



静心学堂丛书

The Mindful Peace Academy Collection

中英双语 Chinese-English Edition

# 开启正念 与慈悲大爱

Unlocking Mindfulness and Universal Compassion

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今天是 2023 年元旦，新年第一天。首先，祝福大家在新的一年里平安健康，吉祥如意，远离一切违缘，精进修学，真正走在菩提道上。同时也祈愿世界和谐安定，风调雨顺，人民幸福安乐。

# 一、觉醒在当代社会的意义

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从改变个体入手  
通过修身养性、道德建设  
培养慈悲大爱之心  
当每个人变得美好  
世界自然就美好了

2022年，我们走过了不寻常的一年。其实不止一年，因为疫情已历时三年。在此期间，世界不仅发生了火山、地震等自然灾害，还出现了严重的国际冲突。人们都在担心冲突不断升级，导致第三次世界大战，甚至核战争。在这样的大环境下，不少企业甚至整个产业面临停摆，也使身处其间的人焦虑、抑郁、烦恼，感觉越活越不容易。

问题的根源在哪里？主要来自贪嗔痴。长期以来，人类为了占有更多财富，不断鼓动欲望，大力发展工业、科技、商业。在提升物质文明的同时，也使环境受到极大破坏。地球经过几亿年形成的生态系统，短短百余年来，就遭到不可逆转的伤害。我们原以为，

经济发达了，想要什么就有什么，世界应该越来越美好。事实上，贪嗔痴不仅造成种种环境问题，还带来更多的人心失衡和社会乱象。

我们要改变世界，必须回归东方智慧。不论儒家的修身、齐家、治国、平天下，还是佛法的心净则国土净，都是从改变个体入手，通过修身养性、心灵净化、道德建设，培养慈悲大爱之心。当每个人变得美好，世界自然就美好了。这是东方智慧的思路，所以人类需要反省，看到目前社会发展存在的重大问题。如果继续下去，世界必然会危机重重。当然这不是说，我们不要发展经济，改善世界，但关键是改变人心。

在东西方文化中，有两个理念非常重要，一是智慧，一是慈悲大爱。这也是觉醒生命的两大内涵。不论什么文化，都推崇智慧和慈悲，但怎么落实？如何使人开启智慧，拥有慈悲？其实是很难的，所以成为各种哲学、宗教探讨的重点所在。

佛法的殊胜在于，不仅为我们揭示了智慧和慈悲的完整内涵，还指引了开启智慧、增长慈悲的具体方法。曾有媒体评出世界十大奢侈品，榜首就是“生命

的觉醒”。其他还有“自由喜悦充满爱的心、走遍天下的气魄、回归自然的能力”等，没有一项是关于物质的。所谓奢侈品，意味着它是多数人向往却求之不得的。因此，引导更多人觉醒，是世界的希望所在。

在经历漫长的疫情和灾难后，希望 2023 年会成为觉醒元年，成为开启智慧和慈悲大爱的新起点。这就需要传承东方优秀的传统文化。我们倡导的修学模式，正是致力于对两大内涵的认识和实践。

## 二、正念是开启觉醒的钥匙

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今天的人学习佛法  
或是读诵佛典、研究经教  
或是参加各种活动  
似乎也在忙于各种事  
但我们有没有走在觉醒路上  
是否知道这条路该怎么走



佛为觉者，代表究竟圆满的觉醒。佛陀出世对人类最大的意义，就是发现每个众生都有觉醒潜质，有自我拯救的能力。正如《法华经》所说，诸佛世尊唯以一大事因缘故出现于世，就是开示众生悟入佛的知见。可见，开启觉醒的重要性不容置疑。

关键在于，怎么才能走向觉醒？佛陀通过修行发现了这条古仙人道，然后说法 45 年，再由历代祖师深入阐扬，形成千经万论，及汉传、藏传、南传三大语系和各个宗派。这些经论和法门都在引领我们走上觉醒之路。但在两千多年的流传过程中，随着这条路的不断被解读，又变得逐渐模糊，甚至有点扑朔迷离。

今天的人学习佛法，或是读诵佛典、研究经教、

礼忏念佛，或是参加各种活动，似乎也在忙于各种事。但我们有没有走在觉醒路上？是否知道这条路该怎么走？其实很多人是不清楚的，只是跟着大家那么做，却很少思考：这么做的修行原理是什么？我几十年的弘法探索，就是想让大家知道，这条路究竟怎么走，对目标、路径、方法清清楚楚。

走向觉醒的关键在哪里？就像我们来到一座屋宇林立的城市，其中有座豪宅，藏着无价宝珠。如何寻宝？首先要找到藏宝的房子。这并不容易，所以人们就在城中转来转去，最后变成逛街了。看到什么好玩就去玩玩，流连忘返，甚至安营扎寨，过起日子来，根本忘了“我来这里究竟干什么”。

很多人学佛也是这样，问题在哪里？就是不知道重点所在。修行，必须立足于对生命实相的认识。佛与众生的根本分歧在哪里？凡夫和圣贤的根本分歧在哪里？就在明和无明。发展无明，就会进入轮回轨道；开启明性，才能回归觉性海洋。

我最近在静修的同时，也会看看禅宗、南传、藏传等高阶禅修是怎么阐述相关问题的。佛法认为，每



个生命内在都有觉醒潜质，即空明不二之心。这个心既有空的特质，也有明的特质。为什么我们认识不到？正是被无明遮蔽。我们现有的生命系统，从第八阿赖耶识、第七末那识到前六识，都是依托无明产生的，又称妄识系统。其实，这个妄识系统的本质还是觉性。

因此，每个念头都包含明和无明两个成分。虽有明的潜质，实际却往往被无明操控。无明的特征是不

知不觉，反之，在每个当下能清楚地觉知自己在走路、说话或做事，就来自明的作用。所以，解脱在每个念头、每个当下都可以实现。忘失正念，即落入无明；保持正念，即回归明性。

当我们在复杂的城市找到藏宝的房间后，还需要钥匙，才能打开锁住的房门。这把开启觉醒之门的钥匙，就是正念。只要带着觉知面对念头，不去抵触妄念和烦恼，妄念乃至烦恼就能回归觉性海洋，不会对我们构成伤害。换言之，念头在生起的当下，自己就能解脱。这是最直截了当的方法。就像波浪的本质都是水，同样，所有的妄念和烦恼，本质都是觉性。只是被无明所扭曲，才会变成烦恼，给我们制造痛苦。

修行的关键在于，当每个念头生起，或遇到每件事情时，是用贪嗔痴的串习面对，还是用正念去觉知？如果用串习，每个念头乃至境界都会成为轮回的增上缘，为轮回添砖加瓦。如果用正念面对，在觉知的当下就能解脱，因为念头本身蕴含了解脱的力量。

所有修行法门中，正念禅修非常关键。这和心理学界流行的正念有深浅之别，后者偏向技术性，而我

们讲的正念是立足于《大念处经》，立足于四念处乃至整个三十七道品，不仅要修习正知正念，还要以出离心、菩提心、持戒和空性见来支持。这样的正念修行，才是完整的体系，才能导向觉醒和解脱。

## 三、三级课程与觉醒

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核心是围绕两大修行  
一是智慧，从正念到觉醒解脱  
一是慈悲，从菩提心到菩萨行  
这些修行不是说法  
而是可以落到实处的

过去，我们一直在做修学模式和服务大众模式，形成初、中、高的修学模式。这套课程又可分为以下板块。

第一是“智慧人生”。通过人生佛教系列的学习，我们开始以佛法智慧看问题。当人生观、世界观、价值观改变了，粗的烦恼就会随之减少。这在修学者中属于普遍现象，也是人们乐意学习人生佛教系列，并从中受益的重要原因。

第二是“走近佛陀”，课程包括《走近佛陀，认识佛法》和《皈依修学手册》。通过这部分的学习，了解佛陀出家、修行、追求真理、走向觉醒的历程，以及他在成道后，如何引导普天下的芸芸众生。认识

佛陀生平，使我们以这位悲智圆满的觉者为榜样，了解佛教是怎么回事，学佛的意义在哪里，修学的纲领是什么。《皈依修学手册》则是通过对佛法僧三宝的认识，引导我们如理如法地建立佛教信仰。

第三是“佛法要领”，主要内容为《道次第》，既是修学次第，也是要诀所在。通过这部分的学习，建立暇满义大、念死无常、轮回是苦、深信业果四个重要认识。如果光学人生佛教，我们会觉得这个世界挺好。有些人不学佛时，常常生起烦恼，学佛后，粗的烦恼少了，似乎生活很美满，可以永远这么玩下去。具备这四种思维后，对生命会有不同的认识。暇满义大是价值观，告诉我们人身蕴含多大的价值，应该如何用好它。念死无常是提醒我们，不管我们多么喜欢这个世界，也只是暂时的客人而已，待不了多久。轮回是苦说明，就算生活环境再好，只要没解决贪嗔痴，都不是真正的美满，因为轮回本质就是痛苦的。深信业果则指出，世间一切都有它的因缘因果，我们想得到好的结果，就得在因上努力。

这四点，佛教称之为转心的思维，即转变观念，





减少对现世的贪著，是追求解脱和觉醒的基础。如果没有这些思维，我们多半会停留在人天乘。比如在别院，一切都很美好，似乎是人间净土。但可以一直在这里吗？肯定不行。即使什么变故都不发生，最终还是要离开，不可能永远待下去。所以说，这些思维可以将我们从入世导向出世，打破对现世的眷恋，知道眼前拥有的一切都靠不住，唯有觉醒才能带来究竟的安乐，实现终极的意义。这就需要皈依三宝，进而发起出离心、菩提心，导向解脱道和菩萨道。这是佛法最根本的两条道路，八万四千法门，最后都要回归这

两条路。

第四是“正念之道”。通过《百法明门论》《辩中边论·辩修对治品》的学习，掌握解脱道的路径和要领。在前面的学习中，我们也知道念死无常，轮回是苦，但怎么断除惑业苦，解决结生相续，解决烦恼杂染、业杂染、生杂染？必须落实到正念之道。在这部分内容中，我们建立了正念禅修的次第。初级，是选择所缘，培养专注和觉知。中级，是依四念处、



三十七道品的禅修，把正念拓展到生活各个方面。高级，是依空性正见，解除二元执著，放下觉知，体认无念。通过三级正念禅修，逐步解除无明烦恼，成就觉醒和解脱。

我们要把所学法义变成自身认识，必须以八步三禅来落实。修行包括分别和无分别，八步三禅是靠分别、理性和思维修来转变观念，调整心态。如果没有这个前提，正念是修不好的，只能暂时解决一些心理问题。因为修行要重建心灵世界，这是一项系统工程，包括人生观、世界观、价值观的改变，也包括发心、行为、生活方式的改变。在此过程中，正见尤为重要。

为什么每天会有这么多念头干扰我们？这些念头的的基础是什么？就是我们的认识，把自我看得太实在，也把世界看得太实在。这种自性见正是轮回的支撑点。在佛法的基本正见中，无常说明一切都是变化的，不要幻想永恒；无我说明现实的一切都不属于你，和你只有暂时的关系；无自性空说明万物都是条件关系的假相，没有所谓的自性。现代量子力学也发现，物质世界没有固定不变的特质，我们认识的世界没有离开

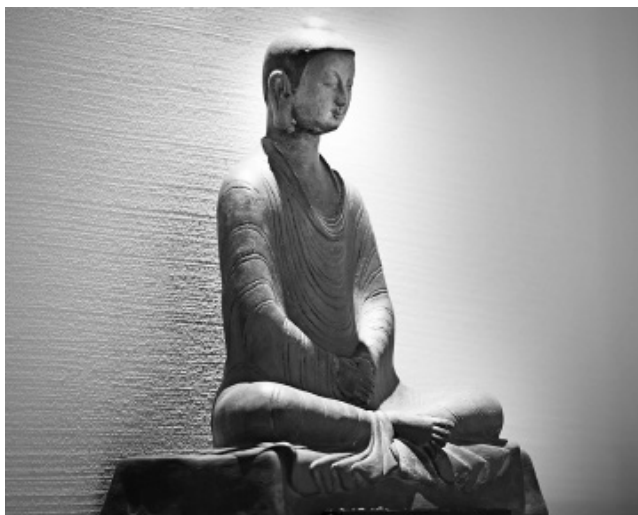
自身认识。我们要不断提醒自己，从这些角度看世界，外境产生的干扰就会越来越少。贪嗔痴都是建立在我法二执的基础上，把自我和世界看得太实在，就会被念头和影像左右。禅修要面对的，正是这些念头和影像。看清念头和影像的本质，不受其干扰，才能时时安住于虚空那样的心。

第五是“学做菩萨”。通过《入菩萨行论》《瑜伽菩萨戒品》的学习，了解菩提心在大乘佛法中的独特性，以及如何发菩提心，行菩萨行。尤其是《入菩萨行论》，以菩提心为核心，从菩提心的殊胜，到菩提心的生起、成长、提升乃至圆满，以清晰而善巧的阐述，构建了菩萨道的完整修学体系。菩萨道修行不仅是一种行为，更是慈心、悲心、无所得心等利他心行的圆满，体现了慈悲大爱的菩萨精神。三种利他禅修，正是帮助我们次第地落实这些利他心行。

第六是“入不二门”。通过《辩中边论》《心经》《金刚经》的学习，解决二元对立。凡夫都是活在二元世界中，由此产生贪嗔痴，乃至爱恨情仇。不论智慧还是慈悲的修行，都要超越对二元的执著，了解世

间一切是如梦如幻的。这样才能体会云彩背后的天空，体会不二法门的真意。在禅修时，我也经常引导大家，要体会虚空般空明不二的心。只要我们持续训练觉知，念头的力量就会随之减弱。

从慈悲的修行来说，要从有限的慈悲到无限的慈悲，从有我的慈悲到无我的慈悲，从有所得的慈悲到无所得的慈悲。在此过程中，空性见非常重要。否则，我们往往会在做事过程中产生执著，包括对事相的执著，对结果的执著，进而产生我相、人相、众生相、寿者相。



在三级正念和三级利他的修行中，高级阶段都有“无所得心”。在正念修行中，要体会心既了不可得，又了了明知；在慈心修行中，则要做到“百花丛中过，片叶不沾身”。如《金刚经》所说，虽然广修六度，庄严国土，修种种利他善行，但始终保有无所得之心，所谓“如是灭度无量无数无边众生，实无众生得灭度者”。即使度化无量众生，内心也不执著众生相，不执著任何结果。总之，入不二门可以使解脱道、菩萨道的修行得以提升。

第七是“回归本心”。通过《坛经》的修行，带心回家。每个众生都有觉醒的潜质，都能成佛。《坛经》是顿悟法门，直接指点我们认识没有造作的清明之心，所谓“直指人心，见性成佛”。有了之前正念禅修的基础，再来认识这个心就不难了。

以上几个板块，是根据修学需要所作的细分，各阶段的重点更明确。但核心还是围绕两大修行，一是智慧，从正念到觉醒解脱；一是慈悲，从菩提心到菩萨行。这些修行不是说法，而是可以落到实处的。三级课程设计和修学纲领，正是一步步引领我们走上正念与慈悲大爱的修学旅程。

## 四、正念与利他在别院的落实

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心的清明，是每个人原本具足的  
只是陷入无明和念头后才隐没不见  
现在要做的，就是重新开启它  
当我们听到钟声，必须提醒自己  
——把心带回当下



说到正念修行，我们很容易把它限定在某种形式，似乎坐在那里才是禅修，做事就不是禅修；或者经行才是禅修，平时走路就不是禅修。虽然别院每天都有定课，但光靠座上和经行，每次就那点时间，效果也难以保障。所以还要靠平时的训练，把禅修贯穿到座下，真正和生活打成一片。就像禅宗说的，“行亦禅，坐亦禅，语默动静体安然”。

怎么把禅修变成一种生活？近期，我们做了两个表格，一是“正念生活日记”，每天记录；一是“利他禅修周记”，每周记录。表中列举了正念和利他修行的要素，当我们修习正念和利他行时，需要依此检讨，看看自己是否具备相关要素，如何进一步提升。

其中，正念修行有十项基本要素，包括基础、止禅和观禅三部分。

基础的要素有三项。第一是正确发心，发起出离心或菩提心。第二是简单有序的生活，这和戒律有关。心的活动有一贯性和延续性，如果生活混乱，禅修是很难修好的。第三是保有热忱，就是对禅修有一份意乐，愿意努力投入。《念处经》讲到正念修行时，首先就讲到要有热忱。

止禅的要素也有三项。第一是有所缘，这不单指呼吸等座上修的所缘，还包括正在做的所有事，都可作为修习所缘。比如我们走路，走路就是所缘；吃饭，吃饭就是所缘。第二是用好作意心所，经论中，对作意的定义是“警觉为性”“引心令趣自境为业”。作意，相当于心理学所说的注意，是通过警觉，把心引向一个锚点，这是修习止禅不可缺少的条件。第三是专注，让心投入所缘，持续、稳定地保持专注。

观禅的要素共有四项。第一是觉知，知道自己正在做什么。走路时，清楚地知道当下在走路；吃饭时，清楚地知道当下在吃饭。第二是接纳，在正念禅



修的过程中，不管出现什么感受或念头，都要如实接纳，不能心生抗拒。第三是不评判，念头来了，只要保持觉知，不作任何评判，不要想着“我的心怎么这么乱”。前面说过，当我们保持觉知时，所有念头都会回归觉性海洋。如果没有觉知，再好的想法也不过是一种妄念。第四是具足正见，以缘起、无常、无我、无自性空的正见，观察自己的身心和外在世界。

我们每天要对照表格勾选，看看自己是否具备这些要素。除此以外，还有两点属于高阶禅修的要求，即无念和无住，有一定难度。作为基础禅修来说，具备前面十点就够用了。

了解正念修行的要素后，就要把禅修贯穿到整个生活，从早晨起床到晚上睡觉，有意识地保持觉知。在以上所说的十点中，又以专注和觉知为关键。其实这些方法并不难，重要的是持之以恒，时时保持专注，保有觉知。所以表格中要填写，做这件事要多长时间，其中多长时间能保持正念，然后说明自己的修习体会。每天晚上，我们都要根据表格自我检验，回顾一下今天的正念禅修达到什么效果，有没有进步。只有不断反省并提醒，才能真正把正念落实到生活中。

别院做了个正念钟，元旦就要开始敲响觉醒的钟声。从早上八点到下午五点，每小时敲一次，提醒大家把心带回当下，提起正念。我们会建立轮班制度，或主动报名。作为敲钟人，要将这段时间完全投入正念修行，不要看书，也不要带手机。敲钟前先合掌默念：“愿觉醒的钟声传遍世界，愿一切众生走向觉醒。”然后带着这样的愿心敲响钟声。没机会听到钟声的人，可以在手机上设置正念铃，准点提醒。

我们听到钟声时，要立刻把心带回当下。当下到底在哪里？其实有三个层面。第一个层面是此刻在做

的事。我们平时走路时，心往往东想西想，一会儿跑到过去，一会儿跑到未来。做事也是同样，做着做着，心就不知跑哪去了。这都是散乱的表现，所以要提起正念，把心带到当下所做的事情上，安住在这个所缘中。第二个层面是觉知，对做事的过程清清楚楚，了了分明。每个心念都有见分、相分、自证分，觉知就是自证分，也是自觉的力量。第三个层面是没有造作的清明的心，这是究竟的、超越时空的当下。我们暂时可能体会不到，但只要持续修习，迷惑的力量就会随之减少，清明的心也会逐步显露出来。到那时，念头就像飘来飘去的云彩，对我们没有丝毫影响。无论做什么，都像雁过长空，了无痕迹。

心的清明，是每个人原本具足的，只是陷入无明和念头后才隐没不见。现在要做的，就是重新开启它。当我们听到钟声，必须提醒自己——把心带回当下。一行禅师的梅村也有正念钟，大家听到钟声时，立刻停止手上一切事务。我们在形式上无须这样，尤其对外接待时，该做什么还是做什么，不要让人觉得怪怪的，但内心要提起正念。如果是自己独处，可以趁机

静一下，安坐一两分钟乃至十分钟。

总之，钟声是提醒我们保持正念的辅助。只要不断训练，正念就会成为我们的用心习惯，最终打成一片。无始以来，我们已经习惯轮回的模式，想要从中走出，需要特别努力。我们知道，企业转型时都很艰难，学佛也是同样。想从凡夫心转到正念轨道，必须突破重重障碍。但习惯之后，我们就会尝到甜头。有了正念，生命将越来越自在，越来越欢喜，内心的清明将越来越有力量。我们已经有了明确的方法，但还要持之以恒。

关于利他的修行，每周记录一次即可。不少人觉得自己缺乏慈悲，正是没有面对具体的人和事，实实在在地训练。我们首先要了解，利他该修哪些心。在利他禅修的表格中，列举了慈心、感恩、随喜、理解、同情、接纳、布施、悲悯心、陪伴、关爱、引导、爱语、利行、同事、忍辱、大悲心、菩提心、平等心、无我利他、无所得心、无住，包含初、中、高三级利他的元素。如何修习这些心理？表格提出了四个角度。

第一是利益思维，深入思考利他的利益及不修的

过患。就像心怀感恩的人，在在处处，都能看到父母、师长、大众乃至国家为自己提供的种种帮助，就会对所有人心生欢喜。而没有感恩心的人，往往会带着仇视的眼光看待他人，觉得全社会都对不起自己，结果使自己痛苦，别人也痛苦。

第二是《慈经》修习，需要不断忆念“愿我无敌意无危险，愿我没有身体的痛苦，愿我没有精神的痛苦，愿我保持快乐”，将此变成发自内心的愿望。然后再把对自己生起的慈悲，替换为对他人，乃至一切众生。久而久之，我们就会成为慈悲的存在，源源不断地散发慈心。再以慈心为基础，生起感恩、随喜、



理解、同情、接纳。所有这些心理，又在帮助我们更好地实践慈心。

第三是缘起思维。说到理解、同情、接纳时，我们往往不容易做到。究其原因，就是缺少缘起的思维。我们习惯性地从自我感觉出发，以这个标准去看，会觉得别人怎么会这么想，这么做，无法理解，自然谈不上同情和接纳。事实上，每个人都有不同的经历，由此形成他的观念和行为习惯。缘起思维就是让我们跳出自我感觉，从对方的角度，设身处地为对方着想。当你想到对方的处境、成长、教育背景，就能理解他为什么会说这些话，做出这些举动。因为理解，就能心生同情，慈悲接纳。所以，缘起思维是修习慈悲的关键。

第四是空性见。我们要修平等心，修无我利他、无住、无所得心，都离不开空性见。没有空性见，就无法体会众生的平等性；没有空性见，就无法彻底放下我执，体会无我，践行无我利他；没有空性见，就无法体会无所得之心，做到心无所住。

第五是其他，除以上四点外，自己还运用了什么



方法。

表格的另一部分是修习对象。我们讲慈悲，讲发菩提心，讲利益众生，必须落实到具体对象，否则就容易流于口号。就像“为人民服务”，如果对具体的人没感觉，怎么能做好服务？修行也是同样，如果说“我要利益众生，慈悲众生”，但面对具体众生时，还是活在我执、我见、贪嗔痴中，是不可能关爱、利益、慈悲对方的。这种现象非常普遍。

表中列举了几类修习对象。第一是共同生活的人，比如你的孩子、父母、兄弟姐妹、同住伙伴。第二是共同工作的人。第三是共同修学的人，即同参道友。第四是除此以外的所有人，包括和你没关系的人。我们修慈悲心，不仅要对自己身边人，还要面向一切众生；不仅要对人类，还要面向动物。针对这四类众生，我们生起了哪种心，运用了什么方法，可以在表格中打勾。每周再写一篇周记，总结一下自己修得怎样，有什么心得。接下来，我们还考虑把它做成 h5 之类的格式，凡是修学者都能使用。希望别院先用起来，因为你们最有条件来做。

## 五、觉醒是人类世界的希望

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在科技日益发达的今天  
人类本该越过越好  
为什么越来越不容易幸福  
因为大家都活在自我中  
未来要有什么样的文化  
才能建立理想世界，让人类和谐安定

智慧和慈悲，是人类共同向往和推崇的两大理念。通过正念开启智慧，通过利他增长慈悲大爱，也是未来世界特别需要的。我曾和周国平老师就“人工智能时代，人类何去何从”展开对话，如果只看具体工作，未来可能 80% 的事都可以用人工智能完成，甚至比人做得更好。那么，人类的优势到底在哪里？就是要不断认识自己，提升自己。

佛教自古就被称为心性之学，对意识、潜意识的了解最透彻，对生命潜能的开发最究竟。佛教认为，每个生命都有两个层面，一是有限性，一是无限性。从有限性的层面看，人真的太渺小了。人在地球是微不足道的，地球在太阳系是微不足道的，太阳系在银

河系是微不足道的，而银河系在整个宇宙又是微不足道的。如果着眼于生命的有限性，不论今天多么风光，多么富有，都是转瞬即逝的尘埃。

但佛法告诉我们，生命还有无限性，心的本质就是宇宙的本质。当我们开发觉醒潜质，就能彰显生命的无限性。宇宙虽大，心量更大，所谓心包太虚，量周沙界。找到这样的心，我们才能找到生命存在的价值。

否则，在这个越来越不确定的世界，面对越来越多的天灾人祸，我们真的会对未来感到迷茫，进而导



致抑郁、焦虑、恐惧，及贪婪、仇恨、对立等负面心理。事实上，这些问题正日益严重，让世界充满戾气和动荡。怎么解决？必须通过禅修，让生命走向觉醒，成为智慧和慈悲的人，成为佛菩萨那样的圣贤。

在科技日益发达的今天，人类本该越过越好，为什么越来越不容易幸福？因为大家都活在自我中。未来要有什么样的文化，才能建立理想世界，让人类和谐安定？我想，离不开东方的儒释道文化。

首先，西方文化是从改变世界来建立人类幸福。这种物质文明、科技文明虽然给人类世界带来极大的发展，但由此产生的副作用，已是显而易见的。而东方文化是从人心入手，从改变人心到改变世界。当人心改善了，我们就会有健全的人格。当人人变美好，世界自然也会变得更好。这种解决方式是究竟且没有副作用的。

其次，佛法倡导无我，这是和其他所有文化的差别所在。西方宗教也讲博爱，但它是有我的，认为有独一无二的主宰。这种有我的文化，会导致宗教、文化的冲突，甚至引发战争。但佛教的慈悲大爱是建立



在无我之上，认为凡是从自我出发，或以伤害他人为目的，不论理由多么充分，都是错误的。所以佛教讲的是无我利他，没有个人的利益，只有众生的利益、世界的利益。

第三，西方文化强调二元对立，造成了宗教之间的征服，国家之间的征服，以及人对自然的征服。而东方文化认为人和世界是一体的，如儒家的天人合一，佛教的依正不二，众生平等。所以我们不能通过破坏环境来获得幸福，只有尊重万物，爱护自然，才能保障每个众生的利益。

总之，弘扬东方的优秀传统文化，是世界的希望所在。正念与慈悲大爱正是东方文化的精华，也是走向觉醒的基本内涵。正念可以开启智慧，化解不良情绪，造就健全人格，已是不容置疑的事实。近年来，正念风靡世界，在教育、医疗、心理学等领域发挥了很大作用。依无我建立的慈悲大爱，则是化解各种冲突的良药，也是当今社会特别需要的。

在 2023 年新年之际，让我们敲响觉醒的钟声，祈愿一切众生走向生命觉醒，拥有慈悲大爱！







UNLOCKING MINDFULNESS  
AND  
UNIVERSAL COMPASSION

Master Jiqun

Translated by MPI Translation Center

**Video Dharma Talk at Amrita Retreat Center  
on New Year 2023**

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**T**oday is New Year's Day, marking the beginning of 2023. First, I wish you peace, health, auspiciousness, and joy in the new year. May you stay away from all adverse conditions, study and practice relentlessly, and truly walk on the Bodhi path. I also pray for world harmony and stability, favorable weather, and the happiness and well-being of all people.

# I

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF AWAKENING IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

We've experienced an extraordinary year in 2022. In fact, it has been more than a year, as the pandemic has lasted for three years. Throughout this period, the world experienced natural calamities like volcanoes, earthquakes, and severe international conflicts. There were widespread fears of escalating conflicts leading to a third world war or even nuclear war. Under such circumstances, many enterprises and even entire industries are facing a halt, causing people involved to feel anxious, depressed, and troubled, making life increasingly difficult.

What's the root of the problem? It primarily arises from greed, hatred, and ignorance. For a long time, humans have stoked desires to possess more wealth, vigorously developing industry, technology, and commerce. While advancing material civilization, this has dramatically damaged the environment. The ecosystem formed by the earth through hundreds of millions of years has been irreversibly damaged in just over a hundred years. We initially thought that, with economic development, we could have whatever we wanted, and the world should become increasingly better. However, greed, hatred, and ignorance have caused various environmental issues and led to a greater imbalance in human minds and widespread social chaos.

To change the world, we must embrace Eastern wisdom. For instance, Confucianism advocates first cultivating oneself, then managing the family, governing the state, and bringing peace to the world; Buddhism holds that a pure mind makes a pure land. Both start with changing the individual through cultivating oneself, purifying the

mind, building moral character, and fostering universal compassion. When every individual becomes better, the world naturally improves. This perspective, deeply embedded in Eastern wisdom, encourages humanity to reflect and acknowledge the critical challenges in our current social development. Continuing on this trajectory will inevitably lead to a world full of crises. This does not mean we should not pursue economic development to improve the world, but the key lies in changing people's minds.

In Eastern and Western cultures, two concepts are pivotal: wisdom and universal compassion, which are the two essences of an awakened life. While all cultures extol wisdom and compassion, the challenge is how to implement them. How do we unlock wisdom and cultivate compassion? This is quite difficult, making it a focal point of discussion in various philosophies and religions.

In Buddhism, the Dharma's unique excellence lies in not only revealing the complete meanings of wisdom and



compassion but also providing specific methods to develop them. A media outlet once ranked the world's top ten luxuries, placing "the enlightenment of life" at the top. Other luxuries included "a heart free with the joy of love," "the courage to travel the world," and "the ability to return to nature," none of which are about material things. The term "luxury" means that it is something that most people desire but cannot get it. Therefore, leading more people to awakening is the hope of the world.

After a prolonged pandemic and disasters, I hope 2023 will be the inaugural year of awakening, marking a new beginning of unlocking wisdom and universal compassion. To achieve this, we must inherit the distinguished traditional Eastern culture. The study and practice mode we advocate is dedicated to understanding and implementing the two essences.

## II

### MINDFULNESS IS THE KEY TO UNLOCKING AWAKENING

Buddha, as the awakened, represents the ultimate and complete awakening. The greatest significance of Buddha's presence to humanity is the revelation that every sentient being has the potential to awaken and the capacity for self-liberation. As stated in the *Lotus Sutra*, the sole reason for the Buddhas' presence in the world is to guide sentient beings to attain the insight and wisdom of a Buddha. Thus, the importance of initiating awakening is indisputable.

The key is, how can one move towards awakening?

Buddha discovered this ancient immortal path through his practice and then taught the Dharma for 45 years. His teachings were further elaborated by successive generations of masters, forming thousands of sutras and treatises, as well as the three major traditions: Han, Tibetan, and Theravada, along with various sects. All these sutras, treatises, and teachings are meant to lead us on the path to awakening. However, over two thousand years of transmission, as these teachings have been continuously interpreted, the path has become increasingly obscure, even somewhat perplexing.

Today, people studying Buddhism are seemingly busy with numerous tasks, such as reading, chanting, or studying sutras, worshipping Buddhas and bodhisattvas, repenting one's karmic evil, chanting Buddhas' names, or participating in various activities, but are we truly on the path to awakening? Do we know how to navigate this path? Many are unclear, simply following others without pondering the principles behind their practices. My decades of exploration in spreading the Dharma aim to

let everyone know how to walk on this path with a clear understanding of the goals, the path, and the methods.

Where lies the key to awakening? It's like arriving in a city filled with buildings, among which a mansion hides a priceless gem. How do we find the treasure? First, we must find the mansion where the treasure is hidden. This is not easy, so we wander around the city, which eventually turns into a leisurely stroll. We get distracted by whatever seems fun, lingering without thought of returning, even settling down, and starting to live there, utterly forgetting our original purpose: "What exactly did I come here for?"

Many people study Buddhism in the same manner, but what is the problem? It is because we do not know where the focus lies. Buddhist cultivation must be based on understanding the true nature of life. Where is the fundamental difference between Buddha and sentient beings, or between ordinary beings and sages? It lies in enlightenment and ignorance. Developing ignorance leads one onto the path of reincarnation; unlocking enlightenment

allows one to return to the ocean of awakened nature.

Recently, while meditating, I have also been reading about how Chan School, Theravada, and Tibetan practices expound on related issues in their advanced meditation. Buddhism believes that all life inherently possesses the potential for awakening, the non-dualistic mind of emptiness and enlightenment. That implies that this mind embodies the characteristics of both emptiness and enlightenment. Why can't we perceive it? It is because our mind is veiled by ignorance. Our current life system, from the first six consciousnesses to the seventh Manas consciousness, and to the eighth Alaya consciousness, is based on ignorance, also called the system of deluded consciousness. However, this system of deluded consciousness still has the nature of awakening.

Therefore, every thought contains both elements of enlightenment and ignorance. Despite the potential for enlightenment, it is often dominated by ignorance, characterized by unawareness. Conversely, being fully aware

in each moment, whether walking, talking, or acting, stems from the function of enlightenment. Thus, liberation can be achieved in every thought and every moment. Losing mindfulness leads to ignorance; maintaining mindfulness is a return to enlightenment.

After finding the treasure room in a complex city, we still need a key to unlock the door that's been locked. The key to unlocking the door to awakening is mindfulness. When we observe our thoughts with awareness, not resisting delusions or afflictions, these delusions and afflictions can return to the ocean of awakened nature and will not harm us. In other words, we can attain liberation when a thought arises. This is the most direct method. Just as the nature of waves is water, similarly, the nature of all delusions and afflictions is awakening. It is only when distorted by ignorance that it turns into afflictions, causing us suffering.

The key to cultivation lies in how we confront each arising thought or situation: do we face it with habits

of greed, hatred, and ignorance, or with mindfulness? If approached with habits, each thought and each situation can contribute to samsara (the cycle of rebirth), further entrenching us. Conversely, if faced with mindfulness, one can achieve liberation at the moment of awareness, as the thought contains the power of liberation.

In all practices, mindfulness meditation is crucial. This differs significantly from the more technique-oriented mindfulness popular in the field of psychology. The mindfulness we discuss is grounded in the *Maha Satipatthana Sutta*, based on the four foundations of mindfulness and extending to the entire thirty-seven factors of enlightenment. It involves not just practicing the right awareness and mindfulness, but also being supported by the mind of renunciation, bodhicitta, adherence to precepts, and the view of emptiness. Only such practice of mindfulness forms a complete system that can lead to true awakening and liberation.

# III

## DHARMA PRACTICE COURSES AND AWAKENING

In the past, we have implemented the approaches of study and service to the public, forming three levels of practice courses: preliminary, intermediate, and advanced. This set of courses can be further divided into the following sections.

The first is *Life of Wisdom*. Through the study of Humanistic Buddhism, we begin to view problems through the lens of Buddhist wisdom. When our views of life, the world, and values change, our coarse afflictions will naturally diminish. This is a common phenomenon among practitioners. It is also a major reason why people are keen



to study the Humanistic Buddhism series and benefit from it.

The second is *Approaching the Buddha*, which includes the courses *Approaching the Buddha and Understanding the Dharma* and *A Guide to Taking Refuge and Studying Buddhism*. Through learning *Approaching the Buddha and Understanding the Dharma*, we can understand the Buddha's journey of renunciation, practice, pursuit of truth, and awakening, and how he guided all beings after enlightenment. Knowing the Buddha's life inspires us to take him as a model of perfect compassion and wisdom, understand what Buddhism is, the significance of learning Buddhism, and the framework for practice. *A Guide to Taking Refuge and Studying Buddhism* guides us to establish a proper Buddhist faith according to the Dharma through understanding the Three Jewels: the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

The third is *Essentials of Buddha Dharma*, focusing on the *Lam-rim (Gradual Path to Enlightenment)*, which

serves as both stages of practice and essentials of practice. Studying this treatise can help us establish four crucial understandings: the great significance of a precious human life endowed with leisure and opportunities (the time and ability to learn and practice the Dharma), contemplating the impermanence of death, the suffering of samsara, and the deep belief in the law of karma. If we only study Humanistic Buddhism alone, we would feel that this world is quite good. Some people frequently encounter afflictions when not engaged in Buddhist study. After learning Buddhism, their major afflictions diminish, giving an impression of a very satisfying life, seemingly sustainable indefinitely. However, one gains a different understanding of life with these four perspectives. Recognizing the preciousness of human life tells us how much value human life contains and how we should make good use of it. Contemplating the impermanence of death serves as a reminder that, no matter how much we like this world, we are only temporary guests, unable to stay for long. The fact that samsara is suffering reveals that no matter how comfortable our lives are, without addressing greed, hatred,

and ignorance, we won't achieve true contentment, as the nature of samsara is suffering. Believing firmly in the law of karma points out that everything in the world has its causes, conditions, and effects, and if we want to achieve good results, we must make efforts at the cause.

These four perspectives refer to the transformation of our minds in Buddhism, that is, changing our views. So, we can reduce attachment to the present world, which serves as the foundation for seeking liberation and awakening. Without these contemplations, our practice would likely remain in the Human and Heavenly Vehicle. For example, in Amrita Retreat Center, everything is perfect, seemingly like a pure land on earth. But can we stay here forever? Certainly not. Even if no changes occur, we eventually have to leave this world. It's impossible to stay here forever. Thus, these contemplations can guide our practice from mundane life to transcendence, breaking our attachment to the present world and realizing that everything we possess is unreliable. Only awakening can bring ultimate peace and fulfill the ultimate meaning

of life. This entails taking refuge in the Three Jewels, then developing the mind of renunciation and bodhicitta, leading to the path of liberation and the Bodhisattva path. These are the two fundamental paths in Buddhism, to which all 84,000 teachings eventually converge.

The fourth is *The Path of Mindfulness*. Through studying *Lucid Introduction to the One Hundred Dharmas* and the fourth chapter of *Discerning the Middle and the Extremes*, we can master the path and essentials of the liberation journey. From earlier learning, we understand the impermanence of death and the suffering of samsara. But how do we eliminate the suffering caused by delusion and karma, address the continuation of life and death, and resolve the three kinds of defilement, namely, afflictive defilement, karmic defilement, and rebirth defilement? All these must be resolved by practicing the path of mindfulness. In this segment, we establish the levels of mindfulness meditation. At the beginner level, it involves choosing the object of focus to cultivate concentration and awareness. At the intermediate level, meditation is

based on the four foundations of mindfulness and the thirty-seven aids to enlightenment, extending mindfulness to all aspects of life. At the advanced level, it involves the right view of emptiness, dissolving dualistic clinging, and letting go of awareness to realize no-thought. Through these three levels of mindfulness meditation, we gradually eliminate ignorance and afflictions, achieving awakening and liberation.

To transform the teachings we learn into personal understanding, we must apply them through the Eight Steps & Three Meditations. Practice generally includes both discriminative and non-discriminative aspects. The Eight Steps & Three Meditations relies on discriminative, rational, and contemplative practice to transform perspectives and adjust the mindset. Without this premise, mindfulness cannot be effectively cultivated and will only temporarily address psychological issues. This is because practice aims to reconstruct the inner world, a systematic endeavor involving changes in our view of life, the world, and values, as well as transformations in aspiration, behavior, and

lifestyle. In this process, the right view is incredibly crucial.

Why do so many thoughts disturb us every day? What underlies these thoughts? It's our perception, seeing the self and the world as too real. This view of self-nature is precisely the support point of samsara. In the basic right views of Buddhism, impermanence teaches that everything is changing, so one should not expect the illusions of permanence; no-self shows that nothing, in reality, belongs to you, only holding a temporary relationship with you; and emptiness reveals that all phenomena are interdependently arising illusions without self-nature. Modern quantum physics has also discovered that the material world does not possess fixed and unchanging characteristics; our understanding of the world does not exist apart from our own perception. We must constantly remind ourselves to view the world from these perspectives, and then the disturbances arising from external conditions will gradually diminish. Greed, hatred, and ignorance are all based on the dualistic attachment to self and phenomena. If we see the self and the world as too

real, we will be swayed by thoughts and mental images. In meditation, we confront these thoughts and mental images. By clearly seeing their true nature and not being disturbed by them, can we constantly abide in the mind as empty as the void.

The fifth is *Learning to Be a Bodhisattva*. Through studying *Bodhicharyavatara* (The *Way of the Bodhisattva*) and the *Yogacara Bodhisattva Precepts*, we can understand the uniqueness of bodhicitta in Mahayana Buddhism and how to develop and practice it. Particularly, the *Way of the Bodhisattva*, which takes bodhicitta as its core, from the excellence of bodhicitta to its generation, growth, enhancement, and even perfection, establishes a complete system for practicing the Bodhisattva path. The practice of the Bodhisattva path is not just an action but also the perfection of altruistic minds such as loving-kindness, compassion, and the mind of non-attainment, embodying the Bodhisattva spirit of universal compassion. The three types of altruistic meditation are meant to help us implement these altruistic practices step by step.

The sixth is *Entering the Gate of Non-Duality*. Through studying *Discerning the Middle and the Extremes*, the *Heart Sutra*, and the *Diamond Sutra*, we can address the issue of dualistic opposition. Ordinary beings live in a world of duality, which gives rise to greed, hatred, and ignorance, alongside emotions like love, hate, passion, and resentment. The practice of both wisdom and compassion requires transcending attachment to duality, understanding that all worldly phenomena are like dreams and illusions. This allows us to grasp the true meaning of the gate of non-duality, just like seeing the sky beyond the clouds. In meditation, I often guide everyone to experience the non-dualistic mind of emptiness and enlightenment, as empty as the void. As we continue to train the awareness, the power of thoughts will diminish accordingly.

For the practice of compassion, it is essential to move from limited to unlimited compassion, from self to no-self compassion, and from attainable to non-attainable compassion. In this process, the view of emptiness is crucial.



Otherwise, we tend to develop attachments in the process of doing things, including attachments to the tasks and their outcomes, thus leading to the arising of the forms of self, others, sentient beings, and longevity.

In the three levels of mindfulness and altruistic practices, “the mind of non-attainment” is attainable at the advanced stages. In mindfulness practice, one can realize that the mind is unattainable and become aware of everything clearly; in the practice of loving-kindness, one should achieve the state of “passing through a thicket of flowers, not a single leaf adheres.” As the *Diamond Sutra* states, even while extensively practicing the six perfections and adorning numerous Buddha-lands, performing various altruistic deeds, one always maintains the mind of non-attainment. As it is said, “In the liberation of innumerable beings, not a single being is liberated.” Even in the process of liberating countless beings, one does not cling to the form of beings or any outcomes. In essence, entering the gate of non-duality enhances the practices of the path of liberation and the bodhisattva path.

The seventh is *Returning to the Original Mind*. Through practicing the *Platform Sutra*, we can bring the mind back home. Every sentient being has the potential for awakening and can become a buddha. The *Platform Sutra* represents a method of sudden enlightenment, directly pointing us to recognize the non-discriminative, clear, and enlightened mind. It says, “directly pointing at the original mind, seeing one’s self-nature and becoming a buddha.” With the foundation laid by previous mindfulness, this original mind becomes more accessible.

The seven parts above are subdivisions based on practice needs, with a more explicit focus at each stage. However, the core revolves around two primary practices: one is wisdom, progressing from mindfulness to awakening and liberation; the other is compassion, from the arising of bodhicitta to the practice of the bodhisattva path. These practices are not merely theoretical but are meant to be applied practically. The three-level practice and study curriculum are designed to guide us step by step on the journey of learning and practicing mindfulness and universal compassion.

# IV

## IMPLEMENTING MINDFULNESS AND ALTRUISM IN AMRITA RETREAT CENTER

When talking about mindfulness practice, we often confine it to a specific form, as if only sitting is considered meditation practice, while doing activities is not, or that only walking meditation counts, while normal walking does not. Although there are regular sessions in Amrita Retreat Center, relying solely on sitting and walking meditation for a limited time each session, its effectiveness is hard to guarantee. Therefore, it's crucial to integrate training into everyday life, extending meditation beyond the cushion, and truly merging it with daily living.

This aligns with the Chan Buddhism saying, “Walking is Chan; sitting is Chan; whether speaking or silent, moving or still—one is always at peace.”

How do we turn Chan practice into a way of living? Recently, we’ve created two charts: one is the “Mindfulness Daily Journal” for daily recording, and the other is the “Altruistic Meditation Weekly Journal” for weekly logging. These charts list the elements of mindfulness and altruistic practice. When we practice mindfulness and altruistic actions, we need to use these charts for self-examination, to see if we possess the necessary elements and how we can improve further.

There are ten essential elements in mindfulness practice, which consists of three parts: foundation, concentration meditation (*samatha*), and insight meditation (*vipassana*).

The foundation consists of three elements. The first is the correct aspiration, initiating the mind of renunciation or *bodhicitta*. The second is a simple and orderly

life related to the practice of precepts. The mind operates in a consistent and continuous manner. If life is chaotic, it is very difficult to practice meditation well. The third is maintaining enthusiasm, meaning having joy in meditation and being willing to put in effort. When the *Satipatthana Sutta* discusses mindfulness practice, it initially emphasizes the importance of enthusiasm.

The concentration meditation also comprises three elements. First, select an object of focus, which refers not only to traditional meditation objects like the breath but also to any ongoing activity. For example, when we walk, walking is the object of focus; when we eat, eating is the object of focus. The second is to make good use of the mental functions of intention. In the sutras, the intention is defined as “being alert by nature” and “directing the mind towards its object as its function.” Intention, akin to what psychology calls attention, involves using alertness to anchor the mind to a point, an essential condition for practicing concentration meditation. The third is concentration, allowing the mind to engage with

its object in a sustained and stable manner.

The insight meditation includes four key aspects. The first is awareness, being conscious of what one is doing now: when walking, one knows, “I am walking”; when eating, one knows, “I am eating.” The second is acceptance, embracing whatever feelings or thoughts arise during mindfulness meditation without resistance. The third is non-judgment, maintaining awareness of thoughts as they come without evaluating them or thinking, “Why is my mind so chaotic?” As mentioned, when we maintain awareness, all thoughts return to the ocean of awakened nature. Without awareness, even the best ideas are merely delusions. The fourth is having the right views. This means observing one’s body, mind, and the external world with the right views of dependent origination, impermanence, no-self, and the emptiness of inherent existence.

We need to check off the chart every day to see if we possess all these elements. In addition to these, there are two more challenging advanced meditation requirements,

namely non-thought and non-abiding. For basic meditation practice, having the first ten elements is sufficient.

After understanding the elements of mindfulness practice, it's essential to integrate meditation throughout the day, from waking up in the morning to going to bed at night, consciously maintaining awareness. Among the ten elements mentioned, concentration and awareness are the key. These methods are not difficult. What's crucial is to maintain concentration and awareness at all times. Therefore, the chart requires noting how long a task is performed and how much of that time mindfulness is maintained, and describing one's practice experience. Every night, we should self-assess based on the chart, reviewing the effects of today's mindfulness practice and noting any progress. Continuous reflection and reminders are vital to truly incorporate mindfulness into daily life.

The Amrita Retreat Center has installed a mindfulness bell, set to strike the bell of awakening on New Year's Day. The bell rings every hour from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., reminding

everyone to bring your minds back to the present and cultivate mindfulness. We will establish a shift system or accept volunteers. As a bell striker, one should fully devote this time to mindfulness practice, avoiding reading books or using a cell phone. Before striking the bell, join hands and silently recite, “May the sound of the awakening bell spread throughout the world; may all beings move towards awakening.” Then, strike the bell with this aspiration.

When we hear the bell, we should immediately bring our minds back to the present. What exactly is the present? It exists on three levels. The first level is the activity we are engaged in at the moment. Usually, while walking, our minds wander, drifting to the past or future. The same happens while working; our minds drift off. This is a sign of distraction, so we need to cultivate mindfulness, focusing on the current activity with utmost concentration. The second level is awareness, which is being fully clear and distinct about the activity process. Each thought has subjective, objective, and self-witnessing aspects; awareness is the self-witnessing aspect, as well as the power



of self-awakening. The third level is the non-discriminative mind, the ultimate present beyond time and space. We may not temporarily grasp this, but with continuous practice, the power of delusion diminishes, and the clear mind gradually reveals itself. Then, thoughts become passing clouds, not affecting us at all. Whatever we do leaves no trace, like wild geese flying across the sky.

The clarity of mind is inherently present in everyone; it only becomes obscured by ignorance and thoughts. What we need to do now is to reactivate it. When we hear the bell, we must remind ourselves to bring our minds back to the present. There is also a mindfulness bell in the Plum Village of Master Thich Nhat Hanh. Everyone stops their activities immediately upon hearing the bell. We don't have to do exactly the same, especially when receiving visitors—just keep doing what you are doing, without making others feel awkward, but internally you should cultivate mindfulness. If you are alone, take this opportunity to calm down, sitting quietly for a minute or two or even ten minutes.

In summary, the bell serves as an aid to remind us to maintain mindfulness. With continuous training, mindfulness will become our habit, eventually integrating seamlessly into our lives. Since the beginningless time, we've been accustomed to samsara; breaking free from it requires significant effort. Just as corporate transformations are challenging, so is learning and practicing Buddhism. Transitioning from the ordinary mind to mindfulness involves overcoming many obstacles. However, once it becomes a habit, we will reap the benefits. With mindfulness, life becomes more liberated and joyful, and the clarity of our inner mind grows stronger. We have a clear method, but it entails your persistent effort.

For the practice of altruism, recording once a week is sufficient. Many feel they lack compassion because they haven't faced specific people and situations to truly practice it. First, we need to understand which aspects of the mind should be cultivated for altruism. The chart for altruistic meditation lists elements such as loving-kindness, gratitude, empathetic joy, understanding, sympathy,

acceptance, generosity, compassionate heart, companionship care, guidance, kind speech, beneficial actions, collaboration, patience, great compassion, bodhicitta, equanimity, no-self and altruism, the mind of non-attainment, and non-abidance. They encompass primary, intermediate, and advanced levels of altruistic elements. How to cultivate these mental states? The chart proposes four perspectives.

The first is the mindset of benefiting others, thoroughly contemplating the benefits of altruism and the drawbacks of neglecting it. People filled with gratitude can see the help provided by their parents, teachers, the public, and even their country everywhere. They will feel joy towards everyone. Conversely, someone lacking gratitude often views others with hostility, feeling wronged by society, resulting in pain for themselves and others.

The second is the practice of the *Metta Sutta*, where one must continually remind oneself, “May I be free from hostility and danger, may I be free from physical suffering,

may I be free from mental suffering, may I remain happy.” Turning this into a heartfelt wish, and then extending the compassion arising from oneself to others, and eventually to all beings. Over time, we will be filled with compassion, continuously radiating loving-kindness. With loving-kindness as the foundation, we can give rise to gratitude, empathetic joy, understanding, sympathy, and acceptance. All these mental states further assist us in better practicing loving-kindness.

The third is the mindset of dependent arising. When it comes to understanding, sympathy, and acceptance, we often find these challenging to achieve. The root cause is lacking the mindset of dependent arising. We habitually start from our own feelings, and by this standard, we can not understand why others think or act this way, let alone sympathize with or accept them. In reality, each person has different experiences shaping their views and standards of behavior. The mindset of dependent origination allows us to step out of our own feelings and think from the perspective of others, putting ourselves in their shoes.

When you consider others' circumstances, upbringing, and educational background, you understand why they say certain things or act in certain ways. Through understanding, one can give rise to sympathy, compassion, and acceptance. Thus, the mindset of dependent arising is key to compassion.

The fourth is the view of emptiness. To cultivate equanimity, no-self and altruism, non-abiding, and the mind of non-attainment, the view of emptiness is essential. Without the view of emptiness, we cannot experience the equality of all beings; without the view of emptiness, we cannot fully relinquish ego attachment, comprehend no-self, and practice no-self and altruism; without the view of emptiness, we cannot grasp the mind of non-attainment and achieve a state where the mind dwells nowhere.

The fifth is "Other," which refers to any other methods you use besides the above four points.

The other part of the chart is the subjects of altruistic

practice. When we talk about compassion, developing bodhicitta, and benefiting sentient beings, it must be applied to specific subjects; otherwise, it's easy to become mere lip service. Like "serving the people," how can one serve well if there is no genuine feeling for the individuals? The same goes for practice: if one professes, "I want to benefit and be compassionate to all beings," but when facing all beings, they still live in self-clinging, self-view, and the poisons of greed, hatred, and ignorance, it is impossible to truly care for, benefit, or be compassionate towards others. This phenomenon is quite common.

The chart lists several categories of subjects for altruistic practice. The first category includes those you live with, such as your children, parents, siblings, and housemates. The second is the people you work with. The third is those you study or practice with, your fellow practitioners. The fourth encompasses all other individuals, including those with whom you have no direct relation. When cultivating compassion, we should direct it not only towards those close to us but towards all sentient beings, not

only towards humans but also towards animals. For these four categories of beings, the chart allows you to check off which mindset you've engaged in and what methods you've used. You can write a weekly summary to reflect on your progress and insights. Next, we plan to develop it into an HTML5 for all practitioners. I hope the Amrita Retreat Center will start using it first, as you are in the best position to do so.

# V

## AWAKENING IS THE HOPE OF HUMANITY

Wisdom and compassion are two universally esteemed and highly aspired ideals in humanity. Through mindfulness, we unlock wisdom; through altruism, we cultivate universal compassion, which is especially needed in the future world. I once engaged in a dialogue with Professor Zhou Guoping on the topic “In the Age of Artificial Intelligence, Where Is Humanity Headed?” If we focus solely on specific tasks, AI could potentially perform up to 80% of jobs in the future, perhaps even better than humans. So, what is humanity’s advantage? It lies in continuously understanding and improving oneself.



Buddhism has long been regarded as a study of the mind, offering the most profound insights into the consciousness, the subconscious, and the ultimate development of life's potential. Buddhism believes that every life has two aspects: finiteness and infiniteness. From the perspective of finiteness, humans are indeed minuscule. Humanity is insignificant on Earth; Earth is negligible within the solar system; the solar system is negligible within the Milky Way; and the Milky Way is negligible within the vast universe. Focusing on the finiteness of life, no matter how glorious or wealthy one is today, it's all but fleeting dust.

However, Buddhism teaches us that life is infinite and that the nature of the mind is the nature of the universe. When we tap into our potential for awakening, we can manifest the infiniteness of life. The universe is vast, but the mind is even vaster, as a mind that embraces the vast emptiness, a heart boundless as myriad worlds. By discovering such a mind, we can find the true value of life's existence.

Otherwise, in this increasingly uncertain world, facing more and more natural disasters and human calamities, we will indeed feel lost about the future, leading to depression, anxiety, fear, and negative mental states like greed, hatred, and opposition. These issues are becoming more severe, filling the world with hostility and unrest. How do we solve this? It is essential to engage in meditation, leading life towards awakening, becoming individuals of wisdom and compassion, akin to buddhas and bodhisattvas.

In today's era of advanced technology, humans should live better lives, so why is happiness becoming more difficult to achieve? It's because everyone lives according to their ego. What kind of culture do we need for the future to create an ideal world where humanity can live in harmony and stability? I believe it cannot be separated from the Eastern cultures of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism.

Firstly, Western culture focuses on changing the world to establish human happiness. The results of their efforts

over thousands of years, along with the various side effects that have arisen, have proven this path is impassable. On the other hand, Eastern culture starts with the human mind and changes the world by transforming the human mind. When the mind becomes pure, filled with wisdom and compassion, our character is perfected. As everyone becomes better, the world will naturally become better. This solution is ultimate and free from side effects.

Secondly, Buddhism advocates the concept of no-self, which sets it apart from all other cultures. Western religions also preach universal love, but it is ego-centered, believing in a unique supreme being. This ego-centered culture can lead to religious and cultural conflicts, and even wars. However, the universal compassion in Buddhism is based on the principle of no-self, believing that any action originating from selfish motives or intended to harm others is wrong, regardless of the justification. Therefore, Buddhism promotes no-self and altruism, where personal interests are set aside in favor of the welfare of all beings and the world at large.

Thirdly, Western culture emphasizes dualistic opposition, leading to conquests among religions, nations, and humanity over nature. In contrast, Eastern culture views humans and the world as one, such as the Confucian concept of unity between heaven and humanity, the Buddhist right view of “circumstantial and direct retributions are not two (direct retribution refers to sentient beings, while the circumstantial retribution is the dependent condition or environment),” and the equality of all beings. Therefore, happiness cannot be achieved through environmental destruction. Only by respecting all beings and caring for nature can the welfare of every sentient being be ensured.

In summary, promoting the excellent traditional cultures of the East represents hope for the world. Mindfulness and universal compassion are the essence of Eastern culture and fundamental to the path of awakening. Mindfulness has the undeniable ability to unlock wisdom, dissolve negative emotions, and develop a healthy personality. In recent years, mindfulness has become

popular worldwide, significantly impacting education, healthcare, and psychology. Universal compassion based on the principle of no-self is an effective remedy for resolving conflicts and is particularly needed in today's society.

In the New Year 2023, let us ring the bell of awakening and pray that all beings move towards the awakening of life and embrace universal compassion!

## 国际静心协会、静心学堂简介

国际静心协会（简称 MPI）是 2021 年成立于瑞士苏黎世的非盈利组织，旨在向全球传播佛法智慧和禅意生活。

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Mindful Peace International (MPI), established in 2021 in Zurich, Switzerland, is a non-profit organization dedicated to spreading Buddhist wisdom and promoting a Chan-inspired life globally.

The Mindful Peace Academy serves as the core public welfare brand under Mindful Peace International. We are dedicated to passing on education about life awakening and offering modern individuals ways towards physical and mental well-being, thereby helping them ground themselves and discover their life's mission. The curriculum we promote at the Mindful Peace Academy has been authenticated through forty years of study and practice by Master Jiqun, an eminent elder of Han Buddhism. It represents an exploration of contemporary Buddhist education, encompassing teachings on the Chan-inspired Life, the Wisdom for Living, and the Path to Awakening. Moreover, we are committed to creating Chan-inspired spaces and fostering mutually enriching environments worldwide to safeguard the public's learning journey.

The *Mindful Peace Academy Collection* showcases a selection of courses on the Chan-inspired Life and the Wisdom for Living. We sincerely hope that through these courses, more individuals will engage with life awakening education and share in the blessings that Eastern wisdom brings to humanity.

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