

**JOYFUL WIND
IN NEW SUNLIGHT**

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Phuoc Duyen Pagoda

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Living with the Buddha

The following meditative poem for waking up in the morning was given by my master nearly 50 years ago:

*Thụy miên thử ngộ
đương nguyện chúng sanh
nhất thể trí giác
châu cổ thập phương.*

This poem can be translated as follows:

*Waking up from a good night's sleep
I pray for all living beings
who possess full knowledge
of seeing all things everywhere.*

This meditative poem conveys a content of meditation which nourishes my mind enormously. Since waking

up means I possess a life. Waking up means I possess six senses. Waking up means I have the whole sunrise. Waking up makes me have both the sky and the earth, the unlimited space. Waking up makes me have grass, trees, flowers and leaves, and humans and other living beings. And if I am still in a long sleep, not only can I lose everything but I also lose myself.

Waking up does not mean solely waking up but waking up in body and mind. Sometimes we wake up in body but our mind is still asleep in fame and sensual pleasure. We can walk, stand, lie, and sit physically but our mind is still in a mixture of worries. Waking up in such a state is to wake up yet still in sleep, so when we wake up we should wake up in body and in mind. Our body can walk, stand, lie, and sit in right posture, in virtue, in right mindfulness, and our mind can wake up and escape from seeds of ambition, hatred, anger, arrogance, wicked thoughts and hypocrisy. Waking up in such a state is waking up in love, like walking from the dark into the

light, from trouble into freedom, from unhappiness into happiness, from the position of sensual beings onto that of the noble. Waking up in mindfulness like that is to wake up both for ourselves and for every being.

We not only wake up like that, but we also wish every being to wake up like that, so that this earthly life is no longer a life in unhappiness and so that the human heart is no longer a frozen and distant heart, a heart of discrimination or hatred.

Every day we should wake up and nourish our body and mind with enlightened knowledge, so that each day we can walk and live in mindfulness. We should wake up and wish that every living being could wake up, walk and live in this mindfulness every day, so that our earth can move on in peace and we can recognize one another as brothers and sisters in life and hold our hands in love so as to protect this lovely life for all the beings.

When we wake up without a look of full enlightenment,

this means that we do not have a look of causation and egolessness towards life, then our look is hindered by perceptual categories, which will lead our life into a dark path that makes us and our life have two quite different faces: a face we wear when we sleep and a face we wear when we wake up, a face we wear when we are in the family and a face we wear when we are in society; a face we wear when we are in the dark and a face we wear when we are in the light. When a person has two faces it is difficult to measure his or her behaviour; this behaviour may be lovely, but sometimes it might be very dangerous, even more dangerous than that of wild animals in the forest.

Therefore, when we wake up, we should wake up in full enlightenment, we should wake up in love, so that our head and our heart will become one, so that we ourselves and our look do not belong to two different entities, so that our words and actions are one, so that we ourselves and our life are inseparable, so that there is no difference

when we live in the day time and when we live during the night. We live in full enlightenment and love, then life is ourselves and we ourselves are life, and in such a life we do not have any deception. Living like that is said to live with the Buddha, we do not have any worry and fear, since our concept of life, action of life, and way of life are in absolute harmony with one another. Therefore every step and every breath of our body are steps and breaths of full enlightenment and love, and every look of our eyes is a look of the Buddha or of love and full enlightenment. A look of full enlightenment is the look of boundlessness. Love conveyed by full enlightenment is love of boundlessness, such a love is no longer hampered by space, time and species.

This meditative poem has been along with me for nearly fifty years, and it helps me to discover life in myself and around me, from simple to complex, from pure existence to complex relations. The more I practise with this meditative poem, the more I realize that every morning

when waking up with the substance of full enlightenment and love, or with the substance of the Buddha, I will look at everybody and every being with a smile, since I know with certainty that everything is available in and together with myself, so there is no happiness just for me but for every being, and this gives me true joy every day. For me, the joy or happiness is no more a wish but a reality. A reality of life and of the Buddha.

In a Moonlight Night

Sometimes I went to the countryside to lie alone on the white sand in the moonlight and with the sound of the waves from the sea, to feel deeply all aspects of the solitary life of humans.

In that moment, I listened to the waves that whispered and dreamed, and then rolled ashore one after the other to look for promised land, as they had expected. But what a pity, on rolling ashore, instead of smiling, they cried violently, and just instantly, their giant body smashed itself into drops of water.

Similarly, in society, there are several people rushing to city life of hustle and bustle. They register their names so as to seek glory and happiness. But what a pity, no glory and happiness is found. Instead, they experience

the feeling of fear and the ghostly competitive screams, and this pushes their cause of competition in their whole life into drops and particles of water smashed up like dew and mist that obstruct their return!

Truly, waves will smash themselves away when getting ashore, people will receive unhappiness when coming to places of hustle and bustle, that is the eternal truth that we can hear and feel from being alone in the moonlight night!

On Stupidity and Knowledgeability

Being stupid is being unhappy. Due to our stupidity, we do not know how to behave properly when we deal with the different aspects of life, and this results in sufferings. Stupidity often results in sufferings for every one of us. Stupidity makes our life move from this suffering to another, and it brings our life from this darkness to another.

Being stupid without realizing one is stupid, then stupidity becomes way of life of the stupid. If the stupid know that they are stupid, then that is an improvement. In our daily life, no one wants to live with the stupid, some people say aloud that: “It is better to take shoes for the knowledgeable than just to be a master of the stupid”. However, who on this earth can say that s/he

is not stupid? We do not know where we come from and after our death where will we return to? Before we were born, did we know how our faces would look like? After one hundred years, do we know how our faces will be? At present, we are living, but we do not know what our faces really are, then how can we say that we are knowledgeable?

Do not think that we are at present able to know our physical faces. We only know our faces thanks to photos and by means of a mirror. All we know about our faces through the photos and the mirror is just unreal knowledge, not real knowledge. What is unreal is supposed to be real, that is placing stupidity over stupidity! Therefore, we can call this knowledge stupidity.

It is not only stupidity that results in misery, but knowledgeability does. Knowledgeability that comes from stupidity is real stupidity. Imperfect understanding of things can result in more misery than real stupidity itself. Real stupidity can create what is called instinct

misery, and the person who is involved in this instinct misery does not feel miserable at all. This is just like dogs that eat human wastes, cattle graze, wild tigers and leopards eat raw meat, their mouths are stinking but they are not aware of that. They are also happy with that way of life!

Imperfect understanding may lead to words and behaviours that act imperfectly. Imperfect behaviours are behaviours that lack thorough understanding, and people possessing these imperfect behaviours consider themselves number one or the unique. Imperfect words are words that aim to satisfy one's own benefits without being interested in benefits of others. Imperfect behaviours are those for one's own benefits without paying attention to benefits of others. Such an understanding can make someone more stupid than normal stupid ones.

Normal stupid people rarely commit suicide, but people whose understanding is abnormal often do.

Knowledgeable people without deep understanding of causes and conditions as well as causes and effects on ourselves and on others are those who know things imperfectly. That kind of understanding will not only damage us in this life but in many coming lives as well. This understanding does not only damage one person but many others, and not only damages many people in one life but in many coming lives.

Therefore, it is true that instinct stupidity results in less misery to many people than imperfect understanding!

Making Offerings

If we think of ourselves when making offerings and giving alms, then the blessings and virtues gained from those actions are just like water contained in a bowl. Water in a bowl can only be used to wash some spoons.

If we think of the benefits for many people when making offerings or giving alms, then the blessings and virtues gained from those actions are just like water contained in a river. Water of a river brings benefits for many people, many species, and is able to clean dirty things for many people and many species.

If we think of the benefits for all living beings when we make offerings or give alms, then the blessings and virtues gained from these deeds are like water of an ocean. We are not able to measure the water of an

ocean as well as the benefits of the ocean water to all the species. Similarly, if we practise making offerings or giving alms for the benefits of all the species, then blessings and virtues gained from those deeds are not measurable.

So, on what is the dimension of your state of mind when you make offerings or give alms?

Do not Abet!

Afflictions in our mind include two types: one belonging to nature and the other to phenomenon.

Afflictions belonging to phenomena are the ones that are in operation in the area of the consciousness. When there are sufficient conditions, they are manifested through our physical actions and words, and when there are not sufficient conditions, they remain hidden inside.

Afflictions belonging to nature are the ones that are in operation deep in our mind. They lay foundation and create conditions for types of distinctive affliction to be manifested on human physical actions and words.

The types of affliction related to ignorance and self-oriented nature are those that hinder enlightened wisdom, peace and happiness, and darken our life.

If we practise any dharma, and our affliction does not decrease, our peace and happiness do not increase, then we practise the wrong dharma against the Buddha's teachings, even though we practise primitive/Hinayana meditation, Mahayana meditation, Meditation of the Patriarchs, Sukhavati (the Pure Land sect), mantra, or Bodhisattva path in different beautiful names.

Nobody - lay people or monks - cannot be called the Buddha's disciples, if they are too greedy for money, sexual pleasure, fame and glory, eating and drinking, sleeping and relaxing.

The language used to support happiness gained from money, sexual pleasure, fame and glory, eating and drinking, sleeping and relaxing is just bad language. The view behind happiness gained from money, sexual pleasure, fame and glory, eating and drinking, sleeping and relaxing belongs to heretical views. The argument for happiness gained from money, sexual pleasure, fame and glory, eating and drinking, sleeping and relaxing

certainly belongs to heterodox reflection. Practicing this bad, heterodox direction for a long time results in bad karma. Making a living from the heterodox acting is called the heterodox way. Efforts made for these fruitless purposes are called fruitless efforts. Growing these bad seeds internally is called incorrect memory and sticking to these wrong ways is called incorrect samadhi, or incorrect mental concentration.

Nowadays there are so-called monks and nuns who boast that they are the Buddha's disciples, but their minds are crammed with Five Desires that run after illusory fame and glory. They tend to cling to their self day after day, and are living with evil minds and false views that enable affliction to develop. These monks and nuns, who claim to be the Buddha's disciples, are people who through their daily practices abet the degradation of social morality and make the light of the Buddha's teachings dim and dark.

That is it!

In our daily life, no one likes cruel people, even cruel people do not like others to be cruel to them. So why are there still so many cruel people in life?

In our daily life, no one likes people who tell lies, even liars do not like others to tell lies to them. So why are there still so many people who tell lies in life?

If we do not want others to be cruel to us, then first of all we have to know how to let go all seeds of cruelty in our mind. If there are no more seeds of cruelty in our mind, the seeds of cruelty outside cannot enter our mind and therefore they cannot harm us!

If we do not want others to tell lies to us, first of all we have to know how to let go all seeds of deception in our mind. If there are no more seeds of deception in our

mind, the seeds of deception outside cannot influence our mind anymore. And if there are no more seeds of deception in our mind, the seeds of deception outside cannot attack us.

So, we do not want anybody to behave cruelly towards us, but if the seeds of cruelty are still available in our mind, then everybody is able to be cruel to us, and we still cannot avoid living with cruel people!

And, even though we do not want anybody to tell lies to us, if the seeds of deception are still available in our mind, people around us can behave deceitfully towards us and we still cannot avoid living with liars in life.

In conclusion, in daily life, we should not blame others, but we must look at ourselves, let go all the deceitful and cruel things in our mind, then everybody will come to us with peaceful and honest behaviours that are all natural!

Method of Destroying or Defining

Rubbish is available everywhere, at home and in society, but what is important is that we should not take rubbish from our house into the society and from the society into our house.

If we take rubbish from our house into the society, rubbish of the society will be piled up and it will flood back into our house. Therefore, rubbish in our house should be gathered and destroyed in a corner of our garden. Our garden will be productive without harming the society.

We should not take rubbish from the society into our house, why? Because it will result in pollution and suffocate our family.

Physical rubbish, if not managed well, will result in

pollution to the family and society in such a way, let alone spiritual rubbish?

If we throw rubbish of affliction from our home into the society, then the society will despise our family. If we bring rubbish of affliction, rubbish of right and wrong viewpoints, rubbish of partisanship from the society into our family, our family will be suffocated by this terrible kind of rubbish from the society.

One who is intelligent knows to destroy rubbish at any place he finds out. Rubbish found out from his mind, his viewpoint, his standpoint, his partisanship is destroyed immediately, then his mind is prevented from creating insects that can harm his life. Physical rubbish found out at any place will be thrown into rubbish cans and delineated for its proper existence!

Thanks to such a nice behaviour, he who is living in the Impure Land still enjoys the noble life of the Pure Land.

Building up One's Life

People generally build up their life on the foundation of Five Desires, therefore their happiness is burnt by their Five Desires. Five Desires are the desires of human life. Desire for money, sexual intercourse, fame and power, eating and sleeping.

If people build up their life on the Five Desires, these desires do not help them at all. It only results in stupidity and bad things; confusion and disorder. Stupidity and bad things, confusion and disorder in the society are created by the competition of human beings who build up their lives based on the Five Desires. Whenever our minds are full of the Five Desires, our lives cannot escape from sufferings and maltreatment. Those who write and read messages or make speeches in praise of greed and desire

are the very criminals of the society as well as crime instigators, not others, that the people in charge of the social security have to make every effort to search for!

In our life, no clear-sighted scholars or genuine sages praise or run after such Five Desires, except ordinary people.

Educated people mostly build up their lives on knowledge, therefore they know things of other people very well but they deal with their own things without care; they can criticize others very well but they do not remember their own weaknesses, thus this often results in viewpoints of bias or partisanship for building up parties that lead to social differentiation.

People who build up their lives on wisdom, not on knowledge, can therefore know themselves and others very well. They behave properly, grasp real things in order to make necessary adaptations so as to help people and save animals.

Wisdom is the bright virtue that is inherently available in our mind, but our mind is not bright because our wisdom is hidden by the Five Desires.

Letting go these Five Desires will immediately make our inherently bright nature brighter. Genuine sages let go the Five Desires, so the bright nature in their minds is brighter, and this makes their speech, silence, gestures, behaviours all Buddha-natured, and thus useful for life and human beings. Ordinary people day and night run after the Five Desires, and this makes their minds more troublesome, their knowledge more imperfect, their body more unhealthy, with narrow vision and within the limitation of dishes of meat, glasses of beer that harm their lives, which completely prevents them from offering assistance to others.

Therefore, out of what do you build up your life?
Please breathe and smile!

Dharma Door of Praying to Buddha

One of the basic dharma doors of Buddhists is praying to Buddha. Praying to Buddha becomes natural behaviour of Buddhist followers. That behaviour constitutes their spiritual life.

In 2008, there was a monk from Thailand coming to Tang Kinh temple, Phuoc Duyen pagoda in Hue, for a visit, and asking me for sharing Dharma practice. I did not share the practice of Vipassana meditation or the four foundations of mindfulness, since I know that these Dharma doors are fundamental Dharma practices of Buddhists in Myanmar, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Laos, and Khmer, I only shared the whole body praying to Buddha dharma door that I have been practicing with him.

I shared with him that whole body praying to Buddha

is praying entirely with body and mind. Regarding the body, the forehead, two hands, and two feet all touch the ground. This means that when we pray to Buddha, our knees and elbows touch the ground, the palms of the hands stretch straight upward and beyond the forehead, and our foreheads touch the ground. Concerning the mind, our minds must contain five fundamentals, namely, belief, effort, correct memory, correct concentration/meditation, and wisdom. Belief is to believe in the Triple Jewel. Effort is to make attempt to bring the respect for the Triple Jewel into reality while praying as well as in daily life. Correct memory is to maintain the belief in and respect for the Triple Jewel, which is clearly present in each action of praying. Correct concentration is to pray with body and mind as one. Wisdom is to contemplate cause and vow of Buddha and his perfect enlightenment, so as to shed light on our cause and vow while praying. And wisdom is to contemplate the Buddhas of three lives and ten directions who are present for our respectful

bow, and each of our bows touches their cause and vow. At the same time, each of our bows touches the pure nature in ourselves, thus making it brighter in our mind and thought.

Praying to Buddha with the five parts of the body and with the mind of such five fundamental contents is to conquer our mind of arrogance and pride, to show our respect for the amount of practice of the Buddhas as well as to respect the nature of Buddhahood in ourselves.

Praying to Buddha in such a noble way can be practised every day and each time we practise praying to Buddha, seeds of egoism, arrogance will be removed. We will approach people and other beings with our mind of belief and respect.

Why do we pray to Buddha so that our mind of egoism and seeds of arrogance can be removed and so that we can approach people and enter the ocean of enlightenment? Because our mind of egoism prevents

us from approaching people; because our mind of arrogance deprives us of our belief in everyone and everything. Therefore, praying to Buddha helps us regain the belief and enables us to live with others without any obstacles. One of the characteristics of the ocean is not to accommodate dead bodies, similarly, one of the characteristics of the enlightenment sea is not to contain minds of arrogance, pride, and egoism. Whenever we still live with our mind of arrogance, pride, and egoism in any form, we cannot reach the ocean of enlightenment. Therefore, praying to Buddha with a mind of belief and purity, the seeds of arrogance, pride, and egoism will sooner or later be removed, thus enabling us to reach the ocean of enlightenment.

Therefore, Buddha does not want us to pray to him, but we pray to Buddha so as to cultivate belief within ourselves and within other people and beings.

When we pray to Buddha with belief, with right mindfulness, with practice and vow, our right knee

touches the ground, our mind starts to wish that “all beings can touch the path of enlightenment”. When our left knee touches the ground, our minds start to wish that “all beings can live peacefully in the Right Path, not to fall into false views”. When our right hand touches the ground, our mind starts to wish that “all beings can be like Buddha, sitting on the throne of diamond, making the earth around shake, showing good marks, and reaching enlightenment”. When our left hand touches the ground, our mind starts to wish “to attain Four all-embracing (bodhisattva) Virtues, to assist all living beings to get into the bodhi path”. When our forehead touches the ground, our mind starts to wish that “all living beings can let go their minds of arrogance and pride, so as to attain the Ushnisha, the invisible mark on the head”.

After sharing the dharma door with the monk, both of us practised it and felt peaceful and happy in body and mind.

If we do not have conditions to practise meditation, we cannot sit peacefully for a few minutes, let alone a few

hours. If we do not have conditions to pray to Buddha, we cannot practise even one bow, let alone every day so that all afflictions can go away. If we do not have conditions to practise vegetarian diet, we cannot practise this in one meal, let alone six days, ten days a month, or every day. But when we have conditions for a certain dharma door, the practice of that dharma door is easy to us.

If you find it difficult to bow to your ancestors of blood relations or to your ancestors of spiritual relations, how can you find it easy to bow to those who dislike you, to those who despise you?

The Lotus sutra included the respect of Bodhisattva Sadàparibhùta to those who despised and disliked him. Despising and disliking him were the work of those whose minds were full of arrogance, pride, self-conceit, and enmity, but Bodhisattva Sadàparibhùta felt no enmity or hatred for anybody, showed no arrogance and pride to the people around him, and never revealed self-conceit to any dharma door he was practicing, even his current

dharma door of respecting those who opposed him.

Thanks to practicing the dharma door of respecting the Buddhas, Samantabhadra's ideas, passive and active, become Sunyata, or Emptiness, and this enabled him to reach the ocean of enlightenment of the Buddhas. Thanks to his respect for those who opposed him and slandered him for his empty mind, with his ability to hear and see, and to harmonize with what is heard and seen, he was able to attain the ocean of undeluded and pure lotuses.

Therefore, the dharma door of bowing to Buddha is a dharma door both fundamental and wonderfully profound, which should be practised every day by any Buddhist followers, so that our bow will reach from shallow to profound, from rudimentary to sophisticated, from narrow to wide, from limited to unlimited, and from measurability to beyond thought and discussion...

Awareness for the Sake of Awareness

Breathing in, we are aware that we are breathing in. Breathing out, we are aware that we are breathing out. That is the base of meditation practice leading to concentration of mind. Awareness is the important factor of meditation practice. Without it, meditation loses its true meaning. Breathing in with the absence of awareness is not breathing in, the action of meditation, but only breathing in based on instinct or biological or physical habit. Breathing out with the absence of awareness is not breathing out, the action of meditation, but breathing out based on instinct or biological or physical habit.

If we breathe in and out by instinct or habit, we are incapable of curing and transferring our ignorance and defilement. Our ignorance and defilement can only be

removed when our breathing in and out comes along with the factor of awareness.

But what are we aware of? It is the clear awareness of breathing in and out, of whether or not that breathing is short, long, tranquil and pervasive. And what is our awareness for? To bring our body to our mind and make our mind exist in our whole body. They are one. Therefore, it is awareness that results in a concentrated mind and our seeds of mind formation become calm.

Once the mind is in calmness and purity, the natural awareness in our mind arises by itself. This natural awareness does not have a possessor nor karma - action of body, words, and thought. There is no possessor because there is no subject in our mind, and there is no karma because our awareness and mind are by nature one.

The awareness from the natural mind is the best one of the whole space because every space is the space of natural mind. Also, that awareness is the best one of whole time since every time does not get out of natural

mind. The right view is considered to be the cognition of natural mind. Thus, that awareness is the one covering every space and exceeding every time.

As a result, the awareness gained from meditation is the one belonging to universal enlightenment or complete enlightenment. This awareness exceeds every time and space. This awareness exceeds all subjects and objects of cognition. Awareness coming from cognition does not belong to awareness of meditation nor to awareness of natural mind, since this awareness is limited to subjects and objects or between things to distinguish and things to be distinguished.

Whereas awareness of meditation is awareness for the sake of awareness. This awareness is direct, on-line and absolute, throughout and simultaneous, at the present place and everywhere. This awareness is awareness of natural mind. It is absolutely not found in the world of cognition, let alone wrong cognition. Awareness of meditation is the awareness for awareness.

Circus

Everyone who plunges headlong into society, in any position or in any form, is like a circus performing at an intersection. People take turns to see them, give compliments and criticisms. Giving compliments and criticisms is an ever lasting thing of viewers, and no one can probably forbid them to give comments to performers. Giving comments is viewers' strength, and similarly, no one is able to completely understand all the minds of circuses, except the circuses themselves.

However, if the circus would really like the audience not to give both positive and negative comments on them, it will be better they should not do it as their career at any place and time. Even if they have passion for it and even though they are so talented, two words of praise

and blame of human beings on any of their performances are unavoidable.

We are happy with compliments and feel depressed with criticisms. If we continue trailing along behind such a state of life, when shall we ever stop such joy and sadness?!

Who do Assets Belong to?!

We have assets, but those assets are not ourselves and do not belong to us. So who are they and who do they belong to? They are nobody, they are causations and conditions. If we have blessed virtues, assets will accordingly then come to us and develop in our houses. If we lack blessed virtues, assets will no longer be ours and they themselves will leave our houses. They will be destroyed by our husbands or wives or children; they will be swept away; they will be burned on fire; they will be buffeted by earthquakes and they will be confiscated by governments or authorities. Therefore, they do not belong to anybody. They belong to every home.

So if we have blessed virtues to obtain assets, we do not think that they are us and they belong to us. We

have to obtain those assets to do all the good and useful deeds, especially to serve and commend correct Dharma, bringing profits to human beings and making our blessed virtues exist in those assets and those assets exist in our blessed virtues, so wherever we are born, those assets also are born together with us, help us do all good deeds.

If assets are created by our blessed virtues, whenever and wherever we are, they will help us have a meaningful, sustainable and peaceful life. If assets are created from our deceptions, they will not make our life peaceful and meaningful, but they just make our life chaotic and meaningless?!

Love and Deception

We live with many fears and worries in relation to other people, because when facing people, we say words which are not what our mind means. Saying the words which are not what our mind means and what our acts are after, often causes fears and worries in ourselves.

Feeling fearful is not feeling happy. Worrying is not feeling peaceful. Feeling fearful makes our brain produce the toxins that make our body ill. Worrying makes our brain produce toxins that make the cardiovascular tubes clogged leading to strokes; make the digestive system disordered, make livers unable to filter the toxins to drain out. . .

If we do not want to fear, we should be true to the truth and always tell the truth. Living with the truth and telling the truth, we will have a peaceful sleep, we will have a

peaceful mind, a long life, a nice life to live.

If there is somebody asking you what you love, and if you are a practical person, you will answer: I love bread and butter. If you have some knowledge, you will answer: I love everybody. If you are a bit dreamy and poetic, you will answer: I love the wind and the moon. If you have some knowledge and clever practice of politics, you will answer: I love my country and country fellows. If you have a bit of filial affection, you will answer: I love parents, but if you have a sincere soul, you will answer: I love the truth.

Loving the truth is the hardest, why? Because loving the truth is giving up all the deception. Where does deception come from? It is because of human ego-attachment. The bigger the ego is, the more deception humans have, and the more disguise there is. Where does ego-attachment come from? It is because of ignorance. If there is ignorance, truth will never exist for humans to love and humans do not know what is the truth to love.

So false love is created and this results in deception in love. The more we do not have true love and the more deception we use to love, the more our life becomes sunk in deception.

Deception does not create peace and peace never exists in deception!

Practising a Peaceful Mind

In order to live a peaceful life, we need to practise the following things:

1. Dreaming of reasonable things:

Dreaming helps us sublimate, but over-dreaming cannot only make us sublime but also cause us to consume our own potentiality and energy, which makes our living capacity lose. In life, we have the right to dream, but the important thing is that we should know which conditions could help us to reach that dream and under which conditions we could have to struggle for it.

2. Putting your ego out of your thoughts:

It is great to never force others to do and obey our thoughts and also never force ourselves to do what we

have thought immediately. Obeying our own thinking and orders of ego, we will be soon disappointed and if others are pushed to act under our orders, we will gradually lose good friends and talented assistants. In life, we truly need them; therefore, we, first of all, have to let go our ego out of our thoughts and actions.

3. Knowing how to study and listen:

We should know how to study and listen wherever and whenever we can and we should never fail to take the opportunity. Knowing to study and listen is knowing to progress. If we wish to progress, true modesty is present within us at present and in the future. Modesty assists us to live more peacefully than arrogance does. Arrogance will exhaust our knowledge and make our emotions gradually wilt. Therefore, we have to study and listen so that our life can be full of deep sentiments and endless knowledge. Learning is to beautify and sublimate our life. Affection is to live and maintain the green color of life.

4. Practicing doing hard pieces of work:

Normally, we often love doing easy work instead of hard one. However, in spite of its hardship or easiness, each has its own value. The easy one has its own value and the hard one has its own value. It is true that the hard work is too difficult to be done, but whenever we succeed in finishing it, our ability in practicing and enduring increases and the results we can get from it are really valuable. As a result, we should spend a little time in a day practicing sitting peacefully in silence. In an industrial country and countries of developed industry, silent sitting is not at all an easy thing to do. In the position of leaders, sitting peacefully to hear others' critiques of their weaknesses, with a serene mind and a desire to progress is not easy at all, dear leaders!

5. Do not waste time:

A poor thing for people in the modern time is lack of time to live. Nowadays, people mostly spend time

thinking of material things. They are chasing material things, consuming them, and in the end all life values are materialized and the life time of human beings is deadly swept away in waves of materials.

We are human beings, matter is present inside of us, but we are not material. We know how to create them in accordance with our desire. Therefore, we should know to use our own advanced awareness to use them and not to let them utilize our life. Knowing how to spend time creating materials in order to serve our life is already an intelligent action, but knowing how to utilize them to make our life noble and not to waste our time in business with those material things is not easy at all and very few people are able to do that!

6. Letting us be in the immense space:

Sometimes, when we suffer stress from work, we should choose a spacious and fresh area to sit down, just by ourselves, look into the vast space, giving our love

through each breath to wind and let the wind bring our love away.

Breathing in, we are aware that we are breathing in; breathing out, we are aware that we are breathing out. Breathing in, we know that we are getting in touch with the immense space inside of us; breathing out, we are aware that we are touching the outer boundless space. Breathing in, we realize we are much smaller than the inner space in our mind, and breathing out, we know we are far smaller than the one outside. Breathing in and breathing out, we travel to that vast inner and outer space. We only need to practise breathing in and out like that, during a period of about twenty minutes. From that, all sadness in our mind will disappear in the air, and our mind will become peacefully empty. We also have a spacious area to live in. The immense space is us, and we ourselves are the immense space. The wind will playfully blow and the moon will be freely shining. This way, we can begin our working day with all our beliefs and hopes.

Who ever Knows!

In life, our eyes have given us boundless treasures of life, but we have never said thank-you to them.

Our ears have given us boundless treasures of life, but we have never said thank-you to them in a deep way.

Our noses have given life to us every day by breathing in and out, but we never know to say thank-you to them.

Our mouths and tongues have helped us talk, eat, live and communicate every day, but we never know to say thank-you to them.

Our bodies help us to live and to work. The legs help us to walk. The hands help us to hold objects. The hearts help us with the circulation of blood. The lungs help our breathing. The stomach helps us to receive and digest

food. The livers help us to metabolize the toxins. The kidneys help our excretion. The small intestine helps us bring the nutrients into the blood, and the large intestine helps us defecate the sediment out...but we never say thank-you to all of them.

Not only are we not grateful to our body's parts but we are also ungrateful and extravagant.

Most of our knowledge is the knowledge we gain from outside, so most of us are those who build up our life from the outside.

The most stupid person in the world knows those who build up their life from the outside are unhappy persons. Thus, where is happiness which we look for from the outside through our lifetime? Who ever knows where happiness is!

Life does not Need Us to Be Busy

How can we protect a water drop? That water drop does not need our protection. Let us return it to the ocean. In this life nobody can hold a water drop for themselves. If we can't even hold a water drop, why are we noisy and busy with what we cannot hold! We are busy with life throughout the day, but life does not need us to be so busy!

Going too Far away!

We think in an erroneous way about the good things and do them with erroneous thinking, so we stuck in Karma just derived from our bad actions. Why do we run after false thoughts - instead of following our self-nature in order to do good things and thus torment ourselves and others?

If we follow our self-nature for the good, we will be stable in mind and body. There will be a peaceful society, and all people will live together in harmony.

The more we run after our erroneous thinking for the good, the more we fail, the more inferior our fame becomes, the more our blessings disappear, the more misfortunes come nearer to us.

When we think in an erroneous way about good

things, good things will go beyond our control and there are too many inversions of illusory ideas appearing in front of all of us. The erroneous thoughts stack one up the other and make our path too gloomy to come back. Alas! Erroneous thoughts have taken us too far away!

In life, we should bear in mind that erroneous thought cannot bring us good things! Therefore we should be very careful...

Our Time

In Buddhist teachings, the time in which we live is the time of destruction and impurity. Time of destruction and impurity, in Sanskrit means kalpa-kasaya. Kasaya is destruction. In Chinese it means dirt or impurity.

Time of destruction and impurity is a period of destruction, the period that is dirty and impure. Why is it a period of destruction and impurity? Because human body, speech and mind in this period, act and run after toxins of greed, anger and ignorance, arrogance of the mind, which makes human time impure. At this time, people bring impurity to life and to their partners. Because human beings live in such a lifestyle, they can destroy the whole period quickly.

Then what are the causes of creating such a fast

destruction to our time? They are our greed, anger, ignorance, pride full of arrogance, and deceptions.

It is these elements related to mind and thought that have an impact on our lives and our environment, making our time sink in poison, from psychology to biology, from subjectivity to objectivity.

Poisonous life of individuals and society is all derived from the poison of the mind and thought.

If the mind itself stays peaceful and pure, then any poison in each individual will have the opportunity to stop for purification and transformation. In the twenty-four hours of a day, do we ourselves ever sit in meditation for a few minutes, in the morning or in the afternoon to let go all ideas of good and evil, of right and wrong, of advantages and disadvantages, of glory and humiliation, of gain and loss, of love and hatred, in order that our mind settles down itself and stays still? If not, then we ourselves destroy our life by such ideas of competition

as superiority and inferiority, right and wrong, gain and loss, glory and humiliation, wisdom and foolishness, love and hatred.

And we destroy our generation rapidly. In this period of destruction, human use bestial behavior or false views towards one another, false doctrines spread uncontrollably, conflicts and military fights happen, accidents and pandemic diseases occur, nature is extremely exploited by human beings, environment is polluted, thus making human seed deformed even in the fetus.

Let us save our generation by detachment of all of the partners, all the competitions promoted by greed, anger, ignorance, ego, alignment with others and let go immediately violent faiths and illusory expectations.

Please let them go, like getting rid of phlegm. Let us foster our souls by peaceful substances every day. Each day we should spend an hour sitting in silence. That means, we just sit in meditation, without thinking about

good and bad, right and wrong, gain and loss, glory and humiliation, wisdom and foolishness, yes and no, ourselves and others... That means in one hour, we are not concerned with all thoughts that come up in our mind, in our mentality. We do not think about them. We do not oppose them. We do not follow them, we do not cheer them up. We do not protest them. We let them all go and we even let go all of our let-go ideas.

Letting go every idea is the excellent food for our mind. Let us nourish our mind with this wonderful kind of food. Our mind is full of too many concepts, gain and loss, praise and criticism, glory and humiliation, advantages and disadvantages, yes and no, mental state and form, success and failure..., which makes the mind laborious, thus leading to sorrows and sufferings. When the mind is laborious and upset, then the body is not in a peaceful state. Restless mind and body are the source of all the errors and the source of all accidents and epidemics.

Thus, if we do not want our generation to fall quickly

into destruction, each of us has to save ourselves first. We have to save our families and the whole society that is falling quickly into destruction. How can we do that? Every day we have to know exactly how to choose the appropriate time and space to sit in meditation and let go all of the concepts and encourage other people to join in such activities.

When all the ideas are dropped, and worries do not have a chance to appear, our mind will be clear and pure. Let us bring that mind into our daily life to create a new dawn, a new age of power and prosperity, which is bright and peaceful.

Making Offerings to the Three Jewels

Practicing making offerings to the Three Jewels is the opportunity for us to regain the power of our wisdom, mercy and blessings which have been lost because of our ignorance and delusion.

Buddha is the All-Knowing One or the One with universal enlightenment. So when we make offerings to Buddha, we have the chance to contact that substance, to make it go into our mind, and to make the best thing in our mind start and move on to perfection. The noblest substance of our human being is wisdom and kindness and compassion. We make offerings to Buddha to create the potentiality and conditions for these two substances to be always present in all our circumstances and activities and to become better in our life.

Dharma is the way to practise moral precepts and meditation in order to create knowledge, and so Dharma is a bright way which helps us overcome the state of birth and death towards liberation and happiness or peaceful tranquility Nirvana. Therefore, making offerings to Dharma is a completely full practice about moral precepts and meditation to encourage wisdom to start.

Sangha is an assembly of disciples of Buddha, which includes at least four Bhikkhu or more, living together in harmony and purity in the Dharma and disciplines given by Buddha. Buddha's Sangha is able to do good things for all the devas and human beings who wish to cultivate their blessings. Therefore, making offerings to Sangha makes the pure and peaceful substances existent in our life, leading us to a noble life .

Making offerings to the Three Jewels with pure devotion will bring us immeasurable blessing so as to improve ourselves as well as our life.

Love is a Miracle

When love is inside us, anger and blame are no longer there. The greater our love is, the smaller our anger and blame become; and the happiness and peace in our life will start to flourish.

Love can not only control the seeds of our anger and blame, but it will also control all the seeds of our greed and meanness. Love is to give, to donate, to confer, and to consecrate. Love is the heart and the hand to offer what is good to people. The more you love, the more noble your donations for people are; the more you love, the more you sacrifice and the more egoless you become. The bigger the love is, the smaller the greed becomes and this likely brings safety and offers fearlessness to people.

In family, parents teach children and children are

obedient to parents, which originates from love. Wife and husband live with each other faithfully from young to old, that also originates from love. Brothers and sisters are in harmony, with elder and younger ones respecting one another, that originates from love. Students listen to what the teacher teaches, that originates from love. If the king and mandarins do not love people, people cannot rely on anybody to worship the king and respect the mandarins. When people worship the king and respect the mandarins, that originates from love.

It turns out that although everything is easy, without love, it can become hindrance; and when things are too difficult, with love, they become easy. Therefore, our ancient sages have saved people and helped life out of their love. The more abundant the substance of love in a person is, the more confirmed the quality of sacredness in him becomes.

Love can make humans in this world erase all differences of religion, ideology, politics, culture, customs and

traditions, national boundaries, gender, so that everyone can come to each other and live together naturally in peace. Therefore, love is a miracle that no other miracles can be compared to. That love is the Buddha.

Money

It is unreasonable to think that money creates sufferings for us, and it is even more unreasonable to think that money brings us happiness.

Let us close our eyes, looking deeply into the issue of money to see whether it is the condition for our happiness or misery.

With eyes closed to look deeply into the aspect of money, are we able to discover the reality of this issue? Money itself is certainly not the cause of our happiness or suffering. What makes us happy when using the money is our mind. When using and getting involved with money, our happiness will depend on how bright and healthy our mind is.

Sufferings in our lives also come from our mind. When

we use or get involved with money with an unhealthy and blind mind, money will bring us sufferings and disappointments.

After such deep meditation, we begin to read the following poem, in which the poet blamed money in an excessive and unintelligent way.

*“Money, why are you so cruel
You are driving humans crazy”*

Or

*“Money is like the fairy, the Buddha,
The springboard for the young,
The health for the old,
The momentum for fame,
The parasol of protection,
The scale of justice
Oh, money is perfect!”*

Looking at money and blaming it like that are true in terms of the negative and passive aspects only, but not in

terms of the positive and active aspects.

Indeed, money is not bad, but it is the greed of humans that is the evil. “Greed is the nature of a malevolent mind”.

Buddhism does not say money is evil or good, but Buddhism says that the mind with greed is evil and the mind without greed is good. Any work that is driven by greed becomes evil, but any work based on our mind without greed or with enlightened mind is considered good.

Thus, a greedy mind is the substance that creates sufferings to life of all of us, and a mind without greed or an enlightened mind can bring happiness for all of us every day.

Without a mind of greed, when we use money every day, it will create blessings for us and it has a great effect on the benefits for people themselves, for their families, for society and life.

When we do meditation and take a close look into money, we will be able to see clearly the nature and

reality of money, and once we do so, we will be able to use money in a way that benefits us and brings happiness for us and for everyone.

Beauty

We continue to let the meditative eyes look more deeply into beauty, to see whether beauty makes us miserable or peaceful? Beauty is not the factor that leads to misery or peace. It is our mind that creates these things for us.

Does beauty make anyone miserable? Do beautiful people make anyone miserable? Does beautiful scenery make anyone miserable? Does beautiful fish make anyone miserable? Do beautiful birds make anyone miserable? Do beautiful rivers make anyone miserable? Does the beautiful moon make anyone miserable? Does a beautiful cloud make anyone miserable? Does a beautiful flower make anyone miserable? Beauty does not make anyone miserable at all, only people with beauty delusion are miserable. Therefore, misery originates from the human

mind full of delusion and greed that is exposed to beauty, then get stuck with appearance of beauty, and consequently misery cannot be avoided.

Does beauty make anyone happy? There are many people with good appearances, but they are not happy. They feel very miserable, really miserable. All Vietnamese know Ms Kieu created by Nguyen Du, Ms Kieu is a very beautiful lady, but really miserable. With their beauty, Ms Kieu as well as Tay Thi, should be happy, and several ladies winning Miss World, too; but they are all persons who have a lot of needs, fears and sufferings.

What makes them unhappy, when they have such beauty? What makes them unhappy is their mind of greed, blame, arrogance and delusion.

When doing meditation, we have a close look, and we feel ridiculous, to see some poets denounce the saying 'girls who are beautiful often meet with bad destiny'. 'Beautiful girls who often meet with bad destiny' are girls of fake beauty. In girls of fake beauty, the beauty

includes greed, delusion and arrogance. In a word, “Any beautiful girls whose beauty is created from ignorance, egotism and greed are the beautiful girls with bad destiny. The beautiful girls who meet with bad destiny are those girls in whose beauty, there is something incomplete and imperfect. It is just a beauty which fools the senses and vision of people.

We can see that beauty makes us neither miserable nor peaceful or happy, it is our mind immersed in beauty that makes us miserable, and it is our mind without being stuck in beauty that makes us happy.

Once our mind is not stuck in beauty, we come in contact with thousands of scenes, but still see the self-nature of emptiness in all of these scenes. Consequently we feel easy and very leisurely when being exposed to evils and beauties in this life.

Staying in contact with thousands of scenes every day, and seeing the self-nature of emptiness in all of these scenes, constitutes the truth of all scenes.

Realizing this, we will not be immersed in the appearance of all things whenever we are exposed. When a person is exposed to all appearances without consequences, without being in blind absorption, then that person has happiness, freedom, sovereignty and joyfulness.

In contrast, people who get stuck in appearances, do suffer restlessness in life, in standing and sitting, in lying and sleeping, and in eating when running after the illusory appearance of life.

Why do they have to live and act like that? Because they are already immersed, trapped and stuck. Therefore, a person’s walk full of exposure to appearance can be recognized immediately. How do we look at that person’s walk? With our meditative eyes, we look deeply into each of their footsteps to see clearly the seeds that are in operation in them and to know where their footsteps are taking them to.

Name and Appearance

We let the meditative eyes look more deeply into name and appearance, to see whether it makes somebody miserable or not? Name and appearance does not hurt anyone. It does not make anyone happy, either. Happiness is the result of having a bright, healthy and open mind. When a person with a name and appearance has a pure, healthy and open mind, then that name and appearance becomes pure, healthy, open and that name and appearance has the effect of bringing happiness to them and helping them build their good life.

In contrast, to a person with a mind that is narrow, dark, tattered, cracked, and if this person has a name and appearance, this name and appearance ties him more tightly, brings distress to him and burns all his happiness.

This thing can be seen very clearly in our society, there are some people whose minds are small but whose names and appearances are big. Whenever they directly deal with their work, they have fear, worry, and doubt. This makes their minds restless which results in diseases. They bring diseases not only to themselves but also to their work, organizations and lives.

Our society today has a lot of diseases, some of which originate from people's immersion into impracticable name and appearance, thus bringing misery to themselves and many people.

In the eyes of meditation, name and appearance is made up by non-name and non-appearance. The name and appearance, which in fact is a non-name and non-appearance, but which we think truly exists, makes us miserable.

Words such as venerable, most venerable in Buddhism are just names and appearances, but when people only

address us merely as teachers, instead of venerable or most venerable, then we immediately get angry and do not want to listen to them.

Does it mean that our anger is due to the words of venerable, most venerable or due to our mind being stuck in these “names and appearances”? Since our minds are stuck in these “names and appearances”, our minds get angry when other people do not call our right names, but if our minds are not stuck, when we are called “teachers” or “venerable” or whatever “names and appearances”, this surely cannot make us angry.

If we have the natural characteristics of a man, when we go somewhere and people call us “that girl”, “that lady”, no matter what they call us, we are still men. It is not because of being called “that girl” or “that lady” that we become girls or ladies.

If we have the natural characteristics of women, when we go somewhere and people call us “that guy” or

“gentlemen”, we are still women. It is not because we are called “this guy” or “gentlemen” that we become men.

The point is whether our dignities, souls, seeds and capacities are real and consistent with such related names or not. If we are not as qualified as what they call us, immediately we get excited with what they call us. That instant excitement can only lead us to disappointment and sorrow.

With our sight of meditation, when having an insight into name and appearance, we see that “There is no name called true name, true name means non-name and it is non-name that really means true name”. Or as revealed in Prajnaparamita’s words - words of enlightened wisdom - “No true name is called true name, it is non-name that is true, to all beings”

Thus, the true name and appearance of people are non-name and non-appearance. The more people are non-name minded, the more they enjoy happiness, freedom,

and peace. If they are name-and-appearance minded, they will be annoyed, disturbed and stuck with troubles.

In the past, when Buddha was alive, there was a mandarin who left his home to become a Bhiksu. Buddha has already taught him how to give up lust and to live in a quiet forest to monitor and reflect on the mind. That Bhiksu once did meditation in the forest and he felt much excited. Then he lay comfortably in a hammock to sway lightly with the winds. He felt happy, free and peaceful. Peacefulness means that there are no ties to anything. And in his feeling of happiness without any ties, he tasted the Dharma taste of giving up lust. He shouted loudly in happiness. This made others jealous.

Other Bhiksu then spoke to Buddha: “Dear Buddha, that Bhiksu was tired of meditation, so he shouted in the middle of the forest”

Buddha called for that Bhiksu and asked: “Why? You were staying in the forest, weren’t you so happy that you

shouted loudly to make the other ones uneasy? And they reported this to Buddha”

The Bhiksu, down on his knees, said: “I was so happy that I could not control myself and shouted so loudly “

The Buddha: “How did you feel happy?”

“Dear Holy Buddha, I felt strangely happy. I was once a mandarin, so wherever I went, my servants as well as my assistants always accompanied me, I did not feel free. They had to taste my meals before I ate; checked my bed before I slept and protected me wherever I went. Now, I give up all to follow you, I practice giving up lust and living quietly in this forest where I feel safe and happy. Because I am so free, I think it is a feeling of true happiness”

Through this story, we see that people controlling their sovereignty and freedom are those who do not have any name and appearance. If we have a name and appearance, our lives will be tied tightly and disturbed by that name and appearance.

And, we also know that if name and appearance comes into our mind, our life will soon become heavy. How can we give up name and appearance? We should use our mind of non-attachment to give up name and appearance.

When I was born, my parents made a worship to name me Tri. Thus, the name Tri is stuck to me. When leaving home to be a monk, my master called me Thai Hoa to make it different from Thai Thuan, Thai Tinh or Thai Tue... Now if I say that I am not Thai Hoa, will anyone in the world agree to that? If they would say that I am not Thai Hoa, do you agree? So how can I refuse my name effectively? I have to use my pure mind to refuse that name in my mind. Outside, I am called Tri, but actually, my name is not me. It does not belong to me. I was named Tri by my parents and people also call me so. Although my parents named me Tri and people also call me Tri, in my mind, I do not stick to that name, so I feel free and leisurely with that name.

Therefore, those who do not have any name and

appearance and who are not attached to that state of non-name-and-appearance are good people, but those who have name and appearance and who are not attached to that state of name and appearance are really better ones.

When a monk hopes to bring life benefits, he has to practise hard with his mind, so that he does not have a mind which sticks with his name. If his mind is with the name, his practice does not bring any benefit for himself and even for life.

If our mind is with the name, whatever we do, we act just for our name and appearance. When we act for our name, how can this bring benefit to life? And how can we say that we understand, love and help life? If we do everything for our name, the effect is less. Instead the damage inflicted on people and to ourselves is much more. The more we do for our name, the less free we are. The more we do for name, the more control we lose over ourselves.

In Samanta-mukuha Sutra - Universal Door, we can see that if our Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva - Bodhisattva of Mercy, needed to act as a Bhiksu, she would immediately change herself into Bhiksu to preach. If our Bodhisattva of Mercy needed to act as a senior householder, she would immediately change herself into a senior householder to preach. If our Bodhisattva of Mercy needed to act as a royal first minister, she would immediately change herself into a royal first minister to preach. If our Bodhisattva of Mercy needed to act as a boy or girl, she would immediately change herself into a boy or girl to preach... Bodhisattva of Mercy could do that because her mind did not stick to any name and appearance. If she stuck to it, she would be a little boy forever when she changed herself into a boy. She could not change herself into a girl, and when she could change herself into a boy and she was unable to change herself into a girl for her preaching, then her preaching could be limited by time, space and species. Because, there is

some space for only boys, not for girls and there is some space for boys, not for girls. There is some space and time sometimes suitable for boys and sometimes suitable for girls. If our Bodhisattva of Mercy sticks to boys only, it is hard for her to work with girls and vice versa. If she sticks to Bhiksu only, it is hard for her to work with ordinary people. If she sticks to ordinary people only, it is hard for her to work with monks. If she sticks to citizens only, it is hard for her to work with mandarins and vice versa. So there were some Kings who pretended to be ordinary people when they wanted to be close to the people and listen to them.

As a result, when doing deep meditation, do we see whether the name can create happiness or sorrow for human beings? That is totally untrue. The thing that causes sorrow and prevents human beings' activities from effective performance is that their mind is attached to their name.

The thing which creates happiness, greatness, multi-

usage, multi-character and boundlessness for human beings is that their mind does not stick to their name and appearance.

Since the mind does not stick to the name, every name and appearance will be then the name and appearance of the mind. So, if we can control our mind, we can make full use of the name.

Bodhisattvas can live with a mind of non-attachment, so they do not stick to any name. They can control and use any name to bring benefits to life. Therefore, Bodhisattvas are free from every name.

Eating and Drinking

Do eating and drinking bring us happiness or sorrow? Taking a meditative look into the issue, we see that eating and drinking are just a condition, not an agent of change.

If we eat and drink something with our joyful and relaxed mind, that kind of food will go into our body and create cheerful, comfortable and peaceful feelings.

Ordinary people only prepare meals while educated people not only prepare food but also look at how and where to eat, whereas people with Buddhist wisdom prepare not only how and where to eat, but also eat with their mind.

If our mind is busy, worried, sad or tired during eating, the food or drink going into our mind causes sorrow and sickness. Thus, before eating we should prepare our

mind, not just care about how and where to eat.

Therefore, ordinary people can recognize only the skin of an issue. Educated people can recognize the flesh of the issue and people doing meditation can recognize the bone of the issue. And just because of seeing the bone of the issue, they can prepare their mind to eat. When they see the flesh, they just prepare how to eat. And when they just see the skin, they just know how to prepare their food to eat. If we eat with our unhappy mind, no matter how delicious the food is, it will become tasteless, and no matter how nutritious the food is, it will become poisonous.

Thus, those who have wisdom, pay attention to not only how and what to eat but also their mind to eat. While eating, they know well what, when, where they should eat and what, when, where they should not. And while eating, they also know what to talk about and what not to talk about, what to think about and what not to think about.

So, with the eyes of meditation, we know clearly food and drink is only a condition that helps us to eat. It is not eating itself or the action of eating. The action of eating involves our body and mouth, and what mainly affects the action of tongue and mouth while eating is our mind. Thus, when looking at food, we should not immediately find fault with it.

Does wine make anybody drunk? It cannot make anyone drunk. In fact wine is just a beverage with alcohol. Wine does not make anyone drunk so why do we blame it? Tofu, vegetables, food, fish, beer and mushroom do not make anyone worse so why do we blame them? They only make us drunk or sick when the substance of greed makes our mind drunk and when the illness of greed entered our mind. Once the illness of greed occupies our mind, not only the things mentioned above, but anything else, can make us drunk or sick.

In fact, wine cannot make anybody drunk, but when a greedy person drinks it, he or she will get drunk. It is not

the wine that gets drunk itself. So, we should not blame food but we should blame the greedy mind of those who produce food and the greedy mind of those who consume that food.

With meditative eyes, food should not be blamed. We have to analyze the pros and cons of an issue. When a problem happens to us, to our family or to society, we have to know how to analyze the root of that problem. Hence, we can overcome the difficulties brought by that problem. It is not so hard to do it. If we do not understand the problem well, and we try to deal with it, it may be more complicated to us, to our family or to our society. When a problem happens in our family or society, we face it as our meditative subject to see its root. Once we find out the nature of the root, we can deal with it as easily as when we meet our beloved people with a peaceful smile on our lips and everything will be all right.

On the contrary, when we do not see the root of the problem well, we will find it more and more complicated

when dealing with it. Like a good doctor, when examining his patient, he knows the kind of sickness, and he can prescribe the proper medication. His patient will recover well. But with a bad doctor, he does not know exactly what is the matter with his patient. He feels doubtful about the patient's illness. He thinks the patient suffers from stomach ache. He decides to operate on the patient's stomach immediately, but finds out that it is wrong, and he stops the operation. Then he thinks that the patient suffers from liver and heart. He does the same procedure. When making a wrong diagnosis, he will give a wrong treatment that can lead to the death of a patient.

Similarly, in our life, if something bad happens, we should look into the matter with our meditative eyes in order to find out the truth, instead of making different predictions. There are very few correct predictions, but incorrect predictions are far more numerous.

Thus, when we see clearly the nature and the reality of eating, we should not blame the food or drinks but

we should blame our greedy mind. And we should know how to prepare our mind before eating and maintain our pure mind while we are eating.

Sleeping

When learning from Dharma teachers that too much sleep can make people stupid, many think that staying awake for a long time can make them intelligent, so they do not go to sleep. When being asked why, they revealed that their Dharma teacher once said that getting too much sleep can make them stupid. Consequently, they inferred that staying awake would make them intelligent. Therefore, they decided to stay awake. But when they lay awake for about two nights, it did not make them intelligent but more stupid instead. Lying awake for one day and one more night, it is not normal stupidity but it is mindless stupidity.

When we look deeply into the existence of the sky and the earth, we can find out why we need sleeping or

awakening. We should know when to stay awake and when to sleep. We stay awake in daytime. That is the awakening of our wisdom, and sleeping in daytime is the sleeping in stupidity. Sleeping at night is the sleeping in wisdom and staying awake at night is the awaking in stupidity. Because nights are for us to sleep and daytime is for us to stay awake. If we sleep in daytime and stay awake at night, we do not follow the rule of nature, of cause and condition. When we lead a life that runs counter to the rule of our life, it can bring us diseases and disasters.

If we want to wake up at 3:30 am but we stay up too late, that means that waking up obstructs sleeping. In football, if you obstruct others, you will be fined. So when the waking up obstructs sleeping, who will fine us? Our body itself will fine us and it is an exact punishment. In our body, the 4 elements - earth, water, wind and fire have to be in balance in order to have a healthy body. If the 4 elements are not in balance, we will have an unhealthy body. And each element has its own Ying and

Yang. The Ying and Yang in each element also have to be in balance. This creates life for creatures. If there are obstructions of these elements, it is very dangerous for our lives and it can bring diseases to us.

Inside our body, if the liquid obstructs the heat, this results in an imbalance that can lead to hundreds of illness. And when the solid obstructs the liquid, it brings a lot of unsettled things and vice versa. When our mind and our body obstruct each other, they can make us worried. This worry originates from the imbalance in our lives. Troubles and unhappiness come to us in the same way.

Our body moves magically. Each part of the body has its own function and they support each other naturally. For example, naturally we wake up to prepare everything for our body itself from 3 to 5am, and from 5 to 7pm, our body prepares for its coming activities, and our abdomen prepares for digestion - the waste starts to go out. If we eat and sleep reasonably, we make a very convenient condition for our “wind - water - earth - fire” activities.

They interact and support each other reasonably in order to help the different parts of our body to function well. This can bring us a healthy, peaceful and happy body.

Therefore, we should know how to use our pure mind to control the body and the different parts of the body to make them work effectively.

In our daily lives, if we continue to eat greedily, do not have good sleeping habits or work immoderately, we may, sooner or later, get sick in both mind and body.

Thus, our happiness and peace never come from begging, entreating favours from others and greediness as well. They come from our mind free from greed, awareness and a mind and body which are in balance.

Therefore, in Buddhist Dharma, teaching of choice is an important thing in 7 elements of Buddhist enlightenment. Teaching of choice means to choose a suitable way to apply in our life, and from that way of life, happiness and peace are born.

Hence, if our choice of Buddhist practice method is wrong, it can lead to unexpected results. We want this way but do it that way. When eating, never make it full, fullness can make us tired and stupid. We should not eat insufficiently because it can lead to a craving for food and we will think of eating all day. Craving for food and thinking of food make us inhuman and our thought and action are not those of human beings. Fullness in eating leads to stupidity, and insufficiency in eating can make us worse. Sufficiency in eating leads to peace. Eating with merciful mind free from greed can bring blessing and liberation. Remember that, eating to the full is the practice of animals. Eating insufficiently is the practice of devils. Inability to eat includes people living in Hell. Eating sufficiently is the practice of intelligent people and eating with merciful mind free from greed is the practice of all saints.

So, we should practise in a way so that when we sleep, we focus our mind on sleeping, when we eat, we focus

our mind totally on eating. Thus, we should know how to eat for the happiness and purity of our lives.

We also sleep in the same way. If sleeping makes us stupid, what do we sleep for? So, we just sleep to meet the biological needs of our body, and we do not let sleep bury our lives.

We eat with mind free from greed to gain happiness. We eat with our relaxed and calm mind to be happy.

If we sleep with mind free from greed and anger, we will be happy. When we go to sleep with worried, calculated, possessive or angry mind, we absolutely will have nightmares. So, there are people who cannot sleep even though they lie down during the night or have nightmare after nightmare.

When we eat, if our mind focuses on eating, we will eat peacefully. When we sleep, if our mind focuses on sleeping, we will sleep well. If we want to obtain happiness and peace, we should know how to eat and sleep in mindfulness.

Mental Desire

People in the world of desire consider joy coming from lust as happiness and they try to look for this kind of joy. Without mental desire, we will not have that kind of joy and we do not look for them. Therefore, the God who creates our lives in this world of desire is our mental desire, not any God in this earthly world. Mental desire is the cause of sorrow and our sorrow originates from our mental desire, not from the God.

Mental desire inherently leads to sorrow, imperfection and unsafety. Not any god in the world has ability to create peace for us, if we stick to our mental desire to act. Giving up mental desire, we will enjoy peace in our mind and even in our life.

It is our mental desire that creates our mean and cowardly lives; it is not the God who punishes our mean and cowardly lives. God never punishes us but mental desire within us does. If we do not want to be punished by sorrow and sufferings, we should give up any mental desire which is present in ourselves.

Ideas

People living in Rupadhatu - the world of form, pay more attention to ideas than to mental desire. Ideas include theoretical points and points of view which are impacted by the act of thinking. Ideas on ego create theoretical viewpoints of this world. Perception and pursuit of an ego for ourselves are totally wrong, Why? It is not right with the reality itself. The reality itself is based on causation of egolessness. Egolessness is the truth of any existence in mutual interaction. Creating intentional actions so as to make inferences and to look for an ego for oneself is the intentional actions that are not consistent with the truth. An intentional action inconsistent with the truth is a false intentional action. That intentional action will lead to disappointment and suffering. Suffering of people in Rupadhatu is caused by their ideas, and they cling to these ideas, as a result their lives are not comfortable and peaceful.

Thoughts

Thoughts create Arupadhatu - the realm of formlessness, which means the realm of thoughts. So beings in the formless realm are formed by thoughts and therefore all viewpoints formed by thoughts can go beyond yet still cling to thoughts. Thoughts do not have form, so we call it formlessness. Thoughts create beings in the formless realm. And beings in this realm live their lives by thoughts, act with thoughts and communicate with thoughts, not with the form. So, this realm is the realm of thoughts and these beings stick to thoughts, so they are not free.

People enjoying freedom are those who are not confined to any thought and who do not live with thoughts but who live with wisdom.

So mental desire burns people's happiness and peace in the world of desire. Ideas burn their happiness and peace

in the realm of form. Thoughts burn their happiness and peace in the realm of formlessness.

People in the 3 realms: desire, form and formlessness are being burned day by day by mental desire, ideas and thoughts.

Therefore, what do we have to do to be happy and peaceful in the 3 realms? We have to practise the Dharma to reduce our mental desire, our ideas, and our thoughts.

People who have minds with reduced mental desire, with reduced ideas and with reduced thoughts will have real happiness and freedom. They can walk with firm and comfortable steps, and they are absolutely happy and safe.

Substance of Love

Substance of love is inherently available in all of us. We come into existence in this world thanks to our substance of love. Substance of love is able to make us go up and also go down.

When substance of love includes tolerance, joyful giving, and non-possession, then that love possesses the substance of bringing us to the 'up' side. Where do we move up to? We move up to accomplish a nice character in the human world, to accomplish a great mission in the heavenly realm and to gain the noble personalities of a Saint or a Bodhisattva or a Buddha in the future.

When our substance of love contains selfishness, greed and blindness, it will push us to the world of thirsty and miserable people. That kind of love can take a bad turn

and dump us into the world of animals.

None of us can live without love. Love is the source of our life. If we do not wisely take hold of that source of life, we will be killed suddenly and submerge into the sea of suffering beings.

Smart young people are brave to express their love and enlarge the way for their love to move forward.

The greater our love is, the greater our happiness becomes!

Our Hands

Our hands are not merely our own. Without our parents, we would never have had those hands. Without our ancestors, we would never have had those hands. Without our peers and other creatures, we would never have had those hands.

Without Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, we would never have had those hands. Without the Sun, the Moon, rivers, forests, mountains and trees, we would never have had those hands.

Why so? Because we would not have been born into this world without our parents. Without our existence, those hands could not exist.

Without our ancestors and grandparents, our parents would not exist. Without our parents, then would we have those hands?

And even when our ancestors, grandparents and parents do exist, without Bodhisattvas and Buddhas' lessons to our ancestors and grandparents and parents about how to give up wickedness, how to do good things, how to love our peers and other creatures, and how to take care of the surroundings, these hands would not exist. If they existed, they would just be hands of disability or hands of crime.

Without the Sun, we could not have those hands either, because there would be no energy for us to survive. Without the Earth, our hands could not exist either. Without rivers, we would not have water to drink. Then how could we have our hands?

Hence, let us look deep into our hands so that the love for our parents, our ancestors, our peers, our creatures and nature, is created and is developing in our minds and in each of our actions.

Let us love our hands just as we love our parents,

our ancestors, our grandparents, our motherland, our Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

Since we see the real existence of our hands in our lives and since we care for those hands every day, they have the ability to create happiness for ourselves and for the people around us.

Only when we take care of our hands in mindfulness and wisdom will they have the ability to build and beautify our lives.

If we do not see clearly the value of our hands, our love will never be present. Every time we wash our hands, we have to look deep into them, wash them clean so that we can stand a chance of holding the Dharma and give love to every human being and creature.

Every day we wash our hands, but if we do not wash them with wisdom and love, we will not see the presence of the hands and will not enjoy happiness.

When washing hands, we must find in our hands

the presence of our parents, grandparents, ancestors, teachers, Bodhisattvas, Saints, the Sun, the Moon, the Earth, rivers, and the blessings from many previous generations. We wash our hands profoundly, and we touch our hands in the same way. This way, the love in us will grow stronger every day and we will enjoy happiness just when we wash our hands.

Avalokitesvara has up to a thousand arms or more as she shows her great love for the world, and from that love, Avalokitesvara has generated countless arms to help others, to build our life, to help people and all creatures.

Therefore, Avalokitesvara is very happy because her love is great. The greater the love is, the greater the happiness becomes. The less the love is, the less the happiness will grow. And where there is no love, happiness permanently disappears.

Avalokitesvara has thousands of arms from a main hand to help our life. Countless hands were born from

one main hand which is full of wisdom and compassion to protect life. Because of wisdom, these hands are not stuck in her own accomplishments. Thanks to compassion, these hands do not make anyone scared. She has the freedom between love and hatred, between favourable and unfavourable things, between peace and storm in life.

Similarly, we should take care of our intellectual hands and love every day, so that we can grow up with the hands of wisdom and love, which enable us to love all people of different backgrounds in our life.

Loving Is Happiness

When loving we enjoy happiness. Happiness belongs to us, not to the person we love.

When being angry with somebody, suffering belongs entirely to us, and not to the person we are angry with.

Those who are living with a mind and thought of jealousy will suffer because of their mind and thought of jealousy. Solely their mind and thought of jealousy, nothing else, punishes them.

Those who are living with a mind and thought of loving will enjoy happiness deriving from that mind and thought of loving, not by anybody else.

Realizing this truth, we should let go every mind and thought of anger, jealousy, and live with a mind and thought of loving and open hands, so that no matter when and where we are, we are happy and happiness is ourselves,.

Everyone Is Co-Existing

In this world, no one can exist on his own and lone individuals cannot exist. Some people say that in this life, they do not need to live with anyone else, and that living alone is enough. Those people are just telling lies. It is against the truth. They are speaking in an ignorant manner.

In this world, no lone individuals can survive because we can only live on thanks to our interrelationship: individuals are connected to one another. It is our presence in each other that helps us survive. We cannot live alone. We need others to live with: one person, two, three, five, or seven people, etc. And we also need the Moon, the Sun, the Earth, rivers, sand, salt, oceans, mountains and forests, grass, and vegetables.

If in this life, we would not have anyone to live for, we could and would never exist. But, as we exist, everything else exists in us and is existing with us.

Do Not Let Love Punish Us

We come to each other to love, but not to abuse others' love. Exploited love is no longer love. If advantage is taken of someone's love, it will produce substances of resentment, hatred and misery.

Whenever love is abused, karma of desire is born. Karma of desire is not capable of leading us to light nor great haven. It can only narrow our paths, drag us to the darkness along our roads, lure us into acting in ignorance and trick us with illusions.

Thus, we approach each other with love, but not to abuse others' love. If we abuse love, we will be punished by love. Our lives will be characterised by animosity and darkness!

One Who Knows How to Take Care of Speech

Our speech is rooted from our hearts. If our mind and thought are sincere, then our speech will be coherent, transparent, and clear. If our mind and thought are impure, unsettled, and distracted, we cannot find the proper words to say even if we want to.

Any speech created from sincerity, love and understanding will be capable of bringing happiness to us and people around us.

There is an old saying: “People seem to have a hammer in their mouths; if their bodies are hit, it’s because of their cruel words.” Another similar saying is that “an utterance can make a country prosperous, but it can also destroy a nation.”

Therefore, in everyday life, we must nurture our happiness from honest words, which also contain love and understanding. We should not say anything to anyone when we’re displeased and angry. If we talk in anger, we can not control our speech and our words will release harmful substances that damage our own personality as well as others’. In moments of anger and displeasure, we should stay still, let our tongues touch the palate, breathe in deeply and slowly breathe out. We should practise breathing like this at least ten times before speaking to avoid making mistakes .

A mistaken utterance of ours can make other people unhappy for the rest of their lives. A mistaken utterance of others can make us lose appetite and suffer insomnia for days. And sometimes if we say something wrong to a family member, we can regret it for the rest of our lives.

Sometimes when a friend says honest words to us, happiness is born within us; and such happiness can last long, from three to seven days, or up to one year and even for our entire lives.

We should not say anything not only in moments of anger, but also when we love somebody excessively. With too much love for someone, our speech can create mistakes as well. Why? Because with too much love, we cannot control what we say, which encourages us to make mistakes. Therefore, when we think that we devote too much love to someone, we should also put our tongues against the palate, take really deep breath-ins and gradually slow breath-outs. We should practise breathing like this at least ten times before speaking to avoid making mistakes with words coming from our love.

In brief, wise people who want to create happiness for themselves and for others must take care of their speech every day, whenever a thought of hatred comes up or a feeling of love emerges.

We should remember that even though we spend most of our lives helping other people, if in the last minutes, just an utterance of ours lacks mindfulness, their gratitude for our deeds will vanish and their animosity will arise.

This, in fact, usually happens in everyday life.

In life, oral wars can take place anywhere and anytime. Our tongues can become a weapon destroying everybody's happiness. Nuclear weapons can cause massacres, but of just one generation; on the other hand, our cruel words can kill not just one but many generations.

Kings who are cruel-mouthed make their whole people feel miserable. Cruel-tongued parents make their children feel wretched. Wicked-tongued grandparents ruin and distress their descendants, and vice versa. Children with brutal speech also make their parents and grandparents miserable.

In short, in our lives, our speech is very important. Therefore, the principle of managing our happiness is that we have to take care of our every-day speech.

We should control our every-day speech by avoiding praising things that are not worth praising, and by avoiding criticizing things that are not worth criticising.

Instead, we should give compliments on praiseworthy deeds and criticize reprehensible actions. We should know how to compliment and criticize right things and right people at right times; by so doing, our praises and criticisms can bring practical benefits to us and those receiving our compliments or criticisms.

If we take care of our speech every day, we will obtain happiness. Then, blessing and happiness will be created whenever we speak.

One Who Knows How to Take Care of Happiness

When we are happy, we have fun with our soul; when we are sad, we take our soul to share sadness. When we are happy, the fun is established on the foundation of the soul, and when we are sad, the sadness will also be established on the foundation of the soul. There is no happiness and sorrow without the involvement of the soul.

Therefore, an intelligent person takes care of his soul in his life.

How can we take care of our soul? Wherever and whenever we live, we have to take care of our soul. We need to care for our soul when we go to pagoda for Dharma talks, as well as when we go to work, to school to study or for teaching.

We must take care of our soul when eating, drinking, lying, sitting, standing, and when speaking ... we must care about our soul in every action and we must make our soul truly present in all of our movements.

When washing dishes, our soul must be present while we are washing dishes, and our soul should be present in our washing movements. The fact that our soul is present in our dishwashing movements could help us see what we are doing in a transparent and meaningful way.

We have to wash dishes by our vows, not by obligation or Karmic power. Thus, while we wash dishes, we have freedom, we have control and happiness. We wash dishes in the vow that we are on the path of lasting love and we are nurturing our love in a practical way in our daily life.

Each of us has at least once washed dishes, cooked, swept our house, ridden, walked, sat down, stood up, eaten, drunk water, got dressed, etc. These daily activities as eating, getting dressed, standing up, sitting down, we

should do with our soul and in a very careful manner.

When the soul is in accordance with the vow, the soul will possess belief. When we believe in the present with our mindfulness and we make efforts with our mindful life, then we will have a completely mindful life in the future.

We take care of our mind from our mindful seeds or seeds of love, and those seeds will grow in our hearts and will make us happy anywhere and at any time when the causes and conditions meet.

Happiness brought to us from inner desire or born from our inner desire is not unreal happiness. Happiness does not come to us from the deceptive promises but it comes to us from the practice in the inner desire and turns the desire into practical actions in this life to have real happiness.

Happiness by the practice of inner desire brings real happiness. Why? Since the substance of suffering arising from greed is real in our life, the happiness originating

from the voluntary practice of Dharma is therefore real in our lives.

Life is full of suffering, because in our minds there are too many seeds of sorrow, pain, disbelief and disappointment. But life is also peaceful, because there are so many seeds of faith and love, harmony, purity, selflessness, tolerance and joyful giving, available in our minds.

So, when we take care of our minds, we take care of the seed of altruism, trust, tolerance, and joyful giving in our mind. Besides, we also know how to care for that seed in our mind. Accordingly, we will be happy wherever we live and at any age we are.

When we know how to care for the happiness seeds in our minds and we know to bring seeds of happiness, and share it with our loved ones and with everyone, they all would have happy souls like us as well. That is the person who knows how to take care of happiness.

Cultivating Love

Parents who know how to take care of the happiness of their children not only care about food, clothing, housing and the physical facilities, academic orientation, profession but also care about their children's noble soul. This means parents must care about their own beautiful body and noble soul, so that their children can be born in good conditions. This should be their attitude from the moment they start loving each other and decide to get married. When pregnant, one must know how to care for their beautiful body as well as their noble soul, for the sake of creating good conditions for their children who will be born soon.

A pregnant mother must always be joyful, smiling, always thinking about good things, always living with

heart and hands open for generosity. A smart husband, when his wife is pregnant, never makes grimaces at his wife, never has rude words and violent gestures with his wife and never abuses her body. Rude husbands who abuse their wives physically during pregnancy might cause adverse effects on mood and general appearance of their children in the future.

With this in mind, wives and husbands need to practise, so that they have the ability to nurture wonderful fruits resulting from love. Those who do not have a wife or husband yet should also practise, because in the future they will have a family and will also create the fruit of love. Those who are married and have children and grandchildren need to practise to educate their children and grandchildren.

The greatest happiness of the parents is that they could give birth to beautiful, dutiful, and intelligent children. The only way to achieve this is to care for our beautiful body and noble soul, in order to establish good conditions for

our children to be born and to grow up with noble souls.

So, in family life, the wife must take care of her husband's beautiful body and noble soul and vice versa the husband must take care of his wife's beautiful body and noble soul. Parents must look after their children's beautiful body and noble soul. Children must look after their parents' beautiful body and noble soul, and siblings must care for the body and soul of one another.

If we want to take care of each other's body, there is no better method than that of "mindfulness of body". Mindfulness is constant awareness of our body, through walking, standing, lying, sitting, through eating, talking, laughing and working. While dining, we should not abuse food to satisfy our greedy needs. We should only consume a proper amount of food just enough for the body for twenty-four hours. If we excessively use amounts of food, particularly fat food, it will cause illness in the body. When working, we should not abuse the body by being workaholic. We must know how to work just right,

so that the processes in the body are balanced. Especially the yin and yang saturation or dynamic properties should be balanced to purify our body. This is how we should live, how we should take care of ourselves and how to help others to care for their bodies as well.

Regarding the method of noble soul care for each other, there is no other effective method than the practice of “mindfulness of mind” every day. Every day we must have moments of practice to sit still and listen to our heart talk. Our mind tells us something, whether good or bad. We just sit in recognition without judgment, not following, nor responding. Images of all the events as well as all things in our mind come up to tell us something. We should look at them, listen and smile. Then hug them with pure love and joy, causing things to stop, to stand still, to self-transform, and not to be restless and moving in our mind. If we nourish our mind with compassion substance, we will have a broad and peaceful mind, and the mind is capable of manipulating

the happiness substance in us and we have the ability to share happiness with many people around us.

If we want to take care of each other’s soul but we do not practise “mindfulness of mind” to achieve the right mind, then we will not have the right speech. We would not have the right view. Without right view, we never see the reality of life and without right speech we would never say nice, loving and true words to each other.

Therefore, we must practise the principles of soul care every day. Friends also have to care for each other’s soul. An utterance can bring happiness to our friends’ family and an utterance can wither away our friends’ soul over the years.

When a person is making efforts to do practice and we say something negative... it could generally make the friend’s spirit go down. In contrast, saying an encouraging word to friends who are lazy in the process of practice could have them stand up from their own weaknesses and move forward.

We must care about the soul of our friends, husbands, children, and siblings, ... If we know some weakness in our friend's mind, then we could take care of that weakness for our friends. If we know some strength in our friend's mind, then we endeavour to help our friend develop that strength, so that his mind becomes better. If we know where our friend's mind is stuck, we strive to deal with it so that their mind could get out of that situation. That is how we could take care of each other's soul.

As a parent, we should spend time taking care of our children's souls, especially when they are in their adolescence. I have made many contacts with young people and I know that there are many lovely young teenagers, but also many spoiled ones as well. They are lovely because their parents often spend time looking after them. One of the reasons why we have naughty teenagers is that their parents do not have time to take care of them. Many young girls were sharing with me: "Sometimes I want to hug my Dad but it is impossible, because my Dad

lives like a machine. As soon as he comes home, he goes into his room sitting with the computer. After working on the computer, he prepares to go to work. Therefore, I do not have the chance to share and talk with him, and through him to understand boys better".

And many boys also confided to me: "My mother is too busy with all the housework, business work and social work. When I want to confide something to her, she does not have time; therefore, sometimes I have to make decisions for all of my work. Not only that, but every time my Mom and Dad sat together, they had quarrels with each other, making their children in the family depressed and after school we liked to sit in cafes rather than go home! "

Boys need to share experience from their mothers, because their mothers' souls were once the souls of girls at the ages of 15, 16, 17, 18 ... 25. Therefore, she must tell her son the mood of the girl of that age. She should share with him her experience of her maiden time. Because

when the mother has a heart-to-heart talk with her son, it is more reliable than any girl that talks to her son, and when the father reveals his youth to his daughter, it is surely better than any young man talking to his daughter.

Many family lives break down because parents are busy at work and keep their children at a distance. This unintentionally pushes the son or daughter into the society, and many of them fall into its unhealthy traps.

Therefore, parents must take care of boys' and girls' souls and friends also must take care of one another's soul. A boy must look after the souls of his friends, not only male but female as well; and similarly, a girl must look after the souls of her friends, both male and female.

If we know how to care for each other's souls, we already know how to nurture the substance of our love and fruits gained from such a love in life in turn will give us fresh fragrance and sweet flavour.

Miracle of Love

In everyday life, we lose touch with each other's feelings, because we do not know how to take care of each other's interests and sentiments and because we do not know how to sacrifice our own interests for others.

In marital life, in life of friendship or brotherhood, we have love for one another when we know to sacrifice each other's interests. Otherwise if each person only looks after his own interests, the life will become two fronts. It will create confrontation and they never have sympathy and happiness. Happiness means to take care of each other's interests. Caring for each other's interests is to make sacrifices for the sake of each other's benefit.

If we have two scarves, one pink and one yellow, and you see that your friend likes the pink scarf and you also like this one, then you should take the yellow scarf and give the pink one to your friend. That is love and this love is preserved in this way. In contrast, in case both, you and your friend, like the pink scarf and as you came first, you obtained the pink scarf; this may end the friendship and if not, your friendship will decrease in time. To preserve our affection for the people and preserve the feelings of people towards us, we should keep this in mind. In everyday life, we often say we love each other, but in reality, if we cannot give up benefits for each other, then that is not love!

So, if we want to go on the road full of love, we must care about each other's interests and we have to sacrifice for each other's interests. For example, there are two gifts, a gift of a little less value and a gift of a little more value. If we come earlier, we should receive the gift of a little less value; we should not get the gift of a little

more value but give it to the person who comes after us. Coming earlier, we should find a gift of less value and save the better one for our friends.

If we can do so, practise so, we will maintain the love of our friend, and that is the miracle of sustained love and love in our daily life.

Nobody is able to offer the miracle of love to us. It shines when we sacrifice for the interests of our people. By so doing, the love for the people will be present within us and our love will develop within our people. Sacrificing our interests for the benefit of all people, we will live happily in that love.

Personality and Ethics

Love associated with personality is noble love. If we love someone, we must know how to bring our personality to love. If we want to protect someone; we must know how to bring our personality to protect him or her.

If we lack personality, we will never have a beautiful love to develop and never have a beautiful love to live happily.

The love we have for each other without personality will take us down to the pit of despair and sufferings. Love means that we must look after the personality and morality of each other in daily life.

I have a pair of students, they loved each other and they decided to get married. After deciding to go to marital life together, they talked to each other like this:

“When we love each other like this, Buddha is always above us spiritually and because he is always above us, whenever I bow to the Buddha, during praying, I pray for your family; and every time you bow to the Buddha, during chanting, you pray for my family, i.e. when we do something, we practise cross-praying: I worship Buddha and pray for your family and you bow to Buddha and pray for my family. Our happiness is the happiness coming from this cross-praying service.”

Thus, the two students are very smart. They know how to care for ethics and spiritual life of each other, how to cultivate each other’s family dutifulness and respect.

Therefore, in everyday life, when we love each other, we must care about the personality and morality of each other. Caring about morality and personality for each other is advising each other not to create negative karma. It means that even a very small matter that is beneficial for one’s own interests but harmful to other people, we should refuse to do; even if it is a joke. A joke can create

resentment between people. We should not tell jokes but just say and do what is honest, timely, and correct.

When we love someone, we must know how to take care of our faith and ethics for our loved ones, and look after faith and ethics of our loved ones.

Nourishing and Protecting Love

When we love someone without understanding him or her, then our love is extremely dangerous. Love without understanding can lead to blind love. So, when we love each other, we must have an understanding of each other. Understanding what? Understanding the causes and conditions of each other. If we do not know each other's causes and conditions, we will not have the ability to create happiness for each other. If we love each other without understanding each other's character, we will not have the ability to create happiness for each other. If we love each other without understanding each other's relationship with the blood family and the spiritual life, then we will not have the ability to create happiness for each other. If we love each other without understanding

strengths and weaknesses of each other, then we will not have the ability to create happiness for each other. If we love each other without understanding each other's relationship with friends and society, we will not have the ability to create happiness for each other.

Understanding each other is the essential. It is precious 'food' for us to nurture love. Without understanding, love in us will be degraded to sex. Understanding each other has the value to protect love. It develops a more sustainable love between us and others than any other preservation. Any contract or law will not help to understand the pledge of love between two people, but only sincere understanding between two people will be the guarantee for their happiness and love.

If we want to have understanding, we must know how to learn and to listen in order to help throw away the seeds of arrogance in our mind. We have to know and learn from many angles and in many different ways. When we deal with an event, we can see that event from

the normal way, but we can also look at the event from different angles.

When an event occurs and we look at it with the eyes of a person doing cultural work, it will give us a different interpretation in comparison with looking at the event with the eyes and perspective of politicians. With regard to the same event, if we take the stand of a scientist, it would give us a different interpretation from that of a poet or a writer or a religion follower. That means if we want to have a rich understanding of an event, we must see it from many angles, and this way will help us to have the knowledge to solve a problem in a reasonable manner, fully flexible and dynamic.

Thus, when we come together, we care for each other's understanding, and we help each other to look at an event from different angles so that our knowledge is not framed and limited to one standpoint.

When we have understanding of a problem from

different perspectives, we have the ability to help and protect the people we love in an effective and comprehensive way.

Transforming Karmic Power

In 2012, I went on a pilgrimage to Gaya in India to attend the ceremony of reciting The Tripitaka - the whole of Pali Buddhist canon of International Buddhism hosted by Burmese Buddhism. I told the members of the delegation: “when attending the ceremony here, we should not go as we habitually and routinely do but we go in our wisdom “.

If we go as we usually do, we will create an obstacle to many people, but if we go in wisdom, we always know who we are and what is happening around us. Then, we will know what are the needs around us and what we should do to adapt to what is around us. Going in wisdom helps us to adapt and harmonize in a flexible manner to all situations.

When we put into practise to go in wisdom and not in our usual manner, we will transform our karmic power into vow power. Vow power is then present in each of our steps. It is available in each of our actions. It will transform our life from low to high, from slavery to freedom.

When we are slaves of habits and karmic power we are subject to the most terrible slavery. Why? Because being a slave without knowing that we are a slave is truly a slave. Slaves of political, ideological, or cultural practices and religious beliefs are all rooted in the routine slavery and arise from habits. To remove a habit, there is no better and effective method than practicing mindfulness to raise wisdom. Only wisdom will have the ability to remove the slavery of our habits and take us to complete freedom in life.

We must know the transforming path of karma to go on the path of the vow power. The path of karmic power is the path without control. Without control, there is no

freedom. Without freedom, there is no happiness. Bound by karmic power, we have to do, even if we do not want to; we have to go even if we do not want to; we have to smile even if we do not want to; we have to cry even if we do not want to. So, there are very painful laughs, “crying in shame, laughing out loud in tears”. Why? Because it is the laughter of karma. So, Nguyen Du said: “Once we travel along with our karma, we should not blame the Heaven near and far away ...”.

We need to practise mindfulness to have enlightened awareness. We must practise mindfulness and enlightened awareness in our daily life so that we transform our karmic power into the vow power.

What is the vow power? It is the voluntary will. This will is created due to seeing and understanding the truth and then we voluntarily act, without any external force. By seeing and understanding the truth, we voluntarily livethrough this truth and are not forced to follow. So, acting in vow power means that we have happiness right in this truth.

The fact that we wash dishes with the vow power, but not with karmic power, shows that washing the dishes is an act of happiness. On the contrary, if we wash dishes with our power of karma, but not with our vow power, then we wash in an act of misery. When we eat with desired vow, but not with karmic power, then eating is an act of happiness. On the contrary if we eat with karmic power, but not with the vow power, then eating is an act of suffering ...

So, the purpose of the practice is that we transform karmic power into vow power. Once we transform the karmic power into the vow power, then, each of our action would bring happiness to us and to everyone.

So, we wash the dishes with great happiness. We cook and we have great happiness. We sweep the house and we have great happiness. It means that all what we are doing brings happiness to us when our mind and our life are nourished by the substance of the voluntary vow.

Suffering is a real thing in our daily life and then happiness is also a real thing in our daily life. While suffering arises from bondage of karmic power and our slavery of karma, our happiness arises and develops from our vow power. So, happiness is something very real that we can find in each of our actions, by praying from our vow power.

Happiness must be nourished by vow power so that it can truly be in our body and mind, and for tomorrow wherever we are, we are present in what vow power brings to us. And when we have nurtured our happiness by the vow power, there is no reason that we are happy here but not happy somewhere else. There is no reason that in this place we live happily in this life, but not in the next one. So, if we want to know if we will be happy or not in the next life, then we need to look deeply into our practice from today.

If we want to know if we will be happy or not in the future when we go to a certain place, we must watch over our happiness here and now.

Therefore, our happiness in the future is present right here, and our happiness in other worlds is also present in this world. So, we do not need to seek happiness and escape from sufferings, but we should simply change our karmic power into the vow power. Then all sufferings will disappear immediately and happiness will be present within us.

Beauty of Life

The beauty of life is to help each other in a transparent way. The sun is very transparent with the earth and the moon. The river is very transparent with the sea and mountains. Pine trees are very transparent with bamboos. Apricot trees are very transparent with chrysanthemums. Sand particles are very transparent with pebbles. Dogs are very transparent with cats. This means that no one with good eyesight can mistake dogs for cats, rivers for seas, etc. Why do we look at all things without seeing any error? Because all things exist in transparency. They are transparent right their nature, effects, and their own forms.

Everything is so transparent that our eyes can see it without making mistakes. There is no civilization created by humans' world of egoistic thought that can

be more transparent than all the things existing within us and around us with its paratantra - the nature of mutual dependence for existence. Existing with properties of dependence is the natural mutual dependence of all things. It is this nature that creates the beauty of all existence. Why? Because it makes all things existing together and rising up.

Inside each of us, the head is very transparent with the foot; the heart is very transparent with the lungs; the stomach is very transparent with the kidney, and the large intestine is very transparent with the small intestine. They are so transparent that anyone with clear eyes cannot ever mistake the head for the legs, the ears for the mouth, the eyes for the nose, the small intestine for the large intestine .

Everything around us also manifests itself in a very flexible and transparent way. The bird is flying in the sky; the fish is swimming underwater. Fire is hot, water is liquid, wind is moving, the earth is solid... All things

are very transparent in forms, but very versatile and consistent in its inter-related functions. Their functions are so inter-related that “without this one, that one cannot exist, and if this one is damaged, the other one will also be destroyed”.

The civilized world of humans is the world of civilization that is formed out of thoughts and thinking. Thanks to right thoughts, things that are not right will become right, things that are unsafe will become safe, things that are narrow will become large, ordinary people will become holy ones, and suffering will become peace and happiness. Due to wrong thinking, civilized people will become rude ones. Things with inter-related functions will become things with abusive functions, and transparent things will become blind, dark, and sinful.

What is wrong thinking? Those are the ego-related thoughts, or unstable thinking. A thought formed by ego will immediately produce karma. The produced karma will be associated with avidyà - ignorance, to take shape, then this leads to wrong action and wrong speech.

Unstable thinking is mean thinking. It is the thinking of people with guilty complex and with abuse of spiritual powers.

Thus, the more ego-related thoughts or unstable thinking are demonstrated in a civilization, the more the people bring illicit things to deal with one another and with all other things.

Although humans have some thought and thinking, to think in an ego-related or unstable way may lead people to a rude civilization, a disastrous civilization of science. It is harmful to humans and to the environment. It is harmful to humans at the present and in the future. A non-transparent civilization is a disguised civilization of ego and ranking. It is not capable to help people to live in a transparent way and to create beauty in human life.

Again, humans always produce karma for themselves. Ego-related thinking. Ego-related thinking is producing karma for themselves. Ego-related thinking is related to

ignorance and desire. It is karma-producing thinking that pushes people towards their ego. As s/he walks to that way, the more activated they are, the more exhausted they become, and this makes them fall down even though they attempt to stand up. Despite efforts to create a civilized world for humans, people still live and work in a wrong way, with misery and suffering. Why? Because the wrong thing exists right in the ego-related and karma producing thinking. Because the suffering and misery exist right in the mean character or in the nature of the action itself .

Anyone who claims to have an ego has ignorance. People who claim to have an ego, have illicit things right in their actions and words, and people who claim to have an ego will consequently turn inter-related functions into functions abuse; from justice into absurdity; from republic into dictatorship; from freedom into imprisonment; from a person enjoying the immense space into a frog sitting at the bottom of a well; from correct Dharma into incorrect

dharma, and from a transparent life, they become people living a blind, non-transparent life.

Egoistic thoughts push human society into a world of paranoia, mental illness, darkness and chasm, thus turning all civilized things into disguised ones of ignorance. And unstable thinking transforms human society into the society of evils, poverty, hunger, thus forcing the whole society to become beggars of spiritual powers.

In this world, people who are ambitious for the benefit of their ego, for the ego of their group or party, will be left behind in terms of ethics; they become poor in dignity and wisdom, but rich in cunning, exaggerating, stupidity and violence. Developing an ego for oneself or for the benefit of one's group or party and forcing others to depend on or respect oneself are mere manifestations of paranoid and mental illness.

Letting go these two types of bad thoughts, humans will regain a transparent life for themselves and

recognize people and all things in relation to themselves. They recognize themselves in relation to everyone with the eyes of inter-related functions, not with the eyes of abusive functions. They know how to help one another. They live without having any ambitions or intention to possess. Individual and societal humans depart from this, continuously to infinity. The beauty of humans is to know how to live together and to go forward together. Social beauty established by beauty of humans is then definitely sustainable. Sustainability is found right in the nature and not in slogans.

Ethics and Individual Culture

We should not blame and condemn the society. Why? Because a society without family units is impossible and a family cannot exist on its own, without individual humans.

So morality of individuals and family morality will create the ethics of the society. Morality of individuals and family morality will create the culture of the society.

If there were no morality of individuals and family morality, it would certainly lead to a society without ethics and culture.

When an individual has no morality, he or she cannot talk about morality to others, because it will become immediately offensive and totally ineffective.

When an individual has no morality, even if he or she talks about morality to others accompanied by some money or strengthened by sharing them some power, it will not entirely have any effect.

Morality or culture of individuals is very important, in relation to family morality and culture as well as morality and culture of the society.

If parents themselves are not severe, it is impossible to teach their children to be severe. If leaders themselves are not severe, they cannot make their organizations severe.

National leaders themselves who are not strict will be the cause of national disorders, houses destruction, and people's misery.

Spiritual leaders themselves who do not have the spirit of leadership will not be able to avoid disincorporation, pits and traps for their organization.

Ethics and individual culture are so important in family life and social interactions!

To have ethics and individual culture, one must know how to nourish the two qualities of *tàm* - feeling ashamed of oneself, and *quí* - feeling ashamed to others - in our mind.

In our mind there are many bad seeds, but also a lot of good seeds.

Tàm and *quí* are one of the good seeds inherent in our own mind. *Tàm* is being ashamed of oneself. *Quí* means knowing how to be ashamed to other people. *Tàm* is being ashamed to people superior to us. *Quí* is being ashamed to people inferior to us; *tàm* is to repent to oneself. *Quí* means encouraging other people to repent to themselves. *Tàm* is the act of doing volunteer work by oneself, *quí* is supporting others to do volunteer work. *Tàm* is feeling ashamed inside, *quí* is the external expression of being ashamed to other people”.

Regarding the two substances of *tàm* and *quí*, if we know how to nurture and take care of them, they

will create the substance of personal morality, human conscience and social conscience.

The two substances of *tàm* and *quí*, if we know how to nurture, take care of, and develop them extensively in our lives, will create the substance of personal culture, contributing to the culture of family and society.

In our mind, thanks to the substance of *tàm*, which means knowing to be self-ashamed, so we ourselves do not live a deceptive life. We do not tell lies and we do not do wrong things. These substances of not living a deceptive life, not telling lies and not doing wrong things are the foundation for personal morality, so that we can contribute to social and family ethics.

In our mind, thanks to the substance of *quí*, which means knowing how to feel ashamed to other people, we will not live a deceptive life with people; we do not tell lies to people and we do not have gestures or actions to deceive people. This results in the development of our ethics and thus people around trust us as well as respect us.

In human life, we know how to express trust and respect for each other in many forms. These forms are often expressed through poetry, music, painting, sculpture, rituals, postures to praise and evaluate. Culture originates from that.

Culture originates from ethical perceptions and makes morality popular in all sectors of society, through many different ways.

When people lose their conscience during their life, they lose the two precious substances of *tâm* and *quý* in their hearts.

A chaotic family is a family whose members lost the two precious substances of *tâm* and *quý* right in their heart. And human society is increasingly becoming chaotic, with the stronger winning and the weaker losing, because the society was deprived of the two substances of *tâm* and *quý*.

The person claiming to be responsible for his or her

family who loses the two precious substances of *tâm* and *quý*, has to take responsibility and repent in relation to the ancestors of the family. By repenting, the person has a chance to recover the two precious substances of *tâm* and *quý* in his or her heart and in life, making the family peaceful.

The persons claiming to be responsible for the society and national leadership who lost these two precious substances of *tâm* and *quý* in their words and actions, should not be humble, but should be brave enough to stand in front of the fatherland's altar, before the holy soul of national mountains and rivers to repent of their sin and restore the two substances of *tâm* and *quý* right in their hearts and in the heart of life, so as to make moral life and social culture better.

The persons claiming to be spiritual leaders who lost these two precious substances of *tâm* and *quý*, should kneel down before their holy ancestors to repent of their sins, to restore the two substances of *tâm* and *quý* right in

their hearts, and even in their own lives, in order to make the sacredness meaningful to life forever.

Those who possess the two precious substances of *tâm* and *quý* have personal morality and culture, and definitely, and they have the ability to contribute to the morality and culture of the family and society. They will have a bright life at present and in the future.

The Round Tie of Bondage

When living with a doubtful mind, we will not have any friendly relationships and we will not have anyone in life to love and respect. I once met a wealthy Danish man. He was over forty years old, but still single. I asked him why he was not married at such an old age? He replied that he did not get married out of fear of dividing the inheritance. It means that he doubts that people love him not because of affection but of money.

For wealthy people, whenever they see someone come to them, immediately they doubt that they come for fortune or for the inheritance; hence they become fearful. Doubt generates fear. Fear creates insecurity. Due to insecurity, people are not happy. No happiness originates from doubtful minds.

The higher people's power is, the more sensitive and delicate their doubtful minds become. So, people with high power always have their houses surrounded with high gates and walls. Their food and drink are carefully checked before use by their subordinates. Their vehicles are carefully reviewed before their trip by their subordinates.

In my pilgrimages overseas, I saw the security people of airports check passengers very carefully, not only manually but also by machines. Why do they check people and luggage carefully? Because they suspect that passengers may become hijackers, terrorists or smugglers.

So wherever there are doubts, there are precautions, life becomes troublesome and insecure. Doubtful attitudes are evil and making others doubtful is even more evil. I feel sorry for those who work in security jobs, because I know that seeds of doubt existing in the society are day after day sown in their minds. These seeds make

their lives and their behaviour unfriendly with everyone. These seeds become barriers, making them unfriendly with their spouses, children or their friends. So, people who do security jobs always live without a secure feeling.

If people know how to live with true minds, there will be no doubtful minds. If people know how to live with true minds, human movements and transportations will not trouble many people and they will not need too much expense and effort for that doubt.

Civilization and modern science has put everyone on earth together in a home via TV, but this civilization has not yet transmitted a true mind to people, nor removed the seed of doubt between people, between countries in terms of national security, making humans in the world stay separate from one another though sitting together in a house sharing a TV program!

Misfortune of humans in the world today is not due to lack of food, clothing, housing, transportation facilities

but due to lack of mutual trust in life. Living together without trust, humans set traps for each other and put together into bondage!

Rich and Poor Story

Greed is the evil nature of humans, non-greed is the good nature of humans. But that there are poor people in life without greed is a true story, not a fairy tale or a moral lesson.

In our pilgrimage to Tibet, we visited monastery Pakhor (Bach Cu Tu) in Ghashe town (Giang tử) on 1st September 2013. People in this town were poor but very gentle. Their hearts towards the Three Jewels were very sacred. They asked me to bless them, by tapping the top of their head, and putting a white scarf, that was in their hands, around their necks. Seeing that they were poor and gentle, our Buddhist group loved them and voluntarily collected some money to offer but they refused to accept it. The guide had to translate in Tibetan to insist on their

accepting the money for us to be in happy contact with the group. They agreed to take the money but they said they would not take the money home. Instead, they would offer the money to the Three Jewels for the benefit of all the people.

Listening to what they said, I was very pleased and learned that although Tibetan people are poor in material life, they are rich in spiritual life. It is this rich spiritual life that helps them lead a stable life, making their poverty in material life only temporary and they can easily overcome it.

Also in this town, there was a Tibetan lady cradling a baby about two months old whom she got from a hospital. She came to me and asked me to tap the head of the boy with an aspiration that the boy would become a Latma in the future. Everyone in the group showed much love for her and voluntarily collected money for her to feed the baby, but she determinedly refused. She said there were certain conditions why she had to take care of the baby,

help him to grow up, have him to go to school in order to become a person and a Latma.

Latma is a Chinese translation of the letter of Blama in the Tibetan language. “Bla” means “most venerable”. The word “ma” means “people”. Blama means “most venerable people”. Most venerable people are honored words of the Buddha’s most venerable disciples. Those persons, who “possess an intellectual and virtuous life inside, have the ability to manifest their extraordinary vows outside “. So, the Tibetan Blama is equivalent to the Sanskrit word Guru. Guru is a venerable and exemplary master.

Thus, we see that the Tibetan people’s faith in their religion is very profound. Tibetans can be poor in food and clothing, but certainly they are not poor in faith in the Three Jewels. So, they are poor but rich. They are poor outside but their inner side is rich. But there are countries where people are rich outside but poor inside.

It is poor outside but rich inside that is worth imitating

and it is very precious. If the outside is rich but the inside is poor, then that richness is a disguise of disappointment and suffering only. It is rare in the world when both sides are rich.

Buddha

Some people asked me about the divided state of Buddhism at present, and they wondered if there is any method to bring all in harmony.

I laughed and said: “Only Buddha”. And I asked if they believed in Buddha. All of us, if we wholeheartedly believe in Buddha, harmony in Buddhism is not impossible and this issue does not need to be put forward. But, it is hard because we only partly believe in Buddha. Harder still is that we want to borrow Buddha to do our work, we do not devote our heart to Buddha work.

If we know how to make use of our mind to do Buddha work, and we know that in Buddha there are Buddhist ancestors and that in Buddha there are all of us, then Buddhism is not so torn to pieces. If we know how to

bring our mind to do Buddha work, and we know that Buddha work is eternally completed, then there is no Buddha work more to be done, and if there is, they just do it for nothing and so there is nothing to cling to or to let go.

The story of a blind man touching an elephant, as taught by the Buddha and recorded in The Sutra of the 100 Parables is always a new lesson for us. It helps us to avoid mistakes. One mistake is to think that our Buddhist ancestors are superior and our Buddhist Sect is number one. The more superior our Buddhist ancestors are supposed to be, the more we insist on the number one of our Buddhist Sect. Buddha's body has been cut off into pieces by such butchers, not by anyone else!

What a pity for the blind people touching an elephant in the new era!

Increase and Decrease

Some people asked me how to bring into unity of all sectors in the society? I laughed and said, "Who sows the division?"

If all sectors of the society know how to increase tolerance, decrease jealousy; increase the mind of joyful giving, decrease the obstinate mind, increase the desire for moving forward, increase the conservative mind, increase the common interest, decrease the private interest, increase self-awareness, decrease the mind of dependence, increase honesty, decrease untruthful acts, then the society itself will be peacefully in harmony. No need to look for bringing unity elsewhere.

We help each other and practise together the Buddhist lesson of increasing and decreasing, then our family will

be in harmony without any further practice. Our country is in harmony without any effort to control, and our society will be in peace without doing any endeavour.

An old saying is reflecting what we said above: “Be peaceful in mind, then the whole world will be in peace”!

Living Beautifully

In life, we are sometimes disappointed and miserable, because we only know to accept this one but not the other.

If we just have the ability to deal with joy but cannot face sadness; if we just have the ability to deal with hope, but we do not have the ability to face disappointment; if we just have the ability to deal with success, but we are not able to face failure; if we have the ability to deal with life but cannot face death, then we are not able to participate in any meaningful and valuable game in life.

Why? Because life includes not only joy but also sadness; not only hope but also disappointment; not only success but also failure; not only gain, but also loss; not only happiness but also suffering and not only life but also death.

People who have the ability to live and live bravely are able to face and accept those both sides which are real in people's lives so as to deal with their activities.

Those who are able to live accept the two sides that are true in human life so as to deal with their responses. When facing joy, they do not lose themselves in that joy. When facing sadness, they do not lose themselves in that sadness. When facing hope, they do not lose themselves in that hope. When facing disappointment, they do not lose themselves in that disappointment. When facing success, they do not lose themselves in that success. When facing failure, they do not lose themselves in that failure. When facing life, they do not lose themselves in life and in face of death, they do not lose themselves in death.

All their responses are responses under their control. Their greatest will is the will to live and the will to refuse to live. They have the will power to die and to refuse to die. Why? Because they have the ability to accept life so as to die and they have the ability to accept death so as to

live. So they live very beautifully so as to die beautifully and they die very beautifully so as to continue to live beautifully. Their life and death are both beautiful. Why? Because life and death take place as they wish, not because life and death force them to do.

Life is only valuable and meaningful for those who have the ability to accept life and death as two aspects of a dynamic reality in human life and all of their responses are based on their personal will in that lively and dynamic reality.

We live a beautiful life, because we want to have a beautiful death, and since we wish to die beautifully, we live very happily in life.

Humans' Nature

Looking at dewdrops on grass leaves, we can see that they are very fragile, but those dewdrops themselves do not realize anything fragile at all. They do not realize anything fragile at all, because they themselves exist as they have ever existed.

Similarly, when people realize that they exist as they themselves have ever existed, all of the anxiety, fear and calculations in their mental mind will become peaceful and quiet. Their minds are no longer framed in a limited scope of perceptions.

Narrow perceptions of life often generate anxiety and fear, and then push human life to the indefinite state of ups and downs.

Long ago, at the time of Buddha, someone asked Buddha: “How can we hold a drop of water, preventing it from falling?” Buddha said: “Let it go to the ocean”.

Today someone asks: “How can we take care of an organization?” A Zen master replies, “Let it lie in the hearts of the people.”

Indeed, anything that lies in human hearts lasts forever and anything that is imposed on humans is refused sooner or later by them!

Fund of Time

We are born to live only for about a hundred years, from which there are fifty years of the day-time and fifty years of the night-time. Fifty years belong to the day-time activities and fifty years belong to the night-time for taking a rest.

During the fifty years of the day-time, we spend fifteen years studying, eating, working, exchanging toasts together, relaxing and chatting.

Our remaining time fund is then thirty-five years, and within those thirty-five years, we waste twenty years to live in anger, reproach, happiness and sadness without causes, to suffer illness, to work for nothing, to remember the past, to cry for the future, to fight for gain and loss.

In the remaining ten years, we can not walk firmly, nor speak consciously, nor remember things clearly... and we suffer a complex of powerlessness in our life.

So, it is difficult to exist as a human being. It is a hundred thousand times far more difficult than the existence of a one-eyed turtle in the ocean that emerges every hundred years and then places its head into a hole of a log floating in the ocean.

Therefore, when we realize that “it is difficult to exist as a human being”, then the meaningful flowers of life will bloom in our lives and we will live fully in every moment of life.

The time fund is the rarest and most precious fund of human life. So, we should make use of this fund for noble goals in life.

Do not Run away

The bitterness of life is not worth worrying, but the bitterness rising from our mind is, why? Because the bitterness of life can be avoided, but how do we avoid the bitterness rising from our mind?

If our mind is small, the tiniest particle cannot get in, and if it is large, both galaxy and universe can be included.

Such is the mind, so our life will become the type of mind that we live with. If we live with a low mind, that mind will create jealousy and hatred when we see someone better than us, resulting in suffering from a guilt complex of being more inferior than others. If we live with tolerant, generous and noble mind, our love is open in ourselves. When we see someone better than us,

we feel joyful and when we see someone worse than us, we try to find ways to support him, to help him to get out of his miserable life.

Living with a low mind makes suffering itself come naturally and it comes from our poor heart. Living with a broad and tolerant mind will encourage peace and happiness itself to come naturally and it comes from our tolerant and open heart.

So, it is clear that bitterness or sweetness, suffering or happiness do not rise from life but from our mind. Our life will be built up exactly from how our mind is.

So, we should not run away, nor avoid any place, and we should at any place live abundantly with our noble mind at any place. Then certainly we will have a noble life and live with noble things.

The Unusual

In life, if we are successful in our physical life such as food and drink, clothing, housing and other daily necessities, that is a trivial achievement.

In life, success in studying and social power is just success of people having an unusual mind. It is unusual because lights shining from fireflies are mistakenly believed to be the fire, then humans bring that fire back home to cook rice.

However, the noble people are successful in things different from what humans have achieved. They do not aim to achieve what to eat, what to wear, what to live in, and they do not aim to search for physical facilities, education or social power, but keeping peaceful in mind is their great achievement. It is great because they succeed without having anything to succeed in at all.

They are peaceful, because their minds are not disturbed by these afflictions. They remain peaceful with rise and fall, with praises and criticisms, with suffering and happiness, with ups and downs, with gains and losses, with pride and humiliation, with existence and non-existence in life. Because they know that: “ if their minds are in peace then all the world around them will be also in peace”. So, they keep peaceful in mind and often live with that peaceful mind without wandering east, west, south or north to look for a similar mind or even for Buddha.

People sitting on the sea to look for water, looking for a mountain when sitting on it, giving up one’s mind to look for Buddha in the mountains, and going down into the sea to find the vastness, are such petty and unusual people?!

Keeping a Peaceful Mind

What is meditation? That is keeping a peaceful mind. Our mind is not in peace because our affliction has not been removed. If our mind is not in peace, then building monasteries is useless since these monasteries are just places where monks and nuns drown themselves, and where Buddhist seeds are eliminated.

Is it sensible to say so?!

Miraculous Sound of Speech

The greatest speech of man is the right speech. It is not the speech that adapts to any era or any space, but neither to any subjects. It is the speech that has the ability to change the erroneous mental perceptions of subjects into enlightened mental perceptions. It is the speech that has the ability to change the narrow space into the large and boundless space. It is the speech that has the ability to make every time to become a wonderful and meaningful moment.

It is the right speech made from a mind of great concentration. It encourages listeners to remove all wrong views, all wrong thoughts, all bad karma, all heterodox ways to obtain a living, all wrong efforts, all incorrect memories and all wrong concentration.

If we do not see the reality as it itself exists, even then we do our best to commend right speech; but right speech will never be commended!

Right speech is also the language of reality, since it originates from reality itself. Reality is at any time and place flexible and complete. The completeness goes beyond all conventions of perception, and the flexibility goes beyond all sides of conventional colloquial language.

Therefore, right speech is the greatest speech of human beings. It is sought for by everybody, not by means of comparative knowledge, but by all unconditional fervent belief so as to enter the world of miraculous speech.

Wandering with All Beings

This is cassava, but seeing cassava like this is not enough. It means we do not know cassava. “Seeing cassava” means seeing clearly cause and condition to form cassava. That is “seeing cassava”. Still, seeing cause and condition to form cassava is not enough to call it “seeing cassava”. We have to see the effect of cassava. Seeing the effects of cassava is still not enough to call it “seeing cassava”. We must see the extinction and transformation of cassava and that is called “seeing cassava”.

This is the manioc or cassava. It is the conventional seeing. That seeing is true to convention but not true to reality. The conventional seeing may be right in the morning and wrong in the afternoon. It may be right at

this place but not at other places, and it may be right to this person but not to other people or species.

When we see cassava not only as cassava, then we see the presence of cassava as a miracle or a mystery and its effect is profound and extremely miraculous.

For we see cassava not as cassava, then we can see the finest flour in cassava and this flour can become noodle soup or the finest cakes. For we see cassava not as cassava, then we can see the resinous quality in cassava and that cassava can become plastic things. For we see cassava not as cassava, then we can see cassava can become alcohol and that cassava may become unleaded biofuel.

If we see cassava not as cassava, we immediately see the reality of its vivacity: not usual, without cessation, not like itself nor different from itself, not in existence nor without existence, not in the state of 'not in existence' nor in the state of 'not without existence'... then we enjoy the freedom to wander along with all beings.

Be Careful

More often than not, we only see water in ponds and lakes, in rivers and in the ocean, but few of us can see water in Sùnya - the Empty Space, or in fire.

If we do not see clouds as vapour of water and another form of water, our seeing is not enough to help us live leisurely in this life with the moon and wind.

If we only see water in lakes, in rivers and in the ocean without seeing the water in fire and water evaporating from fire to become vapour, fog and cloud, then we are unable to go into life to play with ups and downs.

Once, a master wanted to teach his students how to see a miracle, he took the students to a mountain which was full of wood, but short of water. The master asked the students to cook rice, without any pot and water. One

student wondered how to cook rice without water and cooking pot?!

The other student said the cooking without pot and water was possible! This second student took his undervest off, put rice into it, then tied up the whole stuff, dug a hole and buried everything in the hole. He filled up the hole carefully. Then he dug another hole around the first and made a fire in it. Some time later, water seeping from the ground due to the heat of the fire, soaked into the rice and then the rice was heated and cooked into food.

Similarly, if in life we think in accordance with our habits, we do things out of inertia. Consequently we immediately frame our lives and we are imprisoned by such habits. We only escape from prison of knowledge, habit or custom, only when we have wisdom. Without wisdom we will be in prison due to our knowledge. So, the Buddha taught: “Worldly eloquent knowledge is an accident.”

But alas, giving up a habit of perception or a custom is a hundred thousand times harder than an athlete placing Sumeru Mountain on his fingers to walk around the world!

So, we should be careful about what we see and what we know, and about what is supposed to be knowledge forming our perceptions!

One Who Knows How to Protect

Our mind bustles like a gibbon. Our thought acts adventurously and violently like a horse. It is the mind and the thoughts that bring us a life full of ups and downs.

Everyone likes a pleasant life. Nobody is fond of a life which is full of ups and downs. But how do we have a peaceful life with less ups and downs?

If we want to have such a peaceful life, we must know how to protect our thought and mind. Every day we must spend some hours practicing sitting quietly. Sitting very straight, relaxing completely all cells of the face, breathing and using our thought to follow the breath in and out.

Breathing in, we know we are breathing in. Breathing out, we know we are breathing out. While breathing in

for a long or short time, we know we are breathing in for a long or short time. Breathing out for a long or short time and we know we are breathing out for a long or short time. We just need to focus our thought on the breathing in and out by long and short breaths like that and after a certain time our mind will be quiet.

Practicing like that is called thought protection, to make our mind peaceful. Our mind is quiet and bright by nature, but due to the impact of thoughts, the seeds always appear and operate in the mind, to make waves and to disturb and pollute the mind.

So we should know how to protect our thought by kayanupassana - body contemplations - through following the breath to make our mind quiet. Every time the thought is protected by kayanupassana through breath or the sapta bodhyanga - contemplation of awakening factors - the mind is in a status of calmness. If our mind is in this status, it is called calmness of practising mind.

The sapta bodhyanga is clear awareness right in a thought, which means clear awareness right when a thought has not yet arisen, while it is arising and after it arose.

If a thought has not yet arisen, we make efforts to calm the mind and make it impossible for the thought so that it will never arise. If the thought is arising, we make efforts to control it and leave it out and if the thought has arisen, we make efforts to stop it through the peacefulness of body and speech.

Protection of thought leads to peace of body and speech, and peace of body and speech leads to peace of thought. Protecting ourselves against polluted speech our words will create harmony and purity. Protecting ourselves against polluted actions of body, our actions will be capable of creating harmony and purity.

Purity of body, speech and thought is the path that great people have taken, are taking and will take. Fruits of the saintly life also originate from the three karmas of

purity of body, speech and thought.

With such an ability of protection, we are able to close the miserable door of birth and death and to open the way to nirvana.

Nobody Can Replace

Our spiritual life must be looked after by ourselves, nobody else can take care of that for us. Our relations can only support us but they cannot replace us to look after it.

Why? Because no one can eat to live for anyone else and no one can replace anyone else to die. Living karma of a person belongs to that person. Living karma of a species belongs to that species. Dead karma of a person belongs to that person. Dead karma of a species belongs to that species. So in life no one can replace anyone else to live or die.

Life and death are due to a person's karma created by himself or herself and each person has to be responsible for his life and death retribution. No one can be responsible for life and death retribution of others.

People can share happiness, but people cannot share living happily, when they are taking unhappy karma. People can share sadness, but people cannot share living in sadness, when they are taking happy karma.

So, in his sutra, Buddha said "His dharma is the dharma to come and see".

Thus, those who come to his dharma and practise it will see it; those who do not come to his dharma and do not practise it will not see it.

It means that those who come to the way to the cessation of evil and practise it, will see the way to the cessation of evil and through the way to the cessation of evil, they will see the noble truth of suffering. Through the way to cessation of evil, they will see the origin of suffering, and through the way to cessation of evil, they will see the cessation of suffering. And those who do not come to the way to the cessation of evil, do not see the way to the cessation of evil. Due to not seeing the

way to the cessation of evil, they do not have dharma to practise. Due to not having dharma to practise, they do not see the way to the cessation of evil. Due to not seeing the way to the cessation of evil to practise, they do not see the noble truth of suffering to get rid of; due to not seeing the way to the cessation of evil to practise, they do not see the noble truth of the origin of suffering to eradicate, due to not seeing the way to the cessation of evil to practise, they do not see the cessation of suffering to attain. Due to not seeing both the origin of suffering to eradicate, and the cessation of suffering to attain, they were carried along suffering shores; their drifting life ruins in suffering and will forever be in birth and death transmigration.

Therefore, Dharma is coming to see by ourselves, no one else could come to replace us to see. So, please pray to the Buddha by yourselves. No one can replace you to pray to the Buddha! Would you please recite the Buddha's name. No one can replace you to recite

Buddha's name! Please practise meditation by yourself. No one can replace you to practise meditation! Please live honestly. No one can replace you to live honestly!

Why? For all your living roots are located in your mind, not in someone else's mind; in your causes and effects, not in someone else's causes and effects. Others cannot replace your causes and effects for life or death, for suffering or happiness.

Enjoying Life and Death in Peace and Happiness

Whenever there is desire in our mind, we are still bound by that desire and with desire in mind, the more we gain the more we feel lacking. Because there is a feeling of lacking something, we desire more and more, and the more we desire the more we have the feeling that something is missing. If we want to terminate the feeling of lacking something, there is no miracle rather than to know how to stop the desire in our minds.

The poorest person in the world is not the one who has no house, food, clothes but the one whose mind is full of greed. People's minds full of sensual greed are like people who have poisoned arrows planted in their hearts. If poisoned arrows are not quickly pulled out, surely they live in lament and misery.

Intelligent people wherever in the world see the danger of a mind full of sensual greed, so they avoid sensual greed as they avoid stepping on poisonous snakes' heads. A poisonous snake is poisonous, but it only harms humans once in a lifetime. Poisonous greed in human mind harms humans from this life to another life. So people who claim to be wise in life cannot lose sight of being careful and alert!

Entangled in sensual greed, people will no longer have merits. Disasters come naturally. All accomplishments, both material and spiritual, wear out and gradually disappear. Resentment and hatred come closer together, body is therefore wasted away. The one who is entangled in sensual greed is seen as a navigator travelling in the sea on a broken boat. He is engulfed by waves and suffers ups and downs continuously in the miserable sea.

So, in life, smart people always observe their minds to see if their minds harbour sensual greed or not. If there is sensual greed in them, they will let it go. If no sensual

greed is found, they will be constantly in clear awareness so as not to make it present forever. Those people enjoy life and death in peace and happiness.

Immortal Persons

In human life, there are so many precious things such as gold, silver and precious jewels, but time is the most precious and priceless asset of humans that other treasures on earth cannot stand comparison with.

When we lose money, jewels or pearls, we can regain and recover them, but lost time, no one in the world can get it back.

Knowing this, we must spend time on the most meaningful goals of our life.

We should only spend time nurturing wisdom and promoting power of wisdom without nurturing anything else, why? Since only wisdom can make time truly lively and meaningful.

We should only spend time looking into and listening to what is capable of eradicating ignorance and false views in our mind in order to encourage moral mind to brighten up. Why? Because only when our mind brightens up in the light of wisdom can the darkness of ignorance in our life itself be eradicated and at that time, time is no longer time, but unlimited bright life.

We only make use of time to practise a life of purity in the mind and thought and to live with peace resulting from such practise. Why? For the peace brought by the practice of pure mind and thought is real peace.

Happiness and peace of humans can only be true, when people learn how to use time to grow up in wisdom, to get rid of ignorance and false views. Only in this way can a clear and pure moral spirit emerge in the mind.

Such clear and pure moral mind itself creates happiness and true peace for us all. It is not donated or given by any one in heaven, or any God on earth!

Intelligent people in life are aware of the meaning and value of the infinity of time. They make use of time as their ultimate goal of life. They do not need to search the past to live; they do not need to map out a future plan to live nor do they have to reside in the present to live.

Thus, in face of all time, they become relaxed and immortal. They are relaxed and immortal with time, because they know how to live and spend their time. They do not let time make use of them and force them to commit suicide.

Deterioration of Humans and Society

In society and human life, soul degradation is the most frightening thing.

Soul degradation is the degradation of love and wisdom. In humans, if love is fading, it turns into sexual love. If understanding or wisdom of humans degrades, then the understanding of humans becomes false views, ignorance that obstruct and eliminate all dignities, as well as eliminate all significance of human life.

Degradation of morality in people and society originates from degradation of souls in individuals and community.

Soul degradation of adults has a great influence on soul deterioration of children and soul degradation of adults' community also has a great influence on moral degradation of the children's community.

Buddha said: “Adults are genuinely grown-up only when they grow up from virtue of precepts, virtue of meditation, and virtue of wisdom, rather than grow up with age of the body”.

If the virtue of precepts is degraded, all economic developments are just the disguise of a recession and money is no longer effective in helping people to live happily, but it contributes positively to ruining the happy life of humans and the society.

If the virtue of precepts is degraded, all developments of theocratic power or social power are just the disguise of crazy and tricky minds and consciousness which contributes actively to corrupt personal ethics and social security.

If the virtue of precepts is degraded, all developments of relations with the outside world only lead to crisis of the internal world...

If the virtue of precepts is degraded, the more we talk

about morality, the more we are abandoned by morality. If the virtue of precepts is degraded, the more we talk about meditation, the more all meditation is just a kind of dust of ignorance and defilement.

If the virtue of precepts is degraded, the more we talk about wisdom, the more we again fall into the wrong view and ignorance, false consciousness, and craziness, thus creating social cleavage.

In life neither people nor influence destroys humans' life like their own greed. Human greed, not something else, devastates their own happiness and personality. Human habitat is increasingly becoming polluted and toxic. It is also created by humans' own greed and ignorance, not by anyone else.

The more disabled the virtue of precepts is fading, the more human greed develops, the more human lifespan reduces, the more the illness and accidents in human life increase.

If we do not practise the virtue of precepts to develop morality in human life and society, then life of humans and society is standing on the verge of an abyss.

Soul degradation has brought about thousands of other degradations of human life and society. Soul degradation is therefore the most fearful degradation.

Innovation

For each piece of work we do, we should follow a routine, but we should do it with consciousness of clear awareness. Doing things with consciousness of clear awareness will help us to transform our unhealthy habits.

If we do a piece of work well by habit, we will lose the feeling for it and it will not go deeply into our minds. It will not give us great pleasure. If we do a piece of work well by consciousness of clear awareness not only do we have ability to transform bad seeds in our minds, but we also nurture good seeds in our minds in a flexible and lively way.

Bad habits in our minds only change when we act with consciousness of clear awareness. Consciousness of clear awareness is consciousness to understand what is happening in all movements of the body, in the body; in all feelings of feelings; in all operations of minds and

deeds, in internal dharmas (Buddhism) and external dharmas (Non-Buddhist doctrines) of dharmas belonging to internal dharmas and external dharmas.

Consciousness of clear awareness is clearly seeing what is happening in all actions of the body, in all senses of touch, in all concepts of perception, in all attentions of mind and deeds, and in operations of all Dharma actions. All of them include both cause, condition and fruit and all of them exist in one another, but they are not themselves and are not different from themselves.

Practicing such consciousness of clear awareness causes the seeds of egoism in our mind to transform themselves and disappear gradually. At that moment, bright virtue lights up itself in the mind and encourages our understanding, vision, hearing, and feeling in our life to innovate themselves. Our life is only renewed when the habits in our mind are renovated in such a way. We only have true peace when the bad seeds in our mind have been innovated and no longer emerge.

Do not Stick to Numbers

If we do not stick to number one, we will understand number two and number three and unlimited numbers. If we stick to number one, we will not understand number two, not to mention number three, number four and other countless numbers.

A vehicle runs comfortably because it does not jam in gears. Similarly, a person who does not jam in number will live leisurely among all humans' fates.

Preferring to Live or to Die

If we live usefully, then we will die usefully; if we live uselessly, we will die uselessly too.

Living and death are two sides of everything that exists on earth. Death only leads to usefulness when we live usefully. Death leads to uselessness, because when we live, we live uselessly.

Living uselessly means that we merely know to live, but we do not know what to live for. We die uselessly because we merely know to die without knowing why we must die and what to die for?

In the life of all things, sunny weather is not only beneficial but rainy weather is also beneficial. Similarly, benefits do not only come from the rain, but also from the sun. Both the sun and the rain bring usefulness for all things. So, do all things like the sun or the rain?

In human life, it is not only life that brings us benefits, but death also brings benefits. So, do people prefer to live or to die?

Whimsical Happiness and Sadness

Majority of people prefer spring to winter. Why? Spring is warm, buds and shoots burst in spring. Winter is cold, trees are full of bare branches.

But, if there were no winter, how could spring exist!

Remember, winter creates spring for life. In winter, the earth is warm inside, but it is cold outside and in spring, the earth is warm outside, but it is cold inside.

If we only see the joy of spring, and we do not see the endeavour and industry of winter for spring to exist, then we can never get rid of the whimsical happiness and sadness of human life on earth!

Non-Vegetarians Recite Buddha's Name

Someone asked me: “Do non-vegetarians recite Amitabha Buddha’s name to pray to be born in the Pure Land?” I answered yes, why? Because non-vegetarians who know to recite the Buddha’s name for praying to be born in the Pure Land have blessings and virtues more than non-vegetarians who do not know how to recite the Buddha’s name and who do not know how to pray to be born in the Pure Land. And non-vegetarians who know how to recite Amitabha Buddha’s name to pray to be born in the pure world have more blessings and virtues than vegetarians who do not know how to recite the Buddha’s name. However the recitations of Amitabha Buddha’s name and the prayers to be born in the Pure Land are

not as effective when done by non-vegetarians than by vegetarians who follow bodhicitta and observe Buddhist rules to pray to be born in the Pure Land. Why? Because vegetarians following bodhicitta and obeying Buddhist rules to pray to be born in the Pure Land have mind and speech in unity, enjoy sufficient good conditions to assist them to be easily reborn in the Pure Land.

Death is not Impermanent

Someone asked me: “Is impermanence death?” I said no. Impermanence is not death but impermanence arises dependently from the interaction of this thing with that thing and from that thing with this thing. Anything that exists from interaction like that is impermanent, and empty of self. And because all dharmas exist in the world due to the law of dependent origination, by the constant birth and death circle. So it is called impermanence.

Impermanence is not birth and impermanence is not death. Impermanence exists because there is birth in death and there is death in birth. Birth and death continually interact together, in the process of causes and condition, of uninterrupted causes and effects. So it is called impermanence.

Impermanence is neither arising nor ceasing. Impermanence exists because there is arising in ceasing and ceasing in arising. The arising and the ceasing continually interact, by the causes and condition, under the un-interruption of causes and results, so it is called impermanence.

Impermanence is neither life nor death but the living and the death inter-exist dependently, continuously interact and change and due to that there is arising in ceasing and ceasing in arising, and arising gives birth to ceasing and vice versa, continuously. So it is called impermanence.

Impermanence is divided into many types by Buddhist scholars as follows:

Impermanence of instant after instant: it shows the quick arising and ceasing of all existing things due to the dependent origination that is faster than a thought. It is called impermanence of instant after instant or impermanent arising and ceasing.

Continuity impermanence: it just shows that all existences are due to dependent origination relationship and they are born and dead without interruption. The first is dead, then the second is born; then the second is dead, the third is born. Birth and death are therefore in continuity. So it is called continuity impermanence.

Impermanence without self-nature: all things are formed due to the law of dependent origination. They have no independent nature of their own, so they are called impermanence without self-nature.

Impurity and purity impermanence: the contaminated seeds that are stored in the ālaya-consciousness operate in impermanence. They can transform into purified seeds or non-flow ones while the ālaya-consciousness can turn into heterogeneous consciousness, white and pure consciousness, non-purified consciousness, Buddha nature, perfect true nature. This process is called impurity and purity impermanence. Naming it impurity and purity impermanence is because contaminated seeds

that operate in the mind can transform into seeds of non-flowing, and the contaminated mind can transform into a pure one. Thus, it is called impurity and purity impermanence.

Although impermanence is divided into various types by Buddhist scholars, this division does not go beyond the four aforementioned categories of impermanence.

Impermanence is defined like this. It also means non-self causal conditions or causal conditions without self-nature. Emptiness is the permanent nature of impermanence.

This nature of Emptiness, according to Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra, is called the nature of neither being born nor ending, neither being stained nor impurified, neither adding nor subtracting and it is inherently found in all things and species.

Life is the Most Precious Thing

In this world, there is nothing more precious than life. Life is the most precious, so we need to protect and respect life. We protect life by not killing life by ourselves and not asking others to take the life of humans and animals. Protection of life also means that we do not pollute our environment of ourselves or the environment of other species. Respecting life means that we neither cut down trees in forests, nor make all water sources and land polluted, and nor exploit nature to serve humans' greed. And in life, people have to know how to live enough and not to waste time and resources.

Life is the most precious thing, so if we happen to see people waste their life, we are willing to help them with various means, to make them realize the true value

and the meaning of their life so that they can live a meaningful life. And if there is anyone using violence to steal the life of other people and species, we vow to stand up to protect them so that the life of the oppressed ones is respected and protected.

In life, he who knows how to respect and protect life is the person who has wisdom and love. Only wise people can see that life is the most precious thing to respect and only people who have love are able to protect life of others by various ways. Without wisdom, we are unable to respect life and without love we have no ability to protect life.

No one can bestow us wisdom and love since they are placed right in the soul of each person. When our mind is quiet, wisdom will arise. When wisdom arises, love based on wisdom will arise too. Pure mind is the mother who gives birth and brings up wisdom and love. Therefore, the mind is the source of life of all human beings and species.

Without the mind, we would not have our life. A person is called dead, because his or her mind is no longer active.

So, in life there is nothing more precious than life, and the mind is the root of life. If we want to have a peaceful and noble life, we must know how to nourish our mind and not to make the mind polluted by defilements of greed, hatred, delusion and arrogance. An unpolluted mind will create a life of peace and cheerfulness.

Where the Path is

When we drink a cup of tea, the cup, water and tea are completely harmless. Because of their harmlessness, they merge with each other without obstruction. Tea is present in water, water is present in tea, and both water and tea are present in a cup. All of them are present together and are absolutely harmonious in each other to join existence together.

Cup, water and tea in nature involve no attention of the mind, but they become involved in the attention of the mind because of the mind of the person who boils water, the person who makes tea and the person who drinks tea.

If a person boils water with a selfless mind, then the process of boiling water immediately makes him a great person, in every sense of the word.

If the person boils water with a non-ego mind, then the process of boiling water immediately makes him a great person, in every sense of the word.

If the person boils water without seeing his merits of boiling water, then at this moment he becomes an impartial person nothing more than that.

It is the same with the person who makes tea and the person who drinks tea. The person making tea without attention of the mind, the person drinking tea with peaceful mind, their making and drinking tea becomes the Path. There is no other path to look for.

Affairs of this world are confusing and complicated not because of the affairs themselves, but because of the human mind. The human mind with attention of the mind creates confusion and complicates affairs. The human mind without attention of the mind creates emptiness in all things, making life leisurely in the mind. The path is the very pure mind without any attachment.

So, who is the person who genuinely boils water, makes tea and drinks tea in this life!

The Meaningful Existence of an Organization

If an organization wants to exist meaningfully, the four following points should be taken into consideration:

No one in the organization is allowed to do anything that is against its rule, its internal regulation or the law. All of its members have to follow the rule, the internal regulation, as well as the law and live in harmony with this legal system.

Members in an organization have to be aware that they exist within a community of a dependent foundation and they cannot exist on their own separately.

The law has to be obeyed without bias. If a bias occurs, the law will not be the law anymore. In an organization, if people start acting with prejudice, this organization will be swayed and will collapse sooner or later.

People with full awareness will never consider their interests and individual honour higher than the honour and interest of their community.

Knowing How to Be a Real Owner

Never think that we are an owner, even though people give us responsibilities and our rights are recognized by law as an owner. Although we are owners, we must be aware that we exist in the interrelation and the interaction of causation. Therefore, owners who are not owners are real owners.

That wisdom helps us to work enthusiastically, impartially and each action takes us to pureness and straightforwardness.

Thus, whenever and wherever we are, we feel pleasant in every action we are doing and every job we are carrying out. If we realize that some can better manage the work we are doing, we should hold them in high respect and invite them politely to replace us and assume our work. If we do so, we know how to be an intelligent owner.

It is It

A natural disaster is caused by nature. An earth disaster is caused by earthquakes, landslides, land subsidence. A fire disaster is caused by fire. A disaster related to water is caused by flood or tsunami, and a disaster related to wind is caused by storms.

All of these disasters are related to human disasters which cause all these aforementioned disasters. Human disaster is the disaster caused by human beings. Greed, anger, delusion, blindness, wrong view and self-attachment are roots of human disasters and due to these causal conditions natural disasters such as earth disaster, fire disaster, disaster related to water and wind occur.

If we want to put an end to these disasters, we must find ways to eliminate human disasters.

To eliminate human disasters, first of all, we must give up the greed in our mind, in any form. Whenever greed exists in the human mind, it will cause disasters for humans and their world.

Because of greed, people want to occupy land for their own, which leads to fights for land possession among people, among villages and among countries. This leads to feuds and resentful actions which cause conflicts and wars. Due to greed, people exploit land for benefits. This exhausts the source of nutrition in the land and destroys its balance. The internal space of the earth has been dug up, thus making the land poisonous and trees and vegetables are exposed to contamination and poisoning. Human beings who consume those poisonous foods suffer illnesses.

Due to greed, people exploit sources of water to gain benefits, which creates conflicts over the sources of water between regions, nations and then wars break out. Because of greed, people find every way to look for

benefits from sources of water. They build hydroelectrical dams, which prevent water from running naturally, and even worse, water is becoming more and more polluted. Consequently, every natural source of water is running out. In the future, the water in the world will not only be contaminated but we will also suffer a shortage. The water shortage is one of the terrifying disasters that human beings have to face in the near future.

Due to greed, human beings exploit every source of water situated on a high level to make electricity, which creates inharmony between soil and water, and between water and fire. As a result, disasters coming from soil, water, fire and wind occur.

Nowadays, human beings take full advantage of scientific methods to exploit land, hydraulics, electricity in an extreme way to satisfy their greed; which makes natural resources exhausted. Trees are cut down, sources of water are polluted, and over the past years human beings have suffered from accidents caused by soil, fire,

water, wind, epidemics... and continue to incur those bad consequences in the very near future.

The atmosphere is full of poisonous chemical substances coming from science and technology. So global warming happens. The sun's heat damages the earth. On our green planet, the climate has changed. Plants are exterminated. Human sex is destroyed and transformed. People's behaviour loses all humanity and in the near future, human beings will be deformed and then disappear from earth. All of these disasters originate from greed, hatred, blindness and arrogance in humans' minds, not from the power or the punishment of any deities.

In short, it is greed, hatred, blindness, arrogance and ignorance in people's minds that create disasters for human beings and their world, not any other powers.

The greed in humans' mind is the root of every disaster, and all the disasters happening in their world are only

consequences. Any attempts to control the consequences are just actions of crazy people in the vain hope to catch snakes by their tails.

Why don't human beings learn how to give up their greed instead of attempting to control the consequences!

Owner of the House

The body is an inn of the mind. If the mind does not exist in the body, the body is like an empty house. If the body meets with negative conditions that destroy the body, the mind will create a new body to stay in. The new body which is beautiful or ugly, refined or not refined, is also created by its good or evil mind.

A mind with several good seeds will create a refined body; a mind with many evil seeds will create a deformed and ugly body.

Therefore, Avatamsaka-sutra says: “The mind is the painter who draws everything.”

Therefore, we know that the body is the house of the mind and the mind is the owner of the house. If you are an intelligent person, you should never let the owner of

the house starve. If the owner of the house starves, the house will be stinking and collapse sooner or later.

We are trying to build magnificent castles which are decorated by many diamonds, but when the owner of the castle is starving and becomes handicapped, the action of building those magnificent castles full of diamonds becomes useless!

If we take care of our mind with wisdom and compassion, thus making the mind abandon greed, hatred, reproach, suspicion and selfishness, we will have a beautiful and vivid house.

What Should not be Made Light of

We should not make light of small evil things and consider them unimportant. Small evil things first arise in the mind. They are just thoughts, but if an evil thought exists in the mind for an hour, it may be as big as the space of a village. If it is there for two hours, it will be as big as the space of a district. If it is there for three hours, it will be as big as the space of a province. If it is there for four hours, it will be as big as the space of a country. If it is there for five hours, it will be as big as the space of the earth, and for one night, then its space may be as big as a million of worlds and heavier than a million of Sumeru Mountains.

Therefore, Buddha says, “Do not get angry with anyone after a night”. And Our Buddha teaches us to

constantly observe our minds: if an evil thought has not emerged, we should not let it emerge; if an evil thought has emerged, we should stop it immediately. If a good thought has not emerged, we should make attempt to let it emerge. If the good thought has emerged, we should let it exist continuously until the complete end.

So, concerning small evil things, we should not make light of them in our actions, and regarding small good things, we should not make light of them in our actions.

If we are unable to do small good things, no one can believe that we are able to do great good things. If we are unable to get rid of small evil things, no one can believe that we are able to get rid of serious crimes!

The most successful person in life is the one who never makes light of any single small thought or behaviour!

Meaning of Compassion

Loving-kindness - Maitrī - means embracing the five aggregates. Compassion - Karunā - means transforming the five aggregates. Aggregates are a group of different materials as well as spiritual elements. In other words, they include all the physiological and psychological elements.

The group belonging to form, or the elements in the group belonging to materials, is called the aggregate (skandha) of rupa (skandha-rupa), or that which has form. Loving-kindness means embracing the skandha of rupa and this embrace stops and wipes out unpleasant feelings arising from the skandha of rupa. Unpleasant feelings that have not arisen yet will never appear.

The group belonging to the feelings of being happy,

sad, pleasant, unpleasant or neutral falls into the aggregate of feeling (skandha-vadanā). Loving-kindness means embracing and this embrace will immediately wipe out unpleasant or insensible feelings arisen from the aggregate of feeling, right after they arise. It also assists unpleasant or insensible feelings that have not yet emerged not to emerge forever.

The group belonging to perceptions or concepts is called the aggregate of perception (skandha-saññā). Loving-kindness means embracing and this embrace makes perceptions or concepts which have not yet arisen unable to arise and it also assists perceptions or concepts that have arisen to cease and to be completely destroyed.

The group belonging to intentional actions or personal thoughts, and close examination is called the aggregate of volition (skandha-samskāra). Loving-kindness means embracing and this embrace makes intentional actions or personal thoughts which have not yet arisen unable to arise, and it also assists intentional actions or personal

thoughts that have emerged to cease and to be completely destroyed.

The group belonging to perception or discrimination is called the aggregate of consciousness (skandha-viññāṇa). Loving-kindness means embracing and this embrace makes perceptions or discriminations that have not yet arisen unable to arise, and it also assists the ones that have arisen to cease and to be completely destroyed.

If a practitioner of loving-kindness towards the five aggregates acts in this way, the sufferings within the five aggregates will gradually cease and be transformed.

Compassion means transforming and getting rid of mind of self-attachment towards the five aggregates. Due to the link of ignorant actions creating ignorance, mind of self-attachment then arises. Therefore, compassion means getting rid of ignorance so that the practitioner no longer creates conditions for the mind of self-attachment to arise towards the aggregate of rupa to be called ego or the possession of ego.

Compassion means transforming and getting rid of the mind of self-attachment that arises due to the link of ignorant actions creating ignorance and of ignorance creating ignorant actions, causing this self-attached mind towards the aggregate of feelings to be called ego or the possession of ego to disappear by itself.

Compassion means transforming and getting rid of the self-attached mind that arises due to the link of ignorant actions creating ignorance and of ignorance creating ignorant actions, causing this self-attached mind towards the aggregate of perception to be called ego or the possession of ego to disappear by itself.

Compassion means transforming and getting rid of the self-attached mind that arises due to the link of ignorant actions creating ignorance and of ignorance creating ignorant actions, causing this self-attached mind towards the aggregate of volition to be called ego or the possession of ego to disappear by itself.

Compassion means transforming and getting rid of the self-attached mind that arises due to the link of ignorant actions creating ignorance and of ignorance creating ignorant actions, causing this self-attached mind towards the aggregate of consciousness to be called ego or the possession of ego to disappear by itself.

A successful practitioner of the conduct of compassion will have continuous efforts to embrace, transform and get rid of ignorance creating ignorant actions and ignorant actions creating ignorance, thus causing the self-attached mind towards the five aggregates to be called ego and the possession of ego to disappear by itself.

Therefore, compassion is the substance of wisdom and loving-kindness is the effect of wisdom. Compassion is the way of self-enlightenment. The way back to lighten and transform the mind from inside. Loving-kindness is the way to enlighten others, embrace and transform the mind from outside and bring happiness to every home.

Compassion means enlightening and transforming all creatures in their minds. Loving-kindness means embracing all creatures in the external world and helping them to base themselves on the mind of compassion so that all of the roots of their suffering can be transformed and eliminated.

Therefore, compassion is able to get rid of all roots of ignorance and all causes of sufferings, whereas loving-kindness is capable of creating substances of peace and joy for all creatures.

While the Three Buddha virtues include the potency of his cutting off all illusions, the potency of Buddha's perfect knowledge and Buddha's universal grace and salvation; compassion is composed of Buddha's potency of cutting off all illusions and the potency of Buddha's perfect knowledge. The potency of cutting off all illusions is the merit that arises by cutting off all the roots of suffering. The potency of Buddha's perfect knowledge is the merit of wisdom that arises thanks to the vanishing

of all illusion and ego-grasping as well as the clinging to dharma. Loving-kindness includes the merit of Buddha's universal grace and salvation. This merit can be produced by commencing loving-kindness within compassion through great vows and great deeds in order to transform countless and limitless sentient beings in any space and time, helping all living creatures to enter into the ocean of enlightenment in which both the practitioner of loving-kindness and compassion and the object of loving-kindness and compassion are empty and absolute, with complete combination and without obstacle.

Therefore, practicing the merit of compassion means bringing all the most precious, beautiful and valuable things to all human beings as well as to all creatures without raising any concept or requesting any condition towards any recipients of our offering.

Such meaning of compassion was carried out and achieved by the past Buddhas and is being carried out and achieved by the present Buddhas. Also, it will be

carried out and achieved by the future Buddhas.

So, compassion is the gist of Buddhism and Buddhism is a religion of compassion. We can have peace and joy even in hell. Without compassion, we will surely suffer although we are the master of the paradise.

For this reason, compassion is the lord of all peace and joy.

What is the Foundation for Stability?

If a small thing is the foundation for a big thing, the big thing will not only collapse but the small thing will also be broken into pieces. If the big thing is the foundation for the small thing, the small thing is not only stable but the big thing is also unshakeable.

Also, in this life, if people with a narrow mind take over big responsibilities, they cannot only finish their duties but they will also ruin their work, which makes them and the people in connection with them involved in immeasurable disaster.

In this life, people with a broad mind can stably take over every position, which brings long-lasting interests for several people.

The broad mind is Bodhicitta, the mind of bodhi. This mind is the mind which lives for the benefits of everybody and forgets its own benefits. Bodhicitta is the

mind, which considers the unhappiness of everybody as its own unhappiness. Thus, people with Bodhicitta never do any evil things, in any way; making it impossible for unhappiness to arise for them and for everyone.

Bodhicitta is the mind that considers the happiness of everybody as its own happiness. Thus, people with Bodhicitta will do good things wherever and whenever they can, which makes happiness able to arise for them and for everyone at any time and at any place.

The narrow mind is the cause of every catastrophe and collapse. The broad mind is the root of a joyful, peaceful, happy and stable life.

You are an intelligent person, thus, it is your choice what mind you want to live with. Live and work with a broad mind, not only think and talk about the breadth of the mind!

The truthful and broad mind is therefore the foundation for every stability.

Fruits of Making Offerings

By practicing the conduct of making offerings, the following fruits may be obtained:

Making offerings to the Three Treasures and the present Sangha, we can gain strong belief in the Three Treasures. And from this faith, we always have chance to learn about the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha in order to take refuge as well as gain more insights whenever we are born. Taking refuge in the Buddha, we have the chance to accomplish infinite wisdom. Taking refuge in the Dharma, we have chance to accomplish the light of infinite deliverance from all trammels of life. Taking refuge in the Sangha, we have the chance to approach the light of infinitely pure life. Thanks to this, we can push back the darkness of ignorance, involvement and pollution.

Making offerings to the Three Treasures and the present Sangha, we have the chance to gain the refined, elegant and energetic sound in order to praise the Buddhist dharma and also to applaud good deeds from others. A word can be interpreted into countless ideas and an idea can be expressed into numerous expressions. Also, a word with numerous expressions and ideas can be expressed into only one single expression and idea.

Making offerings to the Three Treasures and the present Sangha, we will clear greed and pride from our heart, thus reducing every resentment in our life and as a consequence, we can obtain a joyful, peaceful and liberated life.

Making offerings to the Three Treasures and the present Sangha, we will have the ability to clear envy from our heart, and once these seeds of envy are wiped out, we will have the ability to accomplish the joyful conduct towards the good deeds of others.

Thanks to this, wherever we are born we can meet great teachers and good friends as well as people of virtue to support and guide us in our way of self-cultivation and serving the True Dharma.

Making offerings to the Three Treasures and present Sangha, we wish for the Dharma wheel to be in better motion, the Buddhist Dharma to be in more blossom for the benefits of men and devas, the universal suffering gate to be closed, the path of peace and joy to be wide open.

Making offerings to the three Treasures and present Sangha, we have the capability to adapt positively to all human beings as well as all living creatures to do virtuous affairs. For those who have not fulfilled their good deeds, we can make every attempt to help bring their wish to completion. For those who have no good deeds yet, we can make every attempt to help them have a chance to set out doing their own good deeds to attain expected accomplishments.

Making offerings to the Three Treasures and present Sangha, we have the opportunity to transfer all merits of our good deeds to the Buddhist path. Moreover, we can also transfer those merits of the good deeds to our parents and our relatives. Those who are still alive can live in peace and joy and cultivate merits and virtue, those who have passed away can escape the cycle of births and deaths soon, and can also reach the Pure Land of the Buddhas.

By practising such deeds of making offerings every day, the substance of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha can be present in our lives and help us escape the universal sufferings and reach the shore of enlightenment.

Buddha Recitation - Wholly Complete Dharma

Someone asked me: “How does reciting the name of Amitabha relate to the Vehicles of Learning - Precept-Meditation-Wisdom?”.

I answered: “Very closely”. One’s thought does not think of evils when dedicating oneself to reciting the name of Amitabha, that is the precept. Thought does not think of evil, so mouth says no evil, that is the precept. Thought does not think of evil, so body does not do evil, that is the precept, the precept in one’s mind. The precept prevents body and mind from evil, thought does not think of evil, mouth does not have any chance to say bad words and body does not have any chance to do evil when reciting the name of Amitabha. Therefore,

reciting the name of Amitabha is the precept and the act of keeping the precept.

When dedicating ourselves to reciting the name of Amitabha, our mind focuses on one point, then afflictions are less and mind is not confused. That is meditation. Meditation has the ability that leads to the precept, which in terms of Abhidharma or Sastra - Commentaries, means the cultivation of quiet concentration leading to rules and ceremonies or meditation leading to rules and ceremonies. It means that precepts or rules and ceremonies start from meditation to prevent evils that originate from thoughts of mind, from the action of body and from speech. So, dedicating oneself to reciting the name of Amitabha leads not only to the precept but also to meditation. Not only to precept, meditation but also to wisdom. Meditation leading to wisdom, in terms of Abhidharma or Sastra - Commentaries, means the meditative path leading to rules and ceremonies. That is, if the mind is in the state of the purest meditation, afflictions are conquered and

annihilated, the way to emancipation is born and has the power to prevent evil dharmas, so these bad things are transformed and cannot arise in the mind, it is meditative path leading to the precepts.

Therefore, the more we dedicate ourselves to reciting the name of the Buddha, the more we go deep into meditation and meditation comes to the deepest point and then wisdom arises and joins the holy way without sufferings or Buddhist path.

If wisdom grows, we can clearly see the self-existence of purity in our mind and in the mind of Amitabha, just as one, without any difference. Seeing clearly the remote Pure Land with the Pure Land inside one's own mind is phenomenal identity, mutual entry. If the experiential entry into Buddha truth of the Pure Land in our mind is impossible, then the experiential entry into Buddha truth of the remote Pure Land is also impossible. And without believing in the remote Pure Land, there is no condition for the experiential entry into Buddha truth of the Pure

Land in the mind. In the remote Pure Land there is the Pure Land in the mind and in the Pure Land in the mind there is the remote Pure Land. They are two but not two. They are one but not one.

And thanks to wisdom, the Pure Land of the Amitabha and that of the Buddhas of the ten directions have the same peaceful essence, the harmonious combination without obstacles. If there is difference, the difference may be from the original vow or the means of establishing the Pure Land of each of the Buddhas.

The means or practice vows of the Buddhas are different, but not independent, they are inter-embracing, all inclusive in each other. So, the Pure Land of this Buddha does not hinder that of that Buddha and the Pure Land of that Buddha does not also hinder that of this Buddha either. All the Pure Land of the Buddhas is present in the noumena or principle of unimpeded interaction of the dharma realm and in the phenomena or practice of the unimpeded interaction of the dharma realm.

That is wisdom gained from reciting the name of Amitabha. So, reciting the name of Amitabha leads to the concentrated mind, and Vehicles of Learning - Precept-Meditation-Wisdom as well as the Six Paramitas and Ten Thousand Conducts are completely full.

Thanks to reciting the name of Amitabha with the concentrated mind, all greedy seeds in the mind are conquered. Without greed, the ability of practicing charity is possible. The charity from the mind without greed is called Charity-Paramita.

Thanks to reciting the name of Amitabha with the concentrated mind, all bad and evil intentional actions or “illegal actions” are conquered and all good intentional actions or “legal actions” have a condition to arise. Keeping the precept from “legal actions” is called keeping Precept-Paramita.

Thanks to reciting the name of Amitabha with the concentrated mind, all the seeds of anger from the mind

are conquered. Without anger, the ability of practising endurance is possible. Endurance from the mind without anger is called Endurance-Paramita. Endurance that takes place without knowing who endures and whom one endures, is endurance with nothing to endure. Endurance is then to develop the merciful heart.

Thanks to reciting the name of Amitabha with the concentrated mind, all the seeds of laziness from the mind are conquered. Without laziness, the ability of practising diligence is possible. The diligence from the mind without laziness is called Diligence-Paramita.

Thanks to reciting the name of Amitabha with the concentrated mind, all emotional tones, senses, seeds of the mental activities, seeds of the discriminating perceptions from the mind are conquered. Meditation from the absence of the emotional tones, senses, seeds of the mental activities and seeds of the discriminating perceptions is called Meditation-Paramita.

Thanks to reciting the name of Amitabha with the concentrated mind, the seeds belonging to wrong views of the body, one-sided standpoints, wrong views of conservative standpoints, wrong views and all kinds of ignorance are conquered. Wisdom arising from the absence of all seeds of wrong views, ignorance of clinging to one's ego and to the dharma is called Wisdom-Paramita.

Thanks to evoking the name of Amitabha with the concentrated mind, the Precept-Meditation-Wisdom as well as the Six Paramitas and Ten Thousand Conducts are completely full by themselves. The Pure Land of the Buddha does not disappear, but comes into existence itself. It becomes enlightened within oneself without any praying, and the Pure Land is responsively existent at present, without one's vow.

So, evoking the name of the Buddha is the inter-embracing dharma that harmoniously includes all the dharmas; it is the dharma that contains Buddhism of five yanams: Narayana, Devayana, Avara-Kayanam, Bodhisattva-Yanam and Buddhayana.

Life is not as You Think

Life is not suffering as you think and life is not happiness as you think. Life is just life. But how life sounds is just what you think in your mind, not because of the life itself.

Life is an endless evolution of mind and consciousness. There's no beginning as you think and there is no complete ending as you claim.

Just a moment ago, you felt sad because of saying goodbye to your lovers, so you thought life was hateful and boring. Tomorrow, you will see your lovers and you feel life is lovely and precious. Therefore, love and hatred, suffering and happiness do not come from life itself. They come from our mind and consciousness.

How our mind is, will decide the status of our life and we draw our life just as how we look at it. But life is not the way we see it and how we draw it.

So, what is life? It's nothing. If we want to draw any image of the life, that image comes from our mind and consciousness and it is the image our mind and consciousness reflect.

In this life, those who understand how to play with their mind and consciousness will smile on the current suffering and happiness in their mind. They will be aware of what their past is, where they are standing at present, and what their future will be in this stream of life.

In that stream of life, they are not stuck in any unreal thing and consequently they do not get stuck in illusions. They do not follow anything in that stream in order not to be drifted and drowned in illusions. They just stop to contemplate upon, smile and let go all their illusory thoughts.

If we know how to release all illusory things, the Pure Land of Buddhas will appear before us, without our effort to look for it.

A Message to the World

Greed is bad, but taking advantage of your greed to become corrupt is even worse. People are not only greedy for money, beauty, fame but also for dharmas; and take advantage of these things.

Because of being greedy, people have turned the common things into their own. As a result, the common things are not common anymore, they are broken into pieces by the hearts of corrupt individuals. The heaven and the earth, also, are no more the things in common but separated into small pieces, to satisfy the corrupt demand of people.

However, experiences show that demands originated from human greed have never been satisfied. The more people possess, the more they need; and again, the more

they gain, the more they run ahead. Therefore, the lives of these people are more pitiful than blameworthy.

For the ones who know to cultivate themselves, in their lives, they know when to stop when dealing with unnecessary needs. They just try to have an adequate life to achieve the necessities so that they can do good deeds and foster their kindness.

Even in the act of practicing a dharma, the ones who know how to practise it would know how to choose the suitable dharma to practise without being stuck to the idea of innovation or conservation. The ideas of innovating or conserving a dharma are also just ideas formed by crazy delusions.

Conserving a dharma is also a way of abusing the dharma and innovating a dharma is also a way of abusing the dharma in different forms of crazy conceptual thoughts.

Because of conserving a dharma, we have to waste our efforts and energy to fight against the ones who try

to innovate that dharma; and because of innovating a dharma, we have to waste our efforts and energy to fight against the ones who try to conserve that dharma. Hence, both become victims of upside down and delusive ideas.

Therefore, individuals practicing to conserve or innovate a dharma are all taking advantage of the dharma. Why? Because a dharma is simply a dharma itself, it could be new for some but already quite old for the others. “Old” or “New” depends not on the dharma itself, but on someone’s conditional feeling and inherent capacity to receive it.

As a result, if we discuss whether a dharma is old or new to someone, how long do we need to come to an end?

Let us remember that, on the one hand A, B, C alphabets are new to the pre-school children, but on the other hand they have never been too old to linguists and scholars. There are hardly any linguists and scholars who do not use A, B, C alphabets in different forms to do research or show their inventions.

Similarly, Buddhist dharma has neither any relation to the “new” or “old” nor “conservation” or “innovation”, it only relates to the transformation of greed and lust and egotism in the people’s minds. It addresses the transformation of ignorance and upside down and delusive thoughts in people’ minds, so that meditation and wisdom can come into existence in their minds and they can improve themselves and the world around them just the way it should be.

Buddha teaches dharma for human beings, not for himself. Buddha conducts countless dharma sects for all human beings, not for himself. Therefore, whenever and wherever, Buddha is always by our side but does not belong to any dharma and so, anytime, anywhere and for anyone, Buddha is always the enlightened being, the being of complete liberation.

Hence, if we try just to conserve or modernize a dharma, this dharma will make the afflictions in our mind arise, instead of settling it down.

We have a complex about our old dharma sect and try to find a new one. This action is just like the action of a man who is tired of living with his old wife and wants to seek a new one. However, that man does not understand that his new thing is the old one of others, and he also cannot understand that his new thing today is going to be old in the future.

The ones who have a complex about old things to seek new things, or about clinging to old things to refuse innovative things are all miserable people. They are miserable because for the ones clinging to the old things, there is no difference from worshipping and praying to a shadow and for the ones roaming to seek new things, there is no difference from chasing a shadow to worship and pray to and in the end, there is no more shadow for them at all to worship and pray to.

We should let go thought and perception about “new” and “old”, about “conservation” and “innovation”, about which dharma sect belongs to me and which one to

others. Immediately, the whole vast and boundless sky of fresh spring will then certainly appear in front of us. Actually, that sky does not only appear in front of our eyesight, around us, but also inside our heart and mind; however, since we have kept struggling with the thinking of “new” and “old”, “conservation” and “innovation”, we could not realize that whole vast and boundless sky of fresh spring to live with and to live in.

Therefore, the liberation is simply the liberation in our thinking and perception. Liberation is the liberation in our thoughts, or else, all words used to describe the liberation, the enlightenment and the freedom are just unreal. And the people who practise and abuse a dharma sect and think that it is theirs, will forever immerse themselves in the sea of pains and sorrows, which is even worse than the ones who are being immersed in the sea of three evil paths. What a pity!

Eight Things to Eradicate Animosity

Do not criticize others, whether in front or behind their back, or wherever. Then animosity will be self-eradicated.

Do not overestimate yourself, do not self-bias, do not claim yourself to be the best, cease all gains and losses. Then animosity will be self-eradicated.

Live in mindfulness and enlightened awareness, let go all greed and lust, do not pursue anything and do not attach great importance to profit. Animosity will then be self-eradicated.

Do not show off that you are moral, do not show off that you are talented. Just act enthusiastically, wholeheartedly and humbly. Animosity will then be self-eradicated.

Do not brag about things. Do not look for superficial things. Live mindfully with your proper behaviours and with pure faith. Animosity will be self-eradicated.

While you are happy, do not promise. When you are angry, do not complain. Just come back to yourself, do self-observation and keep your mind and thought clean and pure. Animosity will certainly be self-eradicated.

Keep your mind calm regarding all people who hate and love you, who are for or against you. They are all medicines for you to grow up your Bodhi Mind - The altruistic mind of enlightenment, and animosity will then be self-eradicated.

Do not claim that you are right, do not conclude that others are wrong. Both right and wrong are illusory. By so observing frequently, animosity will be self-eradicated.

Ten Things that Need Frequent Investigation

We are now humans. This is much more difficult than to be a one-eyed turtle living at the bottom of the ocean. During hundred years, it emerges only once. It places its head into the hole of a log, then drifts in the ocean. Being a human being is hard but losing it is very easy. Realizing this, we must practise not to let loose our mind.

Our gratitude to fathers and mothers is heavier than the Sumeru Mountain and deeper than the oceans. Realizing so, we must practise to achieve an altruistic mind of enlightenment to voluntarily redeem debt in a thorough way.

Our gratitude to teachers and friends is as precious as the light of the sun and the moon, which assists us to get

out of the darkness. Realizing this, we must practise to be happy, polite and humble.

Our gratitude to the whole world and beings is as fresh as milk and as precious as Chenrezig treasure. Realizing so, we must practise to cherish good seeds in ourselves.

Meeting with gentle teachers is hard, meeting with Buddhist dharma is even harder, but cultivating our minds with wisdom is thousand times harder. Realizing so, we must practise to cosset our diligent dharma.

No one can confidently say that they know well the flood of impermanence, which is going to sweep all the things, so strong that nobody can resist. Realizing that, we must practise for waking up ourselves from this time.

Those who cause crimes do not want to meet their enemies for the fear of revenge. Those who cherish intimate relationships are afraid of staying away from their loved ones, but nobody knows how to prevent a drop of water on a tree branch from falling. Realizing so,

we practise to live peacefully and happily.

If you are better than others, they dislike you, but if you are worse than others, they despise you, and if you are as good as others, they compete with you. As a result, superiority, inferiority or equal strength will all make us miserable. Realizing so, we must practise to meditate on the conditional causation that everything arises from conditions without praying for.

Let us end all controversies. All gains and losses as well as all gratitude and resentment will be removed, from this lifetime onwards. Realizing so, we must practise the conditional causation of things so as to approach the non-birth nature of beings.

An altruistic heart of enlightenment is the heart of the Buddhas. An altruistic pray of enlightenment is the pray of the Buddhas. An altruistic vow of enlightenment is the vow of Buddhas. The ten directions of the three generations of Buddhas have lived so. Therefore all

afflictions are erased and bring benefits to all creatures. Realizing so, we must practise to keep our altruistic heart of enlightenment firm and steadfast.

Successful People

Successful people are the ones who do not bother about the past. They do not worry about the future. They do not get stuck by the present. They do not attach to any vanity in fame, any compliments or criticisms. They always meditate on their minds, nourish their vow of purity, make their minds clean whenever their minds become impure. The right view from that will arise immediately. They are successful people walking on the way of freedom.

Successful people are the ones who do not bother about personal opinions. They let go all their own knowledge. They do not keep the truth for their own. They always meditate on their minds to see the conditional causation of things so as to approach the egoless nature of beings,

and from practicing meditation they can obtain right view and right thought. They are successful people walking on the way of freedom.

Successful people on the way of being free are the ones who do not feel jealous anymore. They do not criticize other people's mistakes. They only look at their own work and let go all wrong mind. Right speech from that arises immediately.

Successful people on the way of being free are the ones who do not fall into doubts with what they have done or with their conduct. Right action from that arises immediately.

Successful people on the way of being free are the ones who do not elaborate on their speech. They do not have meals untimely. They let go all evil mind and all mind with upside down and delusive ideas. They nurture their honest heart. Right livelihood from that arises immediately.

Successful people on the way of being free are the ones who are not lazy to practise dharma. They do not ask for external supports. They do not have any complex of superiority or inferiority, and they let go all the evils. Right effort from that arises immediately.

Successful people on the way of being free are the ones who do not pray for themselves so that they are not disappointed anymore. They do not think only for themselves so that all false thoughts are kept under control automatically. Mindfulness from that arises immediately.

Successful people on the way of being free are the ones who are not influenced by the five faculties such as forms, sounds, scents, tastes, textures (touches), and mental objects, as a result, their concentration becomes optimal. Right concentration from that arises immediately.

Successful people on the way of being free are the ones who are not arrogant when being respected. They

are not uneasy when they are scorned, move forward like a lion, steadily in morality. Right conduct from that arises immediately.

Successful people on the way of being free are the ones who see the emptiness of nature itself in the conditional causation of things, who then let go all the greeds and the attachments, who cease to pray for anything, who approach the stage of closing the door of birth and death, and consequently right liberation is present in front of them.

A Peaceful Mind

When we lack rice and clothes, we will think about them and life becomes mean. We feel inferior, animosity arises easily, then we suffer even more pain. Knowing that, we must practise to let go the heart of avarice, to rejoice happily and make donations.

If we live without knowledge and act by instinct, we face things against our wish, anger resurfaces and all the good things burn away, then we become more stupid. Knowing that, we must practise the listening conduct, control our heart and mind towards the path of precepts practice.

Chasing delusions, our legs will be damaged, by wrong perceptions about myself and non-myself so that we become crazier and crazier. Knowing that, we must

practise to let go the delusions, live peacefully with mental formation and activities.

When chasing pride and immersing ourselves in passion, our mind becomes blind, we say bragging things, claim to be the best, and form a mass of illusions among people. Knowing that, we must practise to let go our pride, live peacefully with mental thought.

When chasing form and appearance and being cheated by them, when chasing sounds and being cheated by them, when chasing illusory expectations and being cheated by them, we become more and more disappointed and miserable. Knowing that, we must practise to purify the three kinds of karma.

The ones who are trapped into the past are like people eating stale food. The ones who are tracing the future are like people drawing a cake picture to eat. The ones who are immersed in the present are like people who are crippled, having no freedom of movement and no

free life. Knowing that, we must practise to observe the immaterial reality behind all phenomena frequently, not to be trapped into any lifetime so that we can live leisurely.

The ones who are trapped into their mentality will not see clearly its emptiness. The ones who are trapped into form will not see clearly its emptiness, thus creating prejudices, which makes their mentality and form fight against each other. This leads to sufferings and hostilities. Knowing that, we practise to let go the practice of dualism, to live in the Madhya - the Middle path - freely between the two streams.

Looking up to pray for wisdom, looking down to give mercy, letting go all the attachments to view and driving all prejudices away, our mind will become equal and pure and our wisdom of the absolute becomes real, then we live without any doubts with the things around us, both inner and outer parts of the heart are pure and we live peacefully.

Verses Useful For Your Practice

Using computer

Using the computer

with a polluted heart

and polluted images and masks

we sink into a deep sea.

Using the computer

with a civilized heart

and civilized images and masks

we eventually reach the truth.

Computer itself is harmless and whether it becomes harmful or not completely depends on our mind at the time of using it. If we use it with a dirty mind, the computer will take us into darkness. Therefore, if we use it with a pure mind, the computer will then be the one that takes us out of danger.

Schooling

Going to school

To learn and understand how to love

To broaden our mind

To make all the things better.

We go to school to develop our abilities to understand and to love each other. People do not have the ability to love each other because of their selfish and narrow minds. If we go to school just to seek fame, power and benefits, such kind of learning will never bring us peace and happiness, but only discrimination, anxiety and disappointment. On the other hand, if we go to school to broaden our minds, to improve the understanding and love inside our hearts, to help us bring good things to the community and better ourselves in this human society, then the more we study, the happier we are, the wider our love is, the more we find that life is really simple and deep in its meaning, without any thinking and discussing.

Sitting at the Kitchen Table

*Anytime sitting down, dining
let go our mind of arrogance,
sincerely worship Buddha, Dharma, Sangha
and share with all beings.*

Worshiping Buddha, Dharma, Sangha before meal time is a way of eliminating the seeds of the arrogance in our hearts and helping us to develop the seeds of intelligence. Thinking about and sharing with all beings before meal time are ways of eliminating the seeds of greed, passion and selfishness inside our hearts and helping us to develop the seeds of mercy.

Eating is nurturing the seeds of intelligence and mercy. The seeds of intelligence arisen and developed inside our hearts would be able to help us eat without

any mistakes. The seeds of mercy arisen and developed inside our hearts would be able to help us, during the meal time, to eliminate all resentment.

Therefore, before eating, we must practise two things, namely worshipping and almsgiving. Worshipping brings us intelligence and almsgiving gives us virtue. Having both, real virtue and intelligence, that is Buddha, and that is his life, which we all need to imitate and practise every day before any meal.

Having a Meal

*Please have the meal together
to help us raise our soul and body
and our family,
which sends out fragrance towards all our ancestors.*

In the meal we have every day, there are contributions of hard labour from many people and all the creatures. Not only farmers, but also the ones who mill rice, the ones who pound rice, transporters, cooks, growers of vegetables, the ones who carry water, cleavers, gas producers, welders, electricians, plumbers, bricklayers, carpenters and herdsmen, etc. but also the air, the sun, the moon, the earth and the water are involved in our meal. Therefore, before eating something, we need to sit down and think silently about the hard labour of all the people

and creatures. They are all present in the meal with us so that we need to invite all of them to eat together.

If we eat in such contemplation and reflection, we will not eat like a thief or a betrayer but like the one who feels grateful to all the people and the creatures. Such eating will help us to gather blessings for ourselves, for the whole family and the ancestors and transfer our merits to all the beings, helping them live a life full of scent of wisdom.

Using Chopsticks

*Whenever holding a pair of chopsticks
We should better know what food we choose
So that our eating karma is peaceful
And our mercy grows wide and big.*

Eating with evil karma, we develop evil karma daily. When it grows big enough, miserable karmic retributions will appear themselves, forming miserable fruits. On the other hand, when eating with good karma, we will develop it day by day. When it grows big enough, good karmic consequences will appear themselves, forming good fruits. Therefore, anytime we use chopsticks to take something up, we need to know what to take up for eating so as to develop our mercy. The more our heart of mercy is developed, the more all resentments in our lives towards other humans and other beings are transformed.

While Eating

*While eating we should know
that eating less leads to hunger and thirst
that laziness comes from eating much.
Realizing that, we should eat enough.*

Eating too little makes our heart craving, reduces our life expectancy, and produces painful feeling. Eating too much makes our bodies heavy and our minds lazy. Not eat too little or too much will make us soothing and relaxing.

Picking our Teeth

*Our teeth are pearls
that help us digest
and create speech and laughter.
So, find ways to protect.*

Picking our teeth will help food not to stick in the teeth, and prevent cavity conditions from developing. Toothache is one of the most uncomfortable kinds of pains, creating afflictions easily. As a result, if we do not want our hearts to create afflictions after every meal, we need to pick our teeth and brush our teeth so that they could continue to help us digest food, talk and smile, thus creating a lively life.

Drinking

*Drinking in mindfulness
Developing our body in mercy
Developing our heart in wisdom
By means of nectar water of immortality.*

Buddha teaches that there are eighty-four thousand bacteria in a glass of water, so if we drink it without the capacity of contemplating mercy and wisdom, we eat the beings. Therefore, we need to drink water with the capacity of contemplating mercy and wisdom, turning the bacteria in this glass of water into the consciousness of mercy and wisdom so that all of the bacteria have sweet and fragrant lives and are as useful as the nectar water of immortality, making our body and mind well and free from all illnesses.

Standing up

*After eating, we stand up
and pray for all the beings
full of dharma of joyful eating
and engaged in great compassion.*

After eating, we, together with other Buddhists, need to join palms for the transfer of merits to all and stand up from the joyful eating dharma completely so that all of the food we have just eaten is digested and transformed into materials of great compassion to develop our body and mind.

Stepping

*In each step of our walk
we need to know where to go
on the birth and death road
on the miraculous Noble Path.*

After eating, stepping out of the dining hall, we need to know where to go on the roads to birth and death. Greed in eating in many of our lifetimes creates enmity and suffering for us and makes us immersed in Samsara - Deaths and Rebirths. On the other hand, eating in mindfulness and mercy helps us to take off all enmity and suffering, to overcome Samsara and enter into the Noble Path.

By practicing these ten verses, we will gain our control over all distractions, and help our root of memory and power of memory to grow steadily so that we could enter into the Noble Path.

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