

## The Second Summer Retreat at Sudhana Center – Irigaray meets Nāgārjuna

### 善財參學中心第二屆暑期禪七 ——當伊希嘉黑遇上龍樹菩薩



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Dharma Realm Buddhist University held the second summer retreat at Sudhana Center from July 22-29, 2017. As a group of fifty people, we reflected deeply on how we created our identities and the ways we construct who we are. Two texts helped guide the retreat: *The Forgetting of Air in Martin Heidegger* by Luce Irigaray, a French philosopher, and *The Six Perfections* by Nagarjuna Bodhisattva, a pivotal figure in the development of Buddhism. Though separated by nearly two thousand years, both authors share the theme that generosity and gratitude are key elements in opening up the mind and freeing oneself from conditioned habits of thought and identity.

One of the key themes in Irigaray's text was that language is deeply embedded in our way of "being." She asks us to go back to a place before language arises in the mind, so that we can uproot the deep tendencies of identity that shape our reality. Freeing ourselves from these tendencies opens us up to new possibilities of being with ourselves and others.

To facilitate this investigation inwards, we meditated five times each day and kept noble silence throughout the day. By sitting quietly and not socializing, we allowed our minds to calm down, giving us the opportunity to observe how we construct our realities through our feelings, thoughts, and words. Although the meditation was often difficult in the summer

法界佛教大學善財參學中心第二屆暑期禪七於2017年7月22日至29日舉行。參加此次禪七的50位學員深入反思：我們如何自我認同以及如何塑造了自我。使用的兩份教材分別是龍樹菩薩的《六度》以及法國哲學家露西·伊希嘉黑的著作《馬丁海德格遺忘的大氣》。雖然他們兩人的年代相差將近兩千年，但他們不約而同地認為：想要打開心胸，從思想和自我認同的習氣解脫出來的話，布施與感恩是關鍵所在。

伊希嘉黑著作的一大主題是：語言深植於我們的存在方式中。她要求我們回到語言在心中未生前之處，這樣才能將形成我們現狀的深入自我認同連根拔起，讓我們在處己和待人方面，能有新的可能。

為了有助向內參究，學員每天打坐五支香，並全天止語。透過靜坐和不跟別人社交，心平靜下來後，得以觀察我們如何透過感受、思想和文字建構出所處的現況。雖然在酷暑的高溫下打坐，經常很困難，但恒持法師為我們

heat, we were encouraged and inspired by Dharma Master Heng Chih who told us not to waste our time, but apply real effort in practice. To inspire us, she shared her joy and discoveries from fifty years of meditating. To guide us, she answered people's meditation questions and shared the teachings she received from Master Hua.

Irigaray's writings also pointed to gratitude, especially for our mothers who gave to us so wholly and completely while we were in the womb, as an access point for opening up the mind to a place before language. She reflects that as babies still forming in the womb, we existed in a "pre-language" state; it was only after birth and growing up that we began to absorb the language provided by our surroundings and understand who we are and what the world consisted of.

From recognizing the kindness of our mothers (i.e. filial respect) as well as appreciation for the "air" around us that is always supporting us, allowing us to breathe, we begin to lead a new way of being. We no longer need to force our version of reality on others (or force others to fit into our reality), but are able to be open to people for who they are. From this openness, we can be of true service to others, not from self-identity, but from a heartfelt connection with others.

This approach to generosity complemented Nagarjuna Bodhisattva's teachings on dana paramita, the perfection of giving. He provides detailed instruction on how to give, not out of a sense of self, but a true wish for the welfare of all living beings. True giving comes from true wisdom, which is not limited by words and language. When giving is perfected, there are no categories of "giver," "recipient," or "gift." Giving is done unconditionally in accord with the nature of reality.

All the ceremonies during the retreat were conducted in English (except for the mantras) with a combination of Mahayana and Theravada chants: liturgy of the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas and the daily chants practiced at Abhayagiri Monastery. A few days into the retreat, upon request, an additional class was started to help explain the basics of ceremonies, which addressed questions like: Why do we chant? How do we chant? How do we pronounce these mantras that are Chinese transliteration of Sanskrit sounds?

As the retreat came to an end, there was a palpable feeling that everyone had gone through a deep transformation. Some shared how they appreciated the atmosphere of honesty, openness, and care. Others commented on how having both a Western text and a Buddhist classic brought Buddhism into dialogue with modern thought. Almost everyone sensed the potential of Sudhana Center as a gateway for bringing Dharma to the West. In many ways, Sudhana Center is still forming its "identity." Who is Sudhana? —A young Dharma seeker who could be any of us. ❀

打氣，並啟發我們，告訴我們不要浪費時光，要真正用功修行。持法師分享她自己打坐50年的法喜與發現來鼓舞我們，並回答大家有關打坐的問題，同時分享她從宣公上人學到的教法，來引導我們。

伊希嘉黑的著作也指向感恩，特別是要感恩我們的母親。當我們還在母胎時，母親完整賦予我們一切，為我們打開心靈，通往語言生成之前的入口處。伊希嘉黑認為，當胎兒還在母親腹中時，是活在語言之前的狀態。唯有出生後，在成長中我們才開始吸收周遭環境提供的語言，並理解我們是誰，這個世界由什麼組成。

透過認知母親的慈愛（例如孝順），以及感恩週遭的空氣始終支持我們，賦予我們呼吸，這樣才能開始一種新的生活方式。我們不再需要將自己認為的事實，強加於別人身上（或者勉強別人來適應），而能夠以開放的心胸接納他人。以這份開放的心胸，我們就能真正服務別人；不是為了尋求自我定位，而是由衷地與他人連結在一起。

從這個角度來看慷慨大度，與龍樹菩薩所教導的布施波羅蜜有相得益彰之效。龍樹菩薩詳細說明如何布施——不是為自己而布施，而是真心希望眾生幸福。真正的布施發自真正的智慧，不受語言文字的限制。當布施圓滿時，就沒有「施者」、「受者」、「布施物品」之別。布施是無條件的，符合實相的本質。

禪七期間所有的法事儀軌都以英語進行（除了誦咒之外），並且綜合南傳和北傳的唱誦，也就是萬佛聖城和無畏寺的唱誦。禪七開始數天後，應學員要求，增加了一門課程，專門解釋有關法事儀軌的基本問題，例如：我們為何唱誦？如何唱誦？由梵文音譯成中文的咒語如何發音？

禪七進行到尾聲時，可以明顯感覺到每個人都經歷了深刻的轉變。有些人說，他們非常感恩（禪七期間）誠實、開放和關懷的氣氛；也有些人說，同時研究西方的著作和佛教經典著作，使佛教跟現代思潮產生對話。幾乎每個人都感覺到善財參學中心深具潛力，可以成為佛法傳到西方的門戶。從很多方面而言，善財參學中心仍在「自我定位」。「善財」是誰？是一位年輕的求法者，可以是我們當中的任何一位。❀