



Feedback is More Valuable than Gold

—A Dharma Talk given by Ajahn Amaro at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas

良言如玉——阿姜·阿莫若法師萬佛殿開示

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I'm very happy and honored to once again be here at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas (CTTB). I first visited CTTB in 1990, the year before Dharma Master Heng Lyu received his full acceptance as a Bhikshu, and I have been visiting very regularly since then. I went back to live in England in 2010, about eight years ago. Thus, my visits have been less frequent since that time. But, I still feel a strong connection with the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, and of course Abhayagiri Monastery just up the road in Redwood Valley. I was the co-abbot with the Venerable Ajahn Passano for many years as Dharma Master Heng Lyu mentioned. However now, both myself and Venerable Passano have retired from being abbots of Abhayagiri. It's now under new

我很高興、也很榮幸再次來到萬佛城。我第一次訪問這裡是在1990年，是恆律法師受比丘戒的前一年，此後，我經常前來拜訪。大約在八年前的2010年，我回到英國居住，於是從那時起，我就無法來的這麼頻繁了。不過，我仍然感到與萬佛城、以及北邊紅木谷的無畏寺心心相連。正如恆律法師提到的，多年來我與帕薩諾法師是無畏寺的共同方丈。但如今，我和帕薩諾法師都已從方丈位上退下來了。現在無畏寺由新的共同方丈卡如納達莫法師和納尼可法師主持。我在上周多次提到，我很高興看到我們的佛教事業薪火相傳到下一代手中。那裡的社區蓬勃發展，無論是工作上

management, Ajahn Karunadhammo and Ajahn Naniko are the new co-abbots of Abhayagiri Monastery. I have said many times in the last week, it fills me with great joy to see things passed on to the next generation. The developments of the community there, seeing it thriving with many monks, novices and members of the lay community actively involved in working, living there and supporting the place. Similarly coming here today to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas to see the community flourishing, with many members of the monastic community and lay community gathered here today. I was also shown around the Sudhana Centre, the new facility in Ukiah, the new university buildings being refurbished and redeveloped here on the main campus of City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, and the new Wonderful Enlightenment Buddhist Institute.

The facility that is being developed out in the eastern meadows of the property has been discussed for over more than 20 years ago, so that's very wonderful indeed to see it coming to fruition. At Abhayagiri, a new Dharma hall and new spectacular kitchen with many amenities for the resident and lay community there has been completed within the main meditation hall. That was a project that, again, took quite a few years to design and build, and then coming to see it all completed with beautifully landscaped gardens and more accommodating facilities, a dharma hall that can take a few hundred people rather than just 50-60 people, is very wonderful to see. And when we reflect on these kind of material developments and not just the physical structures like the beautiful, new university



或生活上，許多僧侶、沙彌以及在家人都非常積極參與來護持道場。同樣，如今在萬佛城也看到這個團體的活動豐富多彩，許多出家人和在家人今天歡集一堂，和座落在瑜伽市的新場所——善財參學中心、佛教大學設在萬佛城的主校區有已經整修和重建的新樓以及妙覺佛學院都體現了這一點。

這個座落在東邊草原的開發，已經談論了二十多年，現在看到付諸實施，真是太好了。在無畏寺，主禪堂、新佛殿和新的漂亮廚房的建設已完工，有常住和在家眾的許多設施。這個工程規劃也是耗時多年的設計和建設的，如今，瀏覽竣工的美麗的景觀花園、更多的住宿設施、能容納不是五、六十人而是數百人的佛殿，真是賞心悅目。然而，當我們回顧這些物質性發展時，就不僅僅是映入眼簾的嶄新的大學樓，或美麗的接待設施——無畏寺的佛殿這些物質結構了，我們可



buildings here or the beautiful reception facilities--the dharma hall at Abhayagiri—we can focus on all of it. When speaking with Dharma Master Heng Lyu, I said, “Oh, there is a lot of people living here.. we have about 19 or 20 monks, 70 monks, many, many laypeople, the schools are full and are waiting for the new buildings to be used so that the other buildings can be freed up so that the schools can expanded.” So, we can see these as signs of success or abundance: things going really well, things going as smoothly as we envisioned.

But one of the most common teachings own master, Venerable Master Ajahn Chah, repeated very often was: **Success and failure are of equal value. Liking and disliking are of equal value.** Now, to our ordinary, worldly way of thinking, we hear those words and we think, “Now, wait a minute, that’s not right. Success is much better than failure. Getting what I like is good. Getting what I don’t like is bad.” But this is how the world works. This is the worldly way of thinking. And so, what did he mean when he would say “like and dislike are of equal value” or “success and failure are of equal value”? Using these words, he’s speaking the language of dharma, he’s speaking the language of, say, the perspective of wisdom, of prajna, to change the way we look at our life. So, all of us like success, it’s a full house, the place is energetic, the people are enthusiastic, yes! We feel this is a good thing, but if the mind grasps that goodness, if we take hold of happiness or success, we take hold of things that we like in the very way that the mind takes hold of that success. That happiness, then turns into the opposite by creating a sense of ownership or a sense of, say, dependency. Depending on that success, that praise, that happiness, getting what we like, in the very grasping of it, we create a fear, that it’s going to go away or that it’s not going to be like this next year. Or, now we’ve got to hang on to this. So, when we see things with the lens of dharma, when we see things with wisdom, we see that succeeding and failing are of equal value because just as we like to succeed and we like to get things in the form that pleases us, when we experience things we dislike, our first feeling will be “Oh, no, it’s really awful, I’ve got an illness or nobody’s showing up or that program we launched, nobody signed up for it. We’ve got this beautiful new university, and no students have applied. Or these beautiful new buildings are all empty. We might think of this as failure, as bad and wrong—what we don’t want.

But if we are wise, then we’ll recognize the quality of failure, of getting what we don’t like, this is an experience that arises in the moment that we say, “Oh, this is exactly what I didn’t want; this is a bitter taste.” Although this is something that leaves a bad

以專就此點來探討。當我和恆律法師交談時，我說，「哦，這裡都住滿了人，學校也很擁擠，期待搬進新的建築，這樣其他建築可以騰出來，學校也可得以擴展。」所以，我們可以把這些視為成功或富足的標誌：事情進展得一帆風順，一切稱心如意。

但是我們的導師、阿姜查大師最常重複的教導我們的是：**成功與失敗同樣重要，喜歡和不喜歡同等價值。**

現在，按照我們一般世俗的思維方式，聽到這些話時就會想，「等等，這不對。成功勝於失敗；得到我喜歡的是好事，得到我不喜歡的是壞事。」世界就是這樣運作的，這就是世俗的思維方式。那麼，阿姜查大師說「喜歡和不喜歡同等價值」，或「成功與失敗同樣重要」，這究竟意味著什麼呢？他是用佛法，用智慧的、般若的視角來教導我們，以改變我們看待生活的方式。我們都喜歡成功，這裡賓朋滿座，這個地方充滿活力，這裡的人們充滿熱情，太好了！我們認為這是件好事情，於是心裡想抓住這些好事，如果我們喜歡成功或幸福的感覺，內心就認為它們是我們喜歡的事物而牢牢抓住，那麼反而我們就會產生了一種想擁有或依賴的感受。依賴於成功、讚美、幸福，得到我們所喜歡的，就在這執取之中，我們就心生畏懼，怕其離我而去，或怕其不復再來，因而覺得我們現在必須牢牢抓住。相反，當我們用佛法審視這些事時，當我們用智慧觀察這些事物時，我們就會發現成功與失敗是等值的。就像我們喜歡成功，喜歡事物合我心意，但當不喜歡的事情發生時，我們的第一感覺就是「噢，不，這真是糟透了。我病了；或者沒有一個人來參加；或者我們啟動的項目無人問津；我們建起了大學新樓，無人申請入學；或者這些漂亮的新建築，空無一人。」我們可能認為這些就是失敗、糟糕和錯誤——這不是我們期望的。

taste in one's mouth, but the mind doesn't have to create suffering around that, so we don't have to grasp dislike or failure or being with the uncomfortable. So, this is a very simple teaching but a very powerful and very liberating one. Now, when I talk about this, I often invite people to carry out a little exercise. So think of something, say, five or ten years ago that was a big success for you, that you were really happy about. You finally got accepted as a bhikshu or bhikshuni, you got taken on as a professor at the university, you received a pay raise, you were appointed to a new position, you got your book published, you finally got the house paid off, and you thought, "Great! Fantastic!" Yes, I invite all of us to think back maybe five or ten years to some event in our lives that we thought, "Great! That's exactly what I wanted!" and then to think of that same event five or ten years later and think, "Ugh! Why was I so happy? Why was I celebrating when I got that new house? Little did I realize how difficult the neighbors would be!" Or, "When I got my book published, I was so happy to get my book published, and suddenly, all my friends hate me because my book is successful, and they feel jealous. Oh, I didn't see that coming." Or, "Finally, I finally got to enter into the bhikshu life, at last I'm a bhikshu. Oh no, I've got to keep all these rules. Oh, dear." So, these are ways that we can look back and, say, look at some event in our life we were so happy about, "This is exactly what I wanted." But, then, when we look at it from a distance, "Oh, how could I have been celebrating?" In the same way, look back five or ten years to some event in your life that was really a problem: you got really ill, you've had some big conflict--you were fighting with someone, you lost all your money, you got thrown out of the monastery, everyone decides you're a terrible person, and they all hate you. And we look back at that, and at the time, you think this is awful, this is a disaster, the building has fallen down, it was my design, and we wasted a huge amount of money, and it was my fault, and then five or ten years later, you look back and you think and you realize, "Oh, well, I hated it at the time, but actually, that was the best thing that ever happened to me."

Any of you ever had that kind of experience? I see a few people smiling and nodding their heads. I'm not a psychic, this is not psychic power, this is just statistics. This is how we are as human beings. So, I feel this is a very useful, little exercise to perform. So, when we look at that, what does that say about gain and loss? About success and failure? About liking and disliking? What that means is that when we get what we like and we think, yes, this is exactly what I wanted, hooray, at last, we're getting that building

然而，如果我們明智一些，我們就會認識到這些失敗的感覺、這些得到我們不喜歡的東西的感覺，都是在我們說「哦，這正是我不想要的，這真糟糕！」的那一瞬間產生的。雖然這是一種不讓人喜歡的味道，但我們心裡不必因此而產生苦的感受，也不必抓住不喜歡、失敗或者令人不快的事物不放。所以這是個非常簡單，而且強有力和令人解脫的教誨。當我談到此事時，我常常邀請人們做一個小練習。比如說，你們想想五年或十年前，你很成功、你為此感到開心：你終於成為比丘或比丘尼了；你被評為大學教授了；你加薪了；你升遷了；你的書出版了；你最終付清了房貸。然後你覺得，「太棒了！好極了！」是的，我邀請我們中的所有回我們生命中五或十年前的一些事件，讓我們覺得「太棒了、這正是我日思夜想的」一些事件，然後在五或十年後再回顧這些事，思考這些事。「哎！我那時候為什麼那麼高興？為什麼要慶祝得到那所新房子？怎麼完全沒有意識到鄰居們是多麼難相處！」或者，「當新書出版那時，我興高采烈，但突然，所有的朋友都因為我的書暢銷而恨我，他們心懷嫉妒。哦，對此我始料未及。」或者，「我終於成為一名比丘，我可以過我的比丘生涯了。哦不，我必須遵守所有的這些清規戒律，哦，天哪！」所以，這就是我們回首往事的方式。看看我們生命中曾經讓我們如此快樂的、「這確實是我夢寐以求的」。但是，若干年之後當我們回首往事，「哦，我怎麼會為那些事而慶祝？」用同樣的方式，回顧我們生命中五或十年前的那些重重困難：你重病纏身；與人反目——與人爭鬥；你的錢財蕩然無存；你被逐出廟門；人人都認為你是一個壞人，他們都恨你。回首那時場景，你認為糟透了，是大災難：我設計的建築物倒塌了，使我們浪費了大量金錢，這一切都是我的錯。然後，五或十年以後，你回過頭來想一想，你意

constructed. Then, to think, well, wait a minute, maybe this is not the whole story, maybe I should not grasp this as something intrinsically, automatically good. Maybe I should know this is the flavor of sweetness. This is the beautiful flavor of getting what you want. It's just a flavor. And, when things go badly and your project fails and people dislike you or criticize you, you need to view these disliked things with the same perspective, this is bitterness. This is a bitter taste, so what can be learned from this? This is the feeling of getting what you don't want. Okay, what can be learned from this? Venerable Ajahn Chah, would always emphasize, it's not whether we like it or we dislike it, but what can we learn from it? That's the important principle, that's the essential principle, rather than focusing on getting what we like, what we dislike, whether we succeed or we fail, the focus is on what can we learn from this? In our lives in the monastery, in monastic training, we all do our best, we are sincere, we try hard to purify our hearts of greed, hatred, and delusion, whether you're from the northern tradition or the southern tradition, all of us are working in the same way, to do the best we can. To live in a skillful way, to recognize our habits that are unwholesome or unskillful, and to change them. To live in a more beneficial way, a way that brings peacefulness and happiness to ourselves and to other people, but we all make mistakes. Regardless if it is the north tradition or the south tradition, we all make mistakes. We say things that are unkind or are not really, completely true, or we react in ways that are cruel or selfish. We act in ways that are aggressive or unkind, again I can't read anybody's mind. I don't have CCTV cameras on all of your residences, for this is how we are as human beings. We make mistakes, but one of the aspects of training that the Buddha established and I feel is very beneficial, both for the monastic community and the lay community, is that the Buddha did not expect us to never make mistakes. Rather, he understood this is why we train ourselves because we're not perfectly in line. We're not completely free of greed, hatred, and delusion.

識到，「哦，不錯，那時我對此耿耿於懷，但實際上，這是曾經在我身上發生的最好的事情。」

你們中有人有過這樣的經歷嗎？我看到有人微笑著點頭。我不是通靈師，這也不是未卜先知的力量，而只是統計數據。這就是人類的行為模式。所以，我認為做這個小練習是非常有用的。當我們觀察事物時，何謂得、何謂失？何謂成功、何謂失敗？何謂喜歡、何謂不喜歡？這意味著當得到我們所喜歡的、我們會想，對，這正是我們想要的，哇，我們終於把那座樓造好了，然後，想一想，啊，等一等，這可能不是故事的全部，或許我不應該抓住這件事，而認定它是本質上自然而然的喜事。或許我應該知道，這是甜蜜的味道。這是如願以償的美好的味道，但它只是一種味道而已。而且，當事情變壞、你的工程失敗、人們不喜歡你或者批評你，此時，你要用同樣的方式來看待這些不如意的事情，想想，這個苦只是一種苦味而已。所以，我們從中可以學到什麼呢？這是我們得到不想要的東西的感覺。好吧，能從中學到什麼呢？阿姜查大師總是強調，這不是我們喜不喜歡的問題，而是我們可以從中學到什麼？這是個重要原則、基本原則，重點不是得到我們喜歡的或不喜歡的，我們成功或者失敗，而是我們從中能領悟到什麼呢？在我們的出家生活中，僧人訓練中，我們盡力而為，誠心誠意，努力淨化自己那顆貪、嗔、痴的心。不管我們是來自北傳佛教、還是南傳佛教，我們都一樣的盡心盡力，以善巧方便的方式生活，認識到我們的壞習氣和善巧方便的欠缺，並改正之。要以自利利他的方式帶給自己和他人平和、快樂。當然我們都會犯錯。不管是北傳還是南傳的，我們都會犯錯。我們說的話不慈悲不夠真實，或者我們的態度冷酷無情或自私自利，我們的行為咄咄逼人或毫無善意。再說一遍，我沒有他心通，我沒有在你們的住處安閉路電視攝像頭，因為我們人類就是這樣。我們都會犯錯，不過佛陀建立的訓練特點之一，就是佛陀不期望我們永不犯錯，我認為這對於僧眾和在家人來說，都是非常有益的。佛陀充分瞭解我們為什麼需要訓練，因為我們不是完美無缺的，我們還沒有完全擺脫貪、嗔、痴的羈絆。