

Meditation Master JinBodhi's Short Dharma Teachings

Give Thanks for Your Nearest and Dearest

From "Happiness Begins With Thanksgiving"

We must learn to be grateful. Be more tolerant, loving, and less sarcastic. Think more of the other's kindness.

We reap what we sow. When you give love, you get love. If you give compassion, you will receive care and love of others. If you hurt others, you will get hurt. It is as simple as that. But many don't understand that. Some 90-year-olds still fight. It is because they don't tolerate others. If fighting becomes a habit, what if your child takes up murder as a habit? If you don't curb your bad behavior, but make it a habit you are proud of, then it is rather shameless. The damage done to kids would continue. Your kids are tormented continuously, this twists their mind. To learn Buddhadharma, start with compassion and gratitude. Think about this.

If you are married, I hope you all think about this; think about your partner, their kindness. If you are not married, can you think of a teacher or friend who was kind to you? There must be someone, right? Couples, whether together or already divorced, can you think of the other's kindness? Raise your hand if you can. If you can, but cannot help fighting, raise your hand please, be honest. Don't be timid; you were not when fighting. Good. Now for unmarried ones, but with a kind teacher or friend, please raise your hand. Pray for their health, happiness, auspiciousness, and long life. When we are with those closest to us, be it our colleagues, partners, friends, teachers, or students, and when we are unhappy or angry, if we always keep unpleasant and sad things in our mind and raise issues again and again, then we are perpetuating the hurt. Do it once, hurt

once. Do it again, hurt again. If the hurt is already very deep, and you raise it again, it could lead to divorce. If you raise the issue ten times a year, that's like divorce ten times over. If 50 times, then divorce 50 times over. With this immense pain, how can you and your partner be happy? You magnify the hurt indefinitely. If you two are not divorced, you are lucky.

I don't know how one could stay in this kind of relationship, or wants to stay in such a marriage; they must not want to lose you. Even though they are living in pain, they are still standing by you. Not being grateful is the greatest sin. Because we make ourselves suffer; we make others, our children and our aged parents, suffer. It isn't just spouses who feel pain, but the whole family, your relatives and friends included. No one talks to you about it; no one dares. Everyone is living in fear and pain. So, I want to remind everyone: do not rub old wounds. One is hurt when you rub; we suffer when we are hurt. So on and so forth. Some hurts cause awful pain like dying. Why do we do this again and again? We learn Buddhadharma so as to forget the hurt, once and for all, and remember the kindness again and again. Even though you hurt me in the past, if once you were kind to me and then you were hurt by someone, or you had a car accident, I would take care of you. Even if you were too heavy for me, I would still carry you to the hospital, which would be exhausting. But if I save your life, I would feel joyful. Yes, think this way. You will be grateful and happy every time; you recall their kindness. Life, like that, is then full of happiness and gratitude, even though your life is hard.

Learning Buddhadharma is learning to be grateful. We must give up vengeance. With a heart of compassion, we will recall the kindness we have received, forget the harm done to me, even if we have to struggle to forget. That is true gratitude. That shows we know how to live. Just like when you are looking at someone, if you always find flaws on their face, will they be happy? A disciple met me

again after some years. “Master,” he said and began crying nonstop as if his mother had just died.

“Please stop. What’s wrong?”

“Master, how come you look so old now?”

I did not want to say anything bad, “Thank you, I am not that old.” “You aged a lot more than me.”

Once, a disciple in Guangzhou, China said, “Master, you're very handsome. With double eyelids (Chinese standard for being more beautiful), you'd be more handsome.” I was young then, and I said, “It seems you ask to be beaten.” That sort of comment is hurtful. Of course, it didn't bother me. I can take anything. Looks don't affect my self-esteem. I don't care about how I look. But others are easily hurt. Don't keep uttering hurtful words. Those who don't know how to speak nicely exist everywhere. It is because their mind and heart are closed to the outside world. There's no gratitude in their heart. Usually they live in a hurtful environment. Whole families are like that. They always say hurtful words. I paid a visit to this disciple's family to see how they live. When I arrived, they were having dinner. Her mother didn't know me, but recognized me from a photo. She said, “This is your Master, right? Master, would you eat with us?” I couldn't say yes as it was my first visit. I didn't want to trouble them. So I said, “I have eaten, you just go ahead.” Actually, I had not had my dinner. At last, her mother filled a bowl of rice, and she slammed it down before me. “Eat, otherwise it'll spoil!” So I played along. “What if it spoils?” She said, “I'll feed the pigs before it does.” I found it really funny the way she said it. “OK, I'll eat it to save bothering the pigs.” Later, I found that she was very kind. But how come she talked that way? Because that's how her parents spoke. Her parents argued while living. In the old days, bellows were used to help with cooking. The father would work the bellows while the mother stirred the pot of rice. The two worked in tandem like that, but they would argue

the whole time. That's why their child spoke harshly. The third generation inherited it. Her daughter spoke harshly too. She said, "Master, you're handsome, but you'd look better with double eyelids." Later, I played along and asked, "You like me or Andy Lau (an actor)?"

"For good looks, I like Andy Lau," and she thumped it in front of me, "for good heart, I like you."

"You can only pick one. Which one? "

She really didn't know how to say it best. Finally, she said, "Master, don't make me. If you insist, I would pick Andy Lau." I told her that I was just kidding. "Ok, you can keep liking us both."

So, don't say anything hurtful. Even if others do something wrong, which bothers you, don't obsess about it. Sometimes you get hurt badly. But why let it bother you constantly? Because you are narrow-minded or an ignoble person. A magnanimous, noble person always thinks well of others. Perhaps I had been hurt by another person, but he had also been kind to me, so I would be very grateful for his kindness, and be kind to him and help him.

No negative words or opening old wounds. This is especially important for couples. Once married, couples have no restraint. Dirty tricks and harsh words, they dish them out to each other, despite being in love with each other, so let's focus on others' kindness and forget about the negativity. That is the heart Buddhists cultivate.

Without cherishing or gratitude for others, we are prone to causing hurt. With gratitude, compassion and tolerance, always think of the other's goodness, and forget about the bad aspects. We can then live in happiness and peace. That's the start of Buddhadharma learning.