



Buddhist Teachings of Compassion for Self and Others

佛教中的同體大悲

The Evening Seminar Talk by Dr. Susan Rounds for Humboldt State University Students at the Dharma Realm Buddhist University Building in the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas on October 12, 2024.

Chinese Translated by Jannet Lee

蘇珊·朗茲博士2024年10月12日晚間為漢堡大學學生參訪萬佛城講於法界佛教大學大樓
芬陀利 中譯

I am very happy to be here tonight. I remember the very first time that Humboldt State students visited the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas about forty years ago. I'm so glad the visits have resumed. What I can share with you tonight is something about what it means to me to have undertaken the study and practice of Buddhism since I came to California in 1973. How has it helped me gain perspective and balance in my life. How has it helped me be kinder to myself and to others?

Practice is an interesting word. As a noun, the dictionary tells us, it means the actual application or use of an idea, belief, or method, as opposed to theories relating to it. As a verb, it means perform (an activity) or exercise (a skill) repeatedly or regularly in order to improve or maintain one's proficiency.

One of the first things that drew me to Buddhism so many years ago was that it was so very practical. Back to the dictionary: practical means relating to experience, real situations, or actions rather than ideas or imagination. And that is what I found. Buddhism gave me actual tools that I could use to understand myself and my relation to the world in ways that made me better. It taught me to look into my own mind — to gain perspective on the emotions, thoughts and feelings that were constantly arising. It gave me techniques to use to improve that perspective—and here's where the "practice" part comes in.

It is said that there are 84,000 Dharma doors, or ways to enter the Dharma, or teaching. That is, there are many different techniques, or modes of practice. One that has been beneficial to me is recitation. In this practice, you recite the name of a Buddha or Bodhisattva or a line from a mantra over and over again. If

很高興今晚能在此和各位結法緣。記得約在四十年前，北加州漢堡大學的學生初次參訪萬佛城，很開心這種交流能再延續。今晚我想和大家分享，自1973年來到加州，修學佛法對我個人的意義，以及佛法如何幫助我開拓視野和在生活中達到平衡，讓我能更善待自己跟他人。

「行持」是一個有趣的詞。字典告訴我們，作為一個名詞，它意味著某種想法、信念或者方法的實際應用，而不僅只是理論。作為動詞，它的意思是反覆或者規律地進行（一種活動）或練習（一項技能），藉以提高或維持個人的熟練度。

多年前，最初吸引我學習佛法的原因就是它的實用性。字典的解釋是：「行持」是與經驗、實際情況或行動相關，而不僅只是理論或想像。這正是我所發現的——佛法教導我能夠實際運用的方法，幫助我認識自我以及自己與世界的關係，讓我變得更好。佛法教我察照自己的內心世界——了解不斷升起的情緒、想法和感受；並提供修正

you're reciting a name, it is preceded by the phrase "Na Mo" meaning Homage to. You will have heard some of this in the morning, meal, and evening ceremonies you've attended.

The first time I ever practiced recitation, it was before I really had any idea of what I was doing. This was some fifty years ago, when my husband David and I were living in New York city and he had begun studying about Buddhism. I was busy with my teaching job, and I was not at that point myself interested in learning about an unfamiliar religion. But I was happy that he found it engaging. I must have picked up some tidbits, though. One weekend I went to Virginia to visit my father and stepmother. They both were heavy drinkers, although at that point in my life I had not been living at home for some years, and I had no idea how serious things had gotten. One night during my visit, my father was so drunk that he fell down while trying to talk to me and had trouble getting up again. I had never seen my father like that before.

Once he had stumbled into bed and I had gone to my own room to sleep, I lay awake in an excruciating emotional state. Sleep was impossible. My mind was full of emotions — shock, sadness, anger, disappointment, anxiety, fear... My feet were like blocks of ice. I tried chafing them with my hands to warm them up, wrapping them in extra blankets... nothing worked. I wondered if my parents kept any kind of tranquilizers in their medicine cabinet, to help calm me down. My heart was racing. I was miserable. Then I remembered hearing David talk about the practice of reciting the name of Amitabha Buddha. I was desperate. I really had no idea what I was doing, but I began to recite.

Na Mo Amitabha Buddha. Na Mo Amitabha Buddha. Na Mo Amitabha Buddha. Gradually, to my astonishment I noticed that my feet were becoming warm. I was able to fall asleep soon after that. I realized that something very profound had happened there. Fast forward a bit... David and I moved to California to study Buddhism, and I began to learn something about what "practice" was all about. The first time I sat down to meditate was at Gold Mountain Monastery in San Francisco. I could sort of manage an ungainly half lotus position, so my body was ready to begin. But what was I supposed to do with my mind?!

I understand that you have had a chance to try meditation earlier today, and maybe some of you had already done some

知見的方法——也就是「行持」的作用。

據說，佛法有八萬四千法門、方法或教法來引進門。也就是說，有許多不同的修行方式。對我而言，念佛相當有幫助。在這個修行方法中，即反覆唸誦某位佛菩薩的名號，或者咒語。念誦佛名，是在佛名前加上「南無」，表示皈命敬投之意。大家在早課、午供和晚課中，應該都聽過持念佛名。

我的念佛初體驗，發生在完全不知所以的情況下。大約在50年前，當時我和同修果舟住在紐約市，他已經開始修習佛法。我當時忙於授課，對學習陌生的宗教缺乏動力；但很高興果舟找到感興趣的事。雖然無心插柳，我對佛教也有了粗淺的認識。某個週末，我去維吉尼亞州探望我的父親和繼母。他們倆人都酗酒，當時我已經離家多年，並不知道他們酗酒的情況有多嚴重。在我探望他們的某天晚上，父親喝得酩酊大醉，在試圖和我說話時摔倒，且無法站立。我從未見過父親這個模樣。

當他跌跌撞撞回到床上，我回到自己房間，躺在床上，心情糟到極點，輾轉難眠。內心五味雜陳——震驚、悲傷、憤怒、失望、焦慮、恐懼……我的雙腳冰冷。我試著用手搓揉雙腳，還多蓋幾條毯子……卻沒有任何效果。我甚至想看看父親和繼母的藥櫃裏有什麼鎮靜劑，可以幫助我平靜下來。我的心跳飛快，非常難受。這時，我想起果舟曾經提過持念阿彌陀佛名號的修持法。我當時非常絕望，儘管對這個法門並不了解，但我還是開始念起佛號來。

南無阿彌陀佛，南無阿彌陀佛，南無阿彌陀佛。漸漸地，我驚訝地發現，雙腳開始變暖，我也得以入睡。我意識到當時發生一件非常深奧的事。時間稍微向前快轉……我和果舟搬到加州學習佛法，我開始了解什麼是「修行」。第一次靜坐是在舊金山的金山寺。我能勉強擺出半跏趺坐，所以我的身體算是準備好了。但是，我該如何調伏我的心？

我知道你們今天早上也有機會練習打坐，也許有些人到萬佛城之前已經有過打坐的經

meditating before you got here. I'm going to take a wild guess here and assume that you might have noticed that your mind wanted to be very busy! It is very hard for the mind to stop and rest. It always wants to be thinking. It doesn't matter if you are sitting in meditation, or reciting the name of Amitabha Buddha, ...the mind keeps running, one thought after another. One of the first "aha's" that can come as we settle down to try a practice like meditation or recitation is just that awareness of the ceaseless, restless flow of thoughts. And we may be told during guided meditation or when receiving instruction about meditating, that we should focus on the present moment, and when thoughts arise, do our best not to follow them or be drawn away from our focus of attention on just the breath.

But wait a minute...aren't we supposed to be using our minds? Didn't Descartes say, "Cogito, ergo sum?" I think, therefore I am. From ancient times philosophers have valued the human capacity to be rational.

Well, of course thinking is important! Our ability to think, to reason, to consider and be thoughtful about issues, to study and learn from great teachers—all of this is a very valuable part of being human. But a lot of our mental activity is not really "thinking" in that useful and necessary sense. We spend time fretting or worrying about the future, sometimes disguised as "planning", desperately trying to prepare ourselves for every possible contingency. Or we "think" about the past, in the form of idle regrets, or the "if only's"

"If only I had..." or "If only I had not..." or "Why didn't I" or "Why did I".

But replaying a bad movie from something that happened in my life is a habit that does not bring any kind of relief. I cannot change what happened in the past, and this kind of thinking brings only pain.

A regular recitation practice gives my mind a rest from thinking, both the unhelpful kinds of thinking, and the necessary thinking that one must engage in to carry out a life in this world. I have always loved the phrase from the *Amitabha Sutra* that speaks of the benefits of reciting Amitabha's name for seven days "with one heart unconfused." In my own life, I have found that recitation helps me get closer to that clear, calm place of single-minded concentration, a place of equanimity.

驗。我大膽臆測，也許你們已經注意到你的心慌個不停！很難靜心安住。心總是跑來跑去，不管是靜坐，還是念阿彌陀佛名號，心一直很躁動，不斷升起各種念頭。當我們開始修行，無論是打坐還是念佛，會注意到這種無止盡的心念流動。當我們接受有關禪修指導時，我們被教導應該專注於當下——有念頭升起，不要被牽著走，將注意力放回呼吸上。

等等……我們不是應該用心去思考嗎？笛卡爾不是說過「我思，故我在。」嗎？自古以來，哲學家們都很重視人類的理性思維。

當然，思考很重要！我們思考、推理、研究問題、向大師們學習探索的能力——這些都是人類非常寶貴的部分。但我們絕大部分的念頭都不是真正有益或者必要的。我們時常杞人憂天，擔心未來，有時假裝「計畫」，費盡心思為各種可能的意外情況做準備。有時，我們沉溺於過去的遺憾，抱著「如果當時……」，「如果當時我有……」，「如果當時我沒有……」，或者「為什麼我不會……」，「為什麼我會……」的想法中。

回想那些過去不愉快的片段是一種毫無幫助的習慣，因為我無法改變過去，這種思維只會帶來痛苦。每日的念佛修行讓我從各種念頭中得到喘息，不管是那些無益的想法，還是生活中必要的決定。我非常推崇《阿彌陀經》裏的一段經文，文中提到念佛七日能得到「一心不亂」的好處。在生活中，我發現念佛可以幫助我的心更趨向清明、一心、如如不動的狀態。

我想談談自己修持佛法中非常重要的另一個面向，它同樣有助長養安定和清淨的心。我持五戒，這意味著不殺生。我已經茹素四十多年。多年前，當我們停止葷食，我和同修注意到一件事，那就是我們不再那麼容易生氣。這讓我們感到驚訝——沒人告訴我們吃素會有這種效果。此外，我們也注意到一些意想不到的變化。因為我們不殺生，能夠感覺自己與周圍的自然世

I want to mention another very important aspect of my Buddhist practice which also fosters equanimity and mental clarity. I keep the five precepts, which means among other things I refrain from killing any living creature. I have been a vegetarian for more than forty years. One thing my husband and I noticed, soon after we stopped eating meat many years ago, was that we were much less prone to anger. This came as a surprise — no one had told us about this aspect of keeping a vegetarian diet. And we noticed something else unexpected. Because we were not killing anything, we felt much more connected to and in tune with the natural world around us. I had always had a particular aversion to spiders. Once I stopped killing insects, I noticed that my fear of spiders had almost entirely disappeared. Once you take seriously the intention to cause as little harm as possible, it transforms the way you look at other people as well. When you water the seeds of compassion in your own nature, it is easier to feel empathy for those around you—even spiders! You are no longer in an adversarial position, but rather in a state of harmony with the world around you.

Maintaining a practice and keeping precepts is what fosters my sense of equilibrium, of equanimity. I imagine that many of us appreciate the importance of this trait. We see a world wracked by wars, economic instability and inequality, tribalism, political division, fires, floods, and storms exacerbated by the changing climate...and the list goes on. I subscribe to the *NY Times*, paper edition, and I find that it's becoming increasingly painful to read. There is so much in those pages that is disturbing, there are so many things that are happening that I cannot control. I flip through the pages...nope, too depressing, nope, nope, finally landing on the crossword puzzle.

What a time it is! And there is no crystal ball that we could look into that would give us some clarity about what is going to happen. Someone once asked Suzuki Roshi, founder of the San Francisco Zen Center, to sum up Buddhism in one phrase. His response: "Everything changes." There are probably other ways to sum up the basic teachings of Buddhism, but there is no question that he spoke a truth that cannot be disputed. The ground is always shifting underneath our feet. No matter how carefully we plan, or how hard we cling, we can't make the future behave.

Finding equanimity means learning to live with the turbulence. All the things that trouble us are like the winds that blow across the vast stretches of the ocean. The winds stir up the surface of the water, making waves that we cannot still. We cannot stop the waves, we cannot control them, but we can learn to surf. Even in

界更融洽。以前，我特別害怕蜘蛛，當我停止傷害昆蟲，我發現自己對蜘蛛的恐懼感幾乎消失殆盡。當你下定決心盡可能不傷害其他生命，看待他人的方式也隨之改變。當你在心中灌溉慈悲的種子，對周遭的萬物會產生同理心——甚至是蜘蛛！你不再與之敵立，而是與周圍的世界和諧共處。

持續修行和持戒是我內心安定的根源。我想，在座很多人都理解這種特質的重要性。我們看到當今這個世界動盪不安，飽受戰爭、經濟不穩定、不平等、部落意識、政治分裂的摧殘，加上氣候變遷引發的火災、水災和風災，讓問題雪上加霜。我是《紐約時報》紙本版訂戶，我發覺現今的報紙越來越難以閱讀，裏頭夾雜太多令人不安的報導，有許多無法掌控的事情正在發生。我翻著頁面……唉，太令人沮喪了，再翻……再翻……終於，在填字遊戲停了下來。

這是個什麼樣的時代！我們沒有水晶球可以預知未來。曾經有人請教舊金山禪修中心創始人鈴木俊隆禪師，用一句話來概括佛教。他的回答是：「法無定法。」或許還可以用其他方法來概括佛教的基本教義，但毫無疑問，他說出了無可否認的真理。我們腳下的大地不斷變動。不論我們如何多麼仔細地計劃，如何抓緊不放，我們終究無法左右未來的變化。

找到平靜意味著學會忍受動盪。所有困擾我們的事情，就像吹過浩瀚大海的風一樣。風掀起海面的波浪，我們無法平息海面、控制波浪，但我們可以學習「衝浪」。也就是說，即使身處在湍流和風浪之中，我們也能夠找到平衡點。想想颶風。在狂暴颶風的中心，在風暴眼中有一片風平浪靜空間。當我們處於那個清明、安定的狀態時，我們會看到，一切萬物都

the midst of turbulence and rough water, we can find our balance. Think about a hurricane. In the very center of a violent hurricane, in the eye of the storm, there is a space where winds are calm and the sky above is clear and blue. When we are in that space of clarity and calm, we can see that all our fellow beings are struggling with the turbulence, just as we are, that they are all suffering, just as we are. We may not be able to control the course of events in the world, but we can change the way we interact with the people in our lives.

I'm sure we've all had the experience of being in a situation where we have felt the effect of someone else's violent emotions. You can feel it in your gut — it's really a visceral reaction. And we know that violence begets violence. It's contagious — spreading like a virus. Look at any place in the world today where wars are being fought. Anger, hatred, resentment all flourish and spread, setting up an unending cycle of death and destruction. It makes me think of Robert Frost's poem about the end of the world.

Fire and Ice

*Some say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice.
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire.
But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To say that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice.*

I've always thought of this poem as a very Buddhist poem because it speaks to something very fundamental. The external environment is shaped and conditioned by our internal landscape—by the intensity and destructiveness of what Buddhism calls the three poisons of the mind: greed, anger, and ignorance. Having a Buddhist practice means we are working constantly to extinguish the flames of our anger, our greed, and our ignorance. We transform them through the study of wisdom and the practice of generosity, patience, and compassion.

Generosity, patience, compassion—These positive qualities are contagious. They can spread, not like a virus, but like a light. As we develop and deepen our sense of compassion, we can begin to change the temperature of the sphere in which we live and work—our family, our workplace, our community. We can take this good advice from the Dalai Lama: Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible. ❀

同我們一般在動盪中掙扎，同我們一般在經歷苦難。我們也許無法左右世界的發展，但我們可以改變在生活中與他人互動的方式。

我相信在座各位都有受他人情緒波動影響的經驗，你可以真切感受到那股暴力的衝擊，這真是一種本能的反應。我們都知道，暴力會引發更多暴力，像病毒一樣蔓延。看看當今世界任何一個烽煙四起的地方，憤怒、仇恨、怨懟都在滋長、蔓延，形成死亡和毀滅的不斷循環。這讓我想起羅伯特·弗羅斯特那首關於世界末日的詩。

火與冰

有人說世界將在火中終結，
有人認為是在冰中毀滅。
根據我對欲望的了解，
我贊成滅於火的觀點。
但如果世界必須毀滅兩次，
我想我對仇恨認識得夠深，
可以說冰的破壞力，
不僅同樣可觀，
也不遑多讓。

我一直認為這是一首極具佛教意境的詩，因為它講述非常根本的道理。外在環境是由我們的內心去塑造呈現，也就是佛教所說的三毒：貪、瞋、癡。修行讓我們不斷地去澆熄這些貪、瞋和癡之火。透過修持般若、布施、忍辱和慈悲來轉化它們。

布施、忍辱、慈悲——這些正向的特質具有感染力，它們像光一樣傳播，而非病毒一般的擴散。當我們培養並深化自己的慈悲心，我們就能逐漸調整——無論是家庭、工作場所、社區——的環境「溫度」。我們可以採納一位法師的良言：盡可能善待他人，總有辦法做到的。❀