

如來寺冬季禪七報告

Report on the Winter Chan Session at Tathāgata Monastery

比丘近永講於2013年1月21日萬佛城大殿

A talk given by Bhikshu Jin Yong on Jan. 21st, 2013 in the Buddha Hall at CTTB



BODHI FIELD | 菩提田

今晚近永向大眾報告一下如來寺禪七的大致情形。

去年在如來寺參加禪七的居士人數相當多，尤其第一天晚上，整個禪堂都擠滿了。所以今年我們準備了很多座位給居士們；不過出席的，並沒去年那麼多。一個原因可能是去年禪七是在耶誕節當天起七；今年則到了年底，居士們的假期已近尾聲，要準備回去上班了，所以來的人較少。

但是人也不是那麼少，第一晚大概有四十來位。去年很多居士打完第一個七就離開了，到第三週更沒有幾位留下來；今年則不同，好幾位居士都是從頭打到尾的。所以，雖然一開始人數較少，圓滿三個七的卻比去年多！尤其去年結七晚上開示時間，居士們來的寥寥無幾；今年倒是來了二十多位。所以我覺得今年很多居士是很用心的。

去年遠來打七的哥倫比亞大學統計系的老教授，今年也來了；而且待的時間更長。從前他頂多參加十一天，今年他則圓滿了兩個七。他說他過去八年，只有兩年沒來。他也講他從禪七裏頭得到很多利益，否則他怎麼會幾乎每年都犧牲美好的假期，從紐約專程飛來聖城打七呢？

另外，禪七剛開始的時候，我們本來打算將《虛空打破明心地》、英文本《Chan Handbook》等書，借給來打七的居士們研讀。後來，來自荷蘭的年輕人Fadde告訴我們這些書現在已經是結緣品；他更發心到書庫

Jin Yong would like to take this opportunity to briefly report to the assembly what had happened at the Tathagata Monastery's (TM) Chan Hall during the session.

This year, the number of participants in the Chan session decreased compared to last year. While additional seating had been set aside to accommodate more participants based on last year's overwhelming opening night, we found fewer came to this year's session than expected. One possible reason could be the timing of the Chan session, which did not coincide with the off week of Christmas and the New Year. In fact, this year's Chan session began two days before the New Year, making it too close to end of the vacation period and therefore people were hesitant to attend.

Although fewer participants, but the crowd was still a good size as there were about forty participants on the first night. In comparison with last year, when lay people mostly stayed only for the first week and by the end of the third week, there were practically only a few left to conclude the session. This year, the pattern changed. Less people attended at the beginning, but the number of people who stayed until the end far exceeded that of last year. There were a total of over twenty laymen who committed themselves to finishing the full three weeks. My impression is this group of laymen is particularly assiduous.

An elder statistics professor from Columbia University came all the way from New York to attend the Chan Session last year. He came again this time. Besides, he was able to complete two full weeks of the session. In the past, he was only able to stay for a maximum of 11 days. He said that he only missed twice in the past eight years and that obviously he had had great experience in the sessions; otherwise, he would not have kept sacrificing his precious vacations for the Chan Sessions at CTTB over the years.

請了許多書回來和大眾結緣，包括《百日禪》、《Listen to Yourself》等。不少居士利用下午放香的時間閱讀，這對他們相當有幫助。

晚上開示時間，每天我們用約二十分鐘聆聽上人禪七的開示，另二十分鐘則為發問及心得分享。我們聽的主要是1973至1974年上人的禪七開示，另外也聽1975至1976年的。原來我並不曉得73和74年的開示已有英文翻譯，從順法師那兒才得知，《Listen to Yourself》裡有完整的翻譯。而且，該書已出新版。這本書有很多上人開示的英文翻譯，是一本很好的書，在此提供給大家作參考。

上人的開示每句話都很值得聽，所以要選哪部分來播放，是一個很困難的問題；不是沒有材料，而是材料太多了！聽得懂中文的居士，不妨到法總的中文網站（drbachinese.org）下載這些開示。該網站現在已經多了很多上人禪七開示的音聲檔，從前只有六個，現在差不多有二倍多的檔案。

今年禪七期間，聖城的天氣非常好，只有少數幾天陰雨。天氣好的一個代價是早晚非常冷。如來寺的禪堂沒有暖氣，所以是相當冷。如來寺的住眾相形之下是比較幸運的，因為我們不需要出去。居士們可辛苦了，他們早出晚歸，得忍受外面零下四、五度左右的酷寒。因為天氣好，午齋後不少如來寺的住眾就在中庭曬太陽，這實在是一大享受。如來寺室內溫度經常保持在四、五度左右，而室外艷陽下氣溫則高過十度以上！

禪七剛開始時，方丈和尚慈悲，請全法師每天早上七點到八點開初級班的禪坐課。原以為只上一週，沒想到全法師發心連續上了三週！他教的拉筋、放鬆等動作，參加的人都覺得對禪坐很有幫助；好幾位沙彌也參加了。

方丈和尚因看到很多居士發心來打禪七，但是他們在這裡經歷的，除了痛以外還是痛；所以在結七晚上開示時，提出了舉行專門給初級班參加的禪七之構

At the start of the session, we planned to lend laymen some Chan books such as *Smashing the Empty Space and Understanding the Mind-Ground* or the English version of the Chan Handbook to help them with their practices. Fedde, a young volunteer from Holland, informed us that these books are now free for distribution. He even went to acquire them and bring back many other books including *100 Days Chan Talk, Listen to Yourself*, which is also for free distribution. Many people studied these books during their afternoon breaks and had found them quite helpful.

During the evening lectures, we spent approximately 20 minutes daily listening to the Venerable Master's instructional talks and twenty additional minutes thereafter for questions and answers and for experience sharing. The instructional talks we listened to were given at the Chan Sessions held in 1973-74 as well as 1975-76. Dharma Master Shun kindly informed us that the English translations of the former in its entirety were in *Listen to Yourself*. Its new edition is also now available. This book includes the English translations of many other Venerable Master's lectures and is considered a great resource for English readers.

Practically every sentence that the Venerable Master said is worth listening. So, I found it very difficult to select what to play to the participants. It was not due to the lack of material, rather it was due to too much material to choose from. Mandarin speakers may download many of the Venerable Master's Chan talks from DRBA's Chinese website, drbachinese.org. In the past, there were only six files in Chan, the number of files has since doubled.

The weather was really nice during this year's Chan Session with only a few raining days. The downside of nice weather is that it was below freezing at nights and early mornings. There is no heating system in TM's Chan Hall, so it was very cold there. TM residents were lucky because they needed not to go outside, whereas lay participants had to endure the subfreezing weather outside when they came in the early mornings and went back to their dorms late at night. After lunch, quite a few TM residents enjoyed the lovely sunshine at TM's central courtyard. The indoor temperature at TM remained below low 40s all day long. Under the sun the outdoor temperature could be at least 20°F higher!

At the start of the session, the compassionate Abbot asked Dharma Master Chuan to reserve the first week from 7am to 8am to teach the basic meditation techniques to beginners. The original plan was that the beginner's classes would last one week. However, Dharma Master Chuan gracefully extended the teaching to cover the entire three week period. His teaching on relaxing and stretching exercises was very effective. Many participants, including novices, found the physical training helpful.

Abbot noticed that the participants were serious about the session. However, he also noticed they experienced pain the entire time. On the

想；或者以後禪七，分兩個禪堂舉行，一個是給出家眾，另外一個給初學參禪的居士們。後者的課表可以比較輕鬆，每支坐香可短於一個小時。

談到坐禪，為什麼打坐一定要挨痛呢？禪七期間，怎麼談都是痛的問題，不是腿痛、就是腰痠背痛、要不然就是頭痛，甚至全身都痠痛！所以有個居士問道：「參禪既然是心地法門，為什麼我們要盤腿盤得這麼辛苦？」乍聽之下好像很有道理，不是嗎？

我覺得這是個很好的問題，我們不妨來討論一下。今晚我們剛聽到上人解釋《法華經》裡的種種三昧。我們參禪就是要得到三昧，三昧就是定，禪定。有定以後才會有智慧。怎麼樣修定呢？修心。沒錯，這是個修心的法門；但是要怎麼去修心呢？

要能夠入定，必須能夠忍。如果沒有辦法忍，怎麼可能有定力？六波羅蜜中，第三種是忍辱，第五才是禪定。所以要修心，但不是只是嘴巴上說修、說修三昧，就修得出來，必須要實際上去做。那麼究竟怎樣修呢？最方便的就是用我們自己的身體，籍假修真。我們在這兒打坐，自然會痛。痛提供了我們學忍痛的機會。

上人有首起七的偈頌，一開始就說：「大冶洪爐煉金剛」。大冶洪爐就是禪堂，煉金剛之軀嗎？色身怎麼樣都會壞，對不對？我覺得煉的是金剛之心；心可以煉得像金剛一樣不壞，而不是這個身體。雖說大冶洪爐指的是禪堂，但是我覺得，更直接的是我們自己的身體。我們身體在那邊痛，就像大冶洪爐一般，又熱又痛的難忍。坐禪提供了最佳、最簡便、最經濟的修心的機會，不需任何昂貴、先進的設備；隨時隨處只要盤起雙腿席地而坐，就可以修我們自己的忍耐心。全世界再也找不到更好的實驗室了！

所以，我們想要有定力，一定要能夠忍、不能忍的也要忍、要能八風吹不動；如果我們無法忍痛的話，想要有定力也只是空想而已。阿彌陀佛！



last day, he proposed to divide the session into two separate classes, one for the advanced meditators and one for the beginners where their schedule could be less intensive and each sitting period could be shorter than one hour.

The following question always arises during the Chan Sessions: why does one have to endure the pain when practicing sitting meditation? The number one issue at any Chan Session is always pain: leg pain, back pain, headache, even ache all over the body. A layman this year asked: "Since the practice of Chan concerns about the mind, why do we have to undergo the suffering of sitting in the lotus posture?" His doubt on the lotus posture seems quite valid, isn't it?

Since this is a very important question, let's spend some time discussing it. Earlier this evening we listened to the Venerable Master explaining many kinds of Samadhi in *the Lotus Sutra*. The purpose of practicing Chan, of course, is to attain Samadhi. Only then will we attain wisdom. However, how do we attain Samadhi? To train the mind, right? But, how do we train the mind?

To attain Samadhi, one must have patience. Without patience, there is simply no samadhi? In the order of the Six *Paramitas*, the third one is patience followed by Samadhi, which is number five on the list. Hence, to train the mind, one cannot merely talk about it in theories, one has to do it. How to train the mind then? The most convenient method is to make use of our own body, so it is known as to practice the true by means of the false. Naturally, at the beginning, our body will hurt from meditation; however, pain also gives us an opportunity to practice patience and endurance.

Venerable Master Hua wrote a verse to begin a Chan Session and it began with: "Vajra is being smelt in the great hot furnace in the foundry." The great hot furnace is the Chan hall. What is vajra then? Do we smelt our body to be like vajra? Our body will definitely deteriorate sooner or later, right? So, the body can never be like vajra. I see it as smelting the mind to be like vajra. The mind, not the body, can be like vajra and never deteriorate. Although the great hot furnace is said to be the Chan Hall, it can be simply our own body. When practicing sitting meditation, our body can be unbearably painful and hot, just like the furnace. Sitting meditation provides the best, the most convenient and most economical opportunity for us to train our minds. There is no need to purchase any expensive, fancy equipment. By simply sitting in lotus posture at any place and at any time, we can practice patience. You cannot find any better lab in the world than your own body!

In conclusion, to attain Samadhi, we must be able to endure, to bear the unbearable and to remain unmoved under any circumstances. If we cannot bear the pain, attaining Samadhi is simply wishful thinking. Amitabha!

