

Cultivating the Spiritual Path and Studying the Sutras

A Story of Two Friends During the Time of the Buddha

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*He who can extensively recite the Word of the Buddha,
But, not being diligent, does not act accordingly,
Is like a cowherd protecting the cows that belong to others.
He does not partake of the Shramana's life.*

*Even if he recites but a little of the Word of the Buddha;
If he practices in accordance with Dharma,
Having given up greed, hatred, and delusion,
He possesses wisdom and his mind is freed.
He does not cling to this world or another world.
He does partake of the Shramana's life.*

Explanation of the Verse

These passages from the *Dharmapada* (verses #19 and #20) were spoken by the Buddha concerning two close friends who pursued the teachings of the Buddha in quite different ways. Both of them had heard the Buddha give an instructional talk to a gathering of people and were so moved by his teaching that they decided to renounce the life of a householder and become monks. After they

雖多誦經集，放逸而不行。
如牧數他牛，自無沙門¹分。
雖誦經典少，能依教實行，
具足正知識，除滅貪瞋癡，
善淨解脫心，棄捨於世欲，
此界或他界，彼得沙門分。²

偈頌解釋

這兩個偈頌出自《法句經》的第十九和第二十頌，是佛陀用來描述兩位好朋友各自以完全不同的方式來實行他的教誨。事情是這樣的：這兩位好朋友在聆聽了佛陀對大眾的開示後，深受感動，決志出家成為比丘。經過五年的出家訓練，他們各自確定了修行的法門。年輕的這位朋友決定以研究經典作為他修行的內容；另一位年長的則注重實修，培養參禪打坐的功夫。後來他們就分開了，各自去修習自己的法門。

後來，年輕的比丘擅長背誦和講解經典。他為

¹A "Shramana" here refers to a Buddhist monastic who has whole-heartedly devoted his entire life to following the Buddha's spiritual path.

「沙門」指佛教裏全心全意、畢生奉獻於修行佛道的出家人。

²The explanation of this verse that follows is a modified version from the Dhamma (Dharma) Study Group, which the author was previously a participating member of. The group consists of people devoted to the study of the Abhidharma, the Buddhist detailed analysis of the nature and function of citta (mind) and other fundamental elements and phenomena (dharma) that make up Samsara.

「沙門」指接下來對這首偈頌的解釋是根據佛法研究小組（本文作者曾是其成員之一）的解釋而加以修改的。該研究小組的成員致力於研習《阿毗達磨論》；《阿毗達磨論》詳細分析了心的性質和功能，以及有關輪迴的基本要素和各種現象等。



had undergone monastic training for five years, each chose a path of focus. The younger friend decided he would pursue the path of study, whereas the older of the two focused his energies on the path of practice, developing skill in meditation. They then went their own separate ways.

Later, the younger monk became adept at reciting from memory and lecturing on the Buddhist Canon. He was the lecturer for a group of 500 monks and was the Preceptor for eighteen large communities of monks. The older monk, after receiving personal instruction from the Buddha, strove and struggled alone in the forest, and became a 4th Stage Arhat with the Six Super knowledges³. A group of monks went to the older friend to seek instructions on meditation. By faithfully observing his instructions, the entire group also became 4th Stage Arhats.

五百僧眾講經，是十八個大型僧團的傳戒師。而年長的比丘，在接受了佛陀的開示後，獨自一人在森林中苦修，證得了四果阿羅漢，具足六種神通³。有一群比丘向他學習參禪的方法後，依教奉行，全部也都證得了四果阿羅漢。

後來，這群開悟了的比丘們便向老師告假，準備去拜見佛陀。佛陀當時住在舍衛國祇樹給孤獨園。他們的老師就請他們轉達他對佛陀、佛陀的八十位大弟子，以及他那位年輕朋友的敬意。當這群比丘到達祇樹給孤獨園後，即向佛陀、佛陀的弟子，以及那位朋友一一問候致敬。那位年輕的朋友詢問年長朋友的這些弟子們說：「你們從你們的老師那裏都學到了些甚麼？」他心裏想，「我這位朋友連經典中的一

切實修道 與 研習經典

佛陀時代 兩個朋友 的故事

比丘恒順 文
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³A "4th Stage Arhat" is totally free from the Three Realms of Existence in Samsara, and does not to undergo further rebirth and death. However, he or she does not yet have the ability to teach and rescue living beings still suffering in Samsara (except to a very limited extent). On the other hand, a Bodhisattva develops many virtuous qualities for millions of lives, to perfect his ability to help beings still caught in the illusion of Samsara. The Six Super knowledges include the ability to know one's own and others' past lives, knowing others' thoughts, the ability to see and hear what is going on in the heavens, the extinction of mental impurities, and other miscellaneous powers within the spiritual realm.

「四果阿羅漢」完全出離了三界的輪迴，不再受生死。不過，還不具備教化和救度仍在輪迴中受苦的眾生的能力（或者是這種能力非常有限）。相對而言，菩薩在無量生中，積集培植諸多功德，以完善自己救度仍被困在虛幻輪迴中的眾生的能力。六種神通包括能夠明瞭自己和他人的前世，能夠知道別人的心念，能夠看到和聽到天上所發生的事情，能夠斷除心理上的染污，以及精神領域中的其他種種能力。

Then this group of enlightened monks wanted to take their leave of their teacher to go and pay their respects to the Buddha who was staying in Shravasti in the Jeta Grove. Their teacher told them to please also convey his own respectful greetings to the Buddha, the 80 Chief Disciples, and his younger friend. After they arrived at the Jeta Grove they paid their respects to the Buddha, his disciples, and the friend. The younger friend told the disciples of his older friend, "What have you learned from your teacher? Have you learned any sections of the Buddhist Canon?" And he thought to himself, "This monk does not know a single four-line verse from the Canon. As soon as he became a monk, he took rags from a garbage heap, entered the forest, and later gathered a great many pupils about him. When he returns, it behooves me to ask him some questions." Not realizing that his older friend was already enlightened, he was very doubtful that his friend had the ability to teach the Buddha-dharma.

At a later time, the older monk came to the Jeta Grove to pay his respects to the Buddha. He left his robe and bowl with his friend while he greeted the Buddha and the 80 Chief Disciples. When he returned, his younger friend showed him the customary attentions, providing him with a seat, etc., and then sat down. His intention was to question his older friend, so as to show that he was not really qualified to teach. The Buddha, with his spiritual powers was aware of what was about to take place. If the younger monk were to carry out his intention and tried to trouble his friend, the Buddha saw that it could result in being reborn in a lower state of existence in his future life. Therefore, the Buddha intervened by going to where the two monks were.

As was customary whenever monks would meet together in their dwellings in the Jeta Grove, a seat for the Buddha was prepared out of veneration, and also just in case the Buddha happened to come to their dwelling. Therefore, when the Buddha arrived he took the seat already prepared for him and then commenced to question both of the monks.

Upon questioning the younger monk on the states of the Four Dhyana-

首四句偈都不懂得。他一成為比丘，就從垃圾堆裏撿了一些破布，進入深山，後來收了許多弟子。等他回來時，我得好好考考他。」他根本就沒料到他的年長的朋友早已經開悟了，只是一味懷疑他是否有能力教學生佛法。

後來，年長的比丘自己來到祇樹給孤獨園拜見佛陀。他把袈裟和鉢留在他朋友那裏後，先去問候了佛陀及其八十位大弟子。等他返回時，他那年輕的朋友按照禮節接待他，請他就座，然後自己也坐下來。他的用意在於通過問難這位年長的朋友，來證明對方沒有資格教授佛法。佛陀以其神通力，知道將要發生的事情。佛陀知道，如果這位年輕的比丘真的如己所願，向年長比丘問難，給他的朋友製造麻煩的話，來世他就可能會墮落到惡趣。於是，佛陀就到這兩位比丘所在之處準備作調停。

按照慣例，比丘們無論何時在祇樹給孤獨園他們的住處聚會時，都會出於恭敬，給佛陀準備好座位。另外也是為了預防萬一佛陀湊巧真的光臨他們的住處。所以當佛陀來臨時，他就坐上比丘們事先準備好的座位上，然後開始向兩位比丘發問。

佛陀先問年輕的比丘有關四禪的境界，以及證得無色界境界的問題，年輕的比丘都無法正確作出回答。佛陀接著繼續問有





meditations, as well as the states connected with the Formless Realm attainments, he was not able to answer any of the Buddha's questions correctly. When the Buddha continued to question him on the lowest stages of Enlightenment, from the first stage of Stream-Enterer up to and including that of the Arhat, he was also unable to answer any of the Buddha's questions. Then the Buddha asked his older friend the same questions concerning the Four Dhyanas, the Four Formless Realm attainments, and the Four Stages of Enlightenment (in the Theravada tradition). The older friend was able to answer them all correctly.

Then the Buddha applauded and praised the older monk saying, "Well done! Well done!" The Buddha did not offer a single word of praise for the scholarly younger monk. Thereupon, the pupils of the younger monk who witnessed this were rather perplexed that the Buddha had showered lavish praise upon the unscholarly older monk and not a single word of approval on their learned teacher. To resolve their doubts the Buddha told them that, although their teacher knew the sacred words of the Buddha by heart, he lacked enlightened realization, so that "In my teaching he is like a man who tends cows for hire. But the older monk is like the owner who enjoys the dairy products of the cow at his own pleasure."

Some Comments About Buddhist Practice & Realization

Over 40 years ago, when I lived in Thailand to see how the Buddha's teachings (the Dharma) were actually practiced in daily life in one of the strongest Buddhist countries in the world, I was struck by how monks in the forest and monks in the city focused on different aspects of the Dharma.

The monks in the city devoted themselves to the study of the Dharma. They learned Pali, the canonical language of Theravada Buddhism, studied the Sutras, the commentaries by the Great Master Venerable Buddhagosha, and the Abhidharma teachings that gave a detailed and profound analysis of the nature and functioning of the mind, mental factors, and material form. When I became ordained as a novice monk in one of the best city monasteries in Bangkok, Wat Bovornivet, I had many good examples of monks who

關最初級的開悟的境界，從初果入流直至阿羅漢的境界時，他同樣無法正確回答佛陀的任何一個問題。然後，佛陀就問了這位年長比丘同樣有關四禪、四空處、及（南乘傳承的）四果的問題，年長的這位比丘都能一一正確回答。

於是，佛陀稱揚讚歎這位年長的比丘，說道：「善哉！善哉！」而對年輕的學者型比丘，佛陀沒有說一句讚歎的話。在場的那位年輕比丘的弟子們目睹這一幕，非常地困惑不解。為什麼佛陀對毫無學問的年長比丘大加讚賞，而對自己博學的老師卻沒有半句首肯之辭呢？為了解開他們心中的疑團，佛陀告訴他們，雖然他們的老師能夠熟記佛的教言，但卻沒有實際的證得；因此，「在我的法（佛法）中，他就像是一個受雇的牧牛人；而年長比丘就像是牛群的主人，可以隨意享用牛的乳酪。」

關於佛教修持與證悟的評論

四十多年前，當我在號稱佛法最興盛的佛教國家之一的泰國居住時，我有機會看到佛法在日常生活中是如何修持的。當時我很驚訝地發現，森林和城市的出家人修行佛法的側重點非常地不同。

居住在城市的出家人潛心於研究佛法。他們學習南傳佛經使用的語言——巴利文，並且研究佛經、覺音論師的註疏，以及詳細而深入分析心、心所、物質的性質和功能的《阿毗達磨論》。當我在曼谷最好的城市寺廟之一的巴婆尼瓦斯寺剃度成為沙彌時，有許多獻身佛法研究的出家人成為我學習的榜樣。在寺院生活的細微方面指導我的主要老師是一名英國比丘，他在當時是將巴利文經典翻譯成英文的最好的翻譯者之一。

而當我參觀阿姜摩訶布瓦和阿姜查（這兩位尊者都已擁有相當數量的西方出家弟子）的森林寺廟時，他們致力於將戒律（即僧侶日常生活準則）應用到實際修行中，以及投身於心識演化和禪定等核心佛法的修習，令我印象深刻。

對我來說，佛法的解、行這兩者的關係是十分顯著重要的。也就是說，一個人致力於專修禪定之前，能對佛經中佛陀所教的道理

vigilantly dedicated themselves to the study of the Dharma. The main teacher for instructing me on the finer aspects of monastic life was a British monk who was one of the top translators of the Pali Buddhist Canon into English at that time.

And when I visited the forest monasteries of Ajahn Maha Boowa and Ajahn Chah, both of whom already had a significant number of Western monastics disciples, I was quite impressed by their commitment to putting into actual practice the Vinaya (monastic rules in daily life) and the essential practices of Dharma in mental development and meditation.

It was quite apparent to me that these two aspects of the Buddha's teaching have an important relationship with one another. That is, before one devotes oneself to meditation practice, it is good to have extensive knowledge of the principles and truths taught by the Buddha in the Sacred Texts or Sutras. Spending a period of time in studying the Sutras and learning the canonical language creates a good and strong foundation for one's practice later on.

Now given the importance of building a good foundation in knowledge of the Dharma through study, it was still clear from all of the monks that I learned from that the truths of the Buddha's teachings can only be genuinely known through direct realization via deep, profound meditation practice. Even the erudite British monk-scholar who oversaw my monastic training would constantly remind me of how in order to "truly" understand the Dharma, one must practice like those in the forest monastery of Ajahn Maha Boowa, which was associated with our monastery.

Shortly after becoming a novice monk in Thailand, I learned about the rigorous practice of the monks and nuns of Gold Mountain Monastery in the Mission District of San Francisco under the guidance of the Venerable Master Hsuan Hua, the founder of the Dharma Realm Buddhist Association and the City of 10,000 Buddhas. Even though this was 40 years ago, at a time before the City of 10,000 Buddhas had even been established, the Venerable Master already had a far-reaching reputation for establishing a Bodhimanda that included both deep, profound study of the Sutras and, most importantly, vigorous and earnest spiritual cultivation. Fortunately, I

immediately left Thailand to take advantage of the opportunity to learn and cultivate under the tutelage of the Venerable Master here in America.

At the present time in our society we rightfully

和事實有廣泛的認識是很好的。花一些時間學習經典和相關的語言文字，能為日後的實修奠定一個良好和堅固的基礎。

雖然通過學習獲得佛法知識，對於修行基礎方面有其重要性；但可以確定的是，我所跟隨學習的所有出家人都一致同意，惟有通過深入修習禪定，才能真正理解佛陀所教導的真理。即使是博學的英國學者比丘，在他督導我的出家訓練時也會不斷提醒我，必須通過像與我們寺院有來往的阿姜摩訶布瓦森林寺廟中的出家人一樣真修實行，才能「真正」理解佛法。

在泰國成為沙彌後不久，我得知在三藩市米慎區的金山寺裏的僧尼們，在法界佛教總會及萬佛聖城創辦人宣公上人的指導下精進修行。儘管那是四十年前，萬佛聖城尚未成立，上人在創建一個既重視深入研究經典，更強調精進真修實行的道場方面，已經擁有很深的影響力。幸運的是，我旋即離開了泰國回到美國來，充分利用這個能在上人座下學習和修行的機會。

目前的社會，人們理所當然地尊崇博學多聞學者型的人。如果一個人擁有高學歷，人們便認為他是該領域的專家。然而，在佛教裏，僅僅擅長學術研究絕不代表其精通佛法。





honor those individuals who are scholarly and learned. If a person has an advanced degree we expect that he is an expert in that field. However, in the Buddha's teaching, advanced ability in scholarly study alone is not by any means an indication of expertise in the Buddha-dharma.

Unlike most other fields of knowledge, the Buddha's teaching is a way of life that requires actual practice, training, and realization. And it is only through practice or spiritual cultivation that one can come to a true understanding of the Dharma from direct experience and realization.

The training consists first of virtuous conduct. When one habitually acts and speaks in accordance with the moral precepts, one's mind becomes freed from the problems of worry, fear, covering, deception, and so on, that obstruct the ability to develop meditative skill. With training in meditation, one then develops the power of concentration or "Samadhi" that can see with great awareness and accuracy the nature of one's own thoughts inside and the events outside. With this expansion of awareness or "mindfulness" one is not so controlled and manipulated by events or objects in the external environment. Based on this greatly heightened awareness from meditation, the profound intuitive wisdom that sees the true nature of all phenomena in Samsara can unfold. With the deep realization that all conditioned things are unsatisfactory and suffering, impermanent, and "not-self", one no longer identifies with anything in Samsara.

One may say that studying the Sutras is important, because it is the first step in helping one to unfold or reveal one's inherent wisdom. This is absolutely correct. Studying the Sutras is very important, but it must be done in conjunction with virtue and meditative-concentration in order to be meaningful. Enlightened wisdom or prajna-wisdom, as it is called in Buddhism, is not the result of mere study. Without virtue and the development of meditative concentration, this sort of study is hardly different from other worldly fields of knowledge in that it has no significant effect on how one lives one's life, and more importantly how one perceives and experiences the world. One who has the enlightened wisdom taught by the Buddha, goes through a transformation of his or her entire being and as a result experiences the world in a completely different way than ordinary unenlightened people. A person with this

與許多其他知識領域不同，佛法是一種生活方式，必須躬行實踐，經過訓練，並實際證悟。只有通過實修，人們才能夠從直接體驗與證悟中真正明白佛法。

首先是德行方面的訓練。當一個人自然地在言行舉止上遵守道德規範，他的內心就沒有憂慮、恐懼、覆藏、欺誑等障礙禪定的問題。禪修就是培養我們的定力（即三昧），令人能夠更加敏銳和準確地覺察到內在的念頭和外在本質。隨著這種覺知性或念力的拓寬，一個人就不會那麼容易被外境事物所控制和操縱。在禪修的敏銳覺察基礎上，透視輪迴現象本質的般若智慧就能開展出來。一旦能深刻認識有為法的苦、無常、無我，你就不再會對生死輪迴中的事物感興趣。

有人會說，研讀佛經很重要，因為它是開智慧的第一步。這種說法完全正確，研究經典的確很重要，但一定要配合道德與禪修才有意義。證悟的智慧，或是佛教說的「般若」，不是單靠學習就能獲得的。如果欠缺道德和禪定方面的培養，這種研究與其他世俗的知識學問幾乎沒什麼兩樣，因為它無法很明顯地影響一個人的生活方式；以及更重要的，也不能影響一個人如何去感知和體驗這個世界。一個擁有佛陀所教導的智慧的人，其整個人生都會發生轉變，也因此他和普通人體驗世界的方式完全不同。一個擁有這種真實般若智慧的人，才有能力把佛陀所教的真實義理傳授給其他人，因為對他來說，法就是他親身體驗和證悟的事實，不是只是書上的文字而已。這才是一個真正的「載法之器」。

以上關於兩個朋友的故事，充份說明了一個道理，那就是要悟入佛陀所教的法，躬行實踐是絕對必要

genuine prajna-wisdom is capable of transmitting the actual teaching of the Buddha to others, because for him the truths of the Dharma are a reality that he knows through direct experience and realization—not mere words in a book. He is a true “vessel of the Dharma.”

This principal of how absolutely essential actual practice of the Dharma is to awakening to the truths taught by the Buddha, was well explained in the story of the two friends mentioned above. Now in the *Flower Garland or Flower Adornment (Avatamsaka) Sutra*, the “king of kings” amongst all Mahayana Sutras, which the Venerable Master explained in a series of about 3,000 lectures over a seven-year span, there is a section devoted to this idea. It is from Chapter 10, entitled *Bodhisattvas Ask For Clarification*.

This section starts out with Manjushri Bodhisattva asking the Bodhisattva Dharma Leader the following question:

Why is that some people receive the proper Dharma, but still succumb to the mental defilements or afflictions of greed, hatred, delusion, arrogance, covering, indignation, animosity, jealousy, stinginess, deceit, and obsequiousness?

Then Dharma Leader Bodhisattva answered in verse. These are the first lines of his response:

**Disciple of the Buddha, listen well
To the true meaning of what you ask.
It is not merely by means of much learning
That one may enter the Dharma of the Buddha.**

The Venerable Master explained this verse as follows:

In studying the Buddha-dharma, it is not the case that the more one studies, the better. Nor is it that the more one receives and upholds the better. Someone may say, “I can recite the *Shurangama Sutra*, *Dharma Flower (Lotus) Sutra*, and the *Flower Adornment Sutra*- in fact, the entire Twelve Types of Sutra Texts and the Three Treasuries or Baskets of the Buddhist Canon- from memory, without looking at a book.” But have you cultivated the Buddha-dharma? No! To have knowledge without putting what you know into practice is like talking about delicious food, while going hungry. It is not merely by reading more or reciting more that one can enter the Dharma of the Buddhas.

Some of the next verses include the following:



的。而上人曾經花七年、將近三千次的講筵，講述了這部被喻為大乘經典中的「王中之王」《華嚴經》，同樣也闡明了這個觀念，經文就在第十品〈菩薩問明品〉。

經文一開始，是文殊師利菩薩問法首菩薩：

**何故復有受持正法。而不斷者。隨貪
瞋癡。隨慢隨覆。隨忿隨恨。隨嫉隨
慳。隨誑隨諂。**

法首菩薩以偈頌作了回答，開頭幾句是：

**佛子善諦聽，所問如實義，
非但以多聞，能入如來法。**

上人對這句偈頌的解釋是：

「學習佛法，不是研究得越多越好，也不是受持得越多越好。有的人可能說：『我能背誦《楞嚴經》、《法華經》、《華嚴經》，乃至整個三藏十二部。』但是你實際修行過佛法嗎？沒有！只是擁有知識，卻不能把所知道的付諸實踐，就好像餓著肚子說美食一樣。光是讀誦很多的經典，是入不了佛法的大門的。」

接下來的偈頌，其中有一部分如下：

*Like a physician who, though skillful in prescribing medicine,
Is unable to cure his own illness.
Without practicing the Dharma, Much learning is the same way.
Like one who counts the wealth of others',
But has not a penny of his own.
Without practicing the Dharma, Much learning is the same way.
Like a person born in a King's palace,
Who still suffers hunger and cold.
Without practicing the Dharma, Much learning is the same way.
Like a deaf musician playing tunes
Others enjoy but he himself does not hear.
Without practicing the Dharma, Much learning is the same way.
Like a blind artist whose many drawings Are displayed for others,
But he himself can never see.
Without practicing the Dharma, Much learning is the same way.*

In conclusion, I am reminded of these words from a lecture the Venerable Master gave during a Chan meditation session back in August of 1974- actually during my first week of studying and cultivating under his guidance:

True skill, true gong fu (功夫), isn't in any book, isn't in any Sutra, or any Shastra, or in any part of the Vinaya. It requires that you actually, truly, do the work of cultivation. The Sutras just tell people the Path. They teach you how to cultivate the spiritual path. However, if you merely know the path and you don't practice it, that's useless... .

When you're all muddled and confused, you can look at a thousand books and it won't be sufficient. It will still be too few. If you have really become enlightened- you realize Enlightenment and have Awakened- then one word is a lot of talk. You have no use for it. In the Chan School we speak of "using the mind to seal the mind" and "not being established by the written or spoken word". There isn't any language or literature. The inheritance of the Dharma is also called the Mind Ground Dharma. The Dharma of the Mind Ground tells you to cultivate it and to recognize it. It is the 'light and wind' of the original ground. It's not from any other place. You will not find the Mind Ground Dharma anywhere outside. But if you return the light, search within yourself, apply your spiritual skill and gong fu to the inherent nature, you will recognize your own mind and see your own nature. That's what counts.

(From the book *Listen to Yourself, Think it Over*, Volume One) ❀

如人善方藥，自疾不能救，
於法不修行，多聞亦如是。
如人數他寶，自無半分錢，
於法不修行，多聞亦如是。
如有生王宮，而受餒與寒，
於法不修行，多聞亦如是。
如擊奏音樂，悅彼不自聞，
於法不修行，多聞亦如是。
如盲績眾像，示彼不自見，
於法不修行，多聞亦如是。

最後，我想起自己在上人座下修習的第一個星期，也就是一九七四年八月，上人在一次禪七中的開示：

真正的功夫不在哪本書裏，不在哪部佛經、哪部論、或哪部律裏。真正的功夫要你確實、真正地去實行。經典只是告訴我們途徑，教我們如何修道。但是如果你僅僅知道方法，卻不去實踐，那是沒有用的。

迷時千卷少，悟後一字多。禪宗講的是「以心印心，不立文字」，這個法的傳承也叫「心地法門」。心地法門要你去修行、去認識，那是吾人的「本地風光」，不是從任何其他地方來的。你儘在外邊找，是找不著自性的。但是如果迴光返照，在自性上用功夫，你就能識自本心，見自本性。那才算數。

(摘自《Listen to Yourself, Think it Over》第一輯) ❀

