

佛法有賴僧傳

The Monastic Sangha As the Torchbearer of the Buddha's Teaching

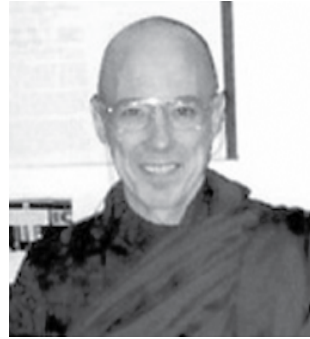
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A TALK GIVEN BY VENERABLE BHIKKHU BODHI

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王青楠博士 中譯 CHINESE TRANSLATED BY DR. QINNAN WANG



首先我不是要找藉口，而是想解釋一下：兩天前我才獲悉今天要發言，因為毫無準備，有點手忙腳亂。最初，我想講自己以前的一篇文章，這樣較為容易。恆良法師在昨天講話的結尾說：「如果僧團無法在美國建設好，我看不出佛法在這裡會有甚麼希望！」這句話一直在我心中縈繞。今天天不亮我就醒了，這些話語立刻湧現在腦海中，我想這就是我要講的。突然間，許多想法在這一早串聯起來，我坐下來草草記下了這些想法，不久初稿便成形。由於上午的活動，午餐之後我才將稿子輸入，發言十分鐘前才印出來；如果講的內容組織欠佳，次序先後不妥，請勿見怪。

同樣在昨天，有人說：如果告訴在家人，僧團是高高在上，他們會感到不安，並對僧團不以為然；但若讓他們覺得僧俗平等（在法上），那他們又不了解有任何特別的原因要尊敬僧團了，這樣僧團就喪失了對佛法，火炬執持者的角色。

我們如何才能打破這個僵局，讓僧團擔任傳承佛法的特別角色，同時不僅不疏遠在家人，反而更能令其對僧團的誠信不疑？在美國這裡，或許在更廣的西方，

First I should say, not as an excuse but by way of explanation, that I learned that I was to be a presenter only two days ago. I was a bit disoriented when I learned this, for I hadn't prepared anything to speak about in advance. At first, I decided to make it easy for myself and give a presentation based on a paper that I already had on hand. But one statement that Venerable Heng Liang made yesterday, at the end of her talk, kept on ringing through my mind. It was the statement: "If a monastic Sangha doesn't become well established in America, I don't see much hope for the Dharma here." Today I woke up long before dawn and those words immediately popped into my mind. I felt that I had somehow to address this topic in my talk. Suddenly ideas started to come together in my mind, at that very early hour. I sat down and started jotting down notes, and before long the draft of a paper was taking shape. Due to this morning's activities, I could type out my notes only after lunch, and I just managed to print out a version to refer to during my talk ten minutes ago. The ideas aren't well organized, but I will present them anyway. Please don't mind if they are a bit out of sequence.

Yesterday, too, someone said that if you tell lay people that the Sangha is superior, they feel upset and look down upon the Sangha, but if you go out of your way to make them feel on a level of equality with the Sangha (in regard to the Dharma), they don't see any special reason to revere the Sangha, and then, once again, the monastic Sangha forfeits its special role as the "torchbearer" of the Buddha's teaching.

So how do we break out of this impasse and move in a direction whereby the Sangha assumes its special role as the "torchbearer" of the Buddha's message, yet does so in a way that doesn't alienate lay people, but on the contrary can win their trust, confidence, and devotion? Here in the United States, and maybe more broadly in the West, we have a rather unusual situation, matched perhaps only by Japan, where the most prominent teaching roles in several Buddhist traditions have been



我們面對著一個相當異常的狀況，而這在日本最典型——幾個宗派最著名的演教說法角色，往往是在僧人的加被支持下，都已經由在家人取代。在家人訓練，甚至有時印可僧眾的說法資格。我認為，僧尼在廟上受的訓練，是為他們說法的準備，因為他們就是為此而獻生命。然而在今日，我們也必須栽培有誠意的在家人之解行與說法，以重視他們的修行和說法善根；可是，它應在法賴僧傳和為在家人之福田僧二種認知的體系下來運作。

現在在斯里蘭卡這樣的傳統佛教國家，在家人說法並非少見。他們講法、開課，講禪開示，有時舉辦坐禪課和靜修營；但他們做時，總是尊重僧眾（按規矩給僧人優先權）。通常他們先受僧人的培訓，以後一直保持對僧人的尊敬，並非只尊敬自己的師父而已；如果任何在家人宗教師與僧團作對，虔誠的信徒就會對他退避三舍。現今在斯里蘭卡有少數這樣的人，他們的教法依其個性而有別。

在現代佛教前身之傳統佛教中，僧俗角色定位很清楚，二眾之法也有很清楚的定位，不過這樣的結構，會有點僵硬、限制。俗人明白其主要工作是修福，以資來生往生善處，並籌集追求佛教的涅槃極果之資糧。以此目標，居士的工作以布施為主；通常他們供養僧人飲食、持戒、熱誠修行，還有短期打七，這通常在特殊的節日，內容主要是念佛、念僧與修慈悲觀。亞洲在家人受現代西方的影響，對自己的角色有了的新理解，除了供養僧團，相信法賴僧傳的同時，他們有意鑽研佛法，並修密集的內觀禪。

理論上，僧人的角色在精研佛法和密集修禪，並且還為在家人帶領法會；然而現實上，在亞洲南傳國家的多數寺廟裡，為在家人帶法會的僧人角色掛帥，它甚至也變成寺院僧人的主要功能了。他們不重視佛法深入的研究，修禪幾乎消失了，只

taken over by the laity, and not seldom this has been done with the blessings of members of the monastic Sangha. Sometimes, in fact, lay teachers train and even certify monastic Sangha members as teachers. It seems to me that the training in the Sangha should prepare monks and nuns to serve as Dharma teachers, for they have dedicated their lives to this purpose; yet in today's world, we also have to prepare earnest lay people to understand, practice, and teach the Dharma, which implies a respect for their potentials as practitioners and teachers. Yet this should be done within a system that recognizes the monastic Sangha as the custodian of the Dharma as well as the field of merit for the lay community.

Now, in a traditional Buddhist country like Sri Lanka, it isn't unusual for lay people to become Dharma teachers. They give discourses, they conduct classes, they give meditation instructions, and sometimes conduct meditation courses and retreats; but when they do so, they're almost always nested within a system that gives priority to the monastic order. Usually they will have studied and trained under monastic teachers, and they'll continue to pay homage to the monastic Sangha as such, not merely to individual monastic teachers. If any lay teacher turns against the monastic Sangha, those lay devotees who have faith in the Sangha will steer clear of them. Such teachers – and there are a sprinkling of them nowadays in Sri Lanka – are usually recognizable by the idiosyncratic character of their teaching.

In traditional pre-modern Buddhism, the roles for laity and monastics are clearly defined, and there is also a clearly defined version of the Dharma for each. This structure, though, can be rigid and limiting. The laity see their primary task to be that of acquiring merit, which will ensure them a favorable rebirth in their next existence and provide supporting conditions for the attainment of the ultimate Buddhist goal, *nibbāna*. The practice for the laypeople that goes along with this task is primarily giving (*dāna*), which usually means giving food to monks, observing precepts, undertaking devotional practices, and practicing short periods of meditation, usually on special observance days. The meditation practiced is primarily recollection of the Buddha, recollection of the Sangha, and loving-kindness meditation. Asian lay Buddhists who have been subject to modern influences emanating from the West have developed a new understanding of their roles, and so, while they continue to support the monastic order and look up to the monks as the custodians of the Dharma, they are also intent on learning the Dharma in depth and on practicing intensive insight meditation.

The roles of monastic persons in theory are intensive study of the Dharma and meditation, as well as performing services for the laity. What happens in practice, however, in most temples in Asian Theravada countries, is that the role of performing services for the laity gains the upper hand; it has even become the major function of temple monks. Even intensive, in-depth study of the Dharma has faded out, and the practice of meditation has almost vanished, so that it is reduced to just five or ten minutes of quiet sitting in the daily devotional service. Forest monks often place more

是每天日誦時有五到十分鐘靜坐而已。森林僧眾為求真道，往往較為強調修禪。

在傳統亞洲佛教界，所有以上的弱點，這些活動衝擊著人們長久以來對三寶、對與經論相應的世界觀的信心。這堅固信心的基礎，就是相信業力輪迴，以及對出世法涅槃的追求。

相形之下，現代西方人出於完全不同的心態來接觸佛法；他們比傳統農村佛教徒受過更多的教育，許多西方人在心理學方面博覽群書，或追求探索「靈性」和「更高層意識」。因為內在的問題不同，在法上他們要尋求的答案也就不同。

當西方人接觸到佛教時，他們帶著對佛法的一種深刻感覺——我稱之為「存在的痛苦」。這個術語，不是指臨床上說的消沉或病態心境的性格，或任何精神病；我指的是令人苦惱的空虛、自我不健全或無可奈何的感覺，而它又不能用任何一般的享受來滿足。「存在的痛苦」的感覺，可以與個性共存；而在所有世俗標準之下，又健康而正常。有時「存在的痛苦」表現為寂寞，它無法藉由任何社會、人際的交往而消除；有時它是種「生活空虛，毫無意思和目的」的感覺；有時它是種信念，生活一定有比美國那偉大成功故事中獲取獎勵或戰利品更多的內容。對於有濃厚宗教背景又失去了信仰的人，它可能呈現為無限空洞的感覺、神的空缺，必須用另一種東西來替補，使生活有究竟意義；一種意義或目的的根源，否則生命就毫無價值。

這種存在的痛苦感覺，或稱「根本缺乏」感，是促使多數西方人尋求佛法的主要動機。他們到佛法中尋找的，我稱之為「固本療法」；因為他們一般不是精神病患，不使用佛法作為精神療法。雖然有些人曾批評他們這樣做，但依我的觀察，這不是實際情形。但他們要的，我們或可稱為一種「存在主義的療法」，以此充實自我存在的根本。他們一心尋找能容於日常生活中，一種提昇他們生活質感的方法。他們不尋找解釋，不尋找新宗教，一般而言，也不尋找新的信仰。

emphasis on meditation in the hope of reaching true attainment.

For all its shortcomings, in traditional Asian Buddhism, these activities take place against a long-standing background that includes trust and confidence in the Three Jewels as objects of devotion and a world view that is determined largely by the teachings of the suttas and the commentaries. It is built upon solid trust in the law of karma and rebirth and upon an aspiration for nibbaana as a state of world-transcending realization.

Modern Westerners, in contrast, come to the Dharma from an entirely different stance of consciousness. They generally have a much higher level of education than traditional village Buddhists. Many Westerners will have read widely in psychology and in fields that might be grouped under the heading of “spirituality” and “higher consciousness.” They also approach the Dharma with different problems in mind and they therefore naturally seek different solutions.

When Westerners come to Buddhism, they bring to their encounter with the Dharma an acute sense of what I shall call “existential suffering.” By this expression, I’m not referring to clinical depression, or a disposition to morbid states of mind, or any type of psychopathology. What I mean is a gnawing sense of lack, a feeling of incompleteness or inadequacy, that can’t be filled by any of the ordinary sources of enjoyment. This sense of existential suffering can coexist with a personality that is, by all other criteria, quite sound and healthy. Sometimes existential suffering takes the form of a feeling of loneliness that can’t be eliminated by any number of social contacts or human relationships; sometimes it’s a feeling that “my life is empty, devoid of meaning and purpose”; or sometimes it’s just a conviction that there has to be more to life than acquiring rewards and trophies in the great American success story. For those who come from a deeply religious background and have lost their faith, it can manifest as a feeling of infinite absence, the absence of God that has to be filled with something else to give an ultimate meaning to life, an objective source of meaning or purpose without which life seems pointless and absurd.

This sense of existential suffering, or “fundamental lack,” is the primary motive that drives most Westerners to seek the Dharma. People troubled by existential suffering come to the Dharma in search of what I would call “radical therapy.” Since they generally aren’t psychopathological, they aren’t using the Dharma as a psychotherapy. Though some have criticized them for doing so, in my observation this isn’t the case. But they are approaching it as what we might call an “existential therapy.” They are trying to fill a hole at the bottom of their existence. They are seeking above all a practice that they can integrate into their daily lives in order to



他們接觸佛法以尋找一種固本療法，以提供他們具體的、實在的和直接的方式，來改變他們對世界的體驗。並且多數佛教老師——毋寧說，多數講法的老師就是這樣教授的；他們開演法為一種實踐或行徑，以改善「存在的痛苦」這種不安的感覺。他們介紹它是固有的、實際的、關於存在的療法，一種不要求任何信仰的方法，隨時可視效果如何，而加以使用的方法；他們所教授的主題有如一本暢銷書，將居士法的本質精美包裝，書名是「非信仰的佛教」。

為什麼「存在的痛苦」這種感覺，在美國和西歐達到技術和工業高峰之時，顯著地開始流行？為什麼它流行於受過良好教育、富有的中上層階級之中？討論這些問題，與我們的議題並非毫不相關的；因為這樣將幫助我們，瞭解佛教在從亞洲到西方之路所經歷的變革。在我看來，「存在的痛苦」這感覺就在那時，就在此地流行，是因為我們經歷的技術革命，讓我們付出了代價，高昂的代價支付至今——就是人們與人類、與自然，與他人的疏離。通常是受良好教育和富有的階層感覺疏離的痛苦最深刻，因此這社會反常的狀態對他們衝擊最深。這疏離使我們感到生活的各方面都漫無目的；它使我們的人際關係變得機械而有競爭的；在我們把自然奇觀變成國家公園，夢想世界變成迪斯尼世界時，它使我們與自然的關係改變。它侵入到我們與自身的關係中，在獨處的時刻也不例外地來相纏。甚至於宗教成為用電話傳福音以增加會員人數的競爭，或為自以為重要的事情——宗教權利——做遊說。

☞待續

transform the felt quality of their lives. They aren't seeking explanations; they aren't seeking a new religion; and generally, they aren't seeking a new system of beliefs.

They come to the Dharma seeking a radical therapy, a method that will provide them with concrete, tangible, and immediate changes in the way they experience their worlds. And most Buddhist teachers – or rather, let me say, most Dharma teachers – are presenting the Dharma as exactly that. They are presenting the Dharma as a practice, a way, a path, that will help ameliorate this disturbing sense of existential suffering. They are presenting it as a radical, pragmatic, existential therapy that does not require any beliefs, that does not ask for any more faith than a readiness to apply the method and see what kind of results one can get from it. What is being given is something that is ably captured by the title of an extremely popular book on Buddhism, a title and a book that encapsulate very well the nature of this lay Dharma practice. The title of the book is *Buddhism Without Beliefs*.

Why did this sense of existential suffering start to set in so dramatically in the United States and Western Europe right at the time that they reached the height of their technological and industrial power? Why did it set in among the well-educated, affluent middle and upper middle classes? To raise and address these questions is not irrelevant to our concerns, because to do so will help us to understand the transformation that Buddhism has been undergoing in its passage from Asia to the West. In my view, this sense of existential suffering set in just at that time, and just here, because the technological revolution that we underwent during that period was bought at a price – a steep price that we are still being forced to pay. The price is the alienation of human beings from themselves, from nature, and from each other. It is generally the well educated and affluent who feel the pain of this alienation most acutely, and thus the sense of anomie hits them hardest. This alienation leads to an overwhelming sense of purposelessness that pervades all aspects of our life. It infects our human relations, which become mechanical and competitive. It infects our relations with nature, as we turn natural wonders into national parks and dream worlds into Disney-worlds. It invades our relations with ourselves, haunting us in our most private moments of solitude. Even religion becomes a matter of Tel-evangelical campaigns aimed at boosting membership figures or lobbying around issues that are considered important by the so-called Religious Right.

☞To be continued