

WHY IS BOWING SO IMPORTANT? (II)

為什麼拜佛這麼重要？（二）

An Interview with Dharma Master Heng Shun at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas on April 24, 2016
Chinese Translation by Yilin Jiang and Pu Cang

恒順法師2016年4月24日於萬佛聖城的訪談
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The Ten Thousand Buddhas Repentance is extremely powerful and efficacious.

《萬佛懺》的力量很大，也很有感應。

Question: For us, normal folks, who are currently bowing the Ten Thousand Buddhas Repentance Ceremony, how is this repentance different from other repentances?

Dharma Master Heng Shun: I remember the Master teaching us that the Ten Thousand Buddhas Repentance is extremely powerful and efficacious. Even karmic offenses that are considered to be very difficult to repent of and extinguish, can still be eradicated by doing this repentance. This instruction on how efficacious this practice is sticks out in my mind. I'm an ordinary person too. Bowing this repentance has a lot of benefit, regardless of where you're at in your cultivation, whatever way you do it, and however you understand it.

問：對於我們這些正在拜《萬佛懺》的一般人來說，《萬佛懺》和其他的懺有什麼不同？

順法師：上人告訴我們，《萬佛懺》的力量很大，也很有感應。即使那些不容易懺悔、不容易消滅的罪業，都可以藉由拜這個懺而消除。這些關於《萬佛懺》多麼感應的開示，始終讓我記憶猶新。我也是個普通人，無論我們的修行程度如何，怎麼拜這個《萬佛懺》，或是對這個法門的認識多少，都能從拜懺獲得很多好處。

In my own experience, I've learned that the more you engage in this practice, the more meaningful it becomes. However, like you said, it does take time. It might take a lot of time, perhaps years. The Buddha taught that patience is a very important quality to have in developing one's spiritual cultivation. I bowed the Ten Thousand Buddhas Repentance for the first time in 1988, after I did a personal repentance before the assembly and the Venerable Master. The Master said to stay back here at the City of 10,000 Buddhas. At the time I was the abbot of Gold Mountain Monastery. He said, "Your offenses are so great, you should do the repentance ceremony. Stay here at the City and do the Ten Thousand Buddhas Repentance Ceremony."

The Master taught us that even karmic offenses that are considered to be very difficult to repent of and extinguish, can still be eradicated by doing this repentance.

上人告訴我們，即使那些不容易懺悔、不容易消滅的罪業，都可以藉由拜這個懺而消除。

Question: So this was after your own repentance?

Dharma Master Heng Shun: Yes, I did my own repentance a few days before the Ten Thousand Buddhas Repentance started in 1988. I did the Ten Thousand Buddhas Repentance for the first time then in 1988 and then I did it again in 1992, 1993, 1994, and 1995. Under the Venerable Master's direction, I started teaching in our Developing Virtue Secondary School during the 1994-1995 school year. Therefore, it has been a long time since I've done the whole repentance ceremony. Right now during this bowing session, I just do one bowing session every morning with the students in my meditation class.

Question: One of the differences too is that we primarily recite the names of the Buddhas as opposed to doing a liturgy with a lot of prose. How do you think that is different than other kinds of repentances? What's the power in the names of the Buddhas?

Dharma Master Heng Shun: There are a couple of sutras, in which the names of the 88 Buddhas are mentioned. We do the 88 Buddhas Repentance Ceremony every other night as part of our Evening Recitation Ceremony. A Buddhist scholar at UC Santa Cruz, Dr. Raoul Birnbaum, did a book entitled "The Healing Buddha" back in 1989. In this book he translated some sutras that mention two groups of Buddhas' names. One has 53 names and the other group has 35 names. Together they make up the names of the 88 Buddhas in this repentance ceremony. In the sutras that he quotes, they say that numerous living beings in the past became fully enlightened Buddhas just by reciting the names of the Buddhas in either one of these two lists. How much the more efficacious is it to recite and bow to the names

我個人的經驗，就是你越深入這個法門，它對你的意義就越大。但是正如妳所言，這確實要費一點時間，有時候是很長的一段時間，也許要幾年的工夫。不過佛陀告訴我們，忍耐是修行過程中很重要的一項特質。我第一次拜《萬佛懺》是1988年，就在對大眾和上人懺悔之後，上人要我留在萬佛聖城。那時我是金山寺的當家，上人說：「你的罪業太大了，你應該拜懺。留下來拜《萬佛懺》。」

問：所以是在您個人的發露懺悔之後？

順法師：是的，就在1988年的《萬佛懺》前幾天。1988年第一次拜《萬佛懺》，之後又參加1992、1993、1994和1995年的《萬佛懺》。遵照上人的吩咐，1994至1995學年我開始在培德中學教書，自此就很少有機會全程參加拜懺了。現在這次《萬佛懺》期間只有利用每天早上打坐課的時間，和學生一起參加一支香。

問：不像那些長行懺文的懺，《萬佛懺》有一個不同處，就是基本上都在唱誦諸佛名號。您個人對於這一點有什麼看法？佛名到底有什麼樣的力量？

順法師：有幾部佛經都提到八十八佛，我們也念八十八佛大懺悔文作為雙日的晚課內容。加州大學聖塔克魯茲分校的一位佛教學者拉悟·伯恩鮑姆博士1989年寫過一本書叫《藥師佛》，書中他翻譯了幾部引述到兩組佛名的佛經。這兩組佛名，一組是五十三佛，另一組是三十五佛，合起來就是懺悔文裡面的八十八佛。這些經典裡都提到，過去已經有無量的眾生因為稱念或者五十三佛，或者三十五佛，都皆成佛了。那麼現在稱念並且禮拜《萬佛懺》的萬佛洪名，功效有多

of all the 10,000 Buddhas in the Ten Thousand Buddhas Repentance Ceremony.

Why does reciting and bowing to the Buddhas have such tremendous merit and virtue? The way I explain it to the seniors in my Buddhism class is as follows: Imagine a being who creates good karma for millions and millions of lifetimes. He amasses an incredible amount of punya (blessings and merit) and then eventually becomes a Buddha. This applies to the great Bodhisattvas as well. The existence of the names of these Buddhas or Bodhisattvas, which have been taught to us by the Buddha, has a deep connection with the actual existence of these Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and the tremendous amount of punya or merit that they had amassed over those millions of lifetimes. Just by saying their names, let alone, bowing and showing sincere veneration, must also have a great amount of good karma. This is because you're connecting with this storehouse of merit, this incredible amount of good karma, that they have accumulated over this very long period of time. Therefore, the existence of their names or anything else about these Buddhas and Bodhisattvas has an immense storehouse of merit. Thus a person who recites and bows to them also accesses and generates many blessings.

Question: Do you know if the Master or anyone has other commentaries on repentances?

Dharma Master Heng Shun: In the last chapter of the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, Chapter 40 on the Practices and Vows of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, he talks about repentance rather extensively. The fourth of the ten great practices of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva is to repent and reform of karmic obstacles. That vow is explained in the sutra itself and the Venerable Master's commentary gives an even more detailed explanation of what this practice means. The Master also gave a very detailed lecture on a separate verse entitled, "The Verse of Repentance and Reform" that is not part of the *Avatamsaka Sutra* per se.

Question: Samantabhadra Bodhisattva is such an important part of the repentance. We begin each session by reciting Homage to Samantabhadra Bodhisattva in Chinese (Namo Pu Xian Pusa) three times because he is the host of the *Sutra of the Buddha Proclaims the Names of Buddhas* (the Sutra used for the 10,000 Buddhas Repentance Ceremony).

Dharma Master Heng Shun: He's the Dharma-host of that sutra. He's also the host of the *Avatamsaka*

大就更不用說了。

為什麼念佛拜佛有這麼大的功德呢？在佛學課上，我是這麼對高年級學生解釋的：想像有一個眾生，在過去無量億的生命裡都在修持善業。積聚不可思議這麼多的功德福報，最終得以成佛，當然也包括菩薩摩訶薩。這些佛菩薩的名號，因為釋迦牟尼佛，我們才得以聽聞，才有機會與他們的清淨法身，以及他們無量劫累積的廣大功德感應道交。光是稱念他們的洪名就有無量無邊的善業，更不用說恭敬禮拜了。這是因為你和這些功德藏、這些無法計算的善業聯繫在一起，而這些功德藏和善業是諸佛在過去生長久積累而成的。這些佛菩薩名號或任何與之相關的，都有無量無邊的功德。因此，藉由稱念、禮拜佛名，也就能獲得和栽培很多的福德。

問：您知道上人或其他人有對懺悔的其他開示？

順法師：《華嚴經》最後一品〈普賢行願品〉，對於懺悔有非常精闢的闡述。普賢菩薩的十大願中，第四大願就是懺悔業障。關於這個願，經文本身和上人的淺釋都講得很清楚。師父甚至特別解釋〈懺悔文〉，雖然〈懺悔文〉不是出自《華嚴經》。

問：普賢菩薩在懺悔法門中扮演很重要的角色，萬佛懺的每支香開始都會先三稱「南無普賢菩薩」，因為他是《佛說佛名經》（萬佛寶懺所拜的經）的懺主。

順法師：不僅是這部經的法主，普賢菩薩同時也是《華嚴經》的法主。《法華經》最後一品名為〈普賢菩薩勸發品〉，還有另一部與《法華經》相關的《佛說觀普賢菩薩行法經》，這部經極其詳盡地描述如何觀想普賢菩薩、他的坐騎六牙

The existence of the names of these Buddhas or Bodhisattvas, which have been taught to us by the Buddha, has a deep connection with the actual existence of these Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and the tremendous amount of punya or merit that they had amassed over those millions of lifetimes.

這些佛菩薩的名號，因為釋迦牟尼佛，我們才得以聽聞，才有機會與他們的清淨法身，以及他們無量劫累積的廣大功德感應道交。

Sutra. And at the end of the *Lotus Sutra* there's a chapter about him called "The Encouragement of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva." There is also a Sutra related to the *Lotus Sutra*, which is called *The Visualization of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva Sutra*. This Sutra has an extremely elaborate description of how one can visualize Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, his six-tusked white elephant and all the many adornments associated with them. It is a pretty amazing meditation and visualization practice.

Question: When you first bowed the Ten Thousand Buddhas Repentance, was it hard for you because of so many Buddhas' names and you probably didn't know that many Chinese characters?

Dharma Master Heng Shun: I had already been a monk for over 12 years when I first did the Ten Thousand Buddhas Repentance. Therefore, it wasn't so hard. I enjoy doing physical activity. Before I was a monk I loved to play sports and I was pretty athletic. As I mentioned earlier, in 1988 the Master had told me to stay at the City to do the repentance. On the second or third day of bowing, the Master came into the Buddha Hall while I was bowing with the assembly and signaled to me that he wanted to talk to me. So I came to the side of the bowing cushions where the Master was, and he said to me in Chinese, "There is a rakshasa ghost who wants your life. If you mess up again, you're finished!" Needless to say, after hearing that, I got even more sincere and earnest in my bowing.

Question: What responses did you get from the Ten Thousand Buddhas Repentance?

Dharma Master Heng Shun: I just felt good, that's all. I had great enjoyment in doing it. I like doing a Buddhist practice like this that involves a lot of physical movement. The Master always taught us not to be concerned or to seek for some sort of good result or special experience in our spiritual practice. He said that our daily spiritual cultivation is analogous to eating food everyday. It is just something we have to do each day to support and sustain our "wisdom or spiritual life" and there is really no need to think about what kind of good result we get from it. Whatever results you attain will occur naturally.

Question: Reading the letter of your account at your parents' home and the very vivid description of what could be these karmic threads that were literally holding you back, that's a very powerful response. One could even think that maybe it was many years that led up to that.

Dharma Master Heng Shun: That's from reciting

白象以及其他種種莊嚴，可以說是
一種殊勝的修定和觀想法門。

問：您第一次拜《萬佛懺》時會
不會覺得很困難，因為有這麼多佛
名，當時您可能還不認識這麼多中
文字？

順法師：第一次拜《萬佛懺》
時，我已經出家超過12年了，所以
沒那麼困難。我很喜歡運動，出家
前我就喜歡運動，而且還算個運動
健將呢！之前提到過，1988年師父
讓我留在萬佛城拜萬佛懺，拜懺的
第二或是第三天，我正和大家一起
拜，師父走進大殿，示意我他有話
跟我說。我走到拜墊旁邊他站的
地方，他用中文跟我說：「有個羅刹
鬼要你的命，這次再搞砸，你就完
了！」聽完這番話，不用多說，我
當然拜得更加誠心專注了。

問：您拜《萬佛懺》有什麼感應
嗎？

順法師：就是感覺很好。我特
別歡喜拜懺，因為我喜歡參加像這
種比較動態的法門。師父經常告訴
我們，修行不要老是關心或者想
要尋求一種什麼好的結果或特殊的
經驗。他說修行就好像吃飯，就是
每天都要做，以滋養我們的「法身
慧命」，沒必要去想會得到什麼好
處。該有什麼好的結果，自自然然
就會有了。

問：我讀過一篇您的故事，是關
於您住在父母家遇到的狀況，您說
那些業障就像繩索一樣把您困在
那裡。這是很生動的形容，也是一
種很強的感應。有些人或許認為，
這要修行很多年才有這種感應。

順法師：那是誦念〈普賢行願
品〉的力量。跟父母一起住的時
候，我依然把讀誦〈普賢行願品〉
當成主要的功課。我第一次會背是
在70年代後期，唸一遍要花40分
鐘。有些人誦得很快，但我不喜歡

He said that our daily spiritual
cultivation is analogous
to eating food everyday.
It is just something we
have to do each day to
support and sustain our
"wisdom or spiritual life".

修行就好像吃飯，就是
每天都要做，以滋養我
們的「法身慧命」。

the Chapter on the Practices and Vows of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva. I still recited it (at that time in my parent's home) as my core practice. I had first memorized it back in the late 70's. It takes me about 40 minutes to recite it one time. Some people recite fast. I don't like to recite it too fast. I like to recite at a moderate pace so I can visualize what I am reciting. I recite in Chinese of course. When I recite and visualize I often cannot tell whether my thoughts are in Chinese or English. When I was one of the Venerable Master's assistants and attendant for several years, I was speaking more Chinese than English in my daily life. To this day, Chinese to me is almost like English especially when reciting this chapter.

Question: That's really interesting because I was going to just ask you quickly about vows, the power of vows. That's one of the huge things of the Chapter on the Practices and Vows of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva.

Dharma Master Heng Shun: The Master taught that we should always say our vows in the morning and in the evening reflect on how well we have fulfilled them. When I go to morning ceremony, I always recite my vows as I walk to the Buddha Hall. I recite some verses and my vows. Vows are very important. I'm always mindful of the vows that I've made. Everybody's got different vows and we've all publicly stated them when we first became novices and monks. Whenever I think of public vows, I also think of repentance, because they would usually happen at the same time. That is, right after a person would do a repentance, he or she would usually make vows. There were also times when people would make vows on their own. This did not occur very often.

I remember once a monk made a vow at the old Gold Mountain Monastery on 15th Street in the Mission District of San Francisco. He had already been a monk for a year or two. He was going to make a vow only to eat raw food—nothing else. As soon as he made that vow, the Master called out from his Dharma seat and said, "No! You can't make that vow." He said that's not a good vow. The Master said in trying to keep that type of vow, it would end up having very negative results for him. He told him right on the spot in front of everyone. For me vows are much more connected with the present life. One of my vows is that I will do a certain number of recitations of the Chapter on the Practices and Vows of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra every day in order to transfer merit on behalf of my late mother.

那麼快。我喜歡誦得不疾不徐，這樣可以一邊誦，一邊觀想經文的內容。我是用中文唸的，但是當我念誦或是觀想時，我很難分辨自己的念頭到底是中文，還是英文。身為上人助手和侍者的那幾年，平常生活中我講中文多過英文。即使到今日，中文對我來說幾乎就像英文一樣，尤其是在讀誦〈普賢行願品〉的時候。

問：這很有意思，因為我正想問關於發願、願力的問題。這也是〈普賢行願品〉中，極為重要的部分。

順法師：師父要我們每天早上應該說一遍自己發的願，晚上反省一下做到多少。清晨到佛殿作早課的路上，我都會讀誦自己發的願，念一些偈頌和自己的願。發願很重要，我時常都記得自己發過的願。每個人的願都不同，當我們做沙彌和比丘的時候，都曾在大眾前發過願。每當想到當眾發願，我都會連帶想起懺悔，因為兩者通常是一起進行的。當一個人懺悔之後，通常都會發願。有時候也有人自己發願，但這並不常見。

記得在舊的金山寺，就是三藩市米慎區15街時，有一個人出家一、兩年了，當時他打算發願只吃生的食物，不吃其他的。他剛發完這個願，師父在法座上就說了：「不行，你不能發這個願。」因為那不是一個好的願。師父說，為了履行這個願，最終會帶給這個弟子不好的結果。所以師父立刻當著所有人的面，告訴了他。對我來說，發願更多是跟今生有關。我其中一個願，就是每天誦滿一定數量的〈普賢行願品〉，將功德迴向給往生的母親。

You should always say your vows in the morning and in the evening reflect on how well you have fulfilled them.

師父要我們每天早上應該說一遍自己發的願，晚上反省一下做到多少。

Doing It takes some type of strong daily spiritual practice to change these habits. Repentance is a great help in changing these habits.

要改變這些習氣，平常修行得下一番工夫，懺悔法門在這方面有很大的幫助。

Question: How would you describe what karmic obstructions are?

Dharma Master Heng Shun: These are bad habit patterns. An example of this would be the habit of getting angry in certain situations. We need to refrain from getting angry regardless of the circumstances. Karmic obstructions refer to the unwholesome things we do as a force of habit. It is very hard to get out of these unwholesome karmic grooves that we've created over a long period of time. It takes some type of strong daily spiritual practice to change these habits. Repentance is a great help in changing these habits, too.

Question: Your training with the Master was done under his rigorous standards. That's one of the things that is very clear about the Master; it's that he had high standards. This is not the Buddhism of convenience; rather, this is real serious cultivation. You have to work hard or bitter work with practices that are difficult. And they are difficult for a reason. Why do you think that's important?

Dharma Master Heng Shun: The Master in so many situations would emphasize having patience with difficult situations, psychologically and even physically. I remember my repentance in February of 1992. The Master would come up every week to give Dharma talks. I have detailed notes of everything the Master said during these Dharma talks. I remember once he said that while sitting in full lotus, even if your legs are going to fall off, you should still endure the pain. He said, "Don't worry! The pain will subside." He taught the importance of having patience like this.

The first Pratimoksha (Rule for Buddhist Monastics) spoken by the Buddha to 1250 Arhats shortly after his enlightenment only consists of three sets of verses. The middle set of verses is well known: "Not doing any evil, doing all good, purifying the mind—this is the teaching of the Buddhas." Most people are not so familiar with the first verse, which begins, "Patience (Kshanti) is the foremost virtue." (The entire verse is: *Patience is the foremost virtue. Nirvana is supreme, say the Buddhas. He who harms another is not one who has "gone forth."* Nor is he a Shramana who afflicts others.) I think that means being patient with both physical pain and difficult situations. That's what I tell new people who visit the City of 10,000 Buddhas like this young man who is currently visiting the monastery from Canada. He has such difficulty in being

問：您怎樣解釋業障？

順法師：就是壞習氣，例如碰到一些狀況，總是發脾氣。無論遇到什麼，我們都要控制自己不要發脾氣。業障，就是習慣性地做出一些不好的事情。想拔出這些惡業深坑很困難，因為這些習慣已經跟著我們很久很久了。要改變這些習氣，平常修行得下一番工夫，懺悔法門在這方面也有很大的幫助。

問：上人訓練你們要求很嚴格。上人為人所知的其中一件事，就是他的標準很高。這不像佛教說的方便法，而是真修實煉的苦幹。想修行就要認真，就要吃苦，當然這是有原因的。您覺得吃苦為什麼很重要？

順法師：師父在很多場合都強調要忍苦，無論是心理上或是身體上的辛苦。我記得1992年2月的那次懺悔，師父每個禮拜都會來講法，我把那段時間師父的講法都詳細地做了筆記。記得有一次他說，結雙跏趺坐，就算你的腿要斷掉了，你也要忍著那個痛。他說：「不要擔心，慢慢就不痛了。」他就像這樣教我們忍耐的重要。

佛陀開悟之後，為一千二百五十位阿羅漢制定的第一個波羅提木叉，只有三首偈頌。中間那首偈頌「諸惡莫作，眾善奉行，自淨其意，是諸佛教」，很多人都知道了。但是，第一首偈頌卻鮮為人知，偈頌的第一句就說：「忍辱第一道。」（全偈是「忍辱第一道，佛說無為最，出家惱他人，不名為沙門」）我想，指的就是要忍受身體的疼痛和艱難的困境。這也是我對新來萬佛城的人說，就像一位從加拿大來的年輕人，忍耐對他來說很困難。我告訴他，多在廟上做功德，這也是根據我跟隨上人多年的經驗得來。即使遇到上人之前，當

patient. I told him to do more merit in the temple. This is based on many years experience under the tutelage of the Venerable Master. And even when I was in Thailand before I studied under the Master, I received similar advice from other teachers.

I remember when I first visited the monastery of Ajahn Maha Bua in Udon Thani in 1973. I told him that I felt scared in his forest monastery (Wat Pa Baan Taad), which was a thickly wooded jungle with all kinds of living creatures. I asked him what I should do to overcome this fear. I was a lay person then. He said, "Just create more merit." He told me that my fear was due to my lack of blessings and merit.

Having been at Gold Mountain Monastery and here at the City of 10,000 Buddhas for so many years, I've observed quite a lot of people come and go. Those people who have difficulty usually have a lot of false thinking about the things that are wrong in the environment or the people they meet. They frequently look at others' faults or things that they feel are wrong. I have found that if they create merit by doing more work for the monastery, they become much more comfortable and their fault-finding mind becomes greatly diminished.

Question: How do you think that works, why?

Dharma Master Heng Shun: I don't know, I just see that over and over again. There are people who work hard for the temple and create merit. Then they feel comfortable. They just feel physically and psychologically more at ease. They don't have so much of finding fault in other people or their circumstances. The human mind is such that we tend to see a lot of faults in others and in our environment. The Buddha said it is so easy to see the faults of others, but very hard to see our own faults. The Venerable Master's verse says it quite well:

Return the Light, Reflect Within

Truly recognize your own shortcomings.

Do not speak of the faults of others.

Others' faults are just my own faults.

The revelation that we are all the same

is called Great Compassion. ☸

我還在泰國時，我從其他的師父那兒也得到類似的忠告。

記得1973年，我第一次參訪阿姜摩訶布瓦位於泰國烏東省的寺廟。我跟他說，他的帕邦塔寺位在茂密的森林中，裡面的各種動物讓我感到很害怕，我問他如何才能克服這種恐懼。當時我還是個在家人，他說：「多做功德。」他告訴我，我害怕是因為我的福報和功德不夠。

在金山寺和萬佛城這麼多年，看到太多人來來去去。那些覺得很難適應的人，通常都是因為很多妄想，覺得環境不對，或是認為遇到的人有問題。他們經常看別人的不是，或者覺得事情不應該那樣。我發現如果他們多為廟上做些工，多積點功德，他們就比較能安住，而且老看別人錯處的心思也會大大減少。

問：您為什麼覺得這麼做有用？

順法師：我也不知道，我只是看得太多了。那些在廟上做很多工的人，有了功德，自己也就感到安樂，身心都自在得多。他們不怎麼找別人的毛病，或者嫌環境不好。人的思想就是這樣，我們習慣看別人的不對，看周圍環境的不對。佛陀說看見別人的錯非常容易，但是要看到自己的錯，卻是非常難的。上人有一首偈頌說得很好：

迴光返照

真認自己錯，

莫論他人非；

他非即我非，

同體名大悲。

☸

The Buddha said it so easy to see the faults of others, but very hard to see our own faults.

佛陀說看見別人的錯非常容易，但是要看到自己的錯，卻是非常難的。
