



BODHI FIELD | 菩提田

這幾個月來，道場晚間聽經都在聽《大方廣佛華嚴經》。所謂「成佛的法華，開慧的楞嚴，教化眾生的華嚴」，我個人對《華嚴經》特別地喜歡，所以十分珍惜這個聽經的機會。當一面聽上人講解，一面閱讀經文，心中有種非常深的感觸。〈世主妙嚴品〉闡述世間跟出世間的主——也就是佛——的功德莊嚴，這些功德莊嚴只能用「不可思議」來形容，而我心裡也有難可名狀的感動。

記得剛學佛的時候，聽說佛陀在世，那些心求出家的人只消佛陀說一句：「鬚髮自落，袈裟披身。」馬上就現了比丘相，然後佛再開示一句話，馬上就能証果。每每讀到這些文字，心裡好生羨慕，老覺得他們怎麼那麼幸運值佛出世，而我就只有乾羨慕的份兒？可是這次聽〈世主妙嚴

For the past few months, we have been continuously listening to the commentary of the *Great Means Expansive Buddha Flower Adornment Sutra* during our evening sutra lecture. As it is said, “The *Lotus Flower Sutra* leads you to Buddhahood, the *Shurangama Sutra* opens your wisdom, and the *Avatamsaka Sutra* teaches all living beings.” I personally like the *Avatamsaka Sutra* a lot; therefore, I really cherish this opportunity of listening to the commentary of this sutra. When I was reading the sutra texts while listening to the Venerable Master’s commentary and explanations, I had an unusually deep understanding. The *Chapter of the Wondrous Adornments of World Rulers* illustrates the meritorious virtue and adornments of the rulers of both the mundane and transcendental, namely the Buddhas. These meritorious virtues and adornments are so great that we can only describe them with the word “inconceivable,” and in my heart, I am extremely moved when reading such descriptions.

# 工欲善其事，必先利其「心」

## “Sharpen” One’s Mind To Do The Work Well

∴ 比丘尼近育講於2013年3月3日臺北法界佛教印經會

∴ By Bhiksuni Jin Yu, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013 At Dharma Realm Buddhist Books Distribution Society, Taipei

品〉的時候，我不禁反問自己：「我準備好了沒有？」如果真的上人、聖人在世，我準備好接法了嗎？

記得一九九零年，上人回臺灣弘法，我的同事跟我說了這個消息。當時臺灣的法師我幾幾乎都不認識，但既然要學佛，就要找一個皈依師。我的同事跟我推薦說，上人是旅美高僧，機會難得，應該去皈依這個師父。因為相信同事的關係，所以就同行去拜師。一路上，他跟我介紹上人，說上人有多麼孝順、多麼有道德等等，可是我什麼都沒聽進去，只牢牢地記住一句話：「他有他心通。」

不久抵達皈依的現場，真可謂「人山人海」。二話不說地，我就把自己安頓在最邊邊的角落。等打完皈依，

As I remember, when I just started learning the Buddha Dharma, I heard a story about the Buddha when he was still alive in the world. At that time, people who wished to leave home only had to hear the Buddha say, “Let hair and beard fall. Be donned by the sash” and they would immediately show the appearance of a bhikshu. Then, after the Buddha spoke one more sentence of Dharma to them, they could immediately attain the fruitions of sagehood. Every time I come across these texts, I would wonder how they could be so fortunate to be born at the time of Buddha, when I could only watch and admire? But when I listened to the *Chapter of The Wondrous Adornments of World Rulers* this time, I asked myself another question: “Am I ready?” If the Venerable Master or some sage were indeed alive in this world, would I be ready to receive the Dharma?

I remember back in 1990 when the Venerable Master came to Taiwan to propagate the Buddha Dharma and my colleague told me about it. At that time I barely knew any Dharma Masters in Taiwan, but since I wanted to study the Buddhadharma, I needed to find a Refuge Master. My colleague recommended the Venerable Master to me, saying that he is an eminent monk traveling in the US, and that this was a very rare opportunity for me to take refuge with this master. Since I trusted my colleague, I went with him to visit the Master. He told me many details about the Venerable Master along the way, including how filial and noble he was. But none of these words went into my mind, except the one statement, “He has the spiritual

上人開示完畢後繞場一圈，當他走到我前面時，我心驚膽跳的程度至今依然記得。當時心想：「哎呦，我做過這麼多壞事情，這個人有他心通，豈不是什麼他都悉知悉見嗎？」所以回到我剛剛的提問：如果上人、聖人在世的話，我們準備好接法了嗎？

我常問學生：為什麼孔夫子周遊列國的時候，列國的君主沒有一個人肯用他？其實大家都心知肚明，以夫子的學問道德，肯定可以幫忙把國家治理得很好。夫子的能力，早在魯君任用他做司空、司寇時，就展現無遺了。掌政三個月，魯國大治，路不拾遺，夜不閉戶，魯國一片新興之相。結果卻引起旁邊齊國的大驚，馬上送來八十女樂給魯君，魯君從此不再上朝。不僅君臣沉迷女樂，就連門下的一些弟子也禁不住誘惑，遭來夫子一番嚴詞自不在話下。試想，隨侍聖人左右，若非有強烈向道之心如顏淵之流，恐怕少有不狼狽而逃的。

如此說來，就不難理解為什麼沒有君主用他了？要不以夫子座下七十二賢不說，光四科十哲，個個可謂一時之選，如政事科的子路會帶兵打仗，言語科的子貢舌燦蓮花，日後身佩六國相印；弟子尚且如此出類拔萃，就甭說教導他們的老師了，但是各國國君卻寧可縱情五欲，而犧牲稱霸群雄的機會。由此可知，聖之所以為聖，凡夫之所以為凡的原因了。

我們累劫以來的習氣毛病，在聖人的身邊很容易就被悉知悉見，難怪常在上人的錄音帶裡，聽到他老人家毫不保留地訓斥弟子。這時候弟子只有兩個選擇：一是逃之夭夭，文過飾非；一是刻苦自勵，改過自新。因此，留在業盡情空的聖人身旁，不是一件容易的事。或許早在釋迦牟尼佛住世的時候，我們就在華嚴法會上做了結緣眾；只是時至今日，我們還繼續在結緣，沒有成為當機眾、影響眾。所以再回來問問自己，我們的身心準備好了嗎？如果沒有，應該怎麼準備呢？

power of knowing others' minds.”

Shortly afterwards, we arrived at the scene of taking refuge. There were so many people. Without a word I settled down at a corner right at the side. After the Refuge Taking ceremony, the Venerable Master spoke Dharma and then walked around the site. When he came to me, my heart was beating so fast that I can still clearly recall it today. I was thinking, “Oh my goodness, I have done so many bad things. This person has the spiritual power of knowing others' mind. Doesn't that mean he can see and know everything I've done?” This brings me back to my previous question about whether we would be ready to receive the Dharma if the Venerable Master or some sage were still alive in this world.

I often ask my students, why was no duke willing to appoint Confucius as an official when he was traveling through the kingdoms? Actually, everyone knew that he was completely qualified to govern the country well with all his excellent knowledge and morality. His capability was well demonstrated as early as when he was appointed by the Duke of Lu with the title “Si Kong” and “Si Kou,” (high official positions in ancient China in charge of construction affairs including water conservancy and traffic, and administration of justice, respectively). He was in the positions for three months, during which time Lu was governed amazingly: people did not take others' lost items as their own, and there was no need to close the doors at night. The entire country of Lu was full of life and displayed a bright future. However, this frightened the neighboring country of Qi. Qi immediately sent eighty beautiful singers and dancers to the Duke of Lu, who successfully tempted him away from governing his own country. Not only did the duke his ministers indulged in these singers and dancers, but some of Confucius' disciples also failed in resisting temptation. Of course, these disciples were harshly criticized by Confucius. Just imagine this: had there not been people holding strong and firm minds towards the Great Way, like Yan Yuan, few of the followers would stay by the side of the sage rather than fleeing.

Therefore, it is not difficult to understand why there was no ruler willing to appoint Confucius as an official, not to mention the seventy-two worthies among Confucius' students. Each of Confucius' ten great disciples had extraordinary talent and held the four categories: virtue and practice, eloquence, politics, and literature. For example, under politics, was Zi Lu who was an expert in military strategy, and under eloquence was Zi Gong who spoke with great persuasiveness; he was later appointed as the prime minister by six countries. All these ten disciples were already so distinguished, not to mention how distinguished their teacher Confucius was. Nevertheless, the rulers of those countries still preferred to pursue their own personal desires, giving up their chance to become a leader among the rulers. From this we can see the reason why a sage is a sage, and why an ordinary person is just ordinary.

Our bad habits accumulated from numerous eons are easily seen by the sages when we are by their side. No wonder that we often hear the Venerable Master scolding his disciples without holding back in the audio tapes. At that

祖師大德以及聖賢所教導的，第一步就是去「我執」。中國文化裡最重要的儒家、道家以及佛教，是不是也教導同樣的內涵？憨山大師說，儒家是「經世」。那麼孔子有沒有教我們去我執呢？有。「子曰：四絕」，意思是有四個東西我們不可以要。哪四絕呢？「毋意、毋必、毋固、毋我。」在這四個裡面，夫子非常清楚地告訴我們，我執去掉了以後，才能夠明明德，能親民，能止於至善。而它的體，就是正心誠意，把我們的心正了、意誠了以後，它的用就是修身、齊家、治國、平天下。

以范仲淹為例，大家熟知他一生奉行「先天下之憂而憂，後天下之樂而樂」的哲理。范仲淹早年喪父，母親無法獨立撫養他，所以就帶著他改嫁。有一次，與同母異父的兄弟在一塊兒玩，玩玩就吵了架。弟弟氣乎乎地說：「你滾出我們鄭家去，你不是我們鄭家人。」那晚他問媽媽，知道自己姓范之後，就請求離開。

宋朝是一個重文輕武的朝代，他知道透過科舉能有出頭的機會，所以立志苦讀。但因為窮，為填肚皮他把米飯煮成粥，再拿到屋外去凍成塊，然後把粥分成四塊，早上吃一塊，中午吃一塊，晚上吃兩塊。天黑之後，就就著廟裡的佛燈來用功。後來考上進士，分發做官，拿到第一份薪水後，就請族弟把它散發給家族之中窮苦的人，好讓他們得以衣食無缺。後來更成立了義田制度。

日後官拜宰相，雖然名望日崇，為人卻日益謙和。有一天他想置產，於是請來風水師來堪察；一看之下，是一塊狀元地。范仲淹知道後，二話不說就把這塊地捐出去做學堂，因為做學堂讓更多的人出狀元不更好嗎？也因為他的無私，後來范家子孫好多人都位居宋朝要津。

由此可知：一個人的心有多大，舞臺就有多寬。有些人會說：「我不要舞

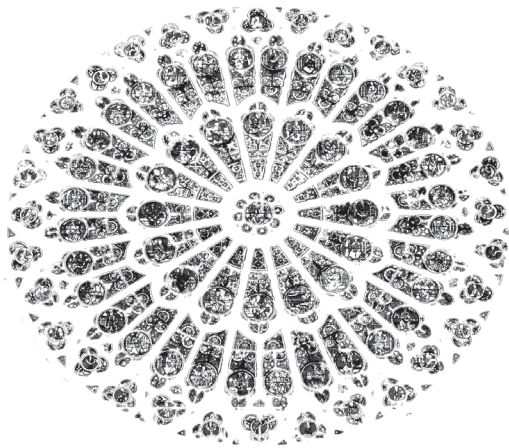
point the disciple has only two choices: one is to flee, and gloss over their faults; the other is to urge oneself to correct the errors and make a fresh start through hard work. Therefore, it is not an easy task to stay by the side of a sage who has no karma or attachments left. Perhaps as early as when Shakyamuni Buddha was abiding in the world, we had already become part of the Dharma affinity tying-assembly at the Avatamsaka Dharma Assembly. Yet today we still continue to tie Dharma affinities without becoming a part of interlocutory assembly or the influential assembly. So let's ask ourselves: Are we ready in both body and mind? If not, how should we prepare ourselves?

The first step, taught by the patriarchs and the virtuous sages, is to eliminate "self-attachment." Do Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, which are most important to Chinese culture, teach and guide with the same intention? Master Han Shan said Confucianism emphasizes "governing the world." So does Confucius teach us to eliminate self-attachment? Yes. Confucius spoke of "The Four Withouts". This means there are four things that we should get rid of. What are the four withouts? "No assumptions, no assertions, no stubbornness, and no self-interests." Within these four, Confucius clearly told us that only after eliminating self-attachment can we clearly understand virtue, be close to the people, and end with ultimate goodness. And the main point is to rectify our minds and establish sincerity. After we rectify our minds and become sincere, we can then cultivate ourselves, manage the family well, govern the country, and pacify the world.

Let's take Fan Zhongyan as an example. We all know that he pursued and upheld the principle of "be concerned before the world becomes concerned, be happy after the world becomes happy" throughout his entire life. He lost his father at an early age, and his mother could not afford to raise him alone. So she remarried and took him along. One day he was playing with his younger half-brother when they started to argue. His brother said with anger, "Get out of our Zheng family! You are not a member of our Zheng family!" That night, he asked his mother and got to know that his actual family name was Fan. He made a request to leave.

The Song Dynasty was a dynasty that valued scholars over warriors. He knew that the imperial examination was an opportunity to distinguish himself, so he resolved to study hard. However, he was poor at that time. To handle the hunger, he boiled rice into porridge and took it outdoors to freeze it into a solid chunk. Then he divided the frozen porridge into four pieces, one for breakfast, one for lunch, and two for dinner. After the sunset, he continued his study by utilizing the lamp in a Buddhist temple. Later he successfully obtained the rank of Jin Shi in the imperial examination and was assigned as an official. When he received his first salary, he asked his brother in his clan to distribute it to the poor and suffering clan members, so that they could have sufficient clothing and food. Later on he further established the system of family farmland, (which was purchased by richer clan members like him for the entire clan to use.)

Years later he became the prime minister. Although his fame kept increasing, his personality became even more modest and gentle. One day he intended to



臺。」舞臺可以不要，但是心量卻要大。范仲淹是儒家經世的實踐者，徹底地體現了儒家無私的精神。由他的故事，我們也明白一個道理，那就是在幫助別人的同時，其實最大的受益者往往是自己。這是儒家教導我們去我執的道理——修心養性之道。

再來看看道家。憨山大師說，道家是「忘世」。那麼道家有沒有也教忘我，去我執呢？道家講「少私寡欲」，教我們要離欲，離欲才能清淨；又教我們要「釋智遺行」，釋智就是放下所謂的「世智辯聰」，放下私智，不是放捨智慧；遺行，就是把我執去掉。老子說：「人之大患為吾有身。」一般人花費很多的心力跟財力，來照顧自己的身體；不僅僅身體，對名利更是趨之若鶩。我常開玩笑，時下父母教導小孩子，無不希望他們五子登科。哪五子？房子、金子、兒子、妻子、車子。但這也說出了「古之教人成聖賢，今之教人能賺錢」的現象。然而，道家教我們要知足，知足就可以常樂。

莊子是把老子哲學思想擴張弘揚的人，他有一個學說叫做「無用之用」。怎麼說呢？有一次，莊子帶著學生到山上去，正巧看到一群伐木工人在砍伐樹木。學生們發現，筆直的樹木被伐，而盤曲的卻因彎曲而安享天年。下山後，他們一行去拜訪莊子的一個朋友。所謂「有朋自遠方來，不亦樂乎」，老朋友自是殺雞宰羊殷勤款待。準備之際，家中的僕人問：「要宰殺那跛腳的鵝？還是正

buy some real estate, and he invited a geomancer (master of Feng Shui) to inspect that piece of land. The geomancer found that this land would produce top scholars. Upon hearing this, Fan Zhongyan donated the land to build a school without a second thought, because he believed that utilizing this land as a school to bring up more top scholars is much better than holding the land under his own property. Due to his selflessness, many descendants of the Fan clan became important officials in the Song Dynasty.

From this we can see that the broadness of one's mind determines the broadness of your stage. Someone may say, "I don't need a stage." Well, you don't need to have a stage, but your mind has to be broad. Fan Zhongyan was someone who practiced Confucianism's emphasis of "governing the world." He fully demonstrated the spirit of selflessness of Confucianism. From his story, we also see another point: when you help others, you help yourself. This is how Confucianism teaches the way of cultivating your mind and nature, by teaching us to get rid of self-attachment.

Let's take a look at Taoism next. Master Han Shan said that Taoism emphasizes, "Forgetting the world." So does Taoism also teach us to forget ourselves and eliminate self-attachment? Taoism says "Minimize selfishness and reduce desires"; it teaches us to leave desires, and only by leaving desires can we be pure. Only by being away from desires can we maintain a pure and peaceful mind. It also teaches us to "Put down knowledge and leave action behind." "Putting down knowledge" here means letting go of the so-called "worldly knowledge and clever arguments (that cause arrogance and obstruct understanding of world-transcending principles)." It means to put down selfish knowledge, not wisdom. "Leaving action behind" means getting rid of self-attachment. Lao Zi said, "Mankind's great misfortune is that they have a (physical) body." Ordinary people spend a huge amount of energy and wealth taking care of their bodies. And they pursue fame and wealth with even greater enthusiasm. I often joke that nowadays when parents teach their kids, they all hope that they will have great achievements in the five aspects of "Zi". Which five? They are house (fang zi), gold (jin zi), son/child (er zi), spouse (qi zi), and car (che zi). But this indeed describes the phenomenon that "In ancient times people were taught to become sages and worthies, while in modern times people are taught to make money." Taoism, however, teaches us to be content, which leads to happiness.

Zhuang Zi is the one who developed and expanded Lao Zi's philosophy. He has a theory called "Usefulness of the useless." How can we understand this? One day, Zhuang Zi took his disciples to a mountain where there were several lumberjacks cutting trees. The disciples discovered that those trees with a nice straight shape were cut, while the ones with a curved shape were left undamaged. Once they descended the mountain, they paid a visit to one of Zhuang Zi's friends. As it is said, "When you have friends coming from afar, isn't it enjoyable?" This old friend treated them well with his poultry and livestock. As the meal was being prepared, the servant asked, "Should we kill that lame goose, or a normal one?" The host said, "The lame one."

常的？」主人答：「跛腳的。」

從朋友家離開後，弟子們狐疑地問老師，山上的樹木因為彎彎曲曲不健全，而可以存活下來，可是鵝卻因為殘疾而死，到底處世之道為何？是應該極力地表現自己，還是應該要明哲保身？於是，莊子教弟子要養成智慧，善巧活動於現實生活中。他認為，並沒有一個放諸四海皆準的法則，我們要依智慧自處，而智慧是從無私無我中來。這道理就讓我聯想到《華嚴經》的一句偈：

一切佛法依慈悲，慈悲復依方便立；  
方便依智智依慧，無礙慧身無所依。

老莊哲學，傳達柔弱、安靜，謙和的道理。所謂「柔弱生之徒」，最柔軟的東西，往往可以存活下來；所謂「上善若水」，水往低處流，處眾人之下，因為不爭，所以往往能夠有所成就。《道德經》開宗明義便說：「道可道，非常道；名可名，非常名。」在在告訴我們不要為了名，去做很多的努力；要無所為而為，做什麼事情不要心存目的。一句話說穿了，就是無私，去我執。

再來說說佛家的道理。《譬喻經》裡有個故事，有兄弟兩人上山採金，運氣很好，兩人都找到了黃金。下山的時候，哥哥心想：「這黃金運回去還要跟弟弟分，乾脆一不做二不休，把他推到山谷裡去，那黃金就我一人獨享了。」說也奇怪，兄弟倆還真心有靈犀，他這樣子想，弟弟也這樣子想：乾脆趁著四下無人把哥哥給害了，神不知、鬼不覺地黃金就全歸自己一人了。

走了一段路，還好兩人都沒下手。等過河涉水的時候，哥哥就想：「哎，我真的好糟糕、好齷齪，竟然為了黃金想把親弟弟給害死。這個錢真是糟糕的東西，讓我連兄弟之情都不顧，這個東西實在是邪惡！放水流，放水流。」還真心電感應，他這樣子想，弟弟也這樣子想：「天啊，

After they left the friend's home, the disciples asked their teacher with doubts, "The trees on the mountain survived due to their crookedness and defects, but the goose died due to its deformity. Which is the way of the world? Should we try our best to express ourselves, or should we wisely play it safe?" Zhuang Zi therefore instructed his disciples to develop wisdom and skillfully handle worldly life. He believed that there is no single rule that can be applied everywhere. We need to lead a life with wisdom, and wisdom comes from selflessness. This reminds me of one verse in *the Avatamsaka Sutra*:

*All Buddha Dharmas rely on kindness and compassion,  
Kindness and compassion again rely on expedient means;  
Expedient means relies on knowledge, knowledge relies on wisdom,  
And the unimpeded wisdom body relies on nothing.*

The philosophy of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi conveys the principles of softness, quietude, and modesty. As it is said, "softness follows life"; the softest things are often the ones that survive. Also, "The utmost good is like water"; water flows towards the lower place, staying below the masses, because it does not fight, which often leads to accomplishments. The opening of the *Dao De Jing* says, "The Way that can be told of is not an unvarying Way; the names that can be named are not unvarying names." It tells us not to spend a lot of efforts simply for fame; we should take purposelessness as our purpose, not fixating on the goals of the things we do. In short, we need to be selfless, and eliminate self-attachment.

Now we come to Buddhism. Here is a story from *The Parables Sutra*. Two brothers went to a mountain to find gold, and luckily they both found some gold. When they were going down the mountain, the elder brother thought, "When we are back home I will need to divide the gold with my younger brother. Why don't I just go all the way and push him off into the valley, so that I can enjoy the gold all by myself?" Strangely enough, there seemed to be a mental connection between the two brothers. His younger brother was thinking the same way, "Why don't I simply murder my elder brother at a place where nobody is around? All the gold would then belong to me without anyone else knowing it!"

Fortunately, neither one acted as they continued down the road. As they were crossing a river, the elder brother thought, "How terrible and disgusting am I, to suddenly think of killing my own brother for the sake of gold! This wealth is truly a terrible thing that causes brotherly bonds to be betrayed. It is truly an evil thing! Let it flow away with the water." The mental connection came about again; as he was thinking this, his younger brother also thought, "My goodness, this wealth truly isn't a good thing! I unexpectedly gave rise to such evil thoughts as harming my brother. Let it flow away with the water." As a result, the two brothers both threw all the gold they had found into the river.

錢真不是好東西，我竟然起了歹念要把哥哥給害了！放水流，放水流。」結果，兄弟倆真的就把採到的黃金都放水流了。

講到這裡，有人一定心想：「哎呦，好可惜喲，那個錢留著多好，還可以幫人。他們兩個好笨，怎麼把錢放水流？留起來多好，自己留一點用，其他來幫助別人。」是不是？這就是我們心不清淨。

佛家教導我們反向操作，以出離五欲。憨山大師說儒家教「經世」的道理，道家教「忘世」，佛家則教「絕世」。記得最初讀唐朝的龐公為一心修道，把家裡的金銀財寶全部都倒到海裡頭去，當時我真是不能理解，何不像范仲淹這樣子，拿來救全世界的窮苦呢？幹嘛要這麼想不開？後來我體會到：當生活一無所有的時候，靈性就能得以提升。這也就是龐公龐婆一家人可以成就道業，而我們還仍是凡夫，繼續不斷生死輪迴的原因了。

由此可知，儒家思想、道家思想，跟佛教的思想，三者體性都是一樣的，只是有用有深淺、大小的程度不同罷了。佛家的「體包太虛，量周沙界」，也是強調同樣的觀念：心有多大，舞臺就有多寬。如果能把心量放到最大，就能跟他人同體，跟萬物同體，就能夠真正做到儒家所說的「人饑己饑，人溺己溺」，就能夠救度眾生，隨類化身，就能夠以眾生為菩提水而成正覺。當跟眾生同一悲仰的時候，就體現了佛教的真正精神。因此，修道的第一個基本功，就是要「去我執」。

第二個基本功，就是「觀照」的功夫，我們要常常回去看看自己的心。廿一世紀，是一個復古的世紀。怎麼說呢？報章雜誌大量介紹養生觀念，什麼東西最養生就吃什麼。但是我個人就有一點點感慨，我們不計成本地把身體照顧好，吃要吃有機的、要少鹽少油、要跟三白說不等等，我們花了好多功夫來養生，但是到底有沒有花功夫養心？

聖城裡有很多孔雀，小朋友都知道如果孔雀生蛋，千萬不可以去碰牠的蛋。如果你覺得孔雀媽媽把蛋生在不安全的地方，晚上可

At this point, someone must be thinking, “What a pity! Why didn’t they keep the gold, so that they could use the gold to help others? How stupid they were! Why did they throw the gold into the river? Just keep it, use a bit for themselves, and help others with the rest.” Is that right? This shows the impurity of our minds.

Buddhism teaches us to do things in the reversed way to get away from the Five Desires. Master Han Shan said Confucianism teaches the principle of “Governing the world,” Taoism teaches “Forgetting the world,” and Buddhism teaches “Cutting off from the world.” I still remember when I first read the story about the Noble Pang in the Tang Dynasty pouring all his treasures into the sea to pursue the great way single-mindedly, I really could not understand the point of the story. Why didn’t he practice like Fan Zhongyan and use the treasures to rescue the poor and suffering people all over the world? Why did he come up with this crazy idea? Later on I realized that when you don’t have a single thing, your spiritual nature can get boosted. This is also why the Noble Pang and his family were able to accomplish the path, while we are still ordinary people staying on in the cycle of birth and death.

From this we can see the essential natures of the three philosophies, Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, are the same. They only differ in depth and vastness. The concept of “the mind that embodies the universe, with a capacity pervading realms as many as grains of sand” is also emphasized in Buddhism: the broadness of one’s mind determines the broadness of your stage. If you can maximize the volume of your mind, your substance will be one with others, or even with the myriad things, and you will truly realize the Confucianism philosophy of “If others are hungry, it is like I am hungry; If others are drowning, it is like I am drowning.” In this way you can rescue and transform living beings, create transformation bodies accordingly, and obtain enlightenment by treating all living beings as the water of Bodhi. When you one feels the living beings’ pain and their seeking for help (from the Buddhas), you demonstrate the true spirit of Buddhism. Therefore, the first basic skill in cultivating is to eliminate self-attachment.

The second basic skill is the skill of contemplation. We should often look at our own minds. The 21st century is a century of restoring the ancient ways. How can we understand this? In newspapers and magazines there are a lot of articles introducing ways to stay healthy. They recommend whatever food is best for health to readers. However, I personally have some reservations about this. We take care of our body at all costs: eating organic food, limiting salt and oil, and saying no to the Three Whites (plain rice, fine flour, and white bread). We put so much effort into staying healthy, but do we ever make an effort to cultivate our minds?

There are many peacocks in the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. The kids also know that you should never touch peacock eggs. If you think that the peacock eggs are located at an unsafe position and may be eaten by foxes during night time, you may think about moving the eggs to a safer place.

能會被狐狸給吃了，而把蛋移到你覺得安全的地方，這麼一來孔雀就再也不去孵蛋了。因為有人的味道，牠就再也不會認那顆蛋了。於是，不知情的小朋友會去求牠：「這是你的寶寶，趕快去蹲在那裏。」可是牠怎麼也不理會。另一個場景是，下雨天時，小朋友蹲在路上救蚯蚓，因為下雨天，蚯蚓爬得到處都是，小朋友擔心車子來了或是不小心，就把牠們給壓死；或者等一下太陽出來的時候，牠們會被曬死了，所以就一路把蚯蚓撿到草地上去。

我常常覺得，我們學佛的人對動物最是慈悲，不敢拍蚊子，不敢殺螞蟻蟑螂。可是，對人有沒有同樣的慈悲？對家人有沒有慈眉善目？講話是不是就像對待小動物一樣，柔聲細語，慈心下氣？

還有，我們有沒有對自己慈悲？常常莫名其妙地生氣或是貪心，沒有讓自己的心平靜，這就是對自己不好。我們應該要對自己好一點，對自己好一點就是要養心，修心養性。常聽人說，女人永遠缺一件衣服，媽媽永遠少一個冰箱。我們放任自己的心一直向外追求，在外面的物質世界裡，花了好多的心思。我們對自己不夠好，更不用說對自己的家人、同事、上司發脾氣、生悶氣。這都是對自己不夠好。

春秋戰國是中國學術思想的黃金時期，出現所謂的「九流十家」，在詭譎多變、禮樂崩壞的大時代裡，這些哲學家試圖解決人們的痛苦。同樣地，如果把佛教當成一種宗教和哲學，當起煩惱時，就要運用所學的法門來對治，讓我們的心回家。我們如果在外面受氣、受委屈了，家是我們的避風港，回到家再怎麼不愉快的事，很快也就能煙消雲散。可是當心有了不平的時候，我們記不記得讓它回到自性，回到這個真心的家呢？這就成了我們修行的課題。

所以修行絕不是口號，而是真槍實彈地面對自己的習氣。我常聽人家講，我一天念五萬聲佛，拜108拜，念淨土五經如何如何…。可是，如果一樣地貪瞋癡，一樣的煩煩惱惱，那有什麼用？即便一天念了五部《地藏經》，

However, if you do that, the peacocks will never go back to hatch the eggs; they will no longer recognize them once the eggs have a human's scent. As a result, some kids who do not know this fact would go and beg the peacock, saying, "This is your little baby. Please go and hatch the egg right now." But the peacock will just ignore you. Another scenario is the kids rescuing earthworms during a rainy day. When it is raining, the earthworms are everywhere. The kids are concerned that these worms might be crushed by cars or people who are not careful enough. Or they may be dried to death by the sun when the rain stops. So the kids take the earthworms back to the lawn along the road.

I often think that Buddhists like us are kind and compassionate towards animals. We do not kill mosquitoes, ants or cockroaches. However, do we have the same kindness and compassion towards other people? Are we kind to our family members? Do we speak to them with the same soft and kind tones that we use when talking to small animals?

Also, are we kind and compassionate to ourselves? If we often get angry or greedy for no reason, thereby disturbing the peace of our minds, we are not treating ourselves well. We should treat ourselves better; this means we need to cultivate our minds and nature. I often hear people say that a woman is always lacking one more piece of clothing, and a mother is always lacking an extra refrigerator. We are always indulging our minds and spend too much effort and energy pursuing external materials. We do not treat ourselves well enough by doing so, not to mention losing our temper and being annoyed with our families, colleagues, and supervisors. These are all behaviors of not treating ourselves nicely.

The Spring and Autumn (770-476 BC) and Warring States (475-221 BC) periods were the golden years of Chinese philosophical thought, with the emergence of the so-called "Nine Schools and Ten Classes." In a time of tumultuous changes full of treachery and cunning where propriety and manners were collapsing, these philosophers tried to eliminate the suffering of the people. Similarly, if we consider Buddhism as a religion and philosophy, when afflictions arise, we should treat them accordingly with the Dharma doors we have learnt, and bring our minds home. If we get upset and annoyed with external things, we can come back to our home as our harbor of refuge. At home, whatever is making us upset will disappear in a flash. However, when our minds encounter some disturbance, do we still remember to take the mind back to its self-nature, the home of the true mind? This becomes the topic of our cultivation.

Therefore cultivation is never just a slogan. It is to truly face our own habits. I often hear people say something like "Every day I chant the Buddha's name 50,000 times," "I bow to the Buddha 108 times," or "I recite the Five Sutras of the Pure Land School," etc. However, if your greed, anger and ignorance remain the same, and if you still have the same afflictions, what use is your practice? Even if you chant *the Earth Store Sutra* five times a day, if your mind is still filled with resentment, loneliness



可是內心還是怨恨不已，覺得孤獨、想哭，一個人沒辦法活下去，那就是沒有把所學的佛法拿來用。

佛說的八萬四千法門是讓我們拿來用的，好讓我們得以解脫，進而邁向菩提道，所以要隨時提在心上。我不是說打坐沒有用，念經沒有用，這些肯定有用的，時時勤拂拭，一定可以幫助我們向道近一點。但是如果碰到境界就失念，隨著境界轉了，這樣子的念經拜佛，充其量只是積集人天資糧罷了。

另外一個學佛人關注的問題，就是「業障」。什麼才可以叫做「業障消了」？就是自己的情緒平復了。並不是有一個外來的業障，事實上一切都是自己找的，所謂「萬法唯心」。因此，不要把修行定位在積聚人天資糧而已，應該要提升到解脫道、菩提道上。

大家回想一下，上次跟自己「冤親債主」吵架的爭執點，是不是覺得很可笑？就為了擠牙膏，一個從中間擠，一個從後面擠，也可以吵架；麪包袋，一個是好好地打開，一個是從中間撕開，這樣也可以冷戰。是不是都是雞毛蒜皮？跟我們生死大事有關嗎？沒有。我們往往對自己很不好，我們知道養生，可是卻沒有好好養心，沒有在內心投入好的元素。

荷澤神會大師有一句話說得很好：「知之一字，眾妙之門。」經常保持覺知，把心帶回到自性上，如此不斷地熏息就能有智慧。千萬不要隨著習氣走，讓知之一字，變成眾禍之門；那個不是覺知，那是識心在控制我們，那不是真的智慧。修道人經常要把心看好，讓我們的自性像明鏡似地去觀照東西，這樣智慧就會出來，生活就會光明。

上人也常跟我們講，學佛就是要明

and the urge to cry, or if you don't feel you can live on by yourself, you are not utilizing the Buddha Dharma you have learned.

The Eighty-Four Thousand Dharma Doors spoken by the Buddha are for us to make use of them. With them, we can obtain liberation and move forward towards the Bodhi Way. So we need to keep this in mind at all times. I am not saying meditation and sutra recitation are not useful; they are definitely useful. As long as we keep practicing, they definitely help us move towards the great way incrementally. However, if we lose our mindfulness upon encountering a certain state, and get led around by that state, this way of reciting sutras and bowing to the Buddha is at most accumulating merit for the human or heaven realms.

Another matter that Buddhists are concerned with is “karmic hindrance.” When can we say that “the karmic hindrance is eliminated”? It is when our mind is calmed down. There is no karmic hindrance coming from outside; actually everything originates from ourselves. Thus it is said that “the myriad dharmas are from the mind”. Therefore, let's not orientate our cultivation towards simply accumulating merit for human and heavenly births. We should raise our cultivation towards the paths of liberation and Bodhi.

Let's recall the topics that we argued with our “creditors” last time; aren't they really ridiculous? For example, we can argue about how to squeeze the toothpaste out; one wants to squeeze from the center and the other wants to squeeze from the end. We can also get into a Cold War by arguing about how to open a bakery bag; one wants to open it elegantly while the other wants to rip it open. Aren't these things really minor? Do they have anything to do with the great matter of birth and death? No. We often treat ourselves badly. We know about keeping our bodies healthy, but we are not keeping our minds healthy; we are not feeding our minds with good elements.

Master Shen Hui of the Heze School taught us, “The single word ‘awareness’ is the door to all wondrous things.” If we constantly keep our awareness, bringing our minds back to the self nature, we can develop wisdom by continuously practicing in that way. We must never follow our habits; this will turn the word “awareness” into the door of all troubles. That is not awareness, but something controlled by the conscious mind. It is not true wisdom. Cultivators should constantly keep an eye on their minds, so that we can use our self nature as a mirror to contemplate everything. By doing this we will have wisdom, as well as a bright life.

The Venerable Master also told us many times, that studying Buddhism is to learn principles. If we understand the principles, we will not be ignorant, and will be free from darkness. Therefore, we should “study Buddhism”, which is to abide where the Buddha dwells, instead of just ‘learning about the Buddha’, which is studying Buddhism as an academic topic. The longer we study Buddhism, the perspective with which we see things should become higher and vaster; we maintain harmony with the people around us, showing them that Buddhists are kind and gentle, distinct from ordinary people. Only in this way will they be willing to study the principles of Buddhism, with the wish of becoming as cheerful and free as you. This is how you help propagate Buddha dharma.

In summary, we need to keep an eye on our minds, treat ourselves better,

白道理，明白道理就不會愚癡，就不會住在黑暗裡。所以我們應該「學佛」——住於佛住，而不是光光「佛學」——把佛教當學問來研究。學佛越久，看事情的角度應該越高越廣，跟周遭的人相處得都很和氣，令人覺得學佛的人慈眉下氣，真的是跟一般人不一樣，這樣他們才願意來研究佛教的道理，希望也跟你一樣地開朗，一樣地自在。這就是幫助弘揚佛法了。

總而言之，要常常把心看好，要對自己好一點，讓心常常注入一些好的元素。這個就需要一些觀照的功夫。所以，不要把修行當作一個口號，當作一個功課。怎麼說？我們每天都有自己的功課。所謂的功課是，當學生的時候，老師出的國語、英語、數學作業；寫完了就可以休息，可以聽聽音樂，可以看看電視。那麼，請問佛教的功課是這樣做嗎？是不是今天的經念完了，可以休息一下，看看戲，玩玩電腦？

如果把修行當作數目性的增加，意思就是，我一天拜一百零八拜的佛，這個月為了要消業障，所以拜兩百個、三百個。然後就可以去跟人家講，我念佛有多少，我拜佛有多少，功課是什麼什麼。這種口號式、數目性地修行，最多是積聚人天資糧罷了，和解脫毫不相關。

相反地，觀照貪瞋癡到底改了多少？當碰到境界的時候，心定不定？這就是修改我們的習氣毛病，就是提升我們看事情的廣度跟高度。當心量不斷擴大，最終能夠體包太虛，能夠用周沙界的時候，觀照的功夫才算完成。

在這個地方很願意跟大家共勉，就是常常把心帶回到自性裡頭來，看好我們的心；當心不小心跑掉，又打了妄想的時候，輕輕地把它拉回來，再回到自性上。每天這樣子不斷不斷地練習，安住在自性上的時間就會越來越長，次數就會越來越多。我們常說「住於佛住」，所以當碰到境界的時候，問問自己：上人如果碰到這個境界，他會怎麼做，他會怎麼說？佛碰到這個境界的時候，他會怎麼做，他會怎麼說？時時保持覺知，住於佛住，那麼我們的修行必能日期有功。 ❀



and feed our minds with good elements. This requires some skill in contemplation. Therefore, we should not treat cultivation as just a slogan or task. How to understand this? We have our own daily practice (“tasks” in Chinese). Here the so-called “task” refers to homework for Chinese, English and Mathematics classes when we were students; and when we have finished our homework, we can take a rest, listen to music or watch TV. But is this how we do our daily practice in Buddhism? When we finish reciting the sutras for the day, can we take a rest, watch some dramas and play around on a computer?

If we treat cultivation as counting quantities—for example, bowing to the Buddhas 108 times a day, or bowing two to three hundred times a month to eradicate karmic hindrances, or telling people many times you recited the Buddha’s name and bowed to the Buddha—this kind of slogan or count is at most accumulating the merit for a human or heavenly birth. It has nothing to do with liberation. On the other hand, if we contemplate our greed, anger and ignorance and see how much they have changed, and observe whether our minds are still when we encounter a difficult state, this is the practice that fixes our bad habits and expands the height and breadth of our vision. Only when our minds become broader and we ultimately realize that “the mind that embodies the universe, with a capacity pervading realms as many as grains of sand” can we say we have mastered the skills of contemplation.

So let’s encourage each other to remember to bring our minds back to our self-nature, and keeping our minds under control. When the mind flees away and creates false thoughts, let’s gently pull it back to the self nature. If we constantly keep practicing like this every day, the periods that we dwell securely in self-nature will become longer and longer, and occur more often. We often say, “abide where the Buddha dwells,” so when we encounter a certain state, we should ask ourselves: “If it were the Venerable Master who encountered this situation, what would he do and what would he say?” “If Buddha encountered this situation, what would he do and what would he say?” If we constantly keep our awareness and abide where the Buddha dwells, we will definitely succeed in our cultivation in the future. ❀