



Instructional Talks on Precepts Training (continued)

戒期開示 (續)

摘錄自宣公上人1971年開示
沙彌尼近本 英譯

Excerpts from Venerable Master Hsuan Hua's Instructional Talk in 1971
English Translation by Shramaneri Jin Ben

這次是正法傳到西方的第一次傳戒。

在《梵網經》上說：「眾生受佛戒，即入諸佛位；位同大覺已，真是諸佛子。」由這幾句偈頌看來，佛教徒必須要先受戒，然後才能成佛。所以釋迦牟尼佛將要入涅槃的時候，阿難以四事問佛，其中之一就是佛住世的時候以佛為師。佛滅度之後，又以誰為師呢？佛就告訴阿難和一切弟子，說是以波羅提木叉為師；波羅提木叉，就是「戒」。人要是能受五戒，行十善，就會生到天上去；要是受十戒，行百善，就可以證果阿羅漢。十戒是什麼呢？就是沙彌戒。要是能受二百五十條比丘戒，這一定成佛果！

所以才說「眾生受佛戒」。眾生，無論哪一類的眾生，都包括在內了，所謂飛、潛、動、植。飛，天上飛的鳥類；潛，在水裡頭的魚類；動，就是有氣血的動物；植，就是植物，花草樹木；這都是眾生。眾生都可以受戒。所以在南華寺，虛老在那傳戒的時候，就有樟樹神去求戒，又有老虎去皈依，不過那是在山上；這個樹神

This is the first transmission of precepts since the Proper Dharma was propagated to the West

The *Brahma Net Sutra* says: "When living beings receive the Buddha's precepts, they will realize Buddhahood. When their state is identical to Great Enlightenment, they truly become a disciple of the Buddha." From these few lines, it is clear that Buddhists must first receive precepts in order to become a Buddha. That is why when Shakyamuni Buddha was about to enter nirvana, one of the four questions from Venerable Ananda was: When the Buddha is in the world, we took the Buddha as our teacher. After the Buddha enters Nirvana, who will be our teacher? The Buddha told Venerable Ananda and all his disciples to take the *Pratimoksha* as their teacher. *Pratimoksha* is the precepts. If people were to receive and uphold the five precepts and practice the ten wholesome deeds, they will be reborn in the heavens. If people were to receive and uphold the ten precepts and practice the hundred wholesome deeds, they can certify to the fruition of Arhatship. What are the ten precepts? They are the Shramanera precepts. If people were to receive and uphold the 250 bhikshu precepts, they will certainly attain the fruition of Buddhahood.

That is why it is said, "When living beings receive the Buddha's precepts:" Living beings here include all types of living beings regardless if they fly, are underwater, move or plant life. Beings that fly refer to birds that fly in the sky; those that are underwater refer to fishes that swim in the water; those that move refer to those with blood and breath; plant life refers to all plants, grass, flowers and trees. These are all living beings. All living beings can receive precepts. When Venerable Master Xuyun was transmitting the precepts at Nanhua Monastery, a camphor tree spirit came to request the precepts. There was also a tiger who took refuge but that was in the mountains. The tree spirit

也要受戒，老虎也要皈依。若在城市裡頭呢，這個樹神就不會來受戒，老虎也不會來皈依。因為牠雖然有善心，但是怕惡人；這人多的地方，就有惡人，這些個惡人就不允許牠們受戒。

「即入諸佛位」，能受戒，就是有佛的位子；「位同大覺已」，那個地位和大覺的佛是一樣的。「真是諸佛子」，這才真真實實地是佛的弟子！

由這幾句偈頌看來，受戒是最重要的。你若不受戒，就不能成為沙彌，不能成比丘，不能成菩薩；所以必須要受沙彌戒、比丘戒、菩薩戒，要受這個三壇大戒。

傳戒這個方法，在東方是很盛行的。可是，在這個西方的國家，打開歷史來看一看，還沒有過；不單在美國沒有，就是其他的西方國家也都沒有過。那麼，這次是正法傳到西方的第一次傳戒。這第一次是早了一點，因為宣傳的力量不夠！甚至於要宣傳三年；在三年以前，就應該做這種宣傳的工作，才能發生效果。

可是在去年，他們五位到紐約大乘寺去參加開幕，看見大乘寺開幕他們就著急了，就等不了了；所以就發表說金山寺今年就傳戒——這最低限度，早了三年。

那麼早了三年，人就會少一點；可是人會少一點，佛就會多一點了。受戒，在西方就好像沙裡澄金一樣；在沙子裡邊找出金子，這是很不容易找的，要費很多人工，才能把這個金子淘出來。

今年提前傳戒，人就很少的，只有三



1972年具足戒儀式。1972 Full Ordination Ceremony

wanted to receive the precepts so did the tiger. However, if the transmission was in the city, the tree spirit would not come forth to receive the precepts nor would the tiger take refuge. Although they possess good natures, they are afraid of bad people. In a place where there are many people, there will surely be bad people. These bad people will not allow them to receive the precepts.

“They will realize Buddhahood:” to be able to receive the precepts, one will surely realize Buddhahood. “When their state is identical to Great Enlightenment:” their states are the same as the Buddha who has attained the Great Enlightenment. “They truly become a disciple of the Buddha:” only then are they true disciples of the Buddha.

From these few lines, we know receiving the precepts is most important. If you do not receive precepts, you will not be able to be a shramanera, a bhikshu or a Bodhisattva. That is why there must be the transmission of the shramanera precepts, the bhikshu precepts and the Bodhisattva precepts, which are collectively referred to as the great precepts of three platforms.

The Dharma door of precept transmission is very popular in the East. However, among all the Western countries, we have yet to see one in the history of these countries. Not only are there none to be found in the United States, even other western countries have not had one. So this is the first time the precepts will be transmitted since the proper Dharma was propagated to the West. It is probably a little too early for this first transmission since the extent of publicity was not enough. The event should have been publicized three years beforehand. If the event was publicized three years ago, then it would have achieved some results.

Last year, when the five of them went to New York to attend the opening ceremony of Mahayana Temple, they became nervous and couldn't wait. They made an announcement saying Gold Mountain Monastery will be transmitting the precepts this year. That was the bare minimum; it was pushed forward by three years.

Since it is three years early, there will be fewer people. However, if there are fewer people, there will be more Buddhas. Receiving the precepts in the

個沙彌、沙彌尼來求比丘戒、比丘尼戒、菩薩戒。其餘的，有想求菩薩戒的，有想求五戒的，那還慢慢會有人；現在就這三個。可是三個是不是少呢？不是！不單三個不少，一個也不少。不過，這三個是在前邊，是第一次；第一次這三個，這正是表示的「三如來」——東方阿閼佛、西方無量壽佛、中央釋迦牟尼佛。那麼將來，這三而九，九九就無盡，無盡無盡的那麼多了！

凡事一開始是難。因為一開始人人都不敢受戒；怎麼叫受戒？他們也不明白。以前有這些個佛教徒他也不懂得怎麼叫受戒；甚至於這國家（美國）的人都不懂得什麼叫受戒。所以，我們這兒一提倡這個傳戒，這人就認為是一個很奇怪的事情，「什麼叫傳戒呢？」他們就很驚奇了！很驚奇，有的想要來受，又不敢來，不知道是怎麼回事。你說這可憐不可憐！

你們大家想一想是不是這個樣子？

我們今年有三位求受出家具足戒，這也表示過去一個、現在一個、未來一個；是過去、現在、未來這三際，也是三如來。

所以你們三位，拜願的時候也誠心來拜，讀誦毗尼經典也都誠心讀誦，絲毫不可以馬虎的；人多了，有的人就會馬馬虎虎的，人少的時候就不能馬虎了，一定要認真！人愈少，我們要做得愈好；人多了，就照顧不過來了。我們天天拜願，要拜祖師。天天，早晨要拜西天東土的歷代祖師三拜；晚間也要拜西天東土歷代祖師三拜。本來在諸方這拜祖，要在祖堂裡去，從大殿走到祖堂。我在普陀山，就要上山去，從這邊上山去，從那邊又下來，每天都是這樣子；到那兒幹什麼呢？就叩三個頭。這上山大約有五分鐘的時間，下山又要五分鐘的時間，因為那裡有很多臺階，那麼去禮祖。為什麼要禮祖？這就是孝順；我們孝順西天東土歷代的祖師。

我們現在想出家的，要恭敬過去的祖師，所以受戒的時候必須要天天禮祖。在諸方禮祖，引禮師叫：「排班——！」你們在臺灣是不是有這個排班？說：「對面立——！向

West is likened to panning for gold in sand. To find gold in sand is not an easy task at all. It requires a lot of manpower.

This year, since we are transmitting the precepts ahead of schedule, there are fewer people, with only three shramaneras and shramanikas requesting the bhikshu precepts, bhikshuni precepts and the Bodhisattva precepts. Of the remaining people, there are those who would like to request the Bodhisattva precepts and there are those who would like to request the five precepts. Gradually, there will be more people. But there are only three people now. Is three too few? No. Not only is three not too few, even if there is only one, it is not too few. These three are forerunners and this is the first time. The three in this first transmission represent the “Three Tathagatas:” Akshobhya Buddha in the East, Amitabha Buddha in the West and Shakyamuni Buddha in the center. In the future, these three will become nine, nine will multiply and thereafter the number will be countless.

In everything we do, it is the hardest in the beginning. It is because initially people do not dare to receive precepts. What are precepts? They do not understand. Previously there were some Buddhists who did not know what it means to receive the precepts. The people in this country (United States) don't know anything about receiving precepts. That is why we are propagating the transmission of precepts. These people will see it as something very strange. “What is receiving precepts?” They are surprised. Being surprised, some would like to receive it but do not dare to come, not knowing what it is all about. Don't you think that is too pitiful? All of you think about it, is the situation like this?

This year we have three people requesting the complete monastic precepts. This signifies one from the present, one from the future and one from the past. They represent the three periods of time which are past, present and future; they also represent the Three Tathagatas.

Now the three of you must bow with sincerity during the Universal Bowing. When you recite the Vinaya Sutras, you must also be very sincere without even the slightest casualness. When there are more people, some will become very sloppy. When there are only a few people you cannot be sloppy, you must be very earnest. When there are fewer people, we must do an even better job. When there are more people, we cannot be attentive to everyone's situation. We must have the practice of Universal Bowing everyday, bowing to the patriarchs. Every morning we must make three bows to all the patriarchs of the East and West, in the evening, we must also make three bows to the patriarchs of the East and West. In all the monasteries, they walk from the Buddha Hall to the Patriarch Hall to bow to the patriarchs. When I was on Mount Potola, I had to hike up the mountain. From where we were, we would hike up the mountain, and from there we would hike back down, doing the same routine everyday. When we got there, what did we do? We would make three bows. It took about five minutes to hike up the mountain, and about five minutes to come back down because there are many steps. This is the way we bowed to the patriarchs. This is filial respect; we are filial to all patriarchs of the East and West. Those of us who would like to leave the householder's

上排班——！頂禮三拜——！」這樣。

我們這兒，人少就不必那麼唱！尤其在西方這個佛教，不必對面立。我們可以說：「排班——！向上——！面上——！恭立——！」這樣子，然後頂禮祖師。

因為我們這兒的規矩，大家都是面對著佛的；不像在中國的佛堂，人是面對面的，你看我，也不順眼，我看你，也要發脾氣。我們現在在這個西方，誰也不看誰，我們看佛，佛沒有發脾氣的。但是我們要是到旁的地方，還要隨其他道場的規矩；因為他們都是那個老規矩，我們這個新規矩，他們不懂。我們這兒做早晚課，人人都面對著佛，不是對面立。中國是對面立；所以我說，我們這兒的佛教不是中國的佛教，我們這是一個新興的佛教。以後你們受戒的沙彌、沙彌尼，要聽以前我們在臺灣受戒回來這些老戒的招呼；在受戒的期間，一定要循規蹈矩的，要認真去學習。

在今天，一個開始的時候，我和你們隨便談這幾句話。

☞待續

life, must be respectful to the patriarchs of the past. That is why we must bow to the patriarchs everyday during precepts training. When we bow to the patriarchs at the monastery, the cantor will give out the commands: "Get in line!" When you were in Taiwan, did you have to get in line? The cantor will also say: "Stand facing each other! Get in line and advance forward! Bow three times." This is the way.

Since we have fewer people here, we do not have to sing out the commands in such a way. Especially for Buddhism in the West, we do not need to stand facing each other. We can have it this way: "Get in line! Advance forward! Face up! Stand up respectfully!" We can do it this way, and then bow to the patriarchs.

This is our rule here, everyone faces the Buddha. Unlike in the Buddha Halls in China where people stand facing each other, when people see each other, some might get angry or some just cannot tolerate the presence of another. Now in the West, we do not see each other but we see the Buddha instead. The Buddha has no temper. However, when we go to other places, we must accord with the rules of other monasteries. They go by the old way and would not understand the new way we are doing things. When we carry out the morning and evening ceremonies, everyone faces the Buddha and we do not stand facing each other. They stand facing each other in China. That is why I said the Buddhism we practice here is not the Buddhism of China. This is a new Buddhism we have here. From now onwards, the shramaneras and shramanerikas who are receiving the precepts must obey the instructions given by senior preceptees who have received the precepts from Taiwan. During the precept training period, you must follow the rules and learn them seriously.

Today is a new beginning, these are just a few casual words for you.

☞To be continued

