



Perfecting the Bodhisattva Practices at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas 在聖城修習菩薩道

A Talk Given by Trinh Doan at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas on August 13, 2015

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段親道2015年8月13日講於萬佛聖城大殿

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BODHI FIELD | 菩提田

I've been living here in the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas (CTTB) for two years. Like many other volunteers, besides cultivating Buddhism I've worked in many different settings in the community; it's like an American saying that says, "Jack of all trades".

First, I'd like to share my reflections on my service for the community as a physical therapist. I used to work for an occupational rehabilitation company that focused on treating workers who got injured at work. Most of these workers, because of their injuries, become permanently disabled and were unable to continue working. They ranked from a brilliant productive manager of a prestigious company to a chief breadwinner of family who suddenly turned into someone who had to physically and financially depend on others to survive.

Going through these difficult situations, most of these patients experience a lot of affliction. I witnessed a lot of tears and suffering in

我在聖城住了兩年了，和其他義工一樣，除了學習佛法之外，我參與很多不同部門的工作，就像平時講的那種「萬事通」，什麼事都做一點。

首先我想分享我身為一個物理治療師的看法。我曾在一個工傷復建機構，治療很多因為工作受傷的人。這些人多因傷害造成終身殘疾，無法繼續工作。他們在社會上、家庭中的角色都會面臨巨大的改變。比如說，從原來一個大公司很聰明能幹的經理，或者是家庭裏的經濟支柱，忽然變成身體上、經濟上都要依賴他人生活的情況。

在這種情況下，大部分人都會起很大的煩惱。我看到很多患者的傷悲、眼淚，他們因

these patients. They suffered from their illness both physically and eventually mentally. Most of them felt frustrated, even angry at life and wondered why this misfortune happened to them. They saw life as meaningless and as a way to ease themselves out of the struggle for a better life, they gave up striving for a better future. It was heartbreaking to see people suffer this way.

I came to the City to cultivate. Because our community is large enough to need an in-house clinician, I have continued to use my professional skill to serve people while cultivating. I feel so blessed! The bliss became even greater when I realized that the people I'd been taking care of are the Bodhisattvas in flesh. What do I mean by this? I have observed that patients at CTTB endure the pain in a very different way from people outside. I still see the tears as they go through their physical pain, but these are the tears of the Bodhisattvas who are willing to set their minds and heart to sacrifice their lives to serve the Triple Jewel and to protect the Budhadharma. These are the tears of those who are brave enough to put themselves through all this hardship in order to transform themselves as well as to help others cross over the sea of affliction. These are the tears of those who have the wisdom to see through all things and understand that life is absolutely fair and that every single thing that occurs in a person's life always follows what Buddhism calls the law of cause and effect, which is more accurate than any hi-tech device.

Now I'd like to share with you some of my experience as a cultivator about the life at CTTB. As we all know, our life here at CTTB is very quiet. As cultivators, we try to limit our talking, chatting, hanging around with other people. This "noble" silence of ours, I think, sometimes intimidates people from the outside; it makes people hesitate to approach us.

One day I got a very "honest" question from my DRBU classmates. It was when we studied a paragraph in a sutra, in which the Buddha instructs us that in order to practice the Eightfold Noble Path well, cultivators need to have good friends. The question they had was, "Do cultivators living in CTTB ever have a friendship?" I joked with them, "I guess Bodhisattvas don't need words to build friendship. Every day, we do the same things, eat the same food with the same people at the same time and same place, of course, there must be a connection."

However, I tried to explain further that to be able to feel this "unique" connection, we do need to possess certain kind of energy that must be compatible with other people. What I meant was that when people think they emit the energy. So if we all can have good thoughts, our thoughts will be in sync with others', which will create a harmonious environment in the Sangha. The power of this harmony then can make a smile or even a simple greeting of "Amitufo" from the others much more meaningful than any words we could say.

One day, during a conference with the staff of Dharma Realm

為身體的折磨而引起精神上的痛苦。他們大多會感到沮喪，憤怒為什麼自己會遇到這種不幸。他們怨天尤人，覺得生命受懲罰，生活沒有意義，也以此為藉口讓自己從繼續奮鬥中逃脫，放棄去爭取一個光明未來的努力。每當我看到他們忍受這種巨大的痛苦時，我都覺得很難受。

當我來到聖城，很高興發現這個社區大到需要住診的醫療服務，所以我在修行中還可以繼續用專業技能來服務大眾，我感到我是多麼的有福！尤其是我意識到，我照顧的是有血有肉的活菩薩時，我感到更加榮幸。

為什麼這麼說呢？因為據我的觀察，聖城的住眾病人，對傷痛的忍受，和外面的人有很大的不同。我也見過這裏的人因為身體疼痛而哭，但這是不一樣的眼淚。這些眼淚來自那些願意犧牲自己，用身心侍奉三寶，護持佛法的菩薩；他們以無比的勇氣克服困難，改變自己，並幫助他人渡過苦海。這些眼淚來自那些有足夠的智慧，看透一切，明白生命是一定公平的菩薩；他們明白在人生中所遇到的每一件小小的事情，都脫離不了佛法上講的不昧因果。這個因果定律，比任何高科技設備都要精確。

以上是我在聖城作為一個醫護人員的感受。下面我想談談在聖城修行的體驗。我們都知道，這裏的生活很安靜。一個修行人，儘量少講話、不聊天、不交際。有時候我們這種「高貴的」沉默，會讓外面的人不明所以，不太敢來接近我們。

一天，一位法大的同學問了我一個很誠實的問題。當時我們正在學習一段經文：佛陀教導弟子，修八聖道，修行者之間要有良好的友誼。我的同學問我，聖城的修行人之間也有這種良好的友誼嗎？我明白他的所指。我開玩笑說，菩薩之間不須要用言語來交流。我們每天在做同樣的事，在同樣的地點，同樣的時間，和同樣的人吃同樣的食物。我們之間確實有一種聯繫。

接著我又說，要體會這種獨特的聯繫，大家之間需要有一種可以互相兼容的能力。如果我們的念頭都是善的，我們就能感受到相同的能量，而創造出一個和諧的僧團環境。這種和諧的力量讓我們見面時只以一個微笑或是簡單一句「阿彌陀佛」的招呼，便勝過其他世俗語言。

有一天，在法界佛教大學的學期會議上，有位

Buddhist University, I was asked by an instructor how DRBU classes have helped my cultivation here at CTTB. Immediately, I said, “I understand the *Avatamsaka Sutra* much better.”

After I took the Buddhist hermeneutic class with Dr. Verhoeven last semester, I learned from the Commentary of the Venerable Master Hua to the *Flower Adornment Sutra Prologue*, that the *Avatamsaka Sutra* offers many valuable tools for people to cultivate the conduct of a Bodhisattva.

One of the principles that impressed me the most is the theory of relativity that is used in the sutra to deconstruct the existence of all things and prove that there is no real self. The philosophy used in the *Avatamsaka Sutra* addresses the no-self concept in a quite different way, than what is found in the *Heart Sutra*.

Any of us who have already read the *Avatamsaka Sutra* would know a famous quote that is stated in the sutra as, “**The place taken up is the tip of a hair, horizontally comprising Dharma Realms. Time taken up is a kshana, vertically exhausts seas of kalpas.**” A tiny space of “a tip of a hair can encompass the entire Dharma Realm,” and a very brief time of “a kshana” can also “exhaust the sea of kalpas.” Right here, we see the two extremities, the big and the small, short and long, can find themselves in each other. Based on the analogy described earlier, the small can become big and vice versa. This principle helps cancel out the contradiction between things and difference among things, which eventually results in the fusion of the all-pervading matrix in which all phenomena in the entire universe are interdependent conditioning to exist.

People don't accept the no-self concept easily, because if there is no self then who is going to cultivate and who will become enlightened? I've very often heard this same question arise among DRBU students.

The doctrine of no-self, conceptualized by the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, however, seems to solve this problem. The theory appears to be easier for the contemporary mind to grasp as the sutra does not accept the emptiness of self with nothing at all in it. On the contrary, the *Avatamsaka Sutra* attempts to prove that even though all things lack existence as individuals, they do possess a true nature. The *Avatamsaka Sutra* is able to bring this out in a more positive and creative way. Once the authentic emptiness of “self” in all things is recognized, the wonderful existence of a higher value and meaning emerges and expresses itself in the selfless image of a “Bodhisattva.”

I would like to conclude my Dharma talk today by showing my great appreciation to the Venerable Master Hua for the precious Buddhadharmic heritage he left behind for us. He is the reason I remember to recite this verse written by a Vietnamese Dharma Master daily, “I am thankful that every morning when I wake up, I realize I have one more day to love”. ❀

老師問我，法大課程如何幫助我在聖城修行。我立刻回答說：「我對《華嚴經》的瞭解，比以前要多很多。」

上學期我上了維荷文博士的「佛教詮釋學」課程後，從上人講的《華嚴經疏序淺釋》— 華嚴經註釋裏，我學到：《華嚴經》事實上提供了很多很好的方法，來指引人們修行菩薩道。

讓我印象很深刻的是，《華嚴經》解析「自我」的存在，是由其他事物組合而成，其實沒有一個我的存在。《華嚴經》用一個獨特的方法闡述「無我」，這和《心經》有很大的不同。

稍進一步來闡述一下這個理論，讓我們看看這個比喻：例如牆上的一個小孔，在人類看來是一個很小的空間，對小蟲子來說卻是牠的整個世界。對人類來說，一天的時間很短，對蟲子而言卻幾乎是整個的一生。所以萬物沒有一個固定的特質，自我也是不存在的。

讀過《華嚴經》的人應該記得經文裏有一段：「處以毛端該於法界，時以剎那盡於劫海。」毛端，一個最小的地方，便能涵蓋整個法界，一個最短的剎那，便能窮盡整個劫海。我們在這裏看到兩個極端，大的和小的、長的和短的，兩者之間可以相容。相對的理論上，大的可以變成小的，反之亦然。這個理論也反駁了事物之間的矛盾性，因為事事無礙，宇宙萬物圓融共存，本無差別。

人們不輕易能接受「無我」這個概念。因為，「沒有」我了，誰來修行，誰在開悟呢？我也常聽到法大的同學們問起這個問題。

《華嚴經》上講「無我」這個概念，如前所述，似乎可以解決這問題。因為《華嚴經》上講「我空」並不是什麼都沒有，相反的，《華嚴經》提出，雖然沒有一個自我單獨存在，卻有一種相互聯繫的自性存在著。這理論比較容易讓現代的人理解接受。《華嚴經》講到，有這樣一種眾生，以更加積極，更有創意的方式存在；一旦自我空了，真空裏有妙有，妙有裏有一種更有價值更有意義的存在，這個存在的無私形象就叫菩薩。

我想以我對上人傳承佛法給我們的感激，來總結今晚的講法。也因為上人，我每天都記得唸一位越南法師寫的這首偈頌：「我感恩生命，每天早晨當我醒來，我知道我有機會熱愛這新的一天。」 ❀