



Entering the Sea of Wisdom: Investigating the Sutras Through Translation

能甚深入智慧海—透過翻譯深入經典

A talk given by Bhikshuni Heng Chih at the San Francisco Main Library on November 3, 2018
Chinese Translated by the Zhang ChinFa

比丘尼恒持法師2018年11月3日講於舊金山總圖書館
張親法 中譯

I would like to go back to my favorite topic which is translation. When we cultivate, we have been taught by the Master to also look at the texts for what advice we can get about our practice. So instead of only doing meditation, we do meditation and we try to go into the Sutras. Going into the Sutras, there are several ways. I have done all these.

One of them is to write out the Sutra. You pick a Sutra you like and you use good calligraphy. In my case, I used blood. You write out in the language you wish, I wrote it out in Chinese. By doing so, you go in deep into the meaning.

Another way to deal with learning the sutras is to bow to them. I have done that. I bowed to every character of the Sixth Patriarch Sutra, back at the Buddhist Lecture Hall, at the beginning of everything. It is also a way to learn. That particular Sutra had a lot of characters that aren't in most Buddhist texts and I had to look them up and figure out what they said and then do the bowing. That's another way to go in deep.

Another way (to learn the Sutras) which the Master did not present to Westerners until there were Asians (who became disciples in the United States) was to teach us that we could chant the sutras. At most of our way places, they are chanted in Chinese. We also initiated ways that we could chant them in English. That is another way to go into the Sutra.

Another way, at the university, as you have been hearing is to closely read the Sutra, which is what the Master's program (at Dharma Realm Buddhist University—DRBU) is all about. I often get to share from my perspective because I am always asked to teach the Sutra courses. So by looking into each passage and trying to figure from our own perspective what it means, we can get a lot out of the Sutras.

I remember in 1968 when the Master lectured the Shurangama (Sutra), one of the major things at the beginning was the title and

我想回到我最喜歡的翻譯話題。在修行時，師父也教導我們，看看能從經文中獲得什麼有關我們修行的建議。所以我們不僅僅是坐禪，我們也試著深入經藏。如何深入經藏，有幾種方法。這些方法我都嘗試過。

其中一個是抄經。您可以選擇自己喜歡的經文，工整的書寫出來。我是用血來抄經。您可以用自己想要的語言來抄經，我用的是中文。通過這樣做，您就能深入了解經文的義理。

另外一種學習經典的方法是拜經。這個我也做過。之前在佛教講堂的時候，我每天做的第一件事就是一個字一個字的禮拜《六祖壇經》。這也是一種學習的方式，這部經中有很多在大多數佛教經典中的沒有用到的文字，我需要先去查資料弄清楚他們說了什麼之後再禮拜。這是另一種深入經典的方式。

另一種方法，師父最開始並沒有教我們西方人，直到有亞洲人來的時候，他才教給我們，這個就是誦經。在我們大部分的道場裡，他們都是用中文誦經。我們也鼓勵用英文來誦經。這是深入經典的另一種方式。

還有一種方式，在大學裡我們聽到的是研究經典。從我的角度來看，研究經典是師父教導的全部內容，因為我經常被要求去教授經文的課程。通過查看每個段落，並試圖用我們自己

the second one was, identifying the translators. If you know anything about Dharma Masters lecturing Sutras, very often they don't mention the translators. The Master spent quite a long time on this, and he taught us all about who they were and he said whenever you open a Sutra, whenever you chant or write it out or bow or close read, you need to thank the translator.

In the end because the Master wanted me to be a translator, I will tell you that the deepest impressions (of the Sutra texts that) I get using all of these methods is through translation. Because you are taking principles out of one language and bringing them into another. As several people have said, that requires you do it accurately.

I am making a pitch really. All of you have language – at least one language. BTTS needs all languages so in this day and age, you do not even have to be bilingual. You can be really good in Spanish, or really good in Italian, or really good in Polish, and you will find somebody with whom to connect, to either translate out of English into Polish or out of Chinese into English. You find the person who speaks Chinese, then you both get together, and between the two of you, you work it out and you work it out together accurately. So there is no way anybody in the room can say “I couldn't be a translator.”, because you all have a language. If we think about languages, translation is involved clear back to the beginning of writing something down.

We owe it to the translators who put Sanskrit down on paper and who put Chinese, at that time, on woodblocks, and those who put it down in English for us. You can't really have language without thanking translators. You can't be a person who speaks a language and not be a potential translator. So I urge you, because there is much work to be done, to try it. Give yourself a three month trial period and work with somebody who is fluent in a language that you want to make the principle language or target language and see how you get along and what comes out of collaborating on a translation project. To me, it is the way to go deepest into the meaning of the sutras. You can not think about the deepest meaning of the Sutra while trying to put it into another language; it is impossible. So with that, thank you for being so patient with us. We hope to see you all soon at one of our branch monasteries or the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. ❀

的視角來理解它的意思，這樣可以從經文中獲得很多。

記得在1968年師父講授《楞嚴經》的時候，最開始的主要講的第一個是經名，第二個是翻譯者。如果您對法師們講經有所了解，就會發現他們通常不會提及翻譯者。師父花了很長時間來講解翻譯者，《楞嚴經》有四個翻譯者，就像我們翻譯委員會的四個部門，師父教導我們每一位翻譯者都是誰。師父說，每當你打開經文時，無論是念誦、抄寫、禮拜或者研究，你都需要感謝翻譯者。

最後，因為師父希望我成為一名翻譯者，我想告訴大家，在這所有方法中讓我印像最深刻的是通過翻譯得到的。因為你是將經文的道理從一種語言帶入另一種語言中。前面有幾個人也說過，這要求你做得準確。

現在我想呼籲大家，更多的人……你們所有人都有語言。佛經翻譯委員會需要所有的語言，所以您不必很時尚，也不必會兩種語言，您可以非常擅長西班牙語，或者非常擅長意大利語，或者非常擅長波蘭語，您會發現有人可以交流，可以將英語翻譯成波蘭語，或者將中文翻譯成英語。您可以找一個中國人，你們一起，在你們兩個人之間可以把意思傳遞過來，並且很準確的傳遞過來。所以現在這裡沒有人能說我不能成為翻譯者，因為您有語言。如果我們想想語言，翻譯其實就是從最初的時候寫下一點東西開始的。

我們應該感謝那些把梵語寫下來和把中文寫下來的翻譯人員，當時我認為這些翻譯是木版刻的。也感謝那些用英文寫下來的人。如果不感謝翻譯者，您就無法真正擁有語言。既然您是一個有語言的人，那麼您就是一個潛在的翻譯者。所以我敦促您，因為還有很多工作要做，嘗試一下，給自己三個月的時間，與一個會你想要作為主要語言或目標語言的人一起工作，看看你們可以如何合作，能有什麼成果。對我而言，這是最能深入了解佛經義理的方式。因為您不能在不考慮經文最深刻的含義時，就想把它用另一種語言表達出來，這是不可能的。然後，感謝大家對我們的耐心。希望很快能在我們的分支道場或萬佛聖城再見到你們。 ❀