



Happiness in Cultivation 以歡喜心來修行

A talk given by Spike Morelli at CTTB on April 15, 2018

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Tonight, I would like to share a few stories from our most recent trip. Every year we take two trips to visit family: one in the winter to see my family in Italy, and another in the summer to visit my wife's family in China. This year was different, however, because we joined the DRBU delegation to Taiwan, and at that point, we decided to combine both trips into one.

So we went to Italy first and then to Taiwan. From Taiwan the idea was to go to China, but the delegation was also going to Malaysia for the first Buddha Root Farm hosted outside of the U.S., so we joined them on that trip as well. The group was also scheduled to go to Indonesia to visit Borobudur, something we had been thinking for many years, so we decided to go along. Eventually we made it back to China to see my wife's family, and that's where we had a big surprise.

When we got to the Beijing airport to board our flight back to the U.S., we were denied departure for some inconsistencies with the dates on our visas. Initially we were in disbelief and simply thought it was a mistake, but eventually it became clear that we would not be able to come back as planned. After considering our options, we decided to go back to Italy to apply for a new visa and try to resolve the issues.

We've been in the embassy in Florence many times over the last five years, to the point, that when we went back this time, some of the people recognized us. Normally, everything would work out in just a couple weeks, and we thought that this time would be no different. Unfortunately, it was quite the opposite. The embassy denied our visa request, claiming a deeper inspection of our case was necessary. When we got the news, we felt terrible and quite helpless.

What I want to share, however, isn't about the troubles of coming back, quite the opposite in fact. It's about the joy when we actually made it back, the gratitude of being here, the feeling of being home. It's about the feeling I felt when I woke up that first morning after coming back, I was so happy.

But, just like with most things, as the days go by, you get back to the routine, problems happen. All of a sudden, it's not so glowing and golden and special any more. And the second morning, after I woke up, feeling like I was basking in golden light, I thought, "No, I don't want to let this happen, I want to remember this feeling, this is too precious."

And it's so obvious, I am the same person, the people around are the same, the place is the same place, so how come it's different? How come my experience is so different? It's so obvious, the mind makes the difference.

今晚想和大家分享一些我和同修最近出國的小故事。每年我們會出兩趟門：一趟在冬季，去義大利探望我的家人；一趟在夏天，去中國探望我同修的家人。今年卻有些不同——我們參加了法界佛教大學的台灣訪問團，於是決定把兩趟探親的行程合併。

我們先回義大利，然後飛到台灣，計畫從台灣再到大陸。但是有幾位訪問團成員想到馬來西亞，參加首次美國領土外的佛根地夏令營，於是我們也就一同前往。後來隨佛根地團員一起參觀了印尼的婆羅浮圖，最終回到中國探望了我同修的家人。而就在那個地方，我們經歷了一個不小的意外。

當在北京準備搭機回美國的時候，因為簽證日期有出入，我們被拒發登機證。一開始我們不相信日期會有問題，覺得一定是個誤會；但是最後的結果，就是不得不取消原訂的返美行程。再三考慮後，我們決定回義大利重新辦理簽證。

過去五年，我們一直都在佛羅倫薩的美國使館辦理簽證，以至於使館的一些工作人員都認得我們。一般來說，兩個禮拜內簽證就可以辦下來了，我們以為這次也是一樣；但出乎意料的，使館拒絕了我們的簽證申請，原因是需要做深入的調查。得知這個消息的時候，我們心情糟透了，同時感到十分無助。

但是我想談的，並不是回聖城的困難，而是回來後的歡喜以及對聖城的感恩，一種回家的感覺。在聖城第一天睡

The way we look at things, we can see the goodness, or we can see the things that are not so good, we can see the things we like, or we can see the things we dislike, focus on one or the other, and that choice is so subtle, and often so habitual that we forget it's actually a choice.

We have a choice moment by moment to decide where our thoughts go, what we pick up, what we attach to, what we don't attach to.

I have come across this notion of joy several times over the years: the first dhyana is the dhyana of joy; the first ground of a Bodhisattva is the ground of joy; and if you have seen pictures of any enlightened masters, there's often a smile, there's always a softness, even in the dire circumstances of the saha world, they are still full of joy.

Maybe not my biggest problem, but certainly a problem I have is that I think through stuff, I think about stuff, so I think about joy, but there's a big big difference between thinking about joy, and understanding joy as an idea, and feeling joyful. But when I think I end up thinking about rights and wrongs, I think about what is correct or incorrect, but the rights and wrongs, the correct and incorrect, actually never brought me any joy and in fact often lead me away from it.

I'm sure many people here have a different experience of cultivation than mine, but it's become rather clear to me that I can't go about practice in terms of rights and wrongs: these are the rules of precepts, these are the rules of cultivation, this is how many recitations I should do; this is how I should bow; this is how you do this or that. All I got out of practicing this way is tightness. Now that I pay a little bit more attention to my body I can feel it, right in the middle of my stomach. This process doesn't actually bring the kind of joy that lightens the heart, that other people feel welcomed by, uplifted by.

I read the *Earth Store Sutra* so many times, for a while, it was my main practice, and now, I think that I never really understood it. I understood it in terms of this is what happens, this is the retribution for such and such infraction, and there is this idea of compassion, you have to be good, you have to be filial, you have to be doing all these things, but the actual feeling of compassion, the actual feeling, not the idea of it, that feeling that warms up the heart, I didn't really get that back then.

So I woke up that morning with that feeling in my heart and I wanted to keep it and not because of an attachment, but because I thought it was important for my cultivation. So how to keep it? I tried to change some things, and one of the things I have changed is my morning meditation.

Normally when I sit in the morning I would try to do a body scan and go from head to toe and just relax the body, become more aware and so on. Now I try to do something a bit different, and instead of just going through the body trying to relax it, I go through the

醒時，我真的非常開心。

但是就像大部分的情況，隨著日子一天一天過去，一切回復平常，問題難免發生，突然間生活變得不再燦爛美好。因此第二天早上醒來後，當我感覺自己像沐浴在金光之時，我告訴自己：不行，不能讓這個美好的感覺消逝，我要牢牢記住這個珍貴的體驗。

很明顯地，我還是原來的我，周圍的環境人物也沒有改變，但為什麼一切變得不一樣？為什麼感受會如此的不同？原因大家都知道，一切唯心造。看事情的角度，可以看到好的一面，也可以看到不好的一面；可以看到喜歡的，也可以看到不喜歡的。角度不同，所見也不同，我們通常只取其一，忽略其二。角度的選擇，總是受習氣的影響，難以察覺，以至於忘記一切是可以選擇的。

時時刻刻，我們都可以決定自己的起心動念，要拿起什麼，要放下什麼。

幾年前我就聽人講過「歡喜」這個詞：初禪天是離生喜樂地；初地菩薩住歡喜地；每一位覺悟者的肖像，你會發現他們都有一種柔和的微笑。即使身處在濁惡的娑婆世界，覺悟者內心依然充滿歡喜。

我總是在思考，凡事都依賴思維。這或許不是最大的問題，但鐵定是個問題。所以我思考過歡喜，但是思考歡喜、理解歡喜，與感受到歡喜是非常地不同。凡是思考，就免不了分別對錯；我就會思維什麼是對的，或什麼是錯的。但是對錯、是非從未帶給我任何的歡喜，反而讓我常常更加遠離歡喜。

每個人修行的經驗各不相同，但是對我來說，我越加認識到修行不能以對錯為準。修行路上的規矩很多：持戒的規矩、修行的規矩，例如每天要念多少遍的咒、拜佛應該怎樣拜，應該這樣、應該那樣。照單全收的結果，只是讓我愈發緊繃，我甚至能感受到丹田附近的變化。這種修行過程，我內心無法感受歡喜，也無法令他人感覺和藹可親。

《地藏經》曾經是我專修的法門，但我覺得自己並沒有真的了解《地藏經》。我知道《地藏經》的道理：世間的因果報應、慈悲、要做個好人、要孝順父母等等。但是對

body, organ by organ, and I try to thank each one of them. To be thankful for everything each organ does: my head for being able to help me solve problems to support people here; my eyes for seeing things; my nose for smelling; my mouth for being able to eat and to speak; thankful for my throat, for my heart, for my lungs, piece by piece, for my arms, my hands, and so on and so forth.

This practice has been very interesting. My sits have become more joyful and more peaceful, and instead of being upset at this body for being painful or because it doesn't sit straight, because it doesn't allow me to do full lotus, this body has become a gift rather than a burden, because it does allow me to sit to begin with, it allows me to serve the temple, etc.

But most of all, I try to remind myself to smile throughout the sit, at the start of the sit, during and at the end of it. The first few days, I felt like a bit of an idiot and resisted it, I felt silly sitting there and trying to smile in the Chan hall, I had no reason to smile, but I kept doing it and it actually worked, it's quite amazing, the power a smile has.

They have even done studies about it, they had people hold a pencil in their mouth, so they are basically forcing the mouth to curve up and take the shape of a smile. In that sense they are not even intending to smile, it's in a way as fake of a smile as it could possibly be, but guess what, just taking the shape of smile produces a change, and people actually say they feel happier.

We say that everything is made up from the mind alone, but isn't it also true that our body influences the mind? Why would we otherwise take on certain forms? A form, and we can see a smile as one, is extremely powerful in nudging the mind. And so throughout the day, not just during meditation, I try to remind myself to smile. And as I am more and more mindful about my expression I catch myself often taking this sort of serious face, a serious look, especially when I think about cultivation, because birth and death is a serious thing you know, cultivation is a serious thing, so you ought to be serious.

My dad was a very serious man, I don't think I ever saw him laugh when I was a kid, so laughter didn't seem to be such a good thing. But, smiling more has helped me a great deal. It has changed my perspective of forms, it has helped me to lead more from the heart and with that to get closer to people, to be more compassionate.

I wouldn't have been exploring this if it wasn't for the people I met in Malaysia during Buddha Root Farm and those I met in our subsequent trip to Indonesia. These people have reminded me of a different way of being, a way to lead from the heart, and I want to share a little story that I think captures that from our two days in Indonesia.

於慈悲，那種溫暖心房的感覺，我卻從來沒有真正體會過。

因此那天早上醒來後，我希望能記住心中的強烈感觸，並不是因為執著這種感覺，而是因為它對我修行的重要性。那麼怎樣才能保留這個感受呢？我嘗試一些改變，其中一個就是早上的打坐。

通常早上打坐時，我會觀想全身上下、從頭頂到腳趾，逐一放鬆身體，同時更加專注。現在打坐則有一點不同：與其只是觀想與放鬆，我會仔細地感恩身上的每一個器官，感恩它們所做的付出：感恩我的頭，每天幫助我解決問題，讓我能好好護持道場；感恩我的眼睛，每天替我看東西；感恩我的鼻子，每天幫我聞味道；感恩我的嘴，每天幫我吃東西，以及讓我能夠說話；感恩我的喉嚨、心臟、肺、肩膀、手臂等等。

這個方法很有意思，它讓我打坐變得越來越平靜愉悅。以前打坐我會因為身體疼痛、不能雙盤而起煩惱；然而現在這個身體成為一份禮物，不再是一種負擔，因為它讓我能打坐，能為聖城服務，能做很多有意義的事。

最重要的一點，我一直提醒自己保持微笑，從打坐開始到結束。在頭幾天裡，我覺得自己很像傻瓜，做得有點勉強；在禪堂打坐還要微笑，實在是很驢的事。儘管找不出需要微笑的理由，我還是堅持下去。令我驚訝的是，還真管用！微笑的力量很大。

有人專門研究過微笑：他們讓人用嘴含住一支鉛筆，保持一個近似微笑的表情。研究目的是想了解，保持微笑會產生什麼效果，即使沒有微笑的意圖。你猜如何？僅僅保持這個微笑的動作也有效，受試者說他們確實感覺比較開心。

我們說「一切唯心造」，難道身體不會影響我們的心嗎？不然我們為什麼要堅持一些形式呢？任何形式，拿微笑來說，對我們的心就有很大的影響。所以我儘量每天，不僅是打坐的時候，都提醒自己微笑。當開始比較注意自己的表情時，我發覺自己時不時會出現很嚴肅的表情，尤其是當我思考修行的時候：要知道，生死是很嚴肅的，修行也是很嚴肅的，所以你必须保持嚴肅。

On the first day, we went to visit the ruins of Borobudur, and then we rented bicycles and rode to the two small temples that are forming a line in front of Borobudur.

At our last stop, when we came out after finishing the visit, it started raining, so we took shelter underneath the shed where this guy had sold us the tickets. I had never seen so much rain, it seemed like somebody was pouring buckets of water from the sky. We waited and chatted with him for quite a while and at around 5:30 he left, it was the end of his day. From underneath the shed we watched him put on his raincoat and take off on his moped, flip-flops on his feet, like it was a sunny day. All the shops closed, pouring down, it was just me, my wife and couple of chickens underneath another shed. Yes chickens, because apparently everywhere in that town there are chickens, it's just like cats or pigeons here, it's quite amazing. So it was me, my wife and these two chickens underneath the shed waiting for it to stop raining, but it wouldn't.

After maybe 15 minutes, still pouring down and getting dark, we see a couple of lights coming toward us, it was clearly a moped, and when it got very close we recognized it was the guy that sold us tickets.

He had come back with two raincoats.

I almost cried, I didn't know how to respond to that, I mean, think about it... it meant this guy, in torrential rain, took his moped, went to buy a couple of raincoats and came back to give it to us. Never seen him before, never gonna to see him again, and he knew that, and yet there he was. We looked at him, he was handing us the raincoats, my wife grabbed him by the arm, she wanted to at least pay him back for the raincoats, and what did he say? He said, "We are friends, no problem," and left.

I was really stunned. I don't think that I actually moved or said anything, but I don't think I ever experienced anything like that...the simplicity of all of it, no lecture on gratitude, there was no second thought, there was no scheming, no nothing, just a genuine human being wishing the best for others and doing it out of joy.

With a smile on his face.

Thinking about it now I think about what the Venerable Master often said about perfecting human virtues and to the Chinese classes where we translated and discussed some verses on "Humaneness." I can only wish to continue to cultivate and hold this sense of joy and gratitude. And a smile on my face. Amitabha! ❀

我的父親是一個很嚴肅的人，從小不曾見過他笑，因此對我來說，歡笑並沒有什麼好處。但是，微笑的確給了我莫大的幫助，它讓我對形式的重要性有了重新的認知，讓我更加能夠從內心，而不是從思維上來行動，能夠更體恤他人，更有慈悲心。

如果不是那些馬來西亞佛根地的佛友，還有在印尼遇到的人們，這一切的改變都不可能發生。這些人用不同的生命形態提醒我，凡事要從心出發。在此和大家分享我們在印尼發生的一個故事。

我們在印尼待兩天，第一天參觀完婆羅浮屠，就租了腳踏車騎去與婆羅浮屠成一縱線的另外兩個佛教古蹟。

當參觀完最後一站，天空下起了雨，於是我們在售票處的帳篷下躲雨。我從沒見過這麼大的雨，真的是傾盆大雨。我們和售票處的小伙子聊了一會兒，大約五點半的時候他下班回家了。我們看著他穿上雨衣，彷彿像晴天一樣輕鬆地踩著拖鞋，騎著摩托車走了。所有的商店都關門了，就剩下我們兩個，還有另外兩隻雞在帳篷下躲雨。沒錯！還有雞，在印尼似乎到處都有雞，就像別的城市裡的貓或鴿子一樣，真是不可思議。我們就繼續等著雨停，但是依然傾盆而下。

大概過了十五分鐘，雨勢沒有絲毫退減，天色也漸漸黑了起來。突然看見一對車燈朝我們的方向緩緩開來，是一輛摩托車；仔細一看，是那個售票的小伙子。

他來給我們送了兩件雨衣。

我感動得眼淚都快掉下來了，不知道說什麼才好。這個小伙子在這麼大的雨中，騎著摩托車去買兩件雨衣，然後再給我們送來。我們素未謀面，今生估計也只有這一面之緣，但是他就在我們面前。看著他遞雨衣給我們，我的同修拉著他的手臂，想要至少付他一些錢。你猜他說什麼？「我們是朋友！不用客氣！」然後就掉頭走了。

我很受震撼，簡直無法言語，這輩子從未有過的經驗。眼前這一幕，如此的單純，沒有感恩的演說，沒有任何斟酌，沒有任何心計，什麼都沒有！只是一個真實的人，以歡喜心為人著想。

他的臉上帶著微笑。

現在回想起來，我記得上人講過要圓滿人道，也記得在中文課裡翻譯和討論的「仁」。在此我只希望能夠繼續以歡喜與感恩的心來修行，面上常帶微笑。阿彌陀佛！❀