

攝心為要

Mindfulness is of the essence



A lot of people want to come, especially westerners, to check out Buddhism. They really like the idea of meditation because there's no religious commitment. You don't have to bow to anything, you don't have to recite anything. Just sit and meditate and then you get enlightened, it's really straightforward. A lot of westerners are drawn that way because they don't want to get involved too much in religion right away.

But when it comes to actually doing it, when it comes to actually doing Chan - sitting meditation, they found out it's not so easy. Our Venerable Master used to say: "The people who can sit Chan and do it properly to attain the Way are maybe one in a hundred." Because that's the direct school, it's deceptively simple, in other words it looks simple and straightforward, but is actually the most difficult.

I know this myself because I did the same thing. When I lived at Gold Mountain, I just wanted to sit and wake up. At Gold Mountain Monastery, we had recitation sessions first, then one to three weeks of Chan, sometimes longer – just twenty-one hours a day of sits – sit for an hour, walk twenty minutes and repeat for twenty-one hours a day. It seemed impossible, how could we do that? It was really hard but it was actually quite doable. So we used to do that and I thought this is my opportunity now, I'm really going to wake up (get enlightened).

So one or two weeks into the session, I'm grinding my teeth, trying to wake up and Shr Fu walks into the Chan Hall, leans over and asks: "What doing?" "Shr Fu, I'm trying to wake up." I said. He chuckled and said, "That's stupid! This is not how

很多人想要認識佛教，特別是西方人。他們喜歡打坐，因為不需要拜佛，不需要念經，不需要參加任何宗教儀式，只要坐在那裏就可以開悟，多簡單！因此，許多西方人對打坐很感興趣，因為不想一開始就涉入宗教的領域。

但是等到真正打坐的時候，他們就發現其實不是這麼容易。上人常說：「能坐禪開悟的，一百個人當中可能只有一個。」因為這個直指人心的法門，看起來很簡單，事實上非常困難。

對此，我很有體會，因為我也是如此。剛來金山寺的時候，我一心想參禪開悟，當時金山寺每年都有禪七，每次先打一、兩個佛七，然後接著一到三個禮拜的禪七，有時更多個禮拜。禪七的時候，每天坐21個小時，就是坐一個小時，然後行香二十分鐘，這樣持續21個小時。聽起來像不可能的事，我們怎麼辦到的呢？雖然不是很容易，但實際上還是做得到的。所以大家就這樣跟著做，我也覺得機會到了，很快我就可以開悟了。

於是咬緊牙關坐了一、兩個禮拜，努力地想開悟。師父走進禪堂問我：「你在幹什麼？」我回答上人：「師父，我正努力開悟。」上人說：「Stupid（傻瓜）！開悟不是這樣開

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you wake up, you just don't understand. Be patient. Don't be greedy for enlightenment. When it is time to sit, then sit. When it is time to walk, then walk. Don't be worried about enlightenment. It will come when conditions are ripe. The more you grasp at it, the less it will come."

For westerners, the best thing actually is to recite because, although we try to do pure Chan we're not very good at it. You become good at it if you learn how to recite and bow first, because that's called active meditation. The trouble with everybody is that they think that all these cultivation methods are different but actually they are the same. Doing recitation is just Chan. Bowing to the Buddha is just Chan. Chan is bowing to Buddha, and so is recitation; it's all cultivation. When the Buddha was in the world, there was just one school – the Buddhadharmā.

So, now we're doing the Amitabha Session where you recite the Buddha's name everyday. We are actually cultivating Chan, according to Shr Fu. Why? We are building our mindfulness when we recite, so as our mind is right here now, not yesterday, nor tomorrow. We want to just recite. If you do it properly, your whole mind becomes Amitabha – that's it, there's nothing else going on. You're here, and you feel everything, you hear the birds making noise, but it's all just Amitabha. There's a famous saying in Buddhism, that just this here and now is the Pure Land. This is the Pure Land. We all look at the Pure Land as some beautiful place up in the clouds where when we die we go there. The Pure Land is right here. Take a look. It's right here.

There's a saying in Buddhism: "Walking, standing, sitting, and lying down, everything is just cultivation." You should be mindful. We're building up our mindfulness. When you do a recitation session, you are especially building

的。要有耐心，不要貪求開悟。該打坐的時候打坐，該行香的時候行香。不要擔心開悟不開悟，時間到了，自然開悟。不要急，欲速則不達。」

對西方人而言，念佛其實是最適合的，因為光靠參禪，我們的功夫還不夠。想學好參禪，要先學會怎麼念佛、拜佛，因為念佛、拜佛也是一種參禪，動態的參禪。問題就在於大家都覺得這些是不同的法門，其實它們都是一樣的。念佛是參禪，拜佛是參禪，參禪也等於在拜佛、念佛，這些都是在修行。佛陀在的時候，沒有這麼多的宗派，只有一個，那就是佛法。

所以我們現在在打佛三，每天都在念佛，念「南無阿彌陀佛」。師父說，其實這也是在參禪。為什麼？因為念佛的時候，專心念佛，讓念頭專注在當下，不在昨天，也不在明天，就是一心念佛。要是念佛念得上路的話，你的心就是阿彌陀佛，什麼妄想也沒有。坐在這裏，你就可以清楚感受到一切；你聽到小鳥吱吱叫，但都變成了阿彌陀佛的佛號。佛教裏有一句大家熟知的句子：當下即淨土。這裏就是淨土。我們總以為淨土是雲端上的仙境，往生以後要去的地方。其實淨土就在當下，仔細看，就在這裏。

所以才會說，行、住、坐、臥都是在修行，時刻都要收攝心念，觀照當下。打七的時候，更要特別建立觀照的智慧，收攝念頭回到當下，這也是本有佛性即將顯現的地方。如果我們可以這樣攝心念佛，專心念「南無阿彌陀佛」，那麼耳朵聽的、身體感受的都是阿彌陀佛，而不是用想的，去想「阿彌陀佛」的意思。阿彌陀佛，就是阿彌陀佛。要是能到這個境界，念佛功夫就有一點相應了。

現在正在打佛三，其實平常不論走路、上班或者上學，修行都不應該停止，都應該繼續用功，攝念觀心。

up your mindfulness. Bring your mind to this moment, to this very moment, and your true Buddha nature will manifest. We can do that by reciting Buddha's name, "Namo Amitofwo." That's all you should hear and feel, and not even think the word "Amitabha," it's just Amitabha. Then you are making some progress.

So, we're doing this session now. We should treat our daily life - when we walk, when we go to work, when we go to school, as cultivating. You just build up your mindfulness. It doesn't matter what you are doing, you should treat everyday as a Chan Session, or Amitabha Recitation Session, or Gwan Yin Recitation. Everyday is just now. You build up your awareness, you build up your everyday awareness; you build up your "now-awareness." The closer we get to building our "now-awareness," the more awake we'll become - that's how you open up your true wisdom. It'll just pop out of you, sooner or later, because all of us have it.

The Buddha said when he became enlightened, "Wow, every living being has the same nature, it's incredible!" That's the first truth the Buddha spoke: "All living beings have the Buddha-nature." But he probably didn't say it that way. He probably said, "Everything has this pure and wonderful nature. We're all just thus." So this is one of the most profound things about the Buddhadharm. Shakayamuni Buddha said that when he woke up (became enlightened) in the middle of the night, under the Bodhi tree looking at the star, saying it is "truly wonderful."

So now we are reciting every day, every hour, every minute, hopefully waking up. Sometimes we wake a little bit, sometimes we wake up a lot. We don't want to get discouraged. Every day is just a day. You treat it that way; treat it as the only day. There was no yesterday, and there's no tomorrow. It's just now.

[Questions from the audience]

Q: This is my first time attending the Buddha recitation session. Usually my dharma door is Chan, or studying the Sutras. I never thought that reciting the Buddha's name is suitable. It wasn't until recently, when I attended the Gwan Yin Session in CTTB, where a person told me that my dharma door is to recite the *Vajra Sutra* and the Buddha's name. So I started reciting that, sometimes twenty-one times per day.

The beginning was really difficult. I got tired easily. It was surprisingly difficult but after two months, it felt easier. So this time, I came here to learn how to recite the Buddha's name, however, I couldn't actually apply the effort to reciting the Buddha's name. I'm usually reciting the *Shurungama Mantra* seven times per day and it is very easy. How come it's so difficult to recite the Buddha's name and what should I do now?

A: If you are doing something that's truly easy, you better take another look at it, maybe you aren't doing something right. The

每天無論做什麼，都當成是禪七、佛七、觀音七，每天都在打七，事實也是如此。每天，就是眼前當下，就是保持內在的觀照覺知，保持每天的觀照覺知，保持當下的觀照覺知。當覺照的功夫愈能安住於當下，心就愈清明，這就是開智慧的方法。時候到了，這種真正的智慧就會突然現前，因為這是我自性本來就有的。

佛陀在菩提樹下，夜睹明星，開悟的時候說：「奇哉！一切眾生的自性無二無別。」這是佛陀證悟後說的第一個真理：一切眾生皆有佛性。但他可能不是這樣說，而是說：「萬物都有淨妙的本性，一切眾生皆是如此。」這是佛法最奧妙的其中一個義理。

因此我們現在每天都在念佛，每個小時都在念佛，每一分鐘都在念佛，希望能夠開悟。有時候開悟一點點，有時候開悟比較多。然而不論多少，都不要灰心，珍惜每一天。不要想昨天，不要想明天，眼前就只有當下。

(聽衆提問)

問：我是第一次參加念佛法會，我平常的法門是參禪或是讀經，從來沒有想過會跟念佛法門相應，直到今年去萬佛聖城參加觀音七的時候，有一個人跟我說我的法門應該是念《金剛經》和念佛，於是我開始在家念《金剛經》，有時一天念21遍。

剛開始，念得很累，沒想到念《金剛經》這麼難；但是念了兩個月之後，變得很有精神。這次是專門來學這個念佛法門，怎麼念得相應，但是卻怎麼都念不動，覺得一點都提不起來。不像〈楞嚴咒〉，我每天念七遍都很有勁，但是念佛法門真的



雪山寺一景 A view at Snow Mountain Monastery



Master used to tell us: “Cultivation is really hard, and it’s really easy at the same time.” So, we all feel a little awkward doing different things: “Oh this is my dharma door, oh that’s my dharma door, oh this is my dharma door.” We don’t even know what our dharma doors are, we aren’t even in that stage yet. You start knowing what your dharma door is when you start really waking up.

Everybody thinks they understand what their dharma door is. I used to think: “Chan is my dharma door.” Shr Fu said: “You just follow, and do everything we all do. Mindfulness is your dharma door. Be mindful. Whatever trick it takes for you to be mindful, that’s your dharma door. Stop making up all this nonsense.”

“Well, if I do this kind of thing, then I recite that, then I look at this, then I see that, then that formula works for me.” “Oh really,” the Master used to laugh at us because we get all attached to these ways of doing things. “No.” We practice all five schools at all our way places actually.

Shr Fu was a Tripitaka Master. He was a master of all five schools of Buddhism. He wasn’t just a master of Chan or master of the Pure Land. He was a master of all of them. He said, there’s basically no school, and it’s the same principle in your cultivation, don’t be so attached to what you’re cultivating. I’ll do anything. If it’s bowing, that’s fine, if it’s reciting that’s fine, if it’s reciting Amitabha, that’s also fine. It’s all fine because it’s helping us build up our mindfulness – that is cultivation when you build up your mindfulness.

Q: When I recite the Buddha’s name, especially when I sit, then I feel the chi and the blood circulate and it causes my shoulders and bones to make cracking sounds. The chi also goes up to my head, and then it causes me to lean backward - it’s kind of uncomfortable. This happens after sitting for one or two hours, and it has bothered me for one or two years. How can I improve that?

A: When we bow and recite, everything we do, we are creating some

很難，怎麼辦？

答：如果有一件事情做起來輕而易舉，你可能要考慮一下，到底做得對不對。上人常跟我們說：「修行是一件非常非常困難的事情，同時也是非常非常容易的事情。」當我們做跟平常不同的事情總會覺得怪，會想說：「嗯，這種法門適合我，那個法門適合我，這才是我的法門。」但是，我們並不知道自己的法門是什麼，因為我們都還不夠那種程度。唯有真正開悟了，才真正知道自己的法門是什麼。

大家都覺得自己清楚自己的法門是什麼，我以前也認為參禪是我的法門。但是師父說：「你就是隨眾，大眾做什麼，你就做什麼。專心就是你的法門，什麼能讓你專心，什麼就是你的法門，不要想那些沒有用的。」

有人說：「我修這個法，念那個咒，然後讀這個經，這法門跟我很契機。」「真是這樣嗎？」上人常笑我們，因為我們太死板了，一定要怎樣才可以。上人說：「不是這樣的。禪、教、律、密、淨，我們都要學習。」

上人是三藏法師，不僅精通經律論，同時也精通佛教的五大宗。他不僅僅通曉禪宗或淨土宗，事實上他是通曉全部的宗派。上人教我們，其實根本沒有什麼宗派的分別。修行也是同樣的道理，不要執著什麼法門，什麼都可以。拜佛也可以，持咒也可以，念佛也可以，因為這些法門都在幫助我們攝心。能攝心，就是修行。

問：念佛的時候，特別是坐著的時候，我都可以感覺身體氣血的流動循環，然後我的肩膀和骨頭就會發出聲響。這股氣從背脊一路走到頭上，我的頭就會向後仰，就會覺得很不舒服。這種情況不到一兩個小時就會發生，而且已經有兩年左右了。請問要怎麼改善？

答：不論拜佛或是念佛，甚至做任何事，都會帶動一股氣，一種身體內的能量。上人曾經告訴我們，拜佛的時候，腹部的氣會走到心臟；打坐的時候，也會有氣。有很多故事描述高僧大德打坐時的氣，足以把雪融化掉。

至於你身體的狀況，我沒有那種智慧來答覆你，我只能告訴你要適時調整自己。如果你的做法讓身體很不舒服或是變得很奇怪，那麼你可能要稍微改變一下，換個方法，不要硬來，因為身體也許正向你發出什麼信號。所以要隨順自己的

kind of chi, some kind of energy with our bodies. When the Master tells us that when we bow, we are creating chi in our stomach, and it comes to our heart. When we are sitting Chan, we are also creating chi. There are stories of masters who can actually melt snow because they can create so much energy simply by sitting.

You want to know a specific situation about your own body? I don't have that kind of wisdom to tell you. I can tell you that you should try to accord to conditions, get tuned in to yourself. If you are doing something that's awkward or unusual for you, then maybe change it and do it in a different way, don't just keep going on. Maybe your body is trying to tell you something. Basically you should be in accord with your body, like you should be in accord with heaven and earth.

Bodhi Dharma sat in a cave all the time, he did it for nine years. We went in 2013 and visited his cave. We had to hike way up this hill to get to it – a tiny little cave where he sat and faced the wall. Every day he would go out and he would exercise. He would sit all day long, and that's not good for you, and that's why we sit for an hour and walk for twenty minutes.

But Bodhi Dharma, who was Indian, went to China where Buddhism was new at that time. He would go out of his cave and watch the animals; look at the monkeys, and all the different animals. He would emulate them and copy their movements and see how naturally they move. He would watch a monkey move in the tree, just a fluid movement – almost beautiful to watch.

You can see how animals, they accord, even though they are not enlightened, they accord with nature. They have a natural feeling. They just know how to flow. They know how to move their bodies. He would watch them and studied their movements. Then, he would start emulating them. That's why they used to laugh at him: "Look at that funny monk, he's doing all those crazy moves." Well, that evolved into Chinese Kung Fu. That's where Chinese Kung Fu came from.

Also, sometimes you might have something wrong with your shoulder, your back. I had trouble with my back. I went and saw a good doctor, Dr. Chiu. He is Chinese, and he fixed me right up. I threw my back out, because I was pulling on a chainsaw. I could barely walk, so I went and saw my doctor. I'm a veteran, I was in the navy before, so I went to the VA, and my doctor said, "Go find an acupuncture doctor or something, they would help you more than we would." So, Dr. Chiu fixed me up quickly: "Oh, that's where the trouble is." Boom. He would wrap me up like a pretzel and he fixed me.

Q: About according with heaven and earth, it makes perfect sense. At the same time, I also know the message that "You have to endure to breakthrough, so you have to do what actually feels unnatural, to endure what is difficult, to overcome the obstacle." I think there are several instructions in Chan that mention "You need to sit with the pain in your legs." and "I will not move - you legs can fall off!" But then

身體狀況，就像隨順天地一樣。

達摩祖師在洞裏一坐就是九年。2013年我們去中國參觀那個山洞，一路往上爬到山頂，才找到他當年面壁打坐的地方——一個很小的山洞。達摩祖師每天打坐完，就會出來活動一下。達摩祖師一坐，就是一整天，但其實這並不適合你。這就是為什麼我們坐一支香，就要起來走二十分鐘。

達摩祖師從印度剛來到中國，佛法在當時的中國還是很新的。所以每當他從洞裏出來，就會看看山裏的動物；觀察猴子，當然還有其他的動物。觀察之後，他試著模仿這些動物，學習牠們的動作，體驗牠們自然的姿態。猴子在樹叢間靈活流利的移動，簡直是近乎完美的表演。

這些動物雖然沒有開悟，卻能隨順自然。動物與生俱來的本能，讓牠們自然而然地就知道應該怎樣在大自然中行動，怎樣支配自己的肢體。於是，達摩祖師開始研究和模仿這些動物，因此當時有人就笑他：「瞧那個滑稽和尚，做什麼怪動作。」但是這些動作，後來演變為中國的功夫。

另外，有時候可能是妳的肩膀或者後背有些問題。以前我的後背有一些毛病，後來去看一位很好的醫生——邱醫生。他是個中國人，很快就把我的毛病治好了。我是因為用電鋸的時候扭到的，痛到幾乎沒辦法走路，只好去看醫生。因為以前在海軍服役，所以就去退伍軍人專屬的醫院，那裏的醫生就推薦我去看針灸醫生，他說那個對我比較有效。邱醫生馬上就診斷出我的問題，於是把我的四肢像轉麻花似的，轉幾轉，就把我的背痛治好了。

問：剛講的隨順天地，講得很有道理。但是我也聽過一個說法，那就是「要忍耐，才能過關。不舒服也要堅持下去，難行能行，難忍能忍，才能突破難關。」我記得幾個參禪的開示說：「打坐的時候，即使腿疼也要忍」；「就算兩條腿斷了，我也不動」。這些聽起來，好像不是隨順天地。

一位聖城的法師也分享過她自己的經驗。她曾經跟上人說她的背痛了大概三年，但上人並不怎樣理會。當然，上人不是不理會她的背痛，而是建議她一些事情。然後有一天，這位

I recall these things that don't seem to be in accord with heaven and earth.

One dharma master at CTTB told us she complained to the Venerable Master about her back pain for almost three years, and the master seemly dismissed it. But he obviously did not dismiss it, he recommended other things, and she realized the pain was gone. But she hadn't done anything particular, she just happily went along with it. She couldn't explain it.

I always find myself having troubles with it. In the beginning when I was practicing the precepts, it was so difficult I almost left the city, which was driving me nuts. And then someone told me: "In practicing precepts or any cultivation and if it is causing you discomfort, you're doing it wrong because there should be joy in cultivation. There is a difference between the discomfort caused by the practice and the joy that comes from the practice." Somehow that eventually clicked yet often times I still find myself struggling with this balance, what does it mean to accord with heaven and earth, what does it mean to break through an obstacle.

A: We really accord with heaven and earth when we wake up to the way, that's really according with heaven and earth. So every time anything before that, we're not really there yet - that's what the breakthrough is all about. "Oh I'm not according with heaven and earth to breakthrough." How do you know? You don't even know what according with heaven and earth is in the first place. You have to get through our pale cast of thought, Shakespeare said that. We're controlled by a pale cast of thought, it's like the skies overcast all the time. We are so used to it, we think that's reality, that's our thinking.

The First Stage Arhat, the first real stage of enlightenment, has left all filth far behind - it means he has broken through and stopped his false thinking. All thinking is false thinking, so the first stage of Arhat has discarded and left the filth of thinking far behind.

Our constant dualistic thinking going on all the time, even about good things. It's like this pale cast of thought that Shakespeare spoke of - even he had the wisdom to know that. We are so bound by it, we think it's real, that's reality but it's a joke. When you break through that and stop it, then you have the first taste of an Arhat - the first taste of real accordance with heaven and earth. You start to feel the anvil, the weight on our shoulders lift, "it's truly, truly wonderful," so they say.

Our fox-like minds are always active, our minds are like lawyers, "if I do that, but if I do this, but, but, but..." It's constantly keeping us in a cycle of thinking, thinking, thinking. We cultivate to get through that actually. We cultivate to rest that, to stop it, to break through it. The first taste you get, you don't have to ask anybody, you'll just know. You know, because we all have this Buddha nature in us. That's the first thing the Buddha said. We all have great wisdom inside us, we just have to break into it, got to tap it basically. ❀

法師就發現自己的背痛不見了。她並沒有特別做什麼，只是不去在意背痛這件事。這個變化她自己也沒法解釋。

我開始練習持戒的時候，也感到非常困難、懊惱，幾乎要搬離聖城。後來有人告訴我：「如果你因為持戒或修行而生煩惱，那你一定是什麼地方做錯了，因為這些應該是令人感到法喜才對。持戒雖然會遇到困難，但是仍然會從中得到法喜。」這番話令我頗有感觸。但是有時候，我還是覺得很難找到平衡點——什麼時候要隨順天地？什麼時候要忍耐，打破難關？

答：開悟以後，我們才能真正地隨順天地。因此在那之前，我們都做不到真正的效法天地自然，而這也就是修行上需要突破的關口。有人說：「喔，這樣修行沒有順應天地法則。」你怎麼知道的？你連什麼是天地法則都不知道。正如莎士比亞說的：「我們要突破這覆蓋我們思維的陰霾。」我們被這個思維的陰霾所控制，就像天空被陰霾蓋住一樣。我們習以為常，以為那就是真實，其實那只是我們自己的想法。

初果的聖人已經到了遠塵離垢的境界，也就是能夠截斷、止住妄想。我們所有的想法都是妄想，而證初果的羅漢突破了這種妄想的境界，因此謂之「遠塵離垢」，離開妄想的塵垢。

我們的念頭，始終游移在二元對立的思維當中，即使好事也是如此，就像莎士比亞說的「思維裏的陰霾」一樣。我們一直被妄想蒙蔽著，卻始終認為它是真的、是實在的，但充其量不過是開自己的玩笑。當你打破並且停止了妄想，你就嚐到初果羅漢的滋味，嚐到真正隨順天地的滋味，你頓時覺得肩頭的重擔不見了，這境界實在是：「太棒了！」

我們這個不老實的心，就像辯護律師一樣，總是說：「假如我這樣做，如果我那樣做，可是這個，又可是那個，可是……可是……可是……。」令我們不斷想這個、想那個，永遠停不下來。修行的目的，就是要在這裏突破，把這個分別識心停下來。當你突破以後，不需要問任何人，你自己一定知道。因為每個人都有佛性，這是佛陀證悟後說的第一件事。這種智慧是人人本有的，我們只要突破妄想，就能證得這個境界。❀