

The Inner Tyrant

心魔

An Excerpt from Ajahn Sucitto's Dhamma Talk, "Unseating the Inner Tyrant",
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Ajahn Sucitto graduated college with a degree in English and American Literature from the University of Warwick in 1971. He went to India in 1974 on a spiritual pilgrimage, and found himself studying Buddhist meditation a year later in Thailand in 1975. In 1976, he was ordained as a Buddhist monk. Later that year, he met Ajahn Sumedho and studied under him for many years. He was part of the original group that founded Cittaviveka, Chithurst Buddhist Monastery, in England led by Ajahn Sumedho. He served as the abbot there from 1992 to 2014. He currently resides there and continues to devote himself to cultivation and teaching.

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Do you ever find yourself dominated by a chain of thought that tells you that you're not good enough, that you don't deserve much, and that other people look down on you or tolerate you out of politeness? Do you find yourself snagging on memories of things you did wrong, or relationships that you didn't get right? Do you feel that you have to be a success in life like you think someone else is — and are consequently critical of yourself? This piece of psychology is called 'the Inner Tyrant'. The good news is that it's not just you who has this, and that you can get free of its grip. And the key to this is through establishing, and continually

你是否曾發現自己被一連串的想法所支配，覺得自己不夠好，不配得到太多，旁人看輕你或是出於禮貌而容忍你？你是否也發現自己總糾結於犯錯的回憶，或是經營失敗的人際關係？你是否也覺得必須像他人一樣擁有成功的人生——因此不斷苛求自己？這種心理被稱為「心魔」。所幸的是，有這種想法的，不僅你一人，而且你還是能擺脫這樣的糾纏，但關鍵在於你得通過建立而不斷重整正思惟。

re-establishing, right intent.

Intent is the attitude or inclination on which we base our actions, and in a life that is full of things to deal with, it's easy to lose touch with that base. Yet intent is significant; it creates a bias and affects how we see things, and how we will act or speak. If we hold a negative intent, we see things in a negative light; if we clear a hostile or depressed intent, the heart feels light and clear. And our actions and speech follow in accordance. This is the principle of cause and effect, right view, the foundation for the Path out of suffering and stress.

So, how do we get in touch with right intent?

The simple answer is that right intent has to come from the depth of the heart, not from its turbulent surface. Focusing within, you can notice that wholesome inclinations lead to freedom from turbulence, anxiety and regret. This feels good, whereas inclinations that are pushy, embittered or deceitful don't feel good. So you can know both the wholesome and the unwholesome, and through steering away from the unwholesome you can come into balance. To live in this balance entails regarding oneself and others with the same intent of kindness and compassion: 'to others as to myself.' This is right intent. The heart is in its natural undivided state, and the resulting balance feels good.

So 'intent' isn't an idea in your head, but the inclination of your heart. And right intent, or right motivation (*sammā-sankappa*) has three inclinations: kindness, compassion and renunciation. These three work together: as you experience warm-heartedness towards yourself and extend it to others, you feel more contented and less needy. So right intent helps us to let go of the pull of the senses and instead focus on conscience and fellow-feeling. Tuning into and sustaining this right intent generates self-respect. Then, if we act in accordance with right intent, we make good friends and cultivate a livelihood that isn't caught up with greed or manipulation. In such a lifestyle the heart feels stable and comfortable.

If right intent isn't accessed, the mind gets snagged on the moods and thoughts that pass on the surface. Then we don't recognize the basic goodness in ourselves and get stuck in disputes, fantasies and worries. And if energy goes into thinking about what we are and what we should be, between feeling inadequate and trying to prove ourselves, the mind never consolidates and comes into its strength.

The heart is divided by doubt, and in that fluster the mind produces narratives such as I am "not a very good person," I am "impure," I "can't concentrate," I am "not very mindful at all, etc. So as the heart loses balance, it divides, and the sense of self creeps in, along with judgements, doubts and comparisons with others. This is anything but right intent! In this respect, even good ideas can be problematic — because they take

思惟是我們行為所依據的態度或意向，在目不暇給的生活中，很容易就忘失這個根本。然而，思惟是至關重要的，它可以生起偏見，進而影響我們看待事物、應對或談話的方式。如果是負面思惟，我們就會以消極的視角看待事物；如果我們清除了敵對或負面思惟，內心就會感到輕鬆和清晰。我們的言行也隨之改變。這是因果法則、正知見，是解脫痛苦壓力之道的基礎。

那麼，我們該如何持有正思惟呢？

最簡單的答案就是，正思惟必須發自內心深處，而非外在的情緒助瀾。專注於內觀，你會觀照到圓滿的思惟是從念頭的波動、焦慮和追悔中解脫出來；這種感覺很好，而不是那種咄咄逼人、悔恨或狡詐的思緒，那些思緒只會讓人感覺很糟。因此，你可以明白善與不善的心態，並透過遠離不善而取得平衡。生活在這種平衡下，需要以同樣的善意和慈悲來對待他人及自身：「待人如己」，這是正思惟。心處於自然而不分別的狀態，由此產生的平衡讓人感覺良好。

所以「思惟」並非你腦中的想法，而是你內心的意向。正思惟 (*Sammā-Sankappa*) 具有三種傾向：善良、慈悲和出離心。這三者相輔相成：當您體驗到自我的熱情延伸到他人時，您會感到更滿足，減少需求感。因此，正思惟可以幫助我們擺脫六根的誘牽，轉而專注於良知和同理心，以調整並且維持這種正思惟而讓我們自重。如果我們按照正思惟做事，我們會結交善友，培養一種不墮於貪婪和操縱的生活方式。在這樣的生活步調中，心會感到安定和舒適。

如果沒有正思惟，心就會被表層

you up into your head and into 'self-view' — a notion of what you should, could or couldn't be.

Even inspiring teachings get twisted if we approach them with self-view. For example, the Buddha advised the recollection of Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha in order to give rise to gladness and confidence. But, if we recollect the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha with self-view we think, "Buddha equals somebody a lot better than I am; Dhamma equals something I haven't got very far with; and Sangha equal a bunch of people who belong to something I'm not part of." The idea hasn't been translated into a heart-sense, and instead turns into a self-view. Yet, if I see a beautiful sunset, I don't think, "I'm not as big and beautiful as that!" or "I'm not part of that." I can take it in and appreciate it — because my heart gets the meaning of its beauty, and receives and relaxes into that. Re-collection is like that; it's a means for uplifting the heart by receiving and empathizing with qualities like understanding, joy, freedom and integrity. Then, you partake of their beauty, and see them in your own heart. But, when we compare and define, "This is me. This is the other." Then there is self-view, and even beautiful things make one miserable. This isolated and self-critical view speaks loudly and is very domineering. That's why I call it "the Inner Tyrant."

The Inner Tyrant wants a perfect self-image. You've probably met him or her. The Inner Tyrant is the nagging voice that demands that you achieve impossible standards of perfection, never offers congratulation or appreciation, exaggerates shortcomings, indicts you with total responsibility for events of which you may have only had a part, and based on this, delivers indifference or scolding. Sometimes the Tyrant keeps urging you to do more, or try harder — advice that may have its place, but is inappropriate when it's applied to a divided heart. It adds more weight to carry when carrying a self-image is already making our lives problematic. So, by trying to make us form a satisfactory self-image, the Inner Tyrant actually impairs our actions.

The painful flaw of self-view is that it makes how I feel, and what passes through awareness, into who I am. So, as what comes up into awareness is often a mix of unresolved memories and impressions, this habit of identification gives rise to a hurt or flawed self who keeps rehashing old

情緒和想法所縛綁。如此，我們就會因為無法意識到自己原有的良知，而陷入諍論、妄想和煩惱中。如果我們把精力用在思索「我們是什麼」和「我們應該成為什麼」，在覺受不妥和想要證明自己之間，心永遠無法堅定、無法發揮力量。

心因疑惑而分別，在這種慌亂中，心會產生諸如「我不是一個很好的人……；我不清淨；我無法專注；我完全沒有正念……」等想法。所以，當心失去平衡時，它就會分別，自我意識會潛入，伴隨而來的就是批判、懷疑以及與他人做比較；這絕對不是正思惟。在這種情境中，即使好的想法也可能不圓滿——因為此時這種失衡在你的心中，讓你有「我見」——一種處在你應該、可以或不可以成為什麼的我相中。

如果我們帶著「我見」去學習，即使鼓舞人心的教義也會被扭曲。例如，佛陀教導我們要憶念佛、法、僧，以生起歡喜和信心。如果我們用「我見」去憶念佛、法、僧，我們會想：「『佛』是遠勝於我的人；『法』深似海，我還不能深入；『僧』是一群和我不同的團體。」這個想法沒有轉化為內心的覺受，而是變成一種「我見」。

然而，如果我看到美麗的日落，並不會認為「我沒有如此壯觀美麗！」或是「我不是其中的一份子」。我可以接受並欣賞它——因為我的心感受到美好的意象，並領受而感到放鬆。集中心思就是如此，這是一種通過接受和感同身受、快樂、自由和正直等品質來提升心靈的方式；你接受它們的美好，並使其影現於心。但是當我們比較和定義「人、我」時，即使美好的事物也讓人有難受的想法，這種孤立、自我批判的觀點能淹沒一切，且毫不講理。這就是為什麼我稱它為「心魔」。

「心魔」想要一個完美的自我形象，你可能見過他或她。「心魔」也是一種叨嘮的聲音，它要求你完成不可能達到的完美標準，但卻吝於祝賀或鼓勵又放大缺點，把所有的責任都歸咎到擔任小角色的你身上；以此為由冷漠或呵責以待。有時，心魔也會不斷督促你多做一點，或者更努力——這些建議或許有理，但當它讓

grudges, disappointments, and regrets in an attempt to clear them. This self fixates on the details of “she said this five years ago and then yesterday she did this,” or sinks into “I’m always anxious and am never going to make it,” again. So whenever we identify with thoughts and emotions, we stop relating to them with the compassion that could resolve them. Then, the Inner Tyrant takes over. It cuts off access to the natural empathy of the heart. It will generally urge you to feel bad about yourself, and to give up on yourself; and when that sense of self-respect is out of the way, then the heart is prone to addictive habits and feeling “It’s all a waste of time anyway.”

Life is difficult enough already. We live in a realm of separations, needs, brutalities, and the inability to hold on to something that’s satisfying. We can’t prevent pain or sorrow coming to us; we’re all swimming around in this sea of difficulty or ‘dukkha.’ That being so, the most important thing to bear in mind is to not drown in the water; to let go of the weight of identity and learn to swim. This is why the Buddha presented a way to release the heart from seeking or believing in any self-image. Whether that image is bad or good, it will lead to comparisons, conceit, pride, despondency and a loss of right intent. And it’s only when we can stop forming a fixed impression of ourselves, the heart finds balance and is clear. Then, it can stop taking on dukkha.

The Inner Tyrant however is committed to making how I feel into who I am. Or it makes an ideal and an absolute out of “stopping” to the extent that we assume we should even stop feeling, to becoming “I am that which doesn’t feel.” Then, when one does feel some happiness, the Inner Tyrant takes over and says, “Don’t hang on to that. That’s self. Let go of that.” So we attach to an idea of not-self and reject the feeling. The truth about the Tyrant is that it can’t handle feelings. It can’t relate to or be fully with what’s going on. So it adopts ideological positions and control strategies. It’s a judge, whose demands and verdicts come from losing touch with the good heart. The scenarios are exaggerated, the verdicts severe, the punishments only make matters worse — but the Tyrant can’t operate any other way. It’s trapped; the Inner Tyrant is a piece of stuck psychology, a view that relates to the heart through an idea. ❀

你以分別心來做的時候就不適當；當自我形象已經給生活帶來問題時，它會增加心的負擔。因此，試圖營造一個令人滿意的自我形象，心魔實質上正是毀害我們的行為。「我見」是苦的深淵，在於它讓「自我的感受」以及藉由意識傳遞的東西，變成了「我是誰」的認知。由於意識中出現的往往是不全的記憶和印象所攪和，這種認同的習慣會導致受傷或有殘缺的自己不斷重提舊怨、失望和遺憾，以試圖清除它們；這種自我執著於一些小細節，比如「她五年前這麼說，然後昨天她卻做了這個」的細節，或者「我總是很焦慮，再也做不成了」這種思緒。所以，每當我們認同這些想法和情緒時，我們就不再用慈悲心去解決問題。心魔隨之接管，讓我們與本有的同理心徹底分離。

心魔通常會促使你感覺自己很糟，放棄自己；當這種自重感消失，心很容易沾染成癮的習氣，認為「反正一樣都在浪費時間」。日子已經夠辛苦了，我們生活在一個充滿分離、需求、殘酷的世界；沒有能力抓住令我們滿足的事物。我們無法阻止痛苦或悲傷降臨，我們都在苦海裡浮沉。因此，要謹記在心的是不要溺水，要放下身段學會不在苦海中沉溺。這就是為什麼佛陀提供一種方法讓心靈從尋求或相信任何自我形象中解脫出來。無論這個形象是好是壞，都會導致比較、我慢、貢高、沮喪和失去正思惟。只有當我們停止對自己塑造既定印象時，心靈才能找到平衡，變得清明，進而離苦。

然而，心魔致力於塑造「我知道我是誰」，或者它產生一種理想和絕對的「禁閉」，讓我們甚至覺得自己應該停止感覺：「我是沒有覺受者。」然後當一個人確實感受到一絲幸福時，心魔即刻說道：「不要執著在那上頭，那是我相，放下它。」於是我們又執著於非我的懸念並拒絕這些覺受。心魔的真相就是它無法處理感覺，它不能與正在進行的事情連結起來，或者完全了解正在發生的事情。因此，它採取意識形態和控制策略。心魔是一個判官，要求和宣判我們與良知切斷聯繫，導致情節被誇大，判決更嚴厲，而懲罰只是讓事情變得更糟——但心魔不和其它方式妥協。它被困住了；心魔是一種被絆住的識心，一種通過念頭與心靈相連結的見解。❀