

Humanistic Buddhism for Social Well-being (II)

An Overview of Grand Master Hsing Yun's Interpretation in Theory and Practice

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Chapter IV -- Buddhism in the Human Realm

I. The Buddha, the Man

Grand Master Hsing Yun draws our attention to the importance of Buddhism in the Human Realm when he says,

In Buddhism, the human realm is the most important realm of all. The human realm is the realm where great transformations can occur. Not only have all the Buddhas in the universe achieved enlightenment in this realm, but this also is where great sages and great Bodhisattvas appear to preach the Dharma. Bodhi-dharma, Fa Hsien, Hsuan Tsang and many others underwent great hardships solely for the good of sentient beings living in the human realm.

The Pali Canon contains a few but significant autobiographical references attributed to the Buddha. [1] He spoke of the luxury in which he was brought up in his father's home. "I was delicate, most delicate, supremely delicate. Lily ponds were made for me at my father's house solely for my benefit.... I used no sandalwood that was not from Benares. My turban, tunic, lower garments and cloak were all made of Benares cloth. A white parasol was held over me day and night so that no cold or heat or dust or grit or dew might inconvenience me."

He has mentioned that three palaces were constructed for him -- one for each season. He has referred to his life style by referring to the way the servants were treated: "Though meals of broken rice with lentil soup are given to servants and retainers in other people's houses, in my father's house white rice and meat were given to them."

He proceeded further, "While I had such power and good fortune, ... the vanity of youth, ... the vanity of health, ... the vanity of life entirely left me." (A. III, 38) Elsewhere he referred to his youth

again and said,

Being subject to birth, aging, ailment, death, sorrow and defilement, I sought after what was also subject to these things (M. 26).

Later, while still young, in the first phase of life, I shaved off my hair and beard -- though my mother and father wished otherwise and grieved with tearful faces -- and I put on yellow cloth and went forth from house life to homelessness. (M. 26, 36, 85, 100)

In these same texts the Buddha related his experience with the two teachers, Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta: "I soon learned the teaching. I claimed that as far as lip reciting and rehearsal of [their] teaching went I could speak with knowledge (ñānavada) and assurance (theravāda), and that I knew and saw -- and there were others who did likewise." (Ibid) [2]

The brief account of his life in the forest as an ascetic underlines the fear and dread he felt as any ordinary person: "On such specially holy nights ... I dwelt in some awesome abodes as orchard shrines, woodland shrines and tree shrines which make the hair stand up. And while I dwelt there, a deer would approach me or a peacock would knock off a branch or wind would rustle the leaves. Then I thought: Surely this is the fear and dread coming." (M. 4)

He also has described how strenuous practices affected him physically: "I stopped in-breaths and out-breaths in my mouth. When I did so, there was a loud sound of winds coming from my ear-holes. ...I stopped the in-breaths and out-breaths in my mouth, nose and ears. When I did so, violent winds racked my head, ... there were violent pains in my head, ... violent winds carved up my belly, and ... there was violent burning in my belly." (M. 36, 85, 100)

The same texts attribute to him an account of how the stringent fasting affected his body: "My body reached a state of extreme emaciation; my limbs became like joint segments of vine or bamboo stems, because of eating so little. My back became like a camel's hoof; the projections of my spine stood forth like corded beads; my ribs jutted out as gaunt as crazy rafters of an old roofless barn; the gleam of my eyes sunk far down in their sockets looked like the gleam of water sunk far down in a deep well; my scalp shriveled and withered as a green gourd shrivels and withers in the wind and sun. If I touched my belly skin, I encountered my backbone; if I touched my backbone, I encountered my belly skin, for my belly skin cleaved to my backbone. If I made water or evacuated my bowels, I fell over on my face there. If I tried to ease my body by rubbing my

limbs with my hands, the hair, rotted at the roots, fell away from my body as I rubbed, because of eating so little. (*M.* 36, 85, 100) [3]

An all too natural inclination to abandon his goal figures in a beautiful poem where the Buddha's sentiments are attributed to Māra the Tempter (Guruge, 1993-1, 169):

*O you are thin and pale,
And you are in the Death's presence too.
A thousand parts are pledged to death,
But life still holds one part of you.
Live, sir! Life is the better way;
You can gain merit if you live;
Come live the holy life and pour
Libations on the holy fires,
And thus a world of merit gain.
What can you do by struggling now?
The path of struggling too is rough
And difficult and hard to bear." (Suttanipāta. III, 2)*

What came to his mind at this stage is stated as follows: "But by this grueling penance, I have attained no distinction higher than **the human state** [4]. ... Might there be another way to enlightenment?" Here is recalled an incident from his childhood: "I thought of a time when my Śākya father was working and I was sitting in the cool shade of a rose-apple tree ... and entered upon and abode in the First Meditation... Then following that memory there came the recognition that it was the way to enlightenment." (*M.* 36, 85, 100).

The attainment of enlightenment is further described in his own words. (*M.* 36, S. XII 65, D. 14). It ends with the explanation: "As long as I did not know by direct knowledge, as it actually is, so long did I make no claim to have discovered the enlightenment. But as soon as I knew by direct knowledge, as it actually is... then I claimed to have discovered the enlightenment that is supreme in the world with its deities, its Māras and its divinities, in this generation with its monks and Brahmans, with its princes and men." (*S.* XXII, 26; *Mv.* 1; *S.* LVI 11)

It is only here that the Buddha is shown as making a reference to Māras, divinities and such other supernatural beings. But they are mentioned along with monks and Brahmans and princes and men to describe the world or rather the universe in which enlightenment was supreme.

Two more autobiographical statements occur in the *Mahāparinibbānasutta*. (*D.* 16) One is on

his renunciation and mission:

*But twenty-nine I was when I renounced
The world, Subhadda, seeking after Good.
For fifty years and one year more, Subhadda,
Since I went out, a pilgrim have I been
Through the wide realm of System and of Dhamma --
Outside of that no victory can be won.*

The other is a touching tone on his imminent death: "I, too, O Ānanda, am now grown old and full of years, my journey is drawing to its close, I have reached my sum of days, I am turning eighty years of age; just as a worn-out cart, Ānanda, can be kept going only with thongs, so, methinks, the body of the Buddha can only be kept going by bandaging it."

Equally moving is the statement in agreement with Ānanda: "So it is, Ānanda, so it is. Youth has to age, health has to sicken, life has to die. All my limbs are flaccid and wrinkled, my body is bent forward, and there seems a change in the sense faculties of my eyes, ears, nose, tongue and bodily sensations.

*Shame on you, sordid Age,
Maker of Ugliness.
Age has now trampled down
The form that once had grace.
To live a hundred years
Is not to cheat Decay,
That gives quarter to none
And tramples down all things." (S. XLVIII, 41)*

Ānanda once observed, "He was injured when a splintered rock hit his foot." (S. IV, 13) When Vakkali in an exceedingly poor state of health excused himself for not visiting the Buddha, the Buddha's reply was "Enough, Vakkali, why do you want to see my filthy body (pūtikāya)?" (S. XXII, 87) What is significant in all these autobiographical statements is that the Buddha appears, speaks and acts as a human being -- a mortal with emotions of fear and anxiety, and subject to human conditions. He was subject to illness and old age. (D. 16; S. XLVII,9) He expected to be so weak in his old age that he would have to be carried about in a gurney. (M. 104)

In the earliest texts of the Pali Canon, this was how the Buddha was viewed by his disciples. He was a person of human dimensions: only four finger-breadths taller than his half-brother, Nanda. (*Sv. Pac.* 92). Both Nanda and Mahākassapa are believed to have resembled the Buddha and sometimes confused disciples who mistook them for the Buddha. In the same Vinaya text, the dimensions of the Buddha's robe is given as nine spans by six spans (approximately 9 feet by 6 feet, according to Welivitiye Sorata: *Sri Sumangala Sinhala Dictionary* sv. viyata). And the Buddha and Mahākassapa are said to have exchanged their robes.

The charisma of the Buddha induced people to ask who he really was. *Anguttaranikāya* records a conversation with Brahman Doṇa:

Sir, will you be a god (deva)?

No, Brahman.

Will you be a heavenly angel (gandhabba)?

No, Brahman.

Will you be a spirit (yakkha)?

No, Brahman.

Will you be a human being (manussa)?

No, Brahman.

Then, Sir, What indeed will you be?

Brahman, the taints by which I might be a deva, gandhabba, yakkha or manussa have been all abandoned in me, cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, done away with, and are no more subject to arising in the future. Just as a blue or red or white lotus is born in water, grows in water and stands up above the water untouched by it, so too I, who was born in this world and grew in the world, have transcended the world, and I live untouched by the world. Remember me as one who is enlightened. (Buddho'ti maṃ Brāhmaṇa dhārehi) (A. IV, 36).

The reason advanced for not being any one other than a Buddha is purely ethical. This as well as numerous other references in the Pali Canon would show that, during the lifetime of the Buddha himself, Buddhahood had become a distinct state, above and different from that of a human being.

In spite of the increasing tendency to elevate the Buddha to the level of a Great or Super Man (Mahāpurisa, Sanskrit Mahāpuruṣa) with thirty-two major and eighty minor characteristics (lakkhaṇa or lakṣaṇa), and the later introduction of such concepts as Dhyānibuddhas, the three Kāyas or bodies of the Buddha, a Primeval or Cosmic Buddha (ādibuddha), and Buddhas in innumerable Buddha worlds, the overriding belief among Buddhists of all traditions is that

Buddhahood is to be attained in the Human Realm, as Grand Master Hsing Yun has stated emphatically.

In fact, the same belief exists with regard to advanced spiritual attainments. This is how Lewis Lancaster explains it:

The rebirth process is determined by karma, the actions and the results of those actions. When we define karma, it has three ways of being created. These three are through the activities of the body, speech, and thought. Once again we see the central position of a human in the three actions involving the body, sense organs, and mental processes. The non-human births also have karma but it is often instinctive or inevitable. Animals have little control over the acting out of that state of existence, they are controlled by a karmic effect. Even the deities seem to have little control over events, they live out their ordained life until the karma that creates the divine state is exhausted. Some deities can only stay in the upper state until they have a thought and the moment a thought occurs, they are reborn immediately in another destiny. Other deities have warning signs of the end of their stay in one of the heavens; the flower garlands around their bodies begin to wilt. Suddenly like a candle that is blown out, they revert to another rebirth. While we must experience the fruit of our karma in this human existence, there is the potential for achieving enlightenment, something seldom available, even to the deities in the heavens.
(Lancaster, 2000, p. 123)

II. A Process of Perfection of Human Personality

Almost all Suttas of the Pali Canon and *Āgama Sūtras* were preached by the Buddha to human beings. His Path of Deliverance or, more precisely, the "Path leading to the end of suffering," is to be pursued by human beings. A human being becomes an Arahant or a Buddha. The incomparable perfect enlightenment is to be attained by a human being only.

There is a number of discourses, including the *Abhidhamma*, which are said to be addressed to gods and non-human beings. The tradition about the doctrines of *Abhidhamma* is that the Buddha preached it in Tusita heaven to a deity who was Queen Mahamāyā in her previous life. There appears to be a common characteristic of sermons or texts described as preached to gods or deities. These are either poetical compositions as the *Mahāmangalasutta* (*Suttanipāta* II, 4) or products of scholastic analysis, synthesis and interpretation like the *Abhidhamma*. In a similar manner *Mahāyānasūtras* are addressed to large numbers of Bodhisattvas, Mahāsattvas, deities and other supernatural beings as interlocutors. For example, the *Lankāvatārasūtra* in a later preamble has Rāvaṇa, the mythical demonic king of Lanka, as the interlocutor. *Mahāyānadhīśamayāsūtra* has his

equally mythical brother, Vibhīṣaṇa. In other discourses in the Pali Canon and *Āgama Sūtras*, the audience as well as interlocutors are human beings, though later preambles or epilogues depict gods and deities as invisible listeners: e.g. *Dhammacakkappavattanasutta* (S. V, LVI, II) and *Mahāsamayasutta* (D. 20).

It has been the universal view of Buddhism that a person has the opportunity to better himself or herself ethically and spiritually only in the human sphere (S. XV). In the words of Grand Master Hsing Yun, "the human realm is the realm where great transformations can occur." As we have already noted, sentient beings exist at so many different levels. The denizens of hells, hungry ghosts (*peta* or *preta*, literally departed ones), Titans or demons (*asuras*) or animals (*tiraścīna* or *tiraścīna*) are said to be incapable of being guided toward self-perfection on account of their miserable conditions. We know for certain that it is true at least with regard to animals. The divine beings in the six sensual spheres, on the contrary, are too engrossed in the enjoyment of sensual pleasures and are, therefore, too distracted to take an interest in the Dharma. The long-living beings of the fine-material (*rūpāvacara*) Brahma-worlds and of the immaterial (*arūpāvacara*) Brahma-worlds are also conceived to be beyond self-improvement. The human being has a short enough span of life to be conscious of suffering and death, an intelligence to grasp the meaning of life and concepts of good and evil, and, thus, a desire for and a capacity of self-improvement, self-perfection, and liberation.

In *Suḥṛdlekhā*, attributed to Nāgārjuna, this concept is elaborated as follows:

*Since to attain human existence after existence as an animal
Is more difficult than for a turtle to put its neck
Into a hole of a yoke tossed about in an ocean,
Make life fruitful, Oh King, by acting properly.
To entertain an erroneous view, to be born among
The animals, spirits, and denizens of hell,
To be born a savage in a far-off place where there is no Dharma,
To be born a dumb person or a long-living god --
Any one of these births is unsatisfactory.
These therefore comprise the eight obstacles.
After having encountered a satisfactory juncture free of them,
Endeavor to avert the possibility of (re)birth.*

(Leslie Kawamura (Tr.), 1975, verses 59-64)

The unique opportunity, which only a human being has to attain the highest of spiritual attainments in one's own life-time, has been underscored by all traditions of Buddhism. To be born a human being is very difficult, the Buddha said in the Dhammapada (*Kiccho manussapaṭilābho -- Dp.* 182). The saying *Dullabhaṃ ca manussattaṃ*, meaning that the state of a human being is rare, is quoted more often, even though a canonical reference to it cannot be found. (See also *M.* 129)

It is true that the Buddha decried the human body as a putrid mass of rotting substances to which one could not be attached. The decaying body is a subject of meditation that was recommended as the first of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (*D.* 22, *M.* - *Satipaṭṭhānasutta*). The impermanence of the body could be most dramatically demonstrated through anatomical and physiological changes of decay, sickness, death and the decomposition of the cadaver. Those who reveled in life with such total abandon as to forget the realities of existence needed to be reminded. The Buddha did so by drawing attention to the futility of being overly attached to the body and bodily pleasures. Addressed to lustfully inclined persons in particular, the efficacy of this approach is based on the element of shock. But unlike some ascetics of the time, the Buddha neither advocated nor tolerated the neglect and torment of the human body. He recognized the paramount importance of the human body as the means through which one improved oneself spiritually and reached ultimate enlightenment.

He was conscious of the need for nourishment and good health. That was the foundation of the Middle Path of avoiding self-mortification as much as self-indulgence. He considered hunger to be the worst ailment (*jigucchā paramā rogā -- Dp.* 204) and good health to be the highest advantage (*ārogyā paramā lābhā -- Dp.* 203). The first catechism a novice monastic learns is that all beings subsist on food (*sabbe sattā āhāraṭṭhitikā*). The rules of the Vinaya show that the Buddha wanted his disciples to be conscious of cleanliness, personal hygiene and good appearance. Hair and beard were shaven mainly for health and hygienic reasons. The monastics were required to be of such good appearance and behavior as to convert the non-believers and increase the good dispositions which the converted had for them. It is remarkable that the influence of the monastic standards had such an overall effect on society. Buddhist societies are known to maintain high standards of personal hygiene and environmental sanitation even under precarious economic conditions.

The human realm, according to the Buddhist view, has another significance. It is a state in which a being has pleasurable and hence desirable experiences. In an oft-repeated benediction are listed the following: *āyu* (longevity), *vaṇṇa* (good complexion), *sukham* (comfort or good health) and *balam* (strength or power). The alternation of the favorable and the unfavorable is emphasized in the teaching on the eightfold worldly conditions (aṭṭhalokadhamma): profit and loss (*lābho alābho*), fame and infamy (*vaso ayaso*), blame or insult and praise (*nindā pasamsā*), happiness and misery (*sukha dukkha*). Among worldly gains of being a person of compassion are listed such mundane

joys as being able to sleep soundly, getting up soundly, not being disturbed by nightmares, being liked by humans and gods, not being hurt by fire, poison or weapons, having a clear facial complexion and dying without losing consciousness (*Aṅguttaranikāya* V, 342).

The Buddha's ideal of a perfect person is laconically presented in *Karaṇīyamettasutta* (*Suttanipāta* I, 8). He or she had to be clever or smart in achieving the objective of attaining the ultimate tranquillity (*atthakusala* or *arthakuśala*). The qualities of such a person are listed as follows:

- * Efficient and effective (*sakko*)
- * Honest or straight (*ujū*)
- * Perfectly straightforward (*sūjū*)
- * Amenable (*suvaco*)
- * Soft or gentle (*mudu*)
- * Not excessively proud (*anātimānī*)
- * Contented (*santussako*)
- * Easily maintained -- i.e. an easy guest (*subhāro*)
- * With little to do -- i.e. not a busy body (*appakicco*)
- * Of simple life (*sallahukavutti*)
- * Restraint in senses (*santīn-driyo*)
- * Mature (*nipako*)
- * Not deceitful (*appagabbho*)
- * Not overly attached to households (*anānugiddho*)
- * Not committing even the smallest fault which the wise may blame in others (*na ca khuddam samācare kiñci yena viññu pare upavadeyyum*).

Such a person's thinking is saturated with the fervent wish that all beings be well, safe and with happy minds.

The acquisition of these qualities for being a perfect human being of compassion and loving kindness or for becoming proficient in accomplishing the objective of liberation in the peaceful bliss (*santam padam*) of *Nibbāna* is a process to be set in motion and completed in this life in the human realm. The Buddha's teachings, therefore, place as much importance on the life here as on life hereafter, which includes ultimate liberation. "One rejoices here and having passed away one rejoices. The doer of good rejoices in both (*Idha nandati pecca nandati - puññakārī ubhayattha*

nandati) is the reward that one gets for being good", says a Dhammapada verse (*Dp.* 18). The opposite is also said about doers of bad deeds: "One repents or regrets here. One regrets that one had done evil. Having passed away one regrets. The evil-doer repents or regrets in both" (*Dp.* 17). *Iha* (here), *param* (hereafter) and *ubhayattha* (in both) are terms which have pervaded the entire ethical system of the Buddha.

How this concept promoted a humanistic approach to social well-being is illustrated by the programs of public service, on the one hand, and intensive campaigns for ethical and spiritual awakening of the people, on the other, of Emperor Asoka. In *Rock Edict VI*, he explained his motivation:

"The welfare of the whole world is considered by me my duty... There is no higher work than the welfare of the whole world. Whatever effort I make to discharge my debt to living beings, I will cause them to be happy here and they will also attain heaven hereafter. (idha and paratrā svagam)"

Again in *Rock Edict XI*, he said,

"There is no such gift as the gift of Dharma, proclamation of Dharma, sharing of Dharma and association with Dharma... This is good. This should be done. Doing so one attains happiness in this world and hereafter (iloka and parata)"

In *Rock Edict XV*, Emperor Asoka admonished the senior official of state,

"You are indeed able to inspire confidence for their welfare and happiness in this world and the next (hidalogika-pālalokikāye)" (Guruge, 1993, pp. 560, 566, 571)

So has the tradition continued.

Humanistic Buddhism, as interpreted by Grand Master Hsing Yun, reiterates with redoubled emphasis that the teachings of the Buddha are for the human realm and they present a process of perfection of human personality for the well-being of people here in this world as well as hereafter.

Chapter V -- Wisdom and Compassion

I. Buddhism: Passive or Active?

In an outspoken assessment of Buddhism in practice, Grand Master Hsing Yun says,

It is a real pity that so many Buddhists, especially when they first begin to practice, place so much emphasis on long retreats and on liberating themselves from the cycle of birth and death. These are important concerns, but remember, no one is going to achieve liberation from the cycle of birth and death if he has not figured out how to live as a human being in the human realm.

All of us must live fully, virtuously and compassionately in this world before we can ever expect to transcend anything. In the past, Buddhism too often was characterized by passivity and inactivity. Buddhists too often were content to 'follow conditions' and not create them themselves. Without a vision of our future, Buddhism will continue to languish in its cocoon, and by doing that, fundamentally contradict some of its most basic principles.

Never before in the history of Buddhism has this reminder been more relevant and urgent as now. The teachings of the Buddha are being sought by an increasing clientele throughout the world. Each has a different need.

It is with hope and faith that one looks to Buddhism to fulfill it. One may come from a totally different religious and cultural background as a new-comer to Buddhism. Another could be a born Buddhist who, after years of either complete disinterest or perfunctory observation of ritual, returns to his or her faith with renewed interest. Both of them could have a multiplicity of objectives: some may be seeking serenity and peace of mind in a life full of cares and socio-economic pressure; others may look for solutions to serious psycho-somatic problems such as anger and paranoia, depression and hyperactivity or an inexplicable lack of interest in life. Between them there could be others whose expectations from Buddhism could be spiritual, intellectual, social or emotional. It is significant that Buddhism has evolved into a religious tradition which can effectively serve all of them.

The principal advantage which Buddhism has is the unfailing inspiration derivable from the life and words of Sakyamuni Buddha. In his mission, he served such a wide variety of people. He went to them or they came to him. It is true that his main objective was to guide as many as he could to the goal of ending suffering. He himself spent six years of isolation and penance with this end in

view. But from the moment he had reached his goal, he was no longer a passive enjoyer of the spiritual bliss he had achieved. He stepped into the world as an active worker for other's well-being and happiness. Both by precept and example, he encouraged every disciple to be a preacher, educator and an effective activist. Early Buddhism records incidents in which the Buddha and his immediate disciples were actively engaged in solving others' problems.

Well known are stories of Angulimāla and Ālavaka. The former was a bandit who had already murdered nine hundred and ninety-nine people, and his mother was about to be the thousandth victim. The other was reportedly a cannibal who had terrorized people into bringing him a baby each day. The Buddha met them both at grave personal risk to himself and converted them to a life of virtue. When Kisā Gotamī came to the Buddha with her dead son in her arms, he sent her on a mission to find a mustard seed from a house that had not seen death; of course, at the end of the day's search, she was ready, as intended by the Buddha, to accept death as an inevitable fact of life. The Buddha was there to open the eyes of a grieving king that a daughter's birth was as much an occasion for celebration as that of a son or even better.

He rushed to the aid of a neglected sick monk on whom he attended and declared to monastics, "Those who wait on the sick do really attend on me." So concerned was the Buddha on human suffering that he would not preach to a tired and hungry man until he had his meal. To an old father, neglected by his children, he composed a set of verses praising his cane as his only support; the verses had to be sung only once in public before the errant sons resumed their responsibility. The vast narrative literature of Early Buddhism is full of hundreds of incidents when the Buddha and his disciples went beyond their missionary functions of preaching and educating people and stepped in to help solve their problems. The Buddha has upheld the importance of such public services as water supplies, parks, roads and bridges as acts of merit.

The tradition continued as we see once again from multiple social welfare activities of Emperor Asoka. *Rock Edict II* says,

- (a) *King Devānampriya Priyadarśi (i.e. Asoka) installed two kinds of medical treatment: medical treatment for humans and medical treatment for animals;*
- (b) *Medicinal herbs, beneficial to humans and beneficial to beast, were brought and planted wherever they were not found;*
- (c) *Wherever they did not exist, roots and fruit were brought and planted ; and*
- (d) *Along roads, wells were dug and trees planted for the use of animals and men.*

Pillar Edict VII continues to list further welfare measures:

- * *On roads, too, banyan trees were caused to be planted so that they would provide shade for beast and man;*
- * *Mango groves were caused to be planted;*
- * *Wells were caused to be dug by me every half krośa (or eight krośas);*
- * *Resthouses (?) were constructed;*
- * *Many watering stations were caused by me to be erected here and there for the benefit of beast and man. (Guruge, 1993, pp. 555 & 581)*

Meritorious deeds to be performed, according to the Buddha's teachings, are (i) Charity or generous giving; (ii) Virtuous life; (iii) Development of the mind through meditation; (iv) Reverence to those worthy of reverence; (v) Service to the elderly, the needy, the sick and society at large; (vi) Transference of one's merits to others; (vii) Rejoicing in merits acquired by others; (viii) Expounding or teaching the Dhamma; (ix) Listening to the Dhamma; and (x) Straightening or rectifying one's views. There are four ways in which one treats one's fellow humans: (i) giving or generosity (*dāna*), (ii) kind and pleasant words (*piyavacana*), (iii) benevolent action (*atthacariyā*), and equality (*samānattatā*).

Merit-making as practiced by modern Buddhists gives an enormous fillip to the practice of the humanistic principles and values of Early Buddhism. Avoiding harm and injury to all sentient beings and working for their well-being comprise all forms of humane and social services. Feeding and clothing the poor and the orphaned, providing shelter to the homeless, educating the ignorant, caring for the sick and the destitute, providing communal amenities and the like are equivalent to religious obligations. "If one has nothing else to give others one could offer one's personal service," is an oft-quoted principle when people are organized to do community services. These are aptly called donations of effort or labor (*śramadāna*)

Thus is Grand Master Hsing Yun perfectly correct in asserting that Buddhism should not be equated with passivity or inactivity. The word for a Buddhist monastic, *Śramaṇa*, is derived from the root *śram* -- to exert, to strive. The Buddha disapproved of people who ate immoderately, slept too long, were lazy and showed little energy. (*Dp.* 7, 8). His ideal was the active and the diligent: The diligent will never die while those without diligence are already dead, he said in the *Dhammapada* (*Dp.* 21).

II. Self-liberation vs. Service to Others

"All compounded things are of the nature of decay. Accomplish your goal with diligence. Do not look back. Go forward." are the last words attributed to the Buddha (*D.* 16). This statement is taken

in Southern Buddhism to emphasize the importance of self-liberation, meaning the attainment of enlightenment as a Buddha, a Paccakabuddha or a Śrāvaka. The life of a monastic who has renounced comforts and luxuries of household is held out as the ideal. Liberation is so urgent that the attainment of the status of an Arahant as a disciple is considered more than adequate. As Buddhism evolved, the monastic ideal was replaced in a popular tradition in India itself by the Bodhisattva ideal. A Bodhisattva is someone aspiring to become a Buddha.

One took the Bodhisattva vow to become a Buddha so that one not only liberated oneself but was also able to save others by leading them to liberation. As the attainment of Buddhahood was the highest achievement, the tradition which upheld this doctrine was known as the **Mahāyāna** -- the Great Vehicle or Great Raft, as some modern scholars translate it. In a further development, the Bodhisattva vow further embodied the concept that a Bodhisattva deliberately delayed his self-liberation until he had seen to the salvation of every sentient being in the universe: In comparison, the ideal of enlightenment as a disciple attaining the status of an Arahant has been described in Mahāyāna texts with the disparaging term: **Hīnayāna** -- Lesser Vehicle or Smaller Raft.

Western scholars of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries knew little of the intricacies of the Buddhist traditions and visualized them to have had as much a hostile and violent relationship as Roman Catholicism and Protestant Christianity. Accordingly, whatever differences found between the two main Buddhist traditions were exaggerated and explained in their own way. One such explanation is that Southern Buddhism upheld **Wisdom** whereas the Mahāyāna tradition ascribed primacy to **Compassion**. But, today, we know much more of the similarities and differences of the main traditions of Buddhism that we see no reason to posit such a black-and-white contrast. Wisdom and Compassion are not mutually exclusive Buddhist values. In actual Buddhist practice they are mutually reinforcing and intermingled.

I heard or read a long time ago a story whose source I have not been able to trace so far. It speaks of two monastics who had to reach a certain destination for a special purpose. As they proceeded on the route to this destination, they reached an extensive part of the road which was impassable on account of foul-smelling rubbish and human and animal waste. One monk set out to clean the road. He wanted the road to be cleared of obstacles so that other travelers would proceed on it. The other monk thought differently. He found some rags, bandaged his legs up to the knees, and waded through the stinking mess. Out on the other side, he removed his bandages, proceeded to his destination and fulfilled his purpose. After that, he returned to the fouled road and set about cleaning it. This story was supposed to compare and contrast the ideal of self-liberation of Early Buddhism and that of giving priority to the salvation of others. Which of the two monastics was wiser or more compassionate? Whose was the more reasonable course of action? Was the monastic

who found a way to accomplish his own pre-determined purpose selfish and self-centered and hence to be criticized? Was the monastic who gave priority to serving the welfare of others to be praised? What if he served others and forfeited his own purpose? One may raise more questions. The debate would be interminable. In reality, both had service for others' well-being as an overall target and differed in only the priority each assigned.

In the light of this discussion, the Grand Master's comment on the importance of figuring out how to live as a human being in the human realm before proceeding on long retreats for self-liberation is apposite. He does not make the fulfillment of human obligations an alternative to self-liberation. He assigns importance to both but highlights how the fulfillment of human obligations is an essential pre-requisite for self-liberation. How very eloquently he reiterates his fundamental message?

- * Remember, no one is going to achieve liberation from the cycle of birth and death if he has not figured out how to live as a human being in the human realm.*
- * All of us must live fully, virtuously and compassionately in this world before we can ever expect to transcend anything.*
- * If Buddhism is to develop as a viable religion in the world, it must adapt to conditions which are present in this world.*
- * Every choice made of the future of Buddhism should be founded on clear reasoning and good intentions.*
- * Humanistic Buddhism emphasizes our treatment of other people above everything else. No one can ever expect to come into full awareness of the Bodhi mind if they do not know how to treat other people with compassion, respect and unfailing kindness.*

When viewed from such a perspective, Humanistic Buddhism is founded on both Wisdom and Compassion.

Chapter VI -- Precept and Example of Sakyamuni Buddha

I. Inspiration From the Historical Buddha

Grand Master Hsing Yun concludes his message to the First International Conference on Humanistic Buddhism with a reference to the historical Buddha, the sage of the Sakyas:

All Buddhists are living representatives of Śākyamuni Buddha, his teachings, and his compassion. Our basic faith comes from the Buddha himself. His teachings and his life are an example of truth, virtue, wisdom and perseverance. The Dharma is based on a reliance on our own

innermost Buddha nature and the wisdom of our own inherent Bodhi mind. Through unity and compassion we will succeed in bringing Buddhism to all the world's people.

All traditions of Buddhism speak of a multiplicity of Buddhas. A list of twenty-eight Buddhas beginning with Taṇhankara, Medhankara and Saraṇankara occurs in *Buddhavaṃsa* of the *Khuddakanikāya* and in a popular text in the *Paritta* or *Book of Protection of Southern Buddhism*. (Cf. *Aṭṭavisipirita*). A more widely circulated list is that of twenty-five, beginning with Dipankara and including Gotama, the sage of the Sakyas.

In all Buddhist traditions, the first encounter of Sakyamuni Buddha with Dīpankara Buddha is the starting point of his quest for enlightenment. Sakyamuni in that life was an ascetic named Sumedha and had the opportunity to be enlightened as a disciple: that is, to be an Arahant under the guidance of Dīpankara Buddha. Instead he resolved to be a Buddha like Dīpankara and save humanity. All traditions agree that Sakyamuni Buddha's career as a Bodhisattva began with this resolution and Dīpankara Buddha's assurance of its accomplishment. Prajñāpāramitā has the Buddha to say,

So did I, when I met the Tathāgata Dīpankara in the bazaar of Dīpavatī, the royal city, possess the fullness of this perfection of wisdom, so that Dīpankara, the Tathāgata, predicted that one day I should be fully enlightened, and said to me: 'You, young Brahman, shall in a future period, after incalculable aeons, become a Tathāgata, Śākyamuni by name, -- Endowed with knowledge and virtue, Well-Gone, a World-knower, Unsurpassed, Tamer of men to be tamed, Teacher of Gods and men, a Buddha, a Blessed Lord!'

And again,

It was when I strewed the five lotus flowers over Dīpankara, the Tathāgata, and I acquired the patient acceptance of dharmas which fail to be produced, and then Dīpankara predicted my future enlightenment with the words: 'You, young man, will in a future period become a Tathāgata, Śākyamuni by name!'

(Edward Conze (Tr.), 1973, pp. 102 & 220)

Even more graphically the Sinhala version stresses that the ascetic Sumedha abandoned the bliss of Nibbāna which was so near at hand (ataṭa pat nivan at hāra) and chose the long and arduous struggle for Buddhahood. !

Postponing one's own liberation and striving to be a savior of humanity as a Bodhisattva for countless aeons of world cycles is what the majority of the Buddhists in the world uphold as the most significant example set to them by Sakyamuni Buddha. The intensity of self-effacing altruism and self-sacrifice, inherent in the postponement of one's liberation for the sake of others, has made the Bodhisattva ideal the more popular goal for this majority. They are stimulated by this episode to urge, "Let us do what the Buddha did rather than what he said." So do they choose the Bodhisattva VOW:

However numerous the beings are, I vow to save them.

However inexhaustible the passions are, I vow to extinguish them.

However immeasurable the doctrines are, I vow to master them.

However incomparable the Buddha-truth is, I vow to attain it. (Guruge, 1999, p. 54)

The rich narrative literature of Buddhist traditions presents Sakyamuni Buddha's career as a Bodhisattva in hundreds of inspiring stories. The Jātaka literature as contained in the Pali commentary on Jātaka of the Pali Canon and Jātakamālā, the Sanskrit compilation of the Mahāyāna tradition, recounts many lives in which he practiced the ten or six perfections or Pāramitās. It is interesting to compare and contract the two lists of Pāramitās: --

Northern Buddhism

- (i) **Charity or Liberality** [5]
- (ii) **Virtue or Moral Precepts or Restraint**
- (iii) **Forbearance, Patience or Tolerance**
- (iv) **Vigour, Effort or Energy**
- (v) **Mental Concentration**
- (vi) **Wisdom**

Southern Buddhism

- (i) **Charity or Liberality** [5]
- (ii) **Virtue or Moral Precepts or Restraint**
- (iii) **Renunciation**
- (iv) **Forbearance, Patience or Tolerance**
- (v) **Vigour, Effort or Energy**
- (vi) **Wisdom/Knowledge**
- (vii) **Truthfulness**
- (viii) **Determination or Perseverance**
- (ix) **Loving Kindness**
- (x) **Equanimity**

Five of the Pāramitās are common to both lists and it is possible that Wisdom or Knowledge of Southern Buddhism incorporates Mental Concentration. Northern Buddhism "sometimes adds four

more Pāramitās: skilful means of teaching, power over obstacles, spiritual aspiration, and knowledge, these last four being, however, regarded as amplifications of *Prajñā*, wisdom" (Christmas Humphreys, 1976, pp. 145-146)

Two later works in verse added to the Pali Canon concentrate on Sakyamuni's fulfillment of Pāramitās. *Buddhavaṃsa* provides brief biographical sketches of the Buddhas from Dīpankara to Sakyamuni. In it is described how the ten Pāramitās were practiced by Sakyamuni who, in the process, has met each of his twenty-four predecessors and had the assurance of his attaining Buddhahood. *Cariyāpiṭaka* deals with thirty-five existences of Sakyamuni as Bodhisattva in which he practiced seven Pāramitās. The missing three Pāramitās are Forbearance, Wisdom and Vigour. (*Burma Piṭaka Association*, 1985 pp. 136-138)

All these not only depict the career of a Bodhisattva as one of utmost compassion but also highlight the highest esteem that is assigned to Buddhahood as the most desirable vehicle through which enlightenment, the end of suffering and the ultimate bliss of Nirvāṇa or Nibbāṇa is to be achieved. It is not only in Northern Buddhism that Buddhahood is the ultimate goal but in Southern Buddhism, too, the basic wish of a devoted Buddhist is to become a Buddha. The most fervent way of expressing gratitude is to wish the doer of the good deed to be born as a Buddha (Guruge, 2000, p. 90).

The last life of Sakyamuni Buddha is as much a source of inspiration. All traditions accept and use in worship the ten or nine qualities of the Buddha as Worthy, Perfectly Enlightened, Endowed with knowledge and virtue, Well-gone, World-knower, Unsurpassed, Tamer of men to be tamed, Teacher of gods and men, Buddha, Blessed One. [6] His renunciation of royal luxury and power and adoption of a life of poverty -- from regalia to rags -- has touched the hearts of many generations of people even outside the Buddhist circles. His biography has been compiled and widely diffused in every tradition of Buddhism. The commentarial literature in Pali presents his life with little literary frills. *Aśvaghōṣa* wrote it in Sanskrit in the style of court poetry. Again in Sanskrit is *Lalitavistara* in which the supramundane elements overshadow the human. Chinese, Tibetans and Koreans have their own versions. In all these are highlighted the principal events and circumstances of his life:

- * Royal ancestry
- * Birth under a tree at Lumbini
- * Prophecies on a career as a universal monarch or a religious leader
- * A father's anxiety for a worthy successor
- * A life of luxury, isolated from realities of existence
- * The shocking discovery of sickness, old age and death

- * The birth of a son
- * The Great Departure
- * Six years of study, penance and fasting
- * The discovery of the Middle Path between the extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification
- * The final struggle -- a night of resolving conflicts, portrayed in literature and art as "the war against Mara"
- * The attainment of Buddhahood and that, too, under a tree at Gaya
- * The first sermon at Isipatana to five one-time colleagues in spiritual effort
- * A mission of forty-five or forty-nine years:
 - * preaching a doctrine of inner serenity and peace with equal enthusiasm to kings and princes, the rich and the poor, the scholar and the ignorant, the friendly and the hostile;
 - * establishing the Sangha of bhikkhus and bhikkhunis as a self-renewing body of persons committed to discipline and service;
 - * promoting an intellectual movement which gave humanity a stupendous treasure of prose and poetry covering ethics, and philosophy, religious and social norms, exemplars for emulation and inspirational utterances to raise one's sagging spirit;
 - * laying the foundation to a religious movement which influenced the diverse people of an entire continent for over twenty-five centuries;
 - * handling hostilities, expressed verbally and in violent actions, with the calm conviction that loving kindness and compassion would ultimately be victorious
- * Death under the twin śāla trees at Kusinārā

The story is being retold in words and pictures, song and drama, in flimsy pamphlets and musty tomes, and in the language of the common people and the rhetorics and oratory of the learned. It has never ceased to capture the imagination of humanity.

For the first five hundred years, the deep veneration in which Sakyamuni Buddha was held by his disciples and followers would not allow him to be portrayed in sculpture or painting in the human form. Wherever a story needed his presence to be indicated, symbols alone were used: a bodhi-tree (*ficus religiosa*), a royal parasol, an empty seat, foot-prints, a wheel, or a column of fire. It was a foreign dynasty, the Kushans of Central Asian origin, that chose to represent Sakyamuni Buddha in human form. Starting with the gold coin of Kaniska I, where the standing figure of the Buddha is identified in Greek letters as BODDO, the image of the Buddha has had a remarkable history.

With no way to know what the Buddha looked like, each community has created its own Buddha

image with its own criteria of physical beauty as well as intellectual and spiritual qualities. From Gandhara to Mathura, from Ajanta to Dun Huang and Loyang, from Sarnath to Sri Lanka, from Sokkuram to Kamakura, the image of the Buddha displays a wide diversity in artistic expression. Yet, in all locations, it continues to be a perfect symbol of the noblest qualities expressed in the teachings of Sakyamuni Buddha. It is not surprising at all that the Buddha holds the record for having the largest number of monuments and representations in art to commemorate his life and mission.

Sakyamuni Buddha continues to inspire people who come to know him. The impact he has in modern times may best be illustrated with my own personal experience in rediscovering my Buddhist heritage in adolescence.

II. Re-discovering my Buddhist Heritage (A Case Study)

Even before the teaching of religion in schools became universal, a child in a Sri Lankan home literally received his introduction to his spiritual heritage with the mother's milk. Thus, in a Buddhist home this induction took the form of visits to temples, veneration of and perhaps association with the Sangha, and participation in ceremonies and festivals. Progressively, the informal learning of Buddhist principles and values through popular narratives and poetry would be supplemented by formal study of the life of the Buddha, his main teachings and the history of Buddhism, usually in a Sunday school. Most children would pass through into adulthood with this initial grounding in Buddhism. As grown-ups they would give to charities, maintain institutions, support the Sangha and serve as the mainstay in the preservation of Buddhism as a living force in the country.

As opposed to the majority who had such a smooth transition, there were those whose adolescence exposed them to new and, in many ways, disturbing influences. Either they went to schools where a different spiritual background was provided or their intellectual curiosity led them to insights and experiences which stimulated skepticism. In either case, the new knowledge which one gained at this stage in science and philosophy, history and economics -- specially of the western world -- infused a sense of intellectual independence, bordering on superiority. To question one's own heritage or even to treat it somewhat nonchalantly or disparagingly would, unconsciously, become a fashion. The reinforcement of such attitudes came from one's peer-group which invariably applauded the more eloquent of the rebels. One fancied oneself to be a rationalist and decried belief and faith. Only **reason** mattered, one would argue.

I recall my own adolescence in the 1940s, when, under the influence of the then most popular Thinker's Library and the Left Book Club, the national cultural heritage was continually being re-appraised. What was thus re-evaluated included the entire gamut of values and practices,

religious and aesthetic as well as social and political. Every question which appeared to cause embarrassment to elders gave a particular sense of satisfaction. **Revolt** had its own pleasures, mainly intellectual.

In my case, the requisite jolt came from a Buddhist monk of Dutch origin, who explained how he came to embrace Buddhism. He had been impressed with assessments which some European scholars had made of Buddhism. He quoted three of the favorite authors of the time -- H.G. Wells, Bertrand Russell and Carl Gustav Jung -- men whose credentials as "rationalists" or "modern thinkers" were highly regarded by us.

To Wells was ascribed the statement that "*Buddhism has done more for the advance of world civilization and true culture than any other influences in the chronicles of mankind.*"

Russell had been more specific. He had said "Buddhism is a combination of both speculative and scientific philosophy. It advocates the scientific method and pursued that to a finality that may be called rationalistic. In it are to be found answers to such questions of interest as 'What are mind and matter? Is the Universe moving towards a goal? What is man's position? Is there living that is noble?' It takes up where science cannot lead because of the limitations of the latter's instruments. Its conquests are those of the mind."

Unequivocal in his appreciation of Buddhism was Jung, one-time colleague and later adversary of Sigmund Freud. Jung asserted, "As a student of comparative religion, I believe that Buddhism is the most perfect one the world has ever seen. The philosophy of the Buddha, the theory of evolution and the Law of Karma were far superior to any other creed."

I was impressed too -- specially impressed and even proud of this great religion. It has been so highly rated by men whose intellectual achievements my generation almost worshipped. More also, it had come to me as my birthright, my natural heritage. I could not help but admit that I was born lucky to inherit such a valued treasure.

A search for further confirmation resulted in the discovery of other equally encouraging assertions. Max Muller, an eminent scholar of Eastern cultures, whom the Western world hailed as the father of Indological Studies, called the Buddha's moral code "*the most perfect the world has ever seen.*" Viggo Fausboll, the Danish scholar who was among the earliest to translate a Buddhist text for a western audience -- namely, **Dhammapada** into Latin in 1855 -- expressed his accord with the statement on the Buddha: "The more I know him, the more I love him."

The Marquis of Zetland, a Viceroy of India, in a learned article on India's democratic traditions, said, "It is indeed to the Buddhist books that we have to turn for an account of the manner in which the affairs of these early examples of representative self-governing institutions were conducted. And it may come as a surprise to many to learn that in the assemblies of Buddhists in India two thousand

years and more ago were to be found the rudiments of our own parliamentary practice of the present day."

Similarly inspiring was an assessment by T. W. Rhys Davids, the pioneering Pali and Buddhist scholar to whom the West owes its in-depth knowledge of Buddhist literature and philosophy. He wrote: "There is no record, known to me in the whole of the long history of Buddhism through the many centuries where its followers have been for such lengthened periods supreme, of any persecution of any other faith."

Other heroes of our adolescent days proved to be equally enthusiastic admirers of the Buddha and his teachings. Among them was the youthful Indian leader, Jawaharlal Nehru -- biologist by training and rationalist by attitude in the vanguard in the struggle for independence. Not only did he take with him to jail a picture of the Samādhi statue of Anuradhapura but also wrote of it in his autobiography: "I kept it on my little table in my cell. It became a precious companion for me, and the strong, calm features of the Buddha's statue soothed and gave me strength and helped me to overcome many a period of depression."

He was in a way confirming what the philosopher P. D. Ouspensky had already observed: " I began to feel the strange effect which the Buddha's face produced on me. All the gloom that rose from the depth of my soul seemed to clear up. It was as if the Buddha's face communicated its calm to me. Everything that up to now had troubled me and appeared so serious and important, now became small, insignificant and unworthy of notice, that I only wondered how it could ever have affected me. And I felt that no matter how agitated, troubled, irritated and torn with contradictory thoughts and feelings a man might be when he came here, he would go away calm, quiet, enlightened, understanding."

This exceedingly favorable impression of the Buddha and Buddhism was further enhanced by a group of European and American writers who saw in Buddhism a spiritual ally to scientific development. Prominent among them, the German scholar, Paul Dalkhe wrote so very convincingly on Buddhism in relation to modern science. He said, "Buddhism, alone, among all world religions, stands in not a priori contradiction to scientific thought" and "It is true there breathes about this system something of the coldness of mathematics; on the other hand, there lives in it that purest and sublimest beauty, that taintless beauty, which belongs only to mathematics."

It was one thing to be pleased with what others had said so very admiringly of one's cultural and spiritual heritage; but a quite different thing to be convinced that all the praise was rightly deserved. It became intellectually an exciting experience to inquire how Buddhism earned all this praise from so varied types of personalities. The inquiry has lasted all my life. I have devoted most of my leisure over five decades to pursuing studies on various aspects of the religion and the culture which the teachings of the Buddha inspired.

The more knowledge I gained, the greater grew my admiration of not only this magnificent heritage to which I have become an heir, but also my ancestors who in diverse ways sought to preserve it for us. It has been a remarkable **rediscovery** of my own heritage -- something that I nearly lost in the ebullience of adolescent revolt. But the fact that it has been a rediscovery achieved through the dint of study and inquiry, thought and meditation makes it much more valuable and meaningful than if it was a tacit conformity with traditional belief and ritual. Mine is thus a heritage which I have truly made mine.

Ever since, I have this message of hope and admiration to place before doubting and inquiring adolescents:

*May your search be as fruitful, inspiring and rewarding as mine has been! True to the Buddha's own confidence in the efficacy of his Path, Buddhism stands up to any stringent investigation. No wonder that the most remarkable epithet given to his teachings was '**Ehipassika**' -- come and see for yourselves. The best reward for a comprehensive study of Buddhism -- the religion and its culture -- comes from the realization that it brings one face to face with some of the noblest creations of humankind in ethics and philosophy, art and architecture, logic and poetry. (Guruge, 1993-1, pp. 208-211)*

So have we to agree wholeheartedly with Grand Master Hsing Yun's appraisal that Buddhists are -- and, if not, should equip themselves to be -- living representatives of Sakyamuni Buddha. In spite of his modest declaration that he was only the discoverer of a lost city and an old path leading to it (*Saṃyuttanikāya* XII, 65 - *Nagarasutta*), the historical Buddha is the founder of Buddhism. Without him this rich and varied religious system would not have come into existence. His fundamental teachings are universally recognized as indispensable to every tradition, school or sect. They are the most sought after by the scholar and the devotee to understand the unity in diversity of Buddhism.

III. Essential Doctrines: Unity in Diversity

Ever since Sakyamuni Buddha came to the attention of the modern Western scholars nearly two hundred years ago, they have assiduously searched for the kernel of common Buddhist beliefs and principles in different traditions.

In 1891, the American Theosophist, Colonel Henry Steel Olcott, identified a fourteen-item "common platform upon which all Buddhists can agree." Item (V) of the document reads:

Sākya Muni taught that ignorance produces desire, unsatisfied desire is the cause of rebirth, and

rebirth the cause of sorrow. To get rid of sorrow, therefore, it is necessary to escape rebirth; to escape rebirth, it is necessary to extinguish desire; and to extinguish desire, it is necessary to destroy ignorance.

Another attempt in the same direction was made by Christmas Humphreys in 1945. Called "Twelve Principles of Buddhism", his analysis aims at reconciling the views of different schools. As regards the basic teaching, he laid stress on the following:

Life being one, the interests of the part should be those of the whole. In his ignorance man thinks he can successfully strive for his own interests, and this wrongly directed energy to selfishness produces suffering. He learns from his suffering to reduce and finally eliminate its cause. The Buddha taught four Noble Truths: (a) the omnipresence of suffering; (b) its cause, wrongly directed desire; (c) its cure, the removal of the causes; and (d) the Noble Eightfold Path of self-development which leads to the end of suffering.

The Eightfold Path consists in Right (or Perfect) Views or preliminary understanding, Right Aims or Motives, Right Speech, Right Acts, Right Livelihood, Right Efforts, Right Concentration or mind-development, and, finally, Right Samadhi [7], leading to full Enlightenment. As Buddhism is a way of living, not merely a theory of life, the treading of this Path is essential to self-deliverance. 'Cease to do evil, learn to do good, cleanse your own heart; this is the teaching of the Buddhas.' The Buddha was the All-Compassionate as well as the All-Enlightened One.

(Both documents are reproduced in full in Guruge, 1999, pp. 79-83)

The most recent and consequently the most comprehensive is the 1997 declaration of the American Buddhist Congress and Southern California Sangha Council of USA under the leadership of Venerable Dr. Havanpola Ratanasara, entitled "Ten-point Convention on Buddhism Across Cultures." [8] It runs as follow:

1. We recognize Sakyamuni Gautama Buddha as the historical source for the transmission of Buddha Dharma of our time and venerate him for his compassionate service to humanity.
2. We recognize the multiplicity of the Buddhas of the past, the present and the future, as well as Pacceka (pratyeka) Buddhas, Arahants and Bodhisattvas.
3. We take refuge in the Triple Gem consisting of the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.
4. We aspire to the fruits of enlightenment and liberation from dukkha (suffering) for others and

ourselves in a spirit of compassion to all beings.

5. We hold, as central to the spirit and goals of Buddhism:

- a. The Four Noble Truths: Suffering (*dukkha*), cause of suffering (*samudaya*), cessation of Suffering (*nirodha*) and the Path to the cessation of suffering (*dukkhanirodhagāmiṇīpaṭipadā*);
- b. The three signata: impermanence (*anicca* or *anitya*); suffering or unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha* or *duḥkha*); and non-self or insubstantiality (*anatta* or *anātman*);
- c. The Noble Eightfold Path (*Ariya Aṭṭhangika Magga*) consisting of Right Thought, Right Motive, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration;
- d. Twelve Links of Dependent Origination (*Paticcasamuppada* or *pratiyasamutpāda*);
- e. The three stages of Buddhist development: ethical conduct (*sīla* or *śīla*), one-pointed mental concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā* or *prajñā*); and
- f. The four sublime or immeasurable states: loving kindness (*metta* or *maitri*), compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*) and equanimity (*upekkhā* or *upekṣā*);

6. We accept our moral responsibility for the results of what we think, say or do, and subscribe to the principles of karma and its outcome (*vipāka*).

7. We share a commitment to make every effort to conform to the ethical ideals of Buddhism of avoiding all unwholesome action, doing wholesome actions and keeping the mind pure by:

- a. Abstaining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, harsh speech, idle talk, slander, stupefying intoxicants, covetousness, anger and malice, and deluded thoughts;
- b. Practicing caring with loving kindness, generosity, contentment, truthfulness, kind speech, meaningful talk, harmonious speech, temperance, and generous, compassionate and clear thoughts;
- c. Eradicating the root causes of unskillful action: greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa* or *dveṣa*), and delusion (*moha*).

8. We recognize the potentiality of every being to attain enlightenment from the cycle of birth and death (*saṃsāra*) in *Nibbāna* (*Nirvāṇa*) and we accept the validity and effectiveness of different paths leading to final emancipation.

9. We realize that the conventional expressions of truth and reality are manifold; and, in the light of Sakyamuni Buddha's own guidelines for an open-minded and tolerant quest for the Ultimate Truth, recognize the importance of deferring to inter-traditional differences and practice of the Buddha Dharma.

10. We uphold our commitment to tolerance, compassion and mutual understanding within and among our diverse traditions, as well as between us and the religious and secular communities outside our traditions and, in order to foster a collective effort towards global, harmonious spiritual development, undertake
 - a. To study and appreciate one another's teachings, religious and social practices and cultural heritage;
 - b. To avoid imposing our beliefs through coercion, manipulation or force, and
 - c. To utilize every opportunity for dialogue and cooperation.

It is such a comprehensive approach to the doctrinal unity of all traditions of Buddhism that Grand Master Hsing Yun advocates as the foundation of Humanistic Buddhism. Hence does he stress that "our basic faith comes from the Buddha himself" and that "his teachings and his life are an example of truth, virtue, wisdom and perseverance." How apt is the Grand Master's vision: "Through unity and compassion we will succeed in bringing Buddhism to all the world's people."

Notes

- [1] Bhikkhu Ñānamoḷi (1972) has been extensively utilized for canonical references on the life of the Buddha. I have considered his translations as well as those in Pali Text Society publications and made such changes, as I found desirable to be closer to the original Pali, for which I depended entirely on PTS editions.
- [2] Bhikkhu Ñānamoḷi (1972, 13) translates this passage as follows: "I could speak with knowledge (*ñānavada*) and assurance (*theravāda*)" depending on the Commentary which explains *theravāda* as *thirabhāvavādam* (=statement of stability and hence assurance) and adds "*thero aham attho*" (The meaning is I am a *thera* or an elder). As commentators display a tendency to invent etymologies based on the similarity of words, I am inclined to think that the word *Theravāda* existed in the same sense that the Buddhists use: i. e. the doctrine of the elders.
- [3] Representations of the Buddha-to-be in penance (called "Fasting Buddha") had been a popular theme in Gandhara sculpture. See Heinrich Zimmer: *The Art of Indian Asia*, Bollingen Foundation, New York 1955 Vol. II, Plate 65.
- [4] Pali *Uttarimanussa* means "above or beyond the state of a human" whereas *Lokottara* signifies "supramundane, above or beyond the world."
- [5] *Pāramitās* common to both traditions are in bold letters.
- [6] This is exactly the set of qualities as it occurs in many discourses of the Pali Canon as "*Iti pi so bhagavā araham sammāsambuddho vijjācaraṇasampanno sugato lokavidū anuttaro purisadammasārathī satthā devamanussānam buddho bhagavā ti.*" Cf. the identical text and order in the quote from *Prajñāpāramitā* with one omission. Missing from the list is *Araham* or Worthy. Could it be due to the Mahāyāna concept

of Arahant as a lesser achievement? Mahādeva's questions already show that Arahant was considered less than perfect. Hence possibly the reluctance to recognize *Araham* as an epithet of the Buddha.

[7] *Sammāsati* is now translated by most scholars as Right Mindfulness and *Sammasamādhi* as Right Concentration. Some tend to translate *Sammāsati* as Right Mind, which is inadequate because the significance of sati or smṛti as emphasized in *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* or *Saddharmasmṛtyu-paṭṭhāna Sūtra* is lost in the process. The other elements of the Noble Eightfold Path are also translated differently by scholars. But the need for fixed terminology has yet to be recognized.

[8] The drafting committee comprised Havanpola Ratanasara, Ananda W. P. Guruge, Karuna Dharma, Henry Shin and Jack Bath.

ABBREVIATIONS

- A.** Aṅguttaranikāya
- Cv.** Cullavagga
- D.** Dīghanikāya
- Dp.** Dhammapada
- It.** Itivuttaka
- M.** Majjhimanikāya
- Mt.** Majjhimanikāya Commentary
- Mv.** Mahāvagga
- Pac.** Pācittiya in Suttavibhaṅga
- S.** Saṃyuttanikāya
- Sn.** Suttanipāta
- Sv.** Suttavibhaṅga
- U.** Udāna

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Essay / Humanistic Buddhism for Social Well-being (II):

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~ to be continued ~

人間佛教對社會福利的貢獻（三之二）

——綜觀星雲大師在解行上的詮釋

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覺慧 譯

第四章 屬於人類的佛教

一、人間的佛陀

星雲大師促使我們注意佛教人道在佛教中的重要性時，提到：

從佛教的立場來看，人間是六道中最重要的一樞紐，唯有在人間才能悟道。不但諸佛皆在人間證果，所有聖賢菩薩也都在人間弘揚佛法。例如菩提達摩、法顯大師、玄奘大師及其他聖僧為了利樂眾生而歷經艱苦。

巴利大藏經也載有一些關於佛陀自傳的重要資料[註 1]，其中提到佛陀在父王的皇宮中的奢侈享受：「我的生活非常高雅，無可比擬的高雅。皇宮裡爲了我的緣故而建造百合花池……我用的檀香、頭巾、短上衣、褲子、及外套全部來自 Benares。在我頭上日夜都有一把白傘蓋爲我遮陽，使我不受寒熱、塵砂雨露的侵襲。」

他還提到自己擁有一座爲不同季節而設計的宮殿，並以僕人所受的待遇來形容他自己的生活方式：「其他人家的僕傭、侍從每餐都吃碎米配扁豆湯，父王宮殿裡的僕人卻吃白米和肉。」

接著說：「雖然我坐擁錢財權勢，卻不被青春、健康和人生的虛妄不實所迷惑。」（《增支部》III, 38）

又說：

我自實病法，無辜求病法。我自實老法、死法、愁憂感法、穢污法，無辜求穢污法。

（《中部》26）

我時年少童子，清淨青髮，盛年年二十九，爾時極多樂戲，莊飾遊行。我於爾時，父母啼哭，諸親不樂。我剃除鬚髮，著袈裟衣，至信、捨家、無家、學道。（《中部》26, 36, 85, 100）

同一經文裡，佛陀提到這個階段的兩個老師：阿羅邏伽摩羅與鬱陀羅摩子：「（我）不久得證彼法，證彼法已，復往詣彼所，曰：此法自知自覺自作證，謂度一切無量識處，度一切無所有處。」（同上）[註 2]

他對森林苦行生活所作的簡短描述中，顯示他也曾經和常人一樣，強調了他與普通人同樣害怕、恐懼的感覺：「在這樣特殊又神聖的夜晚裡，我住在果園、林地、樹叢裡，身毛恐豎。有時鹿會靠近我，孔雀會擊斷樹枝，風會吹得樹葉颯颯作響。那時我就想：『害怕與恐懼來了。』」（《中部》4）

他也提到極度的苦行如何影響他的身體：「我的嘴巴停止呼吸的進出，結果耳朵裏就產生了巨響。我再把嘴巴、鼻子和耳朵都停止呼吸的進出，結果頭裡的猛風快要使我頭痛欲裂，肚裡的強風幾乎快把肚子撕裂，有如猛火在肚裏燃燒一般。」（《中部》36, 85, 100）

同一經文也提到激烈的斷食對身體的影響：「因為吃得太少，我變得極度憔悴，四肢如同藤蔓或竹子的莖一樣，由不同的節組成。背部像駱駝的蹄，前傾的脊椎像繩子串成的念珠。突出的肋骨瘦削得有如缺少屋頂的穀倉的椽。眼神黯淡得陷入眼窩裡，就像水面的反光沉入深井裡頭。頭皮生出皺紋，萎縮得好像綠葫蘆在陽光和風中萎縮、生皺紋一樣。如果我碰一下腹部的皮膚，就可接觸到背部骨頭；如果摸一下背部骨頭，就可感受到腹部的皮膚，因為兩者已緊黏一起了。如果我去取水或洗鉢，臉就朝地面倒下去。如果試著用兩手摩擦四肢，根部已經腐爛的頭髮就會不斷掉下來，因為吃得實在太少了。」[註 3]（《中部》36, 85, 100）

佛陀自然非常想要放棄這種苦行，有一首詩描述魔王如何引誘、煽動佛陀的情緒（Guruge, 1993-1, 169）：

你是如此的瘦削蒼白，

死神離你不遠了。

身體的上千部分都已宣告死亡，

只有命根依然執持。

活下來吧，尊者！活著是比較好的方式。

只要活著，就能得到功德。

來過神聖的生活！

只要把祭酒潑在聖火上面，

就可得到全世界的功德。

如此奮鬥地修行又有何用？

奮鬥的路途也是既坎坷又困難，無法忍受的。（《經集》Ⅲ, 2）

經文如此描述佛陀此時的心境：「我這樣嚴酷的苦行，仍然無法超越人類的境界^[註 4]…有其他開悟的方法嗎？」他憶起兒時發生的一件事：「記得當我釋迦族的父親在工作時，我坐在薔薇一般的蘋果樹的清涼樹蔭下，然後進入初禪……接著我突然悟出那正是解脫之道。」（《中部》36, 85, 100）

佛陀用他自己的話來描述證悟的經過，最後作了結論：「只要我不是經由直接的知識而學會，我就不能宣說已得到解脫。一旦我能用直接的知識而學會，我就可以宣說已證得至高無上的解脫。這種解脫境界是超越神、異教的神、魔羅、或這一世的僧侶、婆羅門、王子、庶民。」（《相應部》XXⅡ, 26；《大品》1；S. L VI 11）

佛陀只有在此處才提到魔羅、異教的神，及其他天神，但他們是與僧侶、婆羅門和王子、庶民並提，用來描述這個世界（或者宇宙），以突顯證悟的至高無上。

在《大般涅槃經》（《長部》16）裡也有兩段佛陀的自傳，其一是關於他的出家和任務：

我年二十九，出家求善道，須跋我成佛，今已五十年，戒定智慧行，獨處而思惟，今說法之要，此外無沙門。

另一段感人的敘述是即將圓寂時：「吾已老矣，年粗八十，譬如故車，方便修治得有所至。」

同樣感人的是佛陀同意阿難的說法：「不錯，阿難！年輕終將變老，健康轉為生病，有生必有死。我的四肢已軟弱無力又佈滿皺紋，上半身往前傾，五官的感覺也開始改變。」

可恥啊，「年歲」！

你是醜陋的製造者。

「年歲」這會兒正在踐踏著曾經優雅的身體。

即使活到一百歲，

也瞞不過「腐朽」這傢伙。

「腐朽」從不寬延任何人一刻鐘，

它只毫不留情地踐踏每樣東西。（《相應部》XLVIII, 41）

阿難曾經注意到：「佛陀只不過被一顆碎石砸到腳，就受傷了。」（《相應部》IV,13）當跋迦梨的身體極度虛弱時，就找藉口不去見佛陀。佛陀回答：「跋迦梨，你為什麼要來看我污穢的身體？」（《相應部》XXII 87）上述這些自傳的陳述中，主要在說明佛陀的外表、言行都示現為一個凡人——也會有憂懼，受制於人類的肉體狀況，也會有生、老、病、死。（《長部》16；XLVII, 9）他早已預料到將來老化時，身體會虛弱得必須躺在擔架上。（《中部》104）

在最早的巴利藏裡，弟子眼中的佛陀即是如此。他是人類的一份子，只比同父異母的兄弟難陀高了四指的長度而已。（《經分別·波逸提》92）據說難陀和大迦葉長得實在太像佛陀，所以有時會被佛弟子們誤認他們就是佛陀。在律藏中記載，佛陀的僧袍是 9 指 × 6 指的布（根據 Welivitiye Sorata 的 *Sri Sumangala Sinhala Dictionary* 的「viyata」條，約 9 呎 × 6 呎）。而且據說佛陀與大迦葉曾經互換長袍來穿。

佛陀的攝受力引起人們好奇地問他究竟是誰。《增支部》經典曾記載香姓婆羅門與佛陀的對話：

「尊者，您是天人嗎？」

「不，婆羅門。」

「您是乾闥婆嗎？」

「不，婆羅門。」

「您是夜叉嗎？」

「不，婆羅門。」

「您是人類嗎？」

「不，婆羅門。」

「那麼，您究竟是什麼？」

「婆羅門，會使我成為天人、乾闥婆、夜叉或人的雜染煩惱皆已連根拔起，如同被遺棄的棕櫚樹殘枝，而且未來永不會再生起。如同青、紅、白蓮華雖然生長在水裡，卻挺拔於水面，不為所污。我也是如此，雖然出生、生長在這個世間，卻超越了世間，不為所動。把我當成一個覺者吧！」（《增支部》IV, 36）

佛陀除了把自己視為「佛陀」以外，其他什麼都不是，純粹是基於道德上的理由。巴利藏其他許多資料也顯示佛陀的一生中，佛果已變成一個特殊的境界，超越於常人。

雖然越來越多的人把佛陀提昇為超人的境界（大士），有三十二相和八十隨形好，後來還發展出三身佛、本初佛，和無數佛土中的佛等佛身論，但各種傳承的佛教徒普遍都相信佛果是要在人間證悟的，如星雲大師所強調。

事實上，較高層次的精神體悟也是要在人間證得。李維斯·藍卡斯特（Lewis Lancaster）曾解釋道：

輪迴的過程是由業力決定，也就是行為和行為的結果。業是由身口意的行為所產生。我們又再度看到人在這三種行為的中心位置，它包含了身體、感官、和心理作用。其他道的眾生雖然也有業，但它通常是由直覺或不可避免的衝動。畜生道由於自身存在的狀態，自我的控制力極為薄弱，是由業的力量所驅使。即使天人到了天福享盡的時候，也會墮落。有些天人一念之間可往生他界，其他天人即將往生時，會有身上花萎等衰相出現，如同火燭熄滅般，剎那間已往生他方。我們在人間雖然必須嚐到業的果實，卻仍有開悟的潛力。這是很稀有的，即使天人也沒有這種機會。（Lancaster, 2000, p.123）

二、人格圓滿的過程

幾乎巴利藏和《阿含經》的所有經典都是佛陀為人類開示的。佛陀的解脫之道，或更精確的說——「滅苦之道」，只有人類才能作到。人類才能成就阿羅漢或佛陀的菩提道果。

有一些開示，是針對天人及其他道的眾生而說的。阿毗達磨的教義據說是由於佛陀上昇兜率陀天為往生天界的摩耶夫人開示而產生的。這種開示都有一個共同的特徵：詩偈的結集（例如《經集》II,4 的《大吉祥經》），或類似阿毘達磨這種學術分析、歸納和解釋性質的著作。大乘經典也是佛陀與菩薩、天人等的開示座談記錄。例如《楞伽經》在序分的後半部有佛陀與楞伽城主羅婆那夜叉王的對話。*Mahāyānā-dhisamayāsūtra* 也曾出現他的兄弟 Vibhīṣaṇa。在巴利藏與阿含經的經文中，聽眾與對話者皆是人類，雖然後來的序文或結語會提到天神是無形的聽眾，例如《初轉法輪經》（《相應部》V, LVI, II）及《大會經》（《長部》20）。

佛教徒普遍都認為：只有在人間才有機會在道德上、精神上改善他自己（《相應部》XV）。以星雲大師的話來說：「唯有在人間才有可能證悟。」如前所述，眾生活在各種層次當中。地獄、餓鬼、阿修羅、畜生道的眾生據說因為處境悲慘，不能導向自我圓滿，我們知道至少在畜生道是如此。反之，六欲天上的天人耽於欲樂，以致無心聆聽佛法。色界天和無色界天的長壽眾生也無法改善自己。人壽短促到足以意識到痛苦與死亡，這種智慧才能抓住生命的意義，理解善、惡的觀念，從而想要改善自我、圓滿自我、得到解脫。

在龍樹菩薩的《密友書》中，對於上述理念有如下闡釋：

人身難得，

如烏龜出其頭於海中浮木之一孔，

國王啊，用善行讓生命結出豐碩的果實吧！

由於錯誤的知見而生為畜生、餓鬼、地獄、邊地、瘖啞、長壽天人，

此中處境的任何一種都無法令人滿意，

因為它們是八難之一。

唯有超脫於此，

才能設法扭轉輪迴！

(Leslie Kawamura (tr.), 1975, Verses 59-64)

各種傳承的佛教裡都強調：只有人類才有機會當生證果。佛陀在《法句經》提到：生而為人是極困難的（*Kiccho manussa-paṭilābho* ——《法句經》182）。所謂「*Dullabham ca manussattam*」，意為人身難得，是經常被引用的話。（亦可參見《中部》129）

佛陀確曾說人身臭穢，不應貪著。觀身不淨是四念處之首（《長部》22，《中部·念處經》）。從解剖學及生理學的角度，來觀察老、病、死、及屍身的分解過程，可以看出身體的無常。為了喚醒那些沉緬於人生，卻忽視生命實相的人，佛陀促使他們注意到：過度貪著於身體和五官享受，是徒勞無益的。特別是耽於淫欲的人，這種法門因有驚人之效，具有震撼的效能。但佛陀不像同時代的某些苦行者，刻意提倡忽略身體，或忍受各種折磨，因為他體認到藉假修真的重要性。

佛陀注意到修行者需要營養和健康，此即中道的基礎——避免自我折磨或自我放縱地享受。他把饑餓當作最糟糕的疾病（*jigucchā paramā rogā*——《法句經》204），健康才是最有利的助緣（*ārogyā paramā lābhā*——《法句經》203）。一個瞭解一切眾生皆以食維生（*Sabbe sattā āhāraṭṭhitikā*），是沙彌初學的第一課。從戒律的條文也可看出，佛陀要弟子們注重清潔、衛生及威儀莊嚴的外表。剃除鬚髮的目的，也是為了健康和衛生的理由。僧侶們具備良好的威儀和行為，才能感化異教徒，增進他們的氣質。僧侶的水準顯然對整個社會有普遍的影響。即使在動盪不安的經濟情況下，佛教團體仍以維持高品質的個人衛生和公共衛生設備而聞名。

以佛教的觀點看來，人間還有一個重要性——它是眾生享有快樂經驗，也因此喜歡快樂經驗的地方。常聽到的祝禱詞包括：長壽、好的氣色、健康、強壯。佛法中也經常強調世間上有：利、衰、毀、譽、稱、譏、苦、樂等八種好壞相生的情況，心懷慈悲的人有八種善利：臥安，覺安，不見惡夢，天護人愛，不毒不兵，水火不喪，色相莊嚴，臨命終時意不顛倒。（《增支部》V, 342）

在《應行慈愛經》（《經集》I, 8）中闡述佛陀心目中完人的理想。此人必須要有智慧，以達到最終的寧靜。並且具備如下特質：

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------|-------------|-----------|------------|
| 1.有效率 | 2.誠實 | 3.正直 | 4.順從忠告 | 5.溫和 |
| 6.不驕傲自大 | 7.知足 | 8.容易款待（不挑剔） | 9.安閒(不瞎忙) | |
| 10.生活簡單 | 11.克制五欲 | 12.成熟 | 13.不妄語 | 14.不過份執著家人 |
| 15.對於智者會譴責的錯誤，即使再微細也纖毫不犯 | | | | |

完人常懷悲願，但願一切眾生得到幸福、安樂。

要成爲一個慈悲的完人，或者善於解脫之道，享受涅槃的和平與喜悅，就必須付諸實踐，而且要在人道中完成。因此佛陀的教法把此生與來生（包括最終的解脫）看得同等重要。《法句經》有一首偈語說：「今歡後歡，爲善兩歡。」（《法句經》18）另一首偈語是：「今悔後悔，爲惡兩悔。」（《法句經》17）iha（此處），param（後世）和 ubhayattha（二世）等名相可說涵蓋了佛陀的道德架構。

這種觀念如何促進人間佛教對社會福利的貢獻？我們可從阿育王對公共福利的建設，與密集地宣導人們在道德與精神上的覺醒而看出。阿育王在《石敕》VI 上解釋他這樣做的動機：

我認爲世人的福利是我的責任。沒有比促進世人福利的工作更爲高尚了。不管我做任何努力是否能抵銷我對眾生的虧欠，我都要讓他們現世得樂，來世昇天。

他在《石敕》XI 中提到：

諸供養中，以法的供養、法的傳佈、法的分享、法的心領神會爲最。此是善，此應做，依此行，二世（iloka and parata）樂。

阿育王在《石敕》XV 中訓諭政要們：

你們確實能激發信心，爲了他們此生與來生的幸福安樂（hidalogika-pālalokikāye）。

（Guruge, 1993, pp.560, 566, 571）

因此佛教習於促進社會福利的傳統就這樣地流傳下來。

故星雲大師解釋人間佛教時，再三地強調佛陀的教法是爲人類而設。佛法即是爲了人們此生與來生的福利，而展現出如何圓滿人格的過程。

第五章 智慧與慈悲

一、佛教——究竟是消極的還是積極的？

星雲大師在評價佛教的實踐面時，直言不諱地說：

遺憾的是，許多佛教徒一開始修行，就把重心放在長期的退隱，以求解脫生死。這雖然很重要，但是在知道怎樣在人間做好一個人之前，沒有一個人能夠真正的了脫生死。在開發智慧之間，每個人都必須充分地善用人生、發展道德與慈悲。佛教徒過去常被貼上「消極、無為」的標籤，也很喜歡守舊而不創新。如果從不考慮未來，佛教就會繼續在自己所作的繭裡面凋萎，根本上這也是違反它的某些最重要的基本原則。

這席話道出了在佛教史上，從沒有像現在這一刻那樣最合乎時代的需要。全世界的佛教徒日益增加，人人都有不同的需要。

每個人在實踐佛法時，也都帶著希望與信心。有的人來自不同文化背景的初學佛者；有的人雖生於佛教家庭，但是多年來毫無興趣，或是敷衍地遵守儀式，最後才重新生起興趣。這兩種人都有多重的目標：有的希望在充滿憂慮和社會經濟的壓力下尋回寧靜、和平的心；有的想要解決受心理影響而引起的嚴重的生理疾病，例如憤怒、偏執狂、躁鬱症、或是不知原因地突然對人生失去興趣。也有人對佛法的期望是屬於精神面、知識面、社會面、或情緒面的。因此佛教演進成一種宗教式的傳統，以便有效地滿足所有人的需要，這種演進可說意義重大。

佛教的最主要利益，在於人們可成功地從佛陀的生平和開示中得到啟發。在佛陀弘法的過程中，曾利益過形形色色的人。有時他主動尋找對象，有時對方自動登門拜訪。當然他的主要目的是儘可能的引導很多人止息痛苦。佛陀本身就花了六年獨自苦行，希望達成此目標。但是從佛陀證果的那一刻開始，他就不再消極地享受涅槃的法喜，而是積極地走入人間，為他人的福利、幸福而活躍地工作。除了訓誡以外，他以自身為榜樣，鼓勵每個弟子作一個弘講師、教育家、和積極的行動主義者。原始佛教記錄了不少佛陀和立即皈依的弟子們主動地解決別人問題的事例。

膾炙人口的故事包括鴛掘魔羅和鬼子母。前者是已經殺了九百九十九個人的強盜，而他的母親將成為第一千個受害者。後者據說是個食人族，恐嚇人民每天送一個嬰兒給他吃。佛

陀冒著極大的生命危險來感化他們，使其過著有道德的生活。當翅舍瞿曇彌抱著死去兒子的屍體來見佛陀時，佛陀只教她去找一戶從沒死人的家庭向他們要芥菜子。當然如佛陀所料，她還沒找完一天，就已經接受「死亡是人生不可避免的」事實。佛陀還開導一位悲傷的國王，讓他知道女兒的出生同樣值得慶賀，甚至比兒子更好。

佛陀主動對一個被忽視的病比丘伸出援手來照顧他，並且告訴弟子們：「看護病人就是在看護我。」佛陀對人類的痛苦非常體貼，乃至他從不對一個又餓又累的人說法，直到那個人吃飽為止。對一個被兒女遺棄的老人，佛陀為他作了一系列的詩偈，讚揚他的柺杖是唯一的依靠。這些詩偈只不過在公共場合吟誦一次而已，那些良心被蒙蔽的兒子們就回來盡孝了。原始佛教採用故事體裁的文獻中，充滿了上百個類似的故事，描述佛陀和弟子們除了弘法、教育等工作以外，還主動介入、解決別人的問題。佛陀認為供水、建園、鋪路、造橋等布施，都是在作功德。

重視社會福利的傳統也可從阿育王的多項措施中看出佛陀精神的延續。《石敕》II 提到：

1. 天喜愛見王（也就是阿育王）設立兩種醫療措施：一種專為人治病；一種專為動物治病。
2. 只要對人和動物有益，一旦此藥材在當地缺貨，就從外地帶來種植。
3. 只要當地從來沒有此藥材，就從外地引進樹根和果實來種植。
4. 在道路兩旁掘井，並種植樹木供人畜使用。

《石敕》VII 柱子刻道：

1. 路上種植榕樹，供人畜乘涼
2. 種植芒果樹
3. 每半個（或八個）拘盧舍就掘一口井
4. 建立休息處
5. 到處設立取水站，供人畜使用

（Guruge, 1993, pp.555 & 581）

依據佛陀的教法，有功德的行為包括：1.慈善布施，2.有道德的生活，3.從禪定中開發心智，4.尊敬該尊敬的人，5.為老人、需要的人、病人和一般大眾服務，6.回向功德給他人，7.隨喜他人之功德，8.弘揚佛法，9.聽聞佛法，10.修正自己的觀念。此外有四種對待同胞的方法：1.布施（*dāna*），2.愛語（*piyavacana*），3.利行（*atthacariyā*），4.等利（*samānattatā*）。

現代佛教徒所作的積功累德之行，對於人間性原則的實踐和原始佛教的價值有極大的助益。諸惡莫作，眾善奉行即含蓋了所有人道的社會服務。對窮人、孤兒施予衣、食，對無家可歸者施予房舍，對無知者給予教育，照料窮困者和病患，提供舒適的公共設施……等，同樣是在盡宗教義務。在組織小團隊作公共服務時，常引用此原則：「如果一個人沒什麼可以布施的，那就布施自己的勞力吧！」這種布施即稱為「勞力布施」。

因此星雲大師主張佛教不應等同於消極、無作為，是很正確的。巴利文的「佛教僧侶」是 *Śramaṇa*，其字根是 *śram*，意為「盡力、勤奮」。佛陀反對一個人吃得過多，睡得過久，懶惰又無精打采（《法句經》7, 8）；他理想中的人是活躍、勤勞。《法句經》說道：「勤勞的永不會死；懈怠者業已死亡（譯註：精神上的死亡，有如行屍走肉）。」（《法句經》21）

二、自我解脫與利益他人

「任何因緣和合的東西，注定有朽壞的特性。勤勞地完成你的目標吧！不要回頭看，要不斷向前。」這是佛陀涅槃前的遺言（《長部》16）。在南傳佛教裡，把這句話看成「強調自我解脫的重要性」，亦即證得佛果、聲聞或緣覺。僧侶把「拋棄世俗的舒適和享受」當成理想的生活。解脫是如此的急迫，因此對弟子而言，證得阿羅漢果是再適當不過了。當佛教逐漸演進時，僧侶的理想由印度流行的菩薩思想所取代。菩薩即是發願成佛的人。

既然發願成佛，就不再只是自我解脫，還包括引導他人解脫。由於佛果是最高解脫，因此遵循這種教義的傳統就稱為 **Mahāyāna**，現代學者把它譯為「大乘」。進一步發展下，菩薩的發願更轉為「刻意延遲自己的解脫，直到宇宙所有眾生皆解脫為止」。相形之下，以阿羅漢為理想的解脫境界，就稱為 **Hīnayāna**，譯為「小乘」。

十八、十九世紀的西洋學者對於佛教各種傳承的錯綜複雜的關係所知甚少，因此把它們視同羅馬天主教與基督新教之間敵對、暴力的關係。因此大乘、小乘之間的差異都被加以渲染，用他們的想法來解釋。其中一例就是以為南傳佛教重視智慧，大乘佛教則強調慈悲。但我們現在更加瞭解兩者的異同，因此沒有必要把它視同「黑與白」的對立。在佛教裏，智慧與慈悲並非互不相容。在實踐方面，兩者是互相增益，密不可分的。

很久以前我聽過一個故事，其來源至今尚不可考。內容是兩個比丘為了某個原因而必須趕到一個地點。途中有段路充滿了臭氣熏天的垃圾和人畜的糞便，其中一個比丘立刻著手開

始清理，以便其他旅客不受阻礙。另一個比丘卻找了些碎布，從腿纏繞到膝蓋為止，再通過污穢的垃圾山。接著他丟棄這些繃帶，趕到目的地去完成任務，然後才回來清理這條骯髒的路。這個故事即在對照原始佛教以自我解脫為理想，與大乘佛教以利他為優先。故事中究竟那一個比丘比較有智慧，或比較慈悲？誰的行為比較理性？先到目的地完成任務的比丘是否就比較自私、自我為中心，因此應受批評？以他人利益為優先的比丘是否就應受到讚揚？如果他為了利益別人，而忘了自己的任務呢？我們可以提出更多疑問，使辯論無窮無盡。事實上，兩個比丘都把利益他人作為總體目標，只是各人的優先待辦事項有所不同而已。

依據前述的討論，星雲大師評價「學會怎樣在人間做一個人，然後才能長期退隱，追求自我解脫」的重要性，是很適當的。他並不認為「圓滿人道」與「自我解脫」，是魚與熊掌不可兼得。他肯定兩者同等重要，但強調「完成個人義務」是「自我解脫」的基本前提。可見他如何諄諄闡述他的基本理念：

1. 記住，在知道怎樣在人間做一個人之前，沒有人能夠真正地了脫生死。
2. 在開發智慧之前，每個人都必須充分地善用人生、發展道德與慈悲。
3. 如果佛教想要生存下去，就得適應現實的環境。
4. 我們對佛教的未來所作的每一個選擇，都必須立基於清楚的思考與善意上。
5. 人間佛教強調他人的利益勝過一切。如果不知道怎樣以慈悲、尊重、親切來待人，就不可能充分自覺到菩提心。

從這些角度來看，人間佛教就是建立在智慧與慈悲兩個基礎上。

第六章 釋迦牟尼佛的教法與其榜樣

一、歷史性佛陀的啟示

星雲大師在第一次國際人間佛教會議的致詞中，以歷史上的佛陀（釋迦族的聖者）作結語：

所有佛教徒都是釋迦牟尼佛的教法與慈悲的化身。我們的基本信仰是來自佛陀本身。佛的教誨與一生的行事即是真理、道德、智慧與忍耐的典範。佛法是立基於我們內心最深處的佛性，和我們先天的菩提心之智慧。通過融和與慈悲，我們才能把佛教帶給全球的人類。

各種佛教傳承都認為佛陀不是只有一個。南傳佛教《小經》的《佛種姓經》，和另一本《明護經》（Cf. *Aṭṭvisipiritā*）都提到二十八佛，以 *Taṇhankara*, *Medhankara* 和 *Saraṇankara* 為首。另一個更流行的說法是以燃燈佛為首的二十五佛，包括釋迦佛在內。

各個佛教傳承都說釋迦佛與燃燈佛最初的會面，促使釋迦佛開始尋求開悟。在與燃燈佛會面的那一生裡，釋迦佛是個名為善慧的苦行者。他雖然有機會聽聞燃燈佛的教法而開悟，也就是證得阿羅漢果，卻當下決定像燃燈佛一樣證得佛果，以便解救眾生。每個佛教傳承都同意釋迦佛從下定這個決心以後，才開始菩薩道的修持，燃燈佛也因此為他授記成佛。在（《般若波羅蜜多經》）中，佛陀提到：

當我在眾華王都四面衢道拜見燃燈佛時，圓滿智慧即將成熟。因此燃燈佛授記我將來必定圓滿開悟，並對我說道：「年輕的婆羅門！經過未來不可計劫，你將成就菩提，號釋迦牟尼如來，正遍知、應供、善逝、世間解、無上士、調御丈夫、天人師、佛、世尊」。

當我把五莖蓮花撒在燃燈如來頭上，並且耐心地接受佛法時，燃燈如來即授記我：「年輕人，你未來將會成佛，號釋迦牟尼！」

(Edward Conze (Tr.), 1973, pp.102 & 220)

錫蘭版的經文更生動地強調苦行者善慧放棄了垂手可得的涅槃之樂，而選擇又長又艱辛的奮鬥，以成就佛道。

延緩個人的解脫，而在無數劫的世界生滅當中，以菩薩的身分來努力拯救人類，這是世界上大多數的佛教徒認為釋迦佛給他們立下的最重要榜樣。這種「留惑潤生」的思想隱含利他無我、犧牲奉獻的菩薩道精神，是大多數佛教徒所趨之目標。他們被這則故事所啟發，而互相鼓舞：「讓我們照著佛陀所做的來做，而不是照著個人所說的來做！」因此他們選擇了菩薩的誓願：

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。

（Guruge, 1999, p.54）

佛教傳統裏豐富的故事體裁的文獻中，對於釋迦牟尼佛行菩薩道的經歷，提供了數百個啟發性的故事。巴利藏附有註釋的本生故事《本生經》，及大乘系統的梵文《本生鬘》，都詳述釋迦佛過去很多世圓滿十波羅蜜或六波羅蜜的過程。這兩種對照是很有趣的：

北傳佛教

- 1.布施[註5]
- 2.持戒
- 3.忍辱
- 4.精進
- 5.禪定
- 6.般若

南傳佛教

- 1.布施[註5]
- 2.持戒
- 3.出世
- 4.忍辱
- 5.精進
- 6.般若 / 知識
- 7.真實
- 8.決意
- 9.慈
- 10.捨

其中五種波羅蜜是共通的，而且南傳佛教的般若或知識可能已包含禪定在內。北傳佛教則「有時增加四個波羅蜜：方便、願、智。但最後這四個常被視為般若的擴展」。(Christmas Humphreys, 1976, pp. 145-146)

巴利藏有兩篇較晚期的詩集，專門敘述釋迦佛如何圓滿六波羅蜜。《佛種姓經》提供了從燃燈佛到釋迦佛為止，每個佛陀的簡短傳記。其中也描述釋迦佛在圓滿十波羅蜜的過程中，一一遇到在他之前的二十四佛，每位佛陀也都授記他必定成佛。《所行藏》則提到釋迦佛為菩薩時，實踐七波羅蜜的三十五個本生故事，缺少的三個波羅蜜為「忍辱、般若、和精進」。

(Burma Pitaka Association, 1985 pp.136-138)

這些本生故事不但把釋迦佛描述成一個最慈悲的人，而且強調對佛果的評價最高，認為佛乘才是佛教徒最需要的，證悟佛果才能究竟的止息痛苦，體會最喜悅的涅槃。不只北傳佛教把佛果當成最終目標，南傳佛教中只要是虔誠奉獻的佛教徒，基本上也是希望成佛。因此後者在表達由衷的感激時，最誠懇的方式就是祝福行善者能夠成佛。(Guruge, 2000, p. 90)

釋迦佛的最後一生也是使人得到啓發的來源。各種佛教傳統都接受，並且崇敬地使用佛陀的十種或九種特質：應供、明行足、正遍知、善逝、世間解、無上士、調御丈夫、天人師、佛、世尊[註 6]。

佛陀拋棄皇宮的享受和權力，而選擇了貧窮的生活，從皇冠到破布縫綴而成的百衲衣，使許多人（甚至異教徒）刻骨銘心。各個佛教傳承都把他的傳記加以編纂而廣為流傳。巴利藏的註釋文獻裡，則很少對他的生平加以文學的修飾。馬鳴用梵文及宮廷詩的體來寫佛傳。另一個梵文作品《方等本起經》則著重於超越世俗的一面，使人性化的一面相形見拙。中國、西藏及韓國皆有各自的佛傳版本。依據上述版本，佛陀生平的大事記可彙整如下：

1. 皇家的血統。
2. 於藍毗尼樹下誕生。
3. 預言將來若不是一個普世的君王（譯註：轉輪聖王），即是宗教導師。
4. 父皇急於由他繼承王位。
5. 奢華的生活享受，與現實的人生隔絕。
6. 震驚地發現老、病、死之事實。
7. 兒子的出生。
8. 離開皇宮。
9. 六年讀書、苦行、斷食。
10. 發現了中道，不偏於「自我縱欲與自我折磨」兩個極端。
11. 最後的奮鬥——解決衝突之夜，文學與藝術描寫為「與魔羅之戰」。

12.在伽耶樹下證得佛果。

13.在鹿野苑向五位曾經一起修苦行的伙伴作第一次開示。

14.四十五年或四十九年的傳教：

- a. 宣揚內在寧靜與和平的教義，對於國王或王子，貧人或富人，學者或文盲，朋友或敵人都一視同仁。
- b. 建立能夠自我更新的比丘和比丘尼教團，每個人都願意持戒和服務他人。
- c. 提昇知識的層次，從而產生了驚人的佛法寶藏。形式為散文或詩，內容則立下了道德、哲學、宗教和社會的基準。成為弟子效法和啟發的榜樣，使積喪者得到精神的振奮。
- d. 為「佛法發展成宗教的形式」打下基礎，兩千五百年來影響了各式各樣的人。
- e. 用冷靜自信與慈悲，對治帶有敵意的言行。

15.於拘尸那羅城的娑羅雙樹下涅槃。

佛傳一再地被口耳相傳，或表現於圖畫、歌曲和戲劇裡，印製成脆薄的傳單或容易發霉的大型叢書中，用平常人所用的語言或知識分子所用的修辭及雄辯詞語。不管用何種方式，人們對它的想像力從未停止。

佛滅後第一個五百年中，弟子與信徒們仍然甚深地敬仰佛陀，因此不允許用雕像或畫把佛陀表現成人類的像貌。當雕像或圖畫的內容需要出現佛陀時，就以菩提樹、傘幢、獅子座、腳印、法輪或火柱等象徵來取代。直到一個外國王朝——從中亞過來貴霜王朝——才決定把釋迦佛描畫成人類的像貌。從迦膩色迦王一世的金幣開始，佛陀的立像在希臘文就稱為 BODDO。至此以後佛像的演變就有了一段精彩的歷史。

由於無從得知佛陀的法相究竟為何，因此每個地區就開始用各自對人體美的標準，及知識、精神上的特質，來發展自己的佛像造型。從犍陀羅到摩菟羅，從阿姜塔到敦煌和洛陽，從鹿野苑到錫蘭，從石窟庵到鎌倉，佛的法相在藝術風格上各有千秋。但每個地區的佛像都表現出最尊貴、完美的象徵，這也是佛陀的教法所顯現出來的。因此在藝術史上，佛陀在各宗教領袖中擁有最多的紀念物和畫像、雕刻，來紀念他的生平和傳教事蹟，亦不足為怪了。

釋迦佛的教法總是給人無限的啟發。他給現代人的影響，可用我年輕時重新發現自己的佛教傳承的經驗，來作最佳的詮釋。

二、重新發現我的佛教傳承（個案研究）

即使在學校還沒有普遍的施予宗教課程時，錫蘭的小孩子可說在吃母乳時就跟著接受宗教的傳承了。從而在一個佛教家庭裡，這種誘導包括參訪寺院，尊敬僧侶（可能也與其來往），參加儀式、節慶等。漸漸的，這種利用流行的故事和詩歌，非正式地學習佛教的宗旨和價值觀的方法，也會轉變成正式地研究佛陀的生平、主要教義、和佛教史，後者通常是在星期日學校裡。大部分的小孩子受過這種啓蒙教育後，長大時就習慣作慈善事業，捐獻給學校，或護持僧團，成爲護持佛教的主流派。

但少數的小孩並沒有在宗教上順利地過渡成人，有些人年輕時接觸了全新的，而且通常是令人困惑不安的影響。有的是到異教徒的學校上課，有的則因知識上的好奇而引發他們去觀察、體驗，從而對佛教的教理產生懷疑。不管是那一種，年輕人在這個階段所學到的新知識，諸如科學、哲學、歷史或經濟，特別是西洋世界的知識，使其能在知識上獨立地研究。從而產生優越感，或者質疑個人的宗教傳承，或對它有點漠不關心，乃至不屑一顧，這些現象不自覺地就成爲一種時尚。來自同儕的壓力必然使得年輕人對叛逆者的滔滔雄辯給予更多的掌聲。人們幻想自己是理性主義者，而詆毀各種信仰。他們會說：「只有**理性思考**才重要！」

我記得 1940 年代時我還是個年輕人，當時在最流行的「思想者的圖書館」和「二手書俱樂部」的影響下，傳統文化就不斷地被重新評估。其範圍包括價值和實踐，宗教和美學，以及社會和政治。只要是能明顯地給長者感到窘迫的問題，都能讓人得到特別的滿足。**反抗**本身就能帶來樂趣，但這主要是知識方面的快樂。

就我的情形而言，這種必要的衝擊來自於一個荷蘭比丘。他解釋自己如何接受佛教時，引用了一些歐洲學者的證言。其中三位歐洲學者都是當時名聞遐邇的——威爾斯(H. G. Wells)、羅素(Bertrand Russell)和(容格)Carl Gustav Jung。這些人都被我們冠以「理性主義者」或「現代思想家」的標籤，對他們極度推崇。

威爾斯提到：「佛教對於世界文明與文化的演進所付出的貢獻，在人類史上是其他教派、科學望塵莫及的。」

羅素的說法更爲清楚：「佛教是冥想與科學化的哲學。它提倡科學方法，而且追求徹底的理性。在佛教裡可以找到諸如此類有趣問題的答案：『什麼是身與心？宇宙是朝向一個目標前進嗎？人類的地位是什麼？有沒有聖人的存在？』它補充了科學無法作到的事，因爲科學的研究必需限於儀器，而它所征服的是人類的心。」

容格曾為弗洛伊德的同事，後來成為其敵手。他的立場也非常明確：「作為一個比較宗教的學生，我認為佛教是世界上最完美的宗教。佛陀的哲學、進化的理論、和業力的法則都遠超其它宗教之上。」

我對此印象特別深刻，甚至以佛教為榮。因為在我那個時代所推崇的傑出哲學家竟然對它推崇備至。更何況我一出生就承襲這個信仰，因此我不得不承認自己非常幸運。

其他哲學家的證言使我更加肯定佛教的地位。對東方文化素有研究的著名學者馬克思·穆勒（Max Muller）有「印度學之父」之美稱，他曾說佛教之律則乃「世間上最殊勝者」。丹麥學者福斯鮑爾於一八五五年將《法句經》譯為拉丁文，是把佛典譯介給西方人士的先驅，對於佛陀的讚賞溢於言表：「我越認識他，越喜歡他。」

身為印度總督的澤特藍侯爵，曾在一篇言之有物的文章中提到印度民主思想的起源：「我們確實要從佛教經論中尋找早期的自治團體的議會運作模式。很多人或許會驚訝的發現：兩千多年前印度佛教的議會早已具備現代議會模式的基本原理。」

里茲·戴維斯（T. W. Rhys Davids）則是巴利文與佛教學的早期學者，他對佛教文獻與哲學的著作，提供西方人深入瞭解的機會。他還說：「就我所知，佛教兩千多年來這麼漫長的歷史中，教徒從沒有迫害其他信仰的記錄。」

在我年青時代還有其他英雄人物也是對佛教讚譽有加。其中一位即是印度的青年總理尼赫魯。他本身是生物學家，在爭取印度獨立時也是一位理性主義者。他入獄時不僅帶了一張（斯里蘭卡）Anuradhapura 的佛陀入定相，而且在自傳中提到：「我把它留在房間裡的一張小桌子上。它變成我的珍貴同伴。佛陀那種大力、平靜的法相安撫我的心靈，給我不少力量來克服許多沮喪的情緒。」

就某一方面而言，他證實了哲學家鄔斯賓斯基（P. D. Ouspensky）早已發現的事：「我發現佛陀的聖容對我產生一種奇怪的效果。在我心靈深處的所有鬱悶全部一掃而光，似乎佛陀臉上的平靜已感染了我。至今為止，所有困擾我的事情，原本以為既嚴重又事關緊要，現在看來竟然微不足道、不值得一提，使我一直驚奇佛像怎會影響我？而且不管我如何被矛盾的思想、情緒所撕裂，而憤怒、困擾不已——正如每個初進監獄的人一樣——在接觸佛陀之後總會變得平靜、安詳、覺悟、以及諒解。」

歐洲與美國學者在科學發展方面，更是把佛教視為精神上的志同道合者。其中一位傑出的德國學者 Paul Dalkhe 提到現代科學時，對佛教給予無比的肯定：「世界的宗教中，唯獨佛教不會和科學思想衝突。而且佛教的系統散發了一種數學特有的冷靜思考。另一方面，它也帶有最純潔、最崇高、無瑕之美，這也是數學特有的。」

自己的文化與精神遺產竟然受到外人如此崇高的評價，著實令人興奮。但是要完全相信這些評價的真實性，又是另一回事。由於這些個性迥異的人竟然異口同聲地讚美佛教，實在令人非常好奇，因此我迫不急待地想作知識上的探討。

沒想到這種探討持續了一生。我總共花了五十多年的時間來研究佛教與其文化的不同層面。我學到的知識越多，就越欣賞這個宗教，以及先賢們用各種方式來保存它的努力。這確實是一個了不起的**重新發現**，因為我在青春反抗期的熱潮中幾乎失去它。由於這是經過層層的研讀、尋問、思考、和冥想所得到的重新發現，因此對我來說，這比靜靜地依循傳統宗教儀式更有價值和意義。

從此以後，我對於心存懷疑的年輕人都給予如下的希望和稱譽：

願你的探尋能得到豐收，深具啟發，並且受益，如同我當年一樣。佛陀對他發現的解脫之道的效力深具信心。佛教能禁得起任何嚴厲的檢驗，難怪他的教法最有名的口號是：「請你親自來檢驗（Ehipassika）！」對佛教及其文化作廣泛調查的最大收益，是體驗到人類在道德、哲學、藝術、建築、邏輯、和詩歌方面的一些最偉大的創作。（Guruge, 1993-1, pp.208-211）

因此我們全然同意星雲大師對佛教徒的評價——佛教徒即是釋迦牟尼佛的現身代表（如果他們還不是，就應該努力讓自己有足夠能力來代表）。雖然佛陀自謙他只是發現一個通往古道的舊城（《相應部》XII, 65——《城經》），事實上歷史上的佛陀畢竟是佛教的創始者。如果沒有佛陀，這麼豐富多姿的宗教體系絕不會出現於世。他的基本教法被普遍認為對每一個傳承、派系都是不可或缺的。它是學者與教徒最致力研究的，以便得知佛教在分歧當中的統一性。

三、基本教義：分歧中的統一

差不多兩百年前時，現代的西洋學者開始注意到釋迦佛，並且努力地尋找不同佛教傳承之間的核心教義和原則。

1891 年美國一位通神論者奧葛特（Henry Steel Olcott）上校提出「十四點原則」可以適用於任何佛教傳承。其第五項內容如下：

釋迦佛開示：無明引發貪欲，因為貪欲無法得到滿足，所以才有輪迴，輪迴即是痛苦的根源。為了消滅痛苦，必須脫離輪迴，從而必須消除貪欲，也就因此必須根絕無明。

洪菲斯（Christmas Humphreys）在 1945 年也提出「十二點原則」，目的在調和不同教派的歧異處。他強調基本教義如下：

由於生命是一體的，因此個人的利益應該也是社會整體的利益。但人們由於無明，以為能夠只為私人利益而奮鬥，這種錯誤的努力導致痛苦。而從痛苦中學到減少、乃至消除苦的原因。釋迦佛說的四聖諦：苦、集、滅、道，即是滅苦的方法。

八正道包括正見、正思惟、正語、正業、正命、正精進、正念、正定[註 7]，此即是通往涅槃之路。佛法不只是生命的理論，而且還是一種生活的方式，遵循此道即可自我解脫。「諸惡莫作，眾善奉行，自淨其意，是諸佛教。」佛陀是大慈大悲，也是究竟解脫的人。（這兩篇文章可參見 Guruge, 1999, pp. 79-83）

最新而且最完整的是 1997 年在那塔拉沙拉（Dr. Havanpola Ratanasara）法師領導之下舉行的美國佛教會議，及美國南加州僧伽會議的宣言。其內容被命名為「十項跨越各文化的佛教公約」[註 8]，要點為：

1. 我們認定釋迦牟尼。喬達摩。佛是歷史上的佛陀，也是傳遞佛法的根源。我們為了他對人類的慈悲服務而尊敬他。
2. 我們肯定過去、現在、未來都有許多佛陀，乃至辟支佛、阿羅漢、及菩薩。
3. 我們皈依三寶——亦即「佛、法、僧」。
4. 為了悲愍一切眾生，我們渴望他人及自己從痛苦中得到解脫及開悟的果實。
5. 我們認為佛教的核心精神及目標如下：
 - a. 四聖諦——苦、集、滅、道
 - b. 三法印——無常、苦（欲望不滿足）、無我（沒有實體）
 - c. 八正道——正見、正思惟、正語、正業、正命、正精進、正念、正定
 - d. 十二因緣
 - e. 修學次第——戒、定、慧

f.四攝法——慈、悲、喜、捨

- 6.對於我們自己所思、所言、所行，我們接受道德上的責任，並且贊同業力的法則及其結果。
- 7.我們約定要努力遵循佛教的道德標準——諸惡莫作、眾善奉行、自淨其意，方法如下：
 - a.受持十戒——不殺生、不偷盜、不邪淫、不妄語、不惡口、不兩舌、不綺語、不飲酒吸毒、不嫉妒、不瞋恨、不愚痴
 - b.奉行慈悲、慷慨、知足、誠實、愛語、言之有物、言語和諧、節欲，以及寬大、慈悲、清楚的思想
 - c.根絕不正行為的原因——貪、瞋、痴
- 8.我們肯定一切眾生都能從生死的輪迴中得到開悟和涅槃的快樂。我們也認定不同法門皆能殊途同歸。
- 9.我們能理解傳統以來對真理的表達方式不一而定。基於釋迦佛對終極真理的指導原則，我們肯定「尊重不同傳承之間的差異和修行方式」是很重要的。
- 10.我們約定對不同的佛教傳承給予包容、慈悲和共同理解。我們也用同樣行為來對待異教或世俗團體。為了促進全球融和的精神發展，我們決議如下：
 - a.研究、欣賞其他宗派的教義、修行、服務社會的方法、及文化的傳承
 - b.避免用高壓、操縱、或武力的方式強迫別人接受我們的信仰
 - c.儘量製造宗教對話及各種合作的機會

上述的完整方法意在促進各個佛教傳承在教義上的統一，此即星雲大師倡導的人間佛教的基礎。因此他強調「我們的基本信仰是源自佛陀」，「他的教法和他的一生都是真理、道德、智慧和忍耐的典範」。星雲大師確有先見之明：「透過統一和慈悲，我們才能把佛法帶給全球的人類。」

【註釋】

[註 1] 髻智比丘（1972）曾經從大藏經裡面詳盡的尋找佛陀的生平。我比較他的翻譯與巴利聖典協會（簡稱 PTS）的翻譯後，為了更接近巴利文的原文，而作了上述修正。原文方面，我完全以 PTS 的版本為標準。

[註 2] 髻智比丘（1972，13）把這一段譯為：「我能以知識和自信說出來」，所依據的註解把 *therāvada* 解釋成 *thirabhāva-vādam*（穩定，從而自信的狀態），又加上 "*thero aham attho*"（我是一個長者）。因為註釋者傾向於根據類似的字而創造語源學，我比較認為 *therāvada* 和佛教認定的意義相同，亦即「長者的教法」。

[註 3] 關於正在苦行的未來佛（稱為「禁食的佛陀」）是印度南方健陀羅美術的雕像的流行主題。參見 Heinrich Zimmer: *The Art of Indian Asia*, Bollingen Foundation, New York 1955, Vol. II, Plate 65.

[註 4] Uttarimanussa 的巴利原文意為「超越人類的境界」，而 Lokottara 意為「超越世俗、高於這個世界」。

[註 5] 南北傳「波羅蜜」相同部分以粗體字表示。

[註 6] 在巴利藏許多經典中確實出現了這十種特質，原文如下： "Iti pi so bhagavā araham sammāsambuddho vijjācaraṇasampanno sugato lokavidū anuttaro purisadammasārathī satthā devamanussānam buddho bhagavā ti." 《般若經》雖然也出現同樣的內容與次序，但卻少了 Arahāt (音譯為「阿羅漢」，意譯為「值得」)。這是否因為大乘的觀念裡，阿羅漢的證悟層次較低？大天的疑問已指出阿羅漢被認為是不圓滿的，因此不願意把「阿羅漢」視為佛陀的特質之一。

[註 7] 現在大多數學者都把 Sammāsati (正定) 翻譯成 Right Mindfulness，把 Sammasamādhi 翻譯成 Right Concentration。有的人把 Sammāsati 翻譯成 Right Mind 是不適當的，因為 sati 或 smṛti (如同《念處經》或《正法念處經》所強調的) 在過程中被遺漏了。關於八正道的其他項目，學者的譯語時有不同，目前尚無統一的譯語。

[註 8] 起草公約的委員有：Havanpola Ratanasara, Ananda W. P. Guruge, Karuna Dharma, Henry Shin 及 Jack Bath。

【縮寫對照表】

A.	<i>Aṅguttaranikāya</i>	《增支部》
Cv.	<i>Cullavagga</i>	《小品》
D.	<i>Dīghanikāya</i>	《長部》
Dp.	<i>Dhammapada</i>	《法句經》
It.	<i>Itivuttaka</i>	《如是語經》
M.	<i>Majjhimanikāya</i>	《中部》
Mt.	<i>Majjhimanikāya Commentary</i>	《中部論》
Mv.	<i>Mahāvagga</i>	《大品》
Pac.	<i>Pācittiya in suttavibhaṅga</i>	《經分別·波逸提》
S.	<i>Saṃyuttanikāya</i>	《相應部》
Sn.	<i>Suttanipāta</i>	《經集》
Sv.	<i>Suttavibhaṅga</i>	《經分別》
U.	<i>Udāna</i>	《自說經》

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~待續~