

Mettā, Vipassanā, and Samatha

慈觀、內觀、奢摩他

A Dharma Talk Given by Ajahn Pasanno in the Buddha Hall at the Sudhana Center on April 11, 2016

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In 1974, Ajahn Pasanno took ordination in Thailand, where he trained under Ajahn Chah. He spent twenty-four years in Thailand before moving to California on New Year's Eve of 1997 to become Co-Abbot of Abhayagiri Monastery. Ajahn Pasanno is the senior-most Western disciple of Ajahn Chah in the United States, and in the world after Ajahn Sumedho and Ajahn Khemadhammo. A monk for over forty years, he is now the retired Abbot of Abhayagiri, where he trains monks in the Thai Forest Tradition. His relationship with Dharma Realm Buddhist Association continues a friendship that started between the Venerable Master Hsüan Hua and Ajahn Sumedho. Ajahn Pasanno has acted as one of the certifying masters in many ordinations in the DRBA tradition.

阿姜·帕莎諾於1974年在泰國正式出家後，便跟隨阿姜·查修行。在泰國修行24年之後，於1997年元旦前夕來到加州擔任無畏寺的共同住持。在美國，阿姜·帕莎諾是阿姜·查最資深的西方弟子，全世界僅排在阿姜·蘇美度和阿姜·柯麥哈莫之後。僧臘超過40年的阿姜·帕莎諾目前是無畏寺的卸任住持，負責培訓泰國森林佛教傳統的僧人。延續宣公上人與阿姜蘇美度的友誼，長老多次應邀擔任法界佛教總會傳授具足戒的證明師之一。

Today I was asked to speak on the inter-relationship of *mettā* or loving-kindness and *samatha* and *vipassanā*. *Samatha* is calming meditation or tranquility, and *vipassanā* is insight or insight knowledge. It sounds very theoretical, but it is a really important aspect of consideration as we engage in our practice, our development of the heart. The purpose of the Buddhist teachings is to lay a foundation for freedom from suffering,

今晚我應邀談談慈心觀（或稱慈愍觀）、奢摩他和內觀的相互關係。奢摩他（*Samatha*）是止禪的寧靜，而內觀（*Vipassanā*）則是禪觀的洞識或洞察之智。這聽起來很理論性，但是當我們啟動修行、開發心識時，這些都是非常重要的層次。佛教教義的

freedom from *dukkha*. I think it is important to recognize that the tools that he gave us in practice have that goal in mind.

Sometimes people get into camps, so the loving-kindness camp is opposed to the insight camp and they have arguments and cast aspersions at each other, trying to figure out who is better. Of course, that is all about increasing *dukkha*, increasing suffering. I can remember when I first went to Thailand. Going to different meditation monasteries or to different teachers, people would ask, “Do you teach *vipassanā* or do you teach *samatha*?” As if they were separate.

Certainly my own teacher, Ajahn Chah, taught that the separation is only a separation in name. What is important is that one is cultivating the development of wholesome qualities within the heart, and as those wholesome qualities increase and stabilize, they bring a fruition of clarity and release from suffering, from *dukkha*. So recognizing that whatever you call it—and they have different nuances in terms of the effect and the result—it always has to be put in the context of freeing the heart from suffering, from *dukkha*.

It is important to recognize that the Buddha's endeavor is a practical one as opposed to a philosophical or metaphysical endeavor. The Buddha's teaching is a practical one. Human beings prefer to be happy rather than to be miserable. It is a very simple underlying quality in terms of the human condition.

Say the word, *dukkha*: in the scriptural language, in the ancient Indian language, the word *su* means good or something that is good, wholesome, or pleasant, and *duh* is something that is not pleasant, not good. In ancient India—because these words are actually pre-Buddha and Northern India was a horse culture—*kha* was where the axle of a chariot wheel goes into the hub of the wheel and rotates on that. *Sukha* is when it fits and it is smooth and it is comfortable. *Dukkha* is when it does not fit, it does not work, it is uncomfortable, it is unpleasant and fraught with difficulty. So, it has been translated in many ways: suffering, unsatisfactoriness, stress. It covers that whole range.

Recognizing that the purpose of the Buddha's teachings is to understand *dukkha* and to be free from *dukkha*, when it is translated as suffering, the teaching is not that the Buddha [takes] sour grapes, miserable ascetic, life-is-suffering, doctrinal position. You have to pay attention to this because there is this *dukkha*. You have to understand it. You have to learn about it. You have to really see it clearly. And so that it is not strange that the Buddha

宗旨是以離苦為基礎，從苦（*dukkha*）得到解脫；我認為重要的是要意識到，佛陀傳授給我們這些修行上的力用，都是建立在這個目的上。

有時人們會加入陣營，所以慈觀禪修營與內觀禪修營就對立起來，彼此評論、互相詆毀，試圖找出誰更勝一籌。當然，那都是在增苦，增加受苦。我記得初次到泰國，參訪不同的禪寺或者拜訪不同的老師時，人們都會問我：「您是教內觀禪的還是教奢摩他禪呢？」彷彿兩者有別。

毫無疑問的，我的老師阿姜查尊者是這樣教導的：分別僅僅是名相上有別，重要的是，修行者要栽培純淨的心靈，隨著內在力量的增強和穩定，進而得到內心清明和離苦的成果。因此，不管怎樣稱呼它——它們在作用上和成效上都有不同的微細之處——它必須專注於心在解脫苦諦（*dukkha*）的行持中。

重要的是，要明白佛陀的努力是具有實用性的，而非哲學或形而上學的。佛陀的教法是落實的。但是，人類寧可喜歡快樂更勝於憂苦。這是一個很簡單的人類基本特質。

接下來講講苦諦（*dukkha*）這個詞：在聖典中，在古印度語中，「*su*」的意思是好的、有益的或愉快的；而「*du*」是不愉快的、不好的。在古印度——因為這些詞實際上是出現在佛陀之前，北天竺盛行馬文化——「*kha*」是指雙輪馬車的车輪轂轉動的地方；「*sukha*」是指輪軸合適的時候，運轉起來平滑又舒適；「*dukkha*」是表示不合適、不能運作、不舒服、不愉快和很困難。因此，苦諦有很多種翻譯：受苦、不滿足、有壓力；苦諦涵蓋全範圍。

明白佛陀的教法是為了讓我們了解苦諦並從中解脫。當苦諦被翻譯成受苦的時候，並不是說佛陀是刻意主張修苦行、人生是苦。你必須注意這一點，因為苦諦是存在的。你必須了解、學習並清楚

uses *dukkha* as a foundation of investigation.

It is more like a physician giving an assessment of an illness. If you go to the doctor and the doctor asks you, “Where does it hurt?” You do not say, “Wow, what a negative, pessimistic doctor I have.” That is, it is very practical. If you are going to be treated in order to be free from difficulty, you have to know where it hurts. You have to understand *dukkha*. The tools for understanding *dukkha* in order to be free from it are the tools of *mettā*, *samatha*, *vipassanā*. They work together; they function together.

Mettā is loving-kindness. Maybe a better translation is well-wishing. We are in the process of pulling together a book of teachings that I gave in 2008. I was asked to give a retreat specifically on *mettā*, on loving kindness. And I thought, “Well, that’s a good topic. I’d be happy to do that because usually when I hear people teaching about loving-kindness, it just irritates me.” Because sometimes *mettā*, loving-kindness, is presented in such a smarmy way. This is a tool that the Buddha is giving to create clarity and brightness in the human heart and to be able to establish the heart in a foundation of well-wishing. Sometimes you say, “Loving-kindness—oh, I’ve got to be loving and kind to everyone all the time.” You know, it gets tedious after a while. But I can wish people well.

And also, when somebody has been really nasty to me, how can I be loving and kind to them? Well, sometimes it is really difficult. But, you can wish them well. You can wish them to be happy, because if they were truly happy, they would not be such a bother. There would be some basis of communication, so this cultivation of well-wishing is a really important foundation for establishing wholesome mental states in the heart.

As a Buddhist teacher, I will be asked all the time by people, “Is my practice correct? Is it incorrect? Is it going in the right direction? Is it progressing? Is it regressing?” And often times people are trying to get some kind of concrete answer or concrete way of measuring it in the sense, “Am I doing the right thing? Am I doing it right? Am I doing the right procedure? Am I getting the right technique?” And it is not really about that at all.

What is important is to recognize is that when we practice appropriately according to the Buddha’s teachings, wholesome qualities increase in the heart and unwholesome qualities decrease. And that is why I say that the conscious cultivation of loving-kindness is such an important, integral part of our development of our Buddhist practice. Of course loving-kindness, *mettā*, is the

地認識到這個苦諦。因此，佛陀將苦諦作為探究的基礎，這不足為奇。

苦諦更像是醫生在診斷病情。如果你去看醫生，醫生問你：「哪裡疼？」你不會說：「哇，遇到一個消極、悲觀的醫生了。」也就是說，這是非常實際的；如果你想接受治療、脫離病苦，你必須知道自己哪裡在疼痛。你必須了解苦諦。了解苦諦以從中解脫的力用就是慈心觀、奢摩他禪和內觀，它們互相的配合，互起作用。

「*Mettā*」的意思是慈愍（慈心觀），也許更好的翻譯是祝願。我們正在將我在2008年的講法編輯成冊。那時，有人請我帶一個慈心觀禪修。我當時想：「嗯，這是一個好題目。我很願意做這件事；因為通常我聽到別人教慈心觀的方式，會讓我起煩惱。」因為，有時候「*Mettā*」慈愍（慈心）會以如此巧妙的方式呈現。這是佛陀賜予的力用，可以在人心中締造出清明和光明，並能夠將心建構在祝願的基礎上。有時你會說：「慈愍——哦，我必須一直對每個人都充滿慈愛之心。」你曉得的，過一段時間後就會覺得乏味。但是我可以祝人們一切順遂。

還有，當有人很不友善來對待我，我該如何對他投以慈愛之心呢？對，有時候真的很難。但是，你可以祝願他們順利，祝願他們快樂；因為，如果他們真的快樂了，他們就不會這樣來惱人。這就有了一些交流的基礎，所以修習這種祝願他人的行持，是開啟正向思維的重要基礎。

作為一名佛教法師，經常有人問我：「我的修行是正確嗎？不正確嗎？方向對嗎？我在進步嗎？我退步了嗎？」很多時候，人們都想找到某種具體的答案或具體的衡量方法，「我的修行方式對嗎？我做得對嗎？我的步驟對嗎？我抓到正確的技巧了嗎？」但這些真的不重要。

first quality that is a part of the divine abidings, the brahma-vihāras: loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. But, I think that the cultivation or development of loving-kindness is really the foundation, the key, the entry point, and the linchpin of all of those qualities.

I remember hearing it on a recording when I was already here in America. A senior forest master, highly regarded in Thailand as an enlightened being, was visiting the international monastery. And one of the questions that was asked by one of the monks in a Q&A session was, “What is the experience of an enlightened being? What is their mind like?” And the teacher immediately replied, “Only compassion.”

And it was a very interesting answer, because that particular teacher was known for his ferocity. He was really fierce. He was a real task master, who didn't suffer fools. And that was his expression. That's really the heart of it. That loving-kindness and compassion is really the foundation the heart and mind that sees and manifests the Dhamma, the teachings.

There are many, many techniques for cultivating loving-kindness, many different ways of approaching it, and all sorts of verses that one can use, but I think what is most important is the feeling that is elicited: the feeling of kindness, of goodwill, of well-wishing, of concern for the wellbeing, happiness, and freedom from suffering of other beings, the quality of empathy. Really, whatever verses or phrases or concepts one uses, if it elicits that feeling then it is working, and you can cultivate that. And the reality is that after you have been doing it for awhile, your mind gets habituated to it, it gets inured to it. It is helpful to have a few different techniques that help in keeping it fresh. It is just the nature of the mind that we get used to things, we get habituated, we get inured, we get bored. So lift it up in different ways so that it elicits that feeling of well-wishing.

Also in terms of how we conceive of loving-kindness, I think one of the things that I found most helpful was hearing a teacher give instructions and say, “What is important is creating this vessel.” Again, bringing it back to the heart as an emotion—a feeling, an experience, as opposed to a concept, an ideal, or a group of phrases that you got really skilled at remembering—paying attention to that feeling and building, creating a vessel within the heart that allows that emotion or feeling of loving-kindness to grow.

☞ To be continued

重要的是要認識到，當我們依佛陀教義行持時，心水會愈來愈清明，渾濁就愈降低。這就是為什麼我說的，要有意識地栽培慈心在我們修行中是如此的重要。當然，慈心是居「梵住」（brahma-vihāras，又稱四無量心）之首位：慈、悲、喜、捨。但是，我認為培養慈心才是根本、是一個關鍵、是入門處，是一切修行質量之關鍵所在。

記得我在美國時，聽到這樣的錄音。一位在泰國被尊為開悟者的資深森林派長老，正在參觀國際道場，在問答中，有位僧人提問：「開悟者是一種怎樣的體驗？他們的心是如何？」這位長老即刻回答：「唯有慈悲。」

這是相當有趣的答覆，因為那位長老的風格向來以嚴厲著稱，他真的很嚴格。他是位名副其實的督察師，沒有誰是蠢材。而這就是他的答覆，慈心才是真正核心所在。慈心和悲心是真正能諦見並彰顯出這個佛法、這個教義的核心基礎。

修習慈心的方式有很多，有許多不同的方法和各種偈頌可以運用；但我認為最重要的是，引發的感受：仁慈、善意、祝福，還有關心他人能夠幸福、順遂並且離苦，及同理心這種的質量。真的，無論你用哪個偈頌、短句或概念，如果能觸發這種感受，那就起作用了，你可以依此修行。而事實是，這樣修行一段時間後，你的心會習慣它，心就習以為常。心能掌握不同的方法，這有助於心的持續性；但是，心的本性一向是，當我們習慣了事務，心有了慣性，進而就感到厭倦、無聊。所以，要善用不同的方法把心給提起來，令它保持在祝願的狀態。

另外，在我們構想慈心的時候，我個人覺得最有幫助的是曾經聆聽一位教授師給出指示，他說：「最重要的是要創造出一個容器。」再次強調，把慈心帶回內心，慈心是一種情感——一種感覺、一種體驗，而不是一個概念、一個理觀或一組你很擅長於背誦的片語。你用心去關注那種感受與創建，在心中創造出一個「容器」，使這種情感或者慈愍心的感覺得以增長。

☞ 待續