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# DON'T CASUALLY DISPLAY YOUR SPIRITUAL POWERS

- by Venerable Master Hua, June, 1981

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Cultivators cannot go around discussing their spiritual powers or casually make a display of their powers. When the Buddha was in the world, he cautioned his disciples to not indiscriminately display spiritual penetrations. But some of his disciples, like the Ven. Mahamaudgalyayana, was fond of displaying his spiritual powers, and the Buddha on numerous occasions reproached him. Why did the Buddha not permit this? It is because people with spiritual penetrations can startle the world and shock society and cause others to become deluded about spiritual powers. Also, those who have spiritual powers will receive all the attention and praise, while others who don't have spiritual powers will not be able to get any offerings. For that reason, one can't casually go about making a show of one's spiritual powers, bragging of one's virtue, nor can one claim, "I am already enlightened! I am a Patriarch, I am a Bodhisattva!" Such a one is just bloated with self-complacency. Only ignorant and deluded people will act in such a way. Really wealthy people won't say to others, "Do you know, I have such and such amounts of wealth and jewels," or "I have a million tons of gold--I own all the wealth in the whole world." If they go on like this, it's for certain they will attract thieves and robbers.

Likewise, any cultivator who is self satisfied and arrogant, always saying, "I am this way, I am that way"--with their overweening pride always in front of them--will attract the demon king who will come and merge into them. Therefore, whatever states you encounter: don't be turned by them. You can't say, "I've seen the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas, and that's very special." It's not the case that if you hear voices from space or have visions of the Buddhas or the Bodhisattvas that you have some skill. It is the demons of the Five Skandhas--form, feeling, thoughts, activity, and consciousness--come to disturb your cultivation and undermine your success. The section on the Fifth Skandha Demons in the *Shurangama Sutra*, reveals such states very clearly and every cultivator should investigate its principles very thoroughly, so as not to be turned by the states of the demon king.

For those who investigate Ch'an:

"When the Buddha comes, chop the Buddha;  
When the demon comes, chop the demon."

They are not attached to conditioned dharmas, nor to any shape or appearance. They won't say, "I hear these voices speaking to me from space" and so forth. If you're really intent on applying effort, where will you find the time to check out such "voices", to pay attention to such petty business? You haven't finished your own business, so where will you find the time to meddle into others business?

Therefore, cultivators do not casually crack even a single joke, and they do not make a single false utterance. They won't entertain even a single thought of greed for name or profit. Once you have a single thought of greed you've entered a demon state. You can't say, "I am higher than everybody else"--that's being totally shameless! Cultivators have to be extremely careful with what they say. You can say, "I am just frolicking in the human realm"--so you go about frolicking and playing, until you

frolic all the way in-to the hells! There's no courtesy about this. To utter a single sentence of falsehood or crack an irresponsible joke is just planting an impure cause. And you will reap an impure result in the future.

When cultivating you have to diligently cultivate pure conduct. You absolutely can't babble a lot of garbage and casually joke around thinking, "I am an old timer, I can hang loose"--that's being shameless!