

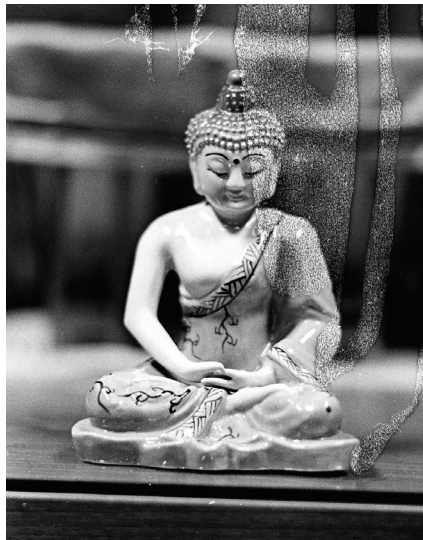
# 從呼吸開始 Start from Breathing

- 沙彌尼近聞2018年3月15日講於萬佛聖城大殿  
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最近因為照顧一位有呼吸困難的年長比丘尼，讓我想和大家分享一個主題。這個主題對我們來說，不但熟悉而且重要，但是幾乎很少有人察覺它的存在，那就是呼吸。

出家之前，我是一位物理治療師，受的專業訓練是利用運動做為治療疾病的工具，從肌肉關節痛到心血管疾病，或者呼吸系統的問題等等。既然談到運動，就不能不提到呼吸。人們運動的時候，每一個動作都配合著呼吸，因此能讓氣吸得更深、更長。那些經常運動的人，通常吸氣吸得比較深，因此血液裡的含氧量比較高，就能供給身體和大腦更多的養份。因此經常運動的人，往往都比較健康。



Lately I've been taking care of an elderly nun whose respiratory problem gave me the idea for the subject that I am going to share with you today. It is about something that is so important but also so familiar to most of us that we are almost not aware of its existence: the breath.

As a physical therapist when I was a layperson, I was trained to use exercise as a tool to address most health problems, ranking from pain in muscles and joints to the disorders of the internal systems such as cardiovascular or respiratory illnesses. In talking about exercise, we cannot leave out the breath; each movement of the body is combined with a breath in or out. Those who do exercises more frequently will have a tendency to breathe deeper. This causes their blood to have a higher oxygen level to nourish their body and brain; therefore, they tend to have good health.

Later when I learned about the Buddhadharmā, I came to know much more about the breath. Breathing is not limited to the physical level. How many times have we heard people advise that when you are upset or become emotional or nervous to just take a deep breath? Deep breathing can help release tension in our brain and heart and eventually relieve anger and stress. In the spiritual practice, the breath is considered the bridge between body and mind. Keeping track of our breath is the first step of going all the way to the ultimate goal of our cultivation.

When we focus our attention on the breath to the point that the mind settles down and is centered, we will have the chance to meet with the real thing: Buddha, pure knowing.

In practicing Chan, using breath to clear false thoughts from the mind is considered a better strategy to prepare our mind for investigation, compared

開始學習佛法之後，我對呼吸有更多的認識，原來呼吸不僅只是身體作用。當有人心情很糟或者很焦慮的時候，我們不是都會勸對方深呼吸一下嗎？深呼吸有助於減輕大腦和心臟的壓力，進而消除內在的憤怒與焦慮。在修行方面，呼吸被視為身心之間的橋梁。掌握呼吸，是邁向究竟解脫之路的第一步。藉由專注於呼吸，進而使思慮沉澱，心力得以完全集中，我們就有機會遇到真正的東西，那就是本有的佛性，全然的覺知。

相較於持咒或誦經，打坐時運用數息去除妄想，是比較好的一個前方便。因為數息不需運用識心，正好是參禪所要避免的。

上人曾說持咒，例如〈楞嚴咒〉，能幫助修行者入定。參禪這個法門，就是用功夫直探我們的本來面目，去參「念佛是誰」的這個「誰」。所有祖師大德施設的「話頭」，都是要幫助我們明心見性。因此，參禪如果還用到心意識，則將依然業惑茫茫，就像《楞嚴經》說的「頭上安頭」。只可惜無量劫來的無明，使我們終日用妄心，而不知真心何在。

那麼再來看看，呼吸如何連結身心？或者以佛法角度來說，如何運用呼吸解脫身心，返本還原，親見如來藏性？當佛陀教導弟子四念處，第一件事就是教他們觀呼吸。跟隨呼吸的入息、出息，能加深行者的專注力。

當身體完全放鬆，呼吸會變得更輕、更細微。甚至到達某種程度，呼吸將不再依靠鼻子和肺，而是逐漸延伸到皮膚的毛孔上，然後最終停止呼吸。因此我們聽過很多禪師可以用他們皮膚毛孔來呼吸，這時體內的新陳代謝會慢下來，心跳也會停止，因此禪修者有時可以長達幾個月無需進食。他們的身體處在一個「保存」狀態，但卻不像屍體一般僵硬，因為他們仍然透過毛孔在呼吸，所以身體還是熱的。禪修者會覺得身體沒有了，完完全全都空掉了。以上是我查到的資料，絕非我自己的修行經驗。

所謂「因戒生定，因定發慧」，持戒能幫助我們攝心，然後令智慧現前。但換個角度思考，攝心能幫助持戒嗎？滿益大師解釋菩薩戒的「無作戒體」時提到：「無作一發，任運止惡，任運行善。」觀呼吸，使身心能逐漸達到「無為」的境界，不加造作的回復本源。所以可以說，正念呼吸引導正知見，究竟回復清淨心。

to other techniques such as reciting mantras or Sutras. The reason is that by focusing on the breath we do not need to use our conscious mind.

As the Venerable Master said: reciting mantras such as the *Shurangama Mantra* gives the practitioner external power to enter Samadhi. While practicing Chan, the practitioner relies on their own effort to directly track their original face, the one who “recites the Buddha’s name.” Any “hua tou” created by the Patriarchs is aimed at bringing out our true mind. Therefore any other mind that is put in use during this practice will confuse the practitioner. In the *Shurangama Sutra*, this is called “Putting another head on top of a head.” Unfortunately, we as human beings have a tendency to use our false mind in the first place rather than our true mind due to our ignorance that has been with us for kalpas.

Now we can go back to the subject of how can the breath help to bridge the gap between body and mind? Or in Buddhist terms, how can we use the breath to empty out this body to free our mind so that it can go back to its origin, the matrix of the Thus Come One? When the Buddha spoke of the “Four Contemplations”, the first thing he taught his disciples was how to contemplate their breath. By following the breath in and out our focus is gradually deepened.

The breath becomes lighter and more subtle when our body is completely relaxed. At some point, the breath through the lungs and nose will disappear. It will gradually spread throughout the surface of the skin and the practitioner will eventually stop breathing. We’ve heard that many Chan masters were able to breathe through the pores of their skin. During this time, the metabolism of the body slows down and the heart beat will stop so that the practitioner sometimes does not need to eat or drink for up to several months. Their body is now in the “preserved” state, but it is not frozen up like a dead body, as the breathing still occurs through the skin, and the body heat is still generated. At this point the practitioner feels his body empty and completely hollow. To talk about this, I did some research. It is definitely not my own experience.

We have learnt that upholding the precepts helps to facilitate our mindfulness and eventually wisdom will be revealed. But can it be the other way around—can mindfulness induce precepts? When Great Master O Yi explained the Effortless Precept Substance of the Bodhisattva Precepts, he mentioned “When effortlessness happens, we naturally stop doing evil, we naturally do good deeds.” The practice of contemplation of the breath can eventually make our body and mind reach the state of “wu wei” or “non-doing”; both body and mind can find their way effortlessly back to the nature. So we could say that proper breath leads to proper views and eventually to a proper mind.



這裡有個關於小偷與和尚的故事。有一天，一位小偷遇到一位和尚，小偷對和尚說：「法師，我很仰慕您的修行，希望能成為您的弟子。可是我有一個條件，就是我可以做您要求的任何事情，但是請不要不准我偷東西，因為我生來就是當小偷的。」和尚回答他：「沒問題，你可以繼續偷東西，甚至殺人也沒問題，我都不會阻止你。但是我也有一個條件，就是從現在起，無論你做什麼都必須保持正念。」

於是和尚對小偷解釋什麼是正念，並且教他如何觀照自己的呼吸以保持正念。這個小偷很有善根，經過幾天的練習就掌握了技巧。從那天起，白天他就留在廟裡幫忙，晚上就出去偷東西。出於跟師父的約定，他做任何事情都保持著正念。

小偷其實非常喜歡廟上的生活。每天清晨，敲著大鐘迴向地獄眾生離苦得樂，他自己也感覺獲得解脫，以往所造的惡業好像也跟著洗刷清淨。在每天讀誦的經文當中，他獲得了平靜，甚至可以在平穩的木魚聲中入定。然而業力的驅使，每晚夜裡他還是要出去偷東西，無法錯過生命中的這部分。

幾個月之後，和尚注意到這個新徒弟的悶悶不樂，知道一定有事情困擾著他。果不其然，有一天徒弟沮喪地來見和尚，他說：「師父，自從出家之後，我就不能偷東西了。您到底是怎麼知道，保持正念讓我無法再偷東西？」

昨天菩提比丘講解「美心所」時，提到一個保持高度專注的人，成功暗殺總統的故事。兩者的區別在於，小偷的專注力，發自於觀照呼吸的無作正念，變成他精進修行的一股力量。蕩益大師說：「謂此戒體不起則已。起則全性。而性修交成。必有無作假色。」小偷的故事就是最佳的詮釋。戒體即是佛性的顯現，是藉由修行的力量而發揮。

各位是否看過一幅孔子的畫像，畫像中的孔子手持初生的釋迦文佛獻給老子？這幅畫傳遞了一個訊息：儒教興起的目的，是為佛教的發展鋪路。也就是說，修行首先要依據世間的倫常，敦倫盡份，視聽言動一切都符合社會的禮法準則。根據蕩益大師對無作戒體的解釋，此戒體以本源清淨為其性，以增上善心為其因，因此培養美德善心，確實是學佛修行的基石。

There is a story about a thief who one day approached a Buddhist monk and said, "Dharma Master, I admire your conduct and want to be your disciple. However, I can only be your disciple on one condition. I can do whatever you want me to but please don't ask me to stop stealing because I was born to steal." The monk replies, "Not a problem. You can continue stealing as much as you want or even go and kill people. I won't stop you, but I also have one condition for you to be my disciple and that is whatever you do just do it with mindfulness."

Then the monk explained to the thief what mindfulness is. To teach him how to acquire this skill he actually showed him how to contemplate the breath. The thief appeared to have very good roots so he could master the technique after a few days of practice. From that day on, during the day he worked in the temple and at night he went out stealing. And according to the deal with his teacher, whatever he did he did it with complete mindfulness.

In fact he enjoyed very much the monastic life at the temple. Early in the morning when he struck the big bell to alleviate living beings' sufferings in the hells, he himself also feels relieved, as if the mistakes he made in the past could also be washed away. He found peace in every single word of the Sutras that he recited everyday. He even could enter samadhi by just listening to the steady beat of the wooden fish. However, at night by the impulse of his karmic habit, he still had to go out and rob. Unfortunately, he could not miss this part of his life.

After a few months, the master noticed that his new disciple was not completely happy. Definitely something was bothering him. No doubt, one day the disciple approached the master in frustration. He said, "Master, I cannot rob even a thing since I've left the home life. How can you know that when I am mindful I cannot steal anything?"

However, yesterday in bhikku Bodhi's class, when he mentioned the beautiful factors, or the wholesome Dharmas, he brought up the story about a man with mindfulness who successfully assassinated the president. The difference here is that the thief in the story acquired mindfulness through the effortlessness resulting from his practice of contemplating the breath, and he later becomes a good cultivator. This story well illustrates a quote from Great Master O Yi, which says, "As to the precept substance, it simply does not arise. What arises is entirely the nature. When the nature and cultivation successfully combine, the result is the precept substance effortlessly availing itself of form." Yes, the precept substance is nothing but the revealing of your own nature that occurs through cultivation.

Have any of us seen the painting of Confucius, an ancient Chinese philosopher, presenting the young Gautama Buddha to Laozi? This piece of Chinese art actually reveals the fact that Confucianism paved the path for Buddhism to grow. This means that we first need to practice propriety to fulfill our proper role in a family, to conform to what is socially acceptable in conduct or speech. Regarding the precept substance, Master O Yi points out that its nature is the fundamental source of purity, and its cause is to

剩下的幾分鐘時間，想稍微介紹福居樓為年長尼眾提供的一項新服務。這項對年長者的服務，無疑是讓大家力行孝道的機會，同時也與今晚的主題「呼吸」有關。

目前在福居樓南區的活動室，每週有三次體能鍛煉課程，課程目的在減緩年長者的身體機能以及認知能力的衰退。參加這項課程的尼眾，年齡分佈從70歲到99歲，算是容易出現失憶或老年癡呆的年齡層。因此課程規劃重點是藉由運動來加深呼吸，增加體內特別是大腦的含氧量。

如果你有機會經過福居樓，你會看到一個99歲的老比丘尼在打籃球。儘管幾乎沒辦法投籃，但是憑藉著堅強的意志力不斷嘗試，每次試著投球，她的呼吸力度就加深一些，無形中也帶動體內血液循環，供應腦部更多的養分與氧量。另一個個案，就是一位老法師前陣子中風，透過運動很快獲得好轉。

從這些法師身上，我看到他們對修行的道心，同樣表現在對運動的精進，絲毫不為身體的退化所限制。體能好一點的，希望成為其他同學的學習對象；體能差一點的，也當仁不讓，努力證明自己的決心。運動時，大家都很开心，因為都體會到了運動的好處。

我希望這個計畫能夠持續幫助這些老法師們維持健康。目前女校高中生也一同加入幫忙，在此特別感謝校長的支持，無論在義工招募或者師資培訓方面。由於身體虛弱或者認知退化的關係，老法師運動時都需要一對一的陪伴協助，因此非常需要更多志工投入。如果你有興趣想加入這項服務，請讓我們知道。對於日後想申請醫學院的女校學生，這將會是妳們很好的學習經驗。❀

augment our wholesome mind. This is a basic building block of Buddhism.

In the few minutes left, I would like to introduce to you a new service that we have for our elderly nuns in the Tower of Blessings. Again, it displays propriety first. And also because of this program I have an announcement to make. It's still related to the subject of the "breath."

Currently we have an exercise program for our elderly nuns in the activity room in the south section of the TOB building. The program provides 3 exercise sessions per week for the nuns.

This activity is aimed at preventing further decline in body strength, range of motion and also cognition in the elders. The participants' ages ranging from 70-99 years old are those who are especially at risk of memory loss or dementia. Because deep breathing can enhance the amount of oxygen in the body especially in our brain, the exercises designed for this class focus on breathing.

If you are lucky enough when stopping by the activity room for the nuns, you can see a 99-year-old nun who plays basketball. Even though she is scarcely able to toss the ball into the basket, she keeps trying to show her determination. Every time when she reaches her arm up to toss the ball, her breathing becomes deeper which helps to increase blood flow to her body and brain, feeding these structures with nutrients and oxygen. We also have another nun who recovered from a stroke very quickly with exercise.

When working with the monastics, I realize that their cultivating mind gives them a vigorous attitude that will stay with them forever despite their physical limitation. The stronger ones want to act as the role model for the others. The weaker ones do not want to give up, but strive hard to prove their determination. They all enjoy the program as they can feel the benefit from these physical activities.

I hope this program will continue benefiting many other elders. Currently we have high school girl students who come to help. I'd like to show our appreciation to the school principal for her help with the recruitment for volunteers and in training our teachers. Most of the nuns need one-on-one assistants with the exercise, either because they are too weak or because their cognition is poor. Thus we desperately need more help from more volunteers to make the program more productive. So please let us know if anyone in the audience can find some time and is interested in helping our nuns.

We strongly encourage girl students who plan to apply to medical fields to join us in this setting, as it would be a good learning experience for them. ❀

