

Embracing the Dharma as Our Teacher and Friend

以法為師， 以法為友

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徐秀儀英譯 Translated into English by Chee, Siew Yee



過去這幾個晚上，我們都在聽與盂蘭盆節有關的法，和大家的看法，我跟著這個話題和大家交換點意見。

在過去我們也常常這樣做，比如到外面結法緣時，大家講一個共同的題目；雖然有時是六個人講，可是從來都沒有重複，我覺得這種方法很好。過去在輪流講法的時候，大家選定一個（話題），比如說淨土法門的注釋，根據這個話題來介紹，讓聽法的佛友，都能在短時間裡，收集很多的資料；即使有重複也是可以溫故知新的。

首先想說在是誦《盂蘭盆經》，出家眾在僧自恣日來咒願美食，在咒願之前他們都要入禪定；當他們入了禪定以後才咒願，對我來說是很好的提醒。我們在道場學習佛法，一定要把所用的道理，在心性上能有所作用；能夠制心一處，不被外面的塵相所攪擾，讓我們的心專一在一個境上，才是我們修行的目標之一。

另外，接著昨天晚上講法者講到要行孝順，在《梵網經》上也說，孝順是能夠成道的方法；至於說到底怎麼樣孝順，可能每個人的定義不一樣，所想的也不同；聽了昨天晚上講法後，我想到一些例子，可以來談一談。

For the past few nights, we have been listening to Dharma talks on the Ullambana celebration and points of view from the assembly. I would like to continue exchanging thoughts on the same topic.

In the past, we used to always do it this way. For example, when we had to go out to give lectures, everyone would give a talk on the same topic. Although sometimes there might be as many as six speakers, there would never be any repetition in content. I think this method is very good. When we had to take turn to talk, we would decide on one topic, for example, commentary on the Pure Land dharma door. We would introduce the Dharma based on this topic, allowing our Buddhist friends to accumulate a lot of information in a short time. Even if there was repetition, it could still be a refresher and an opportunity to gain new understanding.

Today I would like to first talk about a passage in the *Ullambana Sutra* where the assembled Sangha recites mantras and vows in relation to the food offerings made on Pravarana day. Before the assembled Sangha accepted the food, they would first practice dhyana concentration and then recite the mantras and vows. The fact that they practiced dhyana concentration before reciting mantras and vows is a very good reminder to me. When we are practicing the Buddhadharma in the monastery, we must apply all the teachings to the inherent nature. To be able to focus our minds on a single point, undisturbed by external happenings; to enable our minds to concentrate on one single state: this is one of the goals of our cultivation.

In addition, I would like to continue yesterday's topic on practicing filial respect. According to the *Brahma Net Sutra*, filial respect is a practice that

在佛陀入涅槃後，第一次結集經藏時，阿難尊者給大眾報告：「佛快要入滅時告訴我說，小小戒可以捨，小小戒律沒有關係，可以忽視它。」大迦葉尊者一聽到就問：「什麼叫小小戒呢？」阿難說：「我沒有問。」大家說：「你為什麼不問呢？」阿難說：「因為當時佛陀被病攪擾，我怕增加他的負擔。」大迦葉尊者反對的說：「你這樣不明不白。」他認為阿難未向佛陀求證，應向大眾懺悔。

接著大迦葉尊者在這個會上提出三點原則：

1. 若佛所不制，不應妄制。
2. 若已制，不得有違。
3. 如佛所教，應謹學之。

第一點如果佛沒有制的戒，我們不能妄制；我們不能隨便去制一條戒。第二點，如果佛已經制定的戒律不得有違；不得違背他的戒律。第三點如佛所教應謹學之，如果是佛所教的道理，應該很恭敬很小心地學習。這是個好例子，可以看到這些佛弟子大阿羅漢，怎麼樣恭敬佛的教誨。

那麼，在中國古時候，如果父母師長坐的椅子，子女或弟子不敢隨便坐；如果父母還沒有享用的東西，他們也不敢先用；我們做子女或做弟子的，時時刻刻要想、要念到父母恩、師長恩、佛恩，或三寶恩，才能夠行事，絕對不敢超越其上；不要說出世法，就是世間法，如果在一個公司行號裡面，大企業經營者把事業交給另外一個人的時候，接班人也要想盡辦法去傳承那種企業文化，在企業文化中，把原來經營者的經營理念和經營方法，付諸實行；等這些都做好後，接班人有實務經驗與智慧的時候，才能根據自己的才能發揮。

這樣來看，在萬佛聖城，師父說他一共也沒有教我們多少。最先大家想到也就是六大宗旨了：不爭、不貪、不求、不自私、不自利、不打妄語；學這六大宗旨的方法，最重要是在我們身上用。我常常聽到——今天還聽到——朋友抱怨，或者看到大法會或新的人來到聖城的時候，常常被裡面的人糾正或者指責，所做所行不如法不適當，讓新來的人感到手足無措；甚至有些人根本不能接受這種直言的勸誡，

can lead to enlightenment. However, the definition of filial respect might be different for each person. After I heard the Dharma talk yesterday, I thought about a few examples that we can discuss here.

After the Buddha had entered Nirvana, at the First Council, Venerable Ananda reported to the assembled Sangha, "When the Buddha was about to enter nirvana, he said that the minor precepts could be relinquished." After hearing this, Venerable Mahakashyapa immediately asked, "Which are the minor precepts?" Ananda replied: "I did not ask." The assembled Sangha responded: "Why didn't you ask?" Ananda replied: "Because the Buddha was stricken with illness, I was afraid asking questions would disturb him." Venerable Mahakashyapa opposed him and said, "You are not being clear at all." He felt that because Ananda did not ask for clarification from the Buddha, he should repent to the assembled Sangha.

Venerable Mahakashyapa then proposed three rules:

1. Any precept that the Buddha did not establish should not be added.
2. Any precept that the Buddha established should not be violated.
3. All the teachings that the Buddha taught should be carefully practiced.

Firstly, any precept that the Buddha did not establish should not to be added. We cannot add another precept at our heart's whim. Secondly, any precept that the Buddha established should not be violated. We cannot violate any of the precepts. Thirdly, all teachings that the Buddha has taught should to be carefully practiced. If there is a principle taught by the Buddha, we must respectfully and carefully practice it. This is a good example of how the great disciples of the Buddha, the great Arhats, would respect all the teachings of the Buddha.

In ancient China, people would take care not to casually sit in the chairs that their parents or teachers usually occupied. If there were goods that had not yet been offered to the parents, the children would not touch them. We as children and disciples must always be thinking of ways to repay the kindness to our parents, teachers, the Buddha, and the Triple Jewel. We must always put them before everything we do and should never consider surpassing them. In the business world, after a predecessor passes on responsibilities to his or her successor, the successor would exhaust all possible ways to continue the corporate culture as if the company were still run by the predecessor. They continue to carry out the management vision and style of the predecessor. When all is settled and when the successor has gained solid experience and wisdom, only then does he or she explore new visions according to his or her capabilities.

At the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, the Venerable Master mentioned that he did not teach us much. The first thing that comes across our minds is the Six Guidelines: Not fighting, not being greedy, not seeking, not being selfish, not pursuing personal advantage and not lying. The most important point about learning these Six Guidelines is to apply them in our own lives. I often hear friends complaining or have witnessed situations where newcomers to the City are reprimanded by the city residents for behaviors that do not accord with the Buddhadharmas. The newcomers are often taken aback. Some people do not appreciate such direct advice and never return to the City again. In my opinion, this actually goes against the Venerable Master's instructions and his

就再也不會來了。我想，這樣實在有違師父過去的教導，和他所展現接待人的慈悲和溫暖。所以在慶祝盂蘭盆節時要很小心，在最小的事情上留意師父過去的所作所為，怎麼把那樣的家風傳承下去。當然還有很多不好的例子，比如對外面來的人不懂聖城規矩的，要用很寬容、和藹、很親切的態度；不是直接說不可以穿拖鞋到大殿呀；見有人穿低腰的褲子打坐的時候，就從後面幫她把褲子拉高點呀。想想我到另外的一個國家，我不知道那邊的風俗文化等等，每個人都可能在不了解情況下，做出不如法事情；怎樣讓人家慢慢來學習，這是一種智慧。

在道場學佛法，要以法為師，以法為友；法也不需要學很多，聽到師父所解釋的佛法，記住一個行一個，這是師父的方法。師父說：「我就是學了一個字就用那個字。」如果以法為師，以法為友，這就能夠令正法住持。

剛才聽到上人（錄音帶）最後開示講，要直心，不要有彎曲的心。我們每個人都有佛性，怎樣把佛性好好用出來，常常不是外面的人障礙我們，而是我們自己心裡的限定。讓我們自己不能夠發揮的時候，不能接受自己的時候，不能令法輪常轉的時候，那就是用了我們的彎曲心。

這個彎曲心，我心裡有，不知道你有沒有？例如：三十週年籌備大法會時，講好請兩位做翻譯：一位是今晚的翻譯者Nancy，另一位是位師兄。Nancy願意翻成英文，她英文很好很流利；另一位師兄說，我把英文翻成中文，因為中文是母語。結果就是這麼妙，不知道怎麼樣；不記得是如何發生的了，陰錯陽差的結果是，別人講英文，Nancy翻中文；另一位法師卻為講中文的人翻成英文：兩個人互換後都得到訓練的機會，這是個很好的例子。師父說的：「盡其在我」，我就是那個佛性。你的佛性裡就有足夠智慧，足夠的定力，能夠應對當前的局面，所以要記得這樣小小的例子。

在萬佛聖城有這麼多的工作，下一次人家請你講法，你要說沒問題，我就講我所學過，經驗過的事情；下次人家請你去打法器，即使你還在上法器課，你也很願意去；下次人家請你去我們有機農場工作，

personal example of being compassionate and warm in receiving all visitors. Therefore, we need to be very careful during the celebration of Ullambana; we should emulate even the Venerable Master's spirit in order to pass down the tradition. When there are situations that require intervention, we should practice a soft, welcoming, and accepting attitude toward newcomers who are not aware of the City's rules. We should not directly tell them off, saying they should not wear flip-flops into the Buddha Hall. When we notice people who are wearing low-rise pants during meditation, we just "help" them pull their pants up higher from behind. I recall my own experience when I visited another country and was not familiar with the customs. In unfamiliar circumstances, anyone might potentially act in non-accordance with the Dharma. To know how to allow everyone to learn slowly – this is wisdom.

When we are cultivating in a monastery, we need to embrace the Dharma as our teacher and as our friend. We do not need to learn a lot of Dharmas, but when we hear the Venerable Master's commentary on the Buddhadharma, we should learn to practice it bit by bit. That is his method. He once said, "When I learn one word, I will apply one word." If we embrace the Dharma as our teacher and friend, the proper Dharma will abide.

We just heard what the Venerable Master said in his tape lecture: we must use a straightforward mind and not a crooked mind. Each one of us has the Buddha nature. Oftentimes it is not external obstructions that are preventing us from uncovering our Buddha nature, it is because we are limited by our own minds. When we cannot accept ourselves, when we cannot turn the Dharma wheel, when we cannot manifest our full potential, it is because we have fallen prey to our crooked minds with twisted thoughts.

I have these twisted thoughts. Do you have them too? For example, when we were preparing for the CTTB 30th anniversary event, we had preselected two translators: the first was Nancy (who is translating tonight), and the other was a nun. Nancy was willing to translate into English because her English is very good. The nun was willing to translate English into Mandarin because Mandarin was her native language. However, the result was pretty amazing, I don't remember how it happened, but in the end, when the speaker was talking in English, Nancy would translate it to Mandarin. The Dharma Master would then translate sections from Mandarin to English. They were both given the opportunity to receive more training after the exchange of roles that day. This is a very good example. The Venerable Master would say: "It is all within me." We are the Buddha nature. Our Buddha nature has sufficient wisdom and concentration to overcome our present obstacles. So let's remember this example.

There is so much work in the City. When others ask you to present a Dharma talk, you should say, "No problem." You can talk about what you have learned and experienced. When others ask you to play the Dharma instruments, even if you are still attending classes, you willingly participate. When others ask you to help out at the organic

你說沒問題，我也可以去；什麼事情都願意做，只要盡我的力，我認為我可以做就好了。

除了學法，很重要的就是要調心。我們學了那麼多法寶後要調心；為什麼需要調心呢？因為我們觸目所緣，都是心裡的貪瞋癡；一下就不高興了，一下貪要表現好點，一下貪想做簡單工作，最好是一個涼快的工作等等，所以調心很重要。如果能把老朋友貪瞋癡放下，然後抉擇所學聖道，抉擇合乎聖道的清淨法，這樣去修行就能接近涅槃。

我們知道，染污法讓我們六根戀著在色聲香味觸法六塵上去，就是我們生死流轉的原因；我們回頭轉向，慢慢把心調好；心調柔和了以後，沒有貪瞋癡，打坐入定就容易得多了。

時間有限，最後想說的是請我們聖城的住眾，都來發菩提心；發菩提心在佛教裡，是一個很基本的要素。到底發菩提心的內容是什麼呢？如何發菩提心？請各位思考一下，可能不同的人想法不同；簡單地講是：恆順眾生。

講到發菩提心，還有個例子：不在乎自己表現，時時想到別人，讓別人有機會練習；不一定做第一，也可以做最後。相信沒有第一，也沒有最後這個觀念，也是很符合菩提的。我們為什麼不能覺悟，實際上是因為種種分別心，所以能把平等心發出來就很好。我希望講得如法，如果講得不如法的地方，請不吝告訴我，阿彌陀佛！

farm, you say “no problem” because you can help there, too. Be willing to learn whatever tasks that are given to you. It is enough if we try our best with the thought of “I can do it.”

Other than studying the Buddhadharma, it is very important that we tame our minds. Why do we need to tame our minds? Because everything in sight comes from our greed, anger, and ignorance. One moment we experience unhappiness, one moment we experience greed for better performances, another moment greed to do tasks that are easy or tasks that will be cooling, etc. That is why we need to tame our thoughts. If we put down our old friends greed, anger, and ignorance, and instead choose to cultivate the sagely path and the pure undefiled dharma door, then we can draw near enlightenment.

We all know our six senses hold onto the six defilements of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, objects of touch, and dharmas. This is why we are caught up in the stream of birth and death. We must turn around and rein in our mind. When we have tamed our mind to the point where there is no more greed, anger, or ignorance, then our meditation practice becomes much easier.

Time is limited. I would like to ask all the city's residents to bring forth the Bodhi resolve. The Bodhi resolve is one of the most fundamental concepts in Buddhism. So just what is this Bodhi resolve? How do we bring it forth? I would like everyone to contemplate this. Different people will have different points of view. In simple terms: accord with all living beings.

There is another aspect of Bodhi resolve. Do not pay attention to our own performance. Constantly think of other people and allow others to have the opportunity to practice. We don't have to be number one; we can be the last. I believe the concept of “no first, no last” is in accordance with Bodhi. We have not yet awakened [to Bodhi] because of our discriminating mind. So let's bring forth our non-discriminating mind. I hope what I have said accords with the Dharma. Please tell me where I'm not in accordance with the Dharma. Amitufo!

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她致力於搭建東西方的橋樑，而她本身則兼具二者。不僅在學校，就連在僧團，都是個出了名的和事佬。

貞法師臨終前的一個心願是，來世能通曉更多的語言，這樣才能參與更多的翻譯工作，更有能力將佛法引入西方。憑著這樣真誠的願力，讓我們期待貞法師快快乘願再來，也讓我們期待法燈持續通明，好照亮她的歸途。

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DM Jen deeply heard Master Hsuan Hua's message about the importance of education in spreading the Dharma in the West. She was devoted to education at all levels, from training monastics to teaching young children. She had an ability to see each student – not necessarily as they were, but rather to see the potential they possessed. She taught each child to that potential. DM Jen was devoted to bridging East and West; she was a blend of the two. She was well-known as a peacemaker in the schools and in the Sangha.

DM Jen shared her latest vows: Her vows were that in future lives she wanted to master even more languages, so that she could do more translations and grow even more skillful in bringing the Dharma into the West. With real vows such as these, may we look for her to return quickly; may we keep our Dharma lamps burning brightly to light her way.