

Let Go of the Grass in the Saha World

放下娑婆世界的草

施果橋 2010年9月13日講於萬佛城大殿
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今晚輪到果橋來跟大家結法緣，法師要我談參加地藏七的心得。這次來美國六個月的時間即將過去，回想之前我們在台北的道場念佛以外，也定期持誦《地藏經》。誦《地藏經》有助於修淨土的人消業，專注地念佛，所以古德多讚揚念佛要以地藏法門為輔。

我這一次在美國參加了萬佛懺、觀音七、地藏七法會，而且在法會期間清淨受持八關齋戒。前些日子我聽說台灣有三個颱風一起來，我在這裡只能夠以修佛的功德迴向，希望颱風和災害能減到最低。

在這段期間，我深層的體會《地藏經》的意義，《地藏經》是講因果的經典。古德說念佛法門是萬人修萬人去，但是我觀察念佛的親友多數無法往生，這是什麼原因呢？《地藏經》解釋因果很清楚，讓我們了解要從心地上念佛，念佛一定要心地善。為什麼不能夠一心不亂的念佛？主要的原因是我們不能真正體會因果。

《地藏經》說：『南閻浮提眾生舉心動念，無非是罪無非是業。』所以我們必須隨時檢點自己的心念。我們的心假如還貪戀著財色名食睡，地獄離我們很近的，要墮地獄是很容易的，不要以為經上的地獄離我們很遙遠，其實我們起心動念就離地獄非常的近，所以地藏菩薩的願力就是幫助我們修行，真正脫離苦海。

念佛法門的三資糧是信、願、行，如果感情過多是不能看破，不願意放下的。《金剛經》講：『凡所有相皆是虛妄。』就是教我們能看破虛妄的假相，老實持名念佛，老實持戒念佛。地藏王菩薩最終的目



My name is Guo Qiao and I would like to create Dharma affinities with everyone. The Dharma Master asked me to speak to you about my Earth Store Recitation Session. I have been in the United States almost six months. At the branch monastery in Taipei we recited the *Earth Store Sutra* regularly, in addition to Buddha recitation. Reciting the *Earth Store Sutra* helps those who practice the Pure Land Dharma to eradicate karma and to become focused in Buddha recitation. Therefore, many virtuous ones of old suggest practicing the Earth Store Dharma to support Buddha recitation.

During my stay here in the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, I have participated in the sessions of the Ten Thousand Buddhas Repentance, Guanyin Recitation, Earth Store Recitation, and upholding the Eight Precepts during the Earth Store Recitation. I heard that three typhoons were simultaneously approaching Taiwan and transferred the merit and virtue of my cultivation in the hope of minimizing the disaster of the typhoons.

I gained a deeper understanding of the *Earth Store Sutra* during the recitation session: the *Earth Store Sutra* is about cause and effect. The ancient virtuous ones said that if ten thousand people practice Pure Land Dharma, ten thousand people would be able to be reborn in the Pure Land. This is not the case for some of my relatives and friends who cultivate Pure Land Dharma, based on my observations. Why? Because the *Earth Store Sutra* explains clearly the principle of cause and effect. We must recite the Buddha's name with a kind heart and single-mindedness. Why aren't we able to recite it with a kind heart and single-mindedness?

的是要我們能夠持戒念佛，脫離娑婆，離三界往生極樂。念佛的信心不夠，臨命終時願力不足，是沒有辦法往生淨土，只能隨業力的牽引而墮落；所以提升願力，保住正念，對修行人而言是很重要的。

我在台北的時候，一些念佛的同修跟我說：「你修念佛法門，在台北就可以了，何必要到美國去呢？」他說的也對也不對！說的對，是因為我回到台北以後，我還是如同他所說的一樣念佛；但是他說的不對，是這一次來美國，我收獲滿滿的，我對念佛更有信心，以後更專修專學念佛往生的法門。

昨天有一個台灣同修開玩笑地跟我講：「你能不能告訴我們，你在有機農場種菜的經驗，讓我們了解一下你種菜的情形。」我說我哪有在農場種菜，我都在拔草。他笑笑的說：「那麼你把拔草經驗告訴我們！為什麼有人走過去，你也不知道；孔雀進了農場，你也不知道，你好像什麼事情都沒有發生過，為什麼你有這麼大的定力？」我今天想要跟大家分享我拔草時的心得。

諸位同修，我們都不要好高騖遠，有再多的理論是沒有用的，只是你能夠當下真正的老實念一聲佛號，這個功德力就非常非常大。如果我們想東想西，想我哪一天能有所感應，這種想法都是分心。現在只有三個地方，我可以管得到的。第一是眼前，我管得到；第二個我的周邊，我管得到；第三個我的腳下，我管得到。其他的地方，像我的太太、我的小孩在台灣，我都管不到他們，他們要怎麼做，我都沒有力量能夠影響他們。我在農場能夠管得到的只有三處，眼前、周邊、以及足下。

為什麼我有這個心得？我在農場拔草，可是放眼望過去，看到的是一大片的野草，這要做到什麼時候才能拔得完呢？假設我每天都在那邊望草興歎，心想：台灣草那麼多，我為什麼要跑到美國來拔草呢？可能一根草都拔不了。我今天要告訴大家，只要你肯從腳下、周邊、眼前的草開始拔起，這一大片的野草在無形之中，不知不覺地就被你拔光了。為什麼以前萬人修萬人去，今天萬人修不一定有一個人

It is because we do not truly understand cause and effect.

The *Earth Store Sutra* says, “Living beings in Jambudvīpa create karma and offenses in every thought and movement.” We must examine our mind closely all the time. Cravings – for wealth, sex, fame, food, sleep and others – make it easy to fall into hell. The hells described in the *Earth Store Sutra* are not very far away. They are quite close. Earth Store Bodhisattva's great vows help us to cultivate and escape from the sea of suffering.

The three foundations of Buddha recitation are faith, vow, and practice. It is impossible to let go of attachments if one is too emotional. The *Vajra Sutra* states that forms are empty and false. It teaches us to see through false appearance, to recite single-mindedly the Buddha's name and to uphold precepts. Earth Store Bodhisattva's goal is for us to uphold precepts and recite the Buddha's name so that we can leave the Saha World and the Three Realms and be reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss. If we have inadequate faith while reciting the Buddha's name or have insufficient vow power at the time of death, we will fall into the lower realms according to our karma and not be born in the Pure Land. Hence, it is critical for cultivators to keep proper thoughts and to build up vow power.

Before I left Taipei, some fellow cultivators asked me, “You can practice Buddha recitation in Taipei. Why go all the way to the United States?” They were correct – I can and will continue to practice Buddha recitation in Taipei. Their concern about coming to the United States to practice has been allayed because of what I learned and because I found a deeper faith in Buddha recitation. I will definitely focus on the practice of Buddha recitation to be reborn in the Pure Land.

Yesterday, a fellow cultivator from Taiwan told me jokingly, “Can you share your farming experience with us at our organic farm?” I explained that I'm a weeder not a planter. He smiled and said, “Then tell us about your weeding experience. Why is it that you do not notice when people or peacocks walk by? How do you have such samadhi, as if nothing has happened?” Today, I would like to share some thoughts on weeding.

Fellow cultivators, do not crave things that are beyond your reach. A lot of theories are of no use. The merit and virtue of reciting mindfully the Buddha's name, even once, is great. Wandering thoughts distract responses. I have control of three places – the spaces before my eyes, around me, and beneath my feet. I have no control over my wife or children; they can do whatever they want in Taiwan and I have no power to influence them otherwise. Three things were within my control when I was at the organic farm – the spaces before my eyes, around me, and under my feet.

Why do I think this way? When I was weeding on the farm, all I could see was a vast field of wild grass. If I had contemplated daily upon why I came all the way to the United States to pull weeds when there are already many in Taiwan, I would not have accomplished much. I wish to tell everyone to start with the grass – right under your feet, around you, and before your eyes; and gradually you will finish weeding a vast field.

去？因為我們信心不足，沒有真放下，沒有全心全意的相信佛菩薩。放下什麼？放下你在娑婆世界的任何一根草，任何一個念頭都不執著。所以我們不要管那麼多，能夠放下盡量放下。

我虔誠的參與地藏七法會，得到一個因緣。有個同修問我：「下個月十六號，你能不能跟我一起去佛根地？」法師跟我講：「那個地方很好，我好想去。如果你不去的話，我真的想再去！」但是他走不開。因為佛根地管理人要離開兩個禮拜，這邊的同修覺得一個人去不太方便，希望找一個伴，他說：「十四天怎麼過？我一個人住山，萬一有個風吹草動，自己功力不夠，還是有點害怕。」其實，我現在在哪一個地方都不想去，我完全是隨緣。我根本沒有想到要再去佛根地，因為我已經去過。師父在戶外辦的第一次佛七就在佛根地，我上一次在佛根地的時候，我說：「這個地方很殊勝，磁場很好。假設能在這邊念佛的話，實在很殊勝很理想。」想不到地藏王菩薩滿了我這個願，有了這個護持道場的機會。

昨天晚上有個同修問我：「你學過這麼多的法門，你現在有沒有專修？」我說我以前學過許多法門，後來發現往生才是我們做人最重要的；一直輪迴沒有辦法出離，這不是我們做人最終的目的。他告訴我，他想念《楞嚴經》，又想其他的法門。我就勸他要選一個法門用功，我現在是專修念佛法門。

在道場裡，我們要隨眾，道場所有功課都要做圓滿，要上早課，還要聽經，這都是你的助緣；晚課繞佛的時候，你可以大聲念佛，用心念佛。其實，念佛法門入心以後，你在聽經的時候，在做任何事情的時候，心中都在念佛，你念到一心一意才是成功。有些同修說：「我老了，我走不動了，我身體有狀況。」其實你如果真正深信阿彌陀佛，你把身體交給他，你會覺得你疼得有價值，因為佛菩薩在幫你把業障消掉，你以後修行容易深入。下個月將離開聖城回到台北，我希望專修念佛法門的同修們，時時能夠保持修行的正念。大家盡此一報身，同生極樂國。

Why is it that those who used to practice Buddha recitation would be reborn in the Pure Land, yet it is not necessarily the case nowadays? It is because we do not have enough faith to truly put things down and believe wholeheartedly in the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. What do we have to put down? We have to let go of every single blade of grass in the Saha world and not attach to thought. We need to care less and let go of whatever we can.

I had another experience during the seven days of Earth Store Recitation. A fellow cultivator asked me to accompany him to the Buddha Root Farm. One of the Dharma Masters told me, "That place is peaceful and serene and I want to go there. If you don't go, I would like to go." However, he was too busy to leave. It turns out, the person in charge of Buddha Root Farm was leaving for two weeks and the fellow cultivator was trying to find someone to go with him. He said, "How am I going to spend two weeks there? I'll be alone and if something happens, I am fearful I won't be able to handle it." Actually, I didn't feel like going anywhere but decided to let nature run its own course. I had already been to Buddha Root Farm and thought I would never visit there again. The Venerable Master held the first outdoor Buddha Recitation Session at Buddha Root Farm. At that time, I thought: This place is truly remarkable. The energy is serene, and it is an ideal place to recite the Buddha's name. To my surprise, Earth Store Bodhisattva has fulfilled my wishes and given me a chance to protect the monastery.

Just last night a fellow cultivator asked, "You have studied many methods of practice. Do you focus on any specific method right now?" I responded that I had studied various practices and found that to be reborn in the Pure Land is most important; that perpetual reincarnation will not get us anywhere and is not our ultimate goal. He said that he wants to recite the *Shurangama Sutra* and to practice other methods. I suggested that he choose one and work hard on it. I currently concentrate on Buddha recitation.

We must follow the assembly's schedule at the monastery. Morning recitation and lecture are helpful for cultivation. Mindfully recite the Buddha's name out loud during the evening circumambulation. When you have been practicing Buddha recitation, to a certain degree, you will come to silently recite the Buddha's name whether you are listening to the lecture or doing something else. You will achieve something if you recite single-mindedly. Some people say, "I am getting old and cannot move around much. My physical condition is getting worse." Truly believe in Amitabha Buddha and let him take charge of your well-being, and you will regard the pain as worthwhile. The Buddhas and Bodhisattvas will help you eradicate karma, making cultivation much easier for you.

I am returning to Taipei next month. I hope all fellow cultivators who practice Buddha recitation will always keep proper thoughts. May we all be reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss in this lifetime.