

The Key to the Door of Liberation – Are You Ready?



解脫之門的鑰匙 ——您準備好了嗎？

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首先給大家說聲對不起，因為並沒有好好準備，白白浪費了大家給我這個積福累德的機會。在我的理解中，讓居士講法是很好的機會，來跟大家結法緣，也是一個很好的機會來積福累德。可是當我有這樣的機會時，卻因為自己的準備不足而浪費了這個寶貴的機緣。

這樣的經歷讓我想起一個聽來的故事。在北京的某高層公寓裏，住著兩兄弟。有一天這兩兄弟看電影回來，發現電梯出故障。他們等了一會兒，不知道會等到什麼時候，就商量著「還是爬吧。」揹著一個背包，年輕的兄弟倆朝80樓高層爬去。不一會兒就到了20樓，覺得還蠻容易，就決定繼續往上爬。這樣又到了40層樓，兄弟倆已感到了累，開始抱怨，但看著電梯還沒有好，就放下背包（寄放在朋友家）無可奈何往上爬。到了60層樓，兩兄弟已累得說不出話來，只得互相攙扶著繼續爬著。終於，到了80層樓，在他們的家門口，這時才發現需要開門的鑰匙，放在被他們扔在40層樓的背包裏！

大家可能會覺得他們不太幸運；其實我們的人生也是如此。二十歲時，憑著年輕力盛，覺得一切都會在自己的掌控之下，埋頭往前衝。四十歲時，看什麼都不太順眼，相互埋怨。六十歲時，該

First, I'd like to apologize to all of you, because I came unprepared, wasting the chance that was given by all of you, for me to accumulate my blessings and virtue. From my understanding, to speak and share the Dharma is a good opportunity for a layperson to accumulate blessings and virtue. However, now that I have this opportunity, I ended up wasting this precious occasion by not preparing.

With such an experience, I am reminded of a story that I heard before. In Beijing, there were two brothers living in a high rise apartment. One day, after coming back from a movie, the two brothers found that the elevator in their building was broken. They waited a while, but did not know how long they had to wait. So they decided to take the stairs. Carrying a knapsack, the two young brothers started climbing their way up to 80th floor. It didn't take them long to reach the 20th floor. It wasn't too bad, they thought; so they continued. When they reached 40th floor, the brothers started to feel tired. They began complaining, but the elevator was still not working. So they decided to leave their bag (at a friend's place), and continued climbing. By the time they reached the 60th floor, they were too tired to speak. They could only help each other to move forward. Finally, they reached the 80th floor! However, when they got to their apartment door, they realized that the key to their apartment was in the knapsack which they had left on the 40th floor!

Everyone probably thinks that they're quite unfortunate. In fact, our lives are also like that. When we are 20, being young and full of energy, we feel that everything is under our control; so we immerse ourselves in what we are doing and move forward. When we reach 40, we can't stand everything we see and complain a lot. When we reach 60, we have experienced what we needed to experience; and we don't have any energy left to complain. By the time we reach 80, which is the time to face death, we realize that throughout our whole lives, we somehow forgot to prepare the key to open the door of liberation.

Everyone probably has had the following experience. In the summer, when you turn on your lamp, you notice that there are lots of moths that

經歷的都經歷了，已經沒有埋怨的力氣了。到了八十歲，這時面臨了死亡，才發現這一生，竟忘記準備那把打開解脫之門的鑰匙。

大家可能有這樣一個經歷，夏天時，當你打開燈會發現很多飛蛾撲向燈光；飛蛾撲火的結果通常是死亡。其實這並不是飛蛾願意自殺，而是有原因的。近的原因是飛蛾身上有著對光的敏感物質。遠的原因是飛蛾的上一世對色及色蘊的貪心。

同樣的，作為凡夫的我們，死了以後一定要投生；非投生不可，就如飛蛾撲火一樣。而且，作為凡夫，我們也選擇不了我們的投生地——一定要做人，一定要做天人等等。為什麼我們一定要反反覆覆，不由自主地投生呢？這肯定不是我們的本願。如果出於願的話，那絕對沒有一個眾生願意投生為畜牲，更沒有願意投生到餓鬼、地獄道的；但地獄裏面卻充滿了無以計數的眾生。為什麼呢？因為我們對輪迴有貪心，因為這個貪心，迫使我們生生世世一直在輪迴裏流轉。如果我們想真正跳出輪迴這個圈子，必需要走解脫道，放棄對輪迴的貪欲心。這樣我們需要的，就是出離心，也就是「出離輪迴」的心。

當你有了這個出離的心，就像一條街上所有人都在往前走，其中一個人一下子掉頭往回走一樣。在輪迴的道路上，所有的眾生都是往前走，往前走走到哪呢？走到地獄、旁生、餓鬼道等處；但修行人卻往回走了，往回走回到最初的本性中。

現在的我們都有了人身，這是非常不容易的。一定要真正利用這個身體來得到解脫的目的。大家可能會有疑惑，做人不是很容易嗎？這世界好像人滿為患，光中國大陸都有十三億人口。其實能得到人身的機率是非常地小。佛陀曾經告訴阿難尊者：得到善趣的機會就如我手指上的灰塵這麼多，而投生到惡趣的機會卻有三千大千世界的灰塵那麼多。現在「在座的我們」，得到的卻是佛經中所講的「珍寶人身」，即：遇佛出世，佛有講法，佛法也住世，自己有皈依三寶，善知識有攝受……什麼樣的人得到這樣的人身呢？必須具備三個條件，第一，上一世守持戒律；第二，上世有修六度般若蜜多，第三，上世有發願得到珍寶人身。

fly toward the light. When the moths approach a bright lamp, they usually get burned to death upon touching the hot lamp. Is it because the moths are committing suicide? No. There's a reason behind this. A simple reason would be that the moth's body has some sort of sensitive receptors that make it attracted to bright light. However, a deeper reason would be that, in the past life, these moths were greedy for form and the form *skandha*.

Similarly, when we, ordinary beings, leave this world, we will definitely be reborn. Death is an inevitable process or step for us; we are just like moths throwing themselves at the lamp. Furthermore, as ordinary beings, we are unable to choose the place of rebirth – it isn't up to us to decide if we are to be born as humans, heavenly beings, et cetera. Why are we caught in the cycle of rebirth without the freedom to make this decision? This is definitely not our past vows, for no one would vow to become an animal, nor would one want to be born in the realms of the hungry ghosts or be born in the hells. However, the hells are full of uncountable living beings. Why is that so? It is because we are greedy for the thought of the cycle of rebirth. Because of this greed, we are born over and over again in this wheel of transmigration. If we wish to jump out of the wheel of transmigration, we must walk the path of liberation and let go of the greed for rebirth. In order to achieve this, we need the "wish to escape" – the wish to escape the wheel of birth and death.

The moment you have the wish to escape, you will be like a person in a street filled with people walking forward, who decides to turn back and walk the opposite direction. In the path of transmigration, all living beings are walking forward. Where are they heading to? They are walking towards the realms of the hells, animals, hungry ghosts and other beings. However, a cultivator would walk the other way and return to his original inherent nature.

Now, each of us has a human body which is extremely difficult to obtain. Therefore, we must truly use this body to reach the goal of liberation. People may doubt this; isn't it simple to become a human? This world is already overpopulated with humans, it's like a disease. China alone has 1.3 billion people! However, in reality, the probability of attaining a human body is very small. The Buddha once told Venerable Ananda: the chances of being born in the good paths are like the motes of dust on my finger, but the chances of being born in the evil paths are like the number of dust motes in a galaxy of a billion worlds. And right now, what all of us here have obtained is truly what was clearly stated in the sutra: a precious body. In other words, we are born in a time when the Buddha is in the world; that is, the Buddha lectured the Dharma and the Dharma dwells in this world; we have taken the Three Refuges, and we are guided by a good spiritual teacher. What kind of people would receive such a body? They have to have three prerequisites: 1) in their past lives, they observed the precepts, 2) in their past lives, they practiced the Six Paramitas, 3) in their past lives, they vowed to treasure their bodies.

當我們比較一下得「人身」的機會，再比較一下得「珍寶人身」的機會。就會意識到如果浪費了這個「人身」，下一世能真正再次得到這樣的珍寶人身的機會會非常地渺小。要想想怎樣用到這樣的「人身」去過一個真正有意義的「人生」——那就是找到解脫的鑰匙，在死亡來臨之前，為解脫做好足夠的準備。並在此基礎上，盡量生起菩提心，幫助和利益其他的眾生。

可能也是因為福報太小及各種因緣，我人生的大多數時間，都花在為家人及自己的吃穿住行的忙碌中。儘管知道修行的必要性，但卻很難挪出時間去真正的實修。後來，有一位師父告訴我，「你要分清楚生存的方法及生存的目的。」他說，為了吃穿住行而努力，為了這一世的能過的好，求健康財富而修行……這都只是生活，生存的一種方式，並不是你來到這個世間的目的。你生存的意義就是——尋求解脫，並盡力利益眾生。

他給了我一個很好的比喻：一輛汽車的生存意義是不是燃燒燃料呢？當然不是，它生存的意義，就是交通運輸，燃燒燃料只是它的生存條件，因為有了燃料它才有活力，才可以做事情。人也是這樣，衣食住行等等，是生存的方法；除了生活以外，我們還要有一個堅定不移的決心——走解脫道。我想，只要有了從輪迴中解脫的決心，哪怕磕一個頭，念一句咒，就已經開始回頭了。走一步是解脫道，走兩步也是解脫道；走得越多，離解脫越近。

When we compare the chances of obtaining “a human body” with the chances of obtaining a “precious human body”, we should be aware that if we waste this body, the chances of being reborn in this precious body again in our next life will be very small. So we should all think about how we should use this body to live a truly meaningful life--that would be the key to liberation. Before death comes close, we should be fully prepared for liberation. And with this foundation, we should put all our efforts to bring forth our Bodhi heart to help others and benefit all living beings.

It could be because I have few blessings as well as other conditions, that I spent most of my life providing food, clothing, shelter and transport for my family and myself. Even though I know the importance of cultivation, it was hard for me to take the time to truly cultivate. Finally, a Master told me: “You should clearly know the difference between the way to survive and the objective of survival.” He said, if you spend all your energy working for food, clothing, shelter and transport, so that you can live comfortably in this life, and cultivate for the purpose of good health and wealth, then these are all just about living and the way to survive, but it is not your objective to come to this world. The true meaning of survival is to seek liberation and try your best to benefit living beings.

He gave me a very good example: Does a car exist just to burn up gasoline? Of course not. The car exists to transport; burning up gasoline is just the condition for it to work. In order for it to operate, it needs gasoline. Likewise with human beings, food, clothing, shelter, transport, etc. are only the means for survival. Beyond surviving, we should also have steadfast determination to walk the path of liberation. I think as long as we are determined to be liberated from the path of transmigration, whether it is just one prostration or reciting a mantra once, we have already started to go back to the right path. Whether it is one step or two steps, we are on the path of liberation. The more steps we take, the closer we are to liberation.