

Indeed the fear of discomfort is the main reason, at least for me in the past, to step beyond our self-made cage. Almost all people have fears of one kind or another.

I remember once I asked a group of managers to draw themselves. One person drew a sad face chained to a post. Later on, almost everyone else, after seeing the picture, also identified him/herself as being chained to something, be it a big mortgage, their family, their job, etc. But people like Mushashi constantly pushed the envelope and went beyond himself to live on the edge—the boundary between one's own comfort zone and the infinity outside.

It seems that what Mushashi learned from his other teacher, the Buddha, was to have a clear intention—the vow, and to let go, to surrender to the consequences of walking the vow. The Buddha taught us to generate a big vow or intention, and then we should act in our daily life in accordance with the Six *Paramitas* namely; giving, holding precepts, patience, vigor, *samadhi*, and *prajna*. Each of these Six *Paramitas* is a way to help us to surrender something. Giving—surrendering things we like, especially the ego; holding precepts—surrendering desire and anger; patience—surrendering anger; vigor—surrendering laziness; *samadhi*—surrendering randomness or sleepiness; and *prajna*—surrendering holding onto any kind of thoughts or mental models, surrendering form as well as emptiness, or the idea of opposites.

By holding a clear intention while letting go to live on the edge, we might end up loving the edge because it points the way to freedom!

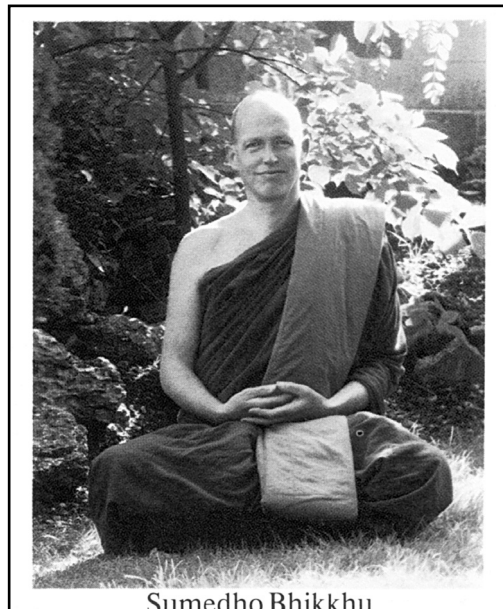
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A Visit from Venerable Ajahn Sumedho (Continued)

阿姜蘇美度法師 2008年六月二十二日 講於萬佛聖城大殿

AJAHN SUMEDHO'S TALK ON JUNE 22, 2008 IN THE BUDDHA HALL AT THE CTTB

蘇美度法師來訪 (續)



Sumedho Bhikkhu

So this sense of oneself as identity with the body, with the conditions that one is experiencing, needs to be looked at and observed, not just to be suppressed or dismissed. My own experience of monastic life involved training in Thailand, learning to speak Thai, learning the Thai tradition and culture, adjusting to different climate and different cultural expectations and to a totally different way of living within the strict boundaries of the vinaya. Of course this brought up the sense of oneself very strongly, my American background, my views, my opinions, my emotions that would be set off, triggered by the various restraints or frustrations of early monastic life. The genius of the teacher, Luang Por Chah, was always his ability to direct my attention to look at what I'm actually feeling, to be able to witness and observe this sense of myself and my belief in what I'm thinking, my attachment to views and memories.

The American cultural conditioning of course has very much developed a sense of uniqueness, of being special, identity with being an individual, with being assertive and demanding rights and very strong views of feeling of independence. And "my life," "my world," "what I think," and "what I want" are very much encouraged within the American cultural conditioning as

I experience it. So this strong sense of individuality and self was very much reflected in the monastic life as I lived it in the Thai forest monastery in the beginning because that wasn't how I could operate. I could not feel free to operate according to my own views, opinions, a kind of demanding special privileges for myself. I began to witness, to observe, to be this Buddhho, seeing the conditioning of the mind, the ego or the personality as it manifested in my way of living within the structures of that Thai forest monastery.

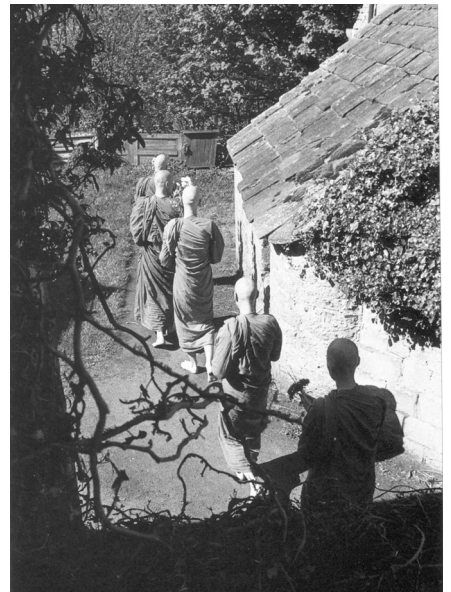
Now the mantra Buddhho is a reminder of a being knowing of this personality, not a critic, it's not a judgmental analysis of me as a person or my good or bad habits but a recognition, a knowing that this personality is a creation which I've become habituated to and which sustains its seeming reality through attachments and identity with these particular impermanent conditions. It's this abiding in this awareness, this Buddhho, this knowing of the condition as a condition (so in this way) you're actually seeing the personality in terms of Dhamma. It is *sankara*. It is a condition that arises and ceases. This is the kind of knowing, of Buddhho, knowing Dhamma rather than me as a person knowing all about my past or my personal problems and relating to them through analyzing or believing that they're really mine.

This self is very much dependent on language and attachment to concepts and to memories. This is also witnessed in meditation. What we call Vipassana meditation is looking into the nature of conditioned phenomena, to see it as impermanent, not as some kind of permanent self or soul that one is stuck with. It is also seeing

phenomena in terms of their nature as change, knowing they give no kind of satisfaction in the long run. Our personalities and emotional habits are always going to be failing us in some way or another. There is always some form of frustration or suffering from attachment to this sense of oneself, through the conditioned sense of self. And then also we have this sense of *anatta* or non-self. We begin to awaken to the reality of non-self -- that what seems very strongly, very much myself, what I really am, is merely a condition arising, ceasing, and it has no substance, no essence in itself, but is merely a changing phenomenon. That which knows this, which observes, is the refuge that one is taking in Buddhho or the refuge of the Buddha.

Then the investigation, this Buddhho, the awareness, awakened consciousness of the sense of oneself as a person, as a personality, as an individual, as a physical body, as a man or a woman, as a Buddhist or Theravadan or Mahayana Buddhist, as a good or bad person or an American or Chinese or whatever, all these conditions, all these memories and attitudes are created out of human ignorance. They are not in themselves anything more than empty phenomena. When we begin to see this and we let them go, we begin to lose interest and no longer feel we need to sustain these illusions that we've created out of ignorance. We can release our hold on these illusions so that we become more aware of the reality of the Dhamma which is always present; it's never separate but maybe is never recognized or fully appreciated until one lets go of this sense of me as a separate person.

Now this investigation of the ego, the self, or the personality is not done



from some theory or some concept but a direct observing of our own sense of self. This created sense of me as a separate person, that which is aware and is observing, that which knows this condition in terms of Dhamma, knows it as a condition changing, knows it as not-self, then, is this reality of Buddhho or awakened, attention in the present moment that in all Buddhist traditions offers refuge.

In Theravadan Buddhism we always take refuge in the Buddha. We chant in Pali "*Buddham saranam gacchami*" which means I take refuge in the Buddha. So this is the real refuge. This is not just a ceremonial recitation but it is practical, immediate and effective as we begin to see through the illusions of cultural conditioning, of our personality, of our own emotional habits, the way we are so identified with and believe in what we feel and our loves and hates, our fears and desires, our jealousies and so forth. We really can totally believe in these emotions as our realities but as we begin to recognize our true refuge in Buddha, then that illusion of our emotional habits becomes apparent in terms of

這種我見出自於對身體的分別心，自己的感受需要得到關切，而不能被壓迫或漠視。我在泰國出家，要學習那裏的語言、文化、氣候、處世之道，還有與世間很不同的嚴格戒律生活，都激起我很強的我見。剛出家時要學習嚴格的規矩，心中還有挫折感，而我的美國背景、我見的觀念、感情都要放下。我的師父阿姜查長老，能善巧地讓我觀照到思維中的我見，以及對觀念記憶的執著。

美國文化總是在強化我見，我獨一無二，要享有權力，以及有強烈的獨立意識。在美國文化背景下，人們非常鼓勵像「這是我的生活、我的世界、我的想法、我的要求」之類的想法。剛出家泰國森林中生活時，我的自我意識很強，因為我以前不是這樣過日子的。我不能自在地按自己的想法過日子，因為如果這樣就是在要求特權了。在泰國森林寺院環境中，我只好觀照，學習做禪，觀照生活中當心念生起、我執表現之背後的因緣。

禪這句咒語是個提醒，讓我們認識自己的個性，它不是在批評或分析我個人好或壞。是讓我們察覺到個性是人們習以為常，因執著我見而誤以為實有的無常因緣法。安住於禪，安住於覺照這一法，我們可以如實察覺到事相的因緣，真正用佛法來看清自己的個性——是有為法、有生滅的因緣法。這是一種禪的認知，是法的認知，而不是認知有自己這個人——瞭解自己全部的過去或個人問題，並通過分析將自己與這些聯繫起來，或者相信這些都真是我所有的。

這個我見與語言、概念、記憶的執著關係非常密切，當習禪時我們會看到這一點。所謂內觀禪就是要參透因緣法的性質，悟到它們的無常性，悟到它們不是人們執著的那種恆常身心實體。內觀禪也可以讓人悟到事物變動不居的性質，因此不能給人任何長久的滿足。

我們的個性、感情、習慣總會不斷的在某些方面給我們失落感。執著於自我的感覺，我見這一因緣法，就一定常常會有挫折感。接著我們會意識到無我，覺悟到實相是無我的。那種看來強烈的我見，只不過是生滅的因緣法，根本沒有實體，只是種變動的現相。那個在觀照了知的覺性，就是皈依佛時的皈依處。

當我們繼續參究下去，這個禪、觀照到我見、個性、色身、男女、大小乘、善人、惡人、美國人、中國人等等都是因緣法，所有這些記憶觀念都是來自人類的無明，這些現象都是空的。悟到這點後，我們就對它們失去了興趣，對這些出自無明的幻象，不再想花力量去保留。學會放下它們，對法的實相體悟就加深了。而法的實相是永恆的，從未離開過我們，但只有當放下自我意識時，我們才能覺查到有這一回事或充分地體悟其內涵。

參究我見、個性這一過程，並不是靠學些理論、概念就大功告成了，這要直接對自我的感覺觀照才行。自我個體的感覺，它能夠觀察事物。用因緣法來觀照它，悟到它是無常、無我的，當下這觀照就是禪或覺悟，專注在當下這一刻的實相，也是所有佛教宗派所提供的皈依處。

南傳佛教中我們總是皈依佛。巴利文Buddham saranam gacchmi的意思是皈依佛。這是真正的皈依處，不只是一種形式，而是實用、直接有效的。讓我們對文化因緣、個性、感情、習慣、愛恨、恐懼、欲望、妒忌、障礙等等看得更清楚。我們過去認為這些都是完全真實的，可是當我們開始知道如何真正皈依佛後，上述的幻象、感情、習慣，在法的面前都變得清清楚楚。它們都是依其他因緣而生的緣起法，其中沒有實體，沒有永恆的內容、只是依其他因緣而存在的。當這些緣滅了，這些特定的感情，自我感覺也就消失了。

第二個皈依處是法，巴利文Dhammam saranam gacchmi，意思是我皈依法，南傳佛教中都這樣唱誦。實際是說我們皈依對實際相狀〈實相，如實〉的覺悟。換言之，法是實相。就皈依真實性。這不是在心中接收甚麼神密物質、能量。法就在眼前，在當下。我們靠覺照禪、達摩來認識實證法。禪、達摩是最有意義的兩個詞，它們可用來改變以下諸多從我產生的問題、我的世界、我的想法、我的問題來自社會，不公平等等。還有從身見分別心產生的自我意識。內心有了禪，達摩，我們得以看視我見的幻象，對因緣，過去的回憶，自己與對環境的感情都看淡了。因為能如實面對，我們就不再分別執著因緣法，因緣隨時在變。我們與它們關係要認識覺悟，而不再是出於對愛憎的執著。

另外一個妨礙我們見法，看到實象的非常令人迷茫的問題，就是對思想過程、語言、記

Dhamma. They are conditions that arise according to other conditions. There is no substance to them. There is no eternal essence. They are merely conditions that are dependent on other conditions for their existence. When those conditions are gone, then that particular emotion, sense of self, drops away.

The second refuge then is the Dhamma. “*Dhammam saranam gacchami*”- I take refuge in the Dhamma. Though this is a traditional chant that Theravadan Buddhists recite, the reality of this recitation is taking refuge through awareness to the reality or the way it is. In other words Dhamma is reality. It's not some kind of mystical substance or energy that we might conceive in our minds, but it's here and now present. We recognize and realize Dhamma through awareness, through Buddhho and Dhammo. These two words are most significant words in changing the perspective from the self view, which is my world, what I think, and my problems due to the problems of the society, the unfairness and injustices I've been subjected to and so on, and the way we can analyze and create a sense of self through this sense of personal identity. With the Buddhho and Dhammo inside, we see through that illusion of me as a separate entity and lose our interest in the conditions, the memories of the past, or our own feelings, personal feelings in regards to the world around us. We no longer identify or feel the inclination to attach to these conditions because we're seeing them in terms of what they really are. They're conditions changing. Our relationship to them is recognizing and knowing and realizing their true nature but no longer attaching to them

out of fear or desire.

Another very blinding problem which obstructs our seeing Dhamma or knowing reality is our strong conditioning and attachment to the thinking process, to the language and memory. This we begin to observe through meditation. Through insight meditation, we incline our attention to the thinking process itself. In other words, we do not think about Dhamma or operate from ideas or views or theories or doctrines about Buddhism or Dhamma or anything of that order, because that's all part of the language, the conditioned phenomena that we have acquired. Language is something that we acquired after we were born. In this knowing of language, of the thinking process, these pronouns I, me, and mine, knowing that these are conditions, we begin to observe that language itself is a function of the mind. We usually try to experience life through analysis, through conceiving, through theories, through ideals, through this sense of a self, through our attachment to views, opinions, prejudices, and biases that we've acquired, through our social and cultural conditioning. However, now we begin to recognize that the way of practice, the way of purity is through this awareness, and then the thinking process seems no longer something to attach to or believe in. It's not to be rejected, but to be used for pointing, for reminding ourselves to awaken and to cultivate this way.

The third refuge in the Buddhist religion is “*Sangham saranam gacchami*”, taking refuge in the Sangha, which is those who are practicing the Dhamma, those who are cultivating the Way, the Middle Way, *majjhima patipada*. And of course this Middle

Way is recognized and seen as not some kind of vague ideal that one might hold to in one's mind but it is the reality of now, the awakened consciousness seeing things. It is awakening to reality and being capable of responding, acting, speaking in the society that we live in a skillful and beneficial way. So the awakened individual, the awakened human being, is a great blessing to the universe and society, because these are rare opportunities in the world now. The political and economic problems, endless wars, environmental problems, pollution, overpopulation, seem to be almost unsolvable in terms of our scientific thought patterns, our own cultural attitudes, or even our religious ideals. We need this awakened awareness to reality to be able to resolve the conflicts that we experience within ourselves and also generate great possibility for the resolution of conflicts on a wider scale. In the Buddhist tradition, actually being born as a human being is the most significant birth of all the possibilities for being reborn in all the different realms, even the most fortunate heavenly realm. It's always the human realm that is highly regarded because within this realm as human beings, with these kinds of bodies, we have this opportunity to awaken to the real and to cultivate our lives in a way that is a blessing, not from any personal views or identities as a personal blessing, but the reality of blessing through awakening to the reality that we're always with but that most human beings do not recognize or appreciate.

The interest in Buddhadhamma has increased so much in countries like this one, which fifty years ago really had no understanding or appreciation for any form of Buddhism. All over the

憶的強烈執著。當我們修禪時會發現這一問題。修內觀禪時，我們習慣專注於思想過程本身。換言之，不是在修內觀，而是在思維佛法、在概念理論之類的東西上翻來覆去。這都是文字的一部份，是因緣法，文字是我們後天學來的。思想過程、「我」這個詞都是因緣法。認識到這點，當我們就悟到文字本身只是種心的活動，面對生活不應基於分析、想念、理論、我見、對觀念的執著、偏見、社會文化背景等等後天的東西，就會發現修行清淨的覺悟之道。既不再執著於思想過程，也不排斥；只是用它來指示提醒我們來覺悟，來修行。



瞭知法的是佛，接下來是僧。佛教裏第三個皈依處——「Sangham saranam gacchami」皈依僧。僧是指修習法、修道、修中道的人。當然中道看來好像是個模糊的觀念，其實它就是當下的實相。覺悟的意識觀察事物，覺悟到實相。

有能力有善巧的通過行為與言語，在自己生活的世間，對眾生做出有利益反應。所以覺悟者的出現對宇宙，對世界是種巨大的福報，現在世上這種機緣已經很少了。政治經濟問題，無盡的戰事，環境污染問題，人口過

剩等等，這些矛盾用科學觀念、文化甚至宗教理念來處理，都幾乎無法解決。我們需要覺性來體悟到實相，這樣就可解決心中的衝突，同時也為解決更大範圍的衝突創造了很好的條件。依佛教來看，做人比生在其他道都有意義，甚至都勝過比有大福報的天道。重視人身，是因為這樣的色身適合於修行，覺悟實相。過修道的的生活是種福報，這不是出自某個人的關點。因為我們覺悟周遭的現實，就得到來自現實的福報，可惜大多數人根本不知道，也不珍惜這種因緣。

人類對佛法的興趣與日俱增，連美國都是一樣。而五十年前，這裏的人對佛法根本不懂，對任何佛教方面的東西都毫無興趣。現在全世界都這樣，從歐洲、南美到最偏遠的國家，總有開始醒覺的人，他們

對佛法有興趣了。其原因在於佛教的獨特風格，覺悟之道超越了宗教信仰、文化、或任何因緣，也超越了古今宗教、歐亞非人種之別。覺悟之道從人道入手，運用已經得到的人身、人心來明白法，瞭解實相。所以在當代，像美國這個現代化的國家，對佛法的興趣越來越濃，這是個好兆頭。學佛不是說要大家接受一種新的宗教，或改變信仰成為佛教徒。學佛修禪的目的是要覺悟，不辜負生而為人的因緣，看明白法。而這個目的，對於局限於個人文化、教育或其他任何條件

的人而言，都是不可能達成的。佛教是古老的，但其內容卻不古老。佛教所處理的問題，是從人類出現時起至今一直存在的。這些問題就是人類的苦、幻覺、執著、愚癡以及如何從中解脫，覺悟認清實相之道，這就是法的力量。

我覺得今天已經講得不少了，感謝恆實法師為我翻譯中文，讚賞他流利的中文。幾年前我有一次也想學中文，相信他今天的翻譯沒有失誤。我很高興又回到萬佛城，宣化上人在世時，在這裏的經歷給我留下很多愉快的回憶，我也還記得參加上人追思法會。我迴向功德時，總是忘不了上人。在我英國住所的佛桌上，就有上人的相片。

我全心全意地迴向功德給萬佛城所有在座的出家眾、在家居士。希望你們發菩提心，珍惜佛陀的妙法，佛法非常有效，非常真實，希望各位好好修道。如果有人視佛教為宗教儀式、文化內容或執著於形式，我們當然也讚歎。可是如果不能真的皈依佛、法、僧，那學佛只停留在唱誦、概念的層次上，那你不能得到真的解脫。一定要將佛、法、僧內在化，成為皈依處——佛，如實瞭知真相，瞭知身心的空性。為人在世，而不再被心念的生生滅滅所迷惑。非常感激今晚受邀跟各位講幾句話的因緣，我全心全意地迴向功德給大家，希望各位都愉快、健康、成功。希望在這一生當中，都會證得佛法。

蘇美度法師回答問題：

這個問題常有人問我。在西方，許多人說起修道都好像很消極，只是保持正念，其他甚麼也不做。現在在座的各位，有多

world this is happening, in European countries, in South America, even in the most remote countries in the world. The reason for this is because of this unique style of the Buddha, this way of awakening which is not about religious beliefs or doctrines or cultural attitudes or conditions of any sort. It's not about old-fashioned or modern religions. It's not about Europeans or Asians or Africans. It's about the human condition, using this human birth, this human consciousness for awakening and for understanding Dhamma or reality. This is why at this time, in a modern country like the United States, this growing interest in Buddhadhamma is a good sign because it's not about adopting some kind of new religion or trying to convert people to become Buddhists. The aim in Buddhist meditation is to awaken and to fulfill one's life as a human being, to be able to see clearly and understand the Dhamma in a way that we can't possibly understand from the limitations of cultural conditioning or personal education or any other conditioning whatsoever. This is an ancient teaching but it's not about ancient time. It's about the human condition that's always existed from the first human being to the present. The human condition of suffering, its delusions, its attachments, its ignorance, and a way to free ourselves from those delusions, to awaken to what is real and true which we call the Dhamma.

Now I think I've said enough at this time. I appreciate Venerable Heng Sure's translations. He always impresses me with his fluent Chinese. I tried to learn it once years ago and I also trust that he's not giving the wrong translation. Also I appreciate coming

back to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. I have many happy memories living here, staying here when the Venerable Master Hsuan Hua was alive. I remember attending his funeral and I always share the merit and goodness of my life with his memory. I have his picture on my shrine in my dwelling place in England.

I give all my best wishes and blessings to the Sangha here at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, the monastic Sangha, and to the laypeople that come here, to encourage and try to inspire you to really appreciate this marvelous teaching of the Lord Buddha. It is a teaching that is very effective, very powerful, very real and I encourage people to cultivate, to develop this way because Buddhism just as a religious ceremony or just seen in terms of cultural identities and attachment to ceremonies, while it is also to be praised and admired, is not liberating. We must actually apply these refuges in Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha, not just on a chanting level or conceptual level. We must internalize them, be that refuge, Buddho, the knowing truth the way it is and being the human individual it is, empty, living in the world but no longer deluded, no longer identified by the delusions that arise and cease in one's consciousness. So I give you all my best wishes and blessings and express my gratitude for being invited to address you this evening and may you all be happy and well, prosperous, and successful. May you all realize the Dhamma in this lifetime.

[Ajahn Sumedho responds to a question.] This is a question often asked of me because many times to people in the West, the way one talks can sound like a kind of passive

resignation that you don't do anything but just be mindful. Many people here assume that what I'm saying is that we just lose interest in the world and take a passive observing role. That's not it; even though that might sound like what I'm saying, that's not what I mean. What I'm pointing to is a very engaged relationship to the world, to see it in terms of Dhamma, and then to be able to respond to the worldly conditions that we experience wisely. We're not caught in just personal reactions of like and dislike. The more mindful we are, the more the wisdom faculty starts operating through our responses to specific conditions, injustices or whatever in the society around us, so that our responses are appropriate and skillful and adequate to that particular condition in the moment. This allows us to have a spontaneous responsibility to the moment rather than just binding us to a kind of passive state of awareness that one might assume.

(The End)

少人聽了我所講的法，會覺得我們只是厭世，扮演一個消極觀察者的角色？這是錯的，即使聽來很像是我說的，但那不是我的本意。用法來面對世界，有智慧地應對，感受到世間因緣，我所說的這種人與世間的關係是高度奉獻投入的。我們的反應並不受個人的好惡局限，正念的程度較高時，我們的慧根就通過意識反應出來了。對特定的因緣，不公平或任何社會環境，我們都能善巧地、恰到好處地做出適合於當下因緣的反應。這樣的修行使我們對當下的都是自然自發地負起了責任，而不是外人想像的那種消極處事狀態。

(全文完)