

Mastering Oneself and not Being Mastered by Others

自在非他在

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世界天天都在變，人、物、時間、空氣都在變。本來這季節不應該有雨，居然這時候就下雨了，這就是氣候反常。變是有種種特殊緣故才變的，像火山爆發是地裏的一股蒸氣壓力蘊藏已久，聚集而爆出。海嘯是海裏的水太滿了，所以水就往外流，洪水為災，這都是變。氣候時節若是反常，象徵著將有事情發生。人反常了，就是神經病；氣候反常了，就是氣候發神經病，這不是好現象。

在這種種災病叢生之時，我們要好好用功修行，化戾氣為吉祥，消災劫成平安。如果再不好好修道，氣候改變時，人也會不正常；當人有心理變態，就有問題發生。所以學佛法的人，在變化期間，要特別用功修行，或特別多念佛、

In the world, there are changes every day – people, material objects, time, and the atmosphere all undergo change. Such changes occur due to special conditions. For instance, sometimes the weather is abnormal and it rains out of season; the pressure built up from magma collecting underground results in a volcanic eruption. Too much water in the ocean causes tsunamis and disastrous floods. A form of abnormality in people is mental illness. When the climate is mentally ill, it's not a good sign. Abnormal changes in the climate and the seasons are omens of future events.

During this time when disease and calamity are occurring everywhere, we must apply ourselves diligently to spiritual practice in order to transform violence and disasters into peace and auspiciousness. If we fail to practice seriously, we will be inclined to psychological imbalance when the climate is abnormal, and then there will be problems. Therefore, during a period of great change, Buddhists need to be especially diligent in their practice, reciting the Buddha's name more, or reciting more mantras or sutras. We should do as many good deeds as possible, 'for great virtue can dispel offenses.'

In this time when things are not as they usually are, we must 'adjust to conditions, but not change; not change, yet adjust to conditions.' Most

持咒、誦經，有力量就多做點善事，所謂「德大冤孽消」。

在這個非常時期，要隨緣不變，不變隨緣。最要緊的是不要發脾氣，一有脾氣就是變。人想在生死中了生死，就要出一番力量。出力量就是無論做什麼事，都往真的去做，遇到橫逆坎坷也不動心，不發脾氣，這是栽培心上地，涵養性中天。若能如此，就能補天地的不足，才是一個真正的修道人，一個學佛求法的人。

要深深研究明瞭，不要執著一切事一切物。一切一切若不執著，就是解脫；還有執著，就不能得到自在解脫。「看破」就是明白，「放下」就是解脫；能解脫才能有真正的「自在」，沒有解脫就不能「自在」。自不在就是他在，他在就是妄想紛飛，按字義解釋是很有意思的，就是喧賓奪主，主人翁沒有當家。注意這點！主人翁不當家就是顛倒，什麼事都沒有規矩了。

放下就是解脫，就是在戒律裏畢業，在規矩、煩惱、無明中畢業了。畢業得到證書就叫解脫。解脫才能自在，若自不在，就是他在，賊來了，將你家裏珍寶全偷了。「他」包括無明、妄想、煩惱、天魔外道、妖魔鬼怪等。你若不守住自己的家，就將被「他人」所侵犯掠奪，所以要注意小心，一定要「自在」。但先要看破，真明白——「願消三障諸煩惱，願得智慧真明了，普願罪障悉消除，世世常行菩薩道。」就是自在、做得主。

若更深解釋，自不在就是佛性不現前，而魔王坐殿，被六賊侵犯，想回來也回不來，一天到晚打犯五戒的妄想，雖沒有真正去做去，但卻時時去打犯戒的妄想，

這不是愚癡是什麼？這是自不在，而被賊侵犯。自在才能做得主，自不在就做不得主，和流就隨境界轉，和而不流就不被境界轉。

所以修行沒有旁的，只在自己身心性命上用功夫，什麼事都要明白，那就不會做糊塗事，而能知行合一。

importantly, we should not lose our tempers. As soon as our tempers flare, changes occur. If we want to put an end to birth and death while still within birth and death, we must put forth great effort. In putting forth this great effort, we have to aspire to be true and honest in all that we do. When we encounter unreasonable and frustrating situations, we need to remain calm and not get angry. This is to 'nurture the earth of our mind and nourish the heaven of our nature.' When we are like this, we make up for the deficiencies of heaven and earth. It is to be a true practitioner, a student of Buddhism and a seeker of Dharma. We must investigate deeply and understand without becoming attached to anything. We are liberated when we have no attachments. If we have attachments, we have not attained liberation and self-mastery.

'Seeing through things' means understanding, and 'letting go' means being liberated. Only when you are liberated can you truly be master of yourself. If you aren't liberated, you cannot be the master. If you aren't the master, someone else is. With someone else as the master, your false thoughts fly about wildly. That means 'the noisy guest has usurped the host' and the host is no longer in charge. Pay attention to this! If the host is not in charge, everything is out of order.

'Letting go' means being liberated, graduating from the study of precepts and graduating from the school of rules, afflictions, and ignorance. When you graduate and receive your diploma, you are liberated. Only when you are liberated can you be the master of yourself. If you are not your own master, then others are your master; the thieves come and plunder all the treasures in your home. 'The others' include ignorance, false thoughts, afflictions, heavenly demons, unbelievers, ghosts, goblins and so forth. If you don't guard your house, it will be invaded and taken over by others. Therefore, you have to be attentive and careful; you need to be the master of yourself. But first of all, you must see through it all and truly understand.

I vow to dispel the three hindrances and all afflictions.

I vow to attain wisdom and true understanding.

I vow to eradicate each and every hindrance caused by offenses,

And always walk the Bodhisattva Path, in life after life.

That is to be your own master.

To explain it at a deeper level, not being the master of yourself means that the Buddha-nature does not manifest; instead, the demon king sits in the 'hall' (of your mind), and the six thieves have taken over. Even if you want to return, you cannot. You fantasize about breaking the five precepts, from morning to night. You think about breaking precepts all the time, although you don't actually do it. If that's not being stupid, what is? It's a case of not being the master yourself, because the thieves have taken over. Only when you are the master can you be in control. If you are not the master, you are not in control, and you follow along, getting confused by states of mind. If you don't follow along, you won't be confused by mental states. Cultivation is nothing more than applying effort in our own bodies and minds, in our natures and lives, until we understand everything. Then we won't do such muddled things. What we know and what we do will be in total agreement.