



Meditating on Metta (II)

慈心禪（二）

Q&A Given by Tan Pesalo at Dharma Realm Buddhist University on September 15, 2019

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Question: You have told us to try and see what practice works for us, but if a practice doesn't seem to work, how do we know if it is the wrong practice for us or if we just need to try harder? For example, maybe a person tries to extinguish the flames in a burning house, but they only use a glass of water. Instead of concluding they need mere water, perhaps they think they need to try using oil or something else. In reality, they are just not going about putting the fire out this way. How do they figure out what will actually work?

問：您曾告訴我們，要試試看什麼法門適合自己。但如果某一法門似乎不適合，我們怎麼知道是因為這個法門不對機，還是我們應該更精進修持？比方說，如果房子失火，只潑了一杯水去滅火，人們沒下結論說應該用更多水，反而覺得應該試試別的，例如用油救火。事實上，這樣肯定不能滅火。怎麼能知道什麼方法才真正管用呢？

Tan Pesalo: One, for some people, they can just keep trying, keep going with it and it sticks. Two, for others, this won't work. They think, "I've tried that. I tried that for a long time and it never works, so I'm not going to try it anymore." Trust yourself when you get to that point. Three, talk to someone that you trust, perhaps a teacher and tell them about your experience, and then ask, is that enough? Four, find something that actually does work and use that as a reference point to this other thing.

Question: At some point I just stopped focusing on the meditation topic of "Who is mindful of the Buddha?" Instead, I started focusing more on a mantra, which seemed to work better. But I never really had a sense if I should have just tried harder with my first meditation topic and stayed with it longer. Did I give up on my original topic too quickly?

Tan Pesalo: Can you know what works, when you've tried it. Only you can know for yourself, yet there's a sort of talking around it as if we only have so many years before we're going to die. But then we only try it for ten minutes or ten days, which is not the right way to practice and go about it. Someone might think, "I tried the asubha practice, and it made me angry and depressed to the point that I wanted to kill myself. Then, I tried the loving kindness meditation and I felt better." Someone then said, "But you should do the recommended meditation; that's the right one." If you're fortunate enough to find something that works, then do that. The whole idea (behind practice) is a cessation of suffering. Find anything that leads the cessation of suffering. There are so many practices.

Question: Have you found any of them that worked for you?

Tan Pesalo: This is a bigger question to answer. Samatha vipassana practice is for experiencing tranquility with its practice for insights, watching one's breath, and sort of feeling the bodily presence. Butoh (mantra) meditation or any sort of mantra meditation is a Brahma Viharas practice. Application of metta, loving-kindness, is to achieve gladness

帕薩羅法師：

第一，對於有些人來說，堅持下去，一直努力做，就會有相應。

第二，對於其他人來說，這種方法未必有用。我試過了好久，從來沒有用，那我就去再試了。當你到了那個境界的時候，就相信自己的判斷吧。

第三，跟你所信任的人去談一談，例如找位善知識，告訴他們你的經歷，問問他們，我試了這麼久，夠了嗎？

第四，去找找那些有人試過真正可行的法門，以此當作你的參考。

問：「念佛是誰？」我參這個話頭參了一段時間就會開始改為集中在一個咒上，而這樣好像我打坐效果更好。但我一直都不知道我是不是應該多努力堅持在最開始的參話頭上，而不是這麼快就放棄了換成咒？

帕薩羅法師：只有在你試過並證明有用之後你才能知道一個法門對你是否相應。只有你知道什麼對你有用。也有這麼個說法說我們生命只剩下這麼多年了，但我們試的時候只試個十分鐘或者十天的話，那也不是正確的方法。有人可能會想：「我以前曾經試過『不淨觀』，但那把我弄得易怒和抑鬱，以至於我甚至都想自我了斷了。然後我就試了慈心坐禪，就好多了。」有的人則說，「但你應該去參禪；那才是正確的禪」。我覺得如果你能有幸找到一個相應的法門，就去做吧。我們最終的真正目標是了苦。找到任何可以幫你實現了苦的法門就好。你知道的，有很多法門都可以。

問：你有沒有找到哪些對你相應的法門呢？

帕薩羅法師：這個問題問得比較廣啊。

and equanimity. These are all samatha practices to calm, to ground, to center in order to get the mind in a happy place where it can then turn towards wisdom and investigative practices. Let's say you have some work that you have to do in your house. For instance, let's say a tree branch fell, and it crushed an entire corner of the house, and you're furious that this happened, and as a result, you spin out with anxiety. This might not be the best time for you to pick up a power tool. If you can go take a walk, go on vacation, and then come back. Then when you're in a place where you can work calmly, that's the time to work on the house or turn toward wisdom. Ajahn Chah said to trust in that. Your question's great because it's really, really hard to answer, and I feel that one can only answer it for oneself.

Sometimes you might think that you're on the right track but you're really not. For somebody who has a tendency toward depression, metta is the way to go. Most likely if they do the (meditations on that which is foul or unattractive) asubha practice, it's going to make them even more depressed, they probably shouldn't clue which might ultimately lead somebody to suicide. It's just a matter of balancing these things, becoming adept at learning how perception works. You need to know when to focus on the positive, focus on the beautiful, focus on the negative, and focus on the drawbacks to see which ones lead to a sense of balance for oneself.

If you're in the depths of depression or anger, it could probably be really hard to steer that ship around quickly into a boundless love for all beings in one field.

The prayers of "freedom from affliction," "freedom from hostility," "freedom from ill will," and "may every one abide in wellbeing." When you're falling apart and filled with fear or anger, it might just be that saying such words would be putting seeds in the ground that at some point in the future might give fruit.

You're thinking skillful thoughts, right thoughts, let's just say, if you were going to start a weightlifting practice, at first you might not see or feel anything, but if you just keep doing it, eventually you will see change. It's the same with the metta practice; you just need to trust it. ❀

止觀修行是利用觀心觀息和一定的觀身來修止。持咒修禪則是梵行修行。慈心大悲則是用來培養歡喜和寧靜。這些都是用來平息內心的止法，從而讓心到達一個歡喜的境地，然後就可以轉向修慧和參禪。舉個例子，假設你現在要去給自己的房子做點修繕。如果有一棵樹倒下了，把你房子的一角都壓壞了，然後你不由得變得很暴躁很焦慮，那這個時候也許你暫時不應該拿起你的電鋸去幹活。如果你去外面走一走，休息一下，然後再回來——等你心安下來可以平靜的幹活的時候，這才是你修房子的時候，也就是你心轉向修慧的時候。阿姜查說過，相信那個時候的你。你的問題很好，因為這個問題真的很難很難回答，我覺得每個人都只能回答自己的情況，不能一概而論。

有時候你可能覺得你走在正軌上，而事實上卻完全不是。對於一個有抑鬱症傾向的人來說，慈心是正道。如果他們選擇不淨觀的話，那很有可能讓他們更加抑鬱。他們會集中關注在那些不淨的方面，如果他們抑鬱而又特別關注這些的話，就可能最終讓人想要自殺。這主要是一個怎麼平衡各方面的問題，靈活的學會如何去觀。你得知道何時觀正面的東西，觀美麗的東西，觀負面的東西，觀缺陷的東西，然後看哪個對自己來說能帶來那種平衡的感知。

如果你現在深深陷在抑鬱或者憤怒中，那要你馬上把你的心轉向對所有眾生的無邊的愛可能會很困難。我們的祈願文說「遠離煩惱」，「遠離敵意」，「遠離惡意」，和「願眾生安樂」。當你崩潰了，內心充滿了恐懼或憤怒的時候，只是念誦這些詞句都可以在你的心底種下種子，然後在未來某個時候可能就會結果。

你在想到善巧心和正念。我們這麼說吧，假設你要開始舉重訓練。在一開始你可能根本看不到或者感覺不到任何效果，但你不停的堅持鍛鍊，最終你就會發現很大的變化。慈心修行也是一樣的，你只需要對它有信心。 ❀