

Buddhism101: Introduction To Buddhism

Lecture 7 – Six Principles of Living in Harmony



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❑ A quick review.

➤ Topic One : General Introduction

➔ Buddhism is an **education**, not a religion or a philosophy

- It teaches us how to recover our wisdom and regain our Buddha nature
- It teaches us how to solve our problems through wisdom – an art of living

➔ The **Law of Causality** governs everything in the universe

➔ All sentient beings possess the **same Buddha nature**

- Our Buddha nature is temporarily **lost** due to **delusion**
- Our lost Buddha nature can be recovered **only** via **cultivation**

➔ Karma refers to an action and its retribution under the Law of Causality

- **Good and bad karmas do not offset each other – prevailing ones occur first**
- Karmas, good or bad, accumulate over time and do not disappear
- When many bad karmic retributions come together, they form disasters

➔ Cultivation means to stop planting bad seeds and nurturing bad conditions, and to, instead, plant good seeds and nurture good conditions

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□ A quick review.

➤ Topic Two : The Three Refuges and the Four Reliance Principles

➔ We formally accept the Buddha's education and **set our goals** by taking the Three Refuges

- Buddha (Awakening 覺), Dharma (Right or Proper 正), Sangha (Purity & Clarity 淨)
- The Three Refuges are within ourselves

➔ We return to and rely on the **Three Refuges within ourselves** and accept the **Four Reliance Principles** provided to us by the Buddha to guide ourselves along the path of **cultivation**

- Rely on the Dharma, not on the persons who expound it (依法不依人)
- Rely on the meaning of the sutra, not just on the words (依義不依語)
- Rely on wisdom, not on perception (依智不依識)
- Rely on the sutras that can lead us to break out of delusion, not on the ones which won't (依了義經不依不了義經)
(Sutras need to fit one's level, or they will not help.)

➔ Four Reliance Principles also help us authenticate a teaching and the person who expounds the teaching

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❑ A quick review (Cont'd)

➤ Topic Three : Recognizing the Four Noble Truths

➔ We begin cultivation by recognizing the Four Noble Truths:

- There is suffering in our lives (苦 Dukkha)
- There is a cause or origin of sufferings (集 Samudaya)
- There is a cessation of sufferings (滅 Nirodha)
- There is a path leading to the cessation of sufferings (道 Magga)

➔ Karma (業) refers to an action and its retribution under the Law of Causality

➔ Sufferings occur because we are committing innumerable karmas every moment

➔ Bad karmas are subsumed as **three poisons: greed (貪), anger (瞋), and ignorance (癡)**

- Greed, Anger, and Ignorance are also called the **Mind Karma (意業)** that drives our **Body Karma (身業)** and **Speech Karma (語業)**

➔ **Body Karma, Speech Karma, and Mind Karma** together

- **Seeded** and **are seeding** the causes of all sufferings of the past, present, and future
- **Conditioned** and **are conditioning** all sufferings of the past, present, and future

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□ A quick review. (Cont'd)

➤ Topic Three : The Four Noble Truths (Cont'd)

- ➔ Nirvana is the cessation of sufferings (Nirodha 滅諦)
- ➔ Nirvana can only be attained via continuous cultivation with diligence and focus, and when we reach Buddhahood
- ➔ Realization of the **Noble Eightfold Path** is **the path** to the cessation of sufferings, Nirvana

➤ Topic Four: The Twelve Links in the Chain of Causation

- ➔ Clearly depicts the function of the Law of Causality in the death & rebirth cycle – Dependent Arising (Pratitya Samutpada 緣生)
 - Due to the existence or production of A, B arises or is produced
- ➔ Also explains how to “stop” the chain (Moksha 還滅)
 - If we don't want B to arise or be produced, we **MUST STOP** the existence or production of A
- ➔ The Twelve Links are:
 - First Link – Ignorance or Avidya (無明)
 - Second Link – Volitional Action (行)

(Avidya and Actions are the **Causes/Seeds** (過去苦因) in the past, from which the present **Effects** (Dukkha, 現在苦果) arise.)

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□ A quick review. (Cont'd)

➤ Topic Four: The Twelve Links in the Chain of Causation

➔ The Twelve Links are: (Cont'd)

- Third Link – Consciousness (識)
- Fourth Link – Name & Form (名色)
- Fifth Link – Six Sense Spheres (六入)
- Sixth Link – Contact (觸)
- Seventh Link – Feeling (受)
- Eighth Link – Attachment (愛)
- Ninth Link – Grasping (取)
- Tenth Link – Existence (有)

Consciousness through Existence are the seeds from which future Dukkha arise.
(現在苦因)

- Eleventh Link – Birth (生)
- Twelfth Link – Aging and Death (老死)

Birth, Aging and Death are the future Dukkha (苦) arisen from the seeds of suffering we are presently planting. (未來苦果)

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□ A quick review. (Cont'd)

➤ Topic Four: The Twelve Links in the Chain of Causation

➔ **Attachments (愛), Grasping (取), and Existence (有) are the only ones over which we still have control**

- Breaking out of the Chain from these places are definitely possible
- It seems the easiest from Existence: stopping depositing anything into our consciousness

➔ **Mahayana's Perspective of Four Noble Truths and Twelve Links (大乘佛法對四聖諦與十二因緣的觀察)**

- All dharma are conditionally arisen or existent (緣生)
- The sense of existence (生) of the Four Noble Truths and the Twelve Links in the Chain of Causation is also a false illusion; so is the extinction (滅) of them
『無無明，亦無無明盡，乃至無老死，亦無老死盡。無苦集滅道，無智亦無得』。(般若波羅密多心經)
- Form and Emptiness do not differ in nature
『色不異空，空不異色』(是指性相不二)
- Therefore, we should dwell on NEITHER existence NOR non-existence (不住空亦不住有)

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□ A quick review. (Cont'd)

➤ Topic Five: The Noble Eightfold Path

➔ It is the Fourth Noble Truth: Realization of the **Noble Eightfold Path** is the **only path** to the cessation of sufferings – Nirvana

➔ Regardless of Theravada or Mahayana Buddhism, the Noble Eightfold Path is a **must**

- Right Understanding (正見)
- Right Thought (正思維)
- Right Speech (正語)
- Right Action (正業)
- Right Livelihood (正命)
- Right Effort (正勤)
- Right Mindfulness (正念)
- Right Concentration (正定)

➔ It centered on teaching us to take the middle way (i.e., to avoid the extremes) (中庸之道) and to develop the proper cultivation path

➔ All in all, live a simple life, i.e., on what we have, not on what we expect to have

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❑ A quick review. (Cont'd)

➤ Topic Five : Nurturing the Three Virtuous Conditions

➔ Be **filial** to one's parents; respectfully **attend** one's teachers and all elders; **compassionately refrain** from killing; **cultivate** the Ten Virtuous Deeds (a.k.a. Ten Good Deeds)

『孝養父母；奉事師長；慈心不殺；修十善業』。

➔ Take the **Three Refuges**; uphold the **precepts**; conduct oneself in a **proper and decent** manner; and do not break laws and customs

『受持三皈；具足眾戒；不犯威儀』。

➔ Give rise to the **Bodhi mind**; deeply believe in the **Law of Causality**; **recite and uphold** Mahayana sutras, and **encourage** and **help** others to advance on the path to enlightenment

『發菩提心；深信因果；讀誦大乘；勸進行者』。

➔ Complete realization of all the Three Virtuous Conditions is imperative to the attainment of Buddhahood

➔ The keys to success are:

- Unwavering belief. (深信)
- Unwavering vow. (切願)
- Continuous practice. (實行)

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- ❑ **Six Principles of Living in Harmony (六和敬):**
 - Recorded in *Agama Sutra* (阿含經) and other sutras
 - The Three Virtuous Conditions are for self-cultivation, or practicing alone
 - The Six Rules of Living in Harmony are for Sangha members practicing together
 - What is a Sangha (和合僧團)?
 - ➔ Four or more people practicing together and abiding by the Six Principles of Living in Harmony
 - ➔ A Sangha is **comprised of monastic and/or laypeople**
 - ➔ “Returning to and relying on the Sangha is the noblest of the beings-kind” (Master Huineng) – Lesson 2 『皈依僧，眾中尊』 (六祖慧能)
 - ➔ The Sangha represents **purity, clarity, and harmony**.
 - The spirit of the Six Principles of Living in Harmony not only applies to Sanghas, but also to all teams or groups of any size, even as large as a country or the world

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- ❑ **Harmony in Having the Same Viewpoints (見和同解):**
 - **Common goals are imperative to any team or group**
 - **But how do we establish common goals?**
 - **We drop our personal insistences, attachments to our own views**
 - ➔ **They could easily be biased (in conventional terms)**
 - ➔ **They are most assuredly deluded (in Dharma terms)**
 - **Requires great patience and tolerance**
 - ➔ **Selflessness, humility, sincerity, and respect**
 - **Revert back to what was recorded in the sutras**
 - ➔ **Sutras reflect our Buddha nature which is common to everyone**
 - ➔ **Accord with our Buddha nature**
 - ➔ **One sutra or one school is all we need**
 - **Our common goal is to attain enlightenment**
 - **A perfect example, the first Pure Land school temple, Tung Lin Si (東林寺), established by Master Huiyuan (慧遠大師).**

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- ❑ **Harmony in Observing the Same Precepts (戒和同修):**
 - **Based on the fundamental precepts Buddha taught us:**
 - ➔ **Abstain from Killing, Stealing, Sexual Misconduct, False Language, and Taking Intoxicants**
 - **Local laws, ordinances and customs**
 - **Also includes group protocols, etc., whether stated or implied.**
 - ➔ **Especially those “Purity” codes (清規) followed in Buddhist centers and temples**
 - **Local laws and customs, and group protocols are subject to change**
 - **The fundamental precepts must be followed regardless**
- ❑ **Harmony in Living Together (身和同住):**
 - **Utilizes group momentum to prevent one from backsliding / regressing on the cultivation path**
 - **In the past, only in-charge, sick persons, and older people could have individual rooms in a temple or cultivation place**

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❑ Harmony in Speaking without Conflict (口和無諍):

- Conflicts can easily result from excessive speech
- Careless speech will deplete our good fortune (福報)
 - ➔ “To protect one’s speech karma, never laugh at or criticize others shortfalls”
(*Sukhavati-vyuha Sutra, that is, the Infinite Life Sutra* 無量壽經)
『善護口業，不譏他過』。(無量壽經)
 - ➔ “Respectfully keep silent” (止語) in every cultivation center
- Revert to the Triple Gems whenever disagreements arise
 - ➔ Use the Triple Jewels as the criteria to reflect on our own conduct
 - ➔ The full name of the *Infinite Life Sutra* tells us that “Purity,” “Equality,” and “Awakening” are the goals, methods, and criteria for our cultivation

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❑ Harmony in Experiencing Dharma Bliss Together (意和同悅):

- “I feel delightful when I can practice and realize what I learned.”
(Confucius)

『學而時習之，不亦說乎。』 (孔子)

❑ Harmony in Sharing Benefits (利和同均):

- Share one's received offerings to all members in the Sangha
- Individuals have nothing; therefore, there is nothing to dwell on
- Share our good fortune – giving generously
- Effectively use the Four All-embracing Methods (四攝法).
 - ➔ Give unsparingly (佈施)
 - ➔ Kind words (愛語) – sincerely show our care for others' well being
 - ➔ Beneficial actions (利行) – always be mindful of others' interest and reflect on our behavior
 - ➔ Comradeship and cooperation (同事) – share the burdens of others