

# 無明火與大悲水

## The Fire of Ignorance and the Water of Great Compassion

比丘尼恒頤2018年8月23日講於萬佛城大殿

A talk given by Bhikkhuni Heng Yi at the Buddha Hall of CTTB on August 23, 2018

今天的題目是無明火與大悲水。我們日日防火，只會防外面的火，但是往往忽略了裏面的火。什麼是內在的火呢？那就是無明火。或許有些人說：「這兩個怎麼可以連在一起呢？外火跟內火有什麼關係呢？」我可以分享一個有關火的故事。

在很久以前，當我還是沙彌尼的時候，曾經做過廚房的執事。那時候我們是在小廚房煮飯，地方很擠、很小。有一天，發生一件事情讓我很生氣；我就一面煮、一面生氣。我們人就是放不下，已經發生成為過去的事，還是會一直往身上抓。每天睜開眼睛還是一直想著已經發生的事，然後越想就越氣。我們不是活在現在、不是活在當下；我們是活在過去那些不高興的事情裏，也活在未來的憂慮當中。

當我正在發火的時候，你們猜發生什麼事情？忽然間那個煮菜的火就往上燒起來，幾乎快燒到屋頂了。當時我只覺得是一個意外，後來想想，是我的自性無名火所造的。我們很害怕，七手八腳地潑水把火給滅了。後來我就知道，要天天看著自己，不要發火。幸好那火不大，不然我就把整個廚房給燒掉了。



Today, I would like to talk about the fire of ignorance, and the water of great compassion. We fight fires everyday; however we only pay attention to protecting ourselves from external fire, but always ignore our internal fire. What is our internal fire? It is the fire of ignorance. Once someone asked, “What is the relationship between fires that are outside and fires that are inside? How do they relate to each other? I would like to share a story that may shed some light on the relationship between them.

Many years ago, when I was still a śrāmaṇerika, I used to work in the kitchen. In those days, we cooked in a small kitchen; the place was very small and crowded. One day, I was offended by something and felt very upset while I was cooking.

Sometimes, it is difficult to put things down when we are upset or irritated, and we hold onto things even when they have passed! It used to be that everyday, when I would wake up and open my eyes, I could not help but think about things that have already happened, and many times I felt upset when I would ruminate on these matters. Then, instead of living in the present, living in the moment, I would find myself living in the unhappy past or a worried future.

Guess what happened when I blew a “fuse” that day in the kitchen and lost my temper? The cooking gas suddenly flared upward, and nearly hit the roof - which really scared me! Everyone in the kitchen was frightened, but all of us pitched in and quickly extinguished the fire. At that time, I thought it was just an accident, but later, I decided that the fire was actually caused by my ignorance. I realized that I need to look after myself, and not lose my temper. Fortunately, that fire was not too big, otherwise the kitchen would have burned down!

後來我就反省說，不應該這樣發脾氣。我們知道在廚房是不容易的，爐火那麼大，人不上火也很難。後來我們有人捐了一台錄音機，我們就在廚房播放大悲咒。大家聽了大悲咒之後，就比較不那麼容易發火。煮出來的菜呢，大家吃了也會平安、有營養。否則，用脾氣煮出來的菜，大家吃起來肯定不舒服。

其實在一起工作也是不容易的，因為廚房那麼小，有時候大家趕時間要煮飯菜，就會為了這個事情吵起來。比方說，煮水的人要用那個爐頭，煮菜的人也要用那個爐頭，那兩個人怎麼辦呢？就吵起來。後來，大家就是學會互相協調，煮菜比較緊急，煮水的就先讓煮菜的人先煮；自己先去做別的事情，等菜煮好了再來煮水。這樣子就不會吵架了。

其實上人每天都有給我們兩次滅火的好方法，是什麼呢？每天做早課或是晚課之前，大家會先念六大宗旨；第一個就是不爭。每天都問自己是不是不爭？我覺得應該加上一問自己有沒有發火？如果有的話，就會火燒功德林，就不要再發了。所以問自己：有沒有發火？有沒有火燒功德林？

其實我們在這邊修行，為什麼有時候會發火呢？因為做得太累了，太累的時候就容易上火。我記得上人有說過，我們早晚可以打坐。比方說，早上坐一個小時；如果沒有時間，或者打坐二十分鐘或三十分鐘也好；那麼下午也是打坐。或者有些人有自己的法門，除了大殿的功課以外，有自己修行的時間，比方打坐或是拜佛。如果真的可以福慧雙修的話，我們就比較不會那麼容易發火；就會長養我們的慈悲心，也會多一點大悲水。讓別人得到清涼，外面的環境也不會那麼容易著火。

We all know that it is not easy to work in the kitchen, and that the stove's fire is so big that it's hard not to get burned. Later on, some of us donated a tape player to the kitchen, and we played the Great Compassion Mantra in the kitchen while we were working. When we heard the Mantra, we felt our moods became more gentle and smooth. It was not so easy to get angry. As a result, we felt that the food we cooked when we recited the mantra was more nutritious and brought the assembly peace. Otherwise, if people cooked while they were in a foul mood, the food was not as easy to digest.

It is certainly not easy to work together in that kitchen. Because the kitchen's space was so small, sometimes people want to cook food at the same time and they would fight for a space to work, and sometimes quarrel with each other. When one person was boiling water another wanted to cook veggies. What did they do then? They would quarrel with each other for the stove. Later, people learned to coordinate with each other. If cooking the veggies was more urgent, the person boiling water would let the person cooking the veggies go first, and the person boiling water would go to do something else and then come back to boil water after the veggies were done. Once they worked out this system, people did not quarrel anymore.

In fact, Venerable Master gave us good methods to pacify our tempers twice a day. What are they? Everyday before morning and evening recitation, the fourfold assembly recites the Six Great Principles; the first one is "No Fighting." Everyday we must ask ourselves: do we fight? I also like to ask myself: Did I get upset? If I did, the fire will burn my forest of merit and virtue, so I decided that I won't let myself get angry anymore.

Why do we become angry when we are cultivating in the monastery? Because sometimes we make ourselves over-tired, which causes us to easily become angry.

I remember that the Venerable Master once said that we could practice meditation both in the morning and in the afternoon. We can meditate in the morning for one hour, or even just 20 or 30 minutes if we don't have much time, and then another hour in the afternoon. Some people have their own Dharma-door, something that they practice on their own that is on a different schedule from Buddha Hall's. For example, some people like to meditate or bow to the Buddhas. If we really keep working hard on developing our blessings and wisdom, it would not be so easy to get angry, cultivation would irrigate our Bodhi resolve, and produce more great compassion water. Thus we can spread coolness and refresh others.

On August 1, 2018, we were still in a Guanyin Session. When I walked towards the Buddha Hall, I saw some people run out of the hall rather than stay in. They ran out and looked at the sky. I felt curious and also took a look. Terrible dark smoke billowed in the sky. It appeared close, and I wondered if it will reach us very quickly. I felt very worried when I saw that fire. Then I thought, "Isn't there Guanyin ceremony going on here? How can a big fire burn around us?" Immediately, I shifted my thoughts to, "I should recite the Buddha's holy name more; if I keep having these useless thoughts, I might

在八月一號的時候，還是觀音七的期間，我記得那天當我走向大殿，看到有一些人不是在大殿裡面，而是往外跑。她們跑出來，就仰頭看天；我也好奇地跟著往上看。哇！不得了，天上濃煙滾滾。我心想：這個濃煙應該很快就要燒到眼前了。當時我看著那個火，心裡頭非常擔心。我心裡頭就打妄想：「不是有觀音法會嗎？怎麼會燒起來呢？」可是心裏馬上又想，我應該趕快去念佛了，再想下去，可能我又會對觀音菩薩發火了。

當我走進大殿，真是全然不同的一個世界。外面是三界火宅，很不安寧，但是裡面完全沒有感覺到火災的威脅，大家是那樣的平靜，發揮著觀音菩薩最慈悲的精神。大家在繞佛，每一步都是向着佛道，所以是不會掉到火坑去的。其實當我們念觀世音菩薩的時候，就已經有慈悲心在裡面，外境就不再對我們有所影響。

火勢最嚴重的時候，大概是在八月四號、五號開始，那個火好像衝著萬佛聖城來，也開始發出警報。這個火本來不是向著我們，後來為什麼會衝著我們來呢？就像剛剛所說的，都是我們自性的無明火所造成的。後來應該是大家努力念大悲咒，大家發心用功；也可以說大家有發這個慈悲心，佛菩薩加持，所以那個火就轉方向了。

〈普門品〉裏面提到，應以什麼身得度，就現什麼身而為說法。那我們在念佛，應以消防員或是救火隊身得度者，就現消防員而為說法。他們就會用他們的方式把這個火轉個方向，讓我們可以度過這個難關。所以我覺得這是給大家機會去認識火的危險，我們把裏面的火熄滅了，才能夠熄滅外面的火。

在萬佛聖城，大家來自不同的國家、不同的生活背景。大家在一起，是一件很不容易的事情。所以我們就需要互相忍讓、互相體諒，這樣我們在聖城才能夠更加合作、更加團結。大家也說，這個火要憑藉大家互相合作、團結、慈悲，才可以消滅、才可以轉移。

講到這個無明火，我想到很久以前的一件事情。一九八四年上人成立了僧伽居士訓練班，我們是第一批。當時我們只有四、五個人，上

even get angry with Guanyin Bodhisavta.

When I entered the Buddha Hall, it was a totally different world. Outside of the Buddha Hall was like a burning house of the three realms in ruins. No peace to be found. But inside the Buddha Hall, the assembly was calm and one could not feel the threatening fires. The assembly was serene and at peace; manifesting the most compassionate spirit of Guanshiyin Bodhisattva. While people were circumambulating the Buddha Hall and reciting the Bodhisattva's name, every step was toward the Buddha's path, and no one fell into the fire! Actually while we were reciting Guanyin Bodhisattva's name, the compassionate spirit was already in our minds, and the environment outside could not effect us anymore.

Probably on August 4 or 5, the fire was at its most severe. It seemed as if the fire was heading directly to the monastery. I thought this was a warning to us. At first, the fire was not coming in our direction, so why did it burn later in our direction? Just as was mentioned before, the external fire was caused by our internal fire of ignorance. Then the assembly, to defend against the fire, recited the *Great Compassion Mantra* together, and applied effort diligently. Under the protection and guidance of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, everybody brought forth their compassionate minds, and finally the fire turned away.

The *Universal Door chapter* mentions that when living beings need to be crossed over by Guanyin Bodhisattva, Guanyin Bodhisattva will appear in front of him/her in a necessary form similar to their own so they will trust and rely upon her. So, when we recite her name, the Bodhisattva would appear before us as firemen if we need to be crossed over by a fireman. This fireman (or in this case, these firemen) would use their skills to turn the fire in the other direction, helping us pass through this difficulty. So I think this was also a good opportunity for everyone to learn and realize the dangers of fire. Only once we extinguish our internal fire can the outside fire burn out.

At CTTB, people come from different countries, different cultural backgrounds, and different lifestyles; it's not very easy for everyone to get along. We need to be patient and considerate, then we can get along with each other with more cooperation and unity. Like some people have said, the fire only could be eliminated and transformed once all of the people cooperated with unity and compassion for each other.

Speaking of the fires of ignorance. It reminds me of something else that happened a long time ago. In 1984, Venerable Master established the Sangha Laity Training Program (SLTP), and we were the first batch of students. There were only four or five students at that time. In the morning, we were worked in the kitchen together and in the afternoon, one of us worked as a teacher while the

午就一起在廚房工作；下午就一個當老師，其他的當學生，一起學習。當然在師父的監督下，我們接受很嚴格的訓練。那時候，可能有些人就不做工；有些人做得太多；有些人做得太少；或者有些人不喜歡到大殿，只喜歡到廚房去工作；那麼帶領我們的這位比丘尼就會安排好課程，讓大家不要有所偏。

還有一些很微細的地方，或許我們沒有注意到，她也會提醒我們。比方說，這位比丘尼會告訴我們：「工作的時候，不要特別去保護一個人。」我起先不太懂這個意思，後來才漸漸比較明白。在我們僧伽居士訓練班裏面，其中有一位是已婚的。師父說，她前身原來是出家修行人，有一天看見一個和睦的家庭就打了一個妄想，覺得有家庭也不錯。結果這輩子，她就結婚了。結婚了以後很不幸福，來到萬佛聖城之後，她的先生還想把她抓回去。後來幸虧師父的慈悲安排，她才得以在聖城就讀僧伽訓練班。她本來想出家，可惜沒有成功。所以修行是很微細的，不能隨便打妄想。

我記得，以前我們也被教導，看到小孩子不可以跟他們玩，因為不要造這個因。就像剛剛所講的，我們只要起一個念頭，下輩子可能就不是那麼清淨。所以即使我們是跟同性一起修行，也不能有太多的感情。尤其當我們生病的時候，「情感」比較脆弱，若別人給予更多的同情及照顧時；應自己小心，勿將別人的同情混進自己的「感情」。

我記得另有三姐妹皆出家為尼眾，她們之間感情很要好，她們的哥哥常常來找她們。有一次，大姊在聽經的時候，有些事情做得不如法（閱讀世間的雜誌），師父就呵責那個犯錯的姊姊。結果三姐妹竟然聯合起來對師父表示不滿示威，罷工、不當任何執事。所以，修行不能有任何感情的作用；有的話，就不清淨了，變成目無師長。這其實也是一種無名火，所以我們要勤修戒定慧，熄滅貪瞋癡。熄滅這些瞋火，長養慈悲心和滋養更多的甘露水；自己清涼，也可以幫助別人，阿彌陀佛！

others were students, and both the teacher and the students learned together. Certainly, we were given a very strict training under the Venerable Master. At that time, things happened much like they do today: some were overworked, some worked a little bit, some did not work at all, and some did not like go to Buddha Hall, but only preferred to work in the kitchen. There was a senior bhikshunī leading us, and she helped arrange our schedule, and protect us from bias in cultivation.

Also, she reminded us of some subtle things to which we had not paid attention. For example, she used to tell us, “Do not try to protect a particular person when working together.” At first I did not understand this, but I understood it gradually. In our SLTP class, there was a lady who had already been married. Shrfu said she was a left-home cultivator in her past life, but one day, she saw a harmonious family, and had the false thought that it was not such a bad idea to have a family. As a result, she got married in this life. After getting married, she felt unhappy. Even after she settled down at CTTB, her husband still tried to take her back. Fortunately with Shrfu’s help, she was able to study in SLTP. She wanted to leave home, but ultimately, could not do so. Thus do not give rise to subtle false thoughts.

I also remember that we were taught not to play with kids to avoid planting emotional seeds on our causal ground. Just like I mentioned, even a single thought arising, may bring something impure in our next life. So even when we are cultivating with our Dharma friends, do not apply too much emotion. Especially, we must remember this when we are sick, when our emotions are weak. We need be very cautious with ourselves when others give us more sympathy and care. Do not get too emotional when others offer their support when we cultivate.

Another story that comes to mind was about three sisters. There were three sisters who all entered the monastic life and became nuns. Even after they left the home life, they kept good relationships with each other. One day, the oldest sister was doing something improper (reading magazines) while listening to the Sutra lecture. So Venerable Master scolded the oldest. The three sisters decided to go on strike against their teacher, and would not manage any temple affairs, to express their dissatisfaction. So do not be emotional in cultivation, otherwise it will become impure, and you could become just like those three sisters who were disrespectful to their teacher. This is also a kind of fire of ignorance. We need to cultivate diligently in precepts, samadhi, and wisdom to extinguish our greed, hatred, and delusion. When our fire of hatred are extinguished, our compassion develops, and sweet dew comes forth.

When we ourselves are refreshed, and our fires are extinguished, we will also be able to benefit others. Amitufo!