

不可思議的禮拜

The Inconceivable Bowing

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或許我們從來都不曾去深刻的體會到，在一個看似平凡無奇的拜佛動作裡，對於某些即刻需要幫助的人，甚至對這法界的一切，造成了多大的影響。於是，在這重複的過程中，日復一日的佛事裡，難免讓人感到枯燥；久而久之，就變得輕率和敷衍了事。

大概是念〈楞嚴咒〉的關係吧？它喚醒了我深眠的自性，我發覺到日常所思所做的罪業積集得有多麼深重；我是應該向地藏王菩薩禮拜懺悔，時時都需要懺悔，因為我們造罪業的心從來沒有停止過。以前的我並不喜歡禮拜，但因為皈依上人的關係，要拜一萬拜，所以我開始持續性的拜佛。在禮拜的過程中，我漸漸的體會到拜佛的重要；同時明白，原來上人不是要我們只拜一萬拜就停了，而是要我們繼續拜下去。

當我開始禮拜時，一有妄想生起，我想起上人曾說，他一生之所以有成就，主要是在於「專一」，也就是不打旁的妄想。所以，每當心動念起時，我都會盡量將這向外奔馳的妄念，收攝回來；也從學習控制妄念中，體會到六大宗旨裡的不爭、不貪、不求、不自私、不自利、不妄語的重要。原來大部分的妄想根源，皆來自於爭、貪、求、自私、自利、妄語，也可以說是「貪、瞋、癡」；因此，發菩提心也就變得相當重要。

這一天晚上，在讀完《華嚴經》後，我便開始向地藏王菩薩禮拜，在這禮拜的過程裡，我心無雜念，一拜接著一拜。突然間，腦海

Maybe we've never really deeply experienced it: how much the seemingly unremarkable activity of making obeisance to the Buddha can influence those who need help, or even the entire Dharma Realm as a whole. Therefore, this process of repetition, this day-after-day service to the Buddha, cannot help but make people feel bored, and inevitably over time we do it rashly and perfunctorily.

It's probably the practice of reciting the Shurangama Mantra, which awakened my inherent nature from its deep slumber. I learned how deep and serious the negative karma accumulated from my daily thoughts and actions really were. I should make penance to the Earth Store (Ksitigarbha) Bodhisattva, repent at all times, because our mind never stops creating negative karma. I truly never liked bowing before, but because I had to fulfill the requirement of bowing 10,000 times in order to take refuge with the Venerable Master Hua, I started bowing constantly. In the process, I slowly realized the importance of bowing to the Buddha. At the same time it became clear that the Venerable Master wanted us not only to bow 10,000 times, but to keep right on bowing.

When I first started bowing, every time my false thoughts arose, I thought of how the Venerable Master once said, out of his life's achievements, the important ones came from "concentrating single-mindedly," which involves not thinking false thoughts. Therefore, every time my mind starts to wander, I do my best to collect these false thoughts racing towards other things. And through learning to control my false thoughts, I experienced the importance of the Six Great Principles of "no fighting, no greed, no seeking, no selfishness, no pursuit of personal advantage, no lying. I discovered that the majority of false thoughts arise from fighting, greed, seeking, selfishness, pursuit of personal advantage, and false speech, or in other words "greed, anger, and delusion."



裡出現了一幕影像，我看見一片海，在海裡的人，因為浮現在半空中的地藏王菩薩所射出的光，而往上升。我想：「大概是妄想吧，不理它！」但接下去再拜時，這影像並沒有消失，依舊如此清晰；於是我便仔細地注意這畫面片刻，並接著拜，不知什麼時候它也就消失了。



事後，當我再回想這一幕時，我不再把它當成一個毫無意義，應該捨棄的妄想；而是把這一幕，放在我心底。每當我被境牽而心慌意亂，妄念紛飛時，我便想起那些因被菩薩放光照射，身著白衣而往上飛的「人」。

我試著想，平常不論打坐、念經、禮拜，我們往往無法很快感受到做這些佛事，對我們的幫助，因為和某些人比起來，我們善根多的關係，所以很難體會到修行的功德。這就像天天都可以吃得很飽的我們，不知道什麼是飢餓一樣。

所以，我們便很容易的去忽略，不珍惜眼前這份難以得遇佛法的福報，也體會不到「世間無常，國土危脆」及時修行的重要性。好似在台灣一塊錢掉到地上，人們都懶得彎腰去撿；但這一塊錢，卻可以讓遠在非洲的一個小孩子，得到一天的飽足而不受挨餓。在我們一刻都懶得去做的佛事裡，不知道就是一個禮佛的小動作，都可能讓地獄一個受苦的眾生得到安樂。我從來都沒去想過這問題，直到有了那次的經驗。

It's for this reason that having a Bodhi mind becomes so extremely important.

One evening, after reading the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, I started to bow to Earth Treasury Bodhisattva, and during that process of prayer bowing, my heart had no extraneous thoughts, and one bow came after the other. Suddenly, an image appeared in my brain. I saw a stretch of sea, and the people in the sea were raised upwards due to the rays of light shot forth from Earth Store Bodhisattva floating in the air. I thought, "It's probably just false thinking; ignore it." But as I continued to bow, this image didn't disappear. It stayed just as clear and precise as it was before. Thereupon I started to concentrate intently on this tableau for a while, and continued to bow. I don't know when it disappeared.

After this, when I think back to that image, I no longer regard it as a trivial false thought that should be discarded. Rather, I have placed this image at the bottom of my heart. Whenever I feel constrained, and my mind is panicked and unfocused, and false thoughts fly unabated, I think of those 'people' wearing white flying upwards due to glorious rays shot forth from the Bodhisattva.

As I ponder it, whether it's meditation, Sutra recitation, or bowing, there is generally no way to quickly know the benefits we reap through these Buddhist deeds. Since we have accumulated more good roots compared to some others, it is difficult for us to truly understand the merit and virtue of cultivation. It's analogous to how, because we can eat our fill every day, we do not understand what hunger is truly like.

Therefore, it is very easy for us to ignore and not treasure the blessing of the Buddhadharmas which is so difficult to encounter. And we cannot truly comprehend that "the world is impermanent, and countries are precarious" as well as the importance of timely cultivation. It's just like if in Taiwan, a one dollar coin were dropped on the ground, few people would bother to reach over and pick it up. But that one dollar could give a tiny child in faraway Africa a day's worth of sustenance so he would not go hungry. During an instant when we just don't feel like practicing Buddhism, we are not aware that this insignificant act of bowing to the Buddha might be able to give peace to one of the many painful living beings in the hells. I had never thought about this issue until this experience.