

Untie the Knot of Guilt

解開內疚的心結

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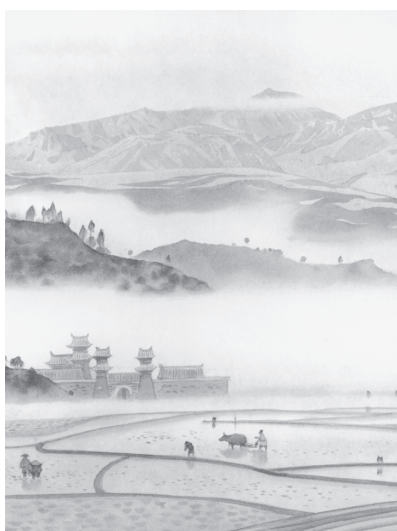
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I'm going to talk about guilt. But, first here is a quote from the *Anguttara Nikaya*: "Three things by which a wise person may be known. First, he sees a shortcoming as it is, when he sees it. Second, he tries to correct it. Third, when another acknowledges his shortcoming, the wise one, forgives this as he should."

Let us define two types of guilt. The simple fact one does something and feels bad about it is one. The other is seeing or projecting one's mistakes while not knowing what to do about them or refusing to correct them. The second is the cause of a lot of mental suffering in the West. Now the second form of guilt leads to negative paralyzing emotions based on non-acceptance of oneself or the situation one is in, and that leads to depression and frustration rather than change or improvement.

Guilt is usually a negative focus upon oneself. As an example, one might believe, "I am an evil person. I can't bear being myself. I am unworthy." Even religious people may experience this. It can also turn into a self-deprecating from laziness. This can lead to self hatred, and certainly contributes to a lack of self-confidence.

Instead of realizing that one's actions are incorrect, one feels as if one is unworthy, as if one is intrinsically bad. And, this sense of "I am bad," can have devastating psychological effects.



我要談的主題是內疚感。首先，我要引用南傳上座部典籍《增支部》裡的一段經文——「若成就三法者，即應知是為智人，云何為三者耶？於過見為過，於過見為過而如實悔除，復如法承認他人對過之發露懺悔。」（成就三法被認知為智者。哪三法呢？對過錯見是過錯，見過錯是過錯後懺悔、當別人如法地懺悔過錯時接受）

現在，讓我們來定義兩種不同類型的內疚感。第一類內疚感的產生很簡單，源自於一個人真的有犯錯。第二類內疚感的產生，源自於一個人認為或預測自己會犯錯，卻不知如何處理、或是拒絕改正錯誤。在西方社會中，很多人因為第二類型的內疚感，在精神上受到很大的折磨，因為無法接受自己，導致對自己或自身所處情況感到漠然。處在這種狀態時，會讓人陷入抑鬱、沮喪的情緒中，而不是企圖振作或改變現狀。

內疚感通常是一種自我的負面情緒；比如說，覺得自己是一個邪惡的人、對自己無法忍受、覺得自己沒有價值。上述這些情緒反應可能會出現在一些宗教人士身上，並形成一種自貶的懈怠狀態，導致自我嫌惡，最終成為一個缺乏自信的人。

當一個人有第二類型的內疚感，不會意識到自己的行為是不正確的；而是認

In Buddhism, the “I have done something bad,” kind of guilt is categorized as a disturbed attitude. One does not see the situation clearly, and this may well be a tricky form of repentance that is self-centered.

We must face what we have done and make a commitment to break the cycle. In meditation, we can contemplate whether this action was motivated by desire, hatred, or ignorance. We can realize it was wrong, and we do not want to do it again in the future.

When we encounter situations in the future that elicit guilt, there are seven antidotes one can use to counteract guilt or self-blame. The first antidote is to reflect on responsibility. Often it may prove that the situation was not one's sole responsibility or fault. Blaming oneself for every negative thing that happens is a form of ignorance and self-centeredness. Obviously, if one is careless or deliberately caused a problem, then one should take responsibility and see to it that they never repeat this regrettable action.

The second antidote is to reflect on one's motivation. An act done with positive intentions, especially one unmotivated by self-interest is not as negative as an act done with harmful intentions. Although others may have been harmed by it. The suffering experienced by others was also the result of their own karma.

The third antidote is changing or accepting. If you can change yourself or the situation, change it. If you can't, accept it.

A fourth antidote is to analyze why one feels guilty and to find the ability to forgive as one recognizes that forgiveness is possible when one realizes the situation one faced, and the responses were all part of the human condition.

For the fifth antidote, we must recognize that in this life we make mistakes. If we can't forgive ourselves, we will also not be able to forgive others.

For the sixth antidote, do a reality check with others, to help overcome feelings of guilt and shame. Talking through a situation of concern with someone you trust to see if your reasons for feeling guilty are actually valid.

The seventh antidote is to realize emptiness as an ultimate cure for all delusions. Realizing emptiness will also rid our mind of guilt as it destroys all negative emotions at the root. In summation, try to transform lack of confidence, ignorance, and mental paralysis with the purification of repentance, forgiving

為自己活著沒什麼意思、認為自己天生就很差勁。這種「我很壞」的想法，會產生破壞性的心理影響。這種思維和一個人因為犯錯而感到內疚，貌似相同，但實際上非常不同。在佛教中，第二類型的內疚感被歸類為一種令人不安的態度。這種態度不僅讓人無法看清情況，這種態度的懺悔也可能是自我中心主義的巧妙偽裝。

我們必須面對我們所做的一切，試著打破這種循環，去觀照這些行為是否源自貪、嗔、癡。不對的，以後不再犯。我能不再犯嗎？以下有七個解方來對治我們的內疚感或自責。

第一種解方是責任反省。通常許多情況都可能不是我們單方面的責任或過失。為發生的每件負面事件而自責，這是一種無知和以自我為中心的表現。更確切地說，如果一個人有意或無意中製造問題，那麼這個人就應該承擔責任，確保他們不再重蹈覆轍。

第二種解方是動機反省。以積極的態度去做事，如果不帶有自利心，那就不像有害人之心的行為那麼負面；儘管有人可能因此受到傷害。嚴格地說，他人之所以受苦，是他們自身的行為或業力使然。

第三種解方是改變或接受。如果我們能夠改變自己或是周遭的境緣，就試著改變；如果不能，就接受它。

第四種解方是分析為何會感到內疚並找出諒解的能力，當我們認清很多我們面臨的狀況，所產生的反應不外乎人性，這時便能原諒。

因此第五種解方是原諒。人都會犯錯。如果我們不能原諒自己，就無法原諒別人。

第六種解方是和別人一起釐清真相，以克服愧疚感。試著聽聽別人的客觀分析，看看自己列舉產生內疚感的原因是否合理。

第七種解方，明白空性是對治所有妄想的終極藥方，擺脫內疚感最好的方法，是從根本上消除所有的負面情緒。最後，我們要試著懺悔淨化、試著原諒自己、試著以愛和慈悲心對待自己、試著以平靜、開放、真實的態度與他人討論。以智慧將我們缺乏自

oneself, experiencing love and compassion for oneself, practicing equanimity, being open minded, checking in with trusted advisors, and use all of these to turn wisdom into positive action and fearlessness.

I want to share another thought with regard to self-confidence. At one time, I experienced a great deal of stress about my bad karma. I inquired about it, and I discussed it with my teacher. He asked me if I had undergone a repentance ceremony. And I told him that I had done so three times, and then he said, “Do you have true faith?” And I thought I did. “But then by doubting, by continuing to feel guilt, after having undergone the repentance ceremonies, if you still feel guilt, then you do not have true faith,” he replied to me, so we have built in for us here, the means for erasing our karmic hindrances that we have taken advantage of. If we don’t accept the power of the repentance ceremony, we are negating all of our effort from participating in that ceremony. That seems to be self-destructive. So I urge everyone to accept themselves as human beings, and to practice true repentance to eliminate unnecessary guilt and self-blame.

There is a traditional verse of repentance “Samantabhadra Bodhisattva’s Conduct and Vows” from Chapter forty of the *Avatamsaka Sutra*. The verse goes like this, “*For all the evil deeds I have done in the past created by body, mouth and mind from beginningless greed, hatred, and delusion. I now know shame and repent them all.*”

But actually, the true practice of Buddhist repentance is not so much the asking for divine forgiveness. It is the clear recognition of our unskillful actions (of body, speech, and mind) done intentionally or without mindfulness, which are the results of our lack of compassion and wisdom originating from our unwholesome attachments, aversions, and delusions. After recognizing our misgivings caused by our unskillful actions, we make resolutions to be as mindful as we can, so as to never repeat them under any circumstances. In this sense, repentance is about forgiving oneself through expressing regret for unskillful actions, and turning over a new leaf absolving oneself of unhealthy guilt while renewing determination to further avoid evil, do good, and purify the mind with greater diligence.

If you truly practice repentance properly, you won’t be bothered by unhealthy guilt anymore. ❀



信、無明和愚痴這些負面情緒轉為積極的態度、無畏和自信。

我要分享另一件跟自信有關的事。有段時間，我因為自己的惡業而承受很大的壓力，我去請教我的老師（宣公上人）。他問我，「有沒有去拜懺？」我告訴師父，「我去參加過三次拜懺法會。」師父問我，「你對懺悔法門真的有信心嗎？」我說，「有。」然後師父說，「如果參加拜懺法會之後仍然有懷疑、有內疚感，那就表示你對懺悔法門沒有真正的信心。」我因此意識到，我們是真的可以藉由拜懺來消除業障。如果懷疑拜懺的力量，我們就是否定自己參加拜懺法會的所有努力，其實就是一種障道因緣。

「往昔所造諸惡業，皆由無始貪瞋，從身生語意之所生，一切我今皆懺悔。」這首偈頌是出自《華嚴經》〈普賢行願品〉，是一首最簡單，也最廣為修習的懺悔偈頌。

佛教中的懺悔法門並不僅僅是請求佛菩薩的原諒，而是清楚地意識到，我們有意或無意地透過身語意產生種種不成熟的行為，都是因為妄想和執著使得我們缺乏慈悲與智慧。認清我們的過失後，盡可能地保持正念，不再重蹈覆轍。懺悔就是藉由表達悔意以得到原諒，擺脫不健康的內疚感，同時下定決心要斷惡修善，精勤的淨化我們的自性。

如果你真正如法修行懺悔法門，你就不會再被不健康的內疚感所困擾了。 ❀