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(一)



We Should Cherish Each Other Like Our Own Father or Mother (I)

Reflections on the Venerable Master's Instructions on Cultivating the Buddha's Path

By Bhikshu Heng Shun 比丘 恒順 文
Translated into Chinese by Jennifer Lin 孫果秀 中譯

The Venerable Master used many skill-in-means to teach his students who came from many different countries and diverse cultural backgrounds. There is one period of his teaching in which I took copious notes, as it was one of the last times during the Master's life in which he came up to the City of 10,000 Buddhas on an almost weekly basis to give instructional talks.

This period had special significance for another monk and myself in that it was a time of focused practice, repentance, and total silence for six months. In these Dharma talks, the Master gave a very comprehensive description of the nitty-gritty of cultivating the Path taught by the Buddha – the Path of cultivation. All quotes in italics are quotes from these lectures with the date in parenthesis, followed by my comments.

At all times your mind should be peaceful/harmonious (he ping), auspicious (ji xiang), and happy (huan xi). Why are we afraid of evil states and demons? Just because of selfishness! That is why we have fear and thus cannot obtain the proper. For measureless eons (kalpas) of time we have not met the Buddhadharma. Now we have met it, so we should be good monastics – good models for others. (April 13, 1992)

上人為了教導來自許多不同國家和不同文化背景的學生，運用了很多種技巧。在他的教學中有一段時期，我記了很多的筆記；因為它是上人一生中最後一階段的教學之一，他幾乎每週都會到萬佛城來做開示。

這一時期，對另一個出家人和我本人具有特殊的意義，這是一段專心修行、懺悔的時期，並且完全止語整整六個月。在這些法語開示，上人對佛所教導的修道本質做了非常廣泛而完整的說明。所有斜體字的節錄，後面都以括號標示講法的日期，然後是我的意見。

在任何時候，你的心都要和平、吉祥和歡喜。我們為什麼害怕邪惡和魔鬼？就因為自私！這就是為什麼我們心有恐懼，而不得其正。佛法是百千萬劫難遭遇，現在我們已遭已遇，所以我們應該要做個好出家人，成為其他人的好模範。（1992年4月13日）

真正修道的人不會緊張和憤怒，也不生氣或與他人爭論；一個專修佛道的人是和諧而歡喜的。最重要的是我們要做其他僧眾和在家人的好模範。如果我們對其他人生氣，或是在寺院中或我們的日常生活中疏忽懈怠，那麼我們不僅不能傳播善法，還造成佛法的式微。

The person who truly cultivates the Path is not uptight and angry. He or she does not get upset or argue with others. Rather one who is devoted to the Buddha's Path is harmonious and happy. It is very important that we act as good models for other monastics and lay followers. If we get angry with others or are lax in fulfilling our responsibilities in the monastery or in our daily lives, then we not only fail to spread the goodness of the Dharma, rather we contribute to its decline.

This is especially the case for those who have studied with the Venerable Master for many years. People have very high expectations for those people, so it is very important that they "try their very best" at all times to at least go towards these pure and lofty ideals. As the Master says that we should always be peaceful and happy, and not miss this rare opportunity of having met the Buddha's teachings. It is not known how many lifetimes it has taken for us to get this chance to study and practice the Dharma.

This truth on the importance of being harmonious and happy – being kind to others – is also expounded in the following passage from the *Flower Adornment (Avatamsaka) Sutra*, Chapter 36, The Practice of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva:

Disciples of the Buddha, I have not seen any such dharma as the great offense and mistake of Bodhisattvas giving rise to thoughts of anger towards other Bodhisattvas. Why is that? Disciples of the Buddha, if Bodhisattvas were to give rise to thoughts of anger and hatred towards other Bodhisattvas, that would open doors to millions of obstructions. What are the million obstructions? They are: the obstruction of not seeing Bodhi; the obstruction of not hearing the proper Dharma; the obstruction of being born in a world that is not pure; the obstruction of being born in the evil destinies; the obstruction of being born in locations of difficulties; the obstruction of having many illnesses; the obstruction of being the object of much slander ...

So this simple instruction that one who practices the Path is always harmonious, auspicious, and happy is very important. When one is like this, one will have a profound influence on those one meets with in one's daily life. Certainly most of us at times fall short of this, but as the Master frequently instructed, we always have the opportunity to "return the light" and rectify our mistakes.

The Buddhadharma is very ordinary. Use the ordinary mind to cultivate. As it is said, "the ordinary mind is the Path" (ping chang xin shi dao). Don't seek for the "far out" and the "profound and wondrous." You will waste all of your spiritual skill (gong fu) seeking for it and never know when you will ever attain it. Cultivation of the Buddhadharma is using the ordinary mind...

If you follow my instructions, your mind will bit by bit become pure and then "every place will be peaceful and happy, without any affliction." Even if people scold you, mistreat you, or even beat you, you will feel very grateful. You'll think, "It's the Buddha come to test me, trying to help me understand that this world is suffering and to make my Bodhi-mind more solid." (April 20, 1992)

One of the reasons that so many Americans became monastics or devout followers of the Venerable Master was the way he made the Buddha's teachings so relevant and practical. During his lectures on the most deep and profound *Flower Adornment Sutra* (which he lectured for about eight years), he always brought the Dharma down to the level of what we were doing in

尤其是那些跟從上人學習多年的人，人們對他們都抱著有很高的期望；因此這是非常重要的，就是他們無論何時，至少都要盡量去實現這個崇高而純潔的理想。正如上人說的，我們應該始終保持和平和歡喜，不要錯過這個遭遇佛陀教誨的難得機會。我們不知道經過了多少生才得到這樣的機會，來學習和修行佛法。

和諧和歡喜——就是善待他人——這條真理的重要性，也闡述於下面《華嚴經·普賢行品第三十六》裡的一段話：

佛子！我不見一法為大過失，如諸菩薩於他菩薩起瞋心者。何以故？佛子！若諸菩薩於餘菩薩起瞋恚心，即成就百萬障門故。何等為百萬障？所謂：不見菩提障，不聞正法障，生不淨世界障，生諸惡趣障，生諸難處障，多諸疾病障，多被謗毀障……

所以這是很重要的，這個修道上的簡單教導，常常是和諧、吉祥而歡喜的。當一個人是這樣子的時候，就會對他日常生活中所遇到的人產生深遠的影響。當然，我們大多數人有時做不到這一點；但是就如上人所指示的，我們總是有機會迴光反照，矯正我們的錯誤。

佛法是很平常的，需要用平常心去修行。所謂「平常心是道」。不要好高騖遠和追求玄妙。你會浪費你所有的功夫去追求，而不知道什麼時候到達止境。修行佛法要用平常心。

如果你照我的話去做去，你的心會一點一點地純淨，然後「哪裡都是和平與歡喜，沒有任何痛苦。」就是有人罵你、虐待你，甚至打你，你會覺得很感激；你認為：「這是佛來考驗我，想幫助我明白這個世界是苦的，好讓我的菩提心更加堅固。」（1992年4月20日）

很多美國人成為出家人或上人虔誠信徒的其中一個原因，是上人使佛的教導中肯而實際。在他講的《大方廣佛華嚴經》（他講了8年左右）裡頭，他總是把佛法普及到我們日常生活的層次。「你還有對食、色或睡的貪欲嗎？你仍然有這麼大的脾氣，人們面對你的時候，他們都怕你像鞭炮或原子彈一樣爆炸嗎？

our daily lives. “Do you still have greed for food, sex, or sleep? Do you still have such a big temper that when people deal with you, they are afraid that you will explode like a firecracker or an atomic bomb? Look within yourself!”

If we think that we can become enlightened by mere study of the teachings of the Buddha, without actually putting them into practice in our daily lives – using the ordinary mind – then we will certainly miss the chance to make genuine progress on the Path to Enlightenment. This is elucidated in another passage from the *Flower Adornment Sutra*, Chapter 10, “Bodhisattvas Ask for Clarification”:

Like a physician who, though skillful in prescribing medicine, is unable to cure his own illness;

Without practicing the Dharma, much study is the same way.

Like a deaf musician playing tunes – others enjoy but he himself does not hear;

Without practicing the Dharma, much study is the same way.

Like a blind artist whose many drawings are displayed for others, but he himself can never see;

Without practicing the Dharma, much study is the same way.

This principle is clearly illustrated in an event that occurred with the Master sometime in 1977 or 1978 at the old Gold Mountain Monastery in San Francisco’s Mission District. A very well known and respected Buddhist scholar, who to this day is still considered one of the foremost experts in the Madhyamika teachings of Buddhism, had a personal audience with the Master. The monk who would normally translate for the Master was visiting another monastery, so I ended up having to do the translation for both the Master and the professor (he was a Sanskrit/Tibetan scholar who did not speak any Chinese).

The setting was very informal in that the Master and the professor were seated on couches on the second floor of the monastery – very private and personal. The scholar started by asking the Master a very recondite question dealing with the nature of prajna-wisdom and shunyata (emptiness). Rather than answer the Buddhologist’s question, the Master asked a very direct question concerning the desires for food, sex, sleep, fame, and wealth. The scholar repeated his questioning concerning some of the more esoteric and abstruse teachings of the Dharma, and the Master kept asking him frank questions concerning how he was dealing with these most fundamental human desires and attachments. The result was that the professor became thoroughly disarmed and vulnerable. The veil of his over-intellectualization of the Dharma had been obliterated and his “ordinary mind” had been revealed. The scholar turned red with embarrassment – It was as if someone had zeroed in on his most intimate emotions and thoughts. What was so amazing was that rather than getting upset or defensive, the professor was profoundly moved by the Master’s teaching. The Master was like a kind father, and the professor was like a little child who was completely open and receptive to his instructions. It was a very wonderful exchange. To this day, that professor is one of the strongest exponents of the idea that the monastic life is essential for the establishment of Buddhism in America. So it is that the “ordinary mind” is the “Path.”

☞ To be continued

好好迴光返照自己！」

如果我們認為單單研究佛的教導，而沒有用平常心在日常生活中實踐，以為這樣就可以開悟的話，那麼我們一定會錯過真正通往開悟之路的機會。在《華嚴經·菩薩問明品第十》的另一段裡頭，就闡明了這一點：

如人善方藥	自疾不能救
於法不修行	多聞亦如是
如聾奏音樂	悅彼不自聞
於法不修行	多聞亦如是
若盲績眾像	示彼不自見
於法不修行	多聞亦如是

這個原則是一個清楚的例證，說明了發生在上人身上的一件事。那是1977年或1978年的時候，當時舊的金山寺是座落於舊金山市的米慎區。有一個非常著名和受尊重的佛教學者——即使到今天，他仍然被認為是佛教中觀教義最早的專家之一。他來拜見上人。平常為上人做翻譯的出家人正好去另一個寺院參訪，所以最後我不得不為上人和教授做翻譯（他是一個梵文與藏文學者，不會說任何中國話）。這是一個非正式的會面，上人和教授都坐在寺院二樓的沙發上——非常私密和隨性。這位學者一開始就問上人一個很深奧的問題，這問題與般若智慧和空的本質有關。上人並不直接回答這種邏輯性的佛學問題，反而問了一個很直接的，關於財、色、名、食、睡等五欲的問題。這位學者一再詢問一些較深奧難懂的佛法教義，而上人也一再詢問他如何處理這些人類最基本的欲望與執著的直率問題。其結果是，教授徹底瓦解而脆弱。他對於法過度理性的面紗已經解除，他的「平常心」已經顯露出來。這位學者尷尬地滿面通紅，就好像有人將他內心最深處的感情和想法歸零似的。令人驚異的是，這位教授並沒有心煩意亂或辯護，反而深深地被上人的教導所感動。上人就像一個慈父，而教授就像一個小孩，他完完全全地開放心胸，並且樂於接受上人的指導。這是一個非常美妙的交流。時至今日，認為在美國建立佛教，寺院生活是最根本而不可或缺的；那位教授就是其中一個最強有力的代表人物。因此，這就是「平常心是道」。

☞待續