

Awaken to No Seeking



When I first came across the Venerable Master's teachings, there were a few that influenced and attracted me the most. Two of them are part of his Six Guiding Principles. The first is the principle of not seeking. The second is the principle of not pursuing personal advantage. The third is his teaching that we shouldn't climb on conditions. Until that point, I had never heard of the term climbing on conditions. It was not a part of my vernacular and I wasn't aware that such a concept even existed. I can still remember reading about these three principles back in 2003 and how strongly influenced I was at the time.

What was interesting for me, while I was reading about these principles, was that they revealed the ways in which I was most obstructed on the Path, and something of which I was totally unaware before that point. You see, I had never looked at myself through those lenses. Rather, I had always looked at myself through the lens of our society. In society, we are taught that it is good to seek. Moreover, in this competitive world of ours, we are taught that the only way to succeed in life is by pursuing personal advantage. We are also taught that we should be opportunistic so that we can get ahead in life, and that the way to do that is by climbing on conditions. Never had I ever

對「不求」的體悟



第一次接觸上人開示的時候，有一些深深吸引我，對我影響很大。六大宗旨裡面的不求、不自利是其中兩個。第三是不攀緣。在此之前，從來沒有聽過「不攀緣」，因為根本不在我生活的字彙中，沒有這種觀念。記得在二〇〇三年第一次聽到的時候，我當時所受的影響是何其之大。

讀到這些宗旨的時候，令我感興趣是，它們揭示了修道過程中最障礙我的方式，在那之前我完全沒覺察到的東西。我從來都沒有以這三個原則為鏡子來反觀自己。更確切地說，我看自己一向都是從社會上一般的角度來看的。在這個社會上，我們被教導了要去求。而且在當前社會上競爭非常激烈的情況下，人生成功的唯一途徑便是追求個人的利益。我們也被教導，要靠投機取巧才能捷足先登，投機的方法就是攀緣。我從來沒想過事實上可能有另一種不同的思考與行為方式，另一種觀看世界及與它互動的方式。

那個時候，當我剛剛學習這些宗旨的時候，我回頭看我過去的生活，認識到那時為止，過去自己沒有一刻時間不是

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considered that there could actually be a different way of thinking and behaving, a different way of viewing and interacting with the world.

When I was learning about these principles, I reflected on the life I had lived up until that point. I realized there had never been a single instant in time when I had not engaged in seeking, in pursuing personal advantage, and in climbing on conditions. That was all I had ever known. I thought to myself, Is it even possible to NOT be like that? My entire personality has been built around seeking, pursuing personal advantage, and climbing on conditions. Who would I be if I stopped doing those things? Moreover, what would there be to actually do if I stopped doing those things? Isn't that all that there is in life? Is it really possible to live a life where you don't do those things?

I never deeply understood why I was so attracted to these three teachings until I heard a Dharma talk by Reverend Heng Sure one day wherein he explained the reason. Through his talk, I came to realize that I was attracted to those three teachings because they are psychological. You see, I was a psychology major in college. I've always been interested in the mind and how it works. Most psychologists, ultimately, are interested in finding out how we can find happiness in our lives. For that reason, many psychologists today are very interested in Buddhadharma. My interest in the mind not only led me to major in psychology, but it also led me to have a keen interest in Buddhism. I wanted to understand, Why is there unhappiness? When I learned the first two noble truths of the Buddha's Four Noble Truths, I realized that Buddhism provided the ultimate answer to that question. The reason why we are unhappy is because our minds are full of desires and attachments in a world that's impermanent. Because it's impermanent, we can never be satisfied. Tanha (craving) leads to dukkha (discontentment). From a psychological perspective, one could even see the Buddha, as the ultimate psychotherapist, truly knowing how to guide one to achieve happiness.

In the same way that the first two Noble Truths are psychological, the three principles taught by the Venerable Master -- not seeking, not pursuing personal advantage, and not climbing on conditions -- are also psychological. When I came across these teachings, I was able to see very clearly how these activities of the mind are aspects of greed and how if I actually want to find true, lasting inner peace and happiness, I should work on changing these vices within myself.

I'd have to say that my most favorite teaching of the three is 'no seeking,' partially because pursuing personal advantage and climbing on conditions contain seeking within them. The main reason I have a particular liking for the guiding principle of 'not seeking' is because it exposes one of our greatest weaknesses as human beings -- that is, seeking after distractions. This weakness is especially prevalent in today's society. How so? Well, technology makes it so we are constantly being bombarded with sensory stimuli and distractions. People are constantly preoccupied with one thing or another using today's technology -- whether it be surfing the internet, listening to

在求，在自利，在攀緣。這是我所僅知的。所以我跟自己講，是不是有可能在沒有這些情形之下，我們還可以活得好？我整個的性格，都是以這種追求、自私跟攀緣做基礎。所以假如我不做這些事情的話，那我還是誰呢？假如不做這些事情，我又能做些什麼？這不就是人生嗎？真有可能過一種不做這些事的生活嗎？

我雖然很被這三大宗旨所吸引，可是從來不知道為什麼，一直到我聽到實法師的一次講法。聽到後，才了解之所以被這三個宗旨所吸引，因為它們是心理上的。在大學裡，我的主修科目是心理學，所以對於一個人的心理是如何運作的，一直都非常感興趣。而大多數的心理學家，最終都是非常有興趣來找出如何在生活中追求快樂的方法。因為那個原因，許多心理學家今天都對佛法感興趣。

我對心理的興趣，使得我在大學裡面主修心理學，也讓我對佛法很感興趣。可是我一直想要了解的是，為什麼人會不快樂？所以當我聽到佛的四聖諦裡面頭兩個聖諦，了解最究竟的答案。我們之所以不快樂，是因為對這個無常的世界，充滿了欲望與執著。因為這個世界是無常的，所以永遠得不到滿足。Tanha（渴求），這個梵語是欲望，就是會帶我們到 dukkha，就是苦、不滿。所以從心理學的角度來看，甚至可以把佛看作是最好的心理分析家，他真正知道如何指引我們獲得最究竟的快樂。

所以就跟我所了解的四聖諦裡面頭兩個聖諦類似，那麼上人的三大宗旨——不求、不自利、不攀緣，也同樣是心理上的觀念。所以聽到上人的這些教法時，馬上可以清楚地了解，腦子裡的貪。如果想要找尋真實、永恆的心靈寧靜與喜悅，我必須改變內在的這些惡習。

我必須說，在這三大宗旨裡面，我最喜歡的是「不求」。因為自利與攀緣都包括在「求」裡面。我對這個不求有特別的好感，最主要的原因是它把我們人類最大的弱點給暴露出來了。也就是說，我們總是在求令我們心神分散的事情。

在今天的社會裡，這個弱點尤其普遍。為什麼呢？因為今天的科技使這些分心的事情更容易做到。每天我們都持續被這些知覺上的刺激與令人分心的事情在轟炸著；藉由科技，人們每天被各樣的事務佔據著，例如上網搜尋、用

music on their ipods, watching television, text messaging their friends, updating their facebook statuses, tweeting, playing video games, etc. Why do we constantly keep ourselves engaged with these different activities? It's because we are seeking distractions. Why do we seek distractions? It's because, at a deep level, our minds are profoundly discontent. We don't want to deal with our discontentment directly, so in order to escape from it, we keep ourselves constantly distracted through the use of technology. Ultimately, we are seeking ways to escape from our minds. There is no moment in the day when we aren't seeking after something to preoccupy our time. In this way, we are constantly engaged with seeking -- seeking after distractions in order to forget about ourselves. These mindless distractions are a real obstacle to the Path, and the practice of not seeking can really help us to overcome this obstacle. Once we are no longer being distracted, we can then return our attention to our own minds and begin the work of transforming them.

Seeking involves trying to get something that you are presently lacking. First, we experience a craving or a hankering for something, and then we seek after it. If we are involved in seeking, then that automatically implies that our minds are discontent. A mind that is completely content would have no reason to seek. Therefore, to practice not seeking is to cultivate inner contentment. In that way, practicing, not seeking, is a powerful way to counteract the first Noble Truth -- dukkha or discontentment.

The act of seeking occurs at a very unconscious, imperceptible level in our minds. It is directly related to one of the twelve links in the Buddha's teaching on dependent origination. The tenth link is called bhava in Sanskrit. In English, it is translated as becoming or continuation. When we seek, we are always seeking after something in the future, because of the fact that in the present we feel discontent.

Seeking reinforces continuation and becoming, because continuation and becoming are the movement of the mind into the future. Regarding the tenth link, bhava, what I find interesting the English translation into the words continuation and becoming, is that these two words mean very different things. Continuation means staying the same as time progresses. Becoming means changing into something different as time progresses. Yet, whether a person experiences a change or continuation, seeking reinforces both. In the case of continuation, the mind seeks to have its present pleasant state continue on into the future. This involves clinging to the present experience, which is the first of the Three Poisons -- greed. In the case of becoming, the mind seeks to have its present unpleasant state become a state that is no longer unpleasant in the future. This involves having aversion to the present experience, which is the second of the Three Poisons -- anger. When a mind has clinging, it seeks to continue that experience into the future. When a mind has aversion, it seeks to have that experience become something different in the future. Yet, the key word in both of these statements is the word seeks. For that reason, a mind that's

ipod聽音樂、看電視、給朋友送簡訊、更新個人臉書資訊、推特(tweeting)、打電動，等等。為什麼我們不斷地讓自己忙於做這些不同的事呢？這是因為在尋求分心。那為什麼我們要尋求分心呢？想從深層次上講，是因為我們的心是非常非常地不知足。不願意直接面對自己的不滿足，所以藉由科技追尋這些分散我們心神的事情，最終是想藉此來逃避面對我們自己的心。

在這個社會裡面，我們無時不在找不同的分散心神的事情，來把時間塞滿，藉著不斷地追求來忘掉自己。這些分散心神的事情，對我們的修道來講是一種真正的障礙。因此培養不求，才能夠真正克服這些障礙。一旦不再心猿意馬，然後就能夠把注意力回注到本心上來，並且開始改變它。

求也包含了我們嘗試追尋那些感覺欠缺的東西。因為從經驗裡面，我們有這個欲望；有了欲望，就要求。如果捲入求中，這自然就顯示了心理上的不滿足。一個人心裡假如說是完全滿足的話，是沒有理由再去求的。所以修行不求，就是培養我們內在的知足，是對治第一聖諦裡面的苦一個很有力的方法。

我們開始有求的時候，這個求的動作在腦海裡面是很微細的層次，不太會意識、覺察到它。這個層次就跟十二因緣裡的一個有直接的關係。十二因緣當中的第十個，梵文裡面叫bhava，在英文裡面翻譯成「有」，或者是「繼續」。所以當我們在追求的時候，我們的心不在當下，而跑到將來去了。當我們在將來的時候，表示我們對目前不滿意。

我們求的時候，這個求有兩種意義：一種是繼續，一種是變成別的東西。兩者皆是心理朝向未來的運動。我對於第十因緣——bhava感興趣，是因為它的英文翻譯是「繼續」和「變成」這兩個差異很大意思的單詞。繼續表示任時光流轉依然維持現狀，變成則是隨著時光流逝而改變成不同的景象。假如是繼續的話，表示希望把當前愉悅的情況延續到未來，這表示執著現在的體驗。我們就抓住三毒的第一項：貪。可是要變的話，追求將目前不愉快的現象「變成」在將來不再是如此，這表示我們對當下的情況感到厭惡，所以希望改變，就跟三毒裡面的瞋

constantly involved in seeking reinforces this particular link within dependent origination.

What I find also equally interesting is the opposite of bhava, that is, to not become or continue. How could the mind stop becoming or continuing? In order to do that, it would have to be completely content in the present moment, without any tanha, or craving. If a mind didn't have craving, it would not cling to pleasant experiences or have aversion to unpleasant experiences. If a mind doesn't have clinging, it will not have the desire to continue the experience into the future. If a mind doesn't have aversion, it will not have the desire to make the experience become something different in the future. When there is no desire to continue an experience or to make it become something different, there will be no seeking after a future state. If there is no seeking, that means one's mind is completely content in the present moment and does not feel a need to move its attention away from the present and into the future.

This brings up another point, which is the way in which not seeking causes our attention to return to the present. There is real value in this. For this reason, as a practice, not seeking, really benefits meditation, in that it requires the mind to be focused on the present moment. If the mind is seeking, that automatically implies that it's focused on the future and not focused on the present. The only way to have a mind that is not seeking is by remaining focused on the present. Moreover, as we know, if the mind is not focused on the present, then there is no way we can ever hope to attain samadhi. Therefore, not seeking indirectly promotes samadhi. In my opinion, to the same extent that seeking reinforces the tenth link of dependent origination -- bhava, not seeking reinforces being mindful in the present moment, and ultimately, therefore, reinforces samadhi. Not only that, but as mentioned before, it also reinforces inner contentment, which, when brought to the ultimate point, becomes nirvana -- the ending of outflows.

The Venerable Master's teachings on not seeking, not pursuing personal advantage, and not climbing on conditions offered me a much larger teaching than just these specific principles. They showed that it is possible to live in a way that is completely different from how we have been raised and taught in modern society and from how our society is run. Before encountering his teachings, I didn't know that there was any other way of living without seeking, pursuing personal advantage, and climbing on conditions. Before that, I always thought that those ways of being were just facts of life, the only way that humans could ever be. Now I know that it is possible to be more than that, to actually have inner virtue at a very deep level of our minds. Now I know what is required and absolutely indispensable in order to truly find lasting inner peace and happiness.

有關係。心理執著時，我們試圖將這種體驗「繼續」到未來；心理厭惡時，求這體驗在未來有所改變。然而兩者都和「求」有關。因此一個一直在「求」的心靈就一直增強緣起中第十因緣。

我發覺bhava的反義——「不改變」、「不繼續」同樣很有趣，就是說，我們的心如何才能既不變又不繼續呢？為了能做到那樣，就要對目前的境況完全滿意，沒有任何的貪愛或渴求。如果沒有渴求的話，就不會執著愉悅的經歷，也不會厭惡不愉悅的經歷。如果沒有執著，就不會有將這種體驗延續到將來的欲望；如果沒有厭惡，就不會有要在將來將這種體驗變得不同的欲望。當沒有欲望去延續一種體驗或是改變成一種不同的體驗的時候，就不會去尋求一個未來狀態。若是無求，也就意味我們對目前的境況完全滿意，並且沒有要將注意力由現在轉到未來的需要。

這又引出另外一點：「不求」能讓我們把握當下。這有真正的價值與意義。因此，不求，作為一種修行，有益於打坐——因它同樣要求集中心智於當下。如果心理在求，自然意味著心念是集中在未來而不是當下。把心念集中於當下是使其不向外馳求的惟一辦法。此外，如果我們的心念不能止於當下，就不可能達到三昧。所以不求間接地促成三昧。依我之見，求增強十二因緣中的第十個——bhava的程度，與「不求」強化將心念守於當下，因而最後增加三昧所達到的程度，這幾者之間是相等的。不僅如此，正如前面所提到的，它同時加強內在的滿足，而在最終，達到涅槃境界——無漏。

上人教導不求、不自利、不攀緣這三點對我來講，不單單僅是三個宗旨而已，它們讓我看到一個完全不同的生活方式，這跟在現代社會下成長與受教的方式完全都不一樣，並且與這個社會運行的方式也完全都不一樣。在受到他的教誨之前，我不知道還有一種不求、不自利、不攀緣的生活方式。頭先我常常認為那些生活方式才是人生的真相，是人類唯一的的生活模式；現在我知道，可以超越那些，可以在內心深處真正地來培養內在的道德（have inner virtue）。所以我知道，這三點對我們來講，是絕對必不可少的，能使自己找到內心永恆的寧靜與喜悅。