

Gratitude 感恩

A Dharma talk given by Brooks Hansard at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas on April 1, 2019

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Good evening all good and wise advisors, Amitabha. Tonight, I would like to talk about the importance of gratitude.

As the volunteer coordinator (for the men at CTTB), a big challenge that I've noticed volunteers tend to encounter is a mindset that is averse towards taking on new work or attending the ceremonies. This is only natural, as most people, including myself, would have such a mindset. For instance, for the first couple years when I was a volunteer, whenever I would be asked to do additional work beyond my assigned work that I was already responsible for, although I would agree to do it, in my mind I would not want to do it. I'd feel this inner reluctance to do it because there would be other things that I'd rather be doing at that time. That was the selfishness in my mind. After volunteering for a couple years, I finally had the realization that the opportunity to volunteer at CTTB is very rare and I should not take it for granted. I realized that this was a precious opportunity for me to create merit and virtue, and to transform my selfish mind into one of selflessness by volunteering for the Sangha.

大家晚上好，各位善知識，阿彌陀佛。今晚我想談談有關感恩的重要性。

作為一名聖城男眾義工協調員，我發現義工們可能面臨的大挑戰是不願接受新工作或參加法會的心態。對多數人而言，這種心態是很自然的一種現象，我自己也是如此。我剛到聖城作義工的頭幾年，每當被指派做工作範圍外的差事，即便答應去做，內心也不十分情願。我發現這種內心的抗拒是因為自己有其他想做的事；這個心態其實是自私的。擔任義工幾年之後，我終於了解在聖城擔任義工是非常稀有難得的機會，不應該視為理所當然。我明白這是讓自己積功累德的寶貴機會，也能藉著服務僧團將習氣中的自私轉化為無私。我很慚愧地說，雖然許多人服務道場的時間遠遠超越我，但至少我對義務工作的心態已有所改變。

Although I'm ashamed to say that others volunteer much, much more of their time to serve CTTB than I do, from that point on at least my mindset towards volunteer work had changed.

Such a change of mindset also occurred for me when it comes to ceremonies. Residents at CTTB attend the ceremonies every day. For me at least, doing the ceremonies on a daily basis caused me to lose the mindset of devotion during the ceremony because it became monotonous for me. The monotony would cause me to feel bored by it, and I would lose interest in trying to maintain single-pointed concentration. I would start false thinking during the ceremony or have an apathetic mind towards it, feeling like I was there because I had to be, not because I wanted to be. Yet now that I'm living outside, that mindset has changed. I look forward to any opportunity I might have to participate in the evening ceremony. Once I'm at the ceremony, I'm usually very vigorous in trying to maintain a focused mind. This is because now that I'm living outside CTTB, I no longer take the ceremonies for granted. I see them as rare opportunities and am happy to get the chance to participate in them.

So I will encounter this type of mindset with the volunteers too, who can sometimes be very honest with me and confess that in their minds they don't want to do extra volunteer work or attend the ceremonies even though they know they should. The reason might be due to tiredness or their bad habits, such as laziness, that are making it difficult for them to do these things. Whenever I hear volunteers tell me this, I can empathize with them and I might tell them about my own similar experience, which I just mentioned to you. One thing, however, I make sure to mention is how rare it is for them to get this opportunity to live, practice, and work at CTTB. I'll say this to them: "Think about all the people who live on the planet. How many of those people will ever have the chance to practice and volunteer at a proper monastery like CTTB, where people are sincere in their practice and uphold the precepts? Such people are a very, very small minority of the human population. Now expand that to include all the innumerable animals that live on planet Earth. The people who can work and cultivate at CTTB becomes an even smaller minority. Then expand that to include all the people who were alive before the Buddha's time or never had a chance to encounter his teachings after he entered Nirvana, and also take into consideration that the Proper Dharma is continuing to die out in the world and is becoming more and more difficult to encounter, until eventually it will be gone completely from this world. Is it not rare to encounter the Proper Dharma? Also, the amount of time you can live and cultivate here is limited. This is probably just a passing stage in your life as even

參加佛殿功課，我在心態上一樣有所改變。聖城的常住眾，每天都要參加佛殿的早晚課。但對我而言，每天上殿做功課讓我失去一種投入感；覺得單調乏味，而無法專心用功。參加佛殿功課的時候，不是打妄想就是漠不關心，因為到佛殿並非出於自願，而是被要求。但現是我住在聖城外，過去的心態也隨之改變。我很期待有機會到聖城作晚課，一旦有機會參加，我會努力保持專注。因為現在我住在城外，不再像以前那樣能把上佛殿做功課視為理所當然。我認為這是很難得的機會，也很高興有機會參與。

我和其他義工們也會遇到這樣的心態，有時他們會坦誠地告訴我，他們不願意接受工作之外的額外差事，或者不願意參加佛殿功課，雖然他們知道應該要作。原因也許是他們太累了，或者過去的一些習氣毛病，比如懶惰等種種的因素障礙他們做這些工作。當義工告訴我這些狀況的時候，我可以理解；如同前面所說的心態轉變，有時我會跟他們提到自己的經驗。但我一定會告訴他們一件事，那就是能夠住在聖城，在這裡學習，作義工，是多麼稀有難得的機會。我通常會這麼說，「想想看在這個地球上，有多少人有機會到一個像萬佛聖城這樣的正道場去修行、作義工？這裡的住眾都很誠心的修行和持戒，這些人只佔人口極小的比例。如果我們將地球上所有的動物都算進去的話，能夠到聖城修行，當義工，這個機會更是稀有難得。假如我們再往前推，將生在佛前或者佛入涅槃之後沒有機會值遇正法的人也算進去；更何況正法逐漸消失，不僅難遭難遇，有一天也會在這個地球上滅盡。如果這樣，我們今天有機會聽聞正佛，這不是稀有難得嗎？此外，能夠在聖城修行、作義工的時間其實是有限的；也許只是我們一生中一個過渡的階段。即使是長期的義工，當聖城住眾

our long-term volunteer residents usually don't live here beyond several years. So don't miss out on this rare opportunity! It won't last forever! Take advantage of it while you still can because it will be over before you know it.” I might tell them that life and death is a serious matter and should not be taken lightly. This is our one opportunity to transform our bad habits. We should not squander this opportunity to transform our destinies.

The overriding message I try to convey to them is one of gratitude. I feel gratitude can really help motivate us to serve the Three Jewels and keep vigorous in our practice. Putting into perspective how rare this chance is and being grateful for this opportunity can instill new life, new vigor, and zeal into one's practice. It can make one enthusiastic and joyful about Buddhist practice and serving the Three Jewels.

So what is gratitude? For me, one form of gratitude is remembering and appreciating the blessings we have in our lives. It involves constantly reminding oneself of those blessings. For instance, all of us at CTTB have so many blessings. Throughout most of the world there is so much suffering, and people are willing to undergo great hardship just for the chance to live in a country like ours, where they can have economic opportunities, freedom to express their views and beliefs, openly practice their religions, and don't have to worry about corruption, oppression, violence, or whether their material necessities will be available on a daily basis. To add to that, we at CTTB even have the blessing of being able to cultivate the Proper Dharma in a supportive community and environment, which is a blessing upon a blessing. The Buddha discussed this when he once said to his disciples: “Suppose, monks, this mighty earth were one mass of water, and a man were to throw down upon it a wooden yoke with one hole. Then comes a wind from the east and wafts it west, and a wind from the west wafts it east. A north wind wafts it south and a south wind wafts it north. Then once at the end of a hundred years a blind turtle pops up to the surface. Now what do you think, monks? Would that blind turtle push his neck through that yoke with one hole whenever he popped up to the surface at the end of a hundred years?” At that point, his disciples answered, “It is unlikely, World-Honored One, that the blind turtle would do that.” The Buddha then responded, “It is just as unlikely, monks, that one will be born as a human, just as unlikely that a Tathāgata should arise in the world, an Arahāt, a fully Enlightened One; just as unlikely, monks, that the Dharma and the Vinaya proclaimed by a Tathāgata should be shown in the world. But now indeed, monks, this state of human birth is won, and a Tathāgata has arisen in the world, and the Dharma and Vinaya proclaimed by the Tathāgata is shown in the world.” Here the Buddha is illustrating just how rare the opportunity that we are now

也不過短短幾年。不要錯過這個難得的機會，義工的機會不會永遠都有的。趁著自己能夠做的時候，好好的把握這個機會，因為機會可能很快就消失了」。同時我也會告訴他們要嚴肅看待生死大事，不要輕忽。因為在這邊當義工可以對治我們的習氣毛病，不要錯過改變自己命運的機會。

我常常提醒他們要記得感恩。我發現懂得感恩能夠激勵我們護持三寶，並且精進修行。從這個觀點來看，會對這個難得的機會生起感恩之心，就能為修行注入新的生命、新的活力和熱情；也可以讓我們對修持佛法和護持三寶產生熱誠和歡喜。

什麼是感恩呢？對我而言就是要珍惜我們的福報，要經常提醒自己所擁有的這些福報。比如說，住在聖城的住眾非常有福報。世界上到處都充滿了苦難，人們願意忍受極大的痛苦爭取在像我們居住的國家生活的機會，能夠擁有經濟機會，能自由表達自己的觀點，可以公開參加宗教活動，不用擔心腐敗、壓迫和暴力等等的事情，也不用為日常生活的必需品操心。除此之外，在萬佛聖城，我們更大的福報就是能夠在一個互相支持的團體中修行正法，這可謂福中之福。佛陀曾在一次與弟子的談話中提及，假如整個大地都變成大海，有人投入了一塊木頭，這塊木頭上面有一個洞，這塊浮木隨著東風漂向西方，隨著西風漂向東方，隨著北風漂向北方，隨著南風漂到北方。有隻盲眼的烏龜，每一百年才浮出水面一次。

佛陀對弟子們問到：「比丘們，你們想想，盲龜每一百年才浮出水面一次，盲龜從這個浮木的孔洞鑽頭出來的機會有多大？」弟子們就答覆說：「世尊，這是不太可能的。」佛陀就說：「比丘們，人身難得就好像

currently encountering is, and it also illustrates how blessed we are. Of course, we all know that our lives are nowhere near to being perfect; however, we shouldn't expect too much, given that we live in the human realm of the Saha world, where our karmic debts are being repaid. If we don't contemplate our blessings, we can take them for granted. Indeed, we are truly blessed to be living where we live and having the opportunity to practice the Proper Dharma as taught by the Venerable Master.

I think another form of gratitude involves remembering and appreciating how others have helped us in the past and any acts of kindness they might have extended towards us. In regards to this, the Buddha said: "If there is a person who knows how to be grateful, he or she, never being oblivious of small favors, to say nothing of great acts of kindness, deserves honor. Should that person be a thousand or one hundred thousand yojanas away from here, he or she would not after all be far away; that person would, as it were, be close to and not estranged from me. For this reason a monk should know that I always admire and praise someone who knows how to be grateful. Those who do not know how to appreciate great acts of kindness, let alone small favors, are neither close to me nor am I to them. Even if an ungrateful person formally wears his or her saṃghāṭī robe in my presence, he or she is after all far away. Therefore, I never say one should not be grateful. For this reason, O all? monks, you should be mindful of gratitude and you should not imitate others who do not have gratitude. Thus, O all? monks, you should train."

Having gratitude also involves remembering, appreciating, and focusing on the good qualities in others. Such a mindset can help us cultivate kindness. Unconditional kindness arises when we don't see others' faults, and don't blame or accuse other people of wrongdoing. A fault-finding mind is full of afflictions, suffering, and is a major hindrance to having patience and kindness. It can lead to resentment, strife, and contention. On the other hand, if we have gratitude by remembering that no one is perfect and reminding ourselves of other people's strengths rather than their weaknesses, we can develop kindness and have peaceful and harmonious relationships.

Gratitude nurtures such harmonious relationships because it can help us cultivate *ren* (仁), translated into English as humaneness or benevolence. Ren is not only the foundation of a benevolent and humane relationship, but also the foundation of filial respect. From an outside perspective, Confucian filial respect might be seen as a system of rigid hierarchy, where subordinates

盲龜要遇到這塊浮木一樣。要值佛出世，要遇見一位羅漢，一位圓滿覺悟的聖者也是如此困難。比丘們，佛法跟佛的戒律是很難得的，但已出現於世。」佛陀是要告訴我們擁有人身、值遇佛法和戒律，我們是多麼稀有難得，多麼幸運。當然，我們都知道我們的生命並不是很完美，我們不應該期望太多。我們生在娑婆世界，生而為人，就是來酬償業報。假如我們不珍惜我們的福報，我們就會把一切視為理所當然。更可貴的是，我們可以住在這裡，有機會按照宣公上人教導的正法修行。

另一種形式的感恩就是要記得感謝別人曾經給予我們的幫助，和曾經對我們展現的任何善意。關於這點，佛陀曾說：「一個懂得感恩的人，不會忽略別人對他施與的任何一點小惠，更不用說那些大的善意。即使這個人離我一千或者百萬由旬之遠，其實離我並不遠，對我也不陌生。比丘們應該知道，我尊重讚歎懂得感恩的人。假如一個人不知道感恩，他既不能親近我，我也不會接近此人。一個不懂感恩的人，即使他搭上僧伽梨衣出現在我面前，也是離我很遙遠。因此，我強調每一個人都要心存感恩，我們不要學那些壞樣子。比丘們，你們應該要好好訓練。」

感恩還包括要記得、欣賞和關注他人的優點，這樣的心態能幫助我們長養慈心。無緣大慈來自於不看他人的過失，不責備他人的過錯。專為別人洗衣服就是自尋煩惱與痛苦，障礙我們長養忍辱跟慈悲，也造成人際關係的怨恨、衝突和爭吵。從另一個角度來看，假如我們存有感恩之心，經常記得沒有任何人是完美的，常看別人的長處而非短處，就可以建立一個良善、和諧的人際關係。

感恩長養和諧的人際關係，可以幫助我們培養「仁」，翻譯成英文就是人道或是慈善。「仁」不僅是善良和人道的基礎，也是孝順的根源。從外在的觀察來看，儒家的孝道是很死板的一個階級觀念，下屬要服從和尊敬他們的上級。如果我們深入

are simply expected to obey and respect their superiors. However, a closer look at Confucianism shows that ultimately filial respect is based on *ren*, or humane relationships, and is based upon repaying the kindness of our parents, elders, and teachers. Mahayana Buddhism expands this list by also encouraging us to repay the kindness of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, as well as the kindness of all living beings, who in the infinite expanse of past lives were at some point our parents. Repaying others' kindness stems from gratitude. If we don't remind ourselves, with gratitude, of others' past kindness towards us, we cannot be filial and develop kindness, benevolence, and humanity towards all living beings.

We are living in a world full of strife. We as humans fight on many different levels and in every arena of life. We fight physically to the point of killing others; we fight verbally by scolding others, arguing, and bickering. We also fight in our minds by criticizing others, keeping mental lists of all the ways we have been wronged, and holding on to resentment and animosity towards others. I wish that all living beings will instead be grateful towards one another, and through that gratitude cultivate kindness, humaneness, benevolence, and filial respect towards all. I wish that all living beings will remember others' kindness and work to repay that kindness. A mind of gratitude is needed now more than ever. Amitabha! ❀

瞭解，儒家的孝道其實是建立在「仁」或者人際關係上，也就是讓我們能夠報答父母、長輩和師長。大乘佛法把這樣的觀念擴而大之，鼓勵我們應該報恩，對佛菩薩乃至於對所有的眾生，我們把他們當成過去的父母。回報他人的善意源自於我們的感恩之心，我們如果沒有時常提醒自己，他人過去曾經給予我們的善念，我們就無法行孝，也就是仁慈、善良、人道的對待所有的眾生。

我們生活在一個充滿衝突的世界。人類在各個層面和各個領域中鬥爭。在身體上的鬥爭就是殺生，在語言上的鬥爭就是責罵他人和爭吵，在意念上的鬥爭就是在心裡批評別人，在心中所有列出自己被冤枉的清單，並懷抱對別人的怨恨和敵意。我希望所有眾生都能夠彼此感恩，通過感恩來培養對所有眾生的仁慈、人道、善良和孝道。我希望所有眾生都能記得別人的善意並予以回報。當今世界最需要的就是感恩之心，阿彌陀佛！❀

我們所有的一切都是由積集而成的；積集而成，也就是由小而大，由近及遠，由淺入深。這個菩提，也是一點一點修成的，不是一天就能成功的。釋迦牟尼佛在三個大阿僧祇劫來修福修慧，也就是積集菩提；他百劫種相好，也就是積集菩提。

你學佛法，就是積集菩提；你不學佛法，就是把菩提丟了。善者覺也，菩提就是覺，你丟了菩提就是不覺了——不覺悟自己是錯了，不覺悟自己把時間都空過了。

有定慧的力量，有神通的力量，才能積集菩提力；菩提的力量，就是一種覺悟的力量。覺悟，就是你不明白的事情就明白了，你不懂的也懂了。本來我不懂佛法來著，現在我一聽這個佛法就明白了，甚至於我不聽都覺道了。

—1969年宣公上人講述於〈普賢行願品〉法會

Everything we have comes about because of accumulation. The great comes from the small; one goes from near to far; and enters the deep from the shallow. Bodhi is also cultivated to perfection step by step; it does not happen in a single day. Shakyamuni Buddha cultivated blessings and wisdom for three great asamkhyeya kalpas. This is to accumulate Bodhi. For one hundred kalpas, he perfected the minor characteristics. This is also to accumulate Bodhi.

From this explanation, it is easy to understand the principle of accumulating Bodhi. If you study the Buddhadharma, you accumulate Bodhi. If you do not study, you lose Bodhi. Bodhi is enlightenment, and so if you lose Bodhi, you are not enlightened. If you are not enlightened, you are not aware when you are in the wrong, that your time passes in vain.

If you have the strength of Samadhi, wisdom, and spiritual powers, then you can accumulate Bodhi. The strength of Bodhi refers to the strength of your enlightenment, and enlightenment refers to understanding things you did not previously understand.

—A Lecture by the Venerable Master Hsuan Hua in 1969 on the Chapter of *Universal Worthy's Conduct and Vows*