

首先，歡迎各位法友們回來萬佛聖城參加2009年的第一個觀音七。提到觀音菩薩，我們會不由得會想到她的慈悲；什麼是慈悲呢？簡單地說，慈就是幫助眾生得到快樂，悲就是幫助眾生離開痛苦；就像我們剛剛的請法，就是基於慈悲，希望眾生能聞法而依法修行，進而離苦得樂。所以佛經裡說慈悲是一切佛法的根本，佛陀之所以弘法四十餘年，講經三百餘會，所有三藏十二部的經典，都是基於一念慈悲，可見慈悲的重要性。

佛菩薩無我的大慈悲就是予樂，幫助眾生得到人天的快樂、法的快樂，及究竟涅槃的快樂；而悲是拔苦，幫助眾生離開三界所有的痛苦。然而我們如果要成就佛菩薩無我的大慈悲，首先在我們的內心裏要對一切眾生充滿著善意，希望他們時時刻刻都能夠自在幸福快樂，而這第一步就要從慈悲對待自己的自性眾生開始。這也就是我們剛剛在蒙山施食唱誦的「自性眾生誓願度」，所以學習對自己的慈悲是極為重要的。

我們可以想一想，我們是不是以最友好，最友善的方法，和自己做好朋友，做最好的朋友？如果能夠這樣做到的話，這就是慈悲的第一步。跟自己建立這種友善的關係是非常重要的。當我們能夠感到跟我們自己相處得很自在的時候，就像回到自己的家一樣的時候；當我們能與自己建立這種關係的時候，我們才能對待別人友善，因為是從內自然發出來的。也唯有如此，我們才能夠開放自己的胸懷心靈，去對待他人。



## The True Nature of Kindness and Compassion

### 慈悲的真相

方丈和尚講於萬佛城大殿

2009年3月14日星期六晚間觀音七灑淨時

Spoken and translated by the Abbot DM Heng Lyu

during the Purifying of the Boundaries for

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First, let us welcome all the Dharma friends returning to City of Ten Thousand Buddhas for the first Guanyin Recitation Session of 2009. Whenever Guanyin Bodhisattva is mentioned, we naturally think of his loving-kindness and compassion. What are loving-kindness and compassion? Briefly, loving-kindness means helping living beings gain happiness, and compassion means helping them leave suffering. Just now when we requested the Dharma, we did so out of loving-kindness and compassion, wishing that those who hear the Dharma will rely on it to cultivate and leave suffering and attain bliss. It is said in the Sutras that loving-kindness and compassion are the foundation of all dharmas. That is why the Buddha propagated the Dharma for over forty years and gave over three hundred lectures. All twelve categories of Tripitika were generated from a single thought of loving-kindness and compassion. It is evident from this that loving-kindness and compassion are very important.

What is the great kindness and compassion of “no-self” of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas? Loving-kindness refers to bestowing happiness, helping all beings gain the joy of the world and heaven, the joy of Dharma, and the joy of nirvana. Compassion refers uprooting suffering, helping beings leave all the pains and sufferings of the three realms. To accomplish

如果我們在對內的心靈上，不能夠建立這種關係的話，我們很容易因為一些事情，或是過去不好的經驗，對自己產生厭惡，乃至瞋恨自己的負面思想；久而久之就會逐漸對自己產生負面評價的習慣，這樣子我們逐漸成為自己最討厭的人，給自己製造了許多的苦惱，也給他人製造了許多的苦惱。所以學習友善地對待自己，開放自己的胸懷和心靈，去對待自己及他人，這就是修行慈悲非常重要的一點，也是第一步。

我們應該如何地對自己慈悲呢？我們應該積極正面看待自己，發掘自己的優點，時時看到我們自己的佛性；如果我們只見到自己的錯處，或只見到自己不好的地方，那只是給自己負面的評價；久而久之，我們就成為自己最討厭最厭惡的人了。所以學習去發掘自己的優點，給自己積極正面的評價，看看自己的長處，以及自己在學佛當中了解自己的佛性，是極為重要的。

當我們學會這樣做時，我們一定會看見別人的優點，也會給別人更多正面的評價，也會見到更多別人的佛性的光輝，我們的內心會培育出更多的慈悲出來，自然我們的行為和我們的說話的內容語態，乃至我們的身體語言，都會跟內心的慈悲相契合的。當我們能夠友善地對待別人，仁慈地對待別人，體恤別人時，我們都有這種感覺，會給我們帶來喜悅和快樂；因為當下我們的身心會覺得輕鬆自在，同時也看到自己所做的事情，能帶給別人快樂那時，我們的內心會感覺到更加地喜悅和輕快的。

佛在經典上說過修行慈悲能得到十一種福報，哪十一種福報呢？

第一，能夠在安逸舒適中睡眠。如果您有睡眠問題，建議您修行慈悲行。第二，能夠在安逸舒適中醒來。如果你每次都是在惡噩夢中醒來，或者在是很不舒服的狀況，在哭泣中醒來的話，建議您修行慈悲行。第三，不做噩夢。就是剛剛我們提到的。第四，為眾人所愛。這是大家都瞭解的，慈悲的人是大家都愛護擁戴的。第五，為非人所愛。非人是那些呢？可以說是動物啊，乃至這些精靈啊，都算是非人類的；天龍八部都可以算。

第六，天神護祐。不只是非人，連天上的神都會保護你。第七，火毒兵器不會侵害。因為你有這種德行，很多惡緣不會來侵害你。第八，心念易專注。所以如果我們心

the great kindness and compassion of “no-self”, we must first regard all living beings with goodwill, wishing that in every moment they be free and at ease, blessed and happy. This is begun by treating your own “beings of the self-nature” with loving-kindness and compassion. This is what was sung in the Mengshan Food Offering just now: “I vow to take across the living beings of the self-nature.” Thus, it is extremely important to learn how to treat ourselves with loving-kindness and compassion.

We can think, are we using the most kind and friendly methods to be a good friend to ourselves? If we can do so, then this is the first step in being kind and compassionate. It is very important to establish this type of friendly relationship with ourselves. We need to feel the easy relaxed manner in which we approach ourselves is like returning to our own home. Only when we have established this kind of relationship with ourselves can we begin to be truly friendly with others; this is because the friendliness is generated naturally from within. Only when this is done are we able to really open up our hearts in our treatment of others.

If we are unable to establish this kind of relationship with ourselves inwardly, it is very easy to start disliking or even hating ourselves when some issue or past negative experience comes up. Eventually, we become overly self-critical. We become the person we hate the most, creating a lot of trouble and pain both for ourselves and for others. Learning to treat ourselves with kindness, opening our hearts in the treatment of ourselves and others, is a very important point in cultivating loving-kindness and compassion; it is also the first step.

How shall we be kind and compassionate to ourselves? We shall regard ourselves positively to discover more about our own good points and always see our own Buddha natures. If we see only our mistakes or bad points, we are giving ourselves a negative evaluation. Eventually we will become the person we dislike the most. Thus it is extremely important to learn to find more good points in ourselves, give ourselves positive evaluations, to see our goodness as well as understand our Buddha nature as we study Buddhism.

When we have learned to do this, we'll surely be able to see others' goodness, give others a more positive evaluation and also be able to see the brightness of the Buddha natures of more people. In other words, our minds will develop more kindness and compassion; our actions, the contents and tones of our speech, as well as our body language, will reflect our inner kindness and compassion. When we treat others with friendliness and consideration, we will feel that it brings us more joy and happiness. We not only feel free and easy in minds and bodies at that moment but also feel delight when we see that our deeds have brought more delight to others.

Thus the Buddha says in a Sutra that one can receive eleven kinds of blessing while practicing loving-kindness and compassion. What are these eleven blessings?

The first, one will sleep in comfort. If you have difficulty sleeping,



很容易散亂的話，我們可以修行慈悲觀。第九，神采安祥。大家都知道相由心生；如果我們的內心是慈悲的話，我們的神采自然是安祥的。第十，往生時安祥鎮靜。這是我們平時修的善業、慈悲業幫助我們；那我們往生去了哪裏呢？第十一，當我們往生，至少可以往生到梵天，或者是更高的，可能是淨土了；那就要看每個人的願力和因緣。

或許有人很感慨地說，「真的嗎？你看一看那個人好慈悲啊，可是老是貧窮潦倒，疾病纏身，都沒有你剛講的那十一個好處，除了還沒死之外。那你看這個人壞得不得了，偏偏肥肥胖胖的，而且還走好運發財，錢多得不得了。你看老天不長眼，都沒有報應，你剛講的都不對啊！」

可是我們要知道，這就是我們佛教所講的三世因果的報應。雖然我們在今生慈悲行善，但是我們怎麼知道我們的前生所欠下來的，所造的罪業呢？這個債還是要還的；不能不還。雖然今生我們雖然很慈悲，有道德，但是不能說以前欠銀行的錢就賴著不還了，我們還是要受過去的果報。惡人享福是因為他們前生過去生積的善業，還沒有銷掉，所以還沒有到受報的時候。這就像在銀行裡存的款還有很多，他還能繼續奢侈地享受；但是一旦他把儲蓄花完了，他馬上就要接受貧窮挨凍之苦了，這是逃不掉的。所以俗話說，善惡到頭終有報，只爭來早與來遲；世間上的事情往往並不像它看上去那樣。

這使我想起一個故事，這故事的名字就叫「並不像它看上去的那樣」。

有一天有兩個天使，如果以佛教講就叫天人——這是西方的故事——有兩個天使化作

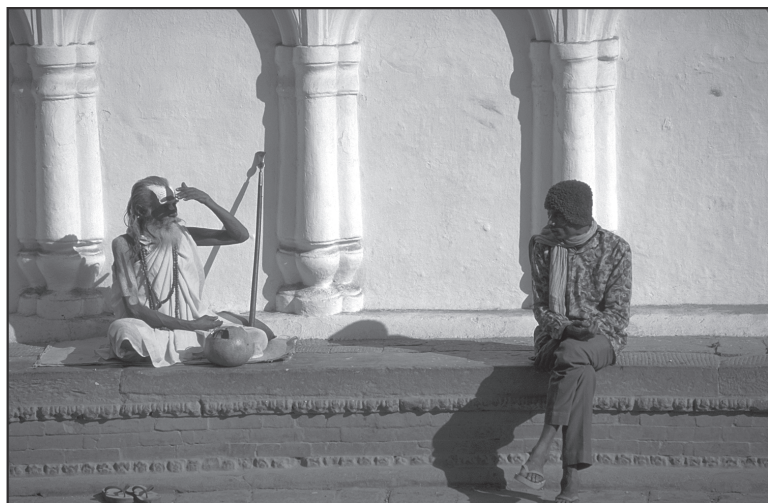
it is recommended that you practice loving-kindness and compassion. Second, one will wake up in comfort. If you always have nightmares or wake up from your dreams feeling ill at ease or in tears, please practice kindness and compassion. Third, one won't have bad dreams, as we just mentioned. Fourth, one will be adored by all beings. We all know that a kind and compassionate person will be cared for and supported by all. Fifth, one will be adored by non-human beings. What are non-human beings? These include animals and spirits, as well as heavenly beings, dragons or Dharma protectors.

Sixth, the heavenly gods will guard you. So you see, not only do non-human beings protect you, even the gods will do so. Seventh, you will not be attacked or harmed by fire, poison, or weapons. Because of your virtue, you will be immune to many adversities. Eighth, one's mind is easily concentrated. If your mind is easily distracted, you can practice kindness and compassion. Ninth, your demeanor will be serene. As you know, one's appearance reflects one's mind. If your mind is kind and compassionate, your appearance will surely be undisturbed and peaceful. Tenth, we will be peaceful and calm at the time of rebirth. It is due to the good deeds and compassionate deeds we cultivated in regular times. But where will we be reborn to? Eleventh, we will be at least reborn to the Brahma Heaven or even higher, to the Pure Lands, depending upon our vows, causes and conditions.

Some people may exclaim, saying, "Really? Look! This person is so kind and so compassionate; yet, he is always poor and sick. He has not received any of the eleven benefits you mentioned, except one—he is not dead. And look at that person: he is so evil, yet, he is strong and healthy and making a lot of money. See, the heavenly gods are blind, aren't they? There's no such thing as a response. Everything you just said is pure nonsense."

We should understand that according to Buddhism, the law of cause and effect operates in the three periods of time. We may be kind and charitable during this life, but how do we know what debts and unwholesome karma we created in our previous lives? All debts have to be paid back. Although we are kind and compassionate in this life, we still cannot refuse to pay what we owe from past lives. We

still have to face the consequences of previous causes. Conversely, people who are evil in this life may still be enjoying blessings because they have not exhausted their good karma accumulated in past lives; the time has not yet come for them to receive the consequences of their current offenses. It is like a person who has a lot of savings in the bank, so he can continue to live extravagantly; yet, as soon as he has spent all his savings, he will face poverty and suffer from cold and hunger. No one can escape their retribution. Thus a proverb says, "There are always consequences for good and evil deeds; it is just a matter of whether they come sooner or later." So, things in the world are not always what they seem.



了人間的外表，來到人間旅行；到了夜晚他們到一個富有的家庭借宿，這家人對他們並不很友好，拒絕讓他們住在舒適的客房裡過夜，而是在冰冷的地下室，給找了一個角落讓他們在那裡過夜。當他們把毯子鋪在地上的時候，這個較老的天使發現牆上有一個洞，他就順手把洞補好了，這個洞看起來就消失了。這個年輕的天使就問：「你為什麼要做這樣的事情，這家人對我們那麼不好？」老天使就說有些事情並不是像它看上去的那樣的。

第二天他們又繼續旅行了，晚上他們到了一個非常貧窮的農家借宿。這主人夫婦倆對他們非常熱情，把僅有的一點食物都拿出來招待這兩位客人，又讓出自己的床鋪給這兩位天使；當然他們（天使）是現凡夫的相。第二天一早起來，這兩位天使就發現這個農夫和他的妻子都在哭泣；為什麼呢？他們唯一生活來源，就是一頭乳牛；這個乳牛死了！這個年輕的天使非常地生氣，就問這個老天使說，「怎麼會這樣子呢？第一個家庭什麼都有，你這個老天使是老糊塗你還幫他修補牆洞。第二個家庭這麼貧窮，還這麼熱情地招待我們，而你卻沒有幫助他們，讓他們唯一的乳牛在晚上死掉；晚上留我們在那裏，你竟然讓牠死了！」

那個老天使就說了，他說，「有些事情並不像它看上去那樣。當我們在那個富有的家庭過夜的時候，我從牆洞看到裏面堆滿了黃金；主人因為被他的貪慾所蒙蔽，而不願意去分享他的財富給他人，所以我就順手把牆的洞給補起來了，他再也看不到這些黃金了。昨天晚上我們睡在這個農夫的床上，到了晚上午夜的時候那個死神來了；來做什麼呢？他來要帶農夫的妻子走。於是我就用那個乳牛代替了她，所以他的乳牛就往生了，而農夫的妻子還能夠繼續留在人世間。所以有些事情並不像它看上去那樣。」

所以有些事情的表面，並不是實際上真實的狀況。如果我們相信三世因緣果報的話，我們應該種下正確的因，持續我們的善行，我們必能歡樂而收成。有人說：「昨天已經是歷史了，而明天是一個未知的謎，但現在卻是手中的禮物。」這是用英文講，在英文，「現在」和「禮物」是同樣的字，相同的發音，所以說「現在」就等於在說「禮物」。所以我們在座各位，都希望珍惜我們手中的這份禮物，好好地把握它。

◎待續

This reminds me a story titled “Things are not always what they seem.”

One day two angels--which we would call heavenly beings in Buddhism but this is a Western story--transformed themselves into humans and came to the human world. When the night came, they came to a wealthy family and asked to stay overnight. This family was not friendly and refused to let them stay in their comfortable guest room; instead, they gave them a small space in their freezing basement for the night. When they put the blanket over the floor, the old angel found a hole on the wall. He sealed it and the hole seem to vanish. The younger angel asked, “Why did you do that? This family treated us so badly.” The old angel said, “Things are not always what they seem.”

The second day, they continued on their journey. When the night came, they reached the door of a poor farmer and asked to stay overnight. The farmer and his wife were very enthusiastic in their hospitality and not only served them with the only bit of food they had but also provided their own bed to these two angels, whom of course looked like ordinary human beings. The next morning when they woke up, they found this farmer couple in tears. Why? Because their only income source was a cow and now it had died. The younger angel was furious and asked the old angel, “How could this happen? The first rich family has everything; however, you are getting so old and muddled that you helped them repair their wall. This family is so poor, yet they hosted us earnestly and let us stay overnight. You not only did not help them; to my surprise, you let their only cow die last night.”

The old angel said, “Sometimes things are not what they seem. When we spent the night in the basement of that rich man’s house, I saw through the hole in the wall and found that it was full of gold. Since this owner was afflicted by his stinginess and greed and unwilling to share his good fortune with others, I sealed the hole in the wall. Thus he will never find that gold again. Last night when we stayed in this farmer’s bed, the angel of death came for his wife at midnight. I gave him his cow instead, so his cow was dead but his wife can continue living in this world. Things are not always what they seem.”

Therefore, sometimes things on the surfaces do not reflect their actual circumstance. If we have faith in the cause and effect of the three periods of time, we should plant the proper seeds, continue cultivating the good deeds and then we surely will harvest with joy. Somebody said, “Yesterday has become history, tomorrow is a mystery, but present is a present to keep.” This is said in English, from that you will find the characters and pronunciations for now and gift are the same (present). When you say “present (now)”, it sounds like saying “present (gift)”. So I wish all of you here will cherish this on-hand “present” and hold it tidily.

◎To be continued