

Coming Going in Freedom

April 22, 2001

*"I am still coming and going in freedom,
Not concerning about being or non-being.
Come back with steps in freedom, beloved children.
Neither full nor eclipsed, it is the same moon."*

"Come back with steps in freedom" - this is your practice. The principle guide for this practice is entirely in the words "coming back." Coming back means no longer wandering or seeking. Coming back means you have seen your path. Coming back means back to your true home, back to your island, back to your true nature. Coming back to the Ancestors, to your homeland, to your parents, to Thầy, to the True Dharma, to the Sangha. Home to love, warmth, peace and joy. Coming back also means back to your children and grandchildren. If you don't come back to them, they will be so lonesome, and you yourselves will be lonesome. The King Trần Thái Tông also shared that his practice was the practice of coming home (Việt Nam Phật Giáo Sử Luận, Book 1)

"Come back with steps in freedom" means that you do not have to hurry, because according to our practice, each step can bring you home. It takes only one step to arrive, to be home. That is why the two words "in freedom" here are also important.

The chant "Repentance and Taking Refuge for Life," include these lines:

*For a long time, we have gone against the stream of our true nature,
floundering in the ocean of sorrows and the river of confusion,
unable to see a way out or a path to our true home.*

These lines in the chant also call you to come back to your true nature. With each step in freedom, you come back each second, each minute. This practice brings about happiness, peace and freedom. These elements can nourish you, the Sangha, Thầy, your parents, your Ancestors, and your descendants.

Thầy' practice is no different. "I am still coming and going in freedom." As long as Thầy is still coming, going, moving around with freedom, Thầy is still a place of refuge for you, for all of you. And as long as you still come back with steps in freedom then you are still a place of refuge and continuing Thầy. And even though the outer appearance may have the sign of fullness or eclipse, but in essence, the moon is still the moon, not obscured by the notions of fullness or eclipse. "Neither full nor eclipsed, it is the same moon."

Lovingly,

Thầy