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By Anne Wong

德行的表現

宣化上人開示

修道就是要修真正道德，不妨礙他人，也不怕他人妨礙自己。

學習佛法的人，就是在這兒開始把種子種到地下去。種子種下後，能不能生出？還要看各種的緣。諸緣具足了，種子就能順利地生出。假若各方面助緣不圓滿，就有可能變成焦芽敗種。這也就是看我們發菩提心、種菩提種子時，種得夠不夠深？堅固不堅固？

若是種得夠深而且堅固結實，那麼將來種子一定會生根發芽；可是若想結菩提果，還要有一段相當的時間，這就要看你用功用得如何？要是用功上路了，開悟證果，成就覺道，這才算是收成。

種子生根發芽、抽葉、開花、結果的過程中，都必須經過相當的時間培養、灌溉、加肥料。肥料是什麼？就是學佛的道德。修行要處處本著道德，以不妨礙道德為根本戒條。

儒教云：「德者本也，財者末也。」德行是人的根本，而財僅是一種末梢之物。修道人處處要惜福節約，不浪費金錢物質，如此日積月累，才能培養出自己的德行，所生出來的枝葉才會茂盛，果實也將累累。如果不加肥料，不用功去培養灌溉，枝芽花果很容易就會枯槁而死，所以修道人，第一戒條就是「注重德行」。

德行先由小處做起，「毋以善小而不為」，你不要以為小善就不去做，而等著做大善，大善沒有那麼多。山是一粒一粒微塵積成的，微塵雖小，但積多了也會變成一座山；德行雖小，但積多了，也會變成一座德行山。

不違背道德就是德行，不妨礙他人就是德行。無論做什麼，要以幫助他人為本份。若於利益上、時間上、文化智慧上，或其他種種事情上，對他人有所妨礙，不能利益他人，都是於道德有所違背。所以我們的一舉一動、一言一行，總以不違背道德為根本箴規。想要修道，先要培德；沒有德行，就不能修道。有人想修道，魔障就來找，這因為沒有德行的緣故，所以說：「德者本也，財者末也。」

道德就等於日月，也等於天地，也等於人之性命。沒有道德就等於人沒有性命、沒有日月天地一樣。什麼是道德呢？就是以利益他人為主，以不妨礙他人為宗旨，也就是內心充滿仁、義、禮、智、信。

- （一）仁：有仁愛的心，就不會殺生。
- （二）義：具足一種知識，做什麼事都恰到好處，合乎中道，不太過也不會不及，不偏左也不偏右，事事合乎中道。懂義，就不會偷盜。講義氣的人不會偷他人的東西。
- （三）禮：禮是一種禮貌、禮節。尚禮節就不會姦淫。偷盜與淫亂都是因為不合乎義禮，是違背常規的現象。
- （四）智：有智慧的人就不會亂喝酒、亂吃迷魂藥，愚癡的人才會做出種種顛倒的事。
- （五）信：有信用就不會打妄語。

修道就是要修真正道德，不妨礙他人，也不怕他人妨礙自己。誰妨礙自己都接受，逆來順受；誰對自己不慈悲，或不講道理，都是自己的善知識。能「逆來順受」，對橫逆能處之泰然，才見出你忍辱的功夫，不要因別人一句話就動了。有些人的「不動」是無慚無愧，這是不對。你要修的「不動」，是能忍人所不能忍，這才是真功夫，否則還須從頭練起。

The Manifestation of a Virtuous Character

Talks on Dharma by Venerable Master Hua

Cultivating the Way means to cultivate true morality by not obstructing others and not being afraid of being obstructed by others.

People who are learning and practicing the Buddhadharma are sowing seeds in the ground. Once the seeds have been sown, will they sprout? It depends on various conditions. When all the right conditions are present, the seeds will sprout and grow in due course. If the various aiding conditions are not all present, the sprouts may wither and the seeds may go bad. It also depends on whether we sowed our Bodhi seeds deeply and firmly enough when we made our resolve for Bodhi.

If we sowed them deeply and firmly enough, the seeds will surely take root and sprout in the future. However, if you want to reap the Bodhi fruit, it will take considerable time, and it depends on how well you apply effort. If your cultivation advances well, and you become enlightened, realize the fruition, and accomplish the Way, then you have reaped the harvest.

During the process of taking root, sprouting, growing leaves, flowering, and bearing fruit, a considerable time of care, watering, and adding fertilizer is needed. What is the fertilizer? It is studying morality. Every aspect of cultivation must be based on morality. “Not going against morality” should be our fundamental precept.

A Confucian maxim says: “Virtue is fundamental. Wealth is incidental.” Virtuous conduct is the foundation of a person, while wealth is an insignificant thing.

Cultivators should always be thrifty and avoid wasting money or resources. That way, over the days and months, they can foster their practice of virtue. Then the branches and leaves will grow abundantly, and fruits will accumulate. If you don't add fertilizer, and you make no effort to care for and water the plant, it will be easy for the branches, flowers and fruit to wither and die. Therefore, the foremost precept for cultivators is to place emphasis on virtuous conduct.

Virtuous conduct begins in small places. “Do not think a good deed is too small and fail to do it. “Don't wait around for a big good deed to do, because there aren't that many big good deeds. A mountain is an accumulation of specks of dust. Although each speck is tiny, many specks piled up can form a mountain. Virtuous deeds may be small, yet when many are accumulated, they will form a mountain of virtue.

Not going against what is proper and right is known as virtuous conduct. Not hindering others is morality. In whatever you do, you should make it your obligation to help others. If you hinder others and cannot benefit them in terms of profit, time, culture, wisdom, or any other aspect, you are acting contrary to morality. Therefore, in every move and action, every word and deed, we should always make “not going against morality” our basic rule. If you want to cultivate the Way, you must first foster virtue. Without virtuous conduct, you cannot cultivate. Some people who want to cultivate will encounter demonic obstacles as soon as they start. That is due to a lack of virtuous conduct. So it is said, “Virtue is fundamental. Wealth is incidental.”

Morality is equivalent to the sun and moon, to Heaven and Earth, and to our very life. Lacking morality is equivalent to being without life, without the sun and moon, and without Heaven and Earth. What is morality? Morality means to take benefiting others as most important, and to take not hindering others as our principle. It is fill our minds with humaneness, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness.

1. Humaneness: Having a heart of humane benevolence, you will not kill.
2. Righteousness: Endowed with common sense, everything you do will be just right, exactly in accord with the Middle Way, neither too much nor too little, and neither too far to the left nor too far to the right. All affairs will be carried out in accord with the Middle Way. If you understand what is right, you will not steal. People who value righteousness will not steal what belongs to others.
3. Propriety: Propriety is a kind of courtesy and etiquette. If you honor the rules of etiquette, you will not be lewd. Stealing and lewdness are phenomena which occur because one is not in accord with righteousness and propriety, and because one is acting contrary to the rules of proper conduct.
4. Wisdom: Wise people will not recklessly drink or take drugs.
5. Trustworthiness: Trustworthy people will not tell lies.

Cultivating the Way means to cultivate true morality by not obstructing others and not being afraid of being obstructed by others. No matter who obstructs you, you should accept it. “When adversity comes, compliantly accept it.” Anyone who is unkind or unreasonable to you is just your Good and Wise Advisor. If you can compliantly accept adversity and calmly handle unexpected or unreasonable situations, then your skill in patience can be seen. Don't be moved because of a single sentence that someone says. Some people think “being unmoved” means to be without shame and remorse, but that's wrong. The kind of “being unmoved” you should cultivate is being able to endure what others cannot endure—that's true skill. Otherwise, you will have to start cultivating all over again.

佛法與人類和平

六、內因外緣並重的究竟和平

內因外緣並重的，世出世並重的大乘真義，以完成究竟和平——佛土莊嚴，佛身清淨為標的。如偏重人世和平，而不能徹底的心地和平，即流為凡夫行。如偏重心地和平，而不能著力於人世和平，即同於小乘行。必須兩者並重，化除人世的鬥爭，因而增進心地的和平；由於心地和平，更能積極地促進人世和平，這才是真正的大乘行。

學佛者，每不能理解世間善法的一貫性，甚至誤會為：一切世間法，都與出世法不相順。不知世間的人世和平，與出世的心地和平，是基於同一（爭鬥）的淨化。真正的不和不平，雖都屬於人類——眾生自己，但一則表現於外，透過社會關係，動亂於思想、法制、經濟方面，成為社會的不和平。一則內存於己，交織於心境、自他、物我方面，熏習自己，成為自心的不和平。從個己來看社會，沒有必然的一致關係。世間的社會和平，不一定是個己的心地和平；世間社會不和平，也不一定是個己心地的不和平。然從社會來看眾人，世間不和平，內心的不和平也增強；世間和平，內心也易於和平。社會對於個己，不是有決定性的，卻有重要性的。因為，「上智與下愚不移」，而一般人都受著社會環境的重大影響。環境對於個人，有著重要關係，所以彌勒在淨土成佛，並不稀奇，而釋迦在穢土成佛，才受十方一切佛的無邊讚歎。大乘法，不但淨化自己，淨化眾生，更淨化國土，即證明環境對於人心的重要性。為大眾著想，促進人世的和平，是非常重要的。這有利於一般的和樂，更有利於佛法的進修。菩薩發願要嚴淨國土，確是比著重出世的二乘，有著更深的正見。

菩薩的努力於人世和平，修證於心地和平，分別來說，雖如上所說。然由於菩薩，從人世和平中去實現心地和平，從利益眾生中去利益自己，所以是：一、必以真理相感召，而有「同願同行」者的共同努力。二、心地和平，雖主要為真智的淨除煩惱根本——無明我執，徹證平等空性。但不離世間，淨化世間而成正覺，不是節制煩惱，不是滅絕煩惱，是融化的，轉化的。貪欲，淨化他而使轉為大乘信願，即菩提心。為真理，為和平，為自由，為度脫眾生，為莊嚴國土而起信願。

所以說：

「眾生無邊誓願度，煩惱無盡誓願斷，法門無量誓願學，佛道無上誓願成」。

盡一切生中，為成就眾生，莊嚴國土而無限的勇進。

〈續下期...〉

Dharma and the Human Peace

The teachings of Mahayana Buddhism places equal emphasis on inner reasons and external conditions and emphasizes the importance of both the worldly (mundane) and the supramundane teachings. It aims at attaining ultimate peace, that is, to dignify the Buddha Land and to attain the purity of the Buddha.

If we pursue only worldly peace, but are unable to thoroughly achieve peace within our mind, then we have merely stayed on the path of the mortals. If we are inclined towards attaining peace within our mind but cannot contribute to the achievement of worldly peace, then this amounts to the practice of a self-benefiting practitioner.

We must place importance on achieving peace within our minds and also strive for worldly peace. By defusing external conflicts and disputes, we help promote peace within our minds. With the achievement of peace within our minds, we can vigorously facilitate worldly peace. This is the true path of Mahayana Buddhism.

Most practicing Buddhists do not understand the universal nature of the Dharma. Many even have the mistaken notion that the laws governing this Saha world are very different from those of the supramundane. They do not realize that worldly peace and peace within the mind all originate from the resolution of the same conflicts and disputes.

Disharmony and inequality originate from humankind – that is, ourselves. On the one hand, disharmony manifests externally throughout the complexity of society, causing confusion in ideological thinking, the legal system and the economy. This brings on social unrest. On the other hand, it manifests within ourselves too. Through the interweaving of the states of our mind,

the concepts of us-and-them, objects-and-us, we develop certain habits and characteristics. This causes our inner mind to be not at peace.

From the viewpoint of an individual, there is no apparent relationship between inner peace and world peace. The peace that exists in society does not necessarily mean peace in the individual's mind; similarly the unpeacefulness of the society also does not imply that one's own mind cannot be peaceful. However, if we examine it from a societal perspective, if there is no worldly peace, the unpeaceful elements within our minds will get stronger. On the other hand, if the world is peaceful, it will be easy for our minds to achieve peacefulness.

Although the influence of society is not a determining factor, it is an important factor that influences the individual. This is because besides “those who are extremely intelligent or extremely stupid, who may be unmoved,” the majority of people are easily influenced by the environment of the society.

The environment has a very strong relationship with individuals. It is therefore not surprising that Maitreya Bodhisattva will attain Buddhahood in the Pure Land where the environment is conducive for the practice of the Buddha path. What is truly remarkable is the fact that Sakyamuni Buddha became enlightened in this turbulent Saha World. This is why he received boundless acclamation from all the Buddhas of the ten directions.

The Mahayana teachings not only purify individuals and all sentient beings, but also the nation and the environment. This explains the importance of the external environment to the mental well being of individuals. For the sake of all people, it is essential to promote and advance world peace. This will facilitate the general harmony and happiness of all people, and more particularly will be conducive to aid the practice of the Dharma. In the Mahayana teachings there are the vows of the Bodhisattvas to purify and dignify their land; this provides the right views. These views contain a much deeper implication than that propagated by the doctrines of the Two Vehicles, which only concentrates on the individuals' enlightenment.

This is why Bodhisattvas work very hard at promoting and advancing world peace and at the same time cultivate inner peace in their mind. Bodhisattvas attain inner peace of the mind through promoting and advancing world peace. By working to attain benefit for all sentient

beings, they effectively also benefit themselves.

As a first step, Bodhisattvas preach the truth in order to gather like-minded beings to work together for world peace.

Secondly, they work towards achieving harmony and equity within the mind, which consists mainly of eradicating the root causes of defilements in sentient beings through the use of wisdom. The root causes are ignorance and holding the concept of ego. Most importantly Bodhisattvas work to bring about the realization of equanimity and “emptiness,” which in Buddhist teaching means that ego and all objects and phenomena are temporal and immaterial. Eradicating the root causes of sentient beings' defilements is not something that is beyond this world. We can purify ourselves and attain enlightenment in this world. It is not to control or to make a defilement disappear, but to solve/defuse or to transform it.

For example, greed can be transformed from a negative emotion to a desire to uphold the Bodhisattva vow, that is the Bodhi Mind (Bodhicitta). This vow encompasses Mahayana faith and determination. This vow arises from the desire to strive for the truth, for peace, for the freedom and liberation of sentient beings, and for the purifying and dignifying of the land.

Thus, in the Buddhist liturgy, there is this verse:

“ I vow to liberate the limitless sentient beings from the ocean of suffering,
I vow to end the endless defilements,
I vow to learn the immeasurable teachings of the Buddha,
I vow to realize the supreme Buddha-path.”

We should therefore make full use of our lives and with boundless courage benefit all sentient beings, and purify and adorn the land.

(to be continued...)

妙道 《法語篇》

什麼是妙道？就是日常所行之道。

眾生的根性，是善根多，還是惡根重，佛都知道；眾生的欲念，是多是少，佛也知道，所以佛為一切眾生指示種種的妙道。什麼是妙道？淺而言之，就是日常所行之道，我們天天所用的道、所行的道、所經過的道，都是妙的。若不注意去研究它，便不知它的妙處；若注意去研究它，那麼無論什麼，都是妙，妙不可言。譬如，我們日常所用的東西，是從什麼地方來的？來處很妙。又怎樣去？去處也很妙。總之，都是妙道。我們一天所遇到的境界，這就是妙道。妙的意思，就是不太明白它，不太瞭解它。換言之，明白了就是妙，不明白就是不妙。

The Wonderful Way

What is the wonderful Way? It's simply the Way that we practice every day.

The Buddha can perceive the amount of goodness and evil in each living being's disposition. He also knows whether a living being's desires are many or few. Knowing this, the Buddha taught living beings a variety of wonderful ways to practice. What is the wonderful Way? It's simply the Way that we practice every day. The Way that we practice, use, and experience every day is wonderful. If we don't look into it carefully, we won't perceive its wonder. But careful scrutiny will reveal how everything is wonderful beyond words. For instance, where do the things we use every day come from? Their origin is wonderful. Where do they go? That is wonderful too. In either case, it's the wonderful Way. The events of our daily life are also the wonderful Way. Their wonder lies in the fact that we don't understand them. If we understood, it would be wonderful. Since we don't understand, it's un-wonderful.

陳例破邪

佛陀有一位弟子，名叫舍利弗，在諸弟子中智慧第一。他原先是名重一時的外道領袖，對印度當時流傳的種種宗教理論，有很深刻的認識，但內心總是懷著一份深切的苦悶，覺得這些都還不是最高的真理。有一天，他信步街頭，偶然遇到佛陀的比丘弟子阿說示，托鉢行於道途。智慧的他立刻察覺這位比丘的氣質不凡——雖然衣著簡樸，但舉止神態，卻有著說不出的從容、安祥、寧靜與優雅。一股難抑的恭敬與好奇，驅使舍利弗行前求教：「請問大德，你住在什麼地方？你的老師是那一位？他向你們說些什麼？」

阿說示謙遜地回答道：「我住在竹林精舍，我的老師是佛陀。他的法義甚深微妙，我出家年淺，還不能完全領受，不過我可以大略告知一二。」於是他道出一偈：「諸法因緣起，如來說是因，諸法因緣滅，是大沙門說。」

沙門，在印度語中是指的出家人（但不一定是佛教的出家人）。阿說示說：我們的佛陀，這位偉大的出家人，這樣告訴我們：一切事物都是緣聚而生、緣散而滅的。這個短短的偈語，立時把舍利弗多年來心中的疑雲驅散了，他終於發現了真理的曙光。於是他放棄了原先擁有的宗教地位，皈依在佛陀座下，並加入了佛教的僧團。

幾句短短的偈語，為什麼會給舍利弗帶來這樣強大的震撼呢？因為它把當時種種外道說的錯誤，一針見血地指正了出來。所有非緣起論的教說，歸納起來，不外乎下面的兩大類：

（一）無因論

本來在人類文化的開展中，有一種很自然的現象，那就是探索因緣。比如：身上感覺冷了，我們會探索是什麼原因使然——是衣服穿少了？室溫太低了？還是生病了？確定了原因，然後謀求解決：衣服穿少了，不妨多加一兩件；室溫太低了，就調整室內暖氣的溫度；要是病了，當然得趕緊找醫生治療。人類就是這樣地在探究因緣中解決問題，改進生活，從而締造出種種輝煌燦爛的文明成果。可是古印度有少數人，卻主張「無因論」，以為世間的一切，其發生與毀滅，都是偶然的，無緣無故就如此如此，壓根兒不必去探究原因。

（二）邪因論

所謂的「邪」，並不是說它們邪惡，而是說它們不正；換句話說：沒有說出正確的因果律。所以佛教稱它們是「非因計因」。佛法長期流傳在世間，有些地方多少也受到這些邪因論的染污，致令許多信眾，雖然學佛多年，仍然受到錯誤思想的影響，所以我們不可不嚴格區別法與非法。從印度到中國，有種種非因計因的思想，主要的可歸納為四類：

1. 宿作論

許多人一遭遇到苦難，就說這是他命中注定的，是他前世無修，只有「認命」一途，才是上策。這種思想，就是宿作論，也叫定命論。定命論固然可以陶冶人類與世無爭的淡

泊胸懷，但也會抹煞現世努力的價值，使人產生坐以待斃的懈怠心理，而不力圖問題的解決之道。

〈續下期...〉

Defeating Improper Dharmas

The Buddha had a disciple named Sariputra, he was regarded the wisest among all disciples. In the beginning he was a renowned leader of non-buddhist teachings. He had mastered a deep understanding of various non-buddhist teachings prevalent in India then, yet he felt greatly frustrated knowing that what he knew was not the ultimate truth. One day when he was strolling in the street, he coincidentally met a disciple of the Buddha named Ashvajit, who was walking his elm's round. The wise Sariputra immediately observed that this Bhikshu had an unusual quality – even though his dress was simple, his manner had an indescribable nonchalance, calmness, reserve and loftiness. Out of a sense of respect and curiosity, Sariputra walked toward Ashvajit and asked him, “Your greatness, where do you live? Who is your teacher and what has he taught you?”

Ashvajit humbly replied, “I live in the Bamboo Grove and my teacher is the Buddha. The meaning of his dharma is very profound. I have not left home for long, so I still have not yet fully understood his teaching, but I can briefly tell you what I have learnt.” Then Ashvajit spoke a gatha as follows: “All dharmas arise because of accumulation of conditions, so the Buddha speaks of the cause; and all dharmas extinguish because of the disappearance of conditions. This is what the Great Sramana teaches.”

Sramana refers to left-home person in India, but it does not necessarily refer to a Buddhist left-home cultivator. Ashvajit said, “Our Buddha is a great left-home person. He teaches us that all phenomena arise because of the accumulation of conditions, and extinguish because of the disappearance of conditions.” This short gatha immediately removed the long-lived doubts from Sariputra's mind, and he ultimately found the day-breaking light of the truth. So he gave up his established religious leadership position, and took refuge with the Buddha, and became a member of the Sangha.

How can a few short sentences in the gatha bring about such a strong appeal to Sariputra? This is because the gatha was able to pinpoint the deficiencies of all kinds of non-buddhist teachings. All non-dependent-cause-arising teachings can be broadly summarized into two categories as follows:

(1) The Teaching of No Cause

In the development of human culture, it is a natural phenomenon for man to investigate causes. For example, when we feel cold, we will investigate the cause for that – Are we lack of clothing? Is the room temperature too low? Are we getting sick? When we are able to identify and confirm the cause, we will implement the right solution. If we do not have enough clothing, we can wear more; if the room temperature is too low, we can adjust the heater to function at a more appropriate room temperature; or if we are sick, we can quickly seek for appropriate medical assistance. The human race has continuously been able to solve problems through investigation of causes and conditions and improve man's livelihood, resulting in numerous great cultural achievements. However in Ancient India there was a minority group of people who believe in the Teaching of No Cause: They thought that all phenomena in the world that happened or extinguished were out of coincidence. That is, all things happen without causes, such that there is no need to investigate causes.

(2) The Improper (Evil) Teachings

The so called “evil” teachings do not mean that they are evil, but rather that they are improper. That is to say, they do not teach the proper law of cause and effect. Therefore, in Buddhism they are known as “non-cause treated as cause”. As the Buddhadharma has been in existence in the world over a long period of time, many areas of which have been contaminated by such improper teachings. As a result, many Buddhist followers are influenced by such wrong concepts despite many years of Buddhist practice. Therefore, we must carefully distinguish between proper and improper dharmas. From India to China, there are various teachings which mistakenly treat non-causes as causes, and they can be classified into the following four categories:

a. Predestinism

Many people encounter difficulties in life, they will conclude that such difficulties are predetermined. Because they had not practiced in their past lives, so it is in their best interest to accept the difficulties now. This kind of belief is predestinism. People with such a belief can live with others in a non-competitive way, but this can also mean that they will ignore the significance of making efforts. In this way, people may simply sit idly to wait for bad things to happen, rather than to strive for solutions when problems occur.

(to be continued...)

珍惜生命——莫輕言自殺

◎王親芳

最近幾個月來，接到老同學們的電話，不約而同的告訴我一些不幸的消息，他們的弟、妹自殺了！

聽到此等消息時，心裡十分的難過，更為他們喪失了寶貴的生命而嘆息。從新聞報導及各項媒體的報導，自殺的個案都在增加當中，有時看到或聽到這些報導時，心內都會發問，為何會發生這種事情，心裡亦深感可惜與難過，不過，老同學們的弟妹這樣選擇結束生命，自己難免感同身受，加倍悲傷與難過，不知應該說些什麼安慰的話。

相信一個人想到要自殺時，內心必定是認為已面臨絕境，所遇到的問題是再也無法解決了。世上真有解決不來的問題嗎？要自尋短見，面對死亡需要勇氣嗎？死了以後問題得到解決嗎？死了以後是不是真的一了百了了嗎？這幾個問題是很值得三思的，能夠認真的去思惟，相信必可以緩解某些一心想尋短的心結，認真面對人生的挑戰，而不是走上自殺的一途。

從佛法的緣起觀，我們得知一切事象的出現與形成，都是具足各種緣條件的緣故。當人生的種種問題出現時，就是某些因緣條件聚會而呈現。問題可能是：考試成績不理想、工作環境差、遭人白眼或排擠，做的工作沒前途與希望、身體健康出現問題、患長期疾病等、對未來充滿憂慮疑惑。

人生不如意事十常八九，是鐵一般的事實，所要面對的種種問題，皆是人我無異。不要認為只有自己最不幸被這個問題、煩惱所困，執著於表現象，因而鑽入牛角尖，把問題擴大，甚至覺得被問題吞沒了。

如實知道問題、煩惱是每個人大同小異，都可以藉助、請教別人的經驗或意見，如何去應付問題，把可能性及後果多方考量、設法調整，這就是把構成問題的部份因緣條件逐步解除，問題便可以慢慢解決。例如：得知患上絕症，馬上查詢醫生或其他病友（從親戚、朋友中），如何醫治，可減輕痛苦或治癒。如果是考試成績不理想，可以請教老師及其他同學們的讀書心得，或修學的方法然後努力做著，加緊用功，必能有好成績的一天。或者遇到失業的情況，可以讓親戚朋友得知，讓他們幫忙找一份合適的工作。

有些時候問題可能不是那麼嚴重，但因為沒有把問題與別人咨商，自己越想便越鑽入牛角尖，認定沒辦法解決只有一死了之。俗語有說：「三個臭皮匠湊個諸葛亮」，能夠把問題與人分擔，有時候未必真能得到解決的方法，但是心裡的鬱結可以打開，消除內心的煩惱，亦是值得一試的。

我們的成長必須經過不斷的考驗，如果一切都順心如意，我們的心智是不夠成熟的。所以當難題出現時，不要怕它。想到問題，人我皆然，並把它看成成長的一部份，生命過程的一部份，它能把生命變得更有挑戰性。能夠不怕困難，自然可鼓起勇氣去迎接困難，戰勝困難。

或者有時候未必能把問題解決，也不要挫敗的感覺，很多成功的偉人事蹟，都是經歷過無數失敗。失敗時不要認為是永遠的失敗，只要能反省個中原因，「失敗為成功之母」，一次又一次的失敗，只要能從失敗中用心學習，最終也會步向成功的。

〈續下期...〉

Cherish Our Lives – Don't Commit Suicide

By Anne Wong

In recent few months, I have received phone calls from my two old schoolmates, and they both happened to inform me that their younger brother and younger sister had committed suicide.

Upon hearing such news, my heart was broken, and I felt very sorry for their losses of precious lives. From newspapers and other media reporting, we know that the number of cases of suicide has been increasing. At times, when I read or hear about such news, I would ask myself why such things happen, and feel deeply sorry and sad. When my old schoolmates' brother and sister had lost their lives through suicide, I empathized with their pain, and was at a loss to offer them the appropriate words to express my sympathy.

When one contemplates of committing suicide, one must believe that one has reached a hopeless situation, or that one has come across a problem which cannot be solved. Is there any problem in the world which cannot be solved? When one wants to commit suicide, does one need courage to do so? After death, is the problem really got solved? When one commits suicide and dies, does it mean that one's life is really finished? These few questions must be seriously considered. By going through a serious contemplation of these few questions, one may alleviate some internal conflicts and become courageous in accepting and overcoming challenges in life, rather than setting out to commit suicide.

From the Buddha's teaching of "Dependent Arising Conditions", we know that everything in the universe exists because of all necessary conditions for their existence come together. When different kinds of problems in our lives appear, this is because all necessary conditions for their existence come together. The problem can be unsatisfactory test results, or poor working conditions, or discrimination or rejection, or a dead-end job, or poor health, or chronic diseases which cause one to become worried and anxious about the future.

It is a hard reality that most of the times we encounter undesirable events in our lives, therefore for whichever problems we encounter, they are not different from others'. We must never think that we are the most unfortunate ones to encounter such problem or bound by such affliction, and get attached and focus our attention completely on our misfortunes. In this way, we enlarge the problem and can become overwhelmed.

We must truly understand the fact that each person's affliction resulting from different problem is more or less the same. We can seek help from people with experience or any advice on how to deal with it. If we can consider all aspects and possibilities of consequences, and implement appropriate remedies, we can help remove certain causes and conditions leading to the formation

of the problem, and gradually the problem can be solved. For example, when one is diagnosed to have cancer, one can immediately consult the doctor, family, relatives and friends on different treatments for alleviating pain and get cured. If the problem is unsatisfactory examination results, one can consult the teacher or classmates on the effective way of studying, and work hard at it; there will be a day one can attain satisfactory results. Alternatively the problem may be one has lost one's job, in this case one can inform relatives and friends, and request for their help in finding another appropriate job.

Sometimes the problem is not as serious as one may think, but because we do not consult others, we get attached and focus our attention completely on our misfortunes and conclude that there is no solution other than to commit suicide. There is a well-known Chinese saying, "Three ordinary folks' minds make up the brilliant mind of Zhu Quo Liang (a famous wise man in ancient China)." When we consult with others, sometimes it may not necessarily result in solving the problem, but it can help us untie the knots in our minds, and eliminate our internal affliction, which is worth doing.

We have to continuously face with different obstacles when we grow up. If everything is smooth and desirable, our minds will not mature. Therefore when obstacles arise, we must not get panic. We must know that other people also face with the same problems in their lives, and recognize that this is part of life in growing up and problems can make our lives more challenging. This way, we can be brave and don't get panic, and naturally we can have the courage to accept the obstacles, and overcome them.

Even though sometimes we may not be able to solve the problem, still we should not feel depressed. Throughout history there are many great men who had encountered numerous failures before they became successful. When we fail, we must reflect upon the reasons for our failure, and we should not regard it as permanent failure. Since failure is the mother of success, when failure comes after failure, as long as we can learn from our failure and persist, we will definitely succeed in the end.

(to be continued...)