

Gaining an Advantage from a Disadvantage —Introducing Richard Chung

在劣勢中得利——介紹鍾耀明居士

編輯部 文
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By the Editorial staff
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Richard Chung, 56 years old, was born and raised in Hong Kong. He received an undergraduate degree in Canada and a PhD in the United States. After receiving his PhD in 1992, he started teaching at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada.

About 10 years ago, he had a stroke. He remembers eating dinner one day and then going to bed. The next morning, he woke up but could not speak or move his body. His family members quickly rushed him to the hospital. The doctors told them that his stroke was very dangerous and they needed to operate as soon as possible. Blood clots in his body would cause permanent damage to the nervous system and possibly death. The doctors were not very optimistic and said that the probability of a successful operation was only 50%.

His family members signed the consent form for the operation and went to a temple to recite a Sutra. The operation was very successful and he walked out of the hospital within a week. Although he did not have any noticeable symptoms from the stroke, the recovery process took six months. After that, he chanted the *Earth Store Sutra* for half an hour every day.

In 2011, he moved to Gold Coast, Australia where he is teaching at Griffith University. He started coming to Gold Coast Dharma Realm about 4 years ago. Dharma Master Heng Chih asked him to lecture on the *Sixth Patriarch Platform Sutra* with the Venerable Master's commentary, both of which he had never read before. He believed that Dharma Master Chih's intention was, 1) to attract more locals to study Buddhism, and 2) to force him to learn the Sutra. Since he is in the



五十六歲的鍾耀明生長於香港，分別在加拿大、美國獲得碩士與博士學位。1992年取到博士學位之後，在加拿大蒙特利的協和大學擔任教職。

大約十年前，他經歷一次中風。記得那天吃完晚飯後，上床睡覺；第二天早上醒來，就無法說話，身體也無法移動。家人很快把他送去醫院，醫生告訴他們必須儘快開刀，否則可能造成神經系統的永久損傷，甚至有死亡的危險。醫生們對他的病情並不樂觀，手術也只有百分之五十的成功機率。

家人簽下手術同意書之後，就去廟上為他誦經祈福。出乎意料地，手術非常成功，他在一週內就出院了。雖然沒有顯著的中風後遺症，復原過程依舊花了六個月。從那之後，他每天讀誦半小時的《地藏經》。

2011年，他搬到澳洲黃金海岸，並在格里菲斯大學任教。四年前來到金岸法界，恒持法師鼓勵

teaching profession, he knows the best way to learn something is to teach it.

He started the class with 7 or 8 participants and found that the Venerable Master's commentary was much easier to understand than what he has read before on Buddhism. The initial reaction from the participants was quite good. However, after a few months, the number of participants dropped and they decided to stop the class. This is when he understood that it is quite difficult to bring Buddhism to the West.

Over the years, he noticed he has one bad habit: the words coming from his mouth could easily hurt other people. Since he has lived by himself for most of his life, his personality is quite direct. When he speaks, he voices out his opinion easily and never contemplates if his words could be misinterpreted or hurt other people. Similarly, when other people said something that he did not like, he would immediately try to defend himself.

Although he realized this problem, he did not know how to change, not until he started learning meditation at GCDR. In meditation, he tries to observe what thoughts come up, not to react to it and to let it pass. The lesson he learnt is that if one can observe one's thought when it comes up, then one will have a chance to correct and change any bad habits. Otherwise, it is impossible to change.

He started the Sunday School for kids at Gold Coast Dharma Realm to teach Mandarin and teaches them traditional moral values. To some extent, this Sunday School is successful. He has seen some changes in the students' behaviour and the class is still running with the second cohort of students.

He feels that his career is relatively straightforward, although he still has to work very hard to achieve some results. He was not always healthy – he's had a broken leg, a twisted back, and a couple of operations. Based on his health, he assumes he must have done a lot of killing in his previous lives and created many karmic debtors.

Although his bad health causes some pain from time to time, he is also very thankful and thinks that his karmic debtors are also good knowing advisors who teach him that life is fragile and impermanent. He believes that if he had good health and a successful career, he would have never thought about cultivation. He would have probably managed "a good life" in his colleagues' eyes, which is to get married, have children, travel a lot, enjoy good food or drink alcohol. These would only bring temporary excitement.

He feels that the purpose of cultivation is to be awakened, to become a Buddha and to cross over all living beings, so that they can escape from the cycle of birth and death. He said adamantly, "I may not be able to do all these in this life time but I will keep trying forever." ❀

他以上人的淺釋為腳本，講解《六祖壇經》。這二本書他都從來沒讀過，他相信持法師的用意是，一來接引更多當地人士學習佛法，二來藉此迫使他研習這部經典。而根據他自己的教學經驗，所謂「教學相長」，學習的最佳方式就是去教。

課程開始只有七、八個人參加。他發現上人的淺釋，比起以前讀過的佛教書籍，更易明白理解。參與者的初期反應非常良好，然而經過幾個月，上課人數逐漸減少，最後決定停課。這使他體會到，把佛法帶到西方國家確實是相當困難。

這些年來，他察覺到自己有個壞習慣，就是說話很容易傷到人。因為多年獨居，個性很直，所以表達意見時太過直率，從不考慮自己的話會不會被曲解或是傷到其他人。同樣地，當別人說了他不中聽的話，他立刻會為自己辯護。

儘管知道自己的毛病，卻不知怎麼修改，直到開始在金岸法界學習打坐。打坐時，他嘗試去觀察自己的起心動念，當念頭起來時，不加回應而讓它過去。課程中他學到的是，如果一個人可以察覺自己的心念，任何壞習慣都有希望修正；否則，永遠不可能改變。

同時他也幫忙金岸法界開設周日班，教導孩子們中文以及中國傳統道德。某種程度上而言，這個周日班頗為成功，因為看到了孩子們的變化。這個班級至今仍持續進行，已經招收第二屆學生了。

他認為教書這份職業還算單純，雖然還是得努力才能獲得一些成果。自己的健康狀況不算太好，脊椎側彎，加上腿傷，並且經歷幾次手術。由此看來，他自認過去生中一定造過許多殺業，累積了很多的冤親債主。

儘管健康不佳時，常常帶來痛苦，他仍是充滿感激，並認為冤親債主正是他的善知識，讓他瞭解到人生的脆弱無常。他相信如果有健康的身體及成功的事業，他絕對不會想到要修行，大概會過著同儕眼中的「美好生活」一成家立業、養兒育女、環遊世界、享受佳餚美酒。然而，這些都只能帶來暫時的歡愉。

他認為修行的目的，在開悟成佛，並度盡一切眾生，令眾生脫離生死輪迴。他堅定地說：「此生也許無法完成全部，但我會永遠不斷地努力下去。」❀