当你所闻只有闻之，当你所受只有受之，当你所认只有认之，所有关系就与你无关。因为与你无关，你就不在那关系里。因为你不在那关系的任何一个环节，就这样，是压力的终点。”



这对 Bhāhiya 来说是他的人生转折点，也是他不惜千里迢迢到这里来感受的原因。就好像佛陀把一副望远镜交给他，让他亲眼见证宇宙和星星在夜里大放光彩。振奋人心的一刻让他完全了解和领悟现实，和众生错综复杂的关系。听了佛陀的开示后，Bhāhiya顿悟得道。

多么启发人的一个故事。

可惜，很少人是摩登的 Bhāhiya。

无论如何，就连我们这种凡夫俗子都能理解。就算我们只是听从佛陀的片面之词，这些话也能提醒我们，特别是在艰难的时候，舍去在任何情况下都把我执投射在内的习性，因而避免造成不必要的痛苦。

佛陀对 Bhāhiya 的教诲，“无论在什么情况下，你都不在任何关系内”让我获益不浅。他让我了解 Juno 的死其实与我无关而与 Juno 本身有关。我越早了解这一点，就能早点接受这个不幸的事件，并做一些正面的事情。这对我 and 它都比较好。

在接下来的日子里，我和Yuda以 Juno 的名义捐款给一些动物收容所。我们甚至从那些收容所领养了两只活泼可爱的小狗。这么一来，Juno 失去的生命演变成它们现在所需要的依靠。它的生命结束了，而另外它们的生命才刚刚开始。

一如既往，我希望您阅读愉快。

Chwee Beng  
编辑



# 主笔言论

## 生死之间

“记得当我们说我们将要老去，当孩子们都长大搬走时，我们不会伤心。我们会庆幸拥有过这么一段生活。我们会记得当时。记得当时？”

由 Alan Jackson 自编自唱的一首歌

3 月 19 日 2016 年星期六，是一个极度炎热和干燥的一天。是清迈人熟悉但又不曾这么早度过的夏天。

用过午餐和下午茶之后，我和室友Yuda如往常一般在返回家的途中。这时，智能手机响起。我瞄了一眼。

“我自然会老去。我不能逃脱衰老。

我自然会生病，我不能逃脱病魔。

我自然会死去，我不能逃脱死亡。

我注重的所有东西和我所爱的人，都自然会变。没有办法不与他们分离。

我因身，口，意而得果报。我的行为就是我的延续。”

从ThanakornJampamoon (TOP) -POJ 刊物设计师，所发出的一个短信。

在我们筹备第 50 期的 POJ 时，TOP 读到这一节从 Yeo Koon Teck 的回顾里所写的法语。回顾讲述的是ThichNaht Hanh 的书《Fear- Essential Wisdom for Getting Through the Storm》。他非常喜欢这一节法语便立即与我分享。

我曾多次读过这些佛陀所说过的名言。但这一节法语，对我而言是最清晰，简单和准确的。

正当车子要到停车场时，通常我家的法国斗牛犬 Juno 都会跑出来迎接我们。可是这次，它却不在。

我入屋后发现它一动不动的躺在饭桌下。我碰它时也没反应，身体的一些部位已变冷了。

“Juno 死了”我喃喃细语的告诉Yuda。Yuda惊

讶的匆了进来。Juno 的死对我的打击比我想象中要大了许多。

当然，我也曾经失去亲人如父母，亲戚和其他宠物。他们的死，在某个角度上都是预料之内的。

相反的，Juno 一直以来都很健康强悍。它的强悍来自它的基因，有如它的弱点一样，眼睛的疾病。

在它年轻时，它双眼患上少年白内障。手术虽然成功但之后得了青光眼差点瞎了。它下半生需要长期接受定期医疗。后来溃疡又让它的双眼不时感到压力。

我不时为它的眼力操心但 Juno 却坦然处之，从没哀嚎过。也许如同著名训狗师 Cesar Millan 所说，狗都活在当下。

Juno 无论到哪里，就算是医院也能引起陌生人对它微笑和与它打招呼，是一只“英俊”的狗。有几次还有其他狗主人要求与他们的狗配种！

我花了很多时间才能接受 Juno 的死。在那之前，我脑海里不时充满了遗憾，怀疑和愧疚。



我也养成了一个习惯，经常到家里的院子里，也是 Juno 的坟前与它说话。我不确定是否有人在



“不能，尊者。”

“以你所知，如果琴的玄绑的太松是否能够弹奏？”

“不能，尊者。”

“以你所知，如果琴的玄绑的即不太紧也不太松而恰到好处，是否能够弹奏？”

“能够，尊者。”

“同样的方法，Sona，*过度执著会引起不安，过度松懈会造成懒散。所以你应该找到自己坚持的音准，调到恰到好处才找到自己的节奏。*”

祝愿你们为自己和众生的修行有美好的结果。



达摩拉哒那法师

宗教顾问

佛教图书馆



Photo credit: Loo Huei Hong





# 达摩拉哒那法师开示

## 《正精进与正念》

正念有许多用途和好处。正念的好处是我们永远也不能完全体验的，因为正念与我们的生命息息相关。

有时在我们修行某些佛法时，我们会感到有点焦虑。

打个比方，正精进是一个非常重要的素质。无论我们做任何事情，都需要一些努力才会成功。不劳而获几乎是不可能的事。所以当我们学习或工作时，或听闻佛法、行善布施、禅修，都需要精进。但有时在不知觉的情况下，会因为追求目标而过于耗费精力。就会变成一种障碍。

我们很想尽快完成事情。我们要一次过做很多事（俗称“一心多用”，听起来让人有成就感。），很想尽快完成事情。这让我们焦虑不安或造成失误。为了避免发生这种失误或为了高效率，我们需要有人守护我们的精进。而这个守护者就是正念。

我们应该无时无刻保持正念，即使是在行善时。因为正念会警惕我们是否做的太过分，太极端或是迷失了方向。所以凡事要避免走极端。这是界限。

就算我们在修持十波罗密，我们也需要有正念。为了证悟，我们需把这些素质修到完美的境界。但是无论我们多么精进，比如做慈善，我们也不能缺乏正念。

有些事情可以做的很好，但好和完美是不一样的。要完美的话，就需要正念。无论是慈善，布施，或道德都一样。有时，我们会走极端。

举个例子，在佛陀的时代，有一个宗教名为耆那教。它依然属于今天印度的少数宗教团体。这个小小的团体是从佛陀的时代就开始了。它的创始人和佛陀是同一个年代的人。

比如不杀生这一戒，耆那教徒为了完全不参与任何杀生或摧毁的行为而戴口罩。当他们行走时，他们会用扫把把足前的地扫一扫，避免伤害或踩

死肉眼看不见的微小昆虫。

当然我不是指他们的修行不好。避免杀害任何生命的行为都是好事。但做到这种地步就不切实际和对修行者造成很多不便。所以佛陀并没有教导众僧修到这种地步。佛陀主张意念为因果或造任何业的重要因素。

就如Professor Y Karunadasa的这本《*Early Buddhist Teachings - The Middle Position in Theory and Practice*》详细的记载-

“因果”这个字实际就是业。尽管如此，佛陀却给了它一个有心理学说的名称，把它称为意愿。”众僧啊！我宣称意愿就是道德的体现。有了意愿，才会进行身，口，意。”业是由意推动的，而不是行动造成的。比如我举起手，那不是业。但如果我有意举手伤害人时，那个意念就会因这个动作而造业。需要付任何因果的行为，都必须有意义的意念。只有带着意念的行为才会令造业者承担因果。果报也会因行为的意念而产生。

在日常生活中，当我们行走时是不会有故意要杀害任何昆虫。同样的，当我们点火烧饭时，也不见得有意图伤害或打死在周围的苍蝇或蜜蜂。

我们在进行日常生活中的琐事时需要保持正念。我们只能在保持正念和不做到极端的情况下，才能把道德修持到完美的境界。正念还可以保持那个境界。

让我以佛陀在《*Sona Sutta*》教导Sona法师如何修持佛法和以正念不走极端的方法来结束这段短文。

“Sona，在你出家之前你是弹玄琴的高手吧？”

“是的，尊者。”

“以你所知，如果琴的玄绑的太紧是否能够弹奏？”