



# 安住四念處

## Peacefully Dwelling Within the Four Applications of Mindfulness

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Dharma Talk by Abbot Heng Lyu on July 8, 2017 at CTTB Buddha Hall

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諸佛菩薩、宣公上人、各位尊敬的法師及善知識們：阿彌陀佛！歡迎大家回到我們的家——萬佛聖城，一起來參加觀音七以及慶祝觀世音菩薩成道大法會。

觀世音菩薩的成道，可以代表觀世音菩薩與我們有很深的因緣，因為我們所處的這個娑婆世界，充滿種種的痛苦和災難，是個很苦惱的世界。但是觀世音菩薩願意來此救苦救難，幫助我們離苦得樂。所以我們在一年中，會特別舉行慶祝觀世音菩薩聖誕日、成道日及出家日的三個大法會，來感恩觀世音菩薩的大慈大悲，並且向他學習，利益廣大的眾生。

慶祝觀世音菩薩的成道日，也是提醒我們，在修道的過程中，一定要有確定的目標和方向，才能夠成就道業。有了確定的修行目標和方向，我們在修行前進的過程當中，也就不會迷失了。

什麼才算是成就道業呢？在這裡，想跟各位分享一個有關阿難尊者的故事。

All Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Venerable Master, respected Dharma Masters, and all Good and Wise Advisors: Amitabha! Welcome back to our home – The City of Ten Thousand Buddhas – to attend the Seven-day Guan Yin Recitation Session, and to celebrate Guan Yin Bodhisattva's Enlightenment.

Guan Yin Bodhisattva's enlightenment represents Guan Yin Bodhisattva's deep affinity with us. The world we live in is called the Saha World. It is filled with all sorts of pain and disasters. It is a world full of distress. However, Guan Yin Bodhisattva is willing to come to this world to rescue us from our suffering and difficulties, and help us leave suffering and attain bliss. Therefore, each year we hold three celebratory ceremonies related to Guan Yin Bodhisattva: Guan Yin Bodhisattva's birthday, her leaving home day, and her enlightenment day. This is our way of showing our gratitude for Guan Yin Bodhisattva's great kindness and compassion, as well as our way of learning from the Bodhisattva how to vastly benefit all living beings.

Celebrating Guan Yin Bodhisattva's enlightenment day also serves as a reminder for those of us on the path of cultivation that we need to have definite goals and direction in order to have accomplishment. With definite goals and direction, we will not lose our way along the path.

So, what defines success when it comes to cultivation? Let me share a story about the Venerable Ananda.

One day, when the Venerable Ananda was out on alms rounds, he overheard an externalist saying, "As long as one is able to maintain 12 years of pure cultivation as a monastic, one is considered successful in cultivation and has achieved Nirvana without residue."

The Venerable Ananda felt puzzled by what he had heard and thought to himself, "The Buddha would know; I'll go back and ask him."

After the meal, the Venerable Ananda proceeded to ask the Buddha,

有一天，阿難尊者托鉢乞食，聽到一位外道說：「任何人只要能夠保持十二年的清淨梵行，就算是成就道業了，可以稱為是漏盡涅槃的修行人了。」

阿難尊者聽了之後覺得怪怪的，心想：佛陀一定會知道的，回去問佛陀就好了。

阿難尊者回來用餐過後，就去見佛陀，說：「世尊，在您的教法與戒律當中，可以單單依靠一個人出家修學的時間，來認定他是成就道業、漏盡涅槃的比丘嗎？」

佛陀就說：「阿難，在我的教法與戒律之中，單單依靠出家修學的時間，是不足以認定是否成就道業、得到漏盡涅槃的。唯有修諸善法，斷盡慾望、煩惱以及無明，才算是成就道業而得到漏盡解脫的。有的比丘在滿12年梵行清淨、成就道業而得到漏盡解脫；有的要24年，有的要36年，有的要48年，乃至更久，這都不是一定的。」

聽了這個故事，我們了解到修行是要斷盡慾望、煩惱以及無明，才算是成就道業得到漏盡解脫。所以修行要有所成就，並不在於修行時間的長短，而是在於修行品質的高低。因此，自古以來是修道容易，成道難。

有人或許覺得：修行要成道，實在太難了，而對修行不免生出了退心。其實修行成道也不難！讓我們來看一看，在一個鐘錶店裡的一段對話，或許對我們會有所啟發。

鐘錶店裡，有一個小時鐘放置在兩個大時鐘的中間。過了一會，左邊的大時鐘就說了：「你是剛來的吧？你看起來沒有我們這麼強壯。」

“World Honored One, within your teachings and the Vinaya, is it possible that the success of one’s cultivation is based solely on the length of time one has been a monastic? Would this alone determine if one has achieved the status of bhikshu who has attained Nirvana without residue?”

The Buddha said, “Ananda, according to my teachings and the Vinaya, the length of time one has been a monastic cannot guarantee whether one will have achieved Nirvana without residue. Cultivating

all wholesome dharmas and eliminating desire, worry and ignorance is the only way to achieve success in cultivation as well as the liberation of Nirvana without residue. Although some bhikshus have achieved Nirvana without residue after 12 years of pure cultivation, for others it takes 24 years, 36 years, 48 years, or even longer. It is not fixed.”

From this story, we learn that in cultivation we must sever desire, worry and ignorance in order to have accomplishment in the Way and attain the liberation of Nirvana without residue. Thus, accomplishment in cultivation does not come from the duration of cultivation, but rather on the level of our cultivation. Therefore, there is an old saying, “To cultivate is easy, but to achieve enlightenment is difficult.”

Some may feel that attaining enlightenment in cultivation is too difficult and so they want to retreat. Actually, attaining enlightenment in cultivation is not that difficult! Let us take a look at a conversation that took place in a clock shop, as it may provide us with some inspiration.

In the clock shop, there was a small clock in between two big clocks. After a while, the big clock on the left said to the small clock, “Are you new here? You don’t look as tough as we are. I am seriously concerned on your behalf that you may not be able to complete more than 31 million ticks in one year.”

The small clock became startled when he heard “31 million ticks” and panicked, “Goodness! I can’t do it!”



我真是有點擔心，你的鐘擺能不能夠在一年之內，完成三千一百萬餘次的擺動啊！」

這個小時鐘一聽到要完成三千一百萬餘次的擺動，就吃驚地說：「天哪！我辦不到啊！」

而右邊的大時鐘就說了：「你不要聽它胡說八道了！沒有什麼好害怕的，你只管每秒鐘滴答擺動一下就好了。」

小時鐘聽了將信將疑地說：「天下哪有這麼簡單的事情呢！如果真是這樣子的話，那我就試一次吧。」於是小時鐘就很輕鬆的每秒鐘滴答的擺動一下，在不知不覺中，一年過去了，而小時鐘也完成了三千一百萬餘次的擺動了。

聽了這個小故事，我們可以了解到，只要目標方向正確，要想多做事情，那最簡單的辦法就是「一次只做一件事」。我們只要專注在當下，盡心盡力做好應該做的事情，則未來的事情就會船到橋頭自然直了。

有一次佛陀對比丘們說了一個有趣的故事。佛陀說：從前，有一對在竹竿上表演空中特技的師徒，這個老師是以他的肩膀頂著一根長竹竿，徒弟就爬到竹竿頂頭上表演。

在表演之前，這個老師就對徒弟說了：「你在竹竿上頭表演的時候，要時時向下留意著我，要保護著我；而我在下頭也會隨時留意著你，保護著你。我們上下彼此互相留意，專心護念對方，我們的表演必定萬無一失，會有很好的收入。」

但是這個徒弟卻說：「老師啊，這個樣子不行啊！老師，您應當專心護念保護您自己，將您應該做的動作做好；而我也應當專心護念保護我自己，做好我應當該做的。這樣子我們各自做好自己應該做的動作，表演才能成功完美，不會有所失誤，那就一定會有很好的收入了。」

故事說到這裡時，佛陀說：「就是這樣，這樣做才是對的。」

這個故事並不是說我們要自私自利，不要互相幫助。而是這師徒兩人，若是老是想著要保護對方，就會分心，互相干擾，會使自己的動作失誤，影響到對方。結果表演很可能因此失敗，乃至有人受傷。

所以佛陀同意他們這兩個師徒，應該專心去做自己手邊最該做的事，這樣子他們才能保護

But the big clock on the right said, "Do not listen to his nonsense. There is nothing to be afraid of. All you need to do is focus on making one tick every second."

The small clock listened with disbelief and said, "Is it really as simple as you say? If so, I guess I will give it a try." So, the small clock was very relaxed and ticked once every second. Imperceptibly, one year passed by and the small clock completed more than 31 million ticks.

From hearing this short story, we learn that if we have proper goals and direction and wish to do many things, the easiest way is to do "one thing at a time." As long as we are focused on the present moment and try our best to complete the task at hand, the future will take care of itself.

The Buddha once told a group of bhikshus a very interesting story. The Buddha said, "Once upon a time, there was a master and a disciple who performed airborne stunts on a bamboo pole. The master placed one end of the bamboo pole vertically on his shoulder. The disciple then climbed up to stand on the other end of the bamboo pole to perform tricks."

Prior to the performance, the master said to the disciple, "While you perform up there on the bamboo pole, be sure to constantly look down to check on me in order to protect me; I will do the same from below to protect you. By looking out for each other, we can ensure a successful performance and make a handsome profit."

The disciple said, "Master, that won't work. When performing, you must wholeheartedly focus on yourself and your part of the performance; I must wholeheartedly focus on myself and my part of the performance. We each have to focus on our own parts of the performance. That way, we can prevent accidents from happening, ensure a successful performance, and make a good profit for sure."

At this point of the story, the Buddha commented, "This is the correct way. This is how it should be done."

The story is not suggesting that we should be selfish, and never help each other. If the master and the disciple constantly think about protecting each other, they can be easily distracted and make mistakes. This will lead to a failed performance, and even worse, someone could get injured.

Therefore, the Buddha agreed that the master and disciple needed to focus on completing their individual tasks. By doing so, they could protect themselves and also protect others.

The Buddha then said, "Bhikshus, how can we protect ourselves and protect others at the same time? We can achieve this through vigorous practice of the four applications of mindfulness. By successfully cultivating the Four Applications of Mindfulness, we certainly will not harm others. This is how we protect ourselves as well as others."

The Buddha continued, "Bhikshus, how do we protect others and protect ourselves at the same time? We do so by withstanding others'

自己，也能夠保護他人。

佛陀接著說：「比丘們，怎麼樣做才是保護自己，同時也保護他人呢？那就是要努力修習和實踐四念處。把自己的四念處修好了，必然不會傷害別人。這就是保護自己，而且也能夠保護他人了。」

佛陀繼續說：「比丘們，怎麼樣做才是保護他人，而且同時也能夠保護自己呢？那就是要能夠容忍他人的侮辱，不去傷害他人，要慈愛他人、悲憫他人。這樣子不但保護他人，也能夠同時保護自己。」

佛陀最後說：「比丘們，為了保護自己，應當修四念處；為了保護他人，也應當修四念處。保護自己，則能夠保護他人；保護他人，則能夠保護自己。」

佛陀這段的開示，告訴了我們真正的智慧，就是知道去做最值得應該做的事情。那什麼是最值得應該去做的事情呢？佛陀說：「就是修四念處；也就是身念處、受念處、心念處、法念處。」

在《四念處經》中，佛陀說：「比丘們啊！這是最直接之道，能夠親近眾生，能夠超越憂傷和悲歎，能夠了苦和滅除不滿；為了真理的成就，為了涅槃的證悟，就是四念處。」為什麼佛陀會說四念處如此重要呢？

因為四念處是修一切法門的基礎，使我們能夠循序漸進，依正確次第的順序來修習佛法，故而能成就道業，滅除一切苦惱。

就以最基礎的身念處來說，就是要求我們時時要放鬆，來觀照我們的呼吸、動作、持戒、威儀和身體的實相等等，這些都是修習一切法門的基礎。

事實上，四念處的內容若詳細解釋，可以說是廣大無邊的。雖然區分為身念處、受念處、心念處、法念處，但其道理卻是環環相扣，渾然一體，不只通於小乘法，也通於大乘法。

所以在《大般涅槃經》中記載，佛將入涅槃的時候，阿難尊者以四件事請問佛陀，其中的一件事就是：佛在世的時候，我們依佛而住；佛入涅槃之後，我們依誰而住呢？

佛陀回答說：佛在世的時候，依佛而住；佛滅度之後，依四念處而住。既然依四念處而住，是佛要入涅槃前的遺囑，由此可見，四念

insults, not harming them, being compassionate towards them, and sympathizing with them. In this way, we not only protect others but we are able to protect ourselves as well.”

Finally, the Buddha said, “Bhikshus, to protect yourself, you must practice the Four Applications of Mindfulness; To protect others, you must also practice the Four Applications of Mindfulness. By protecting yourself, you are able to protect others; By protecting others, you are also able to protect yourself.”

This instructional talk by the Buddha reveals to us what true wisdom is. It is knowing what we should do and what is the best way to use our time. So what exactly is the best use of our time? The Buddha said, “Practice dwelling within the Four Applications of Mindfulness: body, feelings, thoughts, and dharmas.”

In the *Four Applications of Mindfulness Sutra*, the Buddha said, “Bikhshus! This is the most direct way to connect with all living beings, to overcome sadness, to end suffering and to rid oneself of discontentment. The Four Applications of Mindfulness are for the sake of realizing truth and certifying to Nirvana.” Why did the Buddha place such great emphasis on the Four Applications of Mindfulness?

It is because the Four Applications of Mindfulness are the foundation of the cultivation of all other Dharma doors. They enable us to cultivate the Buddhadharma properly and sequentially in order to achieve Buddhahood and eliminate all worries.

Take the application of body mindfulness as an example. It requires our body to be relaxed at all times, while we contemplate on our breath, movement, how we uphold precepts, deportment as well as being mindful of how our body is functioning. All these are the foundation for the cultivation of all Dharmas.

In fact, if we talk about the Four Applications of Mindfulness in detail, we could say that they are vast and boundless. Although they are divided into mindfulness applications of body, feelings, thoughts, and dharmas, their principles are interrelated and integrated as one. Not only do the Four Applications of Mindfulness embody the Dharmas of the Theravada, they also embody the Dharmas of the Mahayana as well.

According to the *Great Nirvana Sutra*, when the Buddha was about to enter Nirvana, the Venerable Ananda asked the Buddha four questions. The Venerable Ananda asked, “When the Buddha is in the world, we dwell with the Buddha, but when the Buddha enters Nirvana, where shall we dwell?”

The Buddha replied, “When the Buddha is in the world, you dwell with the Buddha. When the Buddha has entered extinction, you should dwell in the Four Applications of Mindfulness. Since dwelling in the Four Applications of Mindfulness is the Buddha’s wish before he entered Nirvana, we can see their importance for cultivators on the path of cultivation.

Some may say, the patriarchs and many great virtuous ones directly

處對修行者在修行上的重要性了。

有人或許會說，許多祖師大德都是直接修禪、念佛、持咒，沒有修四念處而有所成就的。為什麼還說需要修四念處呢？這是一個很好的問題。

其實祖師大德們，在平時就已經把四念處修得很好了，我們可以從他們日常生活所行所為就可以看出來了。

記得有一次，宣公上人在簽支票的時候說：你不要看我在簽支票，我也在觀照我的呼吸。從這一個小故事，我們可以知道，祖師大德們的修行之所以能夠有所成就，這都不是偶然的。

佛陀也說，怎麼樣做才是保護他人，同時也是保護自己呢？那就是能夠容忍他人的侮辱，不去傷害他人，而是慈愛他人、悲憫他人。

由於修習身念處，我們首先會放鬆我們的身體和呼吸，這樣子能夠安住於身。這是最基本修習身念處的基礎。這樣子會給我們多一點的時間來分析、探究：自己是不是聽錯了？還是做了需要向對方道歉的事情？還是這件事跟自己根本就沒有關係，而是對方自己在煩惱，所以會說出這樣子的話？還是有其他方面的誤解？



即使對方對我們有所敵意，我們也可以冷靜下來，依照佛陀所說的，保護他人而且同時也保護自己的方法：就是容忍他人的侮辱，不去傷害他人，而是慈愛他人、悲憫他人；不是以眼還眼、以牙還牙，那是冤冤相報沒有了的時候。如果我們能夠照佛陀所說的，以和平的方式來解決彼此之間的不和，那就是把佛法活用於我們的日常生活當中，保護我們自己，也保護了他人。

即使我們選擇了再好的路，但路還是要我們自己走下去，沒有人可以幫我們走，諸佛菩薩也都是如此。所以道是要行的，不行哪有道？

阿彌陀佛！❀

practiced meditation, recitation of Buddha's name, or upheld mantras; they did not practice the Four Applications of Mindfulness. So why is it necessary to practice the Four Applications of Mindfulness? This is a very good question.

Actually, the patriarchs and greatly virtuous ones had already mastered the Four Applications of Mindfulness, and we can see it in how they acted on a daily basis.

I remember one time, while Venerable Master Hua was signing a check, he said, "You think I am just signing a check. However, I am contemplating my breath at the same time." From this short story, we know that the accomplishments of the patriarchs and greatly virtuous ones in their cultivation were not incidental at all.

The Buddha also said, "How do you protect others and protect yourself at the same time? You do so by withstanding others' insult, not harming them, being compassionate towards them, and sympathizing with them."

While practicing body mindfulness, we must first relax our body and breath in order to dwell peacefully in our body. This is the most

basic foundation of practicing body mindfulness. When we are relaxed, it gives us time to analyze and look into these questions: Perhaps I misunderstood? Perhaps I did something wrong that I need to apologize for? Perhaps this has nothing to do with me; it is just because of their own afflictions that they say those things to me? Or perhaps there's something I simply

don't know about?

Even in the situation where someone is hostile towards us, we can still remain calm and put the Buddha's teaching on how to protect others and protect ourselves into practice. That is withstanding others' insult, not harming them, being compassionate towards them, and sympathizing with them. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth will only create never-ending hatred. By following the Buddha's teaching on how to resolve conflict in a peaceful way, we are essentially applying the Buddhadharma to daily life and protecting ourselves as well as protecting others.

Last but not least, even if we have chosen the best path, we still have to walk it and no one can walk it for us. The same applies to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Thus, one must walk the Path; if one does not walk it, then there will be no Path.

Amitabha! ❀