

# 緣

## AFFINITIES

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A Talk given by Bhikshuni Heng Yi at the Buddha Hall of CTTB on March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014



BODHI FIELD | 菩提田

萬佛城是觀音菩薩的道場，來到萬佛城的人，都是和觀音菩薩有緣的，這是師父曾經說過的話。「緣」是個很奇妙的東西，眾生跟眾生的緣，有深也有淺，有好的，也有壞的。懂得修行的人，會非常珍惜和重視與眾生的緣份。與我們有一面之緣的人，可能是百千年前，跟我們擦身而過的一個人。這個緣字裏頭，包含了很多變數跟偶然。

曾經有兩隻螞蟻，在沙漠裏頭慢慢地爬行。有一天，這兩隻螞蟻不期然地相遇了。可是牠們彼此沒有任何的交流，只不過是動一動頭上的觸角，然後各自朝著自己的目標繼續往前走。等到牠們走了一段路以後，兩隻螞蟻心裏頭都覺得很後悔，牠們想：「在這個廣大無垠的沙漠裏頭，我們兩個這麼渺小的螞蟻，竟然可以碰得上面，這是一個多麼不可思議的因緣！可是，我們都沒有好好珍惜這個因緣，就

The City of Ten Thousand Buddhas is the Way-place of Guan Yin Bodhisattva. Whoever can come to CTTB must have an affinity with Guan Yin Bodhisattva; this is what the Venerable Master said. Affinity is an interesting thing. Our affinities with living beings vary from person to person. Some of our affinities are very profound, while others are shallow; some are good, while others are bad. Those who understand how to cultivate will cherish their affinities with other living beings. Someone we meet might have been a person we met hundreds or thousands of years before. A single affinity may contain numerous variables and coincidences.

Once, there were two ants that slowly crawled over a vast desert. One day these two ants came across each other. However, aside from moving their tentacles, the two ants did not have any interactions and continued their respective journeys. After they had walked a while in separate directions, both of the ants suddenly realized the missed opportunity. They thought, "Oh, in such a vast, boundless desert, we tiny ants had an opportunity to see each other. But we failed to greet or hug each. Despite the amazing coincidence that brought us together, we didn't cherish this affinity and we never know that how long we would meet again."

讓這個緣錯過了，以後我們要再見面的話，不曉得是多久以後的事情了。」

講到修行緣份，觀世音菩薩是我們一個很好的榜樣，因為觀世音菩薩和娑婆眾生特別有緣。原因有很多，今天我舉兩個例子。

第一個原因，是觀音菩薩的相貌。觀音菩薩長得清淨莊嚴，沒有一個人看到觀音菩薩不生歡喜，也沒有一個人看到觀音菩薩不能找到安慰。可是反觀我們眾生，我們人跟人見了面，都有不同的反應，為什麼？因為眾生跟眾生之間的緣不一定都是好的，不一定都是清淨的。尤其兩個有怨懟的人一見面，他們的臉色看起來都不是那麼好看。但是觀音菩薩跟眾生的緣是很清淨的，所以眾生見到觀音菩薩就很歡喜。也因為這樣子，觀音菩薩才度得到眾生。

第二個原因，就是觀音菩薩的願。觀音菩薩發願循聲救苦，有求必應。觀音菩薩一聽到我們叫他，他就幫助我們，令我們所求如意。如果我們哪一個能做到這一點，我們和眾生的緣沒有不好的理由。問題是，一般人都有遠近親疏的分別——與我們親近的，我們所喜歡的，我們就幫助他們；與我們遠的，我們不喜歡的，我們就不怎麼願意去幫助他們。因為我們對待眾生的態度是有選擇性的，所以也無法成就觀音菩薩循聲救苦的神力。

釋迦牟尼佛以前帶著一班弟子到某個國家去化緣。到了這個國家以後，全國的人都不願意供養釋迦牟尼佛，也不願意供養佛的弟子。後來目連尊者加入乞食的行列，全國上下，包括國王、大臣、老百姓，每一個人都爭先恐後地要來供養目連尊者。以佛的威德，竟然化不到緣，其他的弟子覺得很奇怪，就問佛過去的因緣。

釋迦牟尼佛就說，我跟目連尊者，過去世是一對父子，是在山上打柴的樵夫。有一天我們去打柴，看到一窩的蜂子。父親就對兒子講，這個蜂子瞋恨心很重，你要小心不要被它們螫了。可是這個兒子的想法不一樣。他就為這窩蜂子念佛，然後還替牠們發願說，有一天如果我開悟證果了，我就回來先度你們成佛，你們現在不要生惡心。以後這窩蜂子就投胎到這個國家來，這個蜂王就成為國家的國王，其他的蜂子就變成這個國家的大臣跟老百姓。因為過

Speaking about cultivating or developing affinities, Guan Yin Bodhisattva is a good example because he has special affinities with all living beings of the Saha World. There are many reasons that contribute to this, and tonight I am going to enumerate on two of them.

The first reason concerns the appearance of Guan Yin Bodhisattva. Guan Yin is so majestic and beautiful that there is no one who isn't delighted upon seeing Guan Yin. Likewise, there is no one who can't find consolation upon meeting him. In stark contrast, the affinity among living beings is very different. Our reactions upon meeting others vary greatly. Why? This is because our affinities with living beings are not necessarily good. And many of our affinities are very impure, especially if we have a history of enmity between them. In fact, we can tell that their faces do not appear pleasant. But Guan Yin Bodhisattva is different; his affinities with living beings are pure, so living beings are very joyful upon seeing him. For this reason, Guan Yin Bodhisattva is able to cross over living beings.

The second reason concerns the vows of Guan Yin Bodhisattva. Guan Yin once vowed to respond to the cries of living beings. Every supplication will entail a response. No entreaty will be left unanswered. When we call upon the name of Guan Yin, he will come to help us. All our wishes will be fulfilled. If anyone of us can do this, there is no reason that our affinities with other living beings will not turn out well. However, the problem is that most of us have varying relationships with people. For those who are close to us (those who we like), we are willing to help them. For those who are distant from us (those who we dislike), we are not willing to help them. Because our attitudes towards living beings are selective, we are unable to realize the spiritual power of Guan Yin that enables him to respond to the cries of living beings.

Shakyamuni Buddha once brought a bunch of his disciples to a state to beg for alms. However, throughout the country, nobody wanted to make any offerings to the Buddha or his disciples. Later, Mahamaudgalyayana joined in the alms begging and everyone strove to make offerings to him. But when the people saw Shakyamuni Buddha, the citizens of the state, including the king and his ministers, were cold towards him. Even though the Buddha is the World Honored One and the Blessed One, he didn't receive any offerings. The very disciples were very baffled, and so they asked the Buddha, "What is the cause and the condition of this?" In response, the Buddha told them a story.

"A long time ago, I and Mahamaudgalyayana were father and son. We were lumberjacks who chopped firewood in the mountains. One day, we came across a hive of bees. At that time, I, the father, told my son, Mahamaudgalyayana, 'You have to be careful because the bees are very angry insects. You don't want to get stung by them.' But my son saw the situation differently. He recited the Buddha's name for these bees and also made a wholesome vow for their sakes, asserting, 'One day, when I become awakened, I will come back to cross you guys first until you

去世我跟目連的發心不一樣，所以這輩子，這個國家的人民，對我們的態度也是不一樣的。

我們對眾生動的一個念頭，不管有沒有說出口，或者是有沒有付諸實行，眾生默默中都知道，因為眾生跟眾生的心裏都互相有一個無線電通著。雖然他不一定知道你想什麼，可是在他的意識裏頭，都有一種感覺的。

接下來，我跟大家講一個我親身經歷的故事，這個故事是講述我自己所錯過的一段因緣。

幾年前，我住在洛杉磯。洛杉磯是一個國際的大都會，可是這個大城市裏頭，有很多的流浪漢。有一天我去坐公車，上了公車後，就坐在靠近車後門的一個位子上。車子一直開，乘客就不斷上來，乘客當中有一個是流浪漢。上來的這個流浪漢是一個黑人，長得非常高大。也不知道是吸了毒，還是喝了酒，所以他站都站不穩，在車上跌跌撞撞。更糟糕的是，他身上有一股很重的臭味，那是一股尿臊味。

我這個人對味道很敏感，所以遠遠聞到那個味道就開始煩惱了。我心想：這個人怎麼味道這麼重！可是我看一下四周，怎麼大家好像都沒有聞到那個味道。不知道為什麼，只有我一個人聞到，大家都無動於衷。然後車子繼續開，上來的人就越來越多，大家就往車子後面移動，這個流浪漢也跟著移動，離我的距離也就越來越近，當然呢，那個味道也就越來越重。於是，我也就越來越煩惱。

後來坐在我前面的乘客下車了，這個黑人上前一步，就坐在那個位子上，所以這個流浪漢就坐在我的正前方。他身上那個味道實在很嗆，嗆得我眼睛都睜不開。我心裏就在想：誒，怎麼大家好像一點反應都沒有，大家鼻子是不是都壞了？怎麼只有我一個人覺得很煩惱？尤其是坐在他隔壁的人，真的一動都不動。我心裏就一直嘀咕：這個人什麼時候才要下車！

後來，這個流浪漢終於站起來要下車了。在美國坐公車要下車的人都是從後門下的，司機先生只要按一個鈕，後門就會自動打開。可是這班公車的後門壞了，它不會自動打開。每一個下車的人，都必須伸手用力把門推開才能出去。那一站，每一個下車的人，下車以後就各顧各地走了。他們一鬆手，那個門就會彈回去，所以每一個要下車的人，都必須重新用力推開門，才能步出車子。

這個黑人也等著要下車。可是下了車以後，他跟

guys reach Buddhahood. Please don't harm us.' Eventually these bees were reincarnated. The Queen Bee became the King of the country where we are now begging for alms; the bees became the ministers and citizens." The Buddha told his disciples, "Because our intentions were different, we are now treated differently."

When we have a thought towards a living being, no matter if we show it or not, he will know it in his heart because living beings are "wirelessly" connected to each other's hearts. Although they may not know exactly what you think about them, they consciously have an intuition of your intention.

Next I am going to share a personal story with you. This story describes how I passed by someone I have affinities with, someone I met before.

Several years ago, I lived in Los Angeles. L.A. is a well-known city. However, this city has many homeless people. One day I took the bus, and found a seat close to the rear side door and sat down. As the bus drove, more and more people came onboard. One of the passengers was a homeless man; he was a tall and strong African American. I wasn't sure if he had taken drug or alcohol, but it was clearly visible that he couldn't stand steadily. He was staggering along the isle, and his body also gave off a pungent smell of urine.

I am a person who is very affected by unfamiliar odor, so I was really afflicted by the smell. However, when I looked around, no one else on the bus seemed to be affected. As the bus ran its route, more and more people got onboard so the crowd on the bus slowly shifted towards the back of the bus. Consequently, this man also moved backwards, and he inched closer to me; thereupon, I got more and more afflicted.

Later the person who sat in front of me got off the bus and the homeless man took his seat, in front of me. The smell was so repulsive, I felt irritated; I could hardly open my eyes. However, I didn't see any other passengers who were affected, especially the one sitting next to this man is not moved at all. And I questioned if they could even smell properly, otherwise why was only me afflicted? I grumbled and prayed that he would get off the bus soon.

Finally, he stood up and began to leave. In this country, passengers usually disembark through the rear side door. The bus driver usually pushes a button to open that door; however, on this bus, the door control malfunctioned and people had to push open the door manually. Every passenger who got off the bus had to push the door open manually because it immediately closed on the next passenger.

Meanwhile, the homeless man was waiting for his turn in line to disembark. But he proved different from the other passengers. After he disembarked, he didn't leave immediately. Using his big, tall frame, he stood in front of the door and used both arms to hold



一般人不一樣，他並沒有立刻離開，反而留在車門旁邊。因為他長得很高大，所以就用自己的兩個手臂撐著門板，讓這個門不會再彈回去。這樣在他後面下車的乘客，不需要用力推開門，就可以很順利地下車。

看到這一幕我就覺得很好奇，所以透過窗戶往下看他在幹什麼。突然間，他抬起頭朝我的方向看，我也嚇了一跳。他是個黑人，皮膚很黑，他的一雙眼睛是充血的，一紅一黑形成強烈對比，看起來很可怕。可是，一個這麼「可怕」的人，怎麼有一顆這麼好的心？我被他的舉動感動了。我想，原來流浪漢也是有德行的。在這個繁忙的大都市裏，人們都汲汲營營地在生命中追逐，每個人下了車就急著趕往下一個目的地，只有他還留在車下，替還沒有下車的人服務。

後來，我們兩個不經意地四目交接。那一剎那，我有個念頭，他好像是在告訴我：「我不是妳所看到的那樣子的人。」等服務完所有乘客以後，他自己也離開了。一路上，他手足舞蹈，旁若無人，留下我一個人震撼地坐在車子裏。我就想，這個人，應該是觀音菩薩到這個世間上來教化我的。而我呢，交臂失之，我不認識他。這是我當時的一個感覺。

觀音菩薩之所以能夠莊嚴相好，循聲救苦，是來自他多生多世勤修與眾生的善緣。最主要的是，觀音菩薩修大悲普渡的行門。為了要大悲普渡，觀音菩薩必須要做到等視眾生，破除人我的分別；也正因為如此，觀音菩薩所積聚的善業跟功德才能廣大。所以，一剛開始，我說觀音菩薩是我們學習結緣的一個好榜樣，就是這個原因。

the door open for the other passengers so others didn't have to go through the trouble of pushing the heavy door open.

When I took a peek out the window to see him, he raised his head and looked at me. His eyes were fused with blood, so the blending of red and black stunned me. His face looked menacing. But why does someone with an ominous appearance have such an awesome heart? He served the other passengers behind him – he must have a beautiful heart. This is the first time I realized that homeless people also have virtues. In this big busy city, people spend their whole lives pursuing things recklessly; everyone rushes to their next destination after getting off the bus. However, only this man stayed to serve those who needed help off the bus.

When our eyes met, an idea flashed over me. I thought he was trying to tell me, "I am not who you think I am." After he finished his service, he left, and I was left in shock. I think this is Guan Yin who came into this world to teach me a lesson. However, I failed to recognize him at that moment.

This is the reason why Guan Yin Bodhisattva is so adorned and responsive to living beings' cries: he has cultivated good affinities with living beings throughout kalpas. The most important thing is that when Guan Yin Bodhisattva cultivates and crosses people over from this world, he universally saves living beings. By this action, it is evident that he has regarded living beings equally. He has broken through the distinction and differences between he and others. Because of this, Guan Yin Bodhisattva accumulated massive wholesome karmas and merits. As I said earlier, Guan Yin Bodhisattva is a good example; we should learn from him because he knows how to cultivate good affinities with other people. ✽



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