

# *How to resolve your personal conflicts*

Chao Khun Samai



"As human beings who are not enlightened we always find trouble. We can't get away from conflict.

If we have sincerity and honesty, then others can trust us. This can help us get on well with our friends, our parents, our brothers and sisters and others that we must deal with. By practising sincerity, we may find peace and happiness."

Some people find sincerity very difficult to practise, yet so often, lack of sincerity is the cause of so much trouble. You will find that anything that comes from the wrong way of life will not help you. Although it may help your body materially in the short term, it will corrupt your mind. If it is stolen or not freely given to you, you will have a lot of trouble.

You must also have the right livelihood, otherwise you will find that people will come and take your things away.

If you don't practise sincerity, then you will find it is very hard to live with your friends, and have their help and support. Also you should not expect any help or support from friends you have just met. You must build up your credits by helping them first. Perhaps after a few years you can then expect some help from them.

You should practise sincerity and honesty within the family first. If the father and mother can set a loving, compassionate example to the children, then those children will be very lucky and will copy that example later.

If you just have good intention, but do not set an example, then the children will grow up the wrong way. Without sincerity and honesty, family life will collapse, partners will stay apart and no-one will look after the children.

To me, this is very sad, as the children will follow their parents' poor example. And even when the wife and husband divorce, they will not be better off, and nor will they be satisfied.

The Buddha lived over 2,500 years ago and taught the Five Precepts. These precepts are; to refrain from killing, taking what is not given, telling lies, sexual misconduct, and drinking intoxicating liquor. If you can't follow just the Five Precepts, then you will cause yourselves lots of trouble. You must do your best!

If you observe the Five Precepts strictly, you will earn the respect of many. People will trust you. You will have name and fame where ever you go. But once you break the Precepts you will have lots of trouble!

Even sometimes when you keep the Five Precepts, you experience many conflicts and suffering.

Sometimes the more your name and fame spreads, you get trouble from others who are jealous, mean and selfish. You may get trouble from those who don't like the teachings. You must have patience. If you don't have patience, you will have a lot of trouble!

Let me tell you a story. One day the Buddha went to a village to teach and encountered much trouble. His adviser, Venerable Ananda told him that he should move onto the next village. The Buddha protested. He said, "How can I leave these people when they don't fully understand my teachings. They will think I am incompetent. They will always abuse me." He asked his advisor, "Where is your true patience ? Where is your true strength ? When people abuse you, you should thank them."

This has happened to me as a monk. Sometimes it is very difficult when we go round and see young people.

One day when I went visiting, I felt a stone hit me. I was very hurt and very angry. I looked around but there was no one. So I looked over the fence and saw a small boy. My heart sank. But I was so angry that I picked up a stone to throw back. Then I thought to myself that it was not good for a monk to throw stones. I was fuming and felt so angry!



I waited and slowly my anger passed, and I dropped the stone that I had earlier wanted to throw with so much acrimony. I learned a lesson from that little boy. I learned to control my anger.

Patience is always so important, like the foundation of a house or the roots of a tree.

You must understand your own defilements, and weaknesses. You must have a lot of patience. You must have a lot of loving-kindness towards others. For example, if you can live in the forest without complaining about the insects or the wild animals, then you can live anywhere. You should try not to complain about mosquitoes, bad people, lack of comfort, or sickness.

If you think you must always have a good room, or a good friend, then you can't have a good life. This is because it shows you can not be satisfied.

Attachment to good people is also a problem, but not attachment to bad people! Sometimes we wish we could be with our good friends always, but this is not possible, and it will bring us trouble.

If you understand your friends properly, you can reduce your conflicts. You should all know what happens when you play tennis...

You know that the ball will always be hit towards the weaker partner! You should look at your friends and understand that the weaker ones will attract far more trouble! You must have loving-kindness towards them, and try to help them.

Tolerance is also very important for practising Buddhism. You must have something to show others that Buddhism is good. Buddhism originally grew in one mind. When you are by yourself, you must depend on your own virtues.

Always try and support your friends. Help yourself but never expect help from others and practise a lot.

After I first came to Australia, I had a bad dream about having to speak to hundreds of Australians. I was afraid of saying something that might upset them in explaining about Buddhism. I dreamt that all the people threw sticks and stones at me. So I ran to the police station and all the police ran out and protected me.

This dream reminded me that we will be accepted by law abiding people, for as long as we are virtuous. If we behave ourselves, we will be accepted and respected by the people.

### **Q1 Why do some people seem to be compulsive liars ?**

**A1.** If we never seem to benefit from doing good, and some people seem to benefit from doing bad, then they will be encouraged to continue their bad habits.

Sometimes due to our past actions, it takes a while before we can receive goodness and kindness from others. Once lying becomes a habit, it is very difficult to break out of it.

However, once they know the trouble they bring from lying, they might stop it. Then they may begin to see the virtue of sincerity, and the advantages it brings.



### **Q2 My friend is being hurt in a relationship. What can I do?**

**A2.** If your friend has to stay with her partner, it may mean your friend does not have enough good virtue to stand on her own. Perhaps she is always depending on the other for her own happiness, and she is not strong enough to be by herself.

Remember my tennis example where the weak partner always seems to receive the ball the most. You must help them. Perhaps this is a situation we see so often, where one person is causing a lot of trouble, and another living with ignorance and delusion gets very upset as a result.

### **Q3. If we should not attach ourselves to good people & things, should we seek out more bad people?**

**A3.** If all good friends stayed with us, you would miss them and you would also depend on them. Life doesn't work that way. Your attachment to them will cause trouble to you later. Remember the Eight Worldly Conditions; gain & loss, fame & insignificance, praise & blame, suffering & happiness. - If you start collecting things, then your room becomes messy. You will be very far away from the Buddha's teachings! It is our duty to train our mind to go beyond this.

You should be able to give away all your material things for the happiness of others. What will be left over is the purity, wisdom and satisfaction of giving as compensation for your action. Eventually you may also realise that it is wiser not to attach to name or fame.

For example, when the last day come for Venerable Serabutang, he did for the last time, all the normal things. He attended his normal duties and asked all the monks to come. He told them, "When I leave here today I will not come back." - Just like that, with no attachments.



However, for Venerable Ananda, when his stepmother passed away, oh, he lost a lot of tears! He was very attached, - even though his stepmother had told him, "I am free from the trouble that this body brings. I am going to Nibbana.- Do not feel sorrow for me!"

The very good are able to stay calm. They can help teach people not to have too many attachments and troubles. For the rest of us, we just have to build up our virtues.

#### **Q4. What if some people become upset about our religion or our practice ?**

**A4.** We should forget and forgive them. Otherwise bad action will result in bad kamma which will bring more suffering. If you dare to harm or hurt the person who is very sincere in their concern for you, you will bring great harm to yourself. We should send our loving-kindness to them, help them, and support them. This should always be our long term strategy! After a while perhaps, they will then see through their own ignorance and delusion.

Let me tell you a story about Venerable Telajunmun For his disciples who practised under him, he was very strict. But for those who did not know or understand Buddhism, he would do and allow everything. He always asked them to come and join with him and he would feed them. He never said anything against them, and always gave them his loving kindness. Later, many joined him, and were able to respect and abide by his strict rules of practise. In this way we should help all people, not just Buddhists but all living beings. Always do your best.

Some children come to the temple for incense. They love the Chinese incense which has a very sweet smell, but which burns quickly. When the little children come, they always ask for some and I immediately give it to them. But sometimes I have to hold back, otherwise they will come every day and disturb us. So we must use wisdom and not spoil them.

As monks we realise it is very important to be kind to all people, so we hope they will carry the spirit of the Buddha on. But we must have loving-kindness for all, including our enemies. If you find you can't stay with someone, then I'm afraid, it means you are not practising Buddhism at all.

#### **Q5. What are the aims of your temple?**

**A5.** We don't have too many ambitions. We must look after ourselves. For me, I try to help wherever I am needed. Sometimes I am asked to give talks in Melbourne or Adelaide. If just one person can understand Buddhism through my teachings then I am happy. I try to lead a simple life.

I remember when I went to India to see where the Buddha was enlightened. Ahh, it was so simple. The cave where the Buddha used to meditate was only 2.6 metres wide. That impressed and inspired me very much!

Let me give you a final example. The frog is always making a noise serenading other frogs. He invites trouble so that he can be killed! A diamond never says anything under the ground. Yet the name and fame of the diamond goes before it. If you are a good person, you should try to be like the subterranean diamond rather than the noisy frog!

You should always say, "May I be well and happy. May all living beings be well and happy!" and spread your compassion and loving-kindness to all.

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