

Awareness in the Present: in the Here and Now (continued)

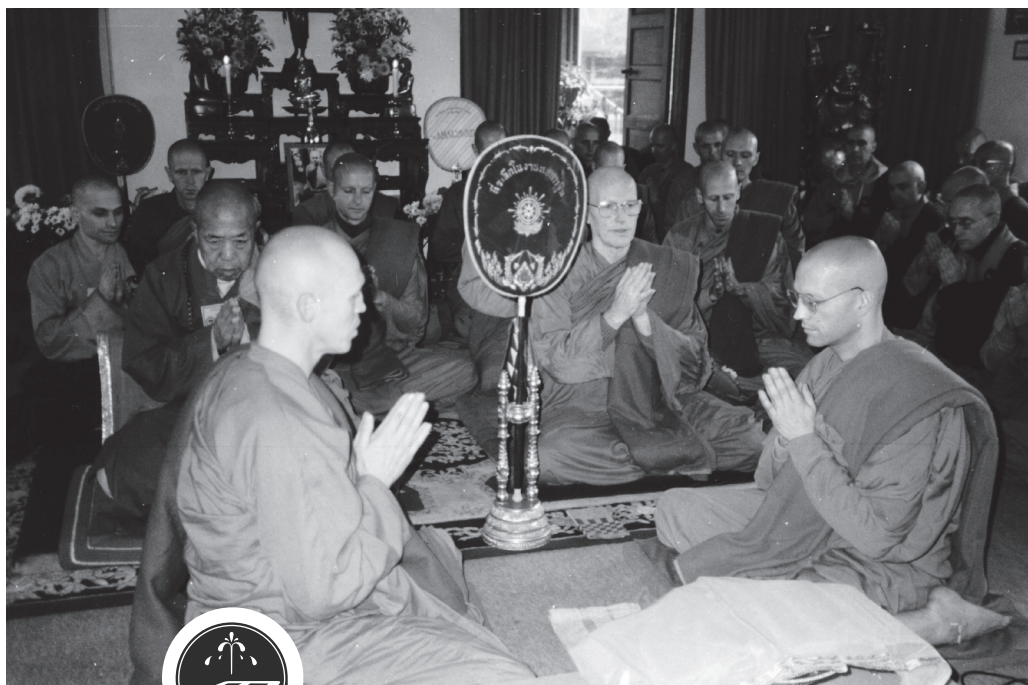
活在當下

(續)

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

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Photos taken during Venerable Master Hua's
visit to Europe at 1990.



The Buddha takes this ordinary experience, a truth that we all can relate to. It's not high; it's not metaphysical or the height of philosophical thinking. It's just the now, ordinary suffering that we experience every day, put it in that category of a Noble Truth. What is noble about suffering, is that we change our attitude towards it—blaming it on others, trying to run away from it (seeking happiness), to looking at it, understanding it. So that's a shift from an unawakened person, who's just seeking for happiness in the world, which most people are doing. Security: They want security. Love: They want to be loved by somebody. So changing from one who is always trying to get rid of it, changing it

佛陀把「苦」列在四聖諦之首，苦為什麼這麼重要？它既不高深，也不抽象，更不是什麼深奧的哲學思想，只是我們每天經歷的一些煩惱，很平常的一種體驗。然而，「苦」之所以稱為「聖諦」，正因為一旦認識了它，我們會改變面對苦的態度，從責怪它、逃避它，到正視它、了解它；讓只懂追求世樂、安全感、被愛感覺的凡夫，遇到困境總想拒絕、逃避、討價還價，轉而能夠理解「苦」的意義，全然接受它。

或者有些人覺得生活太無聊，需要找一點兒刺激。可是，絕大



for the better, ignore it, to one who understands something, you have to accept it for what it is.

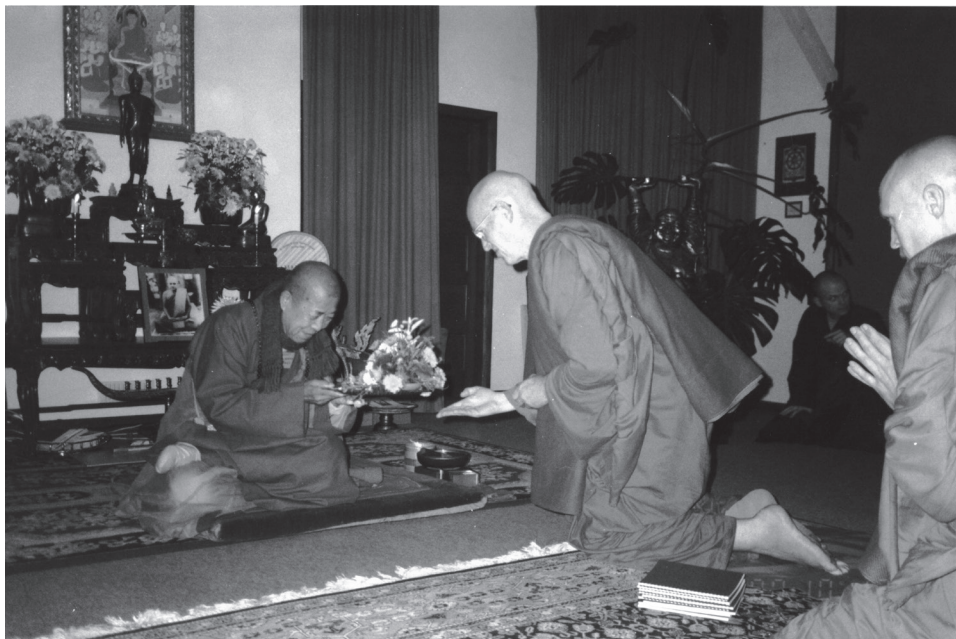
Or they might be seeking an exciting life, because life can be incredibly boring, and so we are seeking for stimulation, for love, for security, for the best, but so much of our life is boring, isn't it? It's routine: getting up, putting on your clothes, washing your face, brushing your teeth, waiting for the bus. I bet much of your life is just waiting for something, and you know, we have traffic jams, and we have to *wait* in traffic jams, and people who complain endlessly. We want to improve the transport system, because we don't like waiting, and we want instant results, and so forth. This is dukkha, this is suffering.

Accepting doesn't mean you're ever going to like Suffering, it's not something you're ever going to like, but it is a Noble Truth that leads you onward to the Reality of Non-Suffering. That's the point of the Noble Truth, because if you follow that teaching. This was the Buddha's first sermon after Enlightenment. It's a perfect teaching, actually, because it takes something quite ordinary, that we can easily see and know in ourselves, and instead of trying to get rid of it, or blame our misery or unhappiness on somebody else, we are understanding. Understanding means to accept it for what it is, rather than seeing it in terms of aversion, and

多數人過的日子不都是些無聊事嗎？每天起床、穿衣、洗臉、刷牙、等巴士。我敢說你們大部份的生命都花在「等待」，遇到塞車的時候，我們得耐心地等，可是偏偏有人就會怨聲隆隆：我們討厭塞車，所以要改善運輸系統，要立即見效，要這樣，要那樣…。這就是苦。

接受，不表示你喜歡；苦是永遠沒有人會喜歡的。但是如果遵循佛陀教導的「苦」聖諦，我們便能到達無苦的境界，而這正是聖諦的重點。四聖諦，是佛陀開悟後最先講的法，它是一個非常圓滿的教導，因為佛陀用很切身平常、我們很容易從自己身上觀察到的道理，去瞭解苦的真諦。瞭解，代表接受事實的真相——「苦就是這樣子」，而不是去逃避或是責怪他人。痛苦並不是只發生在極端的情況，也不是面臨殘酷迫害，例如被釘在十字架上，或是遭人虐待時才有的；苦就是一種不安、不自在的感覺，我們的思想、煩惱、焦慮，以及現代文明衍生的精神官能症，都會讓我們痛苦，這就是苦。一旦明瞭苦的本質，我們對苦的感受就會不一樣。

就像我前面說的：瞭解，表示接受事物的原貌。我們用「它就是這個樣子」來形容，不用描述或是給它下個定義；我們要認識的是那種感覺，那種不安、不自在、煩惱、焦慮的感覺——這就是正念於當下。如果肯忍受、接納這個緣境，你就能觀



blame, you're looking at suffering as like *this*. It's a feeling of disease. It doesn't have to be extreme, and it doesn't have to be some kind of great persecution, like being crucified, or abused by outer forces. It's about thinking, about worrying, about anxiety, and all the neurosis of modern life. They're all about dukkha, suffering. Our relationship to them changes for its understanding.

As I said before, understanding means accepting that *it is like this*. We use this word: "It's like this" because we're not describing it or trying to define it, but we recognize this feeling of disease, or discomfort, or worry, or anxiety, is "like this." That is mindful of a condition that is present. If you are willing to bear with that condition, and allow it to be what it is, you can actually observe its cessation because it *is* impermanent. Worry is impermanent, fear is impermanent, anxiety, anger, hatred, jealousy, you name it. All the emotions, everything, all conditioned phenomena is impermanent. Our relationship then, is toward observing impermanence, rather than trying to hold onto the best, and suppress what we don't like.

This, as I said, is cultivation of wisdom. What do we mean in this Buddhist sense of wisdom? Because sometimes we don't really know what wisdom is. In the Pali language, they use the word *paññā* (Sanskrit: *prajna*), which means "discerning." It's not a critical function, not like your thinking mind, which is about criticizing, isn't it? This is bigger. This is comparing one thing with another. This is bigger than that, this is better, this is worse. Wisdom is not about criticism; it's about discerning. This ability to discern reality from non-reality, discern anger from non-anger, discern anxiety and non-anxiety. That is where wisdom operates. It's mindfulness with sati, with some *patthana* (to establish or set up), and then Wisdom is a universal reality. It is not a cultural thing. It's not dependent on language. It's available to us all the time, no matter if we're educated or not. It's not something we don't have, or we have to get. It's available to us every moment if we recognize it. So in Buddhist meditation there is an emphasis on realizing, recognizing Dhamma, or awaking to reality.

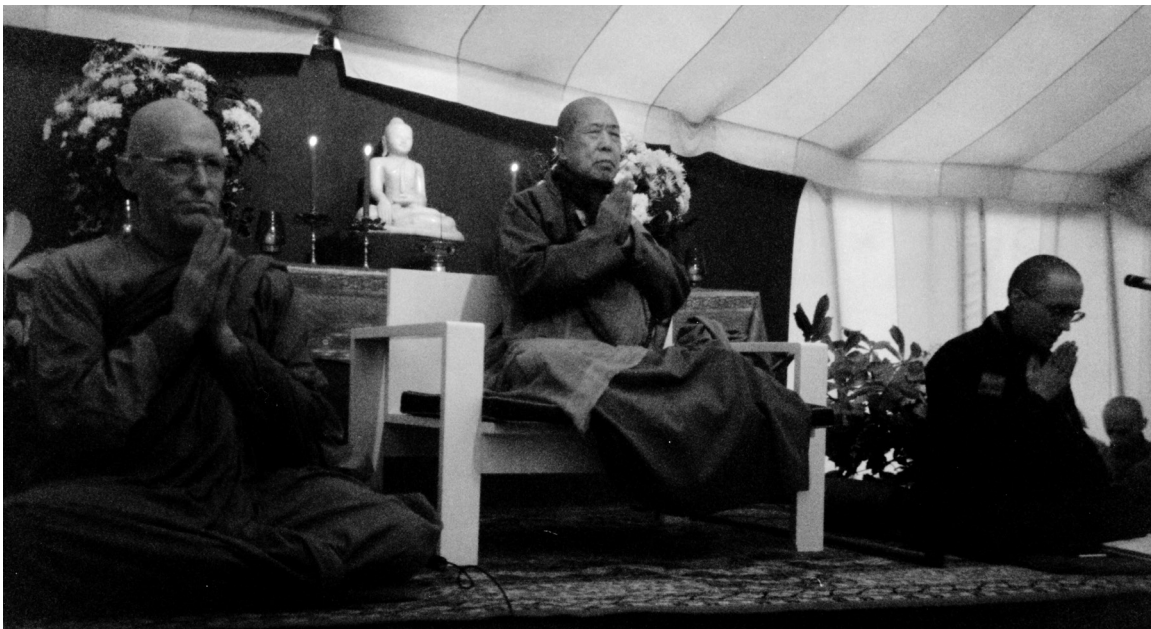
So the Buddho or the Buddha is the awakened consciousness of an individual to Dhamma, reality. In English, I like to use the word "reality," for "dharma." In England, I remember people were blaming us sometimes,

察到它的停息，因為一切都是無常。擔心是無常的，恐懼是無常的，焦慮、忿怒、怨恨、忌妒，這些情緒和一切緣境都是無常的。所以我們和苦的關係，就是去觀察它的無常，而不是一直要抓住最好的、抵制我們討厭的。

這就是我要講的，修習智慧。佛教所說的智慧是什麼？有時我們不是真正明白什麼是智慧。「智慧」的巴利文是 *paññā*（般若），「明瞭」的意思。它不像我們的識心，專門用來分別和比較，譬如這個比那個大，這個比較好、那個比較差等等。智慧無關乎分別，智慧是照見明瞭，明瞭真實和虛妄、瞋恚與無瞋、焦慮與不焦慮。智慧就在這個地方運作，專注於念，或者念處。智慧是人人本具、個個不無，不假外求的；它不是屬於某個文化，或是特定語言，或是有沒有讀書受教育。它就在我們眼前，只要認得，隨時都可以用。所以佛教的禪修是強調對法的瞭解、覺察，或是對實相的覺醒。

佛陀，是一個已經對法覺悟的人。我喜歡用英文字 *reality*（實際狀況）來代替 *dharma*（法）。記得在英國的時候，有些人指責我們：「你們不是活在現實的世界裏。」各位應該知道「逃避現實」的意思吧？可是所謂「現實的世界」，難道他們以為我們住在象牙塔裏嗎？以為我們無時無刻沉醉在夢幻的世界裏享受嗎？我不知道他們怎麼想，不過對很多人來說，「現實的世界」就是付清房貸、買輛新車，或是解決婚姻問題、人際問題、家庭問題、社會問題、政治問題，無窮無盡的問題，對吧？這些不外乎就是角逐權利或是爭第一。人類無法解決這些問題，因為我們總是堅持己見，強迫別人接受我們的想法；如果不隨我們的意，





saying, “You don’t live in the real world.” I suppose you’ve heard this one: “escaping reality.” What do you mean by the “real world,” you know. They think we live in an ivory tower? You know we live in an ivory tower where we are just blissed out on ethereal pleasure every moment of the day? I don’t know what they think, but reality, the “real world” to many people is just, paying off the mortgage and getting a new car, the problems of relationships: marital relationships and personal relationships, family problems, social problems, political problems. Endless, aren’t they? Where do these ever get resolved, really? It’s usually power struggling or dominance of some sort. We manage to force our opinion on somebody else or get our own way or we get frustrated. We take to drink, drugs, or whatever as a way to deal with our dukkha, our suffering that we are experiencing. Or the skillful way, as Buddha recommended, is to understand suffering, to know, to have insight, to let go of the causes of suffering, this ignorance of Dhamma, to let go of just the blind attachments we have to our appearance, to our bodies, to our emotional habits, to our memories, our perceptions. Because these are all very divisive, you know.

We have racial prejudices, religious prejudices, and all kinds of prejudices. Why? Because we are blindly attached to perceptions we’ve acquired. They are not based on wisdom or reality. They are based on ignorance, cultural biases, religious biases and so we get programmed to see things through these distortions. Then we feel anger, hatred, towards those that are not like us, that don’t believe, or have the same belief system that we might have.

When we get into Dhamma, that’s universal, it’s not about culture anymore. It’s not about race, gender, or anything else. It’s

我們就很沮喪，就要藉酒消愁、嗑藥吸毒，或是用種種其他方式來解決痛苦。當然，也有人用佛陀所教導的很善巧的方法，就是去瞭解、去認識痛苦，放下讓我們痛苦的原因——那就是對事理的無知；放下我們對外表、對身體、對情感、對記憶、對觀念等等盲目的執著。因為盲目的執著不但讓

我們痛苦，也很容易造成分裂。

我們有種族歧視、宗教歧視，各種的歧視。為什麼？因為我們盲目地執著於自我的觀念。觀念並不是根據智慧或是事實的真相，它們是建立在無明、文化的差異與宗教偏見之上，我們被養成用這種扭曲的角度來看事情，因此就對與我們不一樣的人、不同信仰的人產生忿怒與仇恨。

然而，佛法是共通的，不是局限於某個特定文化，也無關種族、性別或其他的东西；它無法定義，然而講的卻是實相，是一切眾生都可以證得的。在我們未證得之前，它從未失去過；瞭悟實相之際，也不是向外求得的。佛法就是要我們覺悟這個道理，如此而已。如果你這樣培養智慧，就會開始了解離苦的方法。第四聖諦「道諦」，講的就是對法有正確認識之後，我們才能依法正確地修行；因為一旦我們明白了離苦的途徑，就能在日常生活中修習。出家生活的最大好處之一，就是這種生活形式有助於我們的修行。就拿泰國森林道場嚴持戒律的傳統來說，若從美國自由主義的觀念去看，是有很多可以批評的。然而這些批評都是不必要的，因為在道場裏，一切都是自願；沒人逼你留在那裏，你可以隨時離開。

因此在道場裏，我學會如何放下個人的期望、意見和觀念，生活在一個無法自己控制和操縱的環境中。我覺得這很有幫助，因為佛教不是某人突發異想的新世紀哲學，佛教是一個傳統，而這個傳統已



not defined in any conditioned way. But it is realizable. It is reality. It's not something that you lack or have to get. You awaken to it. *It's just this*. Then if you develop it this way, then you begin to understand the way of non-suffering. That is like the fourth noble truth, based on right understanding of Dhamma. Then our cultivation of Dhamma is accurate, because once we have that insight into the path, into the way of non-suffering, then we cultivate that in our daily life and this is one of the great gifts of Sangha life and monastic life. It's a form, to make it easier for us to cultivate this. You know, it's like the strict Vinaya practices in the Thai forest tradition. One can see as and one can criticize from an American liberal mindset, or rather than just criticize it, you know, it's voluntary. I could have left at any time. Nobody was forcing me to stay there.

It was learning how to give up my own personal agendas, views and opinions, to live within a structure that I couldn't control or manipulate according to my own views and opinions and wishes. That I found very helpful, because it is a tradition. It's not new age philosophy of somebody who just suddenly comes forth and has some new ideas. This form has managed to survive over 2,000 years and still is perfectly pure. It's not been corrupted. I mean it's not been destroyed and that problem, from the time of the Buddha to the present moment. The teaching of Dhamma is pure. It has never been corrupted. Individual monks can be corrupted, but not the Vinaya form.

Before when I went to live in England, for example, I had doubts about how to survive as a Buddhist monk in London. You know there are not many Buddhists, and I'm not even English. I had to live in a huge city, an international city, as a Buddhist monk without money or anything—we couldn't even grow our own potatoes or cabbages. You know we're kind of helpless creatures living in a very sophisticated cosmopolitan city, where I didn't know anyone or any Buddhists there. So I went to Ajahn Chah and I said, "I don't know how I'm going to survive! It's not a Buddhist country,

經延續兩千多年了，依然還是清淨圓滿，沒有衰頹腐敗。從佛陀時代到現在，佛法沒有被摧毀，清淨如故；也許有一些出家人行為敗壞，但是佛陀制定的戒律不會。

例如去英國之前，對於一個出家人要如何在倫敦生活，我的內心有所懷疑。英國沒有多少佛教徒，加上我又不是英國人，一個身無分文、什麼都沒有的出家人，憑什麼在這個國際化的大城市裏生存，我們甚至不能自己種馬鈴薯或青菜之類的。我們就像一群無助的人，住在一個非常複雜的大都會裏，連半個人都不認識，更不用說佛教徒了。於是我跑去問阿姜查：「我不知道我在英國要怎麼生存！一個非佛教的國家，我們又持銀錢戒，不能碰錢，又不能種菜或做其他事，您要我們怎麼過活呢？」

他問我：「英國有好人嗎？」

我回答：「我想應該有。」

他說：「那你就去吧！」

阿姜查的回答，讓我對他有更深的認識。阿姜查認為，人性是慈悲善良的，而我們也希望能成為這樣的人。

受到美國文化的洗禮，我對人性的看法並



不是那樣。基本上美國人是自私的，你必須先顧好你自己，否則沒人會管你的。這就是我當時的想法，很憤世嫉俗，我承認；這也是我學到所謂的「職業倫理」，如果缺少安全的保障，你將成為無家可歸的流浪漢！那是很悲慘的結局，沒有人想要那樣。所以你必须確定銀行有存款，有壽險，有健保，一切一切都要齊全。但是阿姜查只問我：「英國有好人嗎？」我回答：「相信有的。」於是他告訴我：「那就去啊！」這一席話，讓我有

所醒悟、有所改變。現在我學會去認識人性的善良慈悲和寬厚的潛能，這些都是我以前不曾有過的想法。

於是，我到了英國。結果無論在倫敦或是英國，甚至任何其他的地方，我都沒有遇到威脅生存的重大問題；一切生活所須，像食物、僧袍等等都十分得充足。事實上我們有太多的食物，我反而變胖了！英國是世界上第一個工業化的國家，物質條件非常優渥，有太多過剩的東西，因此就算不跟隨社會時髦的潮流，我們出家人也一樣能過活。還有，這個國家對不同宗教的包容度很高，是一個對宗教非常友善的社會。所以在像倫敦這樣的大城市，從來沒有人看輕或歧視我們出家人。政府也很積極想把我們納入他們的體制，他們試圖融合各種不同的

and we can't handle money, we can't garden, or anything. How do you expect me to survive?"

He said, "Are there kind people in England?"

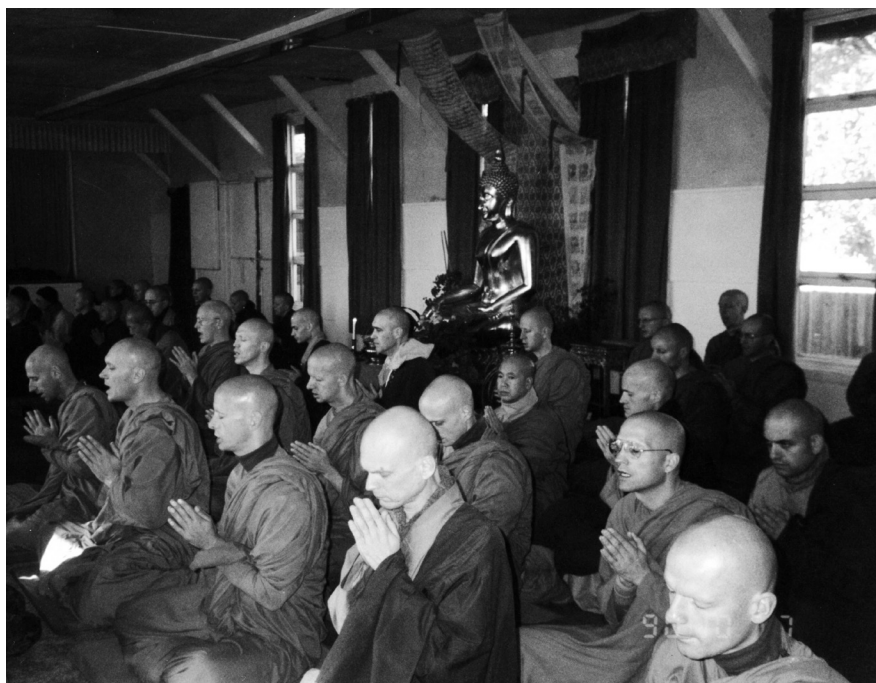
I said, "Well, yes, I'm sure there are."

He said, "Go!"

This was quite an insight for me, because I realized Ajahn Chah's attitude towards humanity was basically we are good and kind. We want to be good and kind.

My view from the American conditioning wasn't like that. It was that we're basically selfish and you have to look out for yourself first, and if you don't, nobody else will care. That was my take: very cynical, I admit. That's the view I had brought up with the work ethic. If you're not out there making sure you're secure, then, you're going to end up as a homeless failure, which nobody wants, you know. It's a dismal prospect, so you've got to make sure you've got money in the bank, life insurance, health insurance, everything provided, and then Luang Por Cha said, "Are there kind people in England?" I said, "I'm sure there are," and he said, "Go!" It really awakened me to a change, seeing humanity as having that potential, a goodness, a kindness, a generosity that before, I wouldn't even have conceived of.

So I did go and I've never had any great problem surviving in London or in England or any other place. You know the requisite for survival: food and robes and so forth, were in abundance. We had too much food! I got overweight there! (Laughs.) England was the first industrialized country in the world. They have a lot of junk there. So you don't even have to have modern fashionable trends there. They have so much extra available stuff around. It's not difficult to survive



and then you are in a society that is incredibly religiously tolerant. Britain is incredibly tolerant toward other religions, so I never felt looked down on, or marginalized as a Buddhist monk, living in even a city like London. The government there was trying to *include* us, in the system. They are trying to include different religions, so I've been invited, about three times, to Buckingham Palace. As a Buddhist monk, you'd never expect to be invited to these kinds of places. The generosity and the tolerance of surviving in Britain—as a Buddhist monk—has never been a problem.

Today in Britain there is a monastery. I've asked Ajahn Amaro to take on the duties of Amaravati. He was at Abhayagiri for years to help establish that place. Now he's taking on this place in England and he's doing very well because it's well-established. There are also many Buddhists now—many Thai, Sri Lankan and other people from Asian countries, as well as Europeans who are interested, especially in meditation.

So my respect for the Dhamma, over the years, has increased to one hundred percent. I feel that I have put into practice, these Four Noble Truths ad infinitum. You know, just pushing them to everything that ever happens to me: success or failure, praise or blame, using every event of my life, every form, you know the tendency, karmic tendency, personal tendency, good or bad, right or wrong - putting it in that context of the Noble Truths. It's like you are from the very refined emotional transitional states to coarse emotions, and whatnot. You're just observing the impermanence of conditioned phenomena. Now it seems so obvious, so true, because it is true, it's reality. There's no real self. All your fears, desires, personal views, they're all conditions changing. You're not anything that you think you are. Don't believe what your mind says; it will lie to you and deceive you endlessly, but trust in the awareness of it. It's not to destroy the mind, but to understand the nature of phenomena in this characteristic of change. So I offer this as a reflection.

Dharma Master Sure's closing:

My direct instructions were to follow my role model in the Sangha. I would like to just share those with everyone. All of us here, in the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, in the Hall of Ten Thousand Buddhas, to be able to hear our elder monastic Sangha member in the West, Venerable Ajahn Sumedho, is a rare and historic moment for all of us. As the Dharma comes West, I think it's really significant to point out how, as our founder said, "Tell the South not to run further south, and tell the North to turn around from their direction north, and we'll all meet in the middle." This is the best sign of the Buddha Dharmas coming to the West and planting down good roots. All of you are part of that, having heard our instructions from our elder monastic Luang Por Ajahn Sumedho, so let me, on behalf of everyone, express gratitude for this opportunity. If you could each put your palms together and make a wish and send it as far as your Mind can reach, with Goodness you'd like to share. ❀

宗教，所以我曾經三次被邀請到白金漢宮；身為一名比丘，我從沒想過會被邀請到那種地方。由於英國政府的大量與包容，佛教僧人在英國的生活一點問題也沒有。

現在我們在英國有一座道場，我請阿姜阿莫諾去當方丈。他曾經在紅木谷的無畏寺住過很多年，幫忙興建這座道場，現在他在英國負責那邊的道場，做得很好，道場也很上軌道。現在那兒有很多佛教徒，分別從泰國、斯里蘭卡以及其他亞洲國家來的，也有從歐洲國家來的，特別是那些對打坐有興趣的人。

因此這些年來，我對佛法的尊崇，可說是到達百分之百。我無時無刻不在修習「四聖諦」，生命中所有的好壞、對錯，都是隨眾生心、循業發現，因此面對成功、失敗、稱讚或是詆譏，我都用「四聖諦」去觀察、認識。前一刻安穩平靜的心情，可能下一秒就雜亂無序，我們靜靜地觀察這些情緒的變化與無常；這種變化密移，這麼地真實、明顯，這就是實相。一切的恐懼擔憂、喜好欲望，乃至觀念想法，一直不斷地變化，根本沒有一個真實的「我」，你也不是你想像中的你。所以不要相信自己的想法，它會騙你，永無止境地蒙蔽你；但是覺知這些念頭的心，我們必須要相信。我們的目的不是摧毀心識，而是去認識一切現象的本質，也就是生滅變化的這個特性。這是我對佛法的省思，謹此供養給各位。

恒實法師結語：

最後要跟大家分享的，就是「以蘇美度長老為榜樣」這句話，這也是當年上人給我的開示。對萬佛聖城萬佛殿裏每一位聽眾而言，今天有機會聽到這位資深西方比丘——阿姜蘇美度長老的開示，是個既難得、又既具歷史性的時刻。佛法傳到西方的時候，宣公上人說過一段很重要的話：「南傳不要儘往南走，北傳也不要儘往北走，兩邊應該要合於中道。」今天這個法會，是佛法西傳並且紮根最好的象徵，我們都是恭逢其盛的一份子，有這個機會聽到蘇美度長老的教導。讓我代表所有人表達心中感謝之意，現在請大家合起掌，用慈悲心許個願，讓這個善念能盡我們心力所極，散播到最遠的地方。 ❀