



## Cultivating on the Mind-Ground

比丘尼恒居2015年9月29日  
講於萬佛城大殿  
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A talk given by Bhikshuni Heng Ju  
at the 10,000 Buddhas Hall on September 29, 2015  
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BODHI FIELD 菩提田

今晚分享幾段大珠禪師的語錄，第一段語錄：有一位法師問大珠禪師：「持《般若經》最多功德，師還信否？」

禪師答：「不信。」

法師云：「若爾，靈驗傳十餘卷，皆不堪信也。」

禪師答：「生人持孝自有感應，非是白骨能有感應。經是文字紙墨，文字紙墨性空，何處有靈驗？靈驗者，在持經人用心，所以神通感物。試將一卷經安著案上。無人受持，自能有靈驗否？」意思是，在世的人行持孝道，自然就有感應，並不是死去的人能有感應；經是文字紙

Tonight I would like to share a few excerpts from Chan Master Da Zhu's instructional talks with everyone. The first excerpt begins with a Dharma Master asking Chan Master Da Zhu, "It is said that one who upholds the *Prajna Paramita Sutra* will have the most merit and virtue. Master, do you believe it?"

The Chan Master replied: "I don't believe it."

The Dharma Master continued: "Well, if that's the case, wouldn't that mean the ten volumes or more of people's stories on their efficacious responses are untrue?"

To which Chan Master Da Zhu replied: "One who practices filial respect will naturally receive

墨，它的性是空的，哪個地方有靈驗呢？所謂靈驗，是在持經人用心，所以能夠神通感應。如果將一卷經放在桌上，沒有人去受持讀誦，這樣怎麼會有靈驗呢？

這段語錄重點在「用心」二字，這個心不是識心，而是真心。讀了這段語錄，個人有很大的感觸。雖然出家很多年，但是談到修行，這個門都還沒有入。怎麼說呢，譬如坐禪，每年雖然參加禪七，只能說是鍊鍊腿，一直都還在昏沉掉舉中，根本提不上「參」；說到念佛，也只能說在數數字；講到持咒誦經，也是口念心不念。凡此種種，用的都是識心、妄想心，可以說是在皮毛上用功夫。

今晚《楞嚴經》正好聽到彌勒菩薩的識大圓通。這個「識」就是分別，眾生無始以來都是因為這個分別心而輪迴六道，所有的山河大地也因為這個分別心而有。我們一直沒有停止用這個分別心，所以有煩惱和菩提；如果停止這個分別心，煩惱即菩提。

我們用分別心誦經，就是被經轉；不用分別心、不打妄想去誦經，就是轉經。《六祖壇經》裏有一位法師得意自己誦了三千部《法華經》，六祖大師說他被《法華經》轉，並不是他轉《法華經》，因為他一得意，我慢心就生出來，就執著那個持經的相上，所以被經轉。

眾生一天到晚都跟著妄想跑，跟著色、聲、香、味、觸、法六塵跑。看到美色就跟色塵跑，看到好吃的跟著味塵跑，聽到美妙聲音就跟著聲塵跑，凡此種種都是向外馳求，所以一直輪迴墮落。如果哪天覺悟了，停止用分別心、妄想心，那時候就是《楞嚴經》上講的：「狂心頓歇，歇即菩提。」這個時候，誦經就能轉經，這時候的修行才是真修。

另外一段語錄，有法師問：「念佛是有相大乘禪，師意如何？」

大珠禪師回答：「無相猶非大乘，何況有相？經云：取相凡夫，隨宜為說。」

法師又問：「願生淨土，未審實有淨土否？」

禪師答：「經云，欲得淨土，當淨其心；隨其心淨，即佛土淨。若心清淨，所在之處，皆為淨土。譬如生國王家，決定紹王業；發心向佛道，是生淨佛國。其心若不淨，在所生處，皆是穢土。淨穢在心，不在國土。」

responses while he is alive, not after death. The Sutra consists of words, paper and ink which are, in and of themselves empty in nature. So which among these words, paper and ink, would you say are efficacious? What makes the sutra recitation efficacious, is the mind of the person who is reciting the sutra. That is why there are efficacious responses. Therefore, how can there be any efficacious response from simply leaving a sutra on the table?"

The main point of this excerpt centers on "being mindful", which is not referring to our conscious mind but to our true mind. Reading this excerpt resonated with something in me. Though I have been a monastic for almost 20 years, I can't yet say that I've gotten past the basics in my cultivation. Take Chan meditation for instance. Though I participate in the Chan sessions every year, I can only say that though I have trained my legs to sit in full lotus, I still succumbed to torpor or the state of having an agitated mind. So I wasn't really able to investigate the Chan topic. As for reciting the Buddha's name, I was just counting numbers. And when it comes to reciting mantras and sutras, I was just reciting with my mouth but not with my mind. All of these examples show that I have been using my conscious mind, or the false-thinking mind. I am practicing at a superficial level.

Earlier we listened to the *Shurangama Sutra* portion how Maitreya Bodhisattva attained awakening through the practice of contemplating that all things exist only in consciousness. This consciousness is the mind that makes distinctions. Since time immemorial, it was this distinction-making mind that has caused us to be bound to the cycle of birth and death in the six destinies. The mountains, rivers, and earth are also projections of our discriminating minds. It is due to our unceasing use of this mind that we make distinctions between bodhi and affliction. But once this discriminating mind stops, afflictions become bodhi.

Thus, if we use the discriminating mind to recite sutras, we would be "turned" by the sutras. If we don't use this distinction-making mind and recite sutras without false thoughts, we "turn" the sutras. What do I mean by that? In the *Sixth Patriarch's Sutra*, there was a visiting Dharma Master who was quite pleased of himself for having recited the *Lotus Sutra* over 3,000 times. So the Sixth Patriarch told him, "You are being turned by the Sutra; it is not you who are turning the Sutra." Because of his complacency and pride, he became arrogant and attached to the notion of reciting the Sutra. He was thus turned by the Sutra.

We living beings chase after our false thoughts [that arise from contact with] the six kinds of perceived objects - sights, sounds, smells, tastes, objects of touch and dharmas. When we see beautiful forms, we chase after them; when we lay eyes on delicious food, we want to taste it; hearing pleasing sounds, we follow those sounds. Thus our minds wander and seek outwards all the time - which is why we continue to transmigrate and fall into the six destinies. When we become aware of



這段語錄，強調心的淨和不淨。如果心清淨，所生的地方就是淨土；如果心不清淨，所生的地方就是穢土。換句話說，我們心裏裝什麼，就與什麼結緣；心裏種什麼種子，就結什麼果。心裏裝著嫉妒，裝著算計，裝著貪心，就走不出狹隘、猥瑣、自私的陰影；心裏裝著他人的不是，就是愚蠢地拿他人的不是，不斷地折磨自己；如果心裏裝著善良，裝著寬容、真誠、感恩，你就會發現生命充滿陽光。因此遇到任何矛盾，都會先找自身的不足，然後修正它。

也許有的人會說：「照這種說法，念佛就可以生到極樂世界。那為什麼有人精進念佛，卻沒有生到極樂世界呢？」不能生到極樂世界，當然有種種的原因。其中主要原因是，心地長滿了雜草，堆滿了砂石，那麼撒再多的種子也無法發芽；即使發芽也是焦芽敗種，無法成長結果。

那麼要用什麼方法除去這些雜草、砂石呢？就要嚴守戒律，用戒律來除無明草、貪心沙、瞋恨石。戒律就像一根繩子，把我們的六根門頭——六個賊綁住，不讓它們偷我們的寶貝——就是功德法財。如果

our discriminating mind and stop making distinctions; when we cease to use the false-thinking mind, then it will be as the *Shurangama Sutra* has described, “When the madness in your mind ceases of its own accord, just that ceasing itself is bodhi [full awakening].” It is at this point that we can turn the sutras, which is when we are truly cultivating.

In another excerpt, a Dharma Master asked, “Buddha name recitation is the Mayayana Chan with marks. Master, what do you think about this?”

Chan Master Da Zhu replied, “That which has no form is not yet considered to be Mahayana, much less something with a form. To quote a Sutra, ‘[Because] ordinary people grasp at forms (appearances), they are thus taught accordingly’ [i.e. this is an expedient means of teaching the Dharma].”

The Dharma Master then asked another question: “I have vowed to be born in the Pure Land, but does it really exist?”

To which the Chan Master answered: “The Sutra says, one who wishes to be born in the Pure Land must first purify one’s mind. When one’s mind is pure, the Buddha Land will be pure. For example, if one were born into a king’s family one would certainly be heir to the throne. Likewise if we resolve to follow the path towards Buddhahood, we will be born in the Buddha’s Pure Land. If our mind is not pure, then no matter where we are born, it will be a land of filth. So it is not that the land is pure or impure, it is our mind that is so.”

The main point of this passage places is the importance of the purity of the mind. If the mind is pure, then wherever we are born into is pure. If the mind is impure, so would the place we’re born into be also. In other words, whatever is in our mind corresponds with the affinities we have; and we reap the fruit of whatever seeds we sow in our minds. When our minds are filled with jealousy, calculative thoughts and greed, we are trapped in the confines of a wretched, selfish and narrow-mind. If we occupy our minds with other people’s faults and mistakes, then we’re quite foolishly punishing ourselves for other’s flaws. However, when we have kindness, forgiveness, sincerity and gratitude in our minds, we will find that life is filled with sunshine. So whenever we encounter conflict, we should first reflect upon ourselves and change ourselves for the better.

Some may say, “Well if that’s the case, and we can be reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss just by reciting the Buddha’s name. Then why are there people who diligently recite the Buddha’s name who have yet not been reborn there?” There are various reasons why some people cannot be reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss. One of the main reasons is that the mind-ground is filled with weeds, sand and rocks. So no matter how many seeds one sows, they can’t possibly germinate. Even if they do sprout somehow, the sprouts are not healthy enough to grow into anything much.

How can we remove these weeds and gravel from our mind-ground? By rigorously upholding the precepts, we can remove the weeds of ignorance, the sands of greed and rocks of anger from our mind ground. The precepts are like a rope that ties up our six sense faculties to prevent them from stealing our treasures of merit, virtue and the Dharma. If we attempt to cultivate without

不把這六賊綁住，即使修了功德法財，累積資糧要到佛國淨土去，它們在另一頭又把功德法財劫走，這樣你想去淨土也去不成，因為這邊修，那邊又漏掉了。

《楞嚴經》裏也提到，要成就五十五位真菩提路，首先要從三種漸次開始。第一是修習，除其助因：就是不可以吃五辛的東西。第二是真修，剝其正性：想要真修，就要斷除殺盜淫妄，因為這正是性業的罪，所以要把它挖空除掉。第三增進，違其現業：要增進聖位，先要違逆現在的惑業。

前兩個漸次講的就是戒律，因此不論修任何法門，都是從嚴持戒律開始。嚴持戒律之後才能讓心地清淨，清淨之後，撒下念佛、誦經持咒的種子，乃至種種法門的種子，就容易發芽、成長、結果。

但是種子撒下去之後，還要不斷地巡視，看有沒有雜草又生出來，有就要拔掉，這樣才能順利結果。這個巡視，也可以說是每天自我反省，檢點自己言行；如果不檢點，雜草很快就長高長大。所以心的淨穢，首先在於有沒有嚴持戒律。

最後一段語錄，有法師問：「眾生入地獄，佛性入否？」禪師答：「如今正做惡時，更有善否？」法師答：「無。」禪師：「眾生入地獄，佛性亦如是。」

法師又問：「一切眾生皆有佛性，如何？」禪師：「作佛用是佛性，作賊用是賊性，作眾生用是眾生性；性無形相，隨用立名。經云：一切聖賢，皆以無為法而有差別。」

這就是說，眾生的自性本來是沒有差別的，差別在於如何善用其心。用在佛，就是佛性；用在眾生，就是眾生性。因此，十法界不離現前一念心。❀

using the precepts to restrain the six sense organs, all the treasures we have amassed to help us get to the Pure Land are leaking out through our six sense faculties. This is why some people are not able to be reborn in the Pure Land.

The *Shurangama Sutra* states that one must take three gradual steps in order to master the fifty-five stages along the true path to Bodhi (full awakening). **The first step is a practice that eliminates contributing factors**, which is to avoid eating the five pungent plants: garlic, onions, leeks, chives and shallots. **The second is to practice not violating fundamental rules of behaviour**, to completely stop engaging in killing, stealing, committing sexual misconduct and lying. In other words, to uphold the fundamental precepts. **The third is to vigorously turn away from intentional engagement with perceived objects**. To join ourselves to the ranks of sages, we need to change our habits and cease making connection with objects of perception that creates karma of delusion.

Notice that the first two steps relate to upholding of precepts; therefore rigorous upholding of precepts is fundamental to any method of cultivation you undertake. It is only by strictly observing the precepts that our mind-ground can be pure. Only then will the seeds we sow begin to sprout, be it the seeds of reciting the Buddha's name, reciting mantras or sutras, or seeds of any other Dharma-practice. They will then sprout well and eventually come to fruition.

After sowing the seeds, we need to constantly check our mind-ground ("garden") for weeds. If there are any, we need to pull them out so that the seedlings will thrive and bear fruit. Checking our mind-ground is reflecting within ourselves about everything that we have said and done every single day. If left unchecked, our mind ground will soon be overgrown with weeds. Therefore, whether our mind is pure or defiled really depends on whether we are strictly upholding the precepts or not.

In the last excerpt, the Dharma Master asked, "When living beings fall into the hells, would the Buddha nature fall in as well?"

The Chan Master replied, "At the moment when one is committing bad deeds, is there still any goodness in that person?"

"No." was the Dharma Master's response.

The Chan Master continued, "So it is, too, with the Buddha nature of living beings who fall into the hells."

The Dharma Master then asked, "All living beings have the Buddha nature; what do you think about that?"

The Chan Master replied, "If you use it doing Buddha's work, then that's the Buddha nature. If you steal and plunder, then you are using your nature as a thief; if you used it doing what living beings do, then you are using your nature as a living being. The essential nature in itself has no shape or form; it is just named or labelled in whatever way it is being used. As stated in the Sutra, 'That which differentiates all sages and worthy ones from ordinary beings is just their awakening to unconditioned dharmas.'"

This means that originally, there is no difference in the inherent of living beings. The difference lies in how we use of our minds. If we use our minds to realize Buddhahood, then our nature is the Buddha nature. If we use it as living beings, our nature will be that of living beings. To realize Buddhahood or to be a living being all lies with this very thought. Hence, the "Ten Dharma Realms do not go beyond this one thought". ❀