



Instructional Talks on Precept Training

戒期開示

摘錄自宣公上人1971年講述之《華嚴經疏玄談淺釋》

葉美霞英譯

Excerpts from A Simple Explanation by Ven. Master Hsuan Hua
on National Master Ching Liang's Ten Doors Commentary on the Avatamsaka Sutra
English Translation by Mee Ha Yap

受戒是最要緊的

能受戒，又能守戒，那是最好的。

今天有受菩薩戒的，有受八戒的。受戒，是佛教最要緊的，所謂「眾生受佛戒，即入諸佛位」。所以各位誰能受戒，又能守戒，那是最好的，那是一定會開大智慧的，一定會得到佛教的好處的。有皈依的，皈依之後不墮落三惡道，也要往前精進。這樹木是一天一天、一年一年長大的；人學佛法也是這樣子，一天你不覺得往前長，但久了就增加了很多。所以我們大家都要特別發菩提心，向前勇猛精進！

勤誦戒律

在受戒之後，一定要常常誦持戒律。

這個「戒」又名「性善」，這個名稱是《十誦律》上所說的「性善」。在中國有一部《三字經》，

Receiving precepts is most important

If one can receive the precepts and subsequently uphold them, that is the best.

Today there are those who received the Bodhisattva Precepts and those who received the Eight Precepts. Receiving precepts is the most important matter within Buddhism. As the saying goes: “When living beings receive the Buddhas’ precepts, they will immediately enter all Buddhas’ position.” Therefore, whenever one receives the precepts and subsequently upholds them, that is the best. It will lead to great wisdom and one will most certainly attain benefits within Buddhism. There are also those who took refuge with the Three Jewels. After taking refuge, one would not fall into the three lower realms and must also progress forward in cultivation. Trees grow day by day, year by year; studying the Buddhadharma is the same way. You might not be aware of your progress within a day, but over time, it will increase. So, we must all especially bring forth the Bodhi resolve and progress forward with vigor.

Diligently recite the precepts

After receiving the precepts, one must recite and uphold them often.

“Precept” is also known as “wholesome nature”, this term originated from the *Sarvastivada-vinaya*. In China, there is the *Three Character Classic*. Traditionally, children beginning their study would

從前兒童啟蒙讀書的時候首先要讀的；這是當時的教科書，是很好的一本書。

一開始就說：

人之初，性本善；性相近，習相遠。
苟不教，性乃遷；教之道，貴以專。

人剛初生的時候，「性本善」，本性都是善的，不是惡的。等他一長，懂一點事情了，這叫「習相遠」，離這個「性相近」。人一初生是「性本善」和「性」是相近的。「習相遠」，就被種種的習氣，習學這種染污法，就惡了，所以和性善就相遠了。「苟不教」，就是假設你要不教導他、不教訓他，「性乃遷」，他這個善性就搬家了。遷是遷移，就是搬家了，搬到什麼地方去了呢？搬到那個惡性那兒去。「教之道，貴以專」，你要是想教導他，令他還恢復到性善上，那麼這要有專一的功夫來教導他；所重要的就是要專心來教化他。

這個「性」就是說我們人人本有的這個性善，這個「戒」也就是人人本有的，本來清淨的，所以叫「性善」。

戒，「亦名『守信』」，如昔所受，實能持故。「戒」又有一個名字叫「守信」。「守」就是保守，就是要持守所受的戒；「信」是相信，就是要相信所受的戒。所受的戒法，要實實在在的去受持；受持就是實行，去守那個戒。

你們到臺灣去受戒（編註：1971年12月，四位美籍弟子前往臺灣臺中慈善寺求具足戒），回來就把這個戒都忘了，這就是不能持了，就「實不能持故」了；你若不忘了，這就叫「守信」。「如昔所受」，好像以前你們所受的戒，能以實實在在的去行持、止持，去修持，所以是「實能持故」。不是受完了戒就不管了！你也可以不管，怎麼樣不管呢？一點毛病都沒有了。你若毛病都沒有了，也沒有妄想了，也沒有真想了，真想、妄想都沒有了；這時候，你不要說一天找不出來一個過錯，就是一年、十年也找不出一個過錯

start out reading this book. It is also the textbook at that time; it is a very good book.

It begins like this:

*Men at birth, are naturally good.
Their natures are similar; their habits eventually become widely different.
If they are not taught due to negligence, their nature deteriorate.
The right way to teach, is with absolute focus.*

When people are first born, their natures are fundamentally good, not evil. When they grow older and begin to understand matters, their habits become widely different and they derail further from their natures that are originally similar. People at birth are naturally good and their natures are fundamentally similar. Their habits become widely different because they have acquired all kinds of defiled habits and eventually become unwholesome. As a result, they stray further from their good natures. If one is negligent in teaching them and does not guide them, their good natures will be displaced towards the bad. If one wishes to teach them and allow them to return to their good natures, one must employ full concentration when teaching. Therefore one must be focused when teaching them.

The term “nature” refers to the good nature that everyone possesses. This “precept” is also fundamentally possessed by everyone; it is originally pure, therefore it is called “good nature”.

“Precept” has another name, which is “Guarding and Believing” because one would honestly uphold the precepts one has received. “Guarding” here refers to preserving and guarding the precepts one has received. “Believing” here refers to having faith; it is to truly believe and have faith in the precepts one has received. Once received, the precepts must be practiced honestly. To uphold is to practice and guard one’s precepts.

If those of you who are going to Taiwan to receive the precepts, (Editor’s notes: Four American disciples traveled to Cishan Monastery in Taichung, Taiwan to receive the full Bhikshu/Bhikshuni precepts in December 1971) forget about them after you return, that cannot be said as “upholding.” If you do not forget about them, then that is called “guarding and believing.” One must uphold the precepts one has received, by honestly practicing, cultivating and upholding them. It does not count if one has received the precepts and does not bother about them afterwards. However, it is also permissible to disregard the precepts; how so? When one has reached the state of not having even the slightest faults anymore. If you have no faults whatsoever and if you no longer give rise to any false or true thoughts, then, not to mention one day or one year but even if ten years go by, people still would not be able to find any faults with you. At that time, you are in a position to forget about the precepts; there is no longer any issue with it. This is referred to as upholding without upholding, cultivating without cultivating, or effortlessly applying the Way. If you have reached that state, it is permissible to do so. But if you have not reached that state, you cannot claim that you are practicing the Way without effort and

了。那時候你就把這個戒都忘了也可以的，沒有問題了；這叫不持之持、不修之修、無功用道。你得要到那個程度上才可以的，沒到那個程度上，你不能就說：「我現在就是修『無功用道』，不用戒了！」那是騙自己。

所以在受戒之後，一定要常常誦持戒律，也就是這個意思，叫你不要忘了。你要是修得無相了，你自己不為自己打算了，沒有自私心，沒有自利心，沒有妒忌心，沒有障礙心，你若真能行忍辱，行布施，那就是無功用道。你是不是能布施而離布施相？忍辱而離忍辱相？持戒而離持戒相？精進而離精進相？禪定而離禪定相？般若、智慧，一切都無所執著了？你要能這樣子，就可以了；不能這樣，就要勤誦這戒律。

戒期多拜佛

求佛菩薩加被你們，令你們得到金剛光明寶戒。

在臺灣受戒的期間，最好有時間就拜佛，不和他們講太多話，講話一點意思都沒有。到那兒，要把心放下，要誠心一點拜佛，求佛菩薩加被你們，令你們得到金剛光明寶戒。在你們沒有去之前，最好一有時間就拜佛，有時間就拜佛，多拜佛、多懺悔；不然你去受戒的時候會有魔障的，或者會發狂，或者會發生什麼意外啊，就不能得戒。我們必須要生大慚愧心，來在這兒求哀懺悔，來發這個菩提心。

最要緊是，你們在戒期裏頭，誰晚間要給你們東西吃，這個人就是菩薩；因為想要試驗試驗你們到底是不是真的吃一餐的，是不是真的？雖然他是菩薩，你們可不要受他這種「慈悲」，他在下午給你們什麼東西，都不要接受的。那麼到香港也是。

因為這個國家（美國）佛法正開始的時候，你們要做榜樣，要做人的法則，不單單做領袖。你做領袖呀，你領也領不起來，袖也袖不起來。你們要做一個人一個好樣子，那麼將來一般人都照你們學了。☸

therefore do not need the precepts. That is basically just deceiving yourself.

Therefore, after one has received the precepts, one must recite the precepts often. It also means one must not forget about them. If in your cultivation, you have reached the state of non-attachment to marks where you no longer scheme for yourself, are no longer selfish, are no longer self-benefiting, no longer become jealous or harbor an obstructive mind; if you can truly practice patience and giving, only then you can be said as “effortlessly applying the Way.” Ask yourself: are you able to give and yet be detached from the marks of giving? Are you able to be patient and yet be devoid of any marks of patience? Are you able to uphold the precepts without any attachment to the marks of upholding the precepts? Are you able to be vigorous yet leave behind the mark of vigor? Can you have dhyana concentration with no marks of dhyana concentration? Are you still attached to prajna or wisdom? If you can be like this, then it is permissible; if not, then you will have to diligently recite the precepts.

Bow to the Buddhas often during precept training

Pray that the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas send you their blessings and help you attain the Pure Vajra Bright, Jeweled Precepts.

During your precept training in Taiwan, it is best if you can bow to the Buddhas whenever you have time. Do not talk too much to others. There is no benefit whatsoever in talking. When you arrive, put down everything in your mind and bow to the Buddhas with more sincerity. Pray that the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas send you their blessings and help you attain the Pure Vajra Bright, Jeweled Precepts. Even before your trip, it is best if you bow to the Buddhas whenever you find time. Bow to the Buddhas often and repent often. If not, you might encounter demonic obstacles when you are receiving the precepts. Maybe you might go crazy or meet up with an accident and consequently miss the opportunity to receive the precepts. We must bring forth great remorse and ask for forgiveness, bring forth the Bodhi mind like this.

The most important thing to remember during your training for the precepts is that if anyone gives you food at night, that person is a Bodhisattva. The main reason in doing so is to test you if you are truly practicing eating one meal a day. Although the person is a Bodhisattva, you must not accept the act of “kindness.” Do not accept anything from them in the afternoon either. That holds true in Hong Kong as well.

Buddhism is just starting out in this country (United States of America). You must be role models for others; not only should you be leaders, you must be the guiding principles for others. You might not be able to fulfill a leadership role, but if you carry yourself well and be good examples for others, then ordinary people will follow in your footsteps in the future. ☸