

Preliminary Practice

修行資糧

A Dharma Talk by Kovilo Bikkhu on April 15, 2024,
during the Ten Thousand Buddhas Jeweled Repentance at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas

Chinese Translated by BTTS Volunteer and Janet Lee

比丘科維洛講於2024年4月15日萬佛聖城萬佛寶懺期間
佛經翻譯委員會義工、芬陀利 中譯



My name is Kovilo Bikkhu, and I was ordained at Abhayagiri Buddhist Monastery, which is just twenty-five minutes up the road. I was ordained there fourteen years ago. I am currently studying at Dharma Realm Buddhist University and will finish the degree program there in four weeks.

For those of you who are participating in the Ten Thousand Buddhas Repentance Bowing Ceremony, I would like to say “Anumodana!” to everyone. This is a Pāli (our Theravada language) word meaning “Way to go! I delight in your goodness!”

This evening, I would like to talk about my own

我是比丘科維洛，在距離這邊二十五分鐘路程的無畏寺受戒。十四年前，我在那兒受具足戒。目前，我就讀法界佛教大學，將於四週後畢業。

參加萬佛寶懺的各位佛友，我想對你們說「阿努摩達那！」，這是巴利語，意思是「善哉！隨喜功德！」

今晚，我想談談自己的拜佛經歷。身為一個美國人，來到佛寺之前，我從未頂禮，也從沒想過自己有一天居然會禮佛。但如今，拜佛是我修行中最重要的功課之一。每天，我至少以藏傳式大禮拜禮佛五十四拜。我無法在講台為各位示範大禮拜，因為講台的高度你們看不到。大禮拜——站

experience with bowing. As an American, before I came to a monastery, I never bowed once in my life. And I never thought that I would ever bow in my life. But today, it is one of the most important things in my life. Every day, I bow at least fifty-four times in the Tibetan style. I can't show you what I mean by "Tibetan style" up here on this high stage because you would not see me, but in the Tibetan style of bowing, you stand up, put your hands up in the air, and then go all the way down onto your stomach, and you're basically lying face down, before standing up again. I do those bows every morning, and it's a very important part of my practice. So, I would like to say and encourage all of you that if you bow twenty-eight times a day, then in one year, you will have bowed 10,000 times!

When I bow, I say, "Buddhamsaraṇaṃgacchāmi. Dhammamsaraṇaṃgacchāmi. Sanghamsaraṇaṃgacchāmi. (皈依佛。皈依法。皈依僧。)" That is my practice, and it has become very meaningful for me because each of those refuges has become very significant in my life.

Like many Westerners, I came to Buddhism because I wanted to meditate. They say that two types of people come to the Dhamma. You can call them "firsters" and "thirdsters." "Firsters" refers to those people who come to Buddhism based on the First Noble Truth of suffering. Perhaps someone in their life, someone in their family passes away, and the suffering of that brings them to a monastery or to meditation. Those are "firsters." "Thirdsters" are those who come to Buddhism based on the Third Noble Truth of the end suffering. These people haven't experienced deep suffering but become inspired by the idea of complete freedom and ultimate happiness in Buddhist practice.

So I came for a bit of both suffering and hoping there's an end. And I started just doing meditation. The more I meditated, the more it seemed that I needed in terms of spiritual support. In a sense, I began to suffer in different ways after I started to meditate.

Like many Westerners, I did not want to bow when I first came to the monastery. Everyone else was bowing, and I thought I was the best because I didn't bow. I sat there in meditation because that is what a good Buddhist

著雙手合掌朝天，由上往下移至腹部，接著臉朝下五體投地，然後起身。我每天早上都會作大禮拜，這是我修行中非常重要的一部分。我鼓勵大家嘗試大禮拜，如果你每天拜二十八次大禮拜，一年後，就完成一萬拜！

禮佛的時候，我會念：「皈依佛，皈依法，皈依僧」這是我的修行方式，對我而言相當有意義。因為每一種皈依都已深深刻劃在我的生命中。

如同許多西方人，我接觸佛教是因為想學習靜坐。我們常說，有兩種類型的人會學習佛法，也就是「第一類型」和「第三類型」。「第一類型」是指那些基於感受第一聖諦（苦）而接觸佛教的人。他們或許是因為特定對象、或是某個家人離世，這種痛苦讓他們走進佛寺或學習靜坐，這些都屬於「第一類型」。「第三類型」是指意識到第三聖諦（滅）而學習佛法的人。這些人並非因為有所苦而學佛，而是希望藉由佛教修行來獲得解脫與自在。

我來道場，則是兩者兼而有之，又有痛苦，又想得到解脫，因此開始禪修。我學習靜坐，想要在精神上獲得支持。就某種意義來說，開始打坐之後，我嘗到各種不同面向的苦。

如同許多西方人，我初次到佛寺並不是為了禮佛。每個人都在拜佛，我沒有，我覺得自己最行，就在那兒打坐。我認為打坐才是一個好的佛教徒或禪修者應該做的事。這種心態在有美國人參與的佛寺裡很常見。我觀察那些不隨眾禮佛的人（例如出於慢心而有意不拜，認為拜佛是流於形式、令人厭煩的文化包袱，對「真正的」靈性修行而言絕非必要）。看到這些不隨眾禮拜的人，他們的心態顯而易見。

當我看到廟上的住持，那些在佛寺修行很久的美加僧眾，禮佛對他們而言很自然。這些美國或加拿大僧眾，他們禮拜的時候，姿勢真是優美。在這些西方寺廟裡，沒有人會勉強你拜佛。你必須在道場待上一段時間，直到自己突然開竅，意識到禮佛是很莊嚴的。最終，有一天，我開始人生中第一次禮拜。我不記得日期，但總之就在某個時候發生了。

我先是在南加州的一座寺廟出家，然後到無畏寺受具足戒。在這之間，我於2008年4月



or meditator is supposed to do, I thought. This mindset is common in monasteries among Americans. When I observed others doing this (i.e., intentionally not bowing out of a conceit that bowing is a frivolous, tiresome cultural accretion unnecessary to “real” spiritual practice), when I looked at them not bowing, it was easy to see that it was unattractive.

Then, I looked at the abbots of the monastery, the monks who had been there for a long time, and they had no problem bowing. These are Americans and Canadians, and it was so beautiful when they bowed. At these Western monasteries, no one will make you bow. You have to stay there until you become smart enough to realize that bowing is beautiful. Eventually, one day, I took my first bow. I don't know the date, but it obviously happened at some point.

I lived at a monastery in Southern California and then moved to Abhayagiri, where I was ordained. Between those two monasteries, I came to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas and participated in a Ten Thousand Buddhas Repentance in April 2008. Then, I was 24 years old and thought I was strong, but it turns out that bowing 10,000 times is hard. I probably only bowed 6,550 or so times at that time - give or take 1,000. I did not have the strength to finish that retreat, mainly my mental strength.

Five or six years after that bowing retreat, during my third year as a monk at Abhayagiri, during the community's annual three-month Winter Retreat, my meditation was going very poorly, so I asked my teacher if I could bow instead of meditate, and he said,

到萬佛城參加萬佛寶懺。那時我24歲，覺得自己身強體壯，但我發現拜一萬拜並不容易。當時，我大概只完成6,550拜左右，或者多1,000拜，也許少1,000拜。總之，我沒有堅定的心力拜完全程。

參加那次萬佛懺的五、六年後，也就是我在無畏寺的第三年，我們道場每年有三個月的冬季閉關，當時我在禪修上遇到瓶頸，於是請示我的師父，是否可以用拜佛代替靜坐。他說：「可以的。」因此，我計劃完成藏傳佛教中所謂的前行十萬次大禮拜。

那個冬季閉關，我每天大禮拜拜1,111次，持續九十天。我在廟上的各個角落拜。因為大家都在打坐，我只好找個隱密的角落進行。當所有人都離開，我才在佛殿拜。我在比丘的更衣室拜、在清潔人員的儲藏室拜、在寺廟的周圍拜、我應該也有在淨房拜。你們多幸運，有佛殿可以拜佛。在藏語中，“ngöndro”的意思是「修行資糧」，我很高興自己這麼做了。現在我依然天天禮拜。

“Yes.” Thus, I planned to do what they call in Tibetan Buddhism the ngöndro practice of bowing 100,000 times.

During that Winter Retreat, I ended up bowing 1,111 times every day for ninety days in that Tibetan style. And I ended up bowing all over the monastery. Since everyone else was meditating, I had to find secret places to bow. I bowed in the Buddha Hall when everyone had left. I bowed in the monk’s locker room. I bowed in the janitor’s closet. I bowed outside, and I probably bowed in the bathroom as well. You are all lucky you have this Buddha Hall to bow in. But my experience was very good. In Tibetan, “ngöndro” means “preliminary practice,” and I’m glad I did that. I still bow every day.

So, ten years after that ngöndro bowing experience, and three years ago, I entered Dharma Realm Buddhist University, and being here, I have learned a lot about internal bowing. It turns out that I have a lot of Theravada conceit! And it is very painful! In the university, we studied many Mahayana texts, and when I couldn’t let go of my views about Theravada, I suffered. I would read the *Heart Sutra*, where it says, “There is no suffering. There is no cause of suffering. There is no cessation of suffering. There is no path to the cessation of suffering.” And I would say, “Yes... there is! That’s what Theravada says! That’s what the Buddha says! So many times! Again and again!” But all the other students were Mahayana, so no one believed me.

Over time, with Doug Powers as a teacher, I could little by little come to see the pain of just holding on to my own view. I could feel the pain of the conceit that “I’m right!” And I feel very grateful to have seen this attachment. I would never have seen it if I had not come to study at this Mahayana University. Because at a Theravada monastery, I would say, “There are the Four Noble Truths!” And everyone would say, “Yes! Yes! There are the Four Noble Truths! There is suffering. There is a cause. There is a cessation. There is a path.”

For many reasons, I am very grateful for Dharma Realm Buddhist University and the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. These days, my primary practice is to recite Guanyin’s name ... and when I return to the Theravada monastery, people will not understand me (laughs).

Q: How long did it take you to bow 1,111 times each day?

A: It took six to seven hours to bow 1,111 times. I counted with a mala. But then, my mala broke. So I had to count with rocks. And then I lost some of the stones, so I counted with one of those counters like you have, and then that broke. I became very muscular, like on the back of my arm (laughs). ❀

在圓滿十萬大禮拜十年後，也就是三年前，我成了法界佛教大學的學生。在這裡，我學到了很多關於「內」禮佛的知識。原來，自己有很多南傳佛教的我慢！這種慢心真是折磨人！在法大，我們學習許多大乘經典，每當我無法放下南傳佛教的知見時，就會起煩惱。《心經》上說：「無苦寂滅道。」我會反駁：「有的……有方法！這是南傳佛教說的！這是佛教導的！佛一再宣說的！」但其他學生都是學大乘佛教，沒人理會我。

隨著時間的推移，在包果勒教授的指導下，我逐漸意識到堅持己見所帶來的苦，也能感受到「我是對的！」這種慢心所帶來的苦。我很感激能覺察自己的執著。如果沒有就讀這所大乘佛教大學，我永遠不會看到這些盲點。因為在南傳佛寺，我說：「有四聖諦！」每個人都會回應我說：「是的！是的！有四聖諦！有苦集滅道。」

在許多方面，我非常感謝法大和萬佛城。最近，我的主要修行是稱念觀世音菩薩名號；當我回到南傳佛寺，那裡同參將無法理解我（笑）。

問：請問行大禮拜1,111次，需要多久時間？

比丘科維洛：大禮拜1,111次，需要六到七個小時。一開始，我用念珠計數，後來念珠壞了，我就用石頭計數，然後有些石頭丟了，我開始跟各位一樣用計數器計數，最後計數器也壞了。我的身體變得很結實，我的後臂都練出肌肉了（笑）。 ❀