



Engaging with Family as Spiritual Practice: Keeping Cool During the Christmas Holidays

修行與探親：心平氣和過耶誕

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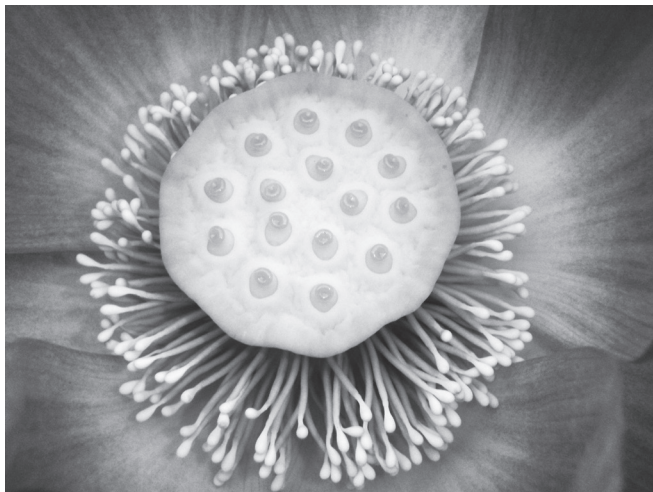
BODHI FIELD | 菩提田

On alternate Mondays, Doug Powers teaches “Buddhism for the Modern Mind” at the Berkeley Buddhist Monastery. The following is from the last class before the winter holiday (12-14-2015). Speaking directly to the situation of the students in the class, Doug addressed the challenges that come up for many people while visiting family and gives advice on dealing with those.

Christmas is coming up soon. So you will all have the chance to really work on your filial respect, to really cultivate. From the point of view of cultivation, looking at how well you were parented is actually almost a secondary issue to the amount that it has affected the fundamental ground of your habituation. Seeing through that in an honest way is really difficult. To me, that is the reason Master Hua pushed filial respect so much. He did so as a Chan teacher. It was not a Chinese cultural thing. It came from the recognition

道格·包威爾教授（果勒居士）每隔週一在柏克萊佛寺主持「佛教與現代心靈講座」。以下內容，摘自二零一五年寒假前的最後一堂課。席間，包威爾教授打開天窗說亮話，直接針對許多學生們回家探親時所面臨的挑戰，提出應對之道。

聖誕節即將到來，你們回家探親的時候，將有機會可以真正地磨鍊孝心，鍛鍊修行。從修道的角度來看，你如何被父母撫養成人相較於父母親的養育對你根本習氣的影響，前者其實是較次要的問題。要誠實地去看清這件事，其實非常不容易。在我看來，這應該是宣公上人致力闡揚孝道的原因。他是以禪師的角度的來推行孝道，不是以中國文



that from the standpoint of Chan cultivation, you need to be connected to your parental construct as much as possible, because then you can actually see that material to work on. The further you remove yourself from that material, the more unconscious it will be, and the more difficult it will be to work through, no matter how positive or how negative it was. Is everyone with me? The basis for filial piety is not a moral obligation, it is a personal-growth obligation to being honest with yourself about those aspects that are embedded in your personality, about your reactions that go back to childhood.

For almost everybody, the holidays become an opportunity to come face to face with those habits and constructs. It's got two sides to it. First, it challenges you: all these old habitual patterns come up when you are around family. Then, on top of the problem of coming back into contact with all these family members, there is the problem of expectations. That is, the second big problem is that people create massive amounts of expectations of each other, that sometimes don't get totally fulfilled. For example, you might be all "charged" with the expectation that someone is going to have a certain kind of reaction to you or give you some kind of joyful, really exciting, positive time. But when we get into the situation it's not always exactly what our expectations are. So these expectations that don't necessarily get fulfilled can create a lot of suffering. If we're going to make the holidays work in terms of our relationships with people, then the only way to do so is to bring forth your paramitas: your patience, your careful listening, your gratitude, your generosity.

You know what the number one Buddhist practice that you want to bring forth in December and January is? It's generosity. Generosity will get you a long way in changing your own energy and spirit, and providing the positive energy

化的方式來灌輸教導。從禪修的角度來看，一個人必須盡量和父母保持關係，才可能觀察到需要下手修行的地方。如果你將自己從需要下手修行的地方抽離，無論你的家庭環境是正面或是負面，你將會不知不覺與修行漸行漸遠，而且會越難修行。諸位聽清楚了嗎？孝道的基礎，並非是道德上的義務，而是個體成長所必須履行的責任：與自己坦誠相待，面對那些深植于性格裏的方方面面，也包括了童年時期的種種反應，並非道德責任。它是個人成長過程中的義務。行孝，能誠實地去看清自己根深蒂固的性格，和深植於童年時期的記憶及反應。

幾乎每個人，節慶是面對這些修行元素的契機。我們可以從兩方面來談：第一；當我們與家人團聚時，我們的習氣都會不自覺地跑出來；其次是，你得重新面對家人的期待。後者最大的問題就是，家人彼此都抱有極大的期望，但是這些期望有時都無法被滿足。舉例來說，你可能充滿著期待，期待某人會對你笑逐顏開，期待與他人共度充滿正面及興奮的時光。然而，實際情況



往往與我們的期待不同，當這些期待無法被滿足時，痛苦便油然而生。如果我們希望在節慶時，能夠與家人正常地互動，唯一的辦法便是修習波羅蜜：用耐心、用凝聽、用感恩、用寬容、慷慨來對待彼此。

諸位知道對佛教徒而言，在十二月和一月時最重要的修行是什麼嗎？是慷慨寬容。在轉化你的精氣神方面，慷慨寬容會幫助你走得很遠，也給你的心提供正能量而讓它活躍得更積極。慷慨寬容也會引發他人將心比心而非批判。如果你打開你的慷慨寬容之心，那麼你在心地上的交流程度，和你對周圍環境的影響程度，都是不可思議的。你還需要耐心。如果你真心想要交流，那麼關鍵在於仔細地聆聽。這個我們已經講過很多了。從修行

for your own heart to be involved in a positive way. It also ignites other people's hearts rather than their judgmentalism. If you would just have generosity, the amount that will do—both in terms of your own exchange on the mind ground and also dealing with the circumstances around you—will be incredible. You will also need patience. And if you actually want to communicate, the key is to listen carefully. We've talked about this a lot. A fundamental issue from the standpoint of cultivation, in terms of relationships, is suspending your own interpretations and listening really carefully to what the other person is saying and then relating to them through their own context, rather than through your expectations. You can tell how well you are cultivating by how well you are able to suspend your own interpretations, judgments, and emotional reactions. Listen to somebody else and actually accord with the passing conditions of the other person rather than your own reactions. You can always tell how well you are doing in cultivation by how irritated you get.

The really, really great Bodhisattva is the “Bodhisattva of irritation” [Laughter from the audience], because whenever you're irritated it shows that the Big Self has been again mistreated — YOU! Other people being mistreated can get you a little excited, but YOU being mistreated, that's a different issue. And that usually creates this irritation. If you can catch the irritation and be patient before it gets momentum, this is really really all what practice is. We can do all the practice we want but it really comes down to these things. How patient can you be in the conditions that would have caused irritation in the past? The second big “Bodhisattva” is judgmentalism, because as soon as you are judgmental you already know, Oh! The Big Self has arisen once again. The illusory self the Buddha was talking about arises not as an intellectual abstraction, but arises in your mind-ground every time judgmentalism or irritation arise. These are signals that tell you there is still a lot of attachment and so forth. They give you information about where you are at.

You can go all day doing just fine until somebody does a particular thing and then you get irritated. If you look into that irritation, you will see that everytime the ground of that irritation is the illusory self. Every time. This is not ninety-eight percent but a hundred percent of the time. YOU were mistreated. YOU were not recognized. YOU were irritated. Something happened in which you were engaged—something negative, and then on the basis of that, irritation arises, anger arises, actions arise, and then down the whole pathway to like... well, you know what kind of mess you can get yourself into. So, it seems like this is a good month to practice generosity in the place of judgmentalism, patience in the place of irritation.

For the next few weeks people will be in very different contexts than they are the rest of the year. These gatherings offer a really good chance to see how you're doing. What is really interesting is when

的角度來講人際關係，一個根本的問題就是你能否暫停你個人的詮釋，仔細傾聽對方到底在說什麼，然後從他們所在的角度出發與之交流，而不是從你的期望來看問題。從你暫停自己的詮釋，判斷和情緒反應的難易，你可以知道自己修行的程度——傾聽他人並且隨順他人的因緣，而非你自己的反應——從你懊惱和反感的程度可以看出你修行的程度。

實際上真正的大菩薩呢，是煩惱菩薩，（眾笑），因為你生氣的時候就是你那個大大的「我」又一次被怠慢了。你！如果其他人被怠慢，你可能還有點興奮，但如果是你被怠慢了，情況就不同了。這時你通常會生氣。如果你可以捕捉到自己的煩惱，忍過去，不讓它繼續發展下去，這就是修行了。我們可以修很多行門，可是歸根究底就是在修這些。對過去讓你煩惱的事，你能不能忍耐？那麼第二個大菩薩是批判心，因為一旦你一有評判心你就知道「喔！大大的我相又出現了。」佛陀所說的虛幻的我不是一個抽象的概念，在你每次開始評判或煩惱的時候它就在你的心地裏出現。這些信號都告訴你——你還有很多執著等等。它們告訴你，修行到什麼程度了。

你本來一天做什麼都好好的，然後有人做了件事你就起煩惱了。如果你去研究這個煩惱，你會發現它的起因是你那個虛妄的我相。每一次都是這樣，不是百分之九十八喔，百分之百都是如此。你被怠慢了，你沒被認可，你被惹惱了。你在做什麼的時候發生了一些負面的事情，在那基礎之上，煩惱產生了，怒氣產生了，你採取行動，然後就一發不可收拾……你知道你會陷入怎樣的麻煩。所以這個月就是用慷慨寬容而非批判，用耐心而非煩惱的好時節。

接下來幾週大家會處在和平時非常不同的情境中。這些聚會給你一個檢驗自己程度的好機會。有意思的是，當你回到某人的家時——你父母的家，你兄弟姐妹的家——你很久沒回去過的地方時，你就可以觀察到，你在面對事情和不常見的人的日常生活時，你的應對是否有所變化。在平常情況下，你很難觀察到自己逐日的變化。但是當你遇到一個情境是你以前很熟悉但是你很久沒經歷過的時候，這就是一年少有的機會，讓你可以看到你的修行是否有進步——是否更有耐心，更柔和，更平靜，更懂得傾聽。這些時候，

you're in a situation where you go back to somebody's house—your parent's house, your relative's house, your brother's or sister's house—that you haven't been at for a while. Because then you actually do see what changes you've made or not made in the passage of time by the way you're reacting to things and the day-to-day activities of the people you don't see very often. You don't see your day-to-day changes very much in normal circumstances. But when you go into a situation that you're very familiar with but that you haven't been in for quite a while, that's one of the few places in the process of your year where you can actually see if you've made any headway on being a little bit more patient, a little bit more gentle, a little bit more still, listening a little bit better. At those moments you can really see if there has been progress in your practice.

Does that help? Anybody have any questions?

A woman from the audience: I have a question. I encountered an issue back home. My brother fights with his wife and it's due to...

Doug interrupts: And they're the only couple that does that out there?

[Laughter from the audience]

She continues: I can see why it is, because I can observe it. But you always say to only take on whatever I'm ready to take on. And I know the cause of their fighting, but he cannot realize it. Do you have any suggestions?

Doug: I think with your relatives, more than with anyone else, you need to be very careful about trying to engage change. Whereas in friendship there is a chosen relationship—in other words, you have chosen at one level or another to engage in taking care of each other—with family, you're not choosing. It is a given and that makes it much more fraught. Remember what I said earlier: everything that happened in the past, the diaper-changing they did for you when you were little and so on, is always there in all these family relationships. You may look at yourself as you think you currently are, but remember, they're seeing you through the entirety of their experience with you: from your childhood through all your different personalities and adolescence; they saw all that stuff. You're coming to them as an adult, but remember, they've seen you through the entire process. A brother or sister has been through all those battles, through all that history, so when you come to those relationships with some idea that you're going to change something, it is really fraught. I don't think that people are very successful in trying to bring insight to their parents or brothers and sisters unless they have a lot of time, and unless the siblings or parents have asked, or given you permission. I don't think that you'll find it very useful to try to engage in the issues in your family, to think that you're going to bring change in your family unless you're asked to. And even if you're asked to, I'd be very careful about it.

你會真的看到你的修行是否有所進步。

這些有幫助嗎？諸位有問題嗎？

一位女眾提問：我有一個問題。我回家後遇到一個難題。我的哥哥和他的妻子有矛盾，因為……

果勒居士打斷：那麼（你以為）他們是唯一一對遇到這種問題的夫妻？

【聽眾笑聲】

女眾繼續：我知道為什麼會發生這樣的矛盾，因為我能夠觀察到。但是你總是說只有在你充分準備好的時候才開始做一件事情。我知道他們矛盾的原因，但是我哥哥並沒有意識到這些。你有什麼建議嗎？

果勒居士：如果你想改變一個人，尤其是你的親人，你應該非常小心。友誼是一種可選擇的關係，換而言之，你可以選擇在不同層面關心對方；然而對於家人，你無法選擇——這是既定的一所以就更加不容易處理。記得我剛才所說的：所有過去發生的事情，包括在你小時候他們給你換尿布等等，都屬於家庭關係的一部分。也許你看自己的時候看到的是現在的自己，但是要記住，他們看到的你是基於他們過去與你一起經歷的一切：從你的童年，到經歷不同的性格轉變，到成年，他們目睹了這一切。兄弟姊妹從這些往事見證了這所有的矛盾，而如果你要在這些關係中做一些改變，這是很不容易的。我認為人們並不擅長給他們的父母或者兄弟姊妹提好的建議，除非他們有很多時間，或者他們的兄弟姊妹主動問他們建議，或者允許他們給建議。我認為你會發現參與到這些家庭問題中，或者主動去改變家庭問題是沒有什麼效果的，除非他們希望你這麼做。即使他們希望你這麼做，你也最好非常謹慎小心。

對於父母，我認為只有一種方法可行，那就是透過他們的價值體系、生存體系和做事方式來與他們溝通。盡可能多的在這些方面與他們溝通，對於你看到他們價值觀中好的成分，用他們的語言和表達方式對他們給予積極的反饋。同時不要認為你可以從他們的價值體系之外給他們的價值體系帶來新的智慧，因為你很有可能會遇到障礙。但是如果在他的價值體系之內，你能基於你觀察到的好的價值觀與他們進行溝通，並且積極支持他們，尤其是當你發現他們有些事情已經做得很好，或者是你觀察到他們的一些積極的改變，那麼極力加強對他們的鼓勵，他們會感受到

I think that with parents, there's only one approach you can take, and that is: engage them within their own value construct, in their existence, in their way of doing things. Engage them inside of that as much as possible, and give positive feedback to what you see as the positive elements of their values, using their own language, their own terms. And in no way think you're going to provide a new insight from outside their construct into their construct, because I think you'll meet with resistance. Whereas if you engage them in their own construct, in what you see as a positive value, and you give support for that, especially if you could find something that they have really done well or if they changed something that you noticed and then give them super-positive reinforcement for that, and they get the glow of your recognition, I think you can go a long way with that. But I think trying to engage them as a daughter knowing something they don't know, or trying to help them to understand something, is a dead end: I think you're going to find that very frustrating. [Laughter from the audience] For many, many good reasons you'll find that frustrating. I highly suggest that you don't try to do that; that's what I mean by not taking on something for which you haven't set up the conditions.

Now, if you're living with your parents, you have time, and you're engaged in their lives, that's a different issue. You might then have an opportunity to engage them. But if you're just visiting, then it is just about the warmth of the relationship. For them, you are their daughter. You are very symbolic for them, very symbolic of things in their ongoing life and future life. You have to understand that as people get older they get more and more sentimental about you, their child. Then the grandkids, oh my... then the symbolic value is all over the place. That's why they're pushing so hard for the grandkids. I don't know if I'm answering your question.

She replies: Yes, thanks.

Doug: Does anybody else want to add something before we move into other stuff?

Another lady: I just want to say briefly that I spent the weekend with my brother whom I haven't seen in awhile. And everything you say is completely true.

[Audience laughs while Doug says "Okay"]

Doug: Yes. Well, siblings have a lot of history. You have a lot of history with your brother, and with all your other family members. But it's the same principle in all relationships. As a practitioner, the way you practice the illusory self is not as a theory, but in the actual listening and according to the conditions of the other. Every time you closely listen and accord with the other's conditions without a position outside of that, and agree as much as possible with everything that he or she is doing, unless it really crosses some incredible line that you're not willing to cross, most things will go pretty well. In supporting their construct, it also gives you a chance to practice less self while giving them positive reinforcement within their own construct.

Someone else from the audience: So, you said that, for example, when engaging your parents, you should provide positive reinforcement or things

你的積極認可。這樣，我認為你可以把這種溝通持續下去。但是，我認為作為一個女兒，你以一種知道他們不知道的東西，或者以幫助他們了解什麼事情的姿態來與他們溝通，這將是一個死胡同。我認為你會覺得非常沮喪。（聽眾笑聲）有很多很多的原因會讓你沮喪。我強烈建議你不要嘗試這麼做。這就是我所說的當你沒有充分準備好的情況下，不要輕易開始一件事情。

如果你現在和你的父母一起生活，並且你試圖干預他們的生活，與他們溝通，這是另一回事，你也許有機會來干預和溝通。但是如果你僅僅是探望他們，那麼我認為這關乎親情的溫暖。對於他們而言，你是他們的女兒。你對於他們非常重要，是一種標誌，對於他們現在和今後的生活都非常具有標誌性。你要清楚，人們年紀越大，對你（他們的孩子）的感情會越來越深，然後對於他們的孫子們……天啊！然後這種標誌的價值就會到處體現出來。這也是他們如此注重孫子的原因。不知道我是否回答了你的問題。

女眾回答：是的，謝謝。

果勒：在討論別的事情前，還有人要再說什麼嗎？

另外一位女眾：我只是想簡短地說，週末我和好久不見的哥哥一起度過。你所說的每句話都完全正確。

【當果勒說「Okay」，眾笑】

果勒：是的，兄弟姊妹之間有很多歷史。你與你的哥哥，和其他家人都有很多親情史。但是在諸多關係中，道理都一樣。作為修行人，修掉虛幻的自我並不是理論，而是體現在真實地聆聽並隨順他人的因緣中。每當你仔細傾聽並隨順他人的因緣，不持有在此以外的立場，而對於他或她正在做的每件事情，除了那些超過了你 unwilling 越過的底線的事情，你都盡可能地認同，那麼就會諸事順利的。當在支持他們的價值體系時，這也給了你自己一個機會來減少自我，同時在他們自己的價值體系裏給與正面的肯定。

另一聽眾：那麼，你是說，比如和父母相處時，對於你覺得是正面的事情，要給與正面的肯定。

that you feel are positive?

Doug: Yeah.

Same student continues: What about when they do something that you consider to be negative?

Doug: I usually would say nothing. I really think you want to support the positive things and not do anything about the negative. I do not think you want to negatively reinforce the negative. I do not suggest you positively enforce something that you see is negative. But you don't have to say anything. For example, they might be getting drunk every Friday night. You're sitting there and they're getting drunk. It is not your place to get involved in their personal stuff at that level. But you don't necessarily have to say, "Oh, this is really great that you're drunk." You do not want to give your support to things that you don't support, but you don't have to be negative about them.

A student asks: What if you observe someone saying something whereby he is undermining someone else, not you. What can you do?

Doug: You have to be SUPER careful to engage in correcting anything. Hopefully, as a cultivator, when you look at a situation like what you are talking about, when you see somebody mistreating somebody else, you're taking a few deep breaths and looking really carefully at what you could constructively do. You don't react emotionally at all and have no personal judgment or interpretation that's playing into it, because any personal thing is going to create more problems than there were before. Any emotion will probably make the situation worse. So, as a cultivator facing something like that, you take a bunch of deep breaths, you observe really closely whether there's something you could actually do constructively, and you're strategic. You're neither emotional nor do you make it into something personal. Neither your own personal reaction nor emotion enters, because if it does, you'll increase the fire from what it was before. It's not going to necessarily resolve anything. Now, even if all those things are in place, I would still say that it is very important to be strategic. You ask yourself, Can I really engage in this? How would I do it? How would I do it the best? Could I take one person aside, not get into the thing between them at all but get support for the person who's getting the criticism, either right at the moment or little bit afterwards? Could I resolve it later in another context? But, the key thing as a cultivator is that you use the same principles over and over again: you don't engage emotion, you don't engage view, you're just engaged tactically. So, you'd have to look at the situation and see whether you can make a positive difference or whether you're just going to blow something up into another level of conflict.

From the audience: Wow, that is not easy!

Doug: Well, if it were easy we wouldn't be all fighting each other, right? ☸

果勒: 對的。

同一學生: 那如果他們做你認為負面的事情呢?

果勒: 我通常什麼也不說。我真的認為你要支持正面的事情，而不要對負面的事情置評。我不認為你需要負面地強化負面的事情。我也不是建議你積極地支持你認為是負面的事情，但是也不需要說什麼。比如，他們也許每逢周五晚上都喝得醉醺醺的。你坐在一邊，而他們在灌醉自己。這不是你介入他們的私人生活的時候。但是你也沒必要說，「哇，你都喝醉了，這實在太好了。」不要支持你不認同的事情，但也不必持負面的態度。

一位學生問: 如果你看到有人在說貶低別人的話，你怎麼做?

果勒: 要介入糾正任何事情，你必須超級小心。作為一名修行者，希望當你面對這種情況，看到有人在對別人不好，你要先深呼吸幾次，真正仔細地看看你能建設性地做什麼。不要有任何情緒的反應，也不要將任何自己個人的看法和見解帶入其中，因為任何個人的東西都會引起比以前更多的問題，而任何情緒可能讓情況變得更糟糕。

所以，當一個修行者面對這樣的事情時，你先深呼吸幾次，真正仔細觀察你是否確實能建設性地做點什麼，並且是有策略地。你既不情緒化，也不把事情個人化。你沒有任何自己個人的反應和情緒介入。要不然的話，你會火上加油，而這不能解決任何問題。即使這些都正常，我仍然會說，運用策略是非常重要的。

你問問自己，我真的能介入這件事情嗎？我要怎麼做？怎樣做最好？我可以把一個人帶到一邊，完全不介入他們之間的事情，但也能在當下或稍後，為被受到批評的另一方說說好話嗎？我能稍後在別的場合解決它嗎？但是，作為一個修行人，關鍵是你要一而再，再而三地用同樣的宗旨：不要帶情緒，不要帶看法，你只是有技巧地處理事情。因此，你必須弄清楚情況，然後看看你是否能帶來一些正面的改變，或者你是否只會把事情搞砸而引發另一層衝突。

聽眾: 哇，這不簡單啊！

果勒: 是的，如果容易的話，我們大家誰也不會你爭我鬥了，對吧？☸