

On the Sense of Self

關於自我意識

A Dharma Talk Given by Bhikshu Jin Xiu in the Online Sunday Evening Lecture Series on February 27, 2022

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Nowadays most people pay little attention to our behavior, action or words. Without realizing it, people insult others and boast of their own good deeds. We delight when anyone praises us, but become angry in the next moment upon hearing insults. This is due to the distinctive line we draw between others and oneself. If your differentiating mind is in control, you can never be peaceful or calm, which decelerates your cultivation progress. If we are strongly attached to the self, we act or see everything solely in our own way and only admire our own ideas. This attachment prevents us from removing karmic barriers. Therefore, if we want our wisdom to gradually be revealed, we need to get rid of attachments..

Some people go around intending to gather information about other people's problems. These people gossip all day long and are also out to learn whether others have stabbed them from behind as so to act upon it. Some delight in praising others for personal gain, which has an adverse effect on their training.

現今，大多數人很少注意自身的言行舉止。在無意中侮辱別人並吹噓自己的善行。受到讚美，我們會感到開心；但被冒犯時，我們會立刻發怒。這是由於我們在「人相（他人）」和「我相（自己）」之間有明確的分際。如果不能調伏分別心，我們永遠無法平心靜氣，修行也難有進展。如果我執太重，就會以自己的角度看待事情，並且一意孤行。這種執著有礙我們消除業障。因此，如果想要逐漸顯現本有的智慧，我們需要放下執著。

有些人到處打探他人的問題。整天說三道四，也留意是否會遭人算計，以便有所回應。有些人基於個人利益而讚美別人，這對修行有負面的影響。

In this world, all problems are caused by constant conflicts between oneself and others. To wipe out our differentiating and calculative mind, we should practice the foundation of our cultivation—patience.

We can start getting rid of our attachments by reducing our desire. The Buddha taught us to relinquish desire and greed, which are the main source of all wrongdoings. Yet people generally seek and are attached to worldly joys. A good start to tackle this is to reduce consuming foods full of flavors, and avoid wearing expensive and stylish clothes. If we can do this, over time our sensual desires will naturally be greatly reduced. We will also become less discriminating and slowly enter the path of liberation that makes no distinction between forms of self, others, living beings and lifespan.

People with some talent like to show off how great they are, or they might use their talent to gain advantages. Yet, such people will normally end up as failures. We should not look down on others or comment negatively about their advice, just because we think that we are better educated, informed, or capable. Our education and intelligence should not turn us into an arrogant person or it would be more difficult to be in accord with the Buddhadharmā. If we only think about ourselves, then our egos just worsen daily. There is an old saying, “Humbleness gains; arrogance loses.” The more popular and talented we are, the more humble and kind we should be. This is a reflection of true wisdom.

Cultivators of the Way should not wish that others will respect you, for with such a mindset, you are clearly strongly attached to the self. Being humble can help us get rid of our self-attachment.

As mundane beings, we do not have the means to transform sentient beings with our words. Yet we can change and be good role models for everyone. When we cultivate vigorously and attain a stage, we can impress, transform, and deliver other beings without much effort.

The ultimate aim of reading or listening to sutra lectures is to practice the methods expounded in them to rectify our bad behavior and to get rid of karma. Stop gossiping, making one-sided judgments, and having illusive ideas, dreams, and views. Get rid of your ego and put distinctions between the self and others aside.

I hope that tonight’s talk will benefit everyone in a small way. Let’s continue with our journey of cultivation until we reach Buddhahood! ❀

在這個世界上，所有的問題都是由人我之間不斷的衝突所引起。為了消除我們的分別心和計度心，應該從修行的根本著手，也就是忍辱。

我們可以藉由減少欲望來擺脫執著。佛陀教導我們捨棄欲望和貪婪，這是所有惡行的主要來源。然而，人們往往追求並沉溺於世俗的喜樂。解決這個問題的方法，可由少吃充滿風味的食物，少穿名貴華服著手。如果我們能做到這點，時間久了，我們對感官欲望的追求自然就會大大降低。我們也會比較沒有分別心，慢慢地走向解脫之道，不再區分我相、人相、眾生相和壽者相。

有天賦的人喜歡炫耀自己有多棒，或者他們可能會利用自己的才能取得優勢。然而，這樣的人往往以失敗收場。我們不該因為自己的教育、見識或者能力比較好，就輕視別人或對他人的建議持負面評論。不該任由我們的學識和聰明才智將自己變成一個貢高的人，否則我們就更難與佛法相應。如果我們凡事只考慮自己，我們的自我只會日益惡化。有句話說「滿招損，謙受益。」我們越受歡迎和有才華，就更應該謙卑慈心。這才是真正智慧的體現。

修行者不該希望別人尊重我們，抱有這種心態，就是我們對我相還有強烈的執著。謙卑可以幫助我們捨去我執。

作為芸芸眾生，我們無法用言語來改變眾生。但是我們可以改變自己，成為大家的好榜樣。當我們精進修行達到一定火候時，就能不費吹灰之力地度化別人。

讀經或聽法的最終目的是依教奉行，矯正我們的習氣，擺脫業力。不講是非，不做片面的評斷，不打妄念。拋開自我，也放下人我之間的區別。

希望今晚的討論對大家略有幫助。讓我們在修行路上繼續前進，直到成佛！❀