

四聖諦：煩惱即菩提

The Four Noble Truth: Afflictions are Bodhi



萬佛聖城方丈和尚恒律法師觀音七灑淨開示
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A Talk Given by the Abbot Dharma Master Heng Lyu before the Purifying of the Boundaries for
Guanyin Recitation on March 26, 2016 in the Buddha Hall



BODHI FIELD | 菩提田

師父宣公上人、各位尊敬的法師、各位善知識，阿彌陀佛！這次觀音七，我想到釋迦牟尼佛成道後第一次轉法輪所講的「四聖諦」法。四聖諦，指苦、集、滅、道。最近有人問我：「是不是四聖諦是小乘法，所以在萬佛聖城很少談到？」事實上，「四聖諦」的道理不但通於大小乘，而且還是我們每天都在修習的法門。今天就提一些個人的淺見，供大家參考。

第一聖諦的苦聖諦，什麼是苦

Venerable Master Hua, Honorable Dharma Masters, and all good knowing advisors: Amitabha! Before this Guanyin session, I am reminded of what the Buddha taught first after his great enlightenment - the Four Noble Truths, which are suffering, the origins of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the way to the cessation of suffering. Recently, someone asked me whether we speak so little about the Four Noble Truths at CTTB because it is a Theravada teaching. In fact, the principles of the Four Noble Truths can be applied to both the Mahayana and Theravada teachings. We also practice them in our daily lives. Tonight, I would like to share my humble thoughts on the Four Noble Truths.

The First Noble Truth is suffering. What is suffering?

呢？簡單地說，就是人、事、物不遂你的意，讓你心煩，就是苦；苦就是問題、困難。當然，如果每件事情都稱心如意，那就沒有苦了。但是，這是不可能的，因為世事無常。譬如你想要健康，但偏偏你就是經常生病，住進醫院去了；你想要人際關係很成功，卻偏偏處處討人厭，做人很失敗；你想要青春常駐，偏偏一年比一年的衰老；你想要很有錢，卻偏偏很窮。種種這些，就會讓你覺得很「苦」。

所以，每個人受的苦沒有一定，每個人對苦的感受也是不同，有的是可以忍受的小苦，有的是難以忍受的大苦。因此，苦的大小和理解的程度是非常主觀的。雖然人有性別、年齡、種族、教育、生活背景、經濟狀況等不同，但是苦卻是每個人日常生活中都可以體驗到的。這就是苦聖諦。

既然苦在日常生活當中如此普遍，為什麼佛陀還要講呢？佛陀講苦，就是要我們以開放的心胸來面對苦，勇於面對問題和困難，不要以負面的情緒來排斥苦，要冷靜來面對苦，才能處理問題和困難。若是以生氣、抱怨、詛咒、抑鬱、沮喪、消沉等負面的情緒來排斥或是抗拒苦，那就猶如在傷口上撒鹽一樣，不但於事無補，而且是苦上加苦。

除了不要排斥和抗拒苦，同時也不要逃避苦。譬如以喝酒、吸毒、狂歡、縱慾，乃至自殺來逃避問題和困難，不但無法解決原本的問題，而且還會增加新的問題和更多的痛苦。就像在擂台上與敵人做生死的決鬥，你能勇敢去面對敵人，就可能去戰勝他，而不是平白把自己的生命交到敵人手中。

世間不了解佛教的人，以為佛教講「苦」——「三苦」、「八苦」、「無量諸苦」，就認為佛教是很消極的。其實佛陀講「苦」，是要我們深入地去了解苦，進而積極地解決苦的問題。所以，四聖諦中的苦聖諦是具有非常積極的意義。

既然眾生都有不同程度的苦，那要如何解決這個問題呢？首先就要先了解這個苦是怎麼來的。苦並不是無中生有，是有其因緣集聚而成的，這就是第二聖諦中的集諦。

第二聖諦集諦，是去了解、分析造成苦的

To put it simply, whenever someone or something goes against your wish, which troubles you or upsets you, you suffer. In other words, suffering is to have problems or difficulties. So if everything were to follow your wishes and if you could have everything you wanted, for sure you would have no suffering. However, that is impossible. Why? Because nothing is permanent. For example, you want to stay healthy, but you often get sick and are hospitalized; or you want to have great relationships, but you are a dreadful bore or very annoying; or you want to have eternal youth, but you age year by year; or you want to be rich but you are poor... Then you feel suffering.

Each person's suffering is different. Each individual feels different towards suffering. Some sufferings are minor thus endurable, while some are great thus hard to endure. So the degree of suffering and our understanding of suffering are very subjective. Although we differ in gender, age, race, educational background, upbringing, and economic status, we all experience suffering in our daily life. This is the First Noble Truth – suffering.

Since suffering is so common in our life, then why did the Buddha talk about it? The Buddha talked about suffering in order for us to face suffering with an open mind. This means that we need to face problems and difficulties with courage. Please do not resist or reject suffering with negative emotions. Instead we need to calm down and face it squarely, so we can really deal with the problems and difficulties. If, in trying to resist or reject suffering, you become angry, complain, curse, become depressed, upset, or pessimistic, it is just like rubbing salt on a wound- it only hurts more.

Not only should we not resist or reject suffering, we should also not try to avoid it. For example, in order to evade problems and suffering, people drink, do drugs, go clubbing, indulge their senses, or even commit suicide. Not only does this not solve your problems, you end up with more problems and suffering than before. This is like, in a duel, it's possible to win if you have the courage to face your enemy, rather than handing your life to your enemy.

However, those who don't understand Buddhism, think Buddhism is pessimistic, because it teaches about suffering, such as the three kinds of suffering, the eight kinds of suffering, and the myriad kinds of suffering. On the contrary, the Buddha talked about suffering in order to let us know how to deeply understand suffering and then to deal with it with a positive attitude. Therefore, the First Noble Truth is very positive and meaningful.

Since we all experience different degrees of suffering, how do we deal with it and end it? First we need to understand how suffering comes into being. Suffering doesn't come from nowhere, it has its origins—there are causes and conditions for it. This is the Second Noble Truth – the origin of suffering.

The Second Noble Truth is to analyze and understand the origins of suffering. It's like a sick man needs to see a doctor who will examine him to find out what illness he has and what caused it. What is the cause of suffering? It is our minds. Because when people, things, or situations do not

因緣。就像病人要去看醫生，經過檢查之後，才了解自己生的是什麼病和造成生病的因緣。什麼是苦的因？就是我們的心。因為人、事、物不順我們的心，讓我們心煩，這就是苦。苦的因既然是我們的心，那又是個什麼樣的心呢？

我們有執著的心，執著人事物要順我意，否則就心煩。譬如你去賭場賭錢，心中就希望能贏一大筆錢，這就是苦的「因」；你不但沒有贏得大錢，反而是血本無歸，這就是苦的「緣」，於是就會令你很懊惱、很痛苦，這就是苦的「果」。所以，只要有苦的因，一旦苦的緣現前，就會有苦的果，這就是「如是因，如是果」的道理。

我們經常有一種迷惘、迷惑，認為自己一定要達到某種程度的完美——這就是苦的因。在日常生活中，有人覺得自己一定要貌美、漂亮、有錢，或是有某種的成就才會受人的歡迎，自己才會快樂。覺得大家都應該尊敬我、喜歡我，如果有人不尊敬我、不喜歡我的話，就覺得被侮辱、被傷害。這都是苦的因。從佛法來講，這就是我執太強了，癡心太重了。所以，佛陀特別告訴我們第二聖諦，提醒我們要深入了解苦的因緣，才能夠真正地對症下藥。

第三聖諦就是滅諦，把苦給滅除了。用看病的例子來講，就是你這個病有救了！除了給病患克服病苦的信心和希望之外，同時也明確設立治療的內容和目標，最重要的是有了積極向上的力量來達成目標。這是第三聖諦滅諦的意義。

滅諦的基礎在於第二聖諦（集諦），若是沒有深入了解苦的因緣，很可能就錯認苦的因緣，而導致錯誤的第三聖諦，也就是說搞錯了方向。到最後，不但事倍功半，而且還可能造成反效果。譬如上個月有人花三塊錢買一張彩票，結果中一億五千萬美元的獎金。有人或許就想，如果我能中一億五千萬美元的話，那我所有的苦就滅除了，我就能想怎麼樣，就怎麼樣，享受舒適幸福的生活，這就是我的「滅諦」了。

但是佛陀早就告訴我們，是無法從外在的事物上找到真正長久的快樂，也就是長久的了苦。為什麼？因為不管發生什麼事情，我們終究會慢慢適應而習以為常。所以就算真的中了

accord with our wishes, we become upset, and this is suffering. Since the origin of suffering is our mind, then what kind of mind is it?

We are attached to ideas about how things should be or how people should behave, and if they don't, we become upset. For example, you may go to the casino with the intention to make a good deal of money. Such an intention is the cause of suffering. Then, when you lose all your money – that is the condition of suffering. As a result, you get upset and depressed. Therefore, as long as there is a cause of suffering, there will be suffering when the conditions of suffering are present. It is the principle of cause and effect.

Sometimes we are deluded or confused about having to reach some kind of perfection- this is a cause of suffering. For example, some people think they have to be pretty or rich or have some kind of achievement to be liked by others. Then they will be happy. Or they may think people should respect and admire them. If someone doesn't like them or show respect to them, they feel hurt or insulted. These are all causes of suffering. According to Buddhism, they have very strong attachment to the idea of self, and their delusion is heavy. So the Buddha told us about the Second Noble Truth, reminding us that we must deeply understand the origins of suffering in order to treat it accordingly.

The Third Noble Truth is the cessation of suffering. Using the analogy of a sickness, this means there is a cure! In addition to giving a patient the confidence and hope of recovery, the doctor sets clear goals and a plan for the treatment, and it is most important to always be positive in working towards goals. This is the meaning of the Third Noble Truth.

The Noble Truth of Cessation is founded on the Second Noble Truth (the origins). If we fail to understand the real causes and conditions of suffering, we will have the wrong ideas about the cessation of suffering and go in the wrong direction. In the end, we may end up with wasting time and energy, or even worse, we may get what we dislike. Just like that person who bought a \$3 ticket and won a jackpot of \$150 million last month. You may think, “ My cessation of suffering is to win the \$150 million jackpot. With so much money, I can enjoy myself in any way I want to, without worries or limitations. I can pursue my dreams and live in comfort. This would be my cessation of suffering.”

However, the Buddha told us that we cannot find long lasting happiness in external things, which means to end suffering permanently, because no matter what happens, we will gradually to adapt to it. Even if you win the \$150 million jackpot, you may buy a grand new house, a new car. You may quit your boring job, and all the aspects of your material life may improve significantly. But within a few months, the contrast gradually blurs and your pleasure fades.

How does this happen? Your pleasure comes from a huge increase in wealth. After a few months, however, the new comforts have become the new baseline of daily life. Then you take them for granted, you want

一億五千萬美元的彩票，你或許可以買一棟富麗堂皇的新房子，再買一輛高檔的新車，辭掉原來無聊的工作，然後吃穿玩樂樣樣都比以前高級得太多了。但是，過了幾個月之後，這種跟以前生活的天壤之別的對比，就會慢慢地變模糊，而且這種快樂也會慢慢地淡化消失。

為什麼？因為你之所以會開心，是因為財富的暴增；但幾個月之後，新的財富已經變成新生活中平常的事物了，一切變得理所當然，再也沒有什麼特別。所以你就會想要更多的錢，於是就種下另一個苦的種子。

更糟糕是，金錢還會帶給你種種的不安全感，擔心別人詐欺、勒索甚至綁架。事實上，就發生過中大獎的人後來被自己的親人給謀財害命了。這就是為什麼許多中獎的人，經常飽受騷擾，不但要特別僱用保鏢或是保全人員，甚至搬家或是躲起來，切斷了原有的人際關係。雖然有了錢，但生活卻過得非常地不快樂。除此之外，還會擔心如果這些錢不管放在銀行或者用在投資，乃至藏起來，突然因為某種意外而損失，甚至全部都沒有了，那時該怎麼辦？

許多工業化國家，在過去五十年全國財富增加兩、三倍，國內生產總值也大幅地提升，生活舒適度顯著改善。住的房子變大，汽車、電視、電腦、手機全面普及，上館子用餐也如家常便飯，健康狀況、平均壽命都普遍進步、延長。但是，這些國家人民的快樂水平及生活滿意度，並沒有多大的改變，反而抑鬱症越來越普遍。

事實上，眾生在六道輪迴中所受種種的苦，要馬上去除是很不容易做到的，因為我們有太多的習氣毛病。就像身體有很多種病，想要一下子把所有病統統治好，也是很難做到的，需要一步一步地來。眾生想滅苦，也是同樣的道理，也是需要一步一步地來。所以聲聞乘有初果、二果、三果、四果的次第，菩薩乘有初地、二地、三地乃至十地、等覺和成佛的果位，都代表著不同程度的解脫。

比如萬佛聖城東區的妙覺佛教學院，最終目標是要完成大雄寶殿，但這也不是一蹴可

more money and you plant another seed of suffering.

Even worse, the money might cause feelings of insecurity because you are afraid of being cheated, blackmailed or kidnapped. Some lottery winners have been murdered by their relatives for the money. Lottery winners are so often harassed that many have to hire bodyguards or security guards or even move, hide and end all their relationships. Even though they have money, they are very unhappy. Besides, you will worry that the money you depend on, whether it is saved in banks, invested, or hidden somewhere, might decrease or be gone one day due to an accident. Then what will you do?

In many industrialized countries, wealth has doubled or tripled in these last 50 years, and their GDPs have greatly increased, which has improved their standard of living. People own bigger homes, more cars, TVs, personal computers, and mobile phones. They can afford to dine out more often. Their health has also improved and so has the average life expectancy. However, the level of happiness and quality of life has changed little, and depression is on the rise.

To end all suffering overnight is very difficult, because we have too many habits and attachments. It is like when someone has many kinds of illnesses. It is hard to cure all of them at once. The healing needs to be done step by step. It is similar with ending of suffering. For example, there are four stages of Arhatship (Stream-Enterer; Once-Returner; Never-Returner; and Arhat) in the practice of the Sound-Hearers. In the course of the Bodhisattvas' practice, there are the First Ground, the Second Ground, the Third Ground, and so forth, all the way up to the Tenth Ground, Equal Enlightenment and Wonderful Enlightenment. These examples represent different degrees of liberation.

This is just like our Wonderful Enlightenment Buddhist Institute Project on the east campus of CTTB. Our vision is to have a great hall, but it has to be done step by step. So we have many sub-goals along the way to help us achieve our vision. We will have a groundbreaking ceremony on June 12th, the 21th anniversary of the Venerable Master Hua's entering Nirvana. There are many different sub-goals along the way, leading to the final goal of the completion of the Wonderful Enlightenment Buddhist Institute project.

After we have set clear final goals and sub-goals, how can we reach these goals? How can we eliminate the causes of suffering and end suffering? We need plans and methods. It is just like a patient who needs treatment to recover. This is the Fourth Noble Truth – the way to end suffering.

What is the plan to end suffering? Besides truly understanding the causes of suffering and the right way to end it, we also need to do it step by step and follow the right sequence of practice. Only in this way we can reach our goal. Therefore, when we took refuge with the Venerable Master Hua, he asked us to bow to the Buddhas 10,000 times to reduce our karmic obstructions, such as arrogance. He also asked us to practice the Six Great Principles to cultivate our virtue and character as the foundation for being

成的，必須要逐步來進行，所以我們設有不同階段性的目標。今年6月12日，也就是宣公上人涅槃21週年紀念日，將舉行動土的典禮，這就是一個階段性的目標。當然，還有許多不同階段性的目標，直到妙覺佛教學院的所有建設完成為止。

有了明確的滅苦的目標、階段性的目標之後，要如何達到這些目標呢？如何來滅除苦的因緣、來了苦呢？這就需要計畫和方法。就像病人想要康復，就必須接受治療，這就是第四聖諦——道聖諦。

什麼是滅除苦的計劃呢？就是真正了解苦的因緣和滅除苦的正確方法之外，我們還要循序漸進，修法的先後次第順序要對，才能夠達到目標。所以當我們在皈依宣公上人的時候，上人要我們至誠禮佛一萬拜，來消除我們貢高我慢的業障；並且要我們實行六大宗旨，來培養我們的德行，打下做人的基礎；進而再選擇自己修行的法門，不論是參禪、念佛、持咒、誦經等等的法門皆可以。所謂「人道盡，佛道成」，這就是宣公上人為我們特別量身訂做，最好修行佛法的次第。

第四聖諦（道聖諦），是滅除苦的方法。所謂「歸元無二路，方便有多門」，佛教中的八萬四千法門，皆是幫助眾生離苦得樂的方法。唯一是必須先瞭解自己的狀況，選擇適當的方法，才能夠對症下藥。

雖然四聖諦分為苦、集、滅、道，但其中的道理卻是環環相扣，渾然一體的；不只是通於小乘，也通於大乘。法無大小，而心有大小；只要有宏大的心量，修行任何法門都可以利益無量的眾生。

同時，四聖諦的道理也可以用於世間法上。譬如企業經營有虧損，就不要忽視，也不要做假賬來隱藏，而要勇敢地來面對問題，這就是第一苦聖諦。進而主動檢查和深入瞭解企業出問題的原因及相關因素，這就是第二集聖諦。然後設定正確的願景及目標，以及達成階段性的目標，從而有了方向和積極向上的動力來改善企業。這就是第三滅聖諦。

所以四聖諦法的道理，是非常科學而且實用的。可以運用在學習、事業、人際關係，從家庭乃至國防軍事方面，應用範圍非常廣泛的。

a good person. The next step would be choosing a Dharma practice of your own, whether it is meditation, recitation of the Buddha's name, mantra recitation, or sutra recitation. The idea is after you perfect yourself as a person, you attain Buddhahood. This is what the Venerable Master Hua has designed especially for us and it is the best sequence of practice.

The Fourth Noble Truth is about the way to end suffering. There is a saying, "There is only one road back to the source, but there are many expedient ways to reach it." That is to say, the myriad different ways of practice in Buddhism all serve to help us end suffering and attain bliss. However, we must first understand our own conditions so that we can choose the appropriate methods, which is like choosing treatment according to one's illness.

Although the Four Noble Truths consist of suffering, the origins of suffering, the cessation of suffering and the ways to end suffering, the underlying principles are integrated with each other as a perfect system that can be applied to both Mahayana and Theravada teachings. In terms of Dharma teachings, there is no "great" or "small" – the difference is in our mind. If you have a great heart, you can benefit countless beings no matter what you practice.

The principles of the Four Noble Truths can also be applied to worldly matters. For example, when your business has a loss, you shouldn't ignore it or cook the books to hide it. Instead you should face the problems with courage. This corresponds to the First Noble Truth. Then you should actively examine your business to find out the root cause and related factors. This corresponds to the Second Noble Truth. Next, you should establish your vision, goals, and sub-goals, which give you the direction and motivation to move forward to improve your business. This accords with the Third Noble Truth.

So the principles of the Four Nobles Truths are actually very scientific and practical. They can be applied to our studies, career, relationships, family, and even national defense. They can be applied almost everywhere.

Someone may say: "Facing my suffering is too painful, too difficult. I can't do it." Another person may say: "My past traumatic experience is too painful for me to face. So how can I apply the Four Noble Truths?" When you raise such a question or have such a thought, you are applying the First Noble Truth. You are willing to face these problems and pain. When you no longer avoid or ignore these issues and pain, you are applying the First Noble Truth.

Next you can try to find a comfortable environment and relax. When you calm down, you can investigate why you don't want to face these painful experiences. After your deep and careful contemplation, you will find out that the pain is due to the attachments in your mind—you don't want to let go. If you can apply effort this way and deeply understand the real cause of your suffering, you are applying the Second

有的人說：「我就是無法去面對問題，因為對我而言，那太痛苦、太困難了，我做不到。」有的會說：「過去的創傷令我太痛苦了，我不願意去面對它。那我要如何去實行四聖諦的道理呢？」其實，能夠提出這個問題，或者有這種想法，這就是第一聖諦了。你已經願意去面對這些問題和痛苦了，而沒有繼續逃避或忽視它們，這就已經在實行第一聖諦了。

接下來，可以找一個舒緩的環境，放鬆自己，讓自己能夠心平氣和地來探究，為什麼不願意去面對這些痛苦創傷的經歷？經過冷靜深入的思維之後，你會發現是因為自己內心有所執著，不願意放下而造成的痛苦。當能如是地下功夫，深切瞭解自己痛苦的真正因緣，這就是在實行第二聖諦了。

當明白痛苦是因為放不下內心執著時，你可以看看這個世界上，是否有人有類似你這樣的經歷，卻活著自在解脫的？你會發現，的確有這樣的人，甚至可能比你的遭遇更不幸，但因為能夠勇敢面對自己的不幸，所以他們活得自在又快樂。如此，你就可以試著放下心中的執著，將痛苦的因緣給滅除了。

當然這不是一蹴可及，你可以設定一些比較容易達到的階段性目標，一步步地來，這就是在實行第三聖諦了。有了目標和方向之後，就可以訂下短程、中程和長程的計劃，選擇適當的方法，以正確的次第來達到各階段性的目標，乃至最終目標。這就是在實行第四聖諦了。

其實，四聖諦的道理也就是禪宗的「煩惱即菩提」。從不逃避、不排斥，用開放的態度來面對煩惱，進而深入瞭解煩惱的因緣，設定正確的滅除煩惱的計畫，以及各階段性的目標；然後依正確的次第方法來實行，回復本具清淨的覺性，這不就是將煩惱化為菩提了嗎？

因此，瞭解四聖諦的道理，就不會像一般世間的人，有了煩惱之後，煩惱還是煩惱，甚至增加更多的煩惱，苦上加苦；而是能夠將煩惱轉為菩提，雖然受苦，但是可以了苦。換言之，四聖諦法也是真正的懺悔法門。❀

Noble Truth.

When you understand that the real cause of your suffering is your inability to let go of your attachments, try to think of someone in the world who had a similar experience and eventually rose above it and is now free of that suffering. You will find that there are people who have had similar or worse experiences. However, they faced their misfortunes with courage and now live a happy life.

You can also try to let go of your attachments and to eliminate the causes of suffering.

To achieve the ultimate goal, you can also set some sub-goals that are easier to achieve step by step, and this is applying the Third Noble Truth. When you have goals and direction, you can further make short-term, mid-term, and long-term plans. If you achieve your sub-goals in the right sequence using appropriate methods, and you will finally achieve your ultimate goal. This is applying the Fourth Noble Truth.

The principles of the Four Noble Truths are the same as the Chan school's "Afflictions are Bodhi". We start by facing our afflictions, with an open mind, without avoiding or rejecting them. Then we deeply understand the causes and conditions of those afflictions. Next, we establish right goals, vision, and sub-goals for different phases in order to end afflictions. Finally, we practice according to the right sequence, end suffering, and return to our inherently pure and bright nature. In this way, aren't afflictions transformed to Bodhi?

Those who don't understand the Four Noble Truths can't do anything about their afflictions. Even worse, more afflictions arise. Those who understand the principles of the Four Noble Truths can transform afflictions into Bodhi. They experience suffering, but ultimately they can end suffering. In other words, the Four Noble Truths are a practice of true repentance. ❀

