

The True Nature of Kindness and Compassion (Continued)

慈悲的真相 (續)

方丈和尚 講/譯 於2009年3月14日觀音七灑淨前

A talk given and translated by the Abbot DM Heng Lyu during the Purifying of the Boundaries for Guanyin Recitation Session on March 14, 2009 in the Bhaddha Hall

我們現在正在觀音七的開始，會專注念觀音菩薩的聖號，其實就是提醒我們。我們想到觀世音菩薩的慈悲。上人告訴我們，我們要為眾生的福祉利益來念；只有真心的去這樣做，而不是唱回向偈的時候，唸唸「願以此功德」這麼回向就算了事了。我們要經常心心念念的有一種善意，希望眾生能夠得到自在快樂；以這種的慈悲心，才能夠跟觀世音菩薩的慈悲相應。這樣子，我們的心會柔軟，我們的自私會減少；當然我們會變得更快樂、更自在、更安詳，同時這個世界也會變得更好。如果我們還是緊緊的抱著自私自利心不放，雖然我們念觀世音菩薩，哪會有什麼樣的感應呢？

我們可以談另外一個真實的故事。有一個信徒就對一個法師說：「法師啊，我現在不再拜觀音菩薩了！」法師很驚奇地問說：「你不是都拜觀世音菩薩的？在家裏拜了十幾年，為什麼不拜了、不信了呢？」他說：「啊！我花了多少錢做善事，祈求觀世音菩薩替我消災增福；可是別人卻不因為我花錢行善來歌頌稱讚我，我兒子競選也失敗了。觀世音菩薩也沒有保佑我兒子出名、升官啊！拜他做什麼？」我們想一想：這位仁兄啊，他不是為了了生脫死，或者求生淨土，乃至不是為了眾生，而禮拜觀世音菩薩、稱觀世音菩薩的聖號；卻是為了升官發財、求出名，而拜觀世音菩薩。你想想看，他把觀世音菩薩當做什麼呢？

We are now at the beginning of the seven day Guanyin Recitation Session. We are actually focusing on reciting the sagely name of Guanyin Bodhisattva in order to remind ourselves of Guanyin's loving-kindness and compassion. The Venerable Master has told us to recite with the intention of benefiting all beings. It will only work if we do this sincerely, and not just mindlessly sing the Dedication of Merit, "May this merit and virtue...". With each and every thought, we need to have good intentions; we need to wish that all beings shall become happy and at ease. Only when we have a kind and compassionate mind will we be able to connect with the loving-kindness and compassion of Guanyin. Our hearts will become softer and we won't be so selfish. Naturally, we will also be happier, more at ease and peaceful, and the state of the world will improve. If instead we hold tight to our selfishness and profit-seeking, unable to let it go, even if we recite Guanyin's name, then how can we expect a response?

There is another true story. Once there was a disciple who told a Dharma Master, "Dharma Master, I no longer bow to Guanyin Bodhisattva." Surprised, the Dharma Master asked, "Didn't you bow to Guanyin Bodhisattva for over ten years in your home? Why do you no longer bow? Why don't you believe any more?" The disciple answered, "Oh! I spent a ton of money doing good works and praying to Guanyin to dispel disasters and increase my blessings. But no one praised me for my good deeds and my son didn't get elected either. Guanyin didn't provide my son with fame and status. What's the use of bowing to him?" Let's think about it. This person is not bowing to Guanyin and reciting his name to end birth and death, nor to seek birth in the Pure Land, nor for the sake of all beings. He is doing it so he will rise in status, so he will get rich or famous. Think about it: what is he making Guanyin out to be?

We should understand that although Guanyin Bodhisattva has

我們要知道，觀世音菩薩雖然大慈大悲、尋聲救苦；但是他是智慧的，是絲毫不會錯亂因果的。你要做官，要有做官的因、緣、果，是不能錯亂的；要不然，在座的各位，你們不想當美國總統啊？想當，就趕快念觀世音菩薩嘍！我們正信的佛教徒，要提升我們信仰的內涵和品質；我們一定要堅信：因果報應是如影隨形的。我們要努力的去學習佛法，要像《心經》所講的「諸法空相」，非常非斷；以無所得心，在我們的思想和行為上痛下功夫，改變我們的習氣毛病。唯有把佛法溶合在我們日常生活當中，才能得到究竟的解脫；這也是為什麼觀世音菩薩要以大慈大悲來救度我們，就是要我們能夠得到究竟的解脫！

明天我們就開始觀音七，早上我們會傳一個八關齋戒。這是一個非常好的因緣，如果在座的居士你有心，歡迎你明天早課後留在佛殿受持八關齋戒；重點就是我們剛剛提到的，要以慈悲心和求解脫心來受持。

每次打七，我們都會鼓勵大家帶禁語牌；特別是如果你受持八關齋戒，最好帶禁語牌。這能夠幫助你攝心，能夠避開惡緣。

在觀音七期間，我們希望大家都能夠掌握慈悲。上人告訴我們：大悲咒的中心就是慈悲心。如果我們有慈悲心，我們不管是念佛也好，念咒也好，都會有感應的；就像我們剛剛講的，慈悲有十一種法益。

在觀音七期間，有繞念，也有坐念。請大家注意的，就是姿勢很重要——大家一定要把背打直、頭抬起來。但是背打直、頭抬起來，不是教我們東張西望；我們應該垂目三分，這樣子能夠攝心。

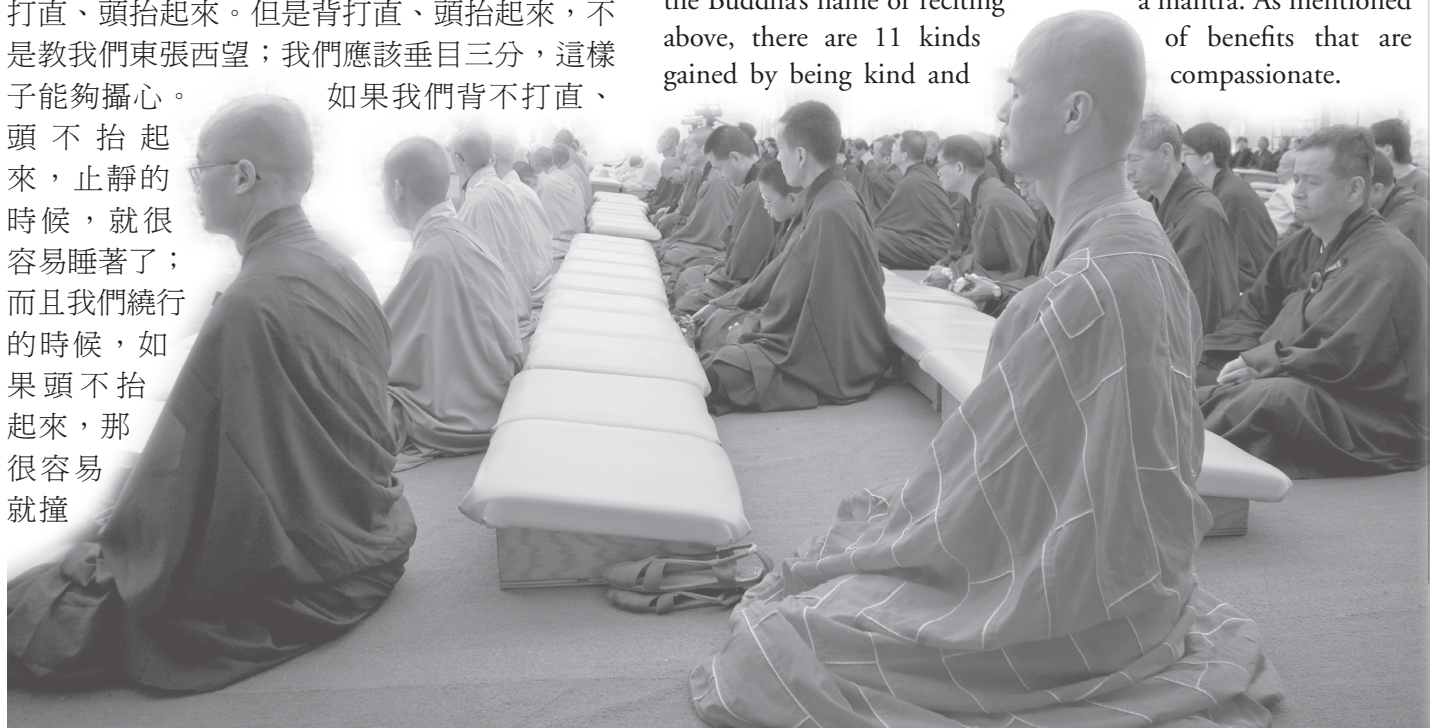
如果我們背不打直、頭不抬起來，止靜的時候，就很容易睡著了；而且我們繞行的時候，如果頭不抬起來，那很容易就撞

great kindness and compassion and rescues beings from suffering by listening to their sounds, he has the wisdom never to confuse cause and effect. If you want to be an official, the causes, conditions, and result have to be right. Otherwise, anyone who wants to be the U.S. President could just recite Guanyin's name and get elected. We disciples who truly believe in the Dharma should improve the quality and nature of our faith. We should believe without a doubt that cause and effect are like a shadow accompanying a form. We need to diligently study the Buddhadharma, keeping in mind that "All dharmas are empty," as stated in the *Heart Sutra*, and "nothing is everlasting nor is anything terminal." Work with your thoughts and behavior to change bad habits without any expectation of gain. Only when we incorporate the Buddhadharma into our daily life can we gain complete liberation. It is just for the sake of helping us gain complete liberation that Guanyin Bodhisattva uses great kindness and compassion to rescue us.

We will start our seven-day recitation tomorrow. In the morning we will hold the ceremony for taking the Eight Precepts. This is a very good practice. Anyone who would like to take them can remain in the Buddha Hall after Morning Ceremony. The most important thing to keep in mind is what was just said. We should hold the precepts with a mind of compassion and with the wish for liberation.

Every time we have a seven-day session, we encourage everyone to wear a "Not Talking" sign. This is especially the case if you take the Eight Precepts. Refraining from talking during the session can help you concentrate and avoid creating negative causes.

During the Guanyin session, our hope is that everyone can gain an understanding of kindness and compassion. The Venerable Master told us that the core of the Great Compassion Mantra is a heart of kindness and compassion. If we have a heart of kindness and compassion, there will be a response whether we are reciting the Buddha's name or reciting a mantra. As mentioned above, there are 11 kinds of benefits that are gained by being kind and compassionate.



到前面的人了。

可能有些居士是從外面來的，希望您在萬佛城期間，儘量動作放輕，不要跟其他的居士談一些八卦新聞；你要受持的是八關齋戒，不是來這邊受持八卦新聞的。

每次一談到止靜，我就想到一件事情。就是有時候，有些人可能是太累了，或者是他背沒有打直；一止靜，乃至坐念，他就會睡著了。最遭糕的是，他還打呼！這一打呼，真的是很多人會起煩惱的；所以希望在周遭的法友，請你伸出你慈悲的手，把他搖醒起來。這樣，會幫助整個大殿有一個修道的氣氛；要不然，大家會以為這裏是臥房，才有打呼聲啊！

那對被搖醒的人呢，我也要講一句。要知道，人家搖醒你，並不是對你有意見，而是你的打呼聲讓別人煩惱了；所以你應該合掌起來，然後很感恩地說「南無阿彌陀佛」或是「南無觀世音菩薩」。不要說：「你打我做什麼？我入定啦，你不知道我有境界啊！」我們修行最大的問題，就是自以為是！

到現在為止，有沒有什麼問題呢？只剩下幾分鐘，還有一點忘記講。就是有帶手機的，請你把手機關掉。你的手機聲音一響起來，大家的手就開始亂摸了：「是不是我的手機響了？」還有，如果你的錶有鬧鈴裝置，請你也把它關掉！

我們剛剛講慈悲，其實它並不是一個很遙遠的事情。就在當下，如果你能夠對自己說：「我希望我能夠快樂自在！」同時你看看周遭的人，也能夠對他們發出同樣的善意：「我希望他們都能夠快樂自在！」這就是我們慈悲的第一步。

或者有的人，他就利用他的呼吸來修慈悲。他吸氣的時候，他說：「我願意將眾生所有的苦由我來代受！」當他呼氣出去的時候，他說：「我願意把所有的自在快樂都給予眾生！」因為我們呼吸是一種自然的現象，利用呼吸，也可以來幫助我們修行慈悲觀，這是一種很好的善巧方便。修行並不是很遙遠的，就在我們日常生活當中；在我們的舉止當中，都是修行的當下。今天就到此為止。我們開始灑淨！

During the session, we recite both while circumambulating and while sitting. Please pay special attention to your posture while sitting. Sit with your back straight and head erect. Do not look about. Sit with your eyes seventy percent closed in order to focus the mind. It is very easy to fall asleep when the silent sit starts if your back is not straight and the head not erect. And you'll bump into the person ahead of you if you don't keep your head up while circumambulating.

No doubt some lay people here are from outside CTTB. We hope that during your stay, you will relax your movements, and you won't engage in gossip with other lay people. You come here to hold the Eight Precepts, not to hold the "Eight Trigrams" of gossip (nonsensical news)!

Each time I mention the silent sit, I always think how some people, perhaps because they are tired or their backs aren't straight, fall asleep as soon as the silent sit begins. Some even fall asleep when the seated recitation begins. The worst is when someone starts snoring! A lot of people get really annoyed when someone starts snoring. I hope that the Dharma friend nearby will kindly reach out a hand and shake that person awake. This will help establish an atmosphere of cultivation in the Buddha Hall. Otherwise, everyone may mistake this for a bedroom full of snoring sounds.

As for the person who is shaken awake, I'd like to tell you something. You should know, the person who shakes you isn't doing it because he dislikes you, but because your snoring is bothering others. So you should place your palms together and gratefully say "Namo Amitabha Buddha" or "Namo Guan Shi Yin Bodhisattva." Don't say, "What are you hitting me for? I was entering samadhi. You don't recognize my accomplishment!" The biggest problem in cultivation is thinking we are right all the time.

Do you have any questions so far? We only have a few minutes left. I forgot to mention one point. If any of you are carrying a cellphone, please turn it off. When your phone rings, everybody's hand starts searching for their cell phones, "Is mine ringing?" Also, if your watch has an alarm, please turn it off as well.

The loving kindness and compassion that we just talked about is not something far away. At this very moment, you can tell yourself, "May I be happy and at ease." Meanwhile, look at all the people around you and say with the same good intention, "May they be happy and at ease." That's our first step of loving kindness and compassion.

Some people use their breathing to practice kindness and compassion. When inhaling, you say, "I wish to take on the suffering of others." When exhaling, you say, "I wish to give happiness and peace to all beings." Since breathing is something we do naturally, using the breath to help practice kindness and compassion is an excellent strategy. Cultivation is not so far away; it is to be done right in our daily lives. Each movement is a moment to cultivate. Okay, we'll stop here today. Let's start the ceremony for Purifying the Boundaries.