



華嚴法會
衆菩薩圖

Avatamsaka Assembly of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas

Teaching and Transforming Living Beings: The Art of Skillful Means

教化衆生—善巧的藝術

Spoken by Bhikshuni Jin Xiang at the Buddha Hall of CTTB on July 11, 2014 ● Chinese Translation by Siew-Hui Tan

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BODHI FIELD | 菩提田

Tonight, I would like to explore the question of how a Bodhisattva teaches and transforms living beings with expedient means. If there is any mistake, please kindly correct me.

The principle of “expedient means” is quite unique to the Mahayana sutras, especially in the *Avatamsaka Sutra*; it is what Buddhas and bodhisattvas draw on for gathering in living beings. In order to use expedient methods one must first have the prerequisites of compassion and wisdom. Compassion is a quality that is at the very root of a Buddha or a bodhisattva’s motivation; seeing living beings sunk in the mire of confusion and ignorance, he feels deep empathy and compassion for them and wishes to rescue them out of myriad miseries. Compassion is the substance and wisdom is the navigator.

A Buddha has ten powers, which are not spiritual powers, but powers based in wisdom. The fourth one is the wisdom-power of knowing the superiority or inferiority of the faculties of all living beings, and the fifth one is the wisdom-power of knowing all of the various understandings of living beings.

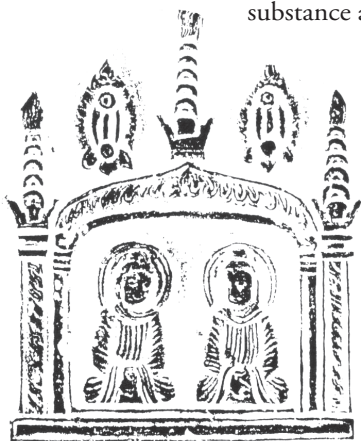
In the *Lotus Sutra*, Chapter Two is titled *Expedient Devices*. The Buddha addressed Shariputra, “...the Buddhas of the past by means of limitless, countless expedient

今晚想跟大家探討菩薩如何用諸般的方便法來教化眾生，如有說錯的地方，請大家慈悲指正。

大乘經典，尤其是《華嚴經》，所提到的方便法是很獨特的，它是佛菩薩用來攝受眾生的法門。但是運用權巧方便有個先決條件，那就是「慈悲」與「智慧」。佛菩薩所有的動機都是以慈悲為出發點，因為見到眾生沉淪於癡惑的泥濘之中，而深生悲憫，希望救度眾生脫離諸苦。因此，慈悲為體，智慧為導航。

如來具足十力，但這力量並不是神通，而是由智慧所生。十力中的第四個「知諸根勝劣智力」，就是知眾生根性之勝劣的智力，第五個「知種種解智力」，即是能知一切眾生種種知解的智力。

《妙法蓮華經》〈方便品第二〉中，佛陀說：「舍利弗！過去諸佛，以無量無數方便、種種因緣、譬喻言辭，而為眾生演說諸法，未來諸佛亦復如是，是法皆為一佛乘故。是諸眾生，從諸佛聞法，究竟皆得一切種智。」



釋迦如來 多寶如來

The Thus Come One Shakyamuni
The Thus Come One Many Jewels



devices, various causes and conditions, analogies and expressions, have proclaimed all the dharmas to living beings. It will be the same way for the Buddhas of the future. These dharmas are all for the sake of the One Buddha Vehicle and for all beings to ultimately attain the Wisdom of All Modes, the most supreme level of wisdom.”

In the chapter ten of the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, *The Bodhisattvas Ask for Clarification*, Manjushri Bodhisattva asked Wealthy Leader Bodhisattva on the profoundness of the teaching and transforming of the Buddhas, “Why does he accord with their practices; why does he accord with their understandings; why does he accord with their languages; why does he accord with



their fondnesses; why does he accord with their expediences; why does he accord with their thoughts; and why does he accord with their considerations, appearing among them in bodies like theirs, in order to teach and transform, tame and subdue them?”

On the part “why does he accord with their expediences”, Venerable Master said, “You should know that the reason one must understand many different expedient methods is just because if one attempted to teach and transform sentient beings by the speaking the Dharma without knowing how to intelligently use expedients, they would not be receptive to one’s teaching and transforming.”

I believe that like the Buddha, Bodhisattvas have the same intention and skills to teach and transform beings. The *Avatamsaka Sutra* says that the Fourth-Ground bodhisattva, among the Four Dharmas of Attraction, emphasizes the cultivation of the dharma of similar work to gather in living beings. How does a bodhisattva do it? One time,

《華嚴經》〈菩薩問明品卷第十〉中，文殊師利菩薩向財首菩薩請問如來教化眾生的甚深意時說道：「佛子！一切眾生非眾生。云何如來隨其行、隨其解、隨其言論、隨其心樂、隨其方便、隨其思惟、隨其觀察，於如是諸眾生中，為現其身，教化調伏？」

上人解釋「云何如來隨其方便」時，這麼說：「你要知道明白種種的方便法門，眾生歡喜什麼，你就給他說什麼法。你說法教化眾生，要不明白權巧方便來教化眾生，眾生就不會接受你的教化。」

我相信菩薩和諸佛一樣，有著相同的動機和技巧來教化眾生。《華嚴經》描述第四地的菩薩注重四攝法中的同事攝。那菩薩是怎麼做到的呢？曾經有人問上人：「有人發願投胎作種種形，隨類度脫眾生。在我看來，他們似乎先知道自己要有個身體，還是不要這個身體。」上人回答說：「菩薩知道怎麼樣生，也知道怎麼樣死。真正的菩薩是來去自如，就像有錢的人，願意到什麼地方就隨便去。他一點也不糊塗的。」

〈普門品〉裏描述觀音菩薩運用種種權巧方便的時候，同時也具備了慈悲與智慧。從中我們可以看出來，觀音菩薩是多麼有耐心與善解。菩薩示現種種感應，好讓眾生漸漸與佛法結緣。其中一個和眾生結緣的方法，就是巧妙地示現三十二種相來教化眾生。透過這些相——其實並不止三十二相——展現出引導不同根性的眾生走向解脫，菩薩所具備的智慧與願景。這說明了菩薩很懂得心理學和社交技巧，同時也體現菩薩不憚生死疲勞，不入涅槃，長駐世間的悲懷。

那麼，菩薩如何善用世間的心理學和社交技巧呢？

我們現住的這個世界，似乎依循自然的節奏運行著。每一個國家，有各自季



the Venerable Master was asked, “When people make vows to be reborn in whatever form necessary to save sentient beings, it seems to me that they should have some idea of what they are trying to do—obtain a body, or get rid of a body.” Venerable Master answered, “Bodhisattvas know exactly how they come [into this life] and exactly how they go ... A real Bodhisattva comes and goes as easily as a rich person can casually travel anywhere he wishes. ... they are not at all confused.”

In the *Universal Door Chapter*, we can see Guanyin Bodhisattva is described as using many skillful means, which require a combination of compassion and wisdom. It shows how patient and understanding Guanyin Bodhisattva is. The Bodhisattva performed miracles to establish affinities with beings and caused them gradually to develop affinity with the Dharma. One of the ways he establishes affinities with beings is in his ingenious capacity to appear in thirty-two forms, in order to teach them. Taking these forms, though its number is not limited to a fixed number, is a manifestation of the Bodhisattva's wisdom and vision in bringing beings with different potentials and inclinations closer to liberation. It shows his understanding of psychology and social skills. It also demonstrates his untiring willingness to engage in the mundane world despite his attainment of transcendence.

How does the Bodhisattva use the worldly knowledge of psychology and social skills? The world we live in seems to operate in natural rhythms. Each country in the world has its own seasonal rhythm; rituals in this Buddha Hall are operated through rhythmic beatings of wooden fish and bell and drum in synchrony with the ritual leader. Our own body also operates in rhythms. Each of us has his or her own natural rhythm of behavior known as habits and characteristics. Some people have the nature of being quick, while others are slow. Some speak straightforward while others are polite and tactful. If that natural rhythm or tendency is disturbed, a disagreement or an argument may happen.

Even inanimate objects have their own innate rhythmic frequency. In 1940, a suspension bridge in Tacoma, Washington state collapsed under a 40 miles per hour wind, which happened to match that bridge's natural structural frequency, which was considered an undesirable resonance (or vibration). Likewise, a bodhisattva or anybody who wants to persuade or teach others needs to learn how to conduct in tune with others' natural rhythm or character. If we look at the thirty-two forms that Guanyin Bodhisattva can manifest, we can see that they represent the ten Dharma realms or simply all classes of living beings. Within the thirty-two, the category of humans has the biggest percentage: 41% or 13 out of 32. The classification of humans ranges from youth to elder, female to male, common class to royalty, householder to monastic, and Buddhists to non-Buddhists.

In order to teach and transform beings, first we need to build good affinities with them. As it says in the chapter on *Benefiting Both Self and Others* in the *Sutra of Upasaka Precepts*, the timing for teaching living beings is either when they are happy or when they are suffering. Guanyin Bodhisattva is able to respond to them in both kinds of situations. We have heard many stories

節性的規律；我們佛殿裏的各種儀式，也是隨著木魚和鐘鼓的節拍，與維那保持一致的速度。我們身體的機能，也有其節奏規律。每個人的行為，同樣有個天生的節奏，也就是我們的習氣和特質，有些人是急驚風，有些人則是慢郎中，有些人說話單刀直入，有些人則客氣圓滑。而當彼此的習氣或是特質發生衝突時，分歧或爭論就會發生。

即使無情的東西，也有屬於它自己天生的節奏頻率。1940年，華盛頓塔科馬海峽的吊橋受到時速40英里的強風吹襲而倒塌，因為強風的風速正好和吊橋結構的自振頻率相符，那是一種不好的共振（或震動）。同樣的，菩薩或任何一個想要勸導或教化眾生的人，也要學習與對方的習氣特質共鳴。仔細觀察觀音菩薩的三十二應身，其實就涵蓋了十法界，或者簡單地說，包含了每一類的眾生。三十二應身中，人類佔最大的比率41%，也就是32相中佔了13相，種類從年輕人到老年人、男人到女人、老百姓到王公貴族、在家人和出家人、佛教徒和非佛教徒都有。

為了教化眾生，必須先和眾生結善緣。《優婆塞戒經》〈自利利他品〉中提到，教化眾生的好時機，就是在他們開心或是痛苦的時候，而觀音菩薩在這兩種情況下都能與眾生相應。我們聽過許多觀世音菩薩解救眾生危難的感應故事，其實眾生愉快高興的時候，菩薩也很清楚何時是教化他們最好的時機，「魚籃觀音」就是一例。觀音菩薩化成一個美麗的女子，引起村裏男人對她的注意，令他們一見到她就心生傾慕；然後菩薩漸次地引導他們背經，誰做得到，誰就能迎娶她。最後有一位把〈普門品〉、《金剛經》和《法華經》全都背起來，他因為明白經中究竟的道理，而決定出家了。

觀音菩薩的種種化身，可以是短暫的示現，也可以是長期的。菩薩或許化身為一名印地安酋長，在高速公路提醒摩托騎士小心減速，因為前方路滑。或者化身在一個濁惡的地方長期教化眾生，目的是為

of how Guanyin Bodhisattva has responded to those who were in difficult situations, that is, when they are suffering. The Bodhisattva also recognizes that when people are in a happy mood, it is the best timing to teach and transform them. If we think of the story of the Fish-basket Guanyin Bodhisattva, she appeared in a beautiful form to attract men in a village, causing them to be happy at the sight of her. Then she instructed them to memorize the sutras in gradual steps to gain her approval. In the end, after memorizing the *Universal Door Chapter*, the *Vajra Sutra*, and the *Lotus Sutra*, the last of the men realized the ultimate principle of the sutras and renounced the household life.

The different kinds of forms manifested by Guanyin Bodhisattva can also be explained as appearing one time or long-term. The bodhisattva may appear one time as an Indian chief on a highway to warn somebody on a motorbike to slow down and be careful of the slippery road ahead. Or he may appear as somebody in an impure place to teach the beings there for a long time. A long-term undertaking is a method for teaching those with deep-seated unwholesome qualities or teaching those who do not have much affinity with the Dharma. The Sixth Patriarch of the Chan School in China lived among hunters for fifteen years, teaching them in an appropriate manner. The Sutra does not elaborate how the Patriarch taught them, except that he did not eat meat like they did and that he would set free the trapped animals that the hunters caught. In applying the dharma of attraction through similar work, it is only to be feared that we get influenced by others whom we are trying to teach and transform.

A recent study showed that synchronizing with others' actions and mannerism give people an advantage in influencing others in a positive way, such as receiving a favorable comment or a cooperative action. In other words, a person who wants to help others must learn to connect with them by being familiar with their jobs, their habits and tendencies. One of the ways is to be in the same occupation as they are or one who has had the same experience or background as they have.

For example, there is a man named Ron Glodoski from Michigan. He joined his first gang when he was only 12 years old. He used to sell marijuana and cocaine every week. He eventually left those habits behind and now encourages kids to avoid this kind of destructive behavior. He is drug-free for over 30 years now. Because he has survived this kind of experience, he is in a position of authority or credibility to persuade young people to follow his model. Since he is in synch (in tune) with the tendencies of the teenagers, he is in the best position to motivate them. On the other hand, if a person without this kind of experience were to tell them what not to do, they might say indignantly, "What do you know? You don't understand us, so why should we listen to you!"

Living beings are characterized by a sense of identity. Those who speak the same language gather together and form their own towns; those with same interest form their own clubs. That's why when two people come from the same town, country, or culture; most likely they can associate with each other more easily. If you become one of them, then you can easily persuade or influence them. Jesuits are known to have lived among natives, learning their languages and customs, so that they can introduce the local people to the Christian scriptures.

了教化劣根或是緣淺的眾生。中國禪宗的六祖大師在獵人隊裏住了15年，適機地教化他們。經典裏沒有提到六祖大師如何教導這些獵人，只提到他不和他們一樣吃肉，並且常常將獵人捕獲的動物放生。與眾生同事，唯一的顧慮就是不要被眾生給度了。

有研究指出，能與他人的行為同步化，就能贏得正面影響他人的好處，諸如取得對方的好感或是合作態度。換句話說，如果一個人想要幫助他人，必須了解對方的工作、習性和喜好才能獲得對方的共鳴。其中一個方法，就是和對方從事相同的職業，或者擁有與對方相同的經歷背景。

例如，密西根州的一名男子羅恩·葛樓都斯基，12歲時第一次加入幫派，之後開始每週販賣大麻和古柯鹼。然而他終究擺脫這些惡習，並且積極鼓勵孩子們遠離這些有害的行為。戒毒迄今30多年，由於自己在這樣的遭遇中倖存下來，所以羅恩擁有足夠的威信來說服年輕人效法他。因為與這些青少年有所共鳴，所以他是最能激勵他們的人。另一方面，如果從來沒有這方面的經歷，就跑去跟他們說這個不可以、那個不可以，對方可能會很憤怒地說：「你懂什麼？你不了解我們，我們何必要聽你的？」

眾生的特點是認同感。講相同語言的人聚集在一起，組成屬於他們自己的城市；有共同興趣的人，組成屬於他們自己的社團。這也就是為什麼來自相同城市、國家或是文化背景的人，很快就能成為朋友；如果你是他們當中的一分子，當然很容易就能說服和影響他們了。因此，耶穌會的傳教士散佈於各個國家，他們學習當地的語言和習俗，以便向當地人介紹聖經。莫尼爾·莫尼爾威廉姆斯是編撰《梵英字典》的一名英國教授，這本字典已被廣泛使用，而他當初專研梵文是為了傳播福音，讓印度人改信基督教。

Monier Monier-Williams was a British professor who compiled the widely-used Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary. His goal for learning the Sanskrit language thoroughly was to convert Indians to Christianity.

Building rapport with others is an important part of teaching and transforming beings. Without the connection of the right affinity, others may just walk out while you're speaking. When we come up on stage, we often say that we are here to tie affinities. This is not an insignificant matter. I say the right affinity, because it's an affinity without stickiness, an affinity that will not cause an increase in desire or affliction in oneself and in others, and it's an affinity done at the right time.

From my experience, it is not easy to transform others using just language and without virtue. This is especially true for relatives, because the closeness of a family is an obstacle itself. At one time, I found out from one of my sisters that my father recited a certain sutra to help my mother recover from sickness. I was surprised that my father, who was not really doing any Buddhist practice, was actually practicing something. Over the phone, I asked him to recite for me a bit of that sutra. It turned out that it was the *Heart Sutra* and he learned about its efficacious power from one of his friends. From this, I realized that it was easier for my father to accept teaching advice from his friend rather than from his children.

I hope people here will take advantage of this opportunity already set up by the Venerable Master and tie affinities with the community members here and learn to speak Dharma. If you want to teach and transform living beings in accord with the Buddha-dharma, then I wish that all of you will accomplish in your endeavor. ❀

與他人建立良好關係，是教化眾生的一個重要條件。沒有跟人結好緣，別人不會有興趣聽你說話。每次我們到臺上來，都會說是來跟大家結法緣，所以別小看這個的重要性。這裏我說「結好緣」，指的不是那種黏乎乎的緣，是一種不會令彼此增加欲望和煩惱的緣，也是一種在適當時機出現的緣份。

就我個人的經驗，要教化眾生如果沒有德行，光靠嘴巴說說，是很不容易做到的，尤其是對親人，因為親情本身就是一種障礙。有一次，我從我的一個姐妹那裏得知，父親正在為生病的母親念一部經，希望她能夠早日康復。當時我感到很驚訝，因為從來不學佛的父親，現在竟然在做佛事。電話中我請他念一段經文給我聽，聽了之後才知道原來是《心經》，因為他從朋友那裏聽說《心經》很靈驗。從這件事我才瞭解到，比起自己的兒女，父親更容易接受他朋友的忠告。

希望大家好好利用上人給我們的機會，學習上臺講法，與大眾結法緣。在此，也祝福發心要如法教化眾生的人，所有付出的努力都能圓滿成就。 ❀

理隨事變，則一多緣起之無邊；
事得理融，則千差涉入而無礙。
—《華嚴經疏序》

*Principle changes according to specifics,
so one and many conditionally arise without bounds.
Specifics interfuse with principle,
so a thousand distinctions combine without obstruction.
— from the "The Flower Adornment Sutra - Preface"*



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