

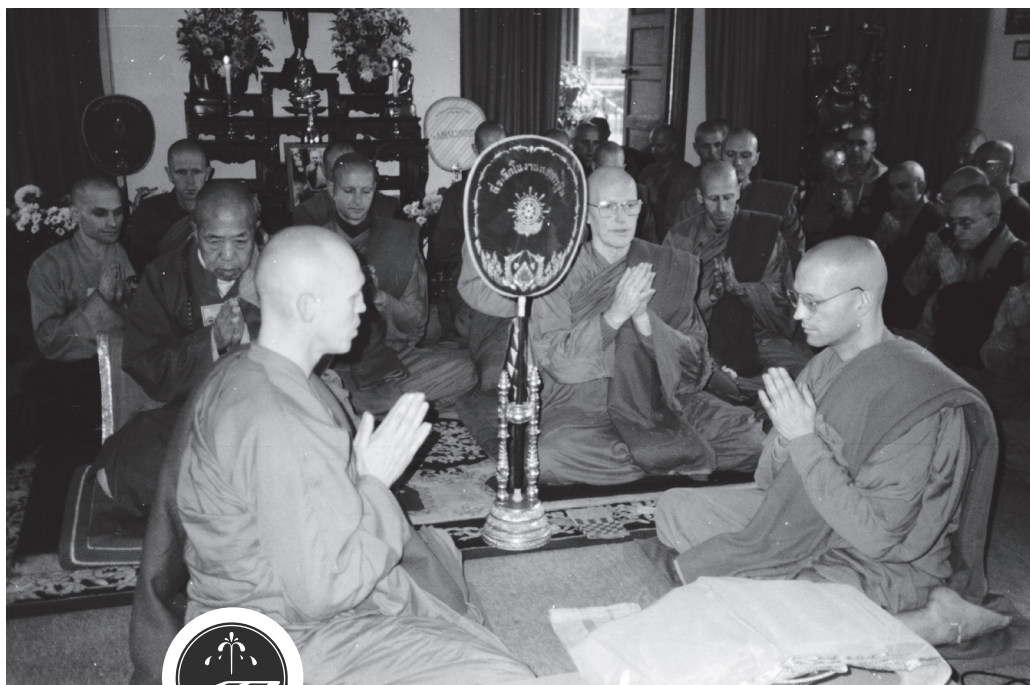
Awareness in the Present: in the Here and Now

活在當下

Spoken by Ajahn Sumedho
at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas
on July 13, 2014

蘇美度長老2014年7月13日
開示於萬佛聖城

照片選自1990年宣公上人訪歐期間。
Photos taken during Venerable Master Hua's
visit to Europe at 1990.



BODHI FIELD | 菩提田

Dharma Master Sure:

Venerable Master, Venerable Ajahn Sumedho, venerable members of the Sangha, Dharma Friends, Amitufo! My name is Heng Sure, and I get the opportunity to do a very short introduction here. Many of us have histories and cherished memories with Luang Por Sumedho, with our venerable Dharma friend, Dharma brother, and good advisor, but I'm going to give a short personal reflection, and the details of his life I think are well known on the programs and advertisements that have been going around, but I just wanted to say something about how deep the affinities with the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas and with Master Hsuan Hua are with our Dharma friend, our guest, our family member..

In 1980, I had returned from a pilgrimage. It took two and a half years to get here, and when I arrived, I was bowing. It was time for CTTB's winter chan retreat, our annual meditation retreat that we do in silence for three weeks. At

恆實法師：

師父上人、蘇美度法師、各位同參道友，大家阿彌陀佛！我簡短地介紹一下蘇美度法師，蘇美度法師可以說是我們的佛友、師兄弟和善知識，這裡許多人對他都有很珍貴的回憶。關於他詳細的生平，想必各位已經在演講的文宣中讀到，因此我主要來談一談長老與萬佛聖城以及宣公上人的淵源。

1980年，當我完成兩年半的三步一拜，回到萬佛聖城之後，那時正值一年一度的三週冬季禪七。有一天，我們的方丈、開山祖師宣公上人對我說：「來，我

one point, in the winter chan retreat, Master Hsuan Hua, our founder and our Venerable Abbot, said, “Come over here,” to me, “I want you to meet someone.” I walked over, and there was this very tall, and I have to say, rather stern looking American monk. He looked no nonsense and like someone, in the language we would use, like someone who had actually resolved his mind on cultivation of the way, someone for whom Bodhicitta was a reality. Master Hua said, “This is Ajahn Sumedho. He has been through a famine in India and survived. He has walked all over Thailand. He is an American who has resolved to leave home, and cultivate, long before you even heard of the Dharma,” he said. (He was speaking of me, personally.) The Master said, “You should bow to him, and take him as your role model in cultivation.” How important was that image of the American monastic Sangha, already taking roots in Western soil. That was my first introduction to Ajahn Sumedho.

Another image that I wanted to share with everyone was when our teacher, Venerable Master Hsuan Hua, was in the last days in this body. He was not long on his way to entering Nirvana. I got the message that I should find out if Ajahn Sumedho was in the country. So I made a few phone calls. I think I called Ajahn Amaro who was in San Francisco at the time. Abhayagiri Buddhist Monastery didn't exist at that point. So I called and they said, “Yes, in fact, Ajahn Sumedho is here visiting.” So, I said, “Would it be possible for him to come with me, down to Los Angeles and pay a visit on Master Hua?” Ajahn Sumedho said, “Yes, I would. I would like to go.” So we went down on Southwest Airlines, myself and Ajahn Sumedho, down to West Covina, when Master Hsuan Hua was there.

They exchanged some pleasantries and affirmed that in past lives, they had been fellow cultivators on the path and that is how they knew each other. Master Hua said, “I understand that Master Ajahn Amaro and you have been looking for a suitable home for the Thai Forest Sangha in America.” Ajahn Sumedho said, “Yes.” Master Hua said, “Well, we have a piece of land on the mountainside. It's pretty rugged. It's suitable only for monks and I wonder whether you would accept that as your new home. Ajahn Sumedho said, “Why yes, we would.” That was the official beginning of what is now Abhayagiri. So, those are some very deep and personal memories that I have regarding our Venerable Father Luang Por Sumedho, and I would like him now to share his Dharma Wisdom with us, please.

Ajahn Sumedho began with a prayer:

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma Sambuddhasa (3x)

(Homage to the Blessed, Holy, Perfectly Enlightened One.)

Buddham saranam gacchami (I go to the Buddha for refuge.)

Dhammam saranam gacchami (I go to the Dharma for refuge.)

Sangham saranam gacchami (I go to the Sangha for refuge.)

With respect to Venerable Heng Sure, Heng Lyu, the Sangha present, and lay people, it is a real pleasure to re-visit the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. I've been retired, if monks can retire, and I live in Thailand. I have been in Thailand for the past four years. I live quite a reclusive life in a forest

要你見一個人。」我走過去，看到一位非常高大、很嚴肅的美國僧人。他看起來，用我們的話說，就像是一個真正發心的修行人。上人說：「這位是阿姜蘇美度，他行腳周遍泰國，並且在印度經歷了一場饑荒活下來。他是一個美國人，在你還沒聽到佛法之前，他就已經發心出家修行了，」上人親口對我說：「你應該頂禮他，以他做為修行的榜樣。」他代表的是一個美國的僧相，佛教終於在西方的土地扎根，這是多麼重要的意義！那是我第一次見到阿姜蘇美度。

另一個故事是，當我們的師父——宣公上人快要入涅槃的前幾天，我收到一個通知，要我去問問看蘇美度長老是否在美國。我打了幾個電話，問到當時在舊金山的阿姜阿莫若，那時還沒有無畏寺。他告訴我，阿姜蘇美度現在正在美國。於是我問他，有沒有可能請蘇美度長老跟我去洛杉磯看上人？蘇美度長老表示他很願意。因此，我們搭乘西南航空的飛機前往洛杉磯西柯汶納市，上人當時住的地方。

見了面，上人和長老互道寒暄，而且肯定過去生中就是同參道友，所以能夠彼此認識。上人問：「我知道你跟阿姜阿莫諾正在找地方，希望在美國有一處適合泰國森林出家人修行的叢林。」蘇美度長老回答：「正是。」上人繼續說：「我們在山上一塊地，地勢相當崎嶇，只適合出家人住。不知道你願不願意把它當成你們的新家？」長老回答：「當然願意！」那就是現在無畏寺的肇始。這些是深植在我個人記憶中，有關宣公上人和蘇美度長老的一些事情。現在就請蘇美度長老跟我們分享他的佛法智慧。

蘇美度法師：

南無無上正等正覺世尊（三稱）。

自皈依佛，自皈依法，自皈依僧。

尊敬的恒實法師、恒律法師，以及各位僧眾及居士們，今天很高興再次來到萬佛聖城。其實我已經退休了（假如出家人可以退休的話），住在泰國的一個森林寺院

monastery. I promised Ajahn Amaro on my eightieth birthday I would go to Amarāvati (Buddhist Monastery in England) for the celebration of that event which will be on the 27th of July. So I'll be eighty years old complete by that time. My sister is 82 years old, and I wanted to see her and she lives in Vancouver, Washington. I went to visit my sister and went to many other places. I've been on the road now for over a month, travelling from one place to another. Then coming to Abhayagiri, I particularly wanted to visit Ajahn Pasanno and the monks, his disciples at Abhayagiri. I also particularly wanted to visit City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, because it is due to the great generosity of the Great Master Hsuan Hua that Abhayagiri has been established. Without that, it wouldn't be here. I always felt this strong connection between the different traditions from the Thai forest tradition and the Chinese Mahayana tradition.

In the world now, as in England, for example, where I lived for many years, there's every representative of every Buddhist tradition that you can possibly conceive of, as well as modern interpretations - Buddhist psychotherapy and new age adaptations to Buddhist teachings. It's a very impressive time to see the interest in this very ancient teaching. People often wonder, what does an ancient religion have to offer a modern, industrial, technological, and affluent society? Why suddenly this interest in countries like the United States? Why is there suddenly this great interest in Buddhism? I've been very much a part of that, since 1955 when I became interested in Zen Buddhism.

I was in the U.S. Navy at the time and I was on a ship that would sail between San Francisco and Japan. I was at the beginning stage; what was available in the English language about Zen Buddhism was limited. Of course, it did offer a challenge to the mind, because, speaking for myself, I had been brought up in a very ordinary, middle-class Christian family in the United States, with a mindset of conditioned thoughts arranged in a certain way, in that particular cultural conditioning in that environment. Somehow one felt this sense that there had to be something more than just this rigidity of just black and white, heaven and hell, good and bad, and in such absolute terminologies. You could sense there had to be more to life than just this dualistic rigidity.

It was very much my straitjacket: my mental, intellectual straitjacket at the time. There was an intuitive feeling that there was more to life than just identifying everything in terms of good and bad, right and wrong. Of course the initial interests of Zen Buddhism started with it being kind of fashionable and slightly superficial, but it was interesting. There was the Beatnik interest, the Beats' Zen and so forth. It all contributed in many ways towards an awakening for many of us. So even though we can criticize the early stages, I've always been incredibly grateful to that beginning, because it was a transformation, a change in my own life. There was a hope and an interest generated from that first meeting with Zen Buddhism.

Altogether 49 years - most of my life has been within the robe and of course, it's been truly a wonderful lifetime looking back, because of having such an opportunity to live my life in such a good way. I never really expected it, even



有四年了，過著深居簡出的生活。我答應阿姜阿莫若會在英國的阿瑪若瓦提寺慶祝我八十歲生日，也就是今年的7月27日。在那之前，我也想去探望我的姊姊，她今年八十二歲，住在華盛頓州的溫哥華。出來參訪一個多月了，去了很多地方，我特別想來看看阿姜帕沙諾，以及無畏寺裡的比丘們。當然也很想到萬佛城來看看，因為有上人慷慨的資助才有今日的無畏寺。我深深地感覺，南傳的泰國森林僧侶傳統和中國的大乘佛法傳承，有著不可分割的關係。

現在的世界，譬如英國——我在那兒住了很多年。在那裏，任何你想得到的佛教傳承都有道場，不但如此，還有一些趕潮流的新行業和新名詞，像是「佛教心理治療」、「佛教的新世紀適應」等等。看到現代人對這個古老宗教有興趣，是很令人振奮的。一般人很難理解，一個古老的宗教能給這個現代化、工業化、科技化的富裕社會帶來什麼？為甚麼，像在美國，突然之間大家對佛教產生興趣？我就是其中的一份子。

我開始對佛教禪宗有興趣，是在1955年，那時我在美國海軍服役，軍艦經常航行於舊金山和日本之間。初學佛的時候，很難找到有關禪宗的英文書；而且不可否認的，在我內心是一種挑戰，因為我是生長在一個美國中產階級的基督教家庭，在那種文化和環境的薰陶下，



in my wildest fantasies that such doors would open for me, opportunities to understand and to practice the Buddhist teaching. So looking back over these years, at eighty, you know, you're definitely an old man and you have a lot of memories from your past. These memories now generate into a sense of incredible gratitude and joy at the opportunity that I've had to live this life in this very fine way, this interesting way!

There was this intuitive sense, something in me. I remember when I first came across Zen Buddhism, reading a few pages of a D.T. Suzuki book, my interest, my faith in Buddhism, responded immediately. It was spontaneous. I didn't know why at the time, because if you had asked me to explain what it was, I wouldn't be able to tell you anything. There was just a feeling, or something or other, because we didn't have any words or understanding of it on an intellectual level, but it was a strong intuitive breakthrough. At least I found something that was some kind of conventional form that could explain or lead me toward a way of life that I could respect and that I could actually practice.

At first I thought of Buddhism was another kind of interesting religion. Being brought up as a Christian, your attitude toward other religions is dismissal. You dismiss all the other religions and believe what the priest says or what your parents think. That was very much the attitude that my social background provided me with but I also recognized that people didn't know anything about Buddhism. Western people. You know, it was easy to dismiss because you didn't know what it was about. It was just some strange religion in China that you could easily say, "It may be good for them, but what has it got to do with my life?" The thing is, the Buddhist teaching is a universal truth. It's not based on cultural conditions. That's why it resonates at a time like this, in a country like the United States. We've developed highly advanced technology and science, and we have democratic institutions and all these worldly conditions, based on high-minded thinking ideals and so forth, with clever intellectual exercises and abilities

我們的思想循照著一種特定的模式。但是我總覺得，在這毫無彈性的黑與白、天堂和地獄、好與壞的名相之外，應該還有一些別的東西。生命應該不是只有這麼相對的兩個極端。

我的直覺是，人生應該還有更多的內涵——除了分辨每一件事情的好與壞、對與錯——這是我當時心智上最大的束縛。開始對禪宗有興趣，多少是因為那個時候學禪是一種時尚，當時有「披頭族的興趣」、「披頭族的禪」之類的名稱。雖然只是表面而已，可是卻很有意思，我對它有一種希望和興趣；從不同的層面來看，「披頭族的禪」也讓許多人覺醒。因此，早期披頭族的年代固然可議，但我始終對於這樣的啟蒙存著無比的感激，因為它令我轉變，改變了我的一生。

迄今49年，生命中絕大部分的歲月都是披著僧袍，做一名出家人；回顧以往，那真是一段奇妙而美好的日子。因為這個際遇，讓我的生命過得很有意義。我從來沒想到，即使最瘋狂的幻想，也想不到會有這麼一扇門為我開啟，有這樣子的因緣來認識佛法和實踐佛陀的教導。我，一個八十歲的老人，回首過去的歲月和種種的回憶，激起的是無限的感激與喜悅；如此的機遇，讓我的人生得以如此有意義、有樂趣。

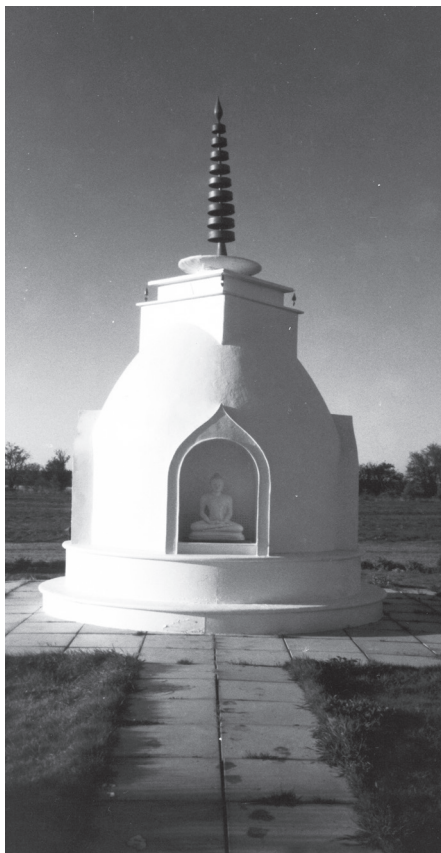
我有一種與生俱來的直覺。記得第一次讀鈴木大拙的書，看了幾頁之後，很自然地，立刻對佛教產生興趣和信心。假如你



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to manipulate phenomena in ways that we can bend it to our will and make it do what we want. But, we have not developed wisdom. In the Buddhist teaching, wisdom is not an intellectual exercise that you just learn wise sayings of the Buddha from scripture. You actually emphasize the practice: putting it, making it work, making it real for you. This is what I found so skillfully done in Thailand with Ajahn Chah.

This was in 1967 when I met him. I was already ordained as a *sāmaṇera* (novice monk) from another place in Thailand and had been practicing meditation in a kind of isolated environment, just by myself in a little hut, and I had a very good experience with that. I realized I needed to take the *Bhikkhu* ordination, the training to be under



an authority, to not just live my life isolated from everyone else but I had to learn how to integrate this practice into life within a group: the *Sangha*. Then I met a disciple of Ajahn Chah and when I became a fully ordained monk, they took me to meet Luang Por Chah. During that year as a *sāmaṇera*, I had developed a lot insight, just reflecting on the initial sermon of the Buddha, *the Four Noble Truths (Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta)*. During that year, I just had this one little book, a little pamphlet from the Kandy, Sri Lanka by

the Buddhist Publication Society, called *Word of the Buddha*. It was a German *Bhikkhu* (Nyanatiloka Mahathera) who had published it and had taken the important teachings from the *Tripitaka* and put them in this manageable book that had everything that you needed to know in order to put it into practice. I had that with me. I didn't take any other books because I didn't want to distract myself. If I was going to read, it would be about the Four Noble Truths.

The First Noble Truth is about *dukkha* or suffering. After the initial high of being alone and away from all worldly pressures - that lasted for about two or three days - then I was stuck with myself for 24 hours a day for almost a year. You know they'd bring me the food - one meal

問我為什麼，我也不知道，說不上來，就是一種直覺，沒有文字可以表達，無法用智力去理解，然而那是一股強有力的突破。最起碼，我找到了一種傳統的方法，可以解釋我的疑問，並引導我投入一種值得尊崇和實踐的生活方式。

剛開始，我覺得佛教只是另一個有趣的宗教。在基督教的環境裏長大的人，對其他宗教的態度就是「不接受」，完全擯除，只相信牧師所說的和父母親所想，這就是我的成長環境所造就的態度；然而，我也知道大部份的人對佛教一無所知。你知道，西方人對他們不瞭解的事，最直捷的方法就是擯斥它。佛教，是個來自中國的陌生宗教，因此你可以很輕易地說：「這可能對他們很好，但是它跟我有什麼關係呢？」其實，佛陀的教導不是根據特定的文化，它是宇宙的真理，這也就是為甚麼現在佛教會在美國引起共鳴的原因。由於世界的環境與趨勢，加上超脫的理念與想法，我們發展出高度先進的科技。科技的發達，使我們有能力操縱各種現象來滿足要求，達到我們的目的。但是，這些都不能增長我們的智慧。在佛教裏，智慧並不是所謂的「世智聰辯」，或只是學習經典上佛陀智慧的話語；而是著重於實踐：活用它，使它成為我們的一部分。我在泰國跟隨阿姜查時，他就是這樣子做。

遇見阿姜查時是1967年，那時我已經在泰國另一個地方受沙彌戒，一個人住在小茅棚裡學打坐，那是一個很好的經驗。後來我覺得自己應該受比丘戒，接受正規的訓練，而不是離群索居，必須練習把所學的融入僧團的生活。爾後，我遇見阿姜查的弟子，他在我受完具足戒之後，帶我去見查長老。在當沙彌的期間，我已經開始參悟佛陀初轉法輪時所講的四聖諦（即巴利經典《轉法輪經》），因此對佛法有較深入的見解。那時我只有一本小冊子，是斯里蘭卡康提佛教出版協會印行的《佛陀的話》。作者是一位德國籍的比丘 Nyanatiloka Mahathera，他將大藏經裡面佛陀重要的教誨摘錄出來，然後印成一本小冊子，裏面有修行須要知道的一切內容。我沒有帶其它的書，因為不想分心；如果要念的話，我就只念四聖諦。

四聖諦，第一是「苦」聖諦。剛離開世俗繁雜的生活，很興奮地獨居兩三天之後，接下來幾乎一年的時間，一天廿四小時，都是自己一個人獨

a day. I couldn't speak the language, and nobody could speak English, so I was just dependent on practices, what they call Kau Hang, where you enter a little hut, or kuti, and then you're not supposed to go anywhere else. You're supposed to stay there but you can go outside and do walking meditation, but you're not expected to attend meetings or anything else, so there I was, this American sāmāṇera novice, in this little hut, in Northeast Thailand, with this one book. Try to imagine what that would be like. I didn't have anyone to talk to, no telephone, or radio, television, no electricity, nothing, just a basic hut. But using this formula of the Four Noble Truths, this is what I was interested in doing. That is why I put myself in such a situation.

Before, I lived in Bangkok. I was teaching English at a university there and I met all these expatriate Buddhists that were available at the time in Bangkok. They were Americans or British people who were in Thailand and who were interested in Buddhism. So I'd meet with them, we'd have discussions and they all had very strong views about who was the best teacher and who wasn't any good. I became totally confused, living in Bangkok, listening to the views and opinions of expatriates. So I fled Bangkok! I actually ran away and didn't tell anybody where I was going. I ended up in Nong Khai, which is the province that borders on Laos. If you go to Vientiane in Laos, you have to go to Nong Khai so I had to go to Laos in order to renew a visa to re-enter Thailand. Then in Nong Khai I spent the first Pansa (three-month rains retreat for monastics, Pali: Vassa) in 1966 in a forest monastery.

What happens when your life has been one where you have been constantly distracted? You live a life, you read. I was an avid reader of books and there were radios, television, and all the other things - there are endless opportunities for distraction. I'd been in university life. I'd been a student in Berkeley and one had developed up to that time the habit of distracting the mind endlessly through exciting, pleasant and endless opportunities. Then suddenly, you are left alone. No friends. No teacher, even. You've just got the word of the Buddha in this little book. In the monastery, the monks and the nuns were there to support me, but I couldn't talk to



處。每天會有人送一餐飯來，我不會講泰語，他們也沒有人會講英語，所以那個時候就是一個人獨自修行，他們稱之為「閉關」（Kau Hang）。就是住進一個小茅棚之後，不再去其它地方，只可以在茅棚外面經行，不參加任何聚會或做其它的事。你可以想像那種情況，一個美國的沙彌，住在泰國東北部的一個小茅棚，只帶著一本小冊子，沒有任何人可以講話，沒有電話、收音機，沒有電視，也沒有電，什麼都沒有，只有一個簡陋的小茅棚。為什麼要讓自己處在如此的狀況？因為這樣可以了解四聖諦，進而靈活運用，這就是我要做的。

在此之前，我住在曼谷，在大學裡教英文，碰到一些美國人和英國人，他們因為對佛教有興趣而來到泰國。我會跟他們一起聚會，討論佛法，他們對於法師的好壞都有很強烈的意見。住在曼谷，聽這些外國人的批評，讓我很困惑，所以我就逃離曼谷，沒有告訴任何人我的去向。最後我走到寮國邊界附近的廊開省。由於我的泰

them. I couldn't speak their dialect. They spoke a northeast dialect; it wasn't the same dialect of Thai that you hear in Bangkok.

The aim of the Buddha's teaching is to cultivate this mindfulness. Now I hear all over the western world, this emphasis on mindfulness. It is the "in" word, it is the word of the day, the word that everybody is using. They suddenly discover mindfulness as something new, another thing to develop, or get. "Get mindful." It's quite interesting that the time has arrived where suddenly the western world - modern psychology and psychotherapy are into this. In London, the psychotherapists that I know are all talking about mindfulness. Twenty years ago, the psychotherapists never used that word. It wasn't a word that they used to describe anything they did.



This is the point that the Buddha made. We are caught in the realm of continuous changing conditioned phenomena. We have these physical bodies. We have senses. We have eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body. We have a retentive memory. We have to remember all the things that we did in the past. We have the ability to learn about other things, to study, to get university degrees, to learn technology, science, history, and you name it. Everything is available now to acquire knowledge from texts, from outside.

So we've developed that ability to acquire knowledge. That is what our universities and schools are about: acquiring knowledge. We get to know all about phenomena: which is the worst, which is the best, the right and the wrong, the highest and the lowest. Of course, this has made us very much divided in how we see each other. We depend on agreeing on the same views and if we don't agree, then that disagreement creates friction. We have wars, conflicts, and contests endlessly about just what this group believes in and what the other group believes in.

☞ To be continued

國簽證必須延簽，因此得去一趟寮國首都永珍，途中就經過了廊開。1966年，我生平的第一次結夏安居，就是在廊開的一個森林僧院中度過的。

當生活經常處於一種注意力分散的狀態時，那會是怎樣的情形？以前的我喜歡看書，除此之外，還有收音機、電視機，還有很多很多不同的東西，都是無止盡地耗散我的專注力。在柏克萊大學唸書的時候，因為這個習性，加上許多令人興奮刺激、眼花撩亂的事物，我的注意力更加無法集中。此時，突然間進入一個獨處的狀態，沒有朋友，沒有老師，就只有這本佛法的小冊子；雖然寺廟裡有比丘、比丘尼幫助我，但是我無法和他們溝通，因為不會講他們的語言，他們說的是泰國東北部的一種方言，而不是我們在曼谷聽到的那種話。

佛教修行的目標是「制心一處」。現在西方人都都注意到這件事，它變成一個非常流行的用語。他們忽然發現，全心貫注（制心一處）是一個可以開發、可以獲得的境界。「制心一處」這件事，現代西方的心理學家和心理治療師都熱衷於此，這是個很有趣的現象。在倫敦，我所認識的心理治療師都在談這個話題。二十年前，他們沒人會用這種字眼，這壓根不是他們這個行業的用語。



然而，這卻是佛陀教我們的重點。我們都處於外在環境不斷變化的現象之中，由於有色身，有感受，有眼耳鼻舌身，還有記憶；加上我們有學習的能力，到學校讀書，獲得大學文憑，學習技術、科學、歷史等等不同的學問，然後安立名言。一切一切都是幫助讓我們從文字、從外在的事物吸取知識。

因此我們培養了追求學問的能力，而學校的功能也是幫學生累積知識，使我們認識不同的事物：好的、壞的，對的、錯的，優的、劣的。這些當然就會造成人我之間不同的看法。對於看法相同的，我們彼此附和；如果遇到見解不同的，就會產生摩擦。人類的戰爭、衝突、競爭之所以不停地發生，就只是因為彼此的信念、看法不同而已。

☞ 待續