

Ill Thoughts Are Common, Real Fear Is In Late Realization

不怕念起， 只怕覺遲



BODHI FIELD | 菩提田

A Talk by Bhikshu Heng Sure on May 19, 2013 at the Buddha Hall of CTTB

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這個禮拜大家正在拜萬佛寶懺，拜的時候有沒有觀照自己的起心動念？當問題來的時候，如果能把它們轉為覺悟的機會，就能順利地穿越煩惱之門。這正是我今天要講的主題，同時也帶來一些筆記與大家分享，這些是我從洛杉磯三步一拜到萬佛聖城過程中所記錄的，今天挑幾個故事跟各位分享。

如來藥，這個「藥」字，在中文的意思是天然的草藥，並非藥丸或藥粉。（按：此處講解「願一切眾生生成如來藥，能拔一切煩惱毒箭」這句經文。）所謂「如來藥」，指的就是佛法；弟子生病時，佛陀應病予藥。然而在佛陀看來，當眾生苦惱及煩憂時，心就已生病了；身病與心病無異，無明煩惱皆致令身心靈生病。

Here we are bowing the Ten Thousand Buddha's Repentance. What is going on inside as you bow? When problems come up, we can pass through those doors of affliction by transforming them into opportunities for awakening. That is what I wanted to talk about, so I brought along a few of the notebooks that I wrote while I was bowing on my pilgrimage from LA to CTTB. I'm going to pick some stories from them.

The Tathagata's herbs—the word “herb” is 藥 (yao) in Chinese, which means medicine—these herbs come from natural sources; they are not pills or powders. The Tathagata's medicine, the Tathagata's herb, are a metaphor for Dharma. The Buddha gave his disciples specific medicines when they were physically sick, but from the Buddha's point of view, we are ill whenever we have afflictions, troubles, or worries. When our spirits are afflicted, it's no different than being physically sick. Such problems can not only make our body sick, but can also make our spirit and mind sick.

Afflictions work on our minds like a water hose that suddenly gets a kink, so the water can't flow. When our minds and our natures get afflicted, our well-being gets a kink in it, very much like that knotted hose. So as the Venerable Master would tell us, "There are 84,000 Buddhadharmas. Why? Because there are 84,000 afflictions. If our nature weren't tied up in knots, we wouldn't need the Buddhadharmas to untie all those afflictions."

So the Buddhadharmas exist specifically to untie those knots of afflictions. Thus in this passage from the *Flower Adornment Sutra*, the Buddha described the Dharma as medicine. His teachings are herbs to heal us from the illness of affliction.

What happens to us when we bow the Ten Thousand Buddha's Repentance ceremony? Inside, memories and thoughts rise to mind; outside our bodies get tired because there's pressure on our joints. Further, our throats grow sore and our patience get tested.

When have you ever worked so closely with so many people before? The bowing ceremony presents a rare opportunity to turn more than three hundred people into a family. As we bow continuously on either side of the Buddha hall, this new big family operates like a body exercising: one side goes down, and one side comes up. That's rare, isn't it? You could see the bowing as an exercise with a large team, only we never get to work with a team this big. Ordinarily, we play on teams made up of two or three people, five if it's basketball, eleven if it's football, and our teams are made up of groups of siblings, classmates, or friends.

Outside of this assembly, we never have teams with 300 people bowing down on the left side and right side. That's pretty rare and it takes rare patience to get through without affliction. So how are we getting along? The answer is better on some days than on other days. Sometimes the person behind you sings too loudly, or he keeps knocking down the sutra stands and banging you in the back. Or else the person beside you always gets up too slowly. Everyone else is rising to their feet but that person is still down on the cushion. Is he asleep? You don't know whether to tap him or let him go. It bothers you. There are all kinds of little problems like that.

Worse yet is when you bow down and your mind fills up with thoughts. I know when I bow my mind comes up with memories of embarrassing things that I did. Sometimes the memories are of nasty things, or behavior that was down right evil. I bow and I recall things I shouldn't have said or done, such as getting angry, slamming the door, and walking out, and so on. I recall so many broken promises. That's my inner experience of bowing. And to continue takes real patience.

I have been through the process repeatedly, when it seems like an entire library of memories comes up for review, and that's hard to take. Why is it so? Because here I am bowing to the Buddhas: what could be more wonderful? Bowing to the name of the Buddha should

無明一起，如同水管突然被打了個結，水就無法流動。我們的心靈與自性若是起了煩惱，我們原本的良好狀況也隨之打結，如同水管打結一般。所以上人告訴我們，佛法有八萬四千個法門，為什麼呢？因為有八萬四千的煩惱。如果我們的自性沒有打結，就不需要佛法來化解這些煩惱。佛法的存在，在於對治所有的煩惱，因此在《華嚴經》佛陀將佛法譬喻成藥，佛陀的教化乃是治療煩惱病的法藥。

當我們禮拜萬佛寶懺時，會發生什麼事情呢？從內在來講，記憶和妄想會湧現於心。從外在來說，身體會變得疲累，因為我們的關節不斷地在承受壓力；甚至，連嗓子也開始痛了，耐心開始受到了考驗。各位可曾和這麼多人一起近距離共事？拜萬佛懺就是這樣一個稀有的機會，可以讓三百多人變成一家人。當我們在佛殿分兩側連續拜佛時，這個新的大家庭就像做運動似地，一邊拜下去，另一邊就站起身。這是很稀有的，對不對？你可以把拜佛看成和一個隊伍在一起運動，只是從來沒遇過這麼大的隊伍。通常，隊伍只是兩到三個人，如果是籃球隊，就是五個人；如果是足球，就是十一個人，而且一般是由我們的兄弟姐妹、同學或是朋友所組成。

除了這個法會，不可能有這樣三百人的團體，在佛殿的左側、右側輪流拜佛。這是很難得的，而且得具備極大的耐心，才能不起任何煩惱地完成此事。那麼，我們做得怎麼樣呢？答案是有些天比較好，有些天就不那麼好。有時候，站在你後面的人唱得太大聲了，或者他總是把放佛經的架子給撞倒，砸在你的背上；又或者是旁邊的人總是起來得太慢，大家都站起來了，可是他還趴在拜墊上，是不是睡著了？你不知道是不是該拍他一下，還是就隨他去？這就足以讓你起煩惱了。總之，就是有許多諸如此類的小問題。

更糟的是，拜下去的時候，腦子裏塞滿各種妄念。當我拜佛的時候，腦子裏會出現一些難堪的回憶，有時候是些噁心或是曾經做過壞事；也會想起以前不應該說的話或者做的事，像是發飆、甩門、負氣而走等等，也想起許多尚未做到的承諾。這是拜佛的時候，內心所經歷的體驗；這時候，的確需要真實的忍力才能繼續拜下去。

我曾反覆經歷這種過程，如同大敞記憶之門，

be sublime, but what am I thinking about? I'm recalling the time I scolded my mother and called her a bad name. How could I have done that? What was I thinking? I'm supposed to be bowing to the Buddha! And then I bow down, and I think, "I'm just such a loser. I'm just such a failure. I'm no good at bowing, just like I am at everything else. No good at all!"

All these thoughts nibble at us inside. That's called affliction; and it's called: "Welcome to the land of living beings!" But I'll share an insight that makes this process more bearable. These thoughts are nothing less than our future Buddhahood rising from within. All those nibbling thoughts, memories, and troubles are our potential awakening, once we turn them around. The challenge is do we recognize them or not?

Sometimes the more sincerely we bow, the more these states rise up. They come from the body, from our mind and also from our memories. If we can be patient and recognize these states as they rise up, and neither cling to them nor be afraid of them, then we can apply the Tathagata's medicines and heal ourselves. If instead of getting upset when states arise, if instead we can say, "I need the Tathagata's medicine to heal these afflictions," then one by one we have the potential to straighten these afflictions out with patience and with the Buddhadharma. That is where Buddhahood awaits. There's no other Buddhahood beyond crossing over of our inner and outer states. So we've got to recognize these afflictions and not be attached to or be afraid of them.

The Venerable Master said,

"Don't be afraid that bad thoughts rise up.

Only fear that you will recognize them too late."

In other words, having negative thoughts arise to mind is not such a big problem as long as we recognize them and respond appropriately with the right Dharma-medicine.

So if I have an evil and nasty thought, but I can catch it and say, "That's merely another afflicted thought. It's nothing special. If I cure it and let the Tathagata's herbs work, then I have done my job. I can be well."

What is ultimate health? It is Buddhahood. So our teacher said to us, "I am just like all of you, I'm no different from you at all. You want to know what's different about me? One thing only: I have no more afflictions." Could he be describing the state of the Buddha nature with no knots in it? What is the state of our Buddha nature with all the knots untied? I don't know, but I would guess that it's Bodhi. So here we are bowing, and untying the knots of afflictions, pulling out poisoned arrows one-by-one. When they're all gone, we are healed, and back in one piece, thanks to the Buddhadharma and to the practice of bowing.

☸ To be continued

供人觀看；這真的很難受。為什麼呢？因為現在我是在拜佛呀，還有什麼比這更好的呢？禮佛洪名應該是非常莊嚴的，但是我到底在想些什麼呀？我在想曾經對媽媽吼叫，對她說不好的話。我怎麼能做那樣的事呢？我到底在想些什麼呀？我應該是在拜佛呀！於是我又拜下去，同時又開始想：「我是個失敗的人，是個沒有用的人，連拜佛都拜不好，就跟我做的每件事情一樣，簡直一無是處！」

這些想法，一點一滴侵蝕著我們的內心，這就叫做「煩惱」，也叫做「歡迎來到眾生的世界」！但是我想和各位分享一個體悟，或許能讓這個過程好受一點。我們將來成就的佛道，正是由這些妄想昇華而成。侵蝕我們的妄想、記憶和所有的麻煩，都是可能開悟的契機，只要能夠轉化它們。問題是，我們是否覺察到？

有時我們拜得越誠心，境界越是現前。這些境界有來自身體的、心裡的，也有來自我們的記憶。如果能保持忍耐心，境界現前時能夠覺察，既不貪著也不害怕，這樣就能用「如來藥」進行自我療癒。如果境界現前時，不起煩惱，取而代之的是：我需要如來藥來對治這些煩惱。這樣就能用忍耐心和佛法，將煩惱一一地解開，那就是開悟成佛的機會。成佛，不外乎超越內在、外在的境界，所以要認識煩惱，既不執著也不害怕。

上人說：「不怕念起，只怕覺遲。」換言之，當不好的念頭升起時，並非大問題；只要能覺察，並善巧地運用法藥來對治。假設起了一個邪惡不淨的妄念，但是抓住了它，並且知道：「不過又是一個煩惱妄念罷了，沒有什麼特別的；如果用如來藥來對治，我就已經做了該做的事，我就會好起來的。」

什麼是究竟的健康？就是成佛。所以上人告訴我們：「我和你們都一樣，沒有什麼不同。想知道我哪裡不一樣嗎？只有一件事，就是我不再有煩惱了。」上人指的是佛性裡不再有打結的情形呢？若佛性裡的結都解開了，又是什麼樣的境界？我不知道，但是我猜想那就是菩提。我們在這裡拜佛，就是要解開這些煩惱的結，把毒箭一一拔出。當煩惱都消失了，我們就被療癒了，恢復清淨。感恩佛法，也感恩拜佛。

☸ 待續