

RECEIVING AN HONORED GUEST VENERABLE AJAHN SUMEDHO (CONTINUED) 貴客遠迎—蘇美度長老來訪 (續)

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(Continued from the front inner cover)

Ajahn Sumedho has had a long history with DRBA beginning with his meeting with the Venerable Master in the 1980s. Master Hua said that they were fellow cultivators in past lives and that together they could help bring the Northern and Southern Schools of Buddhism back together again (i.e. the Mahayana which is generally located in the Northern Asia while Theravada is located in Southeast Asia.)

While introducing Ajahn Sumedho at the start of the lecture, Rev. Heng Sure shared how the Venerable Master told him to take Ajahn Sumedho as a role model for being a Western Bhikshu, someone who had truly made the resolve to end the cycle of rebirth.

DM Heng Lyu, the Abbot of CTTB, paid his respects to Ajahn Sumedho who was his preceptor in 1991 when he became a monk. The Venerable Master asked Ajahn Sumedho to serve as the preceptor during that ordination platform. The Dharma friendships between the two Sangha communities are quite deep.

Ajahn Sumedho commented on how he felt the same aura around Master Hua as his own teacher, Ajahn Chah. He said it was rather unexpected because he did not think he would meet two people like that in the world.

In the Buddha Hall, Ajahn Sumedho gave an hour Dharma Talk sharing his own personal journey practicing the Dharma. He spoke about how he started as a young American living the free and hedonistic life in the 1960s but not finding any true happiness. After finishing his graduate studies at UC Berkeley, he went to Asia to pursue his interest in Eastern thought.

He wanted to go deeply into the Buddha's teachings and put it into practice, so he went to Thailand and became a novice monk. He lived a simple life meditating in a hut where the only book he kept was on the Four Noble Truths. At that time, there were very few people in Thailand who spoke

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蘇美度長老與法界佛教總會的甚深淵源，始自1980年代，長老與宣公上人相遇。上人當時說，他們兩人過去世是老同參，今世他們可協助將佛教南北傳再度團結在一起。（北傳大乘佛教通常流傳於亞洲北部，南傳小乘佛教則流傳於亞洲南部。）

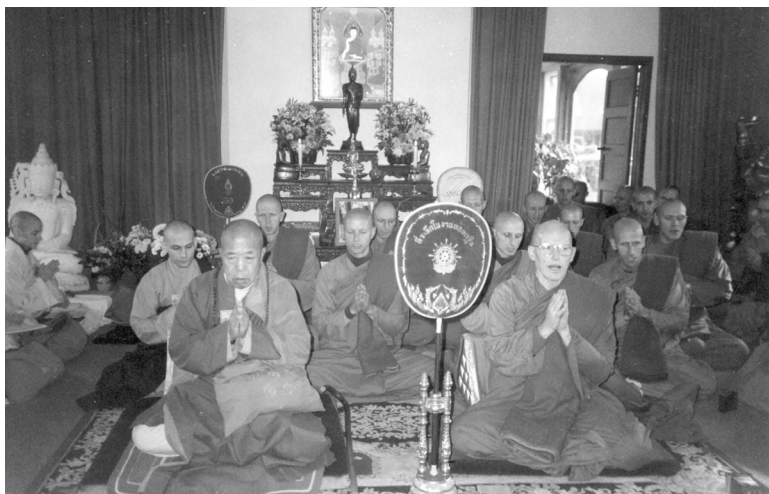
負責開場介紹蘇美度長老的恒實法師，跟大眾分享上人當年對他的教誨：以蘇美度長老為西方比丘的榜樣，因為蘇美度長老是真正發心要了生脫死。

蘇美度長老是萬佛聖城方丈恒律法師1991年出家受戒的戒師，該年宣公上人邀請蘇美度長老登壇傳戒，法總與查長老上座部僧團之間的法緣十分深刻，恒律法師特別向蘇美度長老表達敬意。

蘇美度長老則說，他覺得宣公上人與長老自己的師父查長老周圍，都有相同的光環。他表示以前從不認為在世上能遇到兩個同樣具備這種特質的人，因此令他深感意外。

蘇美度長老在佛殿說法一小時，與大眾分享他自己修行的心路歷程。1960年代，他是年輕的美國人，過著自由享樂的日子，但找不到真正的快樂。從柏克萊加大畢業後，前往亞洲追尋他對東方思想的興趣。

他當時想深入佛陀教誨，並身體力行；因此前往泰國出家為僧，過著簡單的生活，



宣公上人與蘇美度長老合照，1990年10月7日攝於英國阿瑪若瓦提寺。
Photo of Venerable Master Hua and Ajahn Sumedo, taken at Amaravati Monastery, England on October 7th, 1990.

English, so he was not able to converse with others much. However, the Thai were kind and supported him as a Dharma practitioner.

Later he met Ajahn Chah and received training within the monastic form. Over the years, his emphasis has been on abiding in the awareness of the mind rather than the discriminating, thinking process and observing the world through the Four Noble Truths. He had to let go of the American tendency to “idealize” things and wanting things to be “perfect.” Dharma was about the “way things are,” not how they “ought to be,” which leads to dissatisfaction and delusion. We think, “There’s always a better monastery somewhere else.”

Ajahn Sumedho emphasized that the Dharma was about reality and not a naive idealism. Reality is not perfect, but instead, characterized by suffering and impermanence. They are not to be grasped and held onto.

Ajahn Sumedho concluded his talk by saying that his respect for the Dharma over the years has increased to 100% and that he has applied the Four Noble Truths to his life in all situations. Everything is impermanent. He exhorted everyone to not believe in what their minds tell them, but rather trust in the awareness of the mind and see that the nature of all phenomena is change.

The talk was webcast live and is available for viewing at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7yIIgC9_Npk.

After the talk, Rev. Heng Sure and DM Heng Lyu expressed their gratitude on behalf of everyone for Ajahn Sumedho’s visit. DM Lyu wished Ajahn Sumedho could live to be as old as Venerable Master Hsu Yun, 120 years old. Rev. Heng Sure quoted the Venerable Master by saying that to establish the Dharma in the West, we should “Tell the South not to run farther to the south, and tell the North to turn around from their direction north, and we will all meet in the middle.” This visit was truly a rare and historic moment. ❀

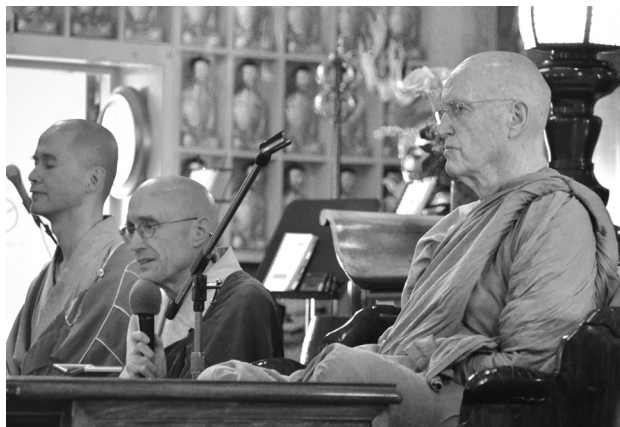
住茅篷打坐，身邊唯一的書籍是探討四聖諦的書。當時泰國很少人會說英語，因此他無法經常與人聊天。所幸承當地泰人慈悲，支持他修行。

其後他遇到查長老，接受僧團教育。這些年來，他強調心的覺照而非分辨思考的過程，他也透過四聖諦觀察世間諸相。因之他必須放下美國人凡事理想化、力求完美的傾向。佛法的重點在於「諸法實相」（事物的本質），而非「諸法該如何如何」；因後者導向虛妄與永不滿足，我們會認為「在別處總有一座更好的道場」。

蘇美度長老強調佛法關乎事實真相，而非無知的理想主義。事實的真相絕非完美，反而充斥著痛苦與無常，不是要讓人抓住不放的。

蘇美度長老最後總結說，這些年來，他對佛法的尊敬與日俱增，已達百分之百。他也將四聖諦運用到生命中的各種情境。諸法無常，長老勸大眾：「慎勿信汝意。」該信的是自心的覺照，以及所有現象的本質都是遷流不停。

蘇美度長老的開示不僅安排現場網路直播，事後並可上網觀看：https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7yIIgC9_Npk.



開示後，實法師與律法師代表大眾感謝蘇美度長老來訪。律法師祝福長老如同虛老般高壽，活到一百二十歲。實法師則引上人所說，在西方建立法幢，應該南傳不要儘往南走，北傳也不要儘往北走，兩邊要合於中道。蘇美度長老的來訪不僅難得，也是歷史性時刻。 ❀

- Shurangama Mantra Session 11/29~12/5
- Meditation Session 12/10~12/16
- Amitabha Buddha Recitation Session 12/21~12/27

- 楞嚴咒法會 11/29~12/5
- 禪七 12/10~12/16
- 佛七 12/21~12/27

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