

佛法有賴僧傳 (二)

The Monastic Sangha As the Torchbearer of the Buddha's Teaching (PART II)

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在用技術征服自然或世界這個過程的底下，還有一個更深層的過程；它使我們對現實的概念，掌控了具體的現實。但我們這麼做時，在所創造的東西，與要代表的具體現實之間，不可避免地有鴻溝、漏洞。概念性的構想永遠無法成功地捕捉具體事物，並充分地表現它。然後，在某方面而言，這種概念不足使人痛苦。通過概念化，我們想操縱事物，用我們的意志使它屈服，令事物屈從於我們人類的目的。概念化經常就有這種好功用。但這操縱，不可避免地來自內心深處，控制現實的慾望所驅使，使現實完全地順應我們意志的慾望。這使現實變成一套由一己使用的工具；但我們越這樣做，事物與我們越遠離，它們也越想逃離我們的控制。這就引起我稱為「存在的痛苦」的那種內在深刻極度痛苦的感覺了。

現在走向佛教或修行佛法的那些美國人和一般的西方人，有意識或下意識地被苦所逼因而接觸佛法，他們看佛法是一種方法，以找回生命的意義與目的。不但他們做如是觀，佛法也確實有這樣的功效。

佛法幫助他們克服這種與自己、他人和自然界疏離的苦澀感覺。在上座部傳統或內觀禪風潮中，修四念處，幫助

Underlying this project aimed at achieving the technological conquest of nature or the technological conquest of the world, is another project occurring at a deeper level. This is the project of bringing concrete actuality under the control and domination of our conceptually constructed pictures of actuality. However, when we attempt to do this, there is inevitably a gulf, a gap, between the conceptual constructs that we create and the concrete actuality that they are intended to represent. The conceptual constructs can never successfully capture the concrete actuality as it is in itself and adequately represent it; then, at some level, this inadequacy of conceptualization becomes felt as painful. Through conceptualization we aim to manipulate things, to bend things to our wills, to make them subservient to our human purposes, and the conceptualization often serves this purpose well. But this project of manipulation is inevitably driven from deep within by a desire to dominate reality, to make reality completely amenable to the dictates of our will; this project turns actuality into a set of tools to be used by a self. However, the more we do this, the further removed things become from us, the more they escape our attempts to dominate them, and this then generates that deep feeling of inner anguish that I call “existential suffering.”

Now those Americans – and Westerners in general – who turn to Buddhism or to Dharma practice because they are oppressed, either consciously or unconsciously, by the sense of existential suffering see the Dharma as a means of restoring a sense of meaning and purpose to their lives. Not only do they see it in this way, but *it works in this way*. It helps them to overcome this bitter feeling of alienation from themselves, from others, and from the natural world. In the Theravada tradition, or the Vipassana movement, the practice of mindfulness serves this purpose by helping us to cut through the net of conceptualization and obtain a fresh and direct encounter with immediate experience. It helps us to make a fresh and direct contact with our experience through the senses, to come back into the present moment, to make more direct contact with the workings



我們破除概念迷網，並鮮活直接地體驗當下。它幫助我們透過感官，回到當下，直接與我們的內心活動相連起來，使人際關係更加鮮活有力、豐富多彩。這樣，四念處禪是個方法將我們帶回現實經驗，時時刻刻都清新。多數人對這果效感到震驚。

現在，四念處在傳統佛教界或在在家人所教的內觀禪運動中，都為人熟知¹。假設四念處在這兩個領域的作用是一樣的，我們會問：「為什麼內觀禪依然主要風行於在家人之中？為什麼它不能朝僧團開展？為什麼它不能成為僧人奮鬥的目標，以指導理想？」我們要問：「傳統佛教僧眾的坐禪和在家人內觀禪中修念處，二者有重大區別嗎？」

作為一種回答這個問題的方式，我想回頭來看一看修行佛法所針對的，我稱存在的痛苦，這種缺乏、無意義、疏離的感覺。從古典佛教來看，缺乏意義或空虛的感覺是種象徵，它是指明那實質常在、不圓滿的輪迴性。如果看到這一點，認識它，修行人自然會步向捨離，離開家庭過出家的生活，尋求了生脫死之道。如果，他尚無勇氣或因緣出家，他會以嚮往捨離之心在家修行，趨向解脫的方向，視解脫為有意義之目標。如果他無法在家修行，他自然仍會十分尊敬出家人，羨慕那些脫下俗服，換上棕褐長袍的僧尼；他會視這些有德發心向道的僧尼為佛教理想的代表，他看他們是實現自己理想志願的人，他會尊敬他們是佛的法脈所在，正如古語說的「世間福田」。

但是，從存在的痛苦到產生我稱為「實質常在、不圓滿的輪迴性」的觀念，還需要另外兩個因素。是什麼？一個是信仰，在巴利文稱為 *saddhā*。它意味著信仰佛法僧三寶。信佛為「徹底覺悟的老師」；信法為「佛的教導」，這

of our own minds, and thereby to have fresher and more vital, more dynamic, more enriching human relationships. And so mindfulness meditation is seen as the technique that takes us back to the concrete experience of actuality, to actuality which is always fresh at every moment. For most people this is quite a startling revelation.

Now this function of mindfulness is common both to classical Buddhism and to meditation practice as taught within the lay Vipassana movement.¹ Given that this function of mindfulness is common to the two, we can raise the questions: “Why does the lay Vipassana movement *remain* primarily a lay Vipassana movement? Why doesn’t it evolve towards a monastic Sangha? Why doesn’t it look towards a monastic Sangha as a ‘polestar’ providing the ideal towards which its members should be striving?” And we can ask: “Is there a significant difference between the style of mindfulness meditation as taught within the lay Vipassana movement and mindfulness meditation as taught within a classical monastic-based system?”

As a way of answering this question, I want to go back and take another look at the type of suffering that Dharma practice is intended to address, at what I have called existential suffering, the sense of lack, the sense of meaninglessness, the feeling of alienation. Now, from the perspective of classical Buddhism, this sense of lack or voidness of meaning would be seen as *emblematic*, that is it would be seen as *pointing beyond itself* to the intrinsic and ever-present unsatisfactory nature of samsaric existence itself. And when *this* is seen, when *this* is recognized, a practitioner’s natural response would be to head in the direction of renunciation, to leave behind the home life and to set out for the homeless life, seeking to solve the great problem of birth and death. If, however, one doesn’t yet have the strength to go forth into homelessness, or if one’s conditions aren’t suitable for taking this step, one would practice at home with a mind that *slants* in the direction of renunciation, that *inclines* in the direction of renunciation, and looks towards renunciation as a worthy goal. And if one cannot practice at home with a mind that slants to renunciation, one would still naturally respect and revere those who have left the household life and taken up the homeless life; one would be full of admiration for those who have exchanged the garments of the householder for the ochre-brown-maroon robe of the Buddhist monk or nun. One would recognize these virtuous and dedicated monks and nuns as the ones who represent the ideals and aspirations of Buddhism; one would see them as people who have fulfilled one’s own inner ideals and aspirations. One would revere them as bearing the lifeblood of the Buddha in their veins. One would regard them, as the ancient expression puts it, as truly “a field of merit for the world.”

However, for the sense of existential suffering to give rise to this perception of what I call the “intrinsic and ever-existing unsatisfactory nature of samsaric existence,” two additional factors are needed. What are these two additional factors? One of these is *faith*. In Pali, it’s called *saddhā*. And what does *saddhā* mean? It means faith in the Triple Gem: the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. It means faith in the Buddha as the fully enlightened teacher; faith in the Dharma as the Buddha’s teaching – the *full* teaching, *not* just a selection of sayings, cleverly arranged and organized and quoted on occasion, often *misquoted* according to one’s convenience; and faith in the Sangha. This last

是指全部佛法而非片段、巧妙排列組織的摘錄，及經常被人依方便而誤用的內容；還有信僧。最後這一項不意味著信共修的團體（那不是僧團的意義），而是信賢聖僧，那些聖者以其無形的出世精神組成的團體，及信僧團（不一定每位僧尼），他們以可見之形態住世代表賢聖僧。

我必須強調，佛教中信仰一詞，也翻譯為相信，特別與佛法相繫。時下佛教居士老師變信仰為相信，對信仰三寶的解釋變得支離破碎。在這種情況下，人可以信仰任何良好、神聖，聖潔的東西，並且這還可被接受！

「相信」有各種層面，它不是「信仰」的同義字；但它有認知的意思，懷有某些信仰。信仰歷史上的佛——釋迦族的喬達摩，是這個歷史時期徹底的覺者；信仰他所說的，是通向覺悟與解脫的法；信仰那些躬行實踐佛法，成功出世的人。這是傳統的佛教，信仰三寶為主要部分，部分源於某些思想信仰。

信還有情感成分。它含獻身，在這裡是指獻身於三寶，超乎一切地奉獻於示現凡夫身，業已實現圓滿佛法的尊貴與理想的佛陀，他大慈大悲，承擔教化我們愚鈍眾生的大業。我發現在當代美國俗人佛教圈內，這種獻身是明顯地缺乏。除了少數例外，在西方流行的佛教雜誌上，幾乎看不見獻身或敬佛的蹤影。

因此，從存在的痛苦步入解脫與出家生活的因素之一為信仰。另一個因素為「正見」，這是我想要強調的。在傳統佛教中，正見有許多層次；但是為了便利起見，我們談兩層：在基本層次上，是因果律。要正確理解業果，就必須考慮行為與結果在多生的關聯。正確理解，至少意味著在原則上，明白行為怎樣與來生有關聯。「許多美國人(和西方人)不願接受業與來生的觀念，因為這不屬於西方文化。」有人魯莽地宣告：這是我們必須捨棄的亞洲佛教「文化包袱」，以打造對西方有用的新「美國」(或西方)佛教。他們有時爭辯說業與來生之類的觀念，是禁錮亞洲佛教徒的教條。今天，我們要破除宗教教條和信仰，變得完全自由，這意味我們必須放棄亞洲佛教教條

doesn't mean faith in the community of those who are practicing together (which is not the meaning of the word "Sangha"); it means faith, first in the *ariyan Sangha*, the invisible spiritual community of those who have attained realization of the world-transcending Dharma – and then it's also faith in the *monastic Sangha* as a community (though not every monk and nun!)—a community that abides here in this world as the visible, human, embodied representation of the *ariyan Sangha*.

I have to emphasize that the word *saddhā* as used in the Buddhist texts—the word we translate as faith—is specifically tied to the Buddha Dharma. It has become fashionable amongst lay Dharma teachers, while knocking down “beliefs,” to extol faith. Faith, however, is then explained in such a way that its link to the Triple Gem is either eroded or fully broken, so that one could have faith in almost anything that's considered good, sacred, and holy, and it's still acceptable.

Faith has various aspects; it isn't synonymous with belief, but one of its aspects is cognitive, and that involves holding certain beliefs. Among them is the belief that the historical Buddha, Gotama of the Sakyan clan, was *the* fully enlightened Buddha of this historical period; and the belief that *his* teaching is the teaching that leads to enlightenment and liberation; and the belief that those who have followed and practiced *his* teaching with a high degree of success have gained world-transcending realization. That is, for classical Buddhism faith is uniquely rooted in the Triple Gem, and rooted in them partly by way of certain beliefs.

Faith also involves an emotional component. It involves devotion, and in this case it is devotion directed towards the Triple Gem, above all love and devotion directed towards the Buddha as the human being who has perfectly realized all the noble qualities and ideals expressive of the Dharma; also, as the one who, out of great compassion, has taken up the burden of teaching and transforming obtuse sentient beings like ourselves. I find that this aspect of devotion is conspicuously lacking in the contemporary lay Buddhist scene here in the U.S. With a few exceptions, we hardly see traces of devotion and reverence for the Buddha in any of the popular Western Buddhist journals.

So one factor necessary for this sense of existential suffering to lead to renunciation and the step into the monastic life is faith. The other factor is “right view” (*sammā dīṭṭhi*), and this is a factor on which I want to place a great deal of emphasis. In the classical teachings, there are many levels of right view, but for convenience's sake we can speak of two kinds. The *foundational level* is the right view of karma and its fruits, and to properly understand the working of karma and its fruits, one has to consider them in connection with the capacity of our actions to bring forth their results *through a sequence of many lives*; that is, the right view of karma and its fruit means an understanding, at least in principle, of how



和信仰。

對這種觀念，我想提一個比喻。假設在印度將開辦一所大學，其中有物理系。物理教授開始辯論他們是否應該教牛頓力學、熱力學定律，或愛因斯坦相對論。假設某教授站起來說：「這些理論來自西方，不屬於我們的文化遺產。我們不一定要教它們。在亞洲教物理，我們必須放下西方的文化包袱。」其他教授看他這樣會認為他瘋了，在他們沒丟開這些物理定律教學之前，他一定早被開除。為什麼如此？因為物理定律並非是別人的文化遺產而教授；教物理定律，因為它解釋現象是全面正確的。在北京、加爾各答、奈洛比，和伊斯坦堡與他們在倫敦、紐約，或布宜諾斯艾利斯都一樣。物理的意義就是如此。同樣，業與來生解釋了道德生活的普遍規律；這對我們至關重要，因為它是支配我們未來生生世世的規律。從迷茫世間到解脫羅漢、圓滿佛陀，它都有效。這些教導（至少最古老的版本）來自佛陀本人。這是他覺悟的一部分，並且用以教導人類事出有因。這些道理教我們在日常生活中做出基本的道德決定，教我們改惡向善，它是佛教的骨架。它屬於法的內涵。若沒有這些認識，認為「只要當下有正念，我就可獲得最高的證悟」，你就像個去湖邊竹籃打水的人，始終是一無所得。

¹ 當然我是從我最熟悉的佛教傳統來談的，這並非是要忽視其他傳統。其實我希望您將我的觀念與您的傳統相結合，因為社會上的變革影響上座部，也一定會影響別的佛教傳統。

karma generates “rebirth linking.” Many Americans (and Westerners) are hesitant to accept the teaching of karma and rebirth because they aren’t part of Western culture. Some even boldly proclaim that this is part of the “cultural baggage” of Asian Buddhism that we have to drop in order to forge a new “American (or Western) Buddhism” that will be meaningful to people here in the West. Again, they sometimes argue that such teachings as those on karma and rebirth are just shackles of dogma and belief with which the Buddhists of Asia have bound themselves. Today, it’s said, we have outgrown religious dogmas and beliefs; we want to become totally free, in the present, and this means we must become free of all those Asian Buddhist dogmas and beliefs.

My response to this is to offer an analogy. Suppose in India a new university were to be started and they would plan to open a physics department. Would the physics professors start to debate among themselves whether they should be teaching the Newtonian laws of motion, or the laws of thermodynamics, or Einstein relativity theory? Suppose some professor among them would stand up and say, “These laws and theories come from the West. They aren’t part of our cultural heritage. We shouldn’t be obliged to teach them in our university. They are part of the cultural baggage of the West that we have to drop when we teach physics in Asia.” The other professors would look at him and think he’s gone mad. Before they dropped the teaching of these physical laws, they would certainly drop *him* from the department. Why so? Because the laws of physics aren’t taught just because they are part of someone’s cultural heritage. They are taught because they explain phenomena that are universally true, because they are just as valid in Beijing, Calcutta, Nairobi, and Istanbul as they are in London, New York, or Buenos Aires. And that is the meaning of physics. So too, the teachings of karma and rebirth are intended to explain the universal laws of the moral life; they explain laws that are vitally important to us, since they are the laws that govern our future destiny from life to life, the laws that underlie the whole process by which one progresses from the state of a deluded worldling to that of a liberated arahant or a perfectly enlightened Buddha. These teachings (at least the oldest versions of them) come from the Buddha himself. They were part of the content of his enlightenment, and he taught them to human beings for a good reason. These laws teach us how to make basic ethical decisions in our daily lives; they steer us away from evil and guide us towards the good; they form the backbone of Buddhist spirituality. They are intrinsic to the very meaning of the Dharma. Without gaining some insight into these laws, thinking, “Just by being mindful of the present I can attain the highest realizations,” one will be like a man who goes to a lake with a sieve, thinking to use it to collect water and fill his bucket. In the end, he will go back home with an empty bucket.

¹ Naturally I’m speaking from the standpoint of the form of Buddhism with which I’m most familiar. In doing so I don’t want to marginalize those who are coming from other Buddhist traditions, but I actually want you to relate what I’m saying here to your own traditions, because I’m sure the same transformation that is affecting the Theravada tradition is affecting other Buddhist traditions.

To be continued

待續