

A Tea Gathering with Monks from Abhayagiri Monastery at Dharma Realm Buddhist University : Q & A (II)

法大茶話會——無畏寺的行腳比丘問答（二）

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Audience: How do you do your alms rounds?

Tan Nisabho: We usually stop four or five miles before the top of the town where we go for alms. By the time we arrive there, we'd usually find a shop or a gas station to start, and around 9:00-9:30 people are already there. As we wait while there trying to be restrained, there are many friendly people looking at you because they are interested.

At Abhayagiri, we're so far removed from the main city center that begging for alms was something we would only do once a week; it's more of an enterprise, but it is still manageable. One of biggest things about tudong is that it's not so much about practicing asceticism such as begging for alms and bearing the cold, but rather to remind ourselves not to take for granted what we have at the monastery. Sometimes unexpectedly people who don't have a lot are the ones who give you the most.

聽眾：你們是怎樣托鉢的？

尼沙薄法師：我們會先抵達距離托鉢的城鎮大約四到五英里的位置，然後開始走去城鎮；進城以後，一般找一個商店或者加油站之類的，大約九點或九點半開始，就有比較多人出現在街道上。你就等在那裏，保持淡然，用友好的態度對待那些看你的人，因為他們對你非常感興趣。

無畏寺距離主要的市中心實在太遠，所以我們大約一周托鉢一次。這對我們來說，實在是一種磨練，不過還是做得到的。托鉢行腳最重要的意義，不在於練習乞食或者受凍這類的頭陀行，而是在提醒我們，不要把道場擁有的一切視為理所當然。有時出乎意料地，給你最多東西的，反而是那些擁有的不多的人。

Audience: I assume in Ukiah now people are used to seeing people from Abhayagiri and they're used to your traditional practice now, but in the past, did you find that there were people questioned, "Who are you?" or were they sort of familiar with your alms rounds from articles or other sources?

Tan Nisabho: I think pretty much nobody recognized us.

Audience: How did you explain what you do to them?

Tan Kovilo: Usually they'd ask, "What are you?", and then point at our bowls and ask, "What's that?" We'll say this is an alms bowl, and I am an alms mendicant, and that we use it to accept food daily on our alms round. Sometimes they'd say, "That's a cool bowl!" and go on their way. Sometimes they'd ask, "Oh does that mean you accept money?" And we'll say, "Actually no, we can only accept food." Then they would say, "Sorry, I don't have any food but I can buy you some food." So they would go in the store to get us something.

In Thailand, as alms round is such a part of the village culture, it's expected that people know what you are. It is an alms round; we literally walk all around. But here in America, if we were walk through the city we wouldn't get any food. So we stand by a market, but at a far enough distance so we're not imposing. We haven't had anybody ask us to leave. If they did, we would of course leave. So far it's been respectful enough and that's largely how we've been doing it.

Audience: Do you have to tell people about any dietary restrictions? Or do you accept whatever they give you?

Tan Kovilo: In the Theravada tradition, there are very few things we cannot eat, such as human flesh, horse flesh, dog flesh, hyena flesh, snake flesh, bear flesh—things nobody is going to give you; foods you can't buy at McDonald's. Sometimes people do ask, "What do you want?" My first answer was, "Whatever you want to offer." If there were a clear indication that we can state some preference, then we'd ask for something vegetarian. We don't really eat meat if it's our choice. We don't really have to go into it that much detail, but some people get the sense that "you are Buddhist, you don't eat meat, and so we'll offer other things."

聽眾: 瑜伽市的人們大概已經習慣看到無畏寺的托鉢僧人，而且也熟悉你們這個傳統。但是在這之前，有沒有碰過人家問「你們是誰」這類的問題？或是從文章或者其他的管道，對你們有一些認識？

尼沙薄法師: 我想，基本上沒人認出我們來。

聽眾: 你們怎麼跟他們解釋你們所做的呢？

尼沙薄法師: 通常他們會問：「你們是誰？」然後指著我們的鉢：「這是什麼東西？」我們會回答這是一個鉢，一個乞食的容器，用來在托鉢的路上裝獲得的食物。有的人會說：「這碗很不錯！」然後就走了；有的會問：「哦，那你們接受錢嗎？」我們會告訴他們：「我們不接受錢，我們只接受食物。」然後他們會說：「哎呀，我沒有帶食物，不過我可以買一些給你們。」就進店裏去買了。

在泰國，托鉢已經是村莊文化的一部分，可以預期人家知道你們是誰，因此可以沿路托鉢。但是在美國，如果照這樣在城裏沿路走一圈，那麼就真的只是走一圈，什麼食物也沒有。因此我們會站在市場附近，保持足夠遠的距離，免得太過顯眼。我們還沒遇過有人要求我們離開，當然如果他們真的要求，我們肯定會離開的；目前為止，大家都彼此以禮相待。基本上，這就是我們托鉢的方式。

聽眾: 你們會讓人家知道你們的飲食禁忌嗎？還是人家給什麼，你們就接受什麼？

科威洛法師: 按照上座部傳統，只有少數東西不能吃，就是人肉、馬肉、狗肉、鬣狗肉、蛇肉、熊肉。這些東西也沒人會給你，你在麥當勞也買不到。如果有人問：「你們

Audience: Is there an opportunity to speak dharma or is that part of the practice?

Tan Kovilo: The opportunity is there I guess. Just like we had a man who offered food to us two days ago. He lived on the streets a lot, and was sort of saved by the Christian church, but he was really disillusioned with that and wanted to talk. I think most people want to talk. They just want someone to listen to them. So it was nice that we were able to provide that and people noticed the robes indicate something. Honestly, he was so generous; he took us to the grocery store. He did not look like he had any money, but he said, “Get whatever you want, \$50, \$75, just get it all.” It was really moving.

Audience: I know you're not out to be missionaries but I'm curious if people wanted to know more what led you to this religion, this conversation that would naturally lead to something about your religion.

Tan Kovilo: It does come up. Many people know about CTTB, but very few people know about Abhayagiri. Only a few people know our temple, including this man who offered us a full meal. This particular man said he had the most peaceful experience of his life, just coming and sitting under a tree here at CTTB, and many people are touched by CTTB here. A good handful of people knew CTTB and associated us with you. Which is fine!

Tan Nisabho: This kind of spiritual pilgrimage is also important to Venerable Heng Sure and the monks in your tradition who've done a bowing pilgrimage, but that's way more hard core than what we do. In terms of responsibility at the monastery, the Buddha has listed several dangers of staying too long in the monastery or going on tudong for too long. The dangers of doing tudong too long is that one does not hear dharma, one does not practice in line with what was heard, one has no friends, and one contracts severe illnesses. There's a fifth danger that I cannot recall. The dangers of staying in a monastery too long is that one becomes competent in many tasks, one takes on many duties, and one develops relationships; there are also some more, but I don't remember them. I know many abbots who've done the practice one month each year, and will be adamant about getting time to do this.

Audience: What physical and cultivation-related dangers have you two personally felt that you've experienced?

Tan Kovilo: In terms of cultivation, it's been great having a friend. No real dangers cultivation-wise, only good challenges.

要什麼？」我會先回答：「任何你願意布施的東西。」如果對方表明讓我們選擇食物種類，我們就會要求素食；有選擇的時候，我們都不會吃肉。其實不用講太多的細節，有些人很自然就明白：「哦，你們是佛教徒，所以你們不吃肉，我給你們其他的食物吧！」

聽眾：托鉢過程中會有機會給大眾講法嗎？還是說托鉢過程一般都會包含講法？

聽眾：托鉢的時候，有機會向對方說法嗎？還是本來就應該向對方說法？

科威洛法師：法布施的機會是有的。就像前兩天給我們食物的那個人，他是個街友，好像也有接受基督教會的救濟，但是對於這種救濟他感到有點失望，因為他更需要的，是跟人的互動交流。我相信大多數人都想跟人聊聊，希望有人願意聽他們說話。我們很高興自己能夠做到這一點，他們也因此有機會認識出家人。老實說，那個人非常慷慨，儘管看上去沒什麼錢，但他帶我們到一家雜貨店，跟我們說：「你們需要什麼就拿，五十、七十五元都沒關係，盡量拿。」這令我們很感動。

聽眾：我知道你們托鉢的目的不是去傳法，不過我很好奇，人們是不是會想要知道更多關於你們為什麼要托鉢，而這種話題一般就能自然的引導到一些關於你們的宗教。

科威洛法師：確實有這種情形。基本上，聽過無畏寺的人不多，但是不少人，包括供養我們一整頓飯的那個街友，都知道萬佛聖城。他說這一生最平靜的時刻，就是在萬佛聖城的一棵樹下坐著。很多人對萬佛聖城印象深刻，也有人把我們當作是聖城的出家人。不過這也沒關係，挺好的！

尼沙薄法師：這類的行腳，對於像恆實法師以及有過三步一拜經驗的其他大乘比丘而言，同樣具有重要的修行意義。當然他們的行腳方式，比我們的更困難得多。就道場的執事而言，佛陀說過住道場太久，或者出去遊方太久的危險。如果出去遊方太久，就聽不到法、不能把修行與聽到的法相應實行、沒有同參道友、還會生大病，第五條危險我不記得了。如果住在道場太久呢，則會擅長太多的事情、身兼數職、太多外緣等等，還有一些但我記不清

In terms of dangers, it really does get cold. Fortunately, I've got this super thick wool samghati. Mostly it's fear rather than actual dangers. Fear of not getting enough.

Tan Nisabho: It was only five days; it's not forever. I'd say the dangers for me are more at the monastery, because I can just take things for granted and get too comfortable. For me, that's the danger.

Audience: What's your packing list?

Tan Kovilo: The bowl, the robes, a helpful tarp tent that really helps with keeping warm at nights, gloves and hats, water filter, sewing kit, and a razor. These are general things we always have to use and take along with us as monks.

Audience: Do you do pujas ceremonies every night?

Tan Nisabho: Yes, every night.

Tan Kovilo: Our little ceremonies, (our pujas), have been quite a nice thread throughout the trip and we can dedicate the merit to our deceased and living relatives and to our teachers. We've also been using that time to reflect, after the formal Pali chanting. One of us will take turns leading and do the "Homage to the Triple Gem" in different forms and then sometimes chant the parittas or the Metta Sutta, which we've been doing a lot. These traditional kinds of tudongs give good energy to beings in the area.

Tan Nisabho: This time our pilgrimage was only a week. But I think the schedule in the monastery can get monotonous as well. It's the same thing every day. You have the same little annoyances and pet peeves, life can really become that. If you have a chance to step out for a brief period, moments like this give you new perspective on life. You can meet new dharma friends and that sense of kali and metta really becomes apparent when you see people who don't know the benefits of renunciation and are always hungry for more.

Audience: They're touched by it.

Tan Nisabho: Yes, these journeys have truly resonated with me. It's been really, really touching. For me today at CTTB, it's been one of the best days in a long time. It's been good to meet everyone.

了。我知道很多寺院的方丈每年都會行腳遊方一個月，也很堅決騰出時間保持下去。

聽眾: 是否經歷過什麼樣的危險，無論身體上或是修行上的？

科威洛法師: 就修行而言，有個同參道友是很好的。修行上，我們並沒有遇到什麼真正的危險，只有一些很好的挑戰。真要說危險，有時氣溫確實很低；不過幸運的是，我有一條很厚的羊毛僧伽黎（袈裟）。更多時候面對的，是內心的害怕，而不是實際的危險，害怕沒法獲得足夠的食物。

尼沙薄法師: 外出行腳只有五天，不是一輩子。對我來說，危險更多的是在道場，當我們把擁有的視為理所當然，日子過得太舒適——對我來說，那才是危險。

聽眾: 你們的行裝都放些什麼？

科威洛法師: 鉢、僧衣，還有一個實用的攜帶式帳篷，讓我們能在夜間禦寒。另外還有手套、帽子、濾水器、針線包以及剃刀。這些都是比丘經常攜帶的東西。

聽眾: 每天都有晚課嗎？

尼沙薄法師: 是的，每晚都有。

科威洛法師: 晚課，是行腳途中很美好的環節。我們把所有功德迴向給去世和在世的眷屬，還有師長，並且利用巴利文誦念結束後的時間來反省自己。我們輪流當維那，用不同形式皈依三寶，有時候還唱誦《衛護文》或《慈經》，這都是我們常唸的。這些托鉢行腳的傳統，能傳遞好的能量給當地的眾生。

尼沙薄法師: 這次行腳只有一個禮拜，但是即使在道場，我們的作息也差不多是這樣。每天日子都一樣，甚至連煩惱和抱怨也一樣，生活真的可以這樣過。如果有機會抽離一下，對人生就有新的視野，就有機會結識新的同參道友，同時也會長養自己的捨心和慈心，當你遇到那些不認識離欲的好處，而渴望獲得更多的人。

聽眾: 他們很為此所觸動。

尼沙薄法師: 是的，沿途的這些際遇在我內心迴盪不已，令我很受感動。就像今天在萬佛聖城，是很久以來感覺最好的時刻之一。能跟各位結這個緣，感覺真的很好。