

# 節錄自：佛陀的啟示 What The Buddha Taught

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在西元前三世紀頃，印度的佛教大帝阿輸迦（阿育王），遵照佛陀寬容諒解的模範，恭敬供養他廣袤幅員內所有的宗教。在他雕刻於岩石上的許多誥文中，有一則原文至今尚存，其中大帝宣稱：「不可只尊敬自己的宗教，而菲薄他人的宗教。應如理尊重他教，這樣做，不但可幫助自己宗教的成長，而且也對別的宗教盡了義務。反過來做；則不但替自己的宗教掘了墳墓，也傷害了別的宗教。凡是尊重自教而非難他教的人，當然是為了忠於自教，以為『我將光大自然』，但是，相反的，他更嚴重地傷害了他自己的宗教。因此，和諧才是好的。大家都應該諦聽，而且心甘情願地諦聽其他宗教的教義。」〔阿育王石誥第十二篇〕

佛不但准許弟子們自由思考，他的寬大為懷，尤令研究佛教史的人吃驚。有一次，在那爛陀城，佛接見了一位有名而富有的居士，名叫優婆離。他是耆那教主尼乾若提子（摩訶毘羅）的家弟子。摩訶毘羅親自選派他去迎佛，和佛辯論有關業報理論方面的某些問題，想將佛擊敗，因為在這些問題上，佛的觀點與尼乾若提子有所不同。可是出乎意料之外，討論的結果，優婆離卻相信佛的觀點是對的，他老師的看法反而錯了。所以，他就求佛收他做佛的在家弟子（優婆塞）。但佛叫他不要急著作決定，要慎重考慮一番。因為「像你這樣有名望的人，審慎考慮是要緊的。」當優婆離再度表示他的願望的時候，佛就要求他繼續恭敬供養他以前的宗教導師們，一如往昔。（巴利文《中部經》第五十六優婆離經）

Excerpted from "What The Buddha Taught"

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In the third century B.C., the great Buddhist Emperor Asoka of India, following this noble example of tolerance and understanding, honoured and supported all other religions in his vast empire. In one of his Edicts carved on the rock, the original of which one may read even today, the Emperor declared: 'One should not honour only one's own religion and condemn the religions of others, but one should honour others' religions for this or that reason. So doing, one helps one's own religion to grow and renders service to the religions of others too. In acting otherwise one digs the grave of one's own religion and also does harm to other religions. Whosoever honours his own religion and condemns other religions, does so indeed through devotion to his own religion, thinking "I will glorify my own religion". But on the contrary, in so doing he injures his own religion more gravely. So concord is good: Let all listen, and be willing to listen to the doctrines professed by others'.

Not only the freedom of thought, but also the tolerance allowed by the Buddha is astonishing to the student of the history of religions. Once in Nalanda a prominent and wealthy householder named Upali, a well-known lay disciple of Nigantha Nataputta (Jaina Mahavira), was expressly sent by Mahavira himself to meet the Buddha and defeat him in argument on certain points in the theory of Karma, because the Buddha's view on the subject were different from those of Mahavira. Quite contrary to expectations, Upali, at the end of the discussion, was convinced that the views of the Buddha were right and those of his master were wrong. So he begged the Buddha to accept him as one of his lay disciples (Upasaka). But the Buddha asked him to reconsider it, and not to be in a hurry, for 'considering carefully is good for well-known men like you'. When Upali expressed his desire again, the Buddha requested him to continue to respect and support his old religious teachers as he used to.