

Ground Zero

從零開始



Spoken by Dr. Raymond Yeh at the Buddha Hall of CTTB on August 6, 2014

葉祖堯教授講於2014年8月6日萬佛聖城大殿

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BODHI FIELD | 菩提田

Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Dharma Masters, and all the wise advisors: Amitofo! I would like to share a bit about my experience of the Bodhisattva precept class and transmission this evening. I use “ground zero” as the title of my talk because as I walked back to Buddha Hall from the repentance session, a Dharma Master told me something like: “Now you are starting from ground zero again, be careful with your actions, speeches, and intentions.”

Let me first talk about why do I want to take the Bodhisattva precept. Looking back in my life, I’ve made many, many mistakes from a Buddhist perspective. For example, when I was younger, I love to do crabbing and fishing and killed a lot of them. Although I had done a lot for my parents, there were many knots among our relationships that I had not made a great effort to resolve before they passed away. I also remembered several major car accidents which could have cost my life or incapacitated me. That would have caused my parents heartbreak and endless sorrows. I had an affair which led to an abortion, and I had been very harsh on some of my former colleagues in Academia as I pushed them hard in order to build a top ranking department, etc. More recently at CTTB, I also used strong words arguing with a Dharma Master.

As a person who is near 80, I am fully aware that my remaining time here is very limited. So, I view taking the

諸佛菩薩、師父上人、各位法師、各位善知識：今天跟大家分享過去一個禮拜來，我個人在參加菩薩戒課程與受戒方面的體驗，題目是「從零開始」，因為昨天懺悔羯磨結束後回到佛殿時，一位法師跟我說：「你現在從零開始，所以要小心自己的身口意業。」

先講講我為什麼要受菩薩戒。回顧我的這一生，從佛教徒的觀點來看，我犯了很多很多的錯。比如說，我年輕時候很喜歡釣螃蟹和魚，所以犯了很多殺業。對我的父母來講，雖然我替他們做了很多事情，可是我們有一些心結，在他們走以前，我也沒有把這些心結解開。回想起來，我對我的父母很抱歉，因為我曾經發生過幾次幾乎喪命的車禍，假如因此而死掉了，或者沒死而變成了殘廢，那會帶給他們很多很多傷心與無盡的煩惱；我也曾有過婚外情，導致那位女士墮胎；從前在學校裡，因為想讓整個科系提升得快，所以把我的同事們逼得很緊；最近在聖城，也跟一位法師大聲地爭執。

因此，對年近八十歲的我來說，受菩薩戒是一個機會，能把從前犯的錯改過來，重新做人。雖然我不知道是不是可以守所有的戒，可是經過這幾天的課程以後，我覺得我不能不去受這個戒。守戒，最主要是一個人的心，犯了輕戒也可懺悔改過。所以對我來講，

Bodhisattva precept is a great opportunity for me to clean up my acts. Of course, I had some misgivings about whether I could uphold the precepts. However, after the class, I felt there is no problem in the sense that a) I cannot afford not to do so; b) the intention is the key in holding the precepts; and c) for minor offenses, there are ways to repent and make up for it. What a great opportunity to begin with a clean slate again!

Let me now share my “in class” experiences. During the orientation, led by DM Jin Fan, on day 1, I learned for the first time how to behave properly in terms of how to walk, sit, stand, and sleep as these adorned behaviors are means to help us to be mindful. I was deeply impressed by the depth of his knowledge and most importantly his own embodiment of the precepts as he made an overall introduction of them.

I joined the English speaking class and had a most rewarding experience from it. First of all, I truly enjoyed the presentations by the various DMs—Jin Yan Shr, Jin Yong Shr, Jin Chuan Shr, and Jin Shou Shr. It was impressive how much material they had prepared for us as well as shared their own understanding and experience of holding the precepts. As such, we gained a pretty clear understanding of the essence of the precepts, in the limited time we had.

Another important aspect of our class was my fellow classmates. We had a small class with about 20 people who came from different continents, cultural background, and professions as well as age spectrum. The DMs were very compassionate to allow us to ask all sorts of questions and guided our conversations as we all contribute real problems to understand how we can handle the tough choices in life while live in accordance with the precepts.

For example, one of our classmates is an investor. He asked the question that when he invests in a big company which looks good financially. But often times he would not know whether that company has some investment in companies that sell intoxicants? Another example is that a person is drafted into army for war with no exemption for religious beliefs? Or a person's child is kidnapped and the kidnappers ask this person to steal some fund from his company in exchange for his son? The precept tells us to guard it with one's own life, but would you sacrifice your son's life by not doing it? None of these questions have easy answers. But by tossing ideas around them within this class, each one of us began to understand our own life path better.

Wise teachers, great students with diverse backgrounds, and small class made our class experience a most memorable one. After many heated discussions, we've come to understand that it is our intention in the act that's the key to our holding the precept.

Now let me share my experiences during the transmission day.

是一個非常好的機會，讓我重新開始。

現在先分享上課的經驗。第一天開始的時候，近梵師給我們做一個總介紹，我也第一次學到行住坐臥的威儀應該是怎麼樣。最令我深深感動的是，法師不僅充分瞭解這些戒律，而且還以身作則。

我參加的是英文班，非常感謝授課法師：近巖師、近永師、近傳師跟近修師，他們準備很多教材，也分享他們個人持戒的經驗與瞭解，令我們在很短的時間裡，就能對戒律有非常清楚的認識。

另外，同班的同學也非常優秀。我們這二十個人來自世界各地，各有不同的文化背景與專業經歷，年紀從很年輕的，到我這個老頭子。由於這些差異性，法師們很慈悲地讓我們進行深度對談，我們運用很多日常生活的真實問題，來討論每一條戒律的開遮持犯。

譬如有一個同學是從事投資業，他說我投資一個公司，這個公司很好，可是我怎麼知道這個大公司有沒有投資販賣菸酒的小公司？或者有一個人被國家徵召去打仗，不允許以任何宗教理由推辭，他該怎麼辦？或者一個人的兒子被綁架，綁票的人要他偷竊公司的財產做為贖金；戒律上說，寧捨生命，不違佛制，可是難道就這樣犧牲兒子的性命？這些都不是容易回答的問題，但是藉由這樣的討論，我們更能瞭解如何在生活中真正遵守戒律。

好的老師、多元背景的同學，加上小班制的教學，因此大家都有一個美好的經驗。尤其有時激烈的討論後，大家對大多數的戒律都有較好的瞭解，都瞭解到最主要的是我們做事的心意。

現在分享受戒的經驗。昨天開始擊鼓時，我就感受到一股很大的力量漸漸形成；當鳴鐘的時候，更覺得鐘聲響徹雲霄，貫通地底。昨天早上



When the drum began, I felt an energy building up. When the bell rang, it sort of shocked me in that I felt that energy went down to the center of earth as well as went up all the way to the unreachable sky. We bowed for three and half hours yesterday morning and then knelt for 2 hours in the afternoon. Yet, my body, despite its discomforts, was filled with energy. This morning when I woke up, I could hardly standstill and felt as if I had played two intensive basketball games yesterday when I was much younger.

As we were bowing, old scenes of wrong doings of the past showed up, and tears flowed down my cheeks and deep apologies arose from the center of my being to all the beings that I've hurt; I felt that they were flowing out of my body through the huge volume of sweat — something that almost does not happen to me anymore since more than 10 years ago. The sweat was also thick in nature. Instinctively, I felt that I was being cleansed. I did not expect to experience such a great energy for being a preceptor.

When the Abbot began to read the precepts, I was surprised to hear such a crystal clear voice. It was so crisp and pure that they penetrated my entire being and woke me up. At the same time, his voice was tender like spring breeze that touched me softly. After transmission of the precept, when I walked out of the Buddha hall, he was there and congratulated me with a warm smile. I felt an urge to kneel down to bow to him to express my deep gratitude, but it was crowded with people flowing out of the Buddha Hall, so I decided to do it another time.

As we were doing the 3rd contemplation, I felt, perhaps just for a few seconds that light raindrops were sprinkling on my body causing a very pleasant cool feeling throughout my entire being. What an auspicious sign that light rain drops actually materialized outside of the Buddha hall as we walked out—a miracle for Ukiah in August. I deeply appreciate Abbot's compassion to share with us an easier contemplation.

I am deeply grateful to all the DMs during this entire week, who helped in this process and guided us to begin the Bodhisattvas path. For example, DM Jin Zhan, who served as cantor during the morning bowing session yesterday sang for 3 1/2 hours nonstop. In addition to our teachers in the class, one Dharma Master also called me before the afternoon transmission to remind me how important it is to understand the contemplation to make sure I will get the precept substance. My heart melted with deep gratitude when I received his call. It is indeed a great blessing to be able to stay in CTTB to have so many wise dharma teachers all around.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge my co-cultivator, my wife, who had walked with me for the last 50 years together. To me, she is a natural Bodhisattva who never had an agenda for herself. Without her support and encouragement, I would never have the nerve to move into CTTB or staying here for the past 11 years.

Finally, I would like to say that with the reception of the Bodhisattva precept, I can now say that "I came naked, and I will go naked!" Thank you. Amitofo! ❀

我們一共拜了三個半小時，下午跪了兩小時。雖然在這種非常緊張的情形之下度過，可是感覺整個身體充滿了能量。可是今天早上起來，兩條腿都站不直了，就像年輕時候一天賽了兩場籃球一樣。

昨天在拜的時候，所有過去犯的錯，一幕一幕都在我腦海裡邊轉了一遍。我一直在流眼淚，從心裡面覺得深深地對不起所有被我傷害過的生命。我全身一直在流汗，其實十多年前我就不太流什麼汗，可是昨天一整天都在流，而且是流非常濃的汗。我真的沒有想到，受戒有這麼大的力量，整個人就像被清洗了。

當方丈開始念戒的時候，我覺得他的聲音非常清亮，同時也很溫暖，像春風一樣，吹過我的整個身體，把我吹醒。昨天下午傳戒儀式完後，我從佛殿走出去，方丈正在外面，他對我笑了一笑恭喜我。我當時就想跪下來跟他頂禮，可是很多人不斷地從佛殿出來，所以我決定過一下再去跟他頂禮。

當我們作第三次觀想的時候，有幾秒鐘的時間，感覺好像春雨的兩點灑在身上，身心一陣清涼。當我們走出佛殿之後，雨真的下下來了——這真是一個奇蹟，八月份的瑜伽鎮竟然下雨！非常感謝方丈跟我們分享一個比較容易的觀想。

這一整個禮拜，我對所有的法師充滿感恩，因為他們將我們一步步帶上菩薩之路。例如，昨天早上近湛法師帶我們拜佛懺悔，連續唱誦了三個半小時。除了授課法師，下午正授菩薩戒之前，我接到一位法師打來的電話，提醒我要認真觀想，因為這攸關戒體的領納。接到電話時，我內心充滿感激，因為他真的希望我能得到戒體。能夠住在聖城，與諸多善知識共聚一處，真的是我的福報。

同時藉此機會，我也想表達對我同修的感謝。她跟我一起走了五十年，對我來講，她是一個天生的菩薩。在我認識她的五十年間，她從來沒有她自己的目的，永遠都是為別人服務。沒有她，我沒有膽量搬進聖城；沒有她，我也不可能在這裡住了十一年。

最後要說的是，因為受了菩薩戒，我終於可以：「我赤裸裸的來，我赤裸裸的走。」謝謝大家。阿彌陀佛！ ❀