

# Humanistic Buddhism for Social Well-being ( I )

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

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### Chapter I - Introduction

#### I. Grand Master Hsing Yun's Introduction to Humanistic Buddhism

Venerable Dr. Hsing Yun is the Grand Master of the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Order, the 48th Patriarch of Lin Ji Ch'an tradition, and the foremost Chinese scholar-monk of our times. He has been impressed, since his adolescence, with humanism as the all-pervading characteristic of the teachings of the Buddha. He has devoted a life-time of study, research, contemplation, discussion, and teaching to clarify and elaborate the philosophical concepts inherent in Buddhism and their practical implications. The ultimate result of this effort is the identification of core teachings of the Buddha, which are relevant and immediately applicable to life in this modern world. He calls these teachings Humanistic Buddhism (Renjian Fojiao). He sees in it an enormous potential for social well-being and individual advancement.

In re-emphasizing the humanistic overtones of the Buddha's teachings, the Grand Master had an exemplar in his own spiritual predecessor, Hui-neng (638-713), the Sixth Patriarch of the Ch'an School, who said,

*Buddhism is in the world;*

*It is not realized apart from the world.*

*Seeking enlightenment apart from the world*

*Is like looking for horns on a hare. ...*

*Good friends, if you want to put this into practice, you can do it at home -- it doesn't depend on being in a monastery. Being able to practice at home is like someone of the East whose mind is good.*

(Thomas Cleary (Tr.), 1998, p. 23)

In 1946, when he was just 19 years old, Grand Master Hsing Yun met a senior enthusiast who was also convinced of Patriarch Hui-neng's vision of Buddhism as an integral part of human life in this very world. The Grand Master of Fo Guang Shan tells us about his meeting with Master Tai Xu:

*In July 1946, Venerable Tai Xu presided over a routine lecture of the Chinese Buddhist Association. I was fortunate to have a chance to attend it. Venerable Tai Xu excitedly called on us, saying, "We must establish the characteristics of Humanistic Buddhism!"*

*I was enlightened by Master Tai Xu's words. Now I see the meaning of the following:*

*"The Buddha was born in the human world.*

*He practiced the cultivation in the human world*

*And he became enlightened in the world.*

*He lectured in the world.*

*His whole life embodied the characteristics of Humanistic Buddhism.*

*For forty-nine years, he offered more than 300 lectures.*

*He did not speak to gods or devils, or to hells, or to those who are born as animals. He taught dharma to people."*

(P'umen -- Universal Gate Monthly -- No.3, 1999, pp. 4-11)

## II. Master Tai Xu's Concept of Humanistic Buddhism

Master Tai Xu's insights had been sharpened by his incisive observation of the situation of Buddhism in China and his in-depth review of other forms of Buddhism elsewhere in Asia. The comparisons that Master Tai Xu made are significant and need to be highlighted to understand his message which inspired a young generation to act. As regards Buddhism in China, he identified the following as needing urgent reform and action:

1. The overriding focus on the theory of self-cultivation and its sequel in the isolation of Buddhists from society;
2. "Empty talk of Mahāyāna theories and the neglect of practice" -- "a missing link between theory and practice."
3. The failure to be inspired by the great spirit of compassionate love in Buddhism for action toward social well-being; and
4. The need to orient Buddhists to serve the nation, the state, and the world.

Master Tai Xu had been himself inspired by what he had seen in Southern Buddhism as taught and practiced in Myanmar (Burma), Thailand and Sri Lanka (Ceylon). He observed that Buddhism in these countries had become "the people's religion". He was particularly impressed with Sri Lanka. He noted that

1. Great efforts are made to study the doctrines and to observe precepts by monastics as well as the laity;
2. Not only Buddhists from Myanmar and Thailand but also scholars doing research in Southern Buddhism and Pali language from various parts of the world come there to study Buddhism; and
3. Buddhists are engaged in many causes such as social welfare, culture, education and so forth and thus benefit the state, society and "even broad masses in the world" -- "marking a great spirit of compassionate love in Buddhism."

He expressed his enthusiasm saying, "Though Buddhism in Sri Lanka is generally considered to be Theravāda, it is indeed the practice of Mahāyāna Buddhism." (*Tai Xu Dashi Quanshu*, Vol. 35, pp. 26-30, translated and quoted in Darui Long, 2000, p. 64)

It is thus very clear that Master Tai Xu's concept of "Humanistic Buddhism" was a platform for reform action for the conversion of Buddhism in China from its isolation as a path of self-cultivation, practiced by a limited few, to a universal religion dedicated to a broad spectrum of initiatives for human well-being. Considering the cataclysmic changes which were taking place in China in mid-twentieth century, his campaign was timely. It had to be parochial and China-centered. It was action-oriented. Master Tai Xu had little need for a conceptual or philosophical basis for his action for bringing Buddhism literally and metaphorically from the mountains to the living society.

### III. Where Master Tai Xu and Grand Master Hsing Yun Differ

To the young, fertile, and vigorous mind of Hsing Yun, Tai Xu's call for a humanistic form of Buddhism had a wider meaning. He embarked on study and investigation. His search was for the inner essence of Buddhism in its diverse manifestations. How actually can Buddhism serve humanity? What contents in the Sakyamuni Buddha's teachings highlight service to humankind? Where should one look for exemplars and guidance in evolving a form of humanistic Buddhism? The search had to be on his own. The inspirer of the new line of investigation, namely Master Tai Xu, died just a year after the memorable meeting of 1946.

Thus Hsing Yun had no opportunity to benefit directly from the insights and aspirations of Tai Xu who could, under different circumstances, have been Grand Master Hsing Yun's mentor and teacher. But that was not to be. [1] As a result, Grand Master Hsing Yun's research and contemplation,

though inspired initially by Master Tai Xu's enthusiasm, had to be based on his own devices. In it the young scholar-activist had some significant advantages. As a result, he could surpass the elder master in scope, complexity and operational diversity of what each called Humanistic Buddhism.

Their major difference has been in outlook, intellectual emphasis and mode of action. Master Tai Xu saw weaknesses in Chinese Buddhism vis-a-vis modern science, education and development. He would urge his countrymen to look up to Christian models and emulate the socially engaged Christian missionary:

*The Christians devote themselves to advancing the general social welfare. They propagate their teachings by practicing altruism. This is something of significance and we may adopt it.*

(Quoted in Darui Long, 2000, p. 63)

On another occasion, Master Taixu urged Buddhists to support the Government in its war efforts "to build a powerful nation." His political agitation earned him a less-than-complimentary description as a "political monk." It is true that he upheld Mahāyāna Buddhism and his advocacy on its behalf was genuine and sincere. But when he aimed at social well-being of the masses, he saw no contradiction in urging that the Chinese should adopt or emulate Christianity for the sake of its modernizing influences in science and education. Of course, he had a knack to be incisive in his statements. In the same predominantly Christian assembly, Master Tai Xu urged the West to adopt Buddhism to rationalize its thinking. (For details, see Darui Long, 2000-1)

As regards the mode of action, Master Tai Xu was an agitator in building public opinion. He stirred up people and certain good results followed like schools and educational development. Just before his death he lamented his failure saying that he was "good at theory and poor in practice;" that he fell out with the conservatives in the mainstream, and that he failed in leading the Buddhists in their endeavors for reform and advancement (Darui Long, 2000, p. 65).

#### **IV. Grand Master Hsing Yun's Original and Innovative Strategy**

In contrast to Master Tai Xu, Grand Master Hsing Yun developed his strategy around learning and scholarship, research and contemplation, systematic planning and deliberate but cautious activism. He was a visionary with his head above the clouds but his feet secured firmly on the ground. He chose to appeal to the intellect of the people rather than to their emotions. He acquired knowledge for himself but readily shared it with others using every available opportunity and modality. He taught; he wrote; he spoke; and he broadcast. In every way he captured the attention of his audience, whether in a modest classroom or in a radio talk reaching thousands or in millions of

households where people switched on their televisions to his transmissions on Humanistic Buddhism.

In all his communications Grand Master Hsing Yun has been self-searching. He reviews his life experiences to illustrate how Humanistic Buddhism affected his thinking and actions. He draws lessons from things, which happened to him and to others. He finds inspiration from whatever source where humanity had risen above pettiness and disharmony to kindness, compassion and peaceful co-existence. He distills his brand of Buddhism in action through his concern for the well-being of every man, woman and child throughout the world.

Grand Master Hsing Yun's intellectual commitment has no boundaries. He has a message for the scholar and the activist; the passive contemplator and the aggressive agitator; the self-effacing monastic and the most worldly seeker of pleasure. This unique universality of intellectual approach, thus, gives him pride of place within his own religious order. Millions of adherents to his teachings on all continents of the world look up to his guidance. He is their acknowledged leader, mentor, guide and friend. The power of his message and the universality of intellectual approach has earned him respect and influence far beyond the reaches of Buddhist traditions. No Buddhist leader of modern times has risen to such heights of popular acceptance solely by dint of his own personal effort and achievements.

## V. Breadth of Vision and Universality of Thought

What Grand Master Hsing Yun has gained by his universal intellectual appeal is further enhanced by the sheer depth of his scholarship. He began with the known. That included the entire Buddhist literature in Chinese, in which the Mahāyāna sūtras were predominant. He studied the traditions of his own school, writing masterful commentaries on the *Platform Sūtra* of Hui Neng and the *Amitabha Sūtra*. He grasped the essence of Ch'an and reached his own conclusions on Pure Land as present to be actualized in this very life.

He explored through the *Diamond Sūtra* the way to become a Bodhisattva and perfected his understanding of wisdom and emptiness. He grasped the significance of the six Pāramita's as a foundation of Buddhist ethics. He analyzed *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sāstra* for its crucial teachings on the perfection of wisdom, and found in *Vimalakīrtinirdesa-sūtra* a perennial appeal to righteousness.

In *Yogācārabhūmisūtra* and *Karmavibhaṅgasūtra*, he found the essence of Buddhist morality. So to him were other texts like *Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra*, *Avataṃsakasūtra*, *Sūrangamasūtra*, *Sukhāvatisūtra*, *Saddharmasmītyupas-thānasūtra*, *Mahāratnakūṭa*, *Vijñaptiṃā-tratāsiddhisāstra*, *Samantabhadrotsahana-parivartasūtra*, *Sutratapariprcchasūtra*, *Abhiniskramaṇaūtra*, *Mahāyānasvra-ddhoppādasūtra*, *Kusalamūlasaṃgraha-sūtra*, *Fo Shou Pei Sūtra*, -- a veritable treasurehouse of insights and information from which he extracted the essence of Buddhism.

From these, he proceeded to the Agama Sūtras to read and understand Sakyamuni Buddha's teachings to human beings. He became as well-versed in the *Ekottarikāgama*, the *Samyuktāgama* and many sūtras of the *Dīrghāgama* as in Mahāyānasūtras.

The wider his reading and study, the more profound was his appreciation of Buddhism as an enormously rich and varied philosophical heritage of humanity. In his books and speeches, he would quote from all traditions: from *Dhammapada* and *Sigālovādasutta*, from *Upāsakasīla* and *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* in the same breath as he cited the *Sūtra in Forty-two Sections* and the *Five-Part Vinaya*. While many spoke of the importance of benefiting from the diversity of Buddhist traditions -- especially from their literary masterpieces -- Grand Master Hsing Yun blazed a new trail. He has become the symbol of unity for all Buddhist traditions -- a crowning success of his undaunting efforts which the World Fellowship of Buddhists has recognized by electing him the Honorary President for life.

His books and speeches demonstrate the unity of Buddhist concepts and ideals. This unity becomes clearer as Grand Master Hsing Yun marshals most skillfully the wide array of diverse Buddhist scriptures to highlight the humanistic foundation of the Buddha's unique Path of Deliverance.

Grand Master Hsing Yun takes us back to the Buddha, the man, who taught human beings on the banks of the river Gangā -- the very origin of the ethical idealism which we call Buddhism.

## VI. Quintessence of Grand Master Hsing Yun's Insights

The most recent declaration of the quintessence of Grand Master Hsing Yun's insights on Humanistic Buddhism is contained in his message to the inaugural session of First International Conference on Humanistic Buddhism, held at Hsi Lai University in California, USA, on December 13, 1999. In it he said,

*Buddhism is a religion that belongs to all sentient beings no matter who they are or where they are. No one is ever to be left out of its reach. Only through dynamic cooperation between the Sangha and the lay followers, between the scholar and the student, will we ever be able to spread the Dharma to all who have a need of it.*

*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. Bodhidharma, Fa Hsien, Hsuan Tsang and many others underwent great hardships solely for the good of sentient beings living in the human realm.*

*It is a real pity that so many Buddhists, especially when they first begin to practice, place so*

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*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. As we draw to the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the third millennium -- only eighteen days away from today -- I believe it is essential that we create a vibrant vision of the future of Buddhism in this world.*

*The world is changing quickly. To grasp these changes and use them for our good, we must fully comprehend the inter-workings of societies, science, economics, governments and the environment. If Buddhism is to develop as a viable religion in the world, it must adapt itself to the conditions, which are present in this world. Every choice we make of the future of Buddhism should be founded on clear reasoning and good intentions. The path of the Arhant has its Four Directions and Four Fruits, while the Bodhisattva Way of Mahāyāna is divided into fifty-two detailed stages. These details and divisions show the importance that Buddhism places on clarity of vision and good planning.*

*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. Meditation and chanting are not means to escape this earth. The concentration, wisdom, peace and joy that we find in meditation are skills that should be applied in this world. We should use them whenever we deal with others. All Buddhists are living representatives of Sakyamuni 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 world's people.*

In the ensuing chapters, each element highlighted by Grand Master Hsing Yun in this concise statement will be examined in depth with special reference to Early Buddhism. My aim is to show how the teachings of Sakyamuni, the historical Buddha (circa 563-483 BCE) [2], as recorded in the Pali *Tīṇipīṭakāni* of Southern Buddhism and the Chinese *Āgama Sūtras* of Northern Buddhism, converge in underscoring the profound religious and philosophical concepts on which Grand Master Hsing Yun has formulated the theory and practice of Humanistic Buddhism for social well-being.

## Chapter II -- The Universality of Buddhism

### I. All Sentient Beings Without Exception (Pāṇabhūtā anavasesā)

"Buddhism is a religion that belongs to all sentient beings no matter who they are or where they are. No one is ever to be left out of its reach," says Grand Master Hsing Yun.

Sakyamuni Buddha spoke of universes without end or limit (anantam aparimāṇam) and sentient beings were said to exist everywhere. He was described as a teacher of gods and humans (satthādevamanussānam) and his compassion extended to innumerable universes. In an attempt to encompass beings to whom we are counseled to direct our thoughts of loving-kindness, he listed them as

*Whatsoever life exists --  
Weak or strong without exception,  
Long and huge, medium, short,  
Miniscule as an atom or fat,  
Seen or unseen,  
Living nearby or far away,  
Born or seeking to be born (Suttanipāta I, 8)*

So comprehensive is this listing that no one is excluded. Just as they are to be recipients of our friendship and compassion, they are also in need of the Buddha's message of deliverance.

### II. Doctrine of Three Marks or Signs of Existence

All sentient beings have one thing in common. Wherever they be -- whether in Pure States or Brahma worlds with or without form, in celestial abodes in the sensual sphere, in human existence or in other states as animals, spirits and so forth -- they are subjected to the ineluctable reality of impermanence, transitoriness or transience. All beings are born, exist for long or short periods, and eventually die to be born again in the relentless saṃsāra (the cycle of birth and death). In *Anattalakkhaṇasutta*, the second sermon of his mission to his one-time companions in fasting and penance, the Buddha chose to present the characteristic of impermanence or Anicca (Skt. Anitya) as the foundation of his theory of Three Signs, Marks or Signata (tilakkhaṇa) of Existence. [3]

Where only impermanence and change reigned, there could be no predictable tomorrow. Nothing could be as one wanted or planned. One had no control or power over change. The mightiest falls from the highest of glory and the strongest becomes subject to debilitating sickness and decay. In



such a situation of flux, one finds no satisfaction or happiness. As the Buddha argued, in such a state of impermanence and change, there could only be dissatisfaction, misery and suffering. That to him was the second reality of existence, namely Dukkha (translatable as unsatisfactoriness, misery, and suffering). This again applies to all beings wherever they are.

In spite of these two Signs or Marks, which characterized existence, an illusion of self enabled beings to be selfish and self-centered, conceited and self-satisfied. In the midst of miserable transience, what a being believed to be his permanent, unchanging self could have no reality. The reality, the Buddha perceived, was the absence of a self which could proclaim "This is mine, this is I and this is my Self." The third sign was designated by the term Anatta (No-Self).

What the Buddha underscored with his doctrine of Three Marks or Signs was the futility and emptiness of existence. It was his conviction that attachment to an illusory Self as though it were permanent and unchanging caused dissatisfaction and suffering. There he found the cause of misery, which was the lot of every sentient being.

### III. Doctrine of Four Noble Truths

A few days earlier, the Buddha had delivered his very first sermon to the same audience. The *Dhammacakkappa-vattansutta* (the discourse of turning the wheel of Dharma or Doctrine) began with what was foremost in his mind when he met his comrades-in-austerity. They had abandoned the ascetic Buddha-to-be when he gave up austere fasting and took to a more normal life. So he extolled the importance of the Middle Path which avoided both extremes of luxury or self-indulgence and of painful penance or self-mortification.

From there he went straight to a discourse of Dukkha, which he presented as the First Noble Truth because it was true in respect of every sentient being. Using situations which were clear and self-explanatory, he defined Dukkha as the pain and misery one experienced with

- \* birth [4]
- \* decay or old age
- \* disease
- \* association with the unloved or the unpleasant
- \* separation from the loved or the pleasant
- \* not getting what one desires, and
- \* in brief, the five groups of attachment (namely, form, feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness).

Already in this definition of Dukkha, the Buddha had expressed his concept of a sentient being as

an amalgam of five aggregates or khandhas (Sanskrit: Skandhas). As is explained later, a being is comprised of the physical form and four mental or psychological functions. When this teaching is brought in line with the Third Sign of Selflessness or Anatta, the resulting definition of a sentient being is "a grouping of the physical body and the psychological functions of feeling, perception, mental formations such as recognition, memory and latent tendencies and the like and consciousness but without a permanent or unchanging self or soul which could say 'This is mine; This is I; This is my Self.'" A sentient being is subject to suffering and misery as each aggregate is inclined towards attachment (upādāna) because of self-illusion.

Though already hinted, the Buddha elaborated the concept of attachment as the Second Noble Truth -- the Cause of Suffering:

*It is craving which produces rebirth, accompanied by passionate clinging, seeking delight now here and now there. That is the craving for sensuous pleasure, for becoming and for extinction.*

If the Buddha taught Dukkha and its cause, he would have been another philosopher expounding his own world-view. He was no philosopher even though he certainly contributed to the development of signal philosophical concepts and views. He renounced the comforts of his palace and the pleasures of royalty to seek answers to the miseries of existence of every sentient being. It took him six years of study and contemplation, experimentation and austerities. But eventually he did discover the end to suffering. Presenting the end of suffering as the Third Noble Truth, he said,

*It is the complete eradication of craving, the withdrawal from it, its renunciation and overthrow, liberation from it and non-attachment to it.*

He called it simply Nirodha (cessation) in the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta* but later elaborated it as Nibbāna -- a state of tranquillity, peace, bliss, protection, security, stability, endlessness, immortality, and emancipation. Nibbāna results from the eradication of craving, clinging, lust, hatred and ignorance. It is attained with incomparable supreme enlightenment. Nibbāna, the Buddha stressed, is to be experienced in this life. It is not within the grasp of mere logical inference (atakkāvacara).

Liberation from suffering and misery is within the reach of every sentient being. It is not the preserve of a privileged few. Of course, one has to achieve it by one's own efforts. The Buddhas were only there to point the way:

*The task has to be accomplished by you and you alone*

*The Buddhas are but teachers (akkhātāro). (Dhammapada, 276)*

The Fourth Noble Truth is that way. He called it the "Path leading to the end of suffering" (Dukkhanirodhagāmiṇīpaṭipadā). We shall return to an analysis of this Path. In the meantime, let us look at another doctrine of Early Buddhism which once again shows the Buddha's preoccupation with suffering and misery and with the way out of it.

#### **IV. Doctrine of Twelve-Stage Dependent Origination (Paticcasamuppāda)**

Tradition says that the Buddha thought out the formulation of Dependent Origination during his first week of meditation at the Bodhi Tree of Gaya after his enlightenment. It begins with a taxonomy of Dukkha as comprising

- \* aging (jarā = decay)
- \* death (maraṇa)
- \* sorrow (soka)
- \* lamentation (parideva)
- \* pain (dukkha)
- \* grief (domanassa)
- \* despair (upāyāsā)

These are termed "the whole mass of suffering." Such suffering which all sentient beings share arises from Birth (jāti) or, more precisely, rebirth. Birth or rebirth is conditioned by the process of Becoming (bhava) and that in turn by Clinging (upādānā). Clinging is conditioned by Craving (taṇhā), which in turn is produced by Feeling (vedanā). Feeling originates with Contact with the external world (phassa) while such contact occurs through the six sense bases (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind). The analysis goes further by explaining the Six Sense Bases as a product of the Mental and Physical phenomena (nāma-rūpa). These in turn are produced by Consciousness (viññāna) which is generated by rebirth-producing Mental formations or Volitional activities (sankhāra). Volitional activities are conditioned by Ignorance or Non-knowledge (avijjā).

In the doctrine of Dependent Origination, thus, ignorance or non-knowledge (avijjā) is the primary cause of suffering of sentient beings. It is the non-realization of the true nature of existence as stated in Three Marks or Signs that prompts one to think in terms of a permanent and unchanging Self. This ego-centric view of Self (sakkāyadiṭṭhi) is the root of craving, clinging, lust, hatred, and

delusion.

The Buddha explains in this manner that the basic foundation for the ending of suffering is wisdom (paññā) which is the antithesis of ignorance or non-knowledge (avijjā). Once avijjā is eradicated, no more rebirth-producing mental activities arise and the progressive chain reaction culminates in the end of suffering.

## V. Path of Liberation

Thus in diverse ways has Sakyamuni Buddha expressed his concern with suffering and its end. It was in fact his fundamental concern. When he was once asked what his message was, he replied, "I teach suffering and the ending of suffering." He engaged himself in a strenuous mission as a religious teacher because of his compassion to save sentient beings from suffering and misery. It is said that he began each day with a period of deep compassionate meditation (karuṇāsamāpatti), surveying the world to see who needed his help. It is thus that he went in search of a ruthless murderer who would have otherwise killed his own mother.

Within four months of enlightenment, when he had just sixty disciples, the Buddha told them,

*Monastics, go forth. Go forth on a mission for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many, with compassion towards the world, for the benefit, the welfare and the happiness of men and gods. Let not two of you go the same way. Preach to them, O Bhikkhus, the doctrine, lovely in the beginning, lovely in the middle, lovely in the end and full of meaning and distinctive characteristics. Proclaim to them pure and complete Higher Life. I myself am proceeding to Uruvela to preach the doctrine. (Mv. 1, 21)*

The key sentiment is "compassion towards the world, for the benefit, the welfare and the happiness of humans and gods."

The Path to end suffering which the Buddha discovered and the many sermons, debates, discussions and poetic compositions, through which his messages for the benefit of sentient beings were expressed, constitute Buddhism. One may object to the use of "Buddhism" as a term to describe the multifaceted teachings of a supremely wise and resourceful teacher like the Buddha. He preached nothing dogmatic. He urged his audiences not to accept things simply because they were in their books or were a part of the family tradition or were taught by a teacher they liked. He wanted everyone to think and think for oneself asking the basic question, "Is what is preached to the benefit, welfare and happiness of the many?" (*Kālāmasutta, Aṅguttaranikāya I*, pp. 188 ff.)

He sought no converts to his faith or point of view and specifically said so in *Udumbarika*

*Sīhanādasutta*. To those who were convinced by his teachings and wished to follow him, he said further,

1. *Let him who is your teacher be your teacher still;*
2. *Let that which is your rule be your rule still;*
3. *Let that which is your mode of livelihood be so still;*
4. *Let those points in your doctrines which are wrong and reckoned as wrong by those in your community, remain so still for you;*
5. *Let those points in your doctrines which are good, reckoned to be good by those in your community, remain so still.*

(D. 25: *Udumbarika Sīhanādasutta*)

Irrespective of what one believed in or practiced, one could follow the teachings of the Buddha. He had all sentient beings as his audience. Grand Master Hsing Yun rightly says that the Buddha's teachings belong to all sentient beings and no one is ever to be left out of its reach.

### **Chapter III -- Spreading the Dharma**

#### **I. Targeting All Who Have Need of the Dharma**

It is the view of Grand Master Hsing Yun that

*Only through dynamic cooperation between the Sangha and the lay followers, between the scholar and the student, will we ever be able to spread the Dharma to all who have need of it.*

Sakyamuni Buddha intended his teachings to reach everybody. We noted how he commenced his missionary movement when he had just sixty disciples. He himself returned to Gaya to embark on a missionary role which lasted over four decades (45 years according to Southern Buddhism and 49 years according to Northern Buddhism). Though the target was each and everyone, the Buddha was realistic about individual differences. Some were more inclined to accept the discipline he demanded. Others were not. Either they had responsibilities and obligations, which they could not set aside or liberation was not their priority. [5] Some had fulfilled the pre-requisites for liberation over life times and were said to possess upanissaya (i.e. sufficing condition or qualification for enlightenment).

The recognition of individual differences enabled the Buddha to tailor and graduate his teachings to suit each person and his or her level of intellectual development. His method of instruction was gradual, going from the known to the unknown and from the simple to the difficult. He illustrated it with several analogies. As the sandy beach slopes into the ocean gradually without pitfalls, cracks or crags and the depth of water increased steadily and not abruptly, so was knowledge to be given to a student -- gradually increasing in depth and complexity. (*Udāna*, V, 5) An accountant would teach a student counting from one the unity, two the duality, three the trinity and so forth. So was all teaching to be done starting with the basics. The taming of a wild elephant was another metaphor. Here a well-trained elephant was engaged to take away the wild ways of the captured animal and get it used to the ways of the village. The educational principle involved in this comparison relates to unlearning the unwanted and learning from peers. The Buddha's overall approach to instruction was through methodically progressive exercises. (Guruge, 1982, pp. 30-31)

What we had discussed in the earlier chapter shows that the Buddha had a well-planned curriculum. The ultimate goal of instruction was to lead the learner (*sekha*) to the level where no more learning was necessary (*asekha*, literally, no more a learner). This stage was reached when one exerted oneself diligently and steadfastly and reached perfect enlightenment whether as a Buddha, a Pacceka Buddha or a Śrāvaka. [6] The Path leading to this stage where the entire mass of suffering ended had to be learned and practiced. As he said about the Four Noble Truths, *dukkha* had to be known and understood, its cause eradicated, the end of *dukkha* attained, and the Path leading to it practiced.

The Buddha was a pragmatist. He was convinced that one needs to know what is knowable and directly utilizable by oneself. Knowledge for knowledge sake was not his goal. In fact, he ridiculed those who acquired too much of even the knowledge of the Dhamma: he called them cowherds who tend cattle for other people's use:

*Though much he recites the Sacred Texts but acts not in accordance with the Teaching, he shares not the blessings of a recluse, like a cowherd counting others' cattle.*

*Though little he recites the Sacred Texts but acts in accordance with the Teaching, and forsaking lust, hatred, and ignorance, truly knowing, with mind totally freed, clinging for naught here and hereafter, he shares the blessings of a recluse. (Dp. 19, 20)*

He had also a metaphor for those who were attached to learning even the Dhamma beyond its practical objective: they were compared to a person who makes a raft to cross a river and, out of gratitude to it, carries it on his head, hampering his journey beyond. (*M. 22 -- Alagaddūpamasutta*)

His pragmatic choice of the essential from interesting but unneeded knowledge is conveyed by the parable of the wounded man:

*If a man were pierced through by a poisoned arrow and his friends, companions and relatives called in a surgeon and the man should say, 'I will not have this arrow pulled out until I know who the man is, who wounded me, whether he is a Ksatriya, a Brahman, a citizen or a servant' or else he should say, 'I will not have this arrow pulled out until I know who the man is that wounded me, whether he is tall or short or of medium height' verily such a man would die before he could sufficiently get to know all this."*

*(M. 63 -- Cūlamālunkyasutta)*

He thus discouraged his disciples from looking for or speculating on the beginning of things, the creation, the creator and similar issues. His advice was to be concerned with what is at hand -- the present moment, when one thing was clear: impermanence and change reigned supreme and the result was suffering and misery, attended by aging, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair; no being was there in such a context who could claim "This is mine. This is I. This is my Self."

On another occasion, the Buddha listed ten questions on which he chose to be silent:

- (1) Is the Universe eternal?
- (2) Or is it not eternal?
- (3) Is the Universe finite?
- (4) Or is it infinite?
- (5) Is the soul the same as the body?
- (6) Are the soul and the body different?
- (7) Does the Buddha exist after death?
- (8) Does he cease to exist after death?
- (9) Does he both exist and cease to exist after death?
- (10) Does he both not exist and not cease to exist?

*(D. 9 -- Poṭṭhapādasutta, M. 63 -- Cūlamālunkyasutta, S. XXXIII, 1-55 Vacchagottasaṃyutta)*

An anecdote concerning Sakyamuni Buddha's closest and most generous lay devotee and benefactor, Anāthapiṇḍika, relates to differentiated subject matter. It shows that each learner was taught according to his or her immediate needs. Anāthapiṇḍika was a regular visitor to the Buddha

and his monastic disciples at the monastery he had donated. He had heard many sermons and participated in discussions. But when Sāriputra and Ananda preached to him at his death-bed, he was surprised. He had never heard these doctrines ever before. They explained, "Such talks on the Dhamma are not given to the white-clothed laity: they are given to those gone forth from the house life" (*M.* 143). Another clear instance is where the subject-matter -- in this case the technique and object of meditation -- was designed according to temperament of the learner. Out of forty different instructions (*kammaṭṭhāna*) the most appropriate was to be chosen.

Four conclusions are to be drawn from what the Buddha and his disciples said and did as regards the spread of the Dharma:

- (1) The Dharma had to be brought to each and sundry as all beings had a need of it. (No two were to take the same route, the Buddha advised the first batch of sixty missionary monks. That emphasizes how widely he wanted the Dhamma to be disseminated).
- (2) Teaching had to be according to each person's capacity to learn. An enormous body of textual knowledge is not needed to lead the Buddha's way of life.
- (3) Differentiated subject-matter out of the Buddha's doctrines and teachings had to be carefully selected to suit each individual's learning needs. Monastics and the laity were taught differently. An individual's needs, temperament and capacity determined what aspects of the Dhamma was relevant and useful to him or her.
- (4) The subject-matter for the laity was determined in terms of what was directly applicable to life as a householder.

## II. The Sangha -- A Society of Ideal Educators

The word Sangha, meaning a community of monastics, is older than Buddhism as are terms like Sramaṇa (*Samana*), Muni, Yati, Bhikṣu which referred to monastics. While monastics belonged to an organized Order or Community, there were others who were ascetics or recluses (*tāpasas*) who pursued their own forms of austere penances or religious observances. Close to the time of Sakyamuni Buddha, Jina Mahāvīra, the founder of Jainism, had his Order of monks and nuns called the Sangha.

The Buddha thus adopted for his purposes an age-old institution (some trace its presence to 3000 BCE). But he made a number of significant innovations, which facilitated its survival and vitality for twenty-six centuries. The Sangha was conceived as a group motivated by a common objective, subscribing to a common way of life, and guided by a common set of rules and regulations. As a self-regulatory body which constantly renewed itself through recruitment, the Sangha evolved itself over several decades in the Buddha's life-time to have its own code of conduct. The Vinaya or



Discipline is preserved in all three traditions of Buddhism (Southern, Northern and Vajrayāna) in remarkable uniformity. It comprises not only rules of monastic discipline but a most impressive array of regulations on dress and food, table etiquette and social manners, and advice on matters ranging from personal hygiene to disposal of human waste.

The Sangha had elements of social organization which the Buddha considered to be ideal and beneficial. It was a community of equals whatever be the social, economic or cultural background from which the individual members came:

*Just as waters of various rivers lost their identity when they flowed into the ocean, persons of different castes lost their previous social identities in the Sangha. (Guruge, 2000, p. 100)*

Precedence among members for practical purposes such as receiving alms was determined by the seniority in membership (i.e. from the time of ordination). Similarly each member was equal economically since he or she renounced all worldly possessions. The very term bhikṣu or its feminine form bhikṣuṇī, meaning a mendicant or one who begged for food, reflected the vow of poverty to which every member adhered.

Within the Sangha, too, everything was held in common for the use of the community as a whole. No one had any right of inheritance or bequest. At death, even the meager personal belongings devolved to the Sangha to be allotted to a deserving monk or nun. Every donation was accepted and held in the name of the Sangha. The formula for vesting any property in the Sangha stressed the common ownership:

*Donated to present and future Sangha (āgatānāgatasanghassa dinnam. Literally, the Sangha that came and did not come.)*

Because of this very reason, the Sangha has been rated as "an incomparable field for the acquisition of merit" (anuttaram puññakkhetṭam), and what is donated to the Sangha was declared to bring about the highest fruit in terms of merit (etesu dinnāni mahapphalāni).

At the early stages, the Sangha subsisted on food obtained by begging from door to door, wore garments made of rags picked up from the dust-heap or the cemetery, lived under trees or in caves, in forest groves or public buildings and used elementary nature cures in times of ill-health. But as time went on, the Buddha relaxed such rules and paved the way for the Sangha to evolve as a viable institution of proven stability. Buildings and properties were accepted. He enjoined to generous

donors, "Establish beautiful monasteries" (vihāre kāraye ramme -- *Cullavagga*, VI, 1, 5: Guruge, 1999, p.196).

Monastics were permitted to accept robes and other requisites. The Buddha himself accepted invitations for lunch and the restriction to begging was gradually relaxed. So were rules pertaining to medicine. In due course, monastics were allowed clarified butter, honey, and molasses as medicine. The Buddha's own cousin was unhappy that the rules for the Sangha were not stringent enough. He wanted monastics to live under trees, wear rags from the dust-heap, eat only what was begged, be vegetarians, and so forth. In his wisdom, the Buddha saw that the Sangha would last as a vibrant institution only if it was flexible. So such strict conduct was allowed for zealous monastics to be adopted voluntarily. The Sangha could thus develop as a human institution responding to needs and challenges of time.

This viability of the Sangha was substantially enhanced by the democratic principles on which its administration and disciplinary control were founded. The Buddha believed in a decentralized Sangha. As his death was approaching, concerned disciples asked him whether a successor was envisaged. The Buddha said, "No" and explained that his teachings would be their teacher.

With no centralized control, the Sangha evolved meeting the demands of each location and time. Whatever be the unit a whole large city or a small village the monastics living in that unit were autonomous. They met for fortnightly confessional ceremonies, where the Pāṭimokkha or Prātimokṣa rules [7] were recited. They made decisions collectively. The question to be decided upon was presented by the most eloquent speaker in the assembly -- not by the most senior or most influential. The reason for this stipulation was that the question was clearly presented and the assembly knew the issues to be considered. The question was posed not just once but three times. After each presentation, a vote was taken. The idea was that each vote would enable voters to rethink and re-evaluate. It was hoped that a consensus would develop in the process. If at the third "reading", the vote was not unanimous, the matter was referred to a committee for arbitration. The committee's task was to reformulate the question in a way that points of disagreement were removed as far as possible. It is after such an effort that a matter would be decided by majority vote as a last resort. To this day, this devotion to democratic decision making persists as the most important factor contributing to the lasting effectiveness of the Sangha.

The Buddha also laid down rules for the Sangha to become cohesive and durable. The recruitment of new monastics requires a minimum quorum. Without such a quorum no ordination would be valid. During the long history of Buddhism, countries had to face the problem of having no quorum. When it happened in one country, the number of monastics to restore the Sangha was obtained from another country. For example, when China had no quorum to ordain nuns, Devasārā from Sri Lanka was invited with a team of Sinhala nuns to restore the Bhikkhuṇī Order in China.

Sri Lanka's Sangha was restored by monks from Thailand in 1753. Despite the differences in Buddhist traditions, the authenticity of the Sangha has been retained to a degree that no other human institution had succeeded.

The Buddha was as pragmatic in the regulation of the Sangha as he was in his doctrines. It is known that he allowed the Sangha to relax some of the minor rules. Ananda was blamed for not finding out exactly what such minor rules were. It is, however, apparent that some of the variations one might see in the Sangha of different traditions could be due to the relaxation of some minor regulations. These really did not affect the integrity of the Sangha: e.g. tailored garments instead of robes and an evening meal (which, quite interestingly, is called medicine). These again are factors which enabled the Sangha to perpetuate itself in countries of climatic conditions different from those of Northern India.

Thus has the Buddhist Sangha remained, without a break, the longest standing monastic system in the world. Its self-renewing and self-regulating capacity has made it a remarkable force which has withstood innumerable obstacles. The confidence which Master Hsing Yun places in the Sangha is more than justified.

### III. The Capacity of the Sangha to Perform a Continually Diversifying Mission

By the time the Buddhist Sangha assumed its final form, it was an organization of monks and nuns, dedicated to a variety of services. It is true that the main purpose of joining the Sangha was to seek one's own liberation through enlightenment. It was the primary concern of monks and nuns. But that goal did not preclude them from making a direct contribution to social well-being.

During the Buddha's life-time itself, the Sangha had differentiated roles. We hear of meditating monastics who concentrated on Insight Meditation. (*Vipassanādhura* or *Vidarsvanādhura* -- i.e. vocation of Insight). They engaged themselves in mental cultivation and lived for the most part isolated from society. Whether they continued to do so after their enlightenment is, however, not known. It is most likely they took up services for the welfare of others after reaching Arahant hood. Arahants are shown in Pali Canon and Chinese *Āgama Sūtras* as engaged in educational and literary activities.

As a distinct group are mentioned monastics who took to educational and literary pursuits. They were said to follow the vocation of books (*ganthadhura*). Their contribution was substantial. They taught both monastics and laity. The Pali Canon and *Āgama Sūtras* contain discourses given by monks such as *Sūriputta*, *Kaccāyana* and *Ānanda* and literary compositions of both monks and nuns. Especially during the rainy season of four months when monastics stayed in a monastery continuously, they undertook in-depth study of the Buddha's teachings from two points of view:

First, they sought to explain the statements of the Buddha and, with that, began the commentarial

literature whose earliest specimens are to be found in the Tipiṭaka itself (i.e. *Culla* - and *Mahā-niddesas*).

Second, they pursued scholastic analysis, classification, synthesis, and interpretation of the Buddha's teachings.

It is this process which resulted in the development of the Abhidhamma. In the Northern Buddhist tradition, Śāriputra, the first of the Buddha's two Chief Disciples, is associated with the growth of Adhidharma. (Thich Huyen--Vi, 1971, pp. 381-398)

We also know that monastics specialized in specific areas. A dispute is said to have taken place among specialists of the Dharma, meaning the doctrinal aspects of the Buddha's teachings, (i.e. Dhammadharas) and the specialists on rules of discipline and procedures of jurisprudence (i.e. the Vinayadharas). An analysis of a work like *Paṭisambhidā magga*, included in the *Khuddakanikāya* of the *Suttapiṭaka*, illustrates the depth of analysis and interpretation which scholar-monastics had achieved. Later, we hear of specialists on specific texts of the Canon: e.g. Dīghabhāṇakas (reciters of long discourses), Majjhimbhāṇakas (reciters of middle-length discourses), etc.

The tradition of scholastic analysis and interpretation continued after the Buddha and the work of scholar-monastics received approval and recognition. In the third century BCE -- over two hundred years after the death of the Buddha -- Moggaliputta Tissa, the President of the Third Buddhist Council under the auspices of Emperor Asoka, produced a scholarly work on points of debate and controversy. This book called *Kathāvatthu* (Points of Controversy) is included in the *Abhidhammapiṭaka* and recognized as an integral part of the Canon (Guruge, 1993, pp. 153-154). Myanmar, for example, recognizes three more books of later origin as canonical: *Milindapañha*, *Nettipakaraṇa* and *Peṭakopadesa* -- all important works of scholarship.

The practice continued in Early Buddhism and has been perpetuated in Southern Buddhism. The Buddhist monastery to this day is a center of learning, where monastics and the lay are educated. The curriculum for the laity had included literacy training and secular knowledge. Indigenous medicine (Ayurveda) and astrology (Jyotiṣa) have been two vocations for which the basic education was given to the laity by the monastery. Equally significant was the study of languages and literature. Pali, Prakrits, and Sanskrit, including in the last case an enormous body of literature and scientific information, have been preserved as a result of the educational initiatives and efforts of monastics.

As far as the lay society was concerned, the Sangha from its very inception established a symbiotic relationship. The laity maintained the Sangha providing them with the four requisites of food, clothing, shelter and medicine (referred to in Pali Canon as Catupaccaya -- fourfold requisites). The Sangha reciprocated by serving the laity as teachers and counselors. In the *Sigālovādasutta* of

*Dīghanikāya* (D. 31), the reciprocal duties and obligations between the religious or spiritual teacher and a lay devotee are elaborated as follows:

The religious or spiritual teacher --

- (1) restrains the lay devotees from evil;
- (2) establishes them in good;
- (3) teaches them what has not been heard before (= new knowledge)
- (4) elucidates what has been heard before (=clarifies and reinforces existing knowledge)
- (5) shows them the way to heaven. [8]

The lay devotee --

- (1) extends friendliness to the spiritual teachers in deed,
- (2) word, and
- (3) thought;
- (4) keeps the door open for them for unhindered entrance;
- (5) supplies their material needs and creature comforts.

It is to this fruitful relationship that the Buddha referred to in the following verse:

*The lay and the homeless alike*

*Each supporting the other*

*Accomplish the true doctrine*

*The peerless refuge from Bondage. (Itivuttaka 107)*

This reciprocity between the Sangha and the laity has been so ingrained in early Buddhist societies and so maintained in Southern Buddhism that the Sangha divided itself into two main branches:

- (i) forest-dwellers (*vanavāsī* or *araṇyavāsī*) and
- (ii) village-dwellers (*gā mavāsī*).

The forest-dwelling monastics lived in hermitages -- like monasteries away from the "madding crowd" and spent their time engaged in meditation in perfect isolation. The village-dwelling monastics lived in the midst of lay settlements, interacting with people, preaching to them the Dharma, teaching their children, running schools where needed and possible, writing and publishing books, spearheading public and social services and providing leadership to the population.

The Buddhist societies of South and Southeast Asia have viable forest hermitages as well as large numbers of monastics performing services to the laity in cities, towns and rural areas. These same societies developed the tradition of lay Buddhist scholars. Emperor Asoka (circa 299-228 BCE) was perhaps the earliest to prepare and propagate his own anthology of essential Buddhist texts (Cf. Babhru or Bairat Inscription) and interpret a universally valid code of ethics for his subjects (Guruge, 1993, 550-551). Sri Lankan history records instances where lay scholars adjudicated issues in Buddhism (Guruge, 1989, p.701) and wrote a number of excellent treatises. [9]

The tradition has continued to this day, and lay Buddhist scholars in Southern Buddhism number several thousands. The impressive rates of literacy and educational participation of these societies (when compared with those of neighboring Hindu and Muslim societies) speak eloquently of the effectiveness of the Sangha as pioneers of education. The universalization of primary education in the last century was possible in Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand because the village temple became a modern primary school, conducted by the Sangha. The Sangha has also been responsible for the steady flow of Buddhist literature in local languages. Today, monastics continue to play a leadership role in educating the people to overcome poverty and oppression, to conserve nature and the environment, and to become effective citizens. Though political activities by monastic is not favored by public opinion, some involvement with politics has been inevitable.

The history of the Sangha has prepared it to perform not only a diversified mission but also one that continues to evolve and diversify. The reciprocal strengthening of the Sangha and the laity has been a hall-mark of Buddhism. Grand Master Hsing Yun, therefore, is convinced that "only through dynamic cooperation between the Sangha and the lay followers, between the scholar and the student, will we ever be able to spread the Dharma to all who have a need of it."

#### **IV. Reviving the Buddhist Sangha and Restoring Lost Elements**

Grand Master Hsing Yun highlights the joint role to be played by the Sangha and the laity (especially scholars from both groups) for Humanistic Buddhism to usher in social well-being. He has actively undertaken for well nigh four decades measures to equip the Sangha to become an effective partner. He began by addressing issues specific to Chinese and East Asian Mahāyāna Sangha through periodicals, books, classes and public speeches. Without restricting himself to advocacy, however effective it was, he translated into action his lofty ideas of how the Sangha should be trained to become active promoters of service to people. The Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Order embodies his ideals in practice.

To supplement what he taught, he sent promising monks and nuns to universities in Japan and USA to begin with, and eventually all over the world. Today, the monastics of the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Order represent the whole spectrum of Buddhist Studies as developed in the world's most

renowned centers of excellence. The Grand Master provides them with the opportunity to earn graduate degrees, Masters and Doctorates, from a number of the highly respected universities. With that body of scholars at the core, he established Colleges of Buddhist Studies with wide-ranging curricula and obtained the services of competent scholars of all traditions of Buddhism -- from China, Japan, Sri Lanka, Tibet and elsewhere.

That was not all that Grand Master Hsing Yun has done to revive the Sangha to uphold the ideals of scholarship which have been motivating it from the days of the Buddha. He looked beyond East Asia to the traditionally Buddhist countries of the rest of the continent. He inspired their monastics to cooperate with him and emulate his example. In one particular initiative, his courageous intervention has proved to be most far-reaching.

Centuries ago, Southern Buddhism lost the Bhikkhuṇī-sāṣana, the Order of Nuns. It happened before Sri Lanka spread its reformed, unified form of Buddhism to Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos. Thus this so-called Theravāda [10] Buddhist world has been deprived of the services of bhikkhuṇīs. It is true that women have always been active in the promotion of Buddhism. Many women dedicated themselves to the Buddhist cause by renouncing household life. But the most that they could do was to become observers of ten precepts. [11] Called "Dasasīlamātās" (mothers observing the ten precepts), they could not be given higher ordination or upasampadā.

The bhikkhus had a valid reason for depriving them of the formal status of bhikkhuṇīs. According to the Vīnaya rules, a quorum of both bhikkhus and bhikkhuṇīs (ten of each) is absolutely necessary to ordain a bhikkhuṇī. In fact, it was the reason why Sri Lankan nuns had to go to China in two voyages in the fourth century CE. Grand Master Hsing Yun's cooperation with the forward-looking monks of Sri Lanka, in spite of the formidable opposition from certain quarters, resulted in the higher ordination of a number of bhikkhuṇīs from Sri Lanka. The historic ceremony took place in February 1998 at Buddha Gaya, the holy spot where Sakyamuni Buddha attained enlightenment. The Fo Guang Shan nuns who participated to form the quorum of bhikkhuṇīs traced their continuous lineage from the restoration of Upasampada in China by the Sri Lankan Bhikkhuṇī Devasārā and her colleagues.

By this most timely step, Grand Master Hsing Yun strengthened the Sangha of Southern Buddhism. Now the Sangha of Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, India, Bangladesh, Nepal and elsewhere can give women an equal chance to play their rightful role in spiritual life. He also accomplished an historically significant rapprochement between Northern and Southern Buddhism in a crucial ecclesiastical act (Vinayakamma). The ecumenical significance of this joint action may take more time to be widely recognized. But its impact of bringing the Buddhists of the world together for the promotion of a humanistic approach to spiritual life is unequivocal. Equally important is that the Grand Master's revival of Bhikkhuṇī-sāṣana in Sri Lanka is tantamount to

repaying a debt which East Asia owed this predominantly Buddhist nation.

Grand Master Hsing Yun has thus concentrated on restoring to the Sangha the historic status it enjoyed in Early Buddhism. It stems from his conviction that a competent, well-educated, resourceful and efficient Sangha is absolutely necessary to bring Buddhism to the doorstep of every man, woman and child of the world.

## V. Role of Scholars and Intellectual Advancement

In Grand Master Hsing Yun's vision, an equally important role in the propagation of Humanistic Buddhism has to be played by the scholar, whether he or she is a monastic or a lay person. The Buddha encouraged intellectual pursuit by his reliance on the critical acumen of the human being. He placed his doctrine for acceptance only after investigation. "Come and see for yourself" (Ehipassika) was his clarion call. He disapproved of blind faith. His Dhamma is "to be known by the wise by oneself" (paccattam veditabbo viññūhi). Once Sāriputta, his first disciple, praised him as the greatest Buddha. "Do you know the Buddhas of the past? Do you know the Buddhas of the future?" the Buddha asked him. Sāriputta had to admit that he did not know any of them. "How can you then call me the greatest of the Buddhas?" was the Buddha's response (D. 16). Thus was stressed the basic element of the scientific method by which all scholarship is guided: namely, the strictest dependence on reliable evidence for every conclusion.

That the Sangha pursued scholarly research by way of analysis, synthesis, exegesis and interpretation of the Dharma during the life-time of the Buddha, and most certainly under his own direction, is borne out by some elements of the Canon of Early Buddhism. The discourses were grouped together on two distinct criteria:

- (i) According to literary form: the navangabuddhasāsana (ninefold teachings of the Buddha): namely, sutta (discourses), geyya (chants), veyyākaraṇa (analyses), gāthā (stanzas), udāna (inspirational utterances), ituvuttaka (thus it was said), jātaka (birth stories), abbutadhamma (supernormal or paranormal) and vedalla (question and answer).
- (ii) According to length and content as *Nikāyas* or *Āgamas* [12] : namely, *Dīghanikāya* and *Majjhimanikāya* (Long- and Middle-length Discourses), *Samyuttanikāya* (Discourses grouped according to subjects, audiences and such other kindred factors); *Anguttaranikāya* (Discourses grouped according to the number of elements covered); and *Khuddakanikāya* (Minor Texts, mainly poetical compositions and short texts).

*Dhammapada*, whose popularity is evinced by its many versions from ancient times and by its ever increasing translations into modern languages, shows the excellent result of compiling a collection of inspirational utterances of the Buddha. *Suttanipāta* is a well-conceived anthology of beautiful poetical compositions. So are *Theragāthā* and *Therīgāthā* where lyrical outpourings of



emotions of monks and nuns, motivated by spiritual attainments, are presented.

Another piece of evidence about Buddhist scholarship of the Buddha's lifetime are the indexes and abstracts prepared especially for the Vinaya rules of discipline. When Jina Mahāvīra, the founder of Jainism, passed away a few years before the Buddha, Jainas began to quarrel among themselves on the authenticity of each one's interpretation of Jaina teachings. Sāriputta, as mentioned earlier, initiated a project to prevent similar things happening to the Buddha's teachings. The product of this project as recorded in the *Saṅgīti-sutta* and *Dasuttarasuttas* of the *Dīghanikāya* continues to baffle scholars. What he had done is to prepare a comprehensive, well-organized list of keywords under which the entire body of the Buddha's teachings can be subsumed and systematically arranged for ready recall. The exhaustive indexing of the details of the Buddha's teachings in these suttas testify to the methodological skills of Sāriputta as well as his astonishing understanding of the need for facilitating retrieval of information. That he was an intellectual and contributed to the systematization of the Buddha's teachings is amply illustrated.

As noted earlier, Sāriputta is also credited with the scholastic undertaking which resulted in the *Abhidhammapiṭaka*. The kind of detailed analysis to which the teachings of the Buddha were subjected, especially with regard to psychology and matter, paved the way for the continuing tradition of study and research, explanation and interpretation. New works were accepted on merit into the Canon.

It is this devotion to scholarship which enabled Buddhist scholars to make a significant contribution to the elaboration of Buddha's teachings. In Early Buddhism the emphasis has been on commentaries, subcommentaries, glossaries and such other works which facilitate the understanding of the canonical works. These kinds of exegetical works flourished in Southern Buddhism. Buddhaghosa, Dhammapala, Buddhadatta, Ananda, Culla-Dhammapala, Upasena, Mahānāma, Kassapa, Vajirabuddhi, Khema, and Anuruddha were the most noteworthy figures in this movement. They are credited with translating into Pali the old Sinhala commentaries, which were extant up to about the twelfth century. Equally important in Southern Buddhism are monastic historians who produced historical chronicles of a wide variety and preserved a remarkably accurate history of Buddhism.

The Mahāyāna scholars proceeded in a different way: they produced new treatises with the stress placed on the philosophical and doctrinal analysis and elaboration of basic teachings of the Buddha. Aśvaghōṣa, the pioneering Mahāyāna scholar, was closely associated with the Kushan Emperor, Kaniska I, in holding the Fourth Buddhist Council in Jalandhara, Kashmir (circa 1st or 2nd century CE). His works include two beautiful ornate poems, *Buddhacarita* (Life of the Buddha), and *Saundaranandakāvya* (The story of the Buddha's half-brother Nanda whose marriage to Sundari was stopped on account of his being ordained a monk by the Buddha); a play, *Sāriputraprakaraṇa*

(on the conversion of Sāriputra) and the inspiring evangelical treatise, *Mahāyānasraddhotpāda* (Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna). A later exponent of the Vaibhāsika school, Vasubandhu produced *Abhidharmakośa* -- an exhaustive work whose impact outside India is to be traced to the Kosha or Chu-she and Pi-tan (< abhidhamma) school of China and the Kusha school of Japan.

Among the best known and most widely influential scholars were Nāgārjuna, Aryadeva, Asaṅga and his younger brother Vasubandhu. The Mādhyamika school, founded by Nāgārjuna, examined in depth the intrinsic nature or characteristic of things (i.e. Sva-bhāva or own-being) in relation to the twelve factors of Dependent Origination (Paṭiccasamuppāda). Nāgārjuna's conclusion was that anything which arises dependent on other things has no svabhāva or "own-being" and, therefore, is futile, void, and empty (sūnya). Nāgārjuna's and Aryadeva's works on this subject were so influential, that the concept of Sūnyatā pervaded the thinking in Mahāyāna schools throughout the world.

A similar lasting influence has been exerted by Asaṅga who elaborated on Nāgārjuna's concept of Svabhāva, presenting in the process the theory of three marks of experience of reality as parikalpita (imagined), paratantra (dependent) and pariniṣpanna (absolute or perfected). Similarly far-reaching in impact was Asaṅga's extension of the doctrine of six consciousnesses (i.e. those of the five senses and the mind) in Early Buddhism by adding two more: namely, Alayavijñāna (storehouse-consciousness -- the basis for all feelings, thoughts, ideas and where seeds of karma accumulated) and Manas (what induced one to the wrong belief that Alayavijñāna was eternal and unchanging). He and Vasubandhu founded the Yogācāra or Vijñānavāda school which stressed that all reality existed only in the mind (cittamātra = mind only).

These scholarly interpretations of the Buddha's teachings brought into prominence the importance of logic in debate and controversy. Thus Buddhist scholarship promoted, through an on-going confrontation with Hindu logicians, a system of Buddhist logic. Names like Dinnāga, Dharmapāla, Śīlabhadra, Dharmakīrti and Candragomin are recalled with appreciation for their contribution not only to Buddhist logic but also to the evolution of Indian epistemology.

Also to be noted is that several among the above-mentioned scholars were connected with the premier Buddhist University of Nalandā (2nd to 11th century CE). Nāgārjuna, Aryadeva, Dharmapāla, Śīlabhadra and Dharmakīrti were abbots of Nalandā and exerted enormous influence in the spread of Buddhism beyond the frontiers of the Indian Sub-continent. Hiuen-Tsang (602-644 CE) studied at Nalandā under the guidance of Śīlabhadra.

Another very important service which scholars rendered to the propagation of Buddhism has been the translation of texts to foreign languages. The history of Buddhism in China is replete with such illustrious names of translators as Dharmarakṣa, Kumārajīva (undoubtedly the greatest of missionary translators), Paramārtha, Guṇavarman, Guṇabhadra and Śāntarakṣita. Their counterparts

in Tibetan Buddhism are Padmasambhava and Atisa Dīpaṅkara.

There is no doubt that Grand Master Hsing Yun's appraisal of the role of the scholar in bringing Buddhism to every being is founded on these historical precedents. His vision of Buddhist scholarship today -- particularly with regard to the promotion of Humanistic Buddhism -- is threefold:

- (i) Establish contacts with scholars specializing in various aspects of Buddhism and promote cooperation and collaboration among them;
- (ii) Create university-level centers of excellence where renowned scholars can be engaged in training young scholars through teaching and research; and
- (iii) Promote the interaction of scholars in in-depth study of Humanistic Buddhism through international seminars, conferences and research initiatives.

Translating this vision into concrete action, he proceeded on a program of institution building. At the headquarters of the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Order in Kaohsiung, I-Lan County, South Taiwan, was established the Fo Guang Shan College of Humanities and Social Science. In Chia-Yi County in Central Taiwan, Nan Hua University was developed into a full-scale seat of higher learning with all modern facilities. In Los Angeles County, California, USA, Hsi Lai University offers a wide variety of courses in Religious Studies from BA to Ph.D. and a comprehensive range of courses in Business Administration for BA, MBA, Executive MBA and Post-MBA Certificate, besides custom-made courses in English as a Second Language and Continuing Education.

For enhanced networking among international scholars, the International Academy of Buddhism, attached to Hsi Lai University, and the Fo Guang Shan Cultural and Educational Foundation in Kaohsiung sponsor conferences, research projects and publications. The Hsi Lai University Press, Hacienda Heights, and the International Buddhist Translation Center in San Diego are primary centers for the translation and publication of scholarly and instructional materials.

The first volume of the Hsi Lai Journal of Humanistic Buddhism, published by the International Academy of Buddhism, has already been issued with seven research papers on Humanistic Buddhism. More institutional building in such far-flung places as Australia and South Africa are in the Grand Master's plans.

All these activities discussed in relation to the spreading of the Dharma by marshalling the Sangha and the laity, scholar and student, demonstrate how the cause of Humanistic Buddhism for social well-being is amply served.

## Notes

- [1] Richard L. Kimball's following statement regarding Master Tai Xu's influence on Grand Master Hsing

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Yun needs clarification in the light of Master Tai Xu's death in 1947 and Grand Master Hsing Yun's own independent and innovative exploration of humanism in Buddhism: "The Grand Master read most of his writings and heard him lecture on a number of occasions... He was both a role model and mentor to Grand Master Hsing Yun." (Kimball, 2000, p.12) After a discussion, Kimball amended it to read as follow: "The Grand Master had read some of his [Tai Xu's] writings and heard his lecture on at least one occasion. He was influenced by both Master Tai Xu's teachings and determination. He was one role model for Grand Master Hsing Yun."

- [2] A recent trend among Western scholars of Buddhist Studies like Heinz Bechert of Germany and Richard Gombrich of Britain to bring down the date of the Buddha by about a hundred years has not led to any convincing conclusion as they ignore (a) the Pali sources which agree with the Purāṇas and Hsuan Tsang as regards two Asokas (Kālāsoka and Dharmāsoka) and (b) the intervening royal dynasties from Bimbisāra, (the Buddha's contemporary) to Candragupta, the founder of the Mauryan dynasty.
- [3] The concept of Three Seals of Dharma in Chinese sources is somewhat different from this doctrine. The Three Seals are Impermanence, No-self, and Nirvāṇa.
- [4] Birth is conceived as suffering as the other forms of misery and suffering are consequent to one's birth. Philosophically the explanation is that birth results in death and that in rebirth. So did the Buddha describe a person who had reached the supreme bliss of Nibbāṇa through enlightenment as "never returning to lie in a womb again" (na hi jātu gabbhaseyyaṃ punareti -- Khuddakapāṭha: *Mettasutta*, also *Suttanipāta* I, 8).
- [5] At a speech delivered by me in January 1974 at the World Fellowship of Buddhists in Bangkok, Thailand, I said, "If somebody were to come today and say 'I can take you straight to Nibbāṇa this very minute', I think most of us will have lots of excuses to give." Some will say, "Can't I wait till my daughter gets married?" Another might say, " Can't I wait till my son gets a job?" "Can't I wait till I have finished my assignment?" We have our own preferred times when it comes even to the ultimate goal because of our attachment to things here and now." -- *Gems of Buddhist Wisdom*, Buddhist Missionary Society, Kuala Lumpur, 1983/1996, p. 332.
- [6] Early Buddhism recognizes that enlightenment could be achieved in three ways: as a Buddha (who becomes enlightened by his own effort and leads others to liberation); as a Pacceka (Private or Silent) Buddha (who becomes enlightened by his own effort but does not lead others to liberation); or as a Srāvaka (disciple, who gains enlightenment on being instructed by a Buddha or his teachings). All three had the epithet of Arahant, meaning "worthy". It is in Mahāyāna literature that Arahant is equated to Srāvaka.
- [7] These are basic rules of discipline which number 227 in Southern Buddhism and 250-253 in Northern and Vajrayāna Buddhism. The bhikkhunis have around 300 such rules.
- [8] The deliberate choice of sagga, meaning any one of heavenly states, rather than mokkha, vimutti, nibbāṇa, meaning liberation, is significant. The laity were not taught for liberation but only for a happier

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rebirth. Cf. Anāthapiṇḍika episode. Equally important is the assumption here that all religious or spiritual teachers, irrespective of sectarian differences, could lead the laity to heaven or happiness in the next life.

[9] Among such lay scholars are King Kassapa V (*Dampiyāaṭṭvāgeṭapadaya*), Gurulugomi (*Dharmapradīpikā* and *Amāvatura*) and Vidyācakravartī (*Butsaraṇā*, *Dahamsaraṇā* and *Saṅgasaraṇā*).

[10] As regards the inapplicability of the term Theravāda as a description of Southern Buddhism today, see Guruge, 2000 pp. 88-92 and 111-118 and *The Buddhist* (YMBA, Colombo), Vesak Number 2000.

[11] This is a state more or less equivalent to that of a novice. The ten precepts are to abstain from (1) killing (2) stealing (3) sexual activity (4) falsehood (5) stupefying liquor and drugs (6) eating at inappropriate hours (7) adorning oneself and using cosmetics (8) dancing, singing and comic shows (9) using large seats and beds, and (10) handling gold and silver.

[12] In the Canon of the Sarvāstivādīns in Sanskrit, the divisions are named Dīrghāgama, Madhyamāgama, Saṃyuktāgama, Ekottarāgama and Khuddakāgama.

## 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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~ to be continued ~

# 人間佛教對社會福利的貢獻（三之一）

——綜觀星雲大師在解行上的詮釋

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覺慧 譯

## 第一章 概論

### 一、星雲大師對人間佛教的引介

星雲大師是佛光山寺的開山大師，也是臨濟宗第四十八代傳人，而且還是中國當代最早的學者型僧侶。從青少年開始，他就深感人間思想是貫徹佛陀教法的主要特色。因此他畢生致力於研究、思考、討論、開示，以說明佛教蘊含的哲理及其實際的意義。其努力的最終結果，便是使其思想完全符合佛陀的核心教義，使教義能與日常生活息息相關，並且能夠直接應用在現代社會中。他把佛陀教法的這種特色，稱為「人間佛教」，並且看出這種特色在社會福利與個人進展方面有無限的潛能。

在重新強調佛陀教法的人間色彩時，星雲大師早已有一個精神上的楷模——禪宗六祖惠能大師（638-713），後者認為：

佛法在世間，不離世間覺。離世覓菩提，恰如求兔角……

善知識，若欲修行，在家亦得，不由在寺，在家能行，如東方人心善。

(Thomas Cleary (Tr.), 1998, p.23)

星雲大師十九歲那年（一九四六年），曾經遇到一個富有弘法熱忱的長老——太虛大師，他也肯定惠能大師佛法不離世間的理念。星雲大師提到與太虛大師會面時，曾說：



一九四六年七月，太虛大師主持中國佛教會務人員講習會，我有幸參加，大師在會中慷慨激昂地說道：「我們要建立人間佛教的性格！」這句話給我很大的震撼。

如今聽太虛大師一席話，令我心開意解，我體會到：

「佛陀出生在人間，修行在人間，成道在人間，說法在人間，他的一生正是人間佛教性格的體現；佛陀說法四十九年，講經三百餘會，不是對神仙、鬼怪說的，也不是對地獄、傍生說的，佛陀說法主要還是以人為對象。」（《普門月刊》1999年第3期，4-11頁）

## 二、太虛大師對人間佛教的概念

太虛大師盱衡中國佛教情勢，審度亞洲各地佛教型態，而能洞徹精微。太虛大師所作的比較分析鼓舞了當時的青年，意義非凡，值得我們去探究。他曾指出中國佛教需要改革之處如下：

- 1.過份著墨於自我修行的理論，使得佛教遺世獨立。
- 2.空談大乘理論，忽略實際的修行，使得理論與實踐脫節；
- 3.缺乏從事社會福利事業的慈心悲願；
- 4.引導佛教徒為國家社會及世界服務。

太虛大師自己也從親眼所見的南傳佛教，諸如緬甸、泰國、錫蘭等地的教導與實踐而得到啓發。他觀察到佛教在這些國家中已形成「人的宗教」，尤其對錫蘭更留下深刻印象，因為他注意到：

- 1.當地僧信二眾深究教理，篤行戒律。
- 2.不特緬甸、暹羅等地的教徒欲求深造者要到錫蘭留學，就是世界各國研究巴利語系佛教的學者，亦無不蒞臨這佛國研討。
- 3.佛教徒從事於各種工作，包括社會慈善、文化、教育宣傳等事業，以利益國家，乃至世界人群，表現佛教慈悲博愛的精神。

他熱忱洋溢地說道：「雖然一般人都認為錫蘭佛教是小乘佛教，實際所修的都是大乘佛法。」（《太虛大師全書》第35冊頁26-30，英譯本 Darui Long, 2000, P.64）。

因此可以很清楚地看出，太虛大師的人間佛教理念改革了中國佛教，使其從少數人自修自了的型態，轉變為人類社會福祉而奉獻的普遍性的宗教。以二十世紀中葉在中國所發生的劇烈改變而言，他的改革運動可說非常順應時機。這種改革必需是地方性、以中國為著眼點、並且付諸於實踐。太虛大師並不需要理論或哲學來作為行動的基礎，而是以淺顯或隱喻的方式引導佛教從山林走向社會。

### 三、太虛大師與星雲大師的差異

太虛大師提倡佛教人間化，對於年輕、有創造力、而又勇敢的星雲大師來說有更深厚的意義。他不斷地研究觀察，以便找出佛教的多樣化外表中的內在精華。佛教如何能實際地為人類謀福利？釋迦佛的教化內容有那些顯著地指出為人群服務的重要性？吾人應該從何處找到發展人間佛教的楷模與指南？所有的答案必需靠自己去發掘，因為一九四六年講習會舉行的第二年的第二年，太虛大師就捨報圓寂了。

由於星雲大師無法直接受益於太虛大師的雄心壯志及真知灼見[註 1]，因此他的研究及思考雖然最初源自太虛大師的弘法熱忱，終究還是得有自己的創見。凡此使得這位兼具學者與行者特質的青年僧有多項重大的發展，不論在範圍之廣博、多元，及活動的多元化等方面都遠超過太虛大師所謂的「人間佛教」。

他們在外觀、知識的著重點及活動的型態上都有顯著的不同。太虛大師看到中國佛教面對現代科學、教育、發展時所顯現的弱點，因此他會鼓勵同胞們模仿基督教模式，學習傳教士的熱心參與社會活動。

基督徒們投身於社會福利事業，用實踐利他主義來弘揚其教義。其意義非凡，很值得我們採用。」

(引自 Darui Long 英譯本, 2000, p.63)

另一次太虛大師鼓勵佛教徒支持政府抗戰（譯者按：一九三七年，日本侵略中國，發動為期八年之久的中日戰爭），以建立強國家。他的政治主張為自己贏得一個毀多於譽的封號——「政治和尚」。太虛大師確實擁護大乘佛法，並且熱誠倡導。但是當提到社會福利時，他卻因為基督教在科學和教育在現代化方面的影響力，而贊成中國人跟進，絲毫不感到其中的矛盾。當然他也深諳銳利的言詞。在一次基督教聚會中，太虛大師鼓勵西方人採用佛教的優點，使思考更加理性。（參見 Darui Long, 2000-1）

關於活動的模式，太虛大師擅於建立群眾的共識，使得學校的創辦及教育方面有了些許進展。然而圓寂前他很遺憾自己「長於理而短於行」，既不能影響主流的保守派，亦無法成功地引導教徒改革佛教。（Darui Long, 2000, p.65）

#### 四、星雲大師最初的獨創策略

相反地，星雲大師把他的策略設定在學習、學問、研究、思考、系統性規畫、與深思熟慮而謹慎的實踐上。他雖然是個夢想家，思想海闊天空，但卻知道腳踏實地。他選擇訴諸人們的理性，而非情感。雖然他也追求知識，但更重視每一個可能的機會與形態來與人分享這些知識。他不但教書、寫作、演講、還在電台廣播。總而言之，他用盡了各種方式吸引群眾對人間佛教的興趣，從教室到收音機數千名聽眾、乃至數百萬聚集在家中收看電視的觀眾。

星雲大師在各種溝通場合中，往往以自己的人生經驗為例，說明人間佛教如何影響他的思想與行為。他引用發生在自他之間的事例來闡釋，並舉例說明人性如何能超越慳吝與不和諧，而發展出親切、慈悲與和平共存的人生觀。甚至為了關懷地球上每個人的福利，他不惜淡化了自身的佛教色彩。

從學者到行者，從消極悲觀的人到鼓噪積極的人，從韜光養晦的僧侶到耽於欲樂的人，星雲大師永遠能給對方啓示鼓舞。他那周遍圓融的法門使他在佛教界有數以百萬的信徒追隨他的指導。他是信徒們眼中的領袖、良師、嚮導及朋友。他傳達訊息的影響力，與他訴諸於知性的普遍程度，使他得到的尊重與影響力能遠遠超越傳統的佛教。他是當代的佛教領袖中，僅憑個人的努力與成就，而能廣受歡迎者。

#### 五、視野的寬度與周遍的思想

具有深厚學養的星雲大師使他的知識更加圓融周遍。大乘佛法以漢傳藏經為主，他就以此著手開始，研究自己的宗派，為《六祖壇經》及《阿彌陀經》寫下巧妙的註解。他掌握禪學的精華，點出淨土應在此生實現。

他探究《金剛經》的菩薩道，徹悟般若空性；他掌握了六波羅蜜的精義，作為佛教徒倫理的基礎；他分析《大智度論》中圓滿智慧的教示；他發現《維摩詰經》中對於真理無止境的追求。

他從《修行道地經》與《分別業經》找到佛教倫理的精華。因此對他來說，像《妙法蓮華經》、《華嚴經》、《楞嚴經》、《淨土經》、《正法念處經》，《大寶積經》、《唯識論》，《普賢菩薩勸發品》、*Sutratapariprcchasūtra*、《佛本行集經》、《大乘起信論》、

*Kusalamūlasaṃgrahasūtra*、《佛說孛經》等，都是他擷取佛法精髓的寶庫，並從中得到佛法的原始精神，接著又回到《阿含經》來瞭解釋迦佛的教示，因此他對於《增一阿含經》、《雜阿含經》及《長阿含經》等許多經典的熟悉程度，與大乘經典不相上下。

他閱讀得越廣，越深切地肯定佛教具有豐富多采的人間性。因此他在著述及講演時，旁徵博引，從《法句經》到《善生經》，從《優婆塞戒經》到《大般涅槃經》，從《四十二章經》到《五分律》。如今許多人談及自己從佛教各種傳承中獲益非淺，尤其是佛教文學，其實星雲大師早已為此作了開路先鋒。星雲大師成了融和佛教各種傳承的象徵。由於他鍥而不捨的努力，獲致了殊勝的成就，使得世界佛教徒友誼會一致推選他為「永久榮譽會長」。

星雲大師口說筆書，善巧方便地將浩瀚的經典加以彙整，點出佛陀的解脫之道以人為基礎，使得佛法的一貫性變得更加清楚。星雲大師讓我們回歸到行走恆河兩岸化導人類的人間佛陀本懷，此乃佛教倫理的根源所在。

## 六、星雲大師洞察力的精髓

星雲大師關於人間佛教的最新宣言，是一九九九年十二月十三日發表於「第一屆人間佛教國際學術會議」的開幕辭，地點在美國加州的西來大學。他提到：

佛教是一個屬於所有眾生的宗教，無人能自於其外。只有透過僧信合作，師生同心，才能把佛法傳達給所有需要它的人。

從佛教的立場來看，人是六道的樞紐，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、玄奘大師等高僧大德都是在人間歷經艱險，為眾謀福。

遺憾的是，許多佛教徒一開始修行，就把重心放在隱居閉關，了生脫死上。這固然很重要，但除非一個人知道自己如何在人間做好一個人的本分，否則是無法真正了生脫死的。

在超越一切之前，我們應該充分善用人生，發展道德與慈悲，在過去，佛教常被人視為消極、退縮，佛教徒則滿於現狀，墨守成規。佛教如果沒有未來觀，將會在自己的厚繭中凋萎，再說，這也和佛教的一些基本教義相違背。在二十一世紀，也就是第三個千禧年之初，為現世的佛教創造充滿活力的未來，誠然是十分重要的。

在這個瞬息萬變的世間，我們必需充分理解社會、科學、經濟、政治和環境之間的互動關係，才能掌握契機，善加應用。佛教必須順應現實的環境，才能續佛慧命。我們對佛教的未來所作的每一個選擇，都必須立基於合乎情理上。阿羅漢必須經過「四向、

四果」的階段，菩薩道的實踐，也有五十二階位，可見佛教很重視對未來的清楚視野，以及良好的規畫。

人間佛教強調人我之間的相處。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。禪坐與梵唄唱誦並非用來逃避這個社會。我們應當將禪定中發展出來的定力、智慧、平靜與喜悅，應用在人我相處當中。

所有佛教徒都是釋迦牟尼佛的教法與慈悲的鮮活化身。我們的基本信念是來自佛陀本身。佛的教誨與一生的行事即是真理、道德、智慧與忍耐的典範。佛法是依賴我們本自具足的佛性及菩提心本具之智慧。通過融和與慈悲，我們才能讓世人同霑法益。

接下來的章節中，將會深入地檢視上述這段話的每個重點，並與原始佛教的教義相對照。筆者的目的是根據南傳巴利藏和北傳的漢文阿含藏，來彙整釋迦牟尼佛（約西元前五六三一—四八三年）[註 2]所說的法義，以點出星雲大師如何在深奧的法義中，形成人間佛教福利社會的理論面與實踐面。

## 第二章 佛教的普遍性

### 一、無一眾生能例外

星雲大師說：「佛教是一個屬於所有眾生的宗教，沒有你我、地域之別，無人能自於其外。」

釋迦牟尼佛說這個世界沒有邊際，眾生無處不在。天人師是他的十號之一，而且他的慈悲無遠弗屆。爲了讓大家修慈悲觀時，能涵容一切，他略舉眾生如下：

一切眾生，或弱或強  
或長，或短，或中，  
或細如微塵，或粗壯肥胖，  
或可見，或不可見，  
或於近處，或於遠處，  
或已生，或當生……（《經集》I, 8）

其範圍之廣大，無一眾生排除於外。眾生需要我們的友誼與慈悲，同樣地，也需要佛法指引他們解脫自在。

## 二、三法印（或存在的特徵）

所有眾生都有一個共同點。不管他們存在何處——或在淨土，或在梵天，或有形，或無形，或在欲界天，或在人道，或為傍生，或為鬼道等，他們都受制無常的事實。在這生死輪迴不已的娑婆世間，所有眾生都必須經歷出生、或長或短的壽命，然後死亡與再次投生的過程。在《無我相經》中，佛陀對曾經與他一起斷食、苦行的同伴們（五比丘）二轉法輪，開示無常的道理，作為三法印的基礎。<sup>[註 3]</sup>既然無常的法則支配了一切萬物，未來就不能如人所料。人也無法控制、駕馭明天。因為崇高必墮落，盛強終必衰。在無常的情況下，人無法真正得到滿足或幸福。如佛所說，無常變異最終只會帶來不滿、悲愁及苦惱。所以，苦是存在的第二個真理，無一眾生能免。

雖然世間是無常、痛苦的，但是對於實我的幻覺卻使眾生變得自私自利、貢高我慢。在悲慘的無常中，眾生執以為常的「我」其實不可能存在。佛陀指出：事實上沒有一個可以稱為「我所有」、「我」、「我自己」的「我」，所以第三個法印即是「無我」。

佛陀在三法印中最強調的是「空」的真理，因為一味執著於虛幻的自我，以為它恆常不變，將導致憂悲苦惱，這不但是苦的原因，而且也成為眾生（不可避免）的命運。

## 三、四聖諦的教義

在上述佛陀對五比丘開示的幾天前，他已初轉法輪。《轉法輪經》中，佛陀對曾經和他一起修持苦行的同伴們講述最重要的真理。他們在佛陀尚未成道時，曾因鄙視佛陀放棄苦行而一度離開。佛陀成道之後，即亟力揚舉「中道」的重要性，要大家避免縱欲享樂和禁欲苦行兩個極端。

然後他講述四聖諦的第一個真理——苦，因為每個眾生都會經歷這種情境，他用淺顯易懂的方式來說明每一個眾生均會體驗到如下的苦，即：

- 生苦<sup>[註 4]</sup>
- 老苦
- 病苦

- 怨憎會苦
- 愛別離苦
- 所求不得苦
- 五蘊（即色、受、想、行、識）熾盛苦

在這個「苦」的定義中，佛陀說眾生是五蘊的集合體，下面我們會提到眾生是由物質的身體和四種心理作用所構成。如果將五蘊與三法印中的「無我」合併起來，「眾生」的定義即：「由物質的身體與受、想、行（包括認知、記憶、及各種潛在傾向）、識等四種心理作用合和而成，沒有永恆不變的實體，可以宣稱『這是我的，這是我，這是我自己』。」由於對自我誤以為實有，使得五蘊中的每一蘊傾向我執，眾生也就註定要活得悲苦了。

佛陀在第二諦——苦的原因（集諦）中，仍詳述過去所提過的「執著」：

正因為對於五欲及生死的貪戀，伴隨著感情的執著而四處尋求喜樂，以致輪迴不已。

如果佛陀只講到苦及苦的原因，那麼他充其量也不過是個將自己的世界觀宣說出來的哲學家。儘管佛陀對於哲學思想有貢獻，但他絕對不只是一個哲學家。他拋棄王宮的榮華享樂，花費了六年的時間，研究、思考、嚐試、苦行，為的是去尋找解決眾生痛苦的方法，最後終於如償夙願，發現了第三諦，即：

根除貪欲，從中解脫，不受染著。

在《轉法輪經》中，他以一個「滅」字來形容此種境界，但在後來的經典裏，則明白地將這種平靜、和平、極樂、保護、安全、穩定、無盡、不朽、及解除束縛的境界稱為「涅槃」。一旦根除貪欲、執著、渴望、瞋恨、愚癡，成就無上正等正覺，必能在此生體現涅槃，這不僅是推理思惟所可以達到。

因此解脫痛苦不是少數人的專利，而是每個眾生都可以做到的。當然，每個人都必須憑藉自己的努力來達成，佛陀只不過做個指引而已：

修行必須由自己來完成，佛陀只不過是導師而已。（《法句經》276）

佛陀把第四諦稱為「滅苦之道」，下面將再作詳述。此處繼續說明原始佛教的另一個離苦得樂的教義。

#### 四、十二緣起

佛陀成道後，在伽耶的菩提樹下禪坐的第一個星期中，他冥思緣起的發展過程，首先將苦分為下列的類別，即：

- 老苦
- 死苦
- 憂苦
- 悲苦
- 苦苦
- 惱苦
- 大苦聚

此即所謂的「純苦聚集」。眾生所共有的這些苦，乃源自於「生」，更精確的說，源自「輪迴再生」。「生」或者「輪迴再生」，又源自「有」，「有」則源於「愛」，「愛」又源自「取」，「取」源自「愛」，「愛」源自「受」，「受」來自「六處」（眼、耳、鼻、舌、身、意）與外界的接觸。「六處」則是物質與心理的組合（「名色」），「名色」則由「識」產生，「識」又源自製造輪迴的意志作用——「行」，而「行」又受制於「無明」。

因此在十二因緣中，「無明」是眾生痛苦的根源，此乃由於眾生不瞭解三法印是生命存在的本質，總是以自我為中心來思考事物，從而產生愛、取、貪、瞋、癡。佛陀指出滅苦的根本之道是智慧，亦即無明的反面。當「無明」消除時，製造輪迴的「行」及其後的連鎖作用不再生起，一切痛苦亦隨之止息。



## 五、解脫之道

佛陀以各種方式來解釋苦與滅苦之道，事實上這也是他最關心的事。有一次當他被問及說法的內容時曾答道：「我教導苦的內容及滅苦之道。」佛陀基於慈心悲願，為解救眾生免於痛苦而不辭辛勞，來往弘法。據說他每天一開始即進入慈心定，看看有誰需要他的幫助。有一次他甚至主動去尋找一個殘忍的殺人魔王，制止他殺害自己的母親。

佛陀成道之後的四個月之中，雖然只收了六十名弟子，佛陀仍對他們說：

比丘們，去吧！為了人天的利益，要心懷慈悲，肩負為眾謀福的使命向前邁進。不要兩人同行一條路，要向大家弘法。啊！比丘們，這些教義初、中、後皆善，你們要向他們宣說生命中的圓滿清淨，而我要獨自到鹿野苑去傳教了。（《小品》1,21）

在這裡，我們可以發覺所懷抱的理念關鍵在於「為了人天的利益，我們要心懷慈悲，肩負為眾謀福的使命」。

佛陀為利益眾生而宣說的滅苦之道及許多的開示、討論、詩偈等等，構成了佛教的內容。或許有人會反對用「佛教」來形容由正遍知的佛陀所宣說的各種法門。因為他所宣說的不是教條，他鼓勵大眾不要只因為那是書上說的，或祖先流傳下來的，乃至這是自己所喜歡的老師說的，而把教義照章全收。他希望每個人再三思考一個基本的問題：「我所聽到的教法能利益廣大的眾生嗎？」（《迦羅摩經》，《增支部》1, pp. 188 ff.）

佛陀在《優曇婆羅獅子吼經》中特別指出：他並不要求聽眾們改變自身的信仰或觀點。對於已接受教法而希望追隨他的人，佛陀更強調：

- 1.對於已是你們的老師，讓他繼續作你們的老師吧！
- 2.對於你已遵守的律法，你就繼續遵守吧！
- 3.對於你現有的生計，你就繼續以此為生吧！
- 4.對於你原有的教義中錯誤的部分，而你的團體中也有人認為它是錯的，讓它維持現狀吧！

5.對於你原有的教義中正確的部分，而你的團體中也有人認為它是正確的，就依然保留它吧！

（《長部》25，《優曇婆羅獅子吼經》）

換句話說，不管一個人的信仰對象或修行方法為何，他都可以實踐佛陀的教法，因此所有眾生都能聽聞佛陀的教法。星雲大師曾說：「佛法不捨棄任何一個眾生。」誠乃不虛之言也。

### 第三章 佛法的弘揚

#### 一、以需要佛法的所有眾生為目標

星雲大師認為：

只有透過僧信合作，師生同心，才能把佛法傳達給所有需要它的人。

釋迦牟尼佛希望能將教義傳布給每個人。前曾述及，當他最初只有六十名弟子時，他如何發起佈教活動。他自己則回到伽耶，從此展開四十多年的弘法生涯。儘管佛陀的目標是讓大家法益均霑，但他也注意到現實世界裡眾生性向的差異：他們有的易於教化，有的剛強難伏，有的揹負難以拋棄的責任與義務，有的不把解脫視為當前要務[註 5]。有的已在過去生中完成了解脫的先決條件，而具備開悟的資格。

由於佛陀能夠了知個別眾生的差異，所以能應機施教。他以循序漸進的方式來教學，從已知到未知，由淺顯到深入。為說明這層道理，他舉出一些譬喻，如沙灘漸漸斜向大海，中途沒有陷阱、裂縫或峭壁，因此水能漸增而非暴漲，學生的知識也應該在廣度與深度兩方面循序漸進。（《自說》V, 5）如算師教學，從一次方到二次方，到三次方……等等，教導也必須從基礎開始。又如野象在受過良好訓練的象帶領下，才能拋棄野性，以適應聚落的生活，教育的方式亦應使人去惡向善，向同儕學習。總之，佛陀是以循序漸進的方式，給予整體性的指導。（Guruge, 1982, pp.30-31）

前一章指出佛陀對的教育具有良好的規畫。教育的最終目標是使學習者透過精進不懈的努力，達到佛陀、辟支佛、阿羅漢[註 6]等無學的境地。其間必須學習滅苦之道，如佛陀所宣示之四聖諦的內容：「苦應知，集應斷，滅應證，道應修。」

佛陀是實用主義者，他認為每個人必須知道什麼是應該知道，而且可以直接在生活上落實運用的，因為學習的目標不在知識本身。他比喻那些攫取大量佛法知識（而不運用）的人是「為別人牧牛的人」：

一個人即使誦讀很多經典，卻不依之修行，好比牧人數他牛，無法得到真實樂處。一個人雖然讀誦很少，卻依之修行，戒除貪瞋愚痴，使心得到解脫，即能得到真實樂處。

（《法句經》19, 20）

佛陀將那些不以實用為目的而學佛法的人，比喻為渡河而製造船筏的人，由於太感激船筏的好處，而把它頂戴在頭上，反而阻礙了他的前程。（《中部》22，《蛇喻經》）

他基於實用主義，而摒除一些有趣而不需要的知識，只保留基本教義。有個受傷者的譬喻即在說明這情形：

猶若有人身中毒箭，彼親屬慈愍之，欲令安隱，欲饒益之，求索除毒箭師。於是彼人作是念：「我不除箭，要知彼人若長若短若中，若黑若白，若刹利姓，若婆羅門姓，若居士姓，若工師姓。」彼人於中間當命終。如是若有愚癡人作是念。

（《中部》63，《摩羅迦小經》）

因此佛陀不鼓勵弟子們思惟事物最初的起源、如何創造、創造者是誰等類似的問題。他要大家關心當下——此時此刻。當我們看清無常故苦，老苦、死苦、憂苦、悲苦、苦苦、惱苦、大苦聚接踵而至，就不會再宣稱：「這是我的，這是我，這是我自己」了。

還有一次，佛陀提出十種捨置不答的問題：

1. 世間有常？
2. 世間無常？
3. 世界有邊？
4. 世間無邊？
5. 身與命同？
6. 身與命異？
7. 佛陀死後有？
8. 佛陀死後無？
9. 佛陀死後亦有亦無？
10. 佛陀死後非有亦非無？

（《長部》9，《布吒婆樓經》；《中部》63，《摩羅迦小經》；《相應部》XXIII, 1-55，《婆蹉種相應》）

須達多長者是在家信徒中，與佛陀最為親近，也最懂得喜捨布施，有一則關於他的軼事告訴我們如何應機施教。須達多經常向佛陀及僧眾們請益，所以不但聽過許多開示，而且還參與其中，互相討論。但當他臨終聽聞舍利弗和阿難尊者的開示時，卻十分驚訝過去從來沒有聽過這些佛法。尊者向他解釋：「這些佛法是為出家人說的，不是為在家人說的。」另一個例子是依照行者的性向設計不同的禪定技巧及所緣物，即所謂的四十業處，由此可以選擇最適合自己的方法。

關於弘法方面，佛及弟子們所說和所行的內容可歸納出四個結論：

1. 佛法必須傳播給每一個眾生，因為大家都需要佛法。（佛陀第一次派遣六十個弟子外出弘法時，即指示不可以走同樣的路線，這可以看出他多麼渴望佛法能夠廣佈。）
2. 教法必須觀機逗教。若要學佛所行，並不需要龐大的經典知識。
3. 必須慎擇教法，以適應每個人的需要。教導出家眾與在家眾的內容不同。每個人的需要、性向和根機不同，決定了佛法的那一個層面對於個人是最有用的。
4. 在家眾學習的內容，應以直接應用於居家生活者為要。

## 二、僧伽——理想教育家的集團

「僧伽」一詞意為一群修道者集合的團體，事實上這個字眼比佛教描述僧侶的一些名詞如沙門、牟尼、行者、比丘等的歷史還要悠久。僧伽固然隸屬於有組織的修道團體，但還有一些追求個人形式的苦行或宗教儀式者。像與佛陀同時代的印度，就有一個名叫「耆那·大雄」，他創立了耆那教，他所聚集的門徒也叫作僧伽。

佛陀採用傳統的僧團形態（有些人認為可溯自西元三千年前），並作了一些有意義的改革，使得佛教能發揮活力，延續了二十六個世紀之久。僧團成為一群具有共同目標，過著共同生活方式，奉行共同戒律的（修行）人。由於僧團以自治為基礎，而且經常補充新員，因此在佛世時的數十年間逐漸形成既定的戒法。南傳佛教、北傳佛教及密宗佛教所有的派別所保存的戒律都有顯著的一致性，不但軌範著僧侶的行為，在衣著、飲食、齋堂行儀、人際禮貌等方面，也訂下感人的條例，此外，從個人衛生問題到大小便利的處理等等，都有許多建議事項。

在佛陀看來，僧團是最理想的社會團體，因為不論成員來自那一種社會、經濟、文化背景，一律接受平等的待遇，即所謂的：

百川入海，無復河名；四姓出家，同稱釋氏。（Guruge, 2000, p.100）

例如托鉢的隊伍是根據戒臘高低來排列。由於大家都拋棄世俗的財物，加入僧團，所以實行利和同均制。「比丘」或「比丘尼」即乞士的意思，反映了墨守清貧生活的誓願。

僧團內把每樣東西都視為共有，任何人都無權繼承或贈送。捨報時，即使微薄的個人財產也要移交給常住，然後再分配給應得的僧侶。任何的布施捐贈，只能以僧團之名接受。僧團對於財產的處理，強調共有的原則：

獻給現在和未來的僧伽。（*āgatānāgatasanghassa dinnam*. Literally, the Sangha that came and did not come.)

因此僧團被視為殊勝的福田。布施人力、物資給僧團均將獲得莫大的果報，功德無量。

早期的僧團是靠沿戶托鉢乞食維生，並且穿著從塵土或塚間撿來碎布補綴而成的衣服，住在樹下、巖穴、樹叢或公共建築裡，生病的時候使用自然藥物。久而久之，佛陀逐漸放寬規定，以使僧團與時俱進，穩定成長，因此後來也接受房舍和財物，並且囑咐那些喜捨為懷的檀那：「建立莊嚴的寺院」。（《小品》VI, 1.5：Guruge, 1999, p.196）

佛陀也應允僧侶接受僧衣及其他必需品的供養。佛陀本身則接受午齋的應供，對於乞食、醫藥的規定也逐漸放寬。在某些時候，奶油、蜂蜜和糖蜜也可以視為藥物使用。佛陀的堂弟對於僧團規矩不夠嚴格感到不滿。他希望僧團還是住在樹下、穿百衲衣、乞食為生，並且嚴格素食……等。但佛陀以智慧觀之，認為僧團唯有採取彈性的制度，才能不斷保持蓬勃的活力，因此對於嚴厲的頭陀苦行，只留給熱衷此道的僧侶去實踐。從此僧團發展成為具有人間性格，能順應時代的需要及挑戰的團體。

由於行事與戒法都是依照民主原則，因此僧團的應世能力顯著增強。佛陀喜歡分權管理，當他即將涅槃時，關心的弟子問他是否有繼承人？佛陀告訴他們應「以法為師」。僧團因為沒有極權控制，所以能適應不同的時空而有所演進。僧侶們不管是住在大城市或小村莊，都採取自治方式，只有每半個月一次誦戒（音譯：波羅提木叉）<sup>[註 7]</sup>時才聚會一處。他們以開會方式議決事情，而且由口才最好的人敘述問題緣起，而不是由最年長或最有影響力的人提出，其目的是希望大眾能清楚問題所在，而予以考慮。每則問題都重複三次，每問一次即表決一次，以使投票者三思之後，再作決定，也希望藉此達成共識。如果議案到了三讀的階段，仍無法得到全體通過時，便交由委員會仲裁。委員會的運作方式，是把衝突的意見儘量減至最低，然後再以最多的票數來作決定。這種民主的決策方式沿革至今，仍是僧團維持不輟的重要原因。

佛陀還為僧團制定一些規則，使它保持凝聚力和持續力。例如，補充新成員時，需要最低的法定僧數，如果沒有到達法定僧數，任何傳戒都是不如法的。在佛教的漫長歷史中，有些國家曾面臨法定僧數不足的情況，此時必須邀請其他國家的僧侶前來補足人數。例如當中國還無法傳授比丘尼戒時，就邀請錫蘭的鐵索羅及一群比丘尼到中國恢復比丘尼教團。錫蘭的僧團則於一七五三年由泰國比丘前往恢復。雖然彼此的傳承不同，僧團的真實性仍然被保留到某一種程度，這不是其他團體所能繼承的。

佛陀對於僧團的規範也像他在宣揚教義的時候一樣，非常講究實際。他曾允許僧團放寬小小戒的規定，阿難尊者為此受到（長老的）責難，因為他忘了問佛陀究竟是那些是小小戒？但我們可以很明顯地看出不同傳承的僧團有些許差異，是在小小戒方面，然而這並不影響到僧團的整體。例如：裁製的僧衣取代（披掛的）僧袍，或食用晚餐（即所謂的「藥石」）等等，都是氣候迥異於北印度的僧團之所以能夠延續久遠的原因之一。

佛教僧團自我更新和自我規範的能力，使它產生一股巨大的力量，足以克服萬難，綿延不輟，成為世界上歷史最悠久的修道團體。星雲大師對僧團的信心是絕對有理由的。

### 三、僧伽完成日益多元化弘法任務的能力

僧團最後確立的形式，是由一群致力於各項服務的比丘、比丘尼組織。雖然加入僧團的主要目的是開悟見性，了生脫死，但這與奉獻社會並不相悖。

佛世時僧眾就扮演著各種角色。例如禪師們因為專心一志，修持止觀，因此大部分離群索居。至於他們開悟後是否依然如此，則不得而知。不過他們在證得阿羅漢果以後，即開始投入社會福利工作。在巴利藏經與漢文《阿含經》中，均有阿羅漢從事教育和文化工作的記載。他們教化的對象涵蓋僧、信二眾，貢獻卓著。巴利藏與漢文《阿含經》保留了舍利弗、迦旃延及阿難尊者等人的開示內容，以及比丘、比丘尼的文學作品。特別是雨季時四個月的結夏安居期中，僧侶們從兩方面來深入研習佛陀的教法：

第一、他們試著詮釋佛陀的言論，從而產生各種論書。最早的論書可見於三藏經典。（即《小義釋》與《大義釋》）

第二、他們對佛陀的教法作學術上的分析、分類、歸納、及闡釋。

由此過程，而形成阿毗達磨藏（即論藏）。根據北傳佛教的記載，身為佛陀二大弟子之一的舍利弗，即與阿毘達磨的發展有關。（Thich Huyen – Vi, 1971, pp.381-398）

每個僧侶所長不同。據說在擅長佛法的法師和擅長戒律的律師之間曾經發生爭論，像收錄於《小部經》中有一分析性的作品《無礙解道》，足以顯示學者型僧侶們在分析、闡釋方面的深度。其他如單一經論的專家也時有所聞，如長部誦者（長部師）或中部誦者（中部師）等。

學問僧從事分析、闡釋的作法，在佛滅之後仍然持續，他們的論書也受到肯定。西元前三世紀（佛滅後約兩百年），目犍連子帝須在阿育王的護持下主持第三次的三藏結集，並就異議之處，造了一部學術性的論書，名為《論事》，收錄於三藏之一的阿毘達磨藏（論藏）中。緬甸也承認三部較晚產生的學術性論書——《那先比丘經》、《導論》及《藏釋》——都是正統的藏經。

南傳佛教承續原始佛教的傳統，直到現在，佛寺仍是僧信二眾學習的中心。在家眾學習的課程包括識字和世俗知識，其他基礎教育包括認識當地的醫藥、天文曆學、語言和文學。

其中，巴利語、普拉克里特語（Prakrits，古印度的日常用語）及梵語裡所含蓋的大量文學及科學知識，因僧侶致力於啟蒙教育，而被保留至今。

僧團從一開始就與信眾建立共榮的關係。信徒們以飲食、衣服、臥具、及醫藥等四種必需品供養僧團，僧侶則以教導和諮商的身分來作為回報。在《長部》的《善生經》提到，宗教老師與在家信徒之間互惠的責任和義務如下：

宗教或精神上的老師的責任：

1. 制止信徒為非作歹，
2. 鼓勵信徒向善，
3. 教授新知識，
4. 闡說已知的知識（澄清、加強既有的知識），
5. 告訴他們生天之道。[註 8]

信徒的責任：

1. 在行為上對宗教師表現友誼，
2. 在言語中對宗教師表達好意，
3. 在思想上對宗教師心懷善念，
4. 對宗教師隨時敞開大門歡迎，
5. 供給物質所需，使其生活無虞。

佛陀對這種互惠關係曾經以一首偈來說明：

在家與出家，彼此相扶助，  
遵循正法義，最勝解脫處。

（《如是語經》107）



僧、信之間的互惠關係在早期佛教即已根深蒂固，並延續到南傳佛教，使得出家僧伽明顯地分成兩類：

1.住於山林者

2.住於聚落者

住於山林者多半遠離閭閻，在幽靜處隱居，修持禪定。住在聚落者則與村人雜處，與民眾互動，向他們弘法，教育他們的小孩，設立學校，寫作著述、出版書籍，積極從事社會福利工作，並扮演領導群眾的角色。

南亞和東南亞有隱居山林的僧伽，也有許多為城鎮、市區的民眾服務的僧伽，在家佛教學者的型態於焉形成。像阿育王（約西元前二九九～二二八年）大概是最早將佛典精華編成選萃（Babru 或 Bairat 法敕刻文），譯成可以普遍遵行的道德守則（Guruge, 1993, 550~551）。斯里蘭卡的史書也記載著在家佛教學者議決佛教問題，而寫出許多出色的條款。[註 9]

這種傳統沿革至今，造就了高達數千名在家的南傳佛教學者。若與鄰近的印度和回教社會相比，其識字率及受教育比率之高，足以說明僧團在教育發展上，具有卓著的貢獻。緬甸、錫蘭與泰國於二十世紀時小學教育之普遍，都應歸功於僧團在村莊聚落開辦了不少現代化的小學。此外，僧團也用當地方言發展佛教文學。迄今僧團仍有領導作用，他們教導村民克服貧窮、壓迫，並保護自然環境，成為優秀的國民。雖然一般民意不喜歡僧團參與政治活動，但某些政治上的介入仍是避免不了的。

從歷史沿革看來，僧團早已習於擔當各種不同的使命，而且正不斷演進，使之更加多元化，出家僧團與在家信眾之間的良好關係從而增強，形成佛教的特徵。因此星雲大師認為：「只有透過僧信互助，師生同心，才能把佛法傳達給所有需要的人。」

#### 四、興隆佛教僧團及恢復失傳的戒法

星雲大師藉著僧團與信眾為人間佛教共同合作（特別是這兩個教團體的學者），來增進社會福利。他用了將近四十年的時間建設僧團，使其有能力承擔使命。他最初透過期刊、書籍、教室和公開演講，向中國及東亞的大乘僧團宣說理念。他深知僅有崇高的理念是不夠的，所以他更付諸實踐，訓練僧伽積極服務人群，佛光山寺就是他落實理想的具體表現。

為讓大家廣泛學習，他先派遣有潛力的比丘、比丘尼到日本、美國留學，然後逐漸擴及

全世界。如今佛光山僧團匯集了全世界最優秀學府在佛學研究方面的成果，因為星雲大師派遣弟子去各個知名學府取得學士、碩士、博士學位。他以這些學者為核心，在他創辦的佛學院開設了豐富的課程，聘請中國、日本、錫蘭、西藏等地不同宗派的學者前來授課。

星雲大師紹承佛世時的理念，不僅復興僧團，高舉學術，而且跨出東亞，到其他各洲的佛教國家，激勵當地僧團與他合作，並效法實踐。他的勇敢介入，造成了深遠的影響。

數百年前，南傳佛教的比丘尼僧團於數百年失傳，錫蘭佛教界將改革過的型式傳給緬甸、泰國、高棉和寮國，以致上座部佛教[註 10]沒有比丘尼僧團。其實女性在推廣佛教方面不遺餘力，並且有許多人因此而出家學道。但是她們最多只能受持十戒[註 11]，稱為「十戒女」，而無法受持具足戒。

比丘們也提出正當的理由剝奪比丘尼的受戒資格，因為根據戒律，必須要有十個比丘與十個比丘尼，才能傳授比丘尼戒。但事實上，這就是為什麼西元四世紀時錫蘭的尼眾二度赴往中國傳授戒法的原因。星雲大師不顧錫蘭某些地方的反對聲浪，與當地有遠見的比丘合作，終於將具足戒傳授給一群錫蘭比丘尼。這場戒會是在一九九八年二月於菩提迦耶（佛陀的成道處）舉行。佛光山比丘尼參與其中，將當初錫蘭比丘尼鐵索羅等人傳往中國的具足戒再度復興起來。

由於跨出這最切合時機的一步，星雲大師讓南傳佛教的僧團更為壯大。如今，錫蘭、緬甸、泰國、高棉、寮國、印度、孟加拉、尼泊爾等地都可以讓女性在追求精神生活上有平等的機會。他在大型的羯摩法會中，促進了南北傳佛教的融和，雖然其重要意義需要一段時間才能廣受肯定，但它促使全世界的佛教徒共同推動人間佛教，厥功至偉。值得重視的是，星雲大師復興錫蘭比丘尼僧團，實則是東亞對這個南亞佛國的報恩行。

星雲大師致力於恢復原始佛教僧團的地位，他相信能力強、學識廣、效率高、有教育的僧團，是讓世人法益均霑的必要條件。

## 五、學者的角色及知識的進展

星雲大師認為，學者不論在家或出家，都是促進人間佛教的重要角色之一。佛陀曾鼓勵人們用敏銳的洞察力來追求知識，並要求大家經過觀察之後，才接受他的教義。他大聲疾呼：「你們要自己來觀察。」（Ehipassika）他反對盲目的信仰，因為「佛法只有各人運用智慧才能體會」（paccattam veditabbo viññūhi）。有一次他的弟子舍利弗稱揚他是最偉大的佛陀，他立即反問：「你認識過去佛嗎？你認識未來佛嗎？」舍利弗只好承認他全都不認識，於是佛陀說：「那麼你怎能說我是佛陀當中最偉大的？」這種依據證據來下論斷的科學方法，正是所有學問的基礎。

僧團在佛世時，即以分析、歸納、註釋、闡揚等方式，來研究佛法，從而形成原始佛教三藏的一部分。這些內容可分為兩大類：

1.根據文學的形態而有所謂的「九分教」——契經（音譯修多羅）、應頌（音譯祇夜）、記別（音譯和伽羅那）、孤起（音譯伽陀）、本事（音譯伊帝曰多伽）、本生（音譯闍陀伽）、未曾有法（音譯阿浮陀達磨）、問答（音譯毘佛略）。

2.根據「尼柯耶」或「阿含」[註12]（意譯為「教法」）長度或內容而有所謂的《長阿含經》、《中阿含經》、《雜阿含經》（根據主題、聽眾等同性質因素而分類的開示）、《增壹阿含經》（根據法數）、及《小阿含》（主要是詩篇及短文）

《法句經》流行廣泛，從自古以來擁有許多版本，及翻譯成多種現代語文即可看出：古人把佛陀啟發性的開示編纂成冊，影響深遠；《經集》是（佛教）詩偈選集；《長老偈》與《長老尼偈》則是比丘與比丘尼們抒發證悟感懷的詩作。

另一個學術上的例證是佛世時特別為戒律條文而作的索引與摘錄。當耆那教的教主在佛陀入滅前數年逝世時，耆那教徒由於對教義的解釋不同而發生爭吵。舍利弗因此得到啟發，為讓佛法防患未然，而展開一些計畫，《長阿含經》裡的《眾集經》及《十上經》均有記載他的計畫。為使人們便於記憶，舍利弗將佛陀的教法予以有系統的整理，並把關鍵字列舉出來，作出詳盡的索引，凡此證明他不但講究方法，而且擁有驚人的智慧，能洞察人們對佛法知識的需要，可謂貢獻卓著。

如前所說，阿毗達磨藏的產生也歸功於舍利弗詳細分析佛陀的教法，尤其在心理和物質方面，此舉為以後的研究、解釋和闡揚鋪路，後來新的佳作也不斷地收入經藏之中。

由於這些學術上的努力，讓佛教學者對佛陀教法闡揚，作了很大的貢獻。原始佛教時代，為了促使人們對經義的瞭解，所以在學術方面側重於評論、注疏等類似作品。這種註釋性的作品盛行於南傳佛教，像覺音、護法、佛授、阿難陀、小護法、優婆先那、摩訶那摩（大名）、迦葉、金剛菩提、差摩及阿那律陀等都是著作論疏的健將，他們將古老的錫蘭文註釋、翻譯成巴利文，年代溯及十二世紀。此外，南傳佛教還有許多僧侶從事年鑑的寫作，為佛教保存了許多精確的歷史。

大乘佛教的學者則採取不同方式。他們著作的新論側重在哲學、教義方面的分析，以及對佛陀基本教法的詳盡說明。作為大乘先鋒的馬鳴菩薩與貴霜王朝迦膩色迦王一世彼此相善，而於西元一或二世紀左右，在迦濕彌羅國的迦蘭陀羅舉行第四次佛教三藏結集。他的作品包括兩首壯麗的詩篇：一篇是〈佛所行讚〉（記述佛陀生涯），一篇是〈孫陀羅難陀詩〉（記述難陀斷卻美妻之愛著，最後成為大乘佛教徒）；還有一部記述舍利弗改皈佛陀的戲劇（〈舍利弗之所說〉），一部啟發人心的論著——《大乘起信論》。此外，說一切有部的世

親菩薩著作了《阿毘達磨俱舍論》，在印度以外的地區有很大的影響，傳到中國之後，成立了俱舍宗（或稱毘曇宗），在日本亦稱為俱舍宗。

其中，龍樹、提婆、無著及其胞弟世親菩薩是最富有盛名，且影響至鉅的學者。龍樹菩薩創立中觀派，討論事物的自性及與十二因緣之間的關連。龍樹菩薩認為，任何事物都是依他而起，所以空無自性。由於龍樹與提婆菩薩的著作影響深遠，使得空觀普及於大乘佛教的各個宗派。

無著菩薩的影響也不小，他把龍樹菩薩對於自性的觀念，以三性說來表達，即遍計所執性、依他起性、圓成實性。無著菩薩又把原始佛教的六識加了兩個識：阿賴耶識（如倉庫一般的藏識，是所有感覺、思想、意見的基礎，也是業種子累積的地方）與末那識（此識使人誤以為阿賴耶識是永恒不變的）。他與世親菩薩建立了瑜伽派（或唯識宗），強調萬法唯心造。

這些有關佛法的論說突顯了邏輯的重要性。因此佛教學者在不斷接觸印度邏輯學者之後，發展出一套佛教因明學。例如陳那、護法、戒賢、法稱及月官不僅對佛教邏輯有貢獻，而且也發展出印度的認識論。

上述幾位學者都與首屈一指的那爛陀大學（西元二至十一世紀）有關。龍樹、提婆、護法、戒賢、法稱都曾經住持那爛陀，而且將佛法傳播到印度以外的地方。像玄奘大師（西元六〇二～六四四）在那爛陀大學深造時，即受業於戒賢大師。

學者在弘法方面的另一項重大貢獻是將佛經譯成各國語文。中國佛教歷史中有許多優秀的翻譯家，像法護、鳩摩羅什（無疑地是最偉大的翻譯家）、真諦、求那跋摩、求那跋陀羅及寂護等等。西藏的著名翻譯家則有蓮華生及阿底峽尊者。

無疑地，星雲大師是從這些前賢大德的先例，看出佛教學者對弘揚佛法的貢獻。他對於當今佛教學者，尤其在推展人間佛教方面，有三點看法：

- 1.與各領域的學者建立關係，並促成學者間的合作；
- 2.設立優等的研究中心，讓知名的學者能透過教學與研究來訓練年輕學者；
- 3.透過國際座談會、會議、及研究計畫，促使學者彼此互動，深入研究人間佛教。

為了將理想付諸行動，他在台灣宜蘭創辦了佛光山人文社會學院，在嘉義成立的南華大學則已擁有現代規模的設施，在美國加州的西來大學，宗教系方面提供學士到博士的學位，

企業管理系方面也開設學士、碩士、企業家進修的碩士、及碩士後進修的課程。除此以外，還有為因應個別需要，而設計以英語為第二語言的課程及進階教育。

為增進國際學者的共同研究，美國西來大學的國際佛教學院和台灣高雄的佛光山文教基金會也提供贊助給各種會議、研究計畫及出版事業。西來大學學報及聖地牙哥的國際佛教翻譯中心即是負責翻譯、出版學術性和教育性的書籍。

由國際佛教學院出版的第一本西來人間佛教期刊業已發行，內有七篇關於人間佛教的論文。星雲大師還計畫在澳洲及南非創立類似的教學大樓。

上述的弘法活動都是經由僧信、師生的合作，凡此說明了人間佛教如何為社會福利而奉獻。

#### 【註釋】

[註 1] 有關太虛大師對星雲大師之影響，Richard L. Kimball 提及太虛大師圓寂於一九四七年，及星雲大師提出創新的人間佛教時，我認為他的下列論點不正確：「星雲大師讀過他（指太虛大師）大部份的著作，聆聽過他的一些開示……，他是星雲大師的典範與導師。」經過一番討論後，Kimball 修正如下：「星雲大師曾讀過他（指太虛大師）的一些著作，至少聽過他一次開示，深受其言辭及決心之感召，並以其為典範。」

[註 2] 最近西方學者的趨勢，如德國的 Heinz Bechert 和英國的 Richard Gombrich 等，都把佛曆延後了一百年，是無法令人信服的，因為他們忽略了(1)巴利史料在兩個阿育王（黑阿育和法阿育）方面，同意 Puranas 和玄奘的說法。(2)從頻婆娑羅王（與佛同世）到旃陀笈多王（孔雀王朝的開國之君）之間的王朝。

[註 3] 漢譯佛典對於三法印的教義，與此稍有不同，即：無常、無我、涅槃寂靜。

[註 4] 由於其他的苦會因「生」而來，所以生也被視為是苦的。哲學的觀點則認為有生必有死，生死於焉輪迴不已。所以當一個人因開悟而體現涅槃境界時，佛陀說他：「不受後有」。(na hi jātu gabbhaseyyam punareti ——見《小誦·慈經》，《經集》I, 8)

[註 5] 我於一九七四年在泰國曼谷的世界佛教徒友誼會的演講中提到：「即使有人說：『我可以在這一刻直接引導你進入涅槃』，我相信大部分的人都會找很多的藉口來推托。有的人會說：『我能不能等女兒結了婚再說?』或者說：『我能不能等兒子找到工作再說?』再不就是說：『我能不能等到我的任務完成再說?』由於我們執著於此時此刻的事物，即使學佛的最終目標來到眼前，我們仍不捨所愛。」--*Gems of Buddhist Wisdom*, Buddhist Missionary Society, Kuala Lumpur, 1983/1996, P.332.

[註 6] 原始佛教有三種悟道的方式：即自覺、覺他、覺行圓滿的「佛陀」；無師而能自悟，自了生死的「辟支佛」；聞佛陀聲教而悟解的「聲聞」。以上三種人都稱為「阿羅漢」，意為「應供」。但在大乘典籍中，阿羅漢相當於聲聞。



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~待續~