



Revealing the Light of Our Inherent Nature By Reciting the Buddha's Name

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I've been proofreading the new translation of Chapter 40 of the *Avatamsaka (Flower Adornment) Sutra* entitled "Entering the Inconceivable State of Liberation By Means of the Practices and Vows of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva" along with the Venerable Master's detailed commentary. When it is published it will be close to 400 pages. I found some interesting things in the Master's commentary. He taught a new way of looking at the power of reciting the Buddha's name or praising the Buddha. In addition to talking about the Master's teaching on this, I will also speak about how the Venerable Master taught people in different ways in various different places, but always did so with incredible kindness and compassion.

Before I begin talking about these things, I would first like to quote some things that the Master had said in the past that are relevant to us doing the Amitabha Buddha recitation session now. Back in 1992, he said, "Everything here at the City of 10,000 Buddhas is good. Everything is fine. We have food, clothes, and a place to live. Everything is good. You should really cultivate the path! If you don't well cultivate here at the City of 10,000 Buddhas, then you couldn't even cultivate in the Pure Land of Amitabha Buddha." This is just saying, "What are you waiting for? Don't miss this opportunity to cultivate the path!" Another thing he said at the time, which I am paraphrasing is that it is not known how many hundreds or thousands of kalpas it's been for us to be able to come together here now and have this opportunity to cultivate in a place like this, especially during these rather chaotic times in the world.

Also around the same time in 1992, the Master said, "Here at the City of 10,000 Buddhas, compared to the outside world, it's very pure, just about every place else in the world has some kind of



最近我在幫忙校對上人講解的《華嚴經》卷40〈入不可思議解脫境界普賢菩薩行願品〉，這本將近400頁的新譯本。從中，我發現一些很有意思的內容。上人教導我們用一種新的角度來看「持名念佛」或「稱讚如來」的力量。談到這，我也會講講上人教化的方式，上人在不同的地方總是以無與倫比的慈悲心來觀機逗教。

首先，我要引述上人講的一段話，這和我們正在進行的念佛七有關。1992年，上人曾說：「萬佛城裡的每件事都是好的，一切都很好。我們有吃的、有穿的和住的地方，樣樣都那麼美好。你們應該認真修行！如果在萬佛城還不能好好修行，到了西方極樂世界也沒辦法修行！」換句話說，就是告訴大家：「你們還等什麼？不要錯過這個修行的好機會！」上人當時還說，「不知道要經過多少百千萬劫才能有這樣的因緣，大家齊聚在這裡修行。」特別是正

afflictions and troubles.” Afflictions in Chinese can also be translated as impurities or mental defilements. The Master continued, “Here we can, single-mindedly cultivate together. We don’t hear, see, or speak about others’ rights or wrongs, we don’t gossip.” And then in conclusion the key thing he said was: “For those who are here cultivating, the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are always protective of them. If you really bring forth the Bodhi-mind (Bodhi-citta), they will help you here.” So it’s a very special circumstance that we’re in right now. We’re very, very fortunate —very lucky to be here now participating in this Buddha Recitation Session.

In looking at the Master’s explanation of the second vow of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva in Chapter 40, which is “**to praise the Buddhas,**” he said something really interesting. I must have read it before, but it never really hit me until now. When we praise the Buddha or recite the Buddha’s name, he said: “We generate merit and virtue from our inherent nature. What merit and virtue do we have in our inherent nature? Our inherent nature is light. And when we praise the Buddha, the light of our inherent nature is revealed. By reciting and praising the Buddha, there’s like an invisible force that prevents us from creating moral transgressions, i.e. breaking the moral precepts. If you praise the Buddha or recite the Buddha’s name without false thoughts, then the light of your inherent nature will be revealed and this is the light of the Buddha’s wisdom.” I never heard or even thought of this idea before. This is another way of looking at reciting the Buddha’s name.

For the next vow of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, which is “**to extensively cultivate the making of offerings,**” the Master said a verse that I also had never heard before. It expressed how having kindness and compassion and not having anger is a true offering. He said, “*When no anger appears on your face, that itself is a complete or perfect offering. / When the mouth is without anger, one emits a wonderful fragrance. / When the mind is without anger, that itself is a precious treasure / To be without confusion and greed is the offering of incense.*”

Now I’ll tell a story about the Master’s compassion. We all know the heart of great compassion is so important. In fact, I was just teaching my students in my 12th grade Introduction to Buddhism class the “10 Dwellings Chapter” of the *Flower Adornment Sutra*. This chapter talks about the 10 causes for bringing forth the Bodhi-mind. Nine of the ten require the presence of a Buddha. A Buddha has to be in the world. However, the one cause that all of us can still do now is bringing forth the heart of great compassion for living beings who are suffering. It literally says that when we observe the intense suffering of living beings and bring forth the heart of great compassion, it causes us to bring

當這個世界特別混亂的時候。

大約在1992年同一時間，上人說過：「相較於外面的世界，萬佛城是非常純淨的。世界上每個地方都有煩惱。」中文的「煩惱」，在英文中也可翻譯為不純淨的或是精神上的染污。上人接著說道：「在萬佛城，我們可以專一齊心的修行。我們不聽、不看、不講別人的是非。我們不舂穀子。」最後，上人總結：「在這兒修行的人，佛菩薩時時刻刻都會看著他們。如果你發了菩提心，佛菩薩一定會幫助你。」身處在這樣一個特別的環境，我們真是十二萬分幸運，此刻還能在這裡參加念佛七。

當上人講解普賢菩薩的第二大願「稱讚如來」，說了一段很有趣的話。我以前肯定看過，直到現在我才真正明白。上人說：「我們讚歎佛，我們的自性上就有功德。有什麼功德呢？我們每個人自性上都有光。當我們讚歎佛，自性的光就現出來了，照破我們的黑暗。我們讚歎佛的功德，無形中就不會造罪業、不會犯戒。我們讚歎佛或持佛名號而不打妄想，自性的光明就會顯現出來，這也就是佛的智慧光。」這樣的想法我從未聽過，也從未想過，原來可以這樣持佛名號。

在校對上人講解普賢菩薩的第三大願「廣修供養」時，我看到一首從未聽過的偈頌，這個偈頌闡述什麼是真正慈悲而沒有脾氣的供養：

面上無嗔供養具，口裡無嗔吐妙香，意裡無嗔是珍寶，無癡無貪供養香。

以下，我要講一個和上人慈悲心有關的故事。我們都知道大悲心的重要，事實上，我才剛在十二年級的「佛教入門」課中講了《華嚴經·十地品》的其中片段。這一品主要是談到發菩提心的十種因緣，其中有九種因緣是因為需要請佛住世，這個世界需

forth the Bodhi-mind. Compassion is extremely important.

In my experience, the way the Master taught different groups of people in different countries and even different groups of people here in America was pretty amazing. In the 1970's when we listened to the Master's lectures at Gold Mountain Monastery in San Francisco he was pretty formal and straightforward. However, I remember every time I would be one of the people accompanying the Master to Gold Wheel Monastery in Los Angeles, especially in the late seventies and early eighties, he was entirely different with the people there. In San Francisco, the Master would rarely talk about spiritual powers and stuff like that. If people asked him about things like that, most of the time he wouldn't want to talk about it. But every time we went to LA, people would ask him all kinds of questions like, "What are dragons like?" and other similar questions. And to my surprise, the Master would start explaining what they're like. So he was entirely different with the disciples there in LA.

I'll tell another story of the experience I had in Hong Kong with the Master in 1986. Three of the Master's European-American monk disciples had been lecturing in Hong Kong for several weeks. I travelled with the Master there around March 17 to March 20. I had been with the Master visiting and participating in lecture tours in 10 or so different countries over the years.

In Hong Kong, the Master was totally different from any other place I had been with him. He was really, really strict. Two of three monks who were lecturing in Hong Kong decided that they were going to copy or emulate the Master and started scolding and being rather harsh to the disciples in Hong Kong. After the Master arrived in Hong Kong, he strongly reprimanded them for doing that. He said, "I can be strict and harsh with these people in Hong Kong." The people there were probably Master's disciples for many lives so when he talked to them, it was entirely different from normal people. They had profound affinities and conditions with the Master, so they knew that what he said to them regardless of how harsh it seemed came from a place of great compassion.

I think it's like a mother or father scolding their child. No matter how much a parent scolds them, he/she does it out of kindness and compassion. And you know they love their child. They're trying to help them. And their child knows that. In the same way when the Master would talk to the disciples in a stern way, it was to help them and he knew that they could accept it. But when the two monks scolded the people, it gave them a lot of

要有佛。我們現在可以為受苦的眾生做的就是發起大悲心，意思就是，當我們觀眾生苦並生起大悲心的時候，就會使我們生出菩提心。慈悲心是非常重要的。

我發現，上人在不同的國家面對不同的人總是觀機逗教，尤其在美國用種種不同教化弟子的方式也令人驚歎。1970年代，那時上人在三藩市舊的金山寺講法，他的教法是非常直接了當的。但是，我記得在70年代末和80年代初，當時我常陪同上人前往洛杉磯金輪寺，上人在那裡的教導方式就相當不同。在三藩市，上人很少提及神通這類的話題；即使有人問，他也多半不想談。可是每次我們去洛杉磯，大家都會圍著上人提問各種各樣的問題，比方「龍是什麼樣子？」等等類似的問題。令我驚訝的是，上人會開始跟弟子們描述龍的模樣。上人教化洛杉磯弟子們的方式就和在三藩市完全不同。

我再講一個1986年隨同上人到香港的經歷。當時，已有三位上人的西方弟子在香港講法，講了幾個星期。大概是在3月17日到3月20日那段時間，我和上人一起前往香港。多年來，我陪同上人到過十幾個國家進行訪問或講法。在香港，上人和弟子相處的方式又與其它地方完全不同，他真的非常非常嚴格。在香港講法的三位西方弟子，有其中兩位就想要模仿上人的教化弟子方式，於是他們就開始用言語訶罵那些香港的弟子們。上人抵達香港後，嚴厲譴責他們倆人，並且說：「只有我可以對香港的弟子嚴格。」那裡的弟子可能在多生都是追隨上人，所以上人和他們說話的時候就跟對一般弟子完全不同。他們與上人有很深的緣分，明白上人對他們的訶責，不管再怎樣的嚴厲，也知道這都是出於師父對於弟子的大悲心。

我認為那就像父母親管教孩子一樣，不管父母親怎麼責罵，都是出於慈悲。父母親愛著自己的孩子，試著幫助他們；孩子們也能明白。同樣的，上人厲聲教訓弟子的方式，是在幫助這些弟子，這需要

afflictions. It was totally counterproductive and just didn't work at all. I remember this was a major transformative experience for the two monks.

Also, at that time, there was a young man in his early to mid 30s. He and his mother were disciples of the Master when he was in Hong Kong before he came to America. The mother was probably in her seventies or so, and she scolded her son who kneeling before the Master repenting and slapping his own face as hard as he could. When I saw that, I thought to myself, "Holy smokes! Hong Kong is a totally different place. Culturally, it's very different from America." The way the man acted would be considered totally bizarre here in our culture, but it didn't seem like a big deal in Hong Kong. I could see then why the Master seemed to be so different in Hong Kong. He was rather strict and harsh. Anyway, the big lesson with the two monks was that we should never ever, none of us, should ever try to emulate Master's teaching method of tough love, which is similar to the red face of Guan Yin Bodhisattva amongst the 11 heads on the image of Guan Yin on the altar here at the City of 10,000 Buddhas.

I've heard the Master say many times that we should always teach with kindness and compassion. One of the last times I actually saw the Master before he left the world, he said that he had come to America especially to teach Americans. And, he said that the way to teach Americans is to use a heart of loving kindness and compassion. That was one of the final instructions that I ever heard from the Master. He literally said, "Use a heart of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity to teach Americans."

This reminds me of something else the Master said back in 1992 here at the City of 10,000 Buddhas. He said, "We shouldn't take lightly the affinities that have brought us all here to the City of 10,000 Buddhas." Then the Master continued to say something really important. He said, "Take care of those near at hand." Those right here, not those who are somewhere else; we should take care of each other here. "Teach and transform those that are close to us here and near at hand, and do not seek for things that are far away. We should cherish each other, like our own father and mother." When the Master said that we should teach Americans with kindness and compassion, I remember that one of the last things he told me was, "I look upon all living beings as being like my father and mother from past lives." That's the attitude we should have toward each other. That's the essence of the heart of kindness and compassion. ❀

有很深的德行和緣分，因為上人知道這些弟子也能接受。但是，當這兩個比丘責罵人，完全適得其反，不僅讓這些在家弟子們起了很大的煩惱，也根本不起作用。對這兩位比丘來說，是非常寶貴的一課。

當時，有一個年約30多歲的青年人，在上人到美國前，他和他的母親是上人的弟子。他的母親約莫70多歲，正責罵跪在上人面前懺悔的兒子，他還使勁自打耳光。當我看到這一幕，心想：「天啊！香港這個地方真的特別，它的文化和美國很不一樣。」在美式文化中，這個兒子願意自己搥耳光的行為肯定讓人無法理解，在香港卻似乎稀鬆平常。那時我才能明白為什麼上人在香港會對弟子那麼嚴厲。總之，這兩個比丘得到最大的教訓是，我們永遠都不該學上人教訓弟子的方式，那就像萬佛城佛殿裡觀世音菩薩像中的第十一面紅臉觀音像那般嚴厲。

上人講過很多次，我們應該抱著慈悲心來教化人們。上人涅槃之前，我最後一次見到上人，上人說他是特別到美國教化美國人的。上人說，教化美國人的方法就是用一顆充滿慈悲與愛的心。那是我聽到上人最後所說的其中一段開示，上人說：「用一顆慈悲喜捨的心來教化美國人。」

這也讓我想起1992年上人在萬佛城所說的話，他說：「不要小看將我們所有人帶到萬佛城的這個緣分。」上人接下來的開示也非常重要，他說：「我們要照顧身邊的人。」意思就是我們要照顧在萬佛城的人，而非心想著那些遠在他方的人；我們在這裡應該互相照顧。「我們要教化我們身邊的人，不要捨近求遠。我們要互相愛護，就像愛護自己的父母一樣。」當上人說我們應該用慈悲心來教化美國人時，我記得上人告訴我的最後一件事是：「我把所有的眾生都當成我過去生的父母。」這就是我們對待彼此應有的態度，也就是慈悲的本質。❀