



Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2017

Session Summary (No. 66)

Boao Forum for Asia Institute

March 26, 2017

Session43

A Dialogue with Religious Leaders

Time: 15:30 - 17:00, March 26, 2017

Venue: ICC, Level 1, Dong Yu Grand Ballroom C

Moderator: YANG Rui, Host, China Global Television Network (CGTN)

Panelists:

- Bhaddanta CINTITALANKARA, Member of the State Sangha MahaNa Yaka, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
- Sittivong ONEKEO, Chairperson, Lao Buddhist Fellowship Organization of Luang Prabang Province; Abbot, Vat Xieng Thong
- The Most Ven. PHRAPROMMASITH, Vice Sangharaja of Thailand Buddhism; Chairman of the Administrative Office of the Thai Buddhist Missionaries Overseas
- Most Ven. Dr. Thich Nhat Tu, Vice Rector of the Vietnam Buddhist University, Vice Director, Vietnam Buddhist Research Institute
- Tep VONG, the Great Supreme Patriarch of the Kingdom of Cambodia
- Venerable Master YIN Shun, Vice Chairman of the Buddhist Association of China and Chairman of the Buddhist Association of Hainan Province



Key points:

- Buddha teaches us that we can only live happily in friendship and solidarity. We should live in solidarity to realize regional peace and prosperity. This is not just for our own generation, but also for our prosperity.

- We should seek more communications and discussions based on mutual understanding and mutual respect so as to reduce our anger and ignorance. If possible, we should promote peace and benevolence, which is a role that Buddhism plays in Asian culture.

- People may hold different opinions and this may give rise to problems. Buddhism deems that solidarity can overcome all problems and resolve all conflicts.

- Every coin has two sides. We should use the good aspect instead of the bad one. People practicing Buddhism should be patient and maintain a peaceful mind.

Synopsis:

The Langcang River-Mekong River basin is the common cradle of life for countries and peoples along the riverbanks, while Buddhism is a spiritual tie connecting the countries and peoples in this region. These countries from the upper stream to the down streams are China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Viet Nam. Buddhism has been upholding peace during its entire history, which always advocates the



solemn pure land of Buddhism, benefit and happiness for people, doing good to the world, and protecting nations and people. Since the ancient times, no war has been launched in the name of Buddhism, which merits our deep thinking. Religious leaders from six countries in the Langcang River-Mekong River basin met at the Boao Forum for Asia for a spiritual dialogue.

Harmonious Coexistence of Close neighbors in the Langcang River-Mekong River basin

Tep VONG pointed out that the Langcang River-Mekong River basin provides living resources for people along the riverbanks. China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Viet Nam have been coexisting peacefully and developing jointly over a long period of time. These six countries should respect and follow the teachings of Buddha, who instructed that we can only live happily in friendship and solidarity. We should live in solidarity to realize regional peace and prosperity. This is not just for our own generation, but also for our posterity. Buddhism, which has existed in the Langcang River-Mekong River basin for about 2000 years, is a source of inspiration and a bright future, and millions of people benefit from the teachings of Buddha.

Bhaddanta noted that Myanmar and China support each other on various occasions. In this diversified world, we must support and assist each other to pass on the Buddhist culture. This is also the true essence and teaching of Buddha's universal love. Buddha is of critical importance to all living beings.

Bhaddanta pointed out that Asian peoples have coexisted for many centuries without too much conflict. As people have different perspectives and opinions,



some may say some words of hatred out of ignorance about Buddhism. In case of any problem arising from people's relationship, we should find out a solution. We should seek more communications and discussions based on mutual understanding and mutual respect so as to reduce our anger and ignorance. If possible, we should promote peace and benevolence, which is a part that Buddhism plays in the Asian culture.

Kindhearted, We Should Strive to Overcome Pains and Difficulties by Good Faiths

Most Ven. Dr. Thich Nhat Tu noted that we see so many sufferings in the world, but Buddhism admonishes that we maintain the purity of our soul and harbor kindness in our heart, and follow the natural rule of laws. Buddha teaches us that we should have three kinds of beliefs: first, we should believe in Buddha, who is our spiritual guide and helps us realize human well-being and find true happiness in life; second, we should believe in the Buddhist doctrines, and take them as our spiritual guidance, which helps us overcome and transcend all the sufferings in society; third, we should observe the Buddhist precepts, which can help us overcome the negative aspects in life.

Most Ven. Dr. Thich Nhat Tu noted that Buddhism also teaches us to believe in ourselves and in morality. In this way, each action we take and each thing we do, be it “mind”, “mouth”, “will” or “action”, there will be a result. Therefore, no one should do any evil thing—as evil things violate social laws and rules. Only in this way can we ensure a good life. We should do our best to accomplish such qualities in our life. So long as we have these beliefs, we will be able to overcome troubles and pains in life.



The Most Ven. PHRAPROMMASITH noted that most Thai people believe in Buddhism, and they respect each other, refrain from resorting to violence, and believe that solidarity can be realized. Buddhism tells us that we should have compassion and tolerance for each other. Therefore, violence is basically absent in Thailand, and no incident of violence can be found on streets. Inner joy means that everyone trusts and loves each other, while maintaining their independence and acquiring happiness through mutual love. The principle is to tolerate those who have done wrong and be compassionate with the ill-fated. People may hold different opinions and this may give rise to problems. Buddhism deems that solidarity can overcome all problems and resolve all conflicts.

With Tolerance and Tranquility, We Give a Home to our Heart and Soul

YIN Shun noted that people have been rapidly running forward over many years and leaving their hometown for to pursue wealth. However, they come to realize that the wealthier they have, the more trouble they are ridden with, while happiness is receding farther and farther. What is the way out? Where should we settle our heart? In the contemporary times, Buddhism offers a home for our heart and a place for our soul; Buddhism shows us the way out, what we want to achieve, and where we will go ultimately. He put forward four “nos”, that is, benevolence has no enemy, wisdom no worry, Buddhism no boundary, and art no border.

YIN Shun noted that it is hoped that more socially vulnerable groups and people struggling at the bottom of the society should have the courage to face sunshine and the future and do not give up their yearnings for a good life.



Belief is of critical importance to today's society. He hoped that the whole society and the whole world will be full of benevolence and love. Each idea is a wish, with a cause and an effect. All people working with media should disseminate the message of benevolence and love among the public, spreading hope, sunshine and warmth, and elevating people's moral standards. Media should know that the spread of "killing, stealing, obscenity and absurdity" brings chaos to people's beliefs. He hoped that friends in media can bring people hope, sunshine, warmth and moral improvements.

Tep VONG noted that according to Buddha's teachings, everything has two aspects. We should use the good aspect instead of the bad one. The emergence of online cheating and spread of scandals is no surprise, but people practicing Buddhism should be patient and maintain a peaceful mind.

Tep VONG pointed out that in today's society everyone has the opportunity to use modern technological techniques in the course of their development. In Cambodia, almost everyone has a mobile phone. Monks, as they do not live in seclusion, also use mobile phones. Since the end of the civil war in Cambodia, people have been benefiting from economic development and growth. Monks, as members in the society, must make contributions to it. The main purpose of monks for using mobile phones is to communicate and transmit peace and Buddha's teachings.

Bhaddanta noted that in Myanmar 90% of the Buddhists support Buddha's teachings. Despite changes in government and political power, Buddhists' learning of Buddhism is not affected. Perhaps some people think that Buddhism may face some conflicts in Myanmar, but it is not so in reality. It is our purpose to let people live and co-exist peacefully.



With Benevolence in Heart, Do the Most Virtuous Things

Bhaddanta noted that many people wish to live and develop in a better way, while the Buddhist culture requires the balanced development in spirit, politics and economy. On one hand, we need Buddhist culture to maintain peace on the spiritual level; on the other hand, we need economic and political development. Only in this way can our inner peace co-exist with the external world peacefully. For example, economically, we support and help poor people through social welfare; and politically, we promote the development of better moral standards so that people can care and love each other.