

大师的话

宏船长老的教诲集锦

WORDS OF
THE MASTER

A collection of
teachings by Venerable
Seck Hong Choon



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宏船長老德像

人間度世仗宏船



海上有山森萬石

(新明日報照片)

Portrait of Mahathera Venerable Hong Choon | Source: Shin Min Daily News

The couplet framing this portrait was penned by Venerable Taixu when he met then 26-year-old Venerable Hong Choon in 1932. The elder monk was so impressed by the latter and wrote: "The ocean counts on its rocky base, whilst worldly human deliverances depend on none other than Hong Choon."

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Preface

Time flies. It has been more than 30 years since Venerable Hong Choon passed into parinirvana.

He came and left us a monumental legacy, developing Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery (KMSPKS) into what it is today — a gleaming and spacious Buddhist hub that spread the Buddha Dharma, and illuminates the Republic of Singapore, its local Buddhist community and all four groups of Buddhist male and female monastics and lay followers. Venerable Hong Choon spent decades toiling to transform this deserted hillock into a world-renowned monastery, which was a major accomplishment worthy of utmost respect and admiration.

As the late Venerable Long Gen said, “Even though his physical body has dissipated, his Dharma body remains, and his Wisdom body is immortal; monastics and lay followers from Singapore and abroad continue to venerate this highly-respected and well-loved monk!” When Venerable Hong Choon was still alive, he placed much emphasis on cultivating virtues through practising Buddhist teachings, he was also equally passionate about propagating the Buddha Dharma in order to cultivate wisdom. He warmly supported and encouraged Dharma talks and Buddhist education when alive.

This book, which is a collection of Dharma teachings Venerable Hong Choon gave in the 1980s, pays homage to this inspiring Buddhist master and former abbot of Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery. It also commemorates the 100-year anniversary of the Monastery. May readers, especially the younger generations, who did not have a chance to be acquainted with the late Venerable Hong Choon be inspired by his exemplary life as a preamble to their own practice. And may the Monastery, under the leadership of current abbot Venerable Kwang Sheng, continue to extensively benefit sentient beings and achieve greater heights in the next 100 years.

The Significance of Observing Precepts

A Dharma Talk given at the Buddhist Lodge

The Buddha Dharma is vast and relies not only on monastics for its propagation, but also on Buddhist lay followers to shoulder this responsibility, so that everyone will know this noble path to enlightenment.

There are two main pathways to learning the Buddha Dharma: Sudden (Fast) or Gradual (Slow). Those who have the karmic affinity are able to achieve enlightenment swiftly upon hearing the Dharma, even just once (the so-called “Hearers”). This is the sudden path. On the other hand, there are others who slowly and steadfastly practise the teachings and finally reach the destination, perhaps not in this lifetime, but in a future one. This is the gradual or slow path.

The Joy of Mutual Help and Harmony

I spoke about the first of the Six Perfections (*pāramitā*) the last time, which are: generosity or giving. This can take three forms: giving in kind (material or financial donation), giving the Dharma, and giving freedom from fear, which all of you would have known.

All three forms of giving, if widely implemented in daily living, will enable all beings to experience the joy of mutual assistance and harmonious living. It will also eliminate all suffering and fear. Abandoning all non-virtuous thoughts of the five heinous crimes and ten unwholesome kinds of behaviour, one moves towards the spiritual realm of purity and goodness. As a result, at any time and at any place, one is able to experience true freedom.

Today I will continue to speak on the second perfection, which is: Observing the precepts.

The precepts are simply rules or prohibitions to stem out evil, so that all behaviours that are against one's conscience are uprooted and prevented from happening. Confucianism teaches the Five Relations, whereas Christianity prescribes the Ten Commandments. Both share certain commonalities. However, the precepts in Buddhism are even more detailed and far-reaching.

For example, Confucianism teaches children to be filial towards their parents, not only by taking care of their parents' material well-being, but also by taking care of themselves, which includes not committing crimes as that would cause their parents grief or causing harm to their bodies as their bodies are given by their parents.

Filial piety therefore implies that the children take good care of themselves physically and morally, by not engaging in any activities that would bring shame to their parents and harm their reputation or cause their parents disappointment. However, Buddhism goes beyond the above and teaches that not only should children repay their parents' kindness, but they should also liberate their parents from the suffering of cyclical rebirths as well, including their parents of multiple lifetimes — so that all who have once been their parents could be reborn in a heavenly realm. When the Buddha was alive, his father fell sick so the Buddha returned to personally attend to his father by administering the needed medicines. Later, when his father passed away, he returned once again to be a pallbearer for his father's coffin. The Buddha also ascended to the Heaven of 33 Devas (*Trāyastriṃśa Heaven*) to teach the Dharma to his late mother. These are exemplary demonstrations of filial piety in Buddhism.

The Significance of Observing Precepts

To observe the precepts implies a continuous, long, unbroken duration of strict abstinence or discipline. Observing the precepts can be said to be the real-world implementation of Buddhism. When the Buddha was alive, he instituted rules in response to incidents that had occurred in the community, so these rules were reactive, in order to guide the behaviours of the four groups of followers. After the Buddha passed into *parinirvana*, the council of monks nominated the Elder Upali to recite all the rules that the Buddha had spoken and compiled these into the Code of Monastic Discipline, or *Vinaya*. This code can be said to be the extension of the Buddha Dharma, as it serves as a compass to regulate monastic life. Observing precepts has two dimensions to it: Refrain from doing non-virtue, and do what is virtuous instead. Both dimensions are equally important and have to be balanced. By refraining from doing non-virtue, the roots of all non-virtue are severed, and one gets rid of all troubles and negative habits. As a result, one enjoys peace and purity. Doing good, one cultivates virtues, which form the basis for one to eventually obtain Buddhahood. Whether Buddhism will flourish or decline depends entirely on whether its followers are able to observe the precepts and how well they can do so. The true spirit of Buddhism can also be said to reside in this practice of observing the precepts.

As for the precepts, they can be easily understood as analogous to the laws in society, or the rules for communal living. Every family has its unique rules and every country has its own laws, even small groups or organisations have their rules for members. The principle is the same. Buddhism advocates observing the precepts, indirectly encouraging people to be law-abiding and self-disciplined. A country's laws mainly seek to punish violators and ensure that they do not escape scot-free. There is also a deterrent effect to dissuade people from committing crimes out of fear of being caught and punished. The precepts in Buddhism do not have the force of law but emphasise that one should watch one's behaviour ceaselessly, so that even under circumstances where others would not find out, one does not transgress because one understands the karmic law of cause and effect. This ability to watch oneself comes from within and propels one to do the right thing and move towards goodness. It is also a method to cultivate one's integrity, not in a passive manner of being law-abiding, but proactively seeking to improve one's ethical conduct. Hence, there is a subtle difference from worldly laws.

Monastic Precepts

The monks (*bhikkhus*) and nuns (*bhikkhunis*) in the Buddhist monastic community (*Sangha*) are subjected to even stricter precepts or rules. The monks observe 250 precepts, while the nuns observe 500, known as “full and complete observance” or “full ordination”. I will only touch on

this briefly because going into details would involve the three thousand demeanours and eighty thousand subtle actions. These are prescribed to promote sagely conduct, they are not suitable for most people. As for the common Five Precepts, Eight Precepts or Ten Precepts for novice monks, these are the basic training blocks. The Five Precepts for lay followers are commonly understood, because killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and intoxication by alcohol are the causes of many misfortunes. Therefore, one should abstain from these as the most fundamental step to building a wholesome life. It is also the key to practise morality and good deeds. As for the strict precepts of the monastics, they are not suitable for lay followers. This is not because there are certain secrets in Buddhism, but because they pertain to issues related to life and death, or physiological aspects of the human body, so for beginners who have not reached a certain level of understanding, they would not be able to comprehend these rules, which may lead them to doubt the teachings, or even to ridicule what they cannot understand. The karmic consequences are grave as they would descend into hell. To prevent them from suffering such adverse consequences due to ignorance, the monastic rules are strictly prohibited. It is due to the hard work of many forefathers before us, and the present Chairman and directors, who poured their hearts into building this place that we have this sanctified and peaceful place to practise today. I hope that all of us will share their vision and abide by the rules and regulations, lead by example and cherish the Dharma. This is also one way to observe the basic precepts.

Just before the Buddha passed into *parinirvana*, he told Ananda: “After I am gone, some of you may think, ‘now we have no teacher.’ But that is not how you should see it. Let the Dharma and the *vinaya* that I have taught you be your teacher. All compounded phenomena pass away. Strive on, untiringly.” He also taught, “Monks! When I am gone, you should adhere by the precepts (*Patimoksha*), just like when I was alive.” Hence, it can be seen that “taking the precepts as the teacher” is the golden rule for Buddhists.

The Buddha’s Great Compassion

The Buddha had a follower named Cudapanthaka who had a learning disability, he could not even remember a single verse. However, he tried hard, so the Buddha took great compassion on him and taught him patiently and skilfully. Eventually, using sweeping with the broom as a metaphor, Cudapanthaka achieved the sudden insight that the dust he was tasked daily to sweep was a metaphor for the obscurations clouding his mind and the spiritual task was to sweep his mind clean of all the defilements. He became an arhat and was even revered by King Pasenadi. I hope that everyone will diligently practise as well to cultivate morality, concentration and wisdom, to ultimately attain enlightenment.

Cultivating Forbearance to Overcome Anger and Hatred

Since beginningless time, humans have accumulated the seeds of hatred and anger within them due to Ignorance. The Buddhist sutras compared this propensity as the most intense of the Three Poisons afflicting the human race. The raging flames of hatred or anger burn like wildfire in the heart, causing people to lose all rationality, giving rise to violence that spirals out of control, launching into a destructive rampage that destroys everything. This triggers a chain reaction of endless troubles, compounding the problem! Such negative feelings are not conducive to harmonious social relations, even splintering family, relatives or friends into nemeses or enemies. Not only do these destructive emotions impede the progress of human civilisations, but they are also like bitter poisons in worldly interactions. That's why the Buddha taught the Six Perfections (*pāramitā*):

“Cultivate generosity to overcome stinginess.
Observe the precepts to prevent misdeeds.
Cultivate forbearance to overcome anger and hatred.
Strive diligently to overcome laziness.
Meditate to overcome stupor.
Cultivate wisdom to overcome ignorance.”

The third antidote of cultivating forbearance is meant precisely to curb the rash impulse to fly off the handle, to cut off its destructiveness at the source.

Followers Must Understand the Teachings

As Buddhists, we must understand the Buddha's teachings and hold discussions and dialogues to learn from one another from time to time and check on our understanding. This is what the Ch'an Master, Shen Xiu, who was a contemporary of the Sixth Patriarch meant by, "frequently wipe with diligence, so that they will not collect dust". We have to continually observe and reflect on our physical and mental states.

Normally, it is the vocation of monastics to teach the Dharma, but because I am too busy with administrative and personnel issues at the monastery, I have not been able to do so. This shows that my personal karmic obstruction is severe, so I feel very ashamed.

If we look at the orthography of the Chinese word 忍 for "forbearance" or "endurance", it looks like a sharp knife above a human heart. This shows how difficult it is to endure something. To make things worse, not only are we taught to brush off others' insults or bullying, but we are also further expected to calmly bear with the abuse. Let us look at this from the perspectives of worldly and ultimate truths. Worldly truths pertain to this world we inhabit, whereas ultimate truths are transcendent. The Buddha Dharma encompasses both truths. Only those worldly truths that are reasonable conform to the ultimate truths. There is no Buddha Dharma to speak of that defies goodwill and reason.

From the perspective of worldly truths, we as ethnic Chinese share an excellent traditional ideal that promotes peace and tolerance. Even when practitioners of Chinese martial arts spar with one another, the emphasis is on their virtues as warriors, namely, righteousness and graciousness. They fight only when they have to in self-defence and never on a whim. Even when a friendship is broken beyond repair, the Chinese believe that "the gentleman does not hold grudges. Even when parting ways, he does not speak ill of the other". Such behaviours reveal the exemplary virtue of endurance. As for forbearance, or putting up with humiliation, Confucius said, "To forget oneself and one's kin in the heat of anger is to lose one's mind indeed". Mencius said, "Those people who are drawn to brawls and fights, thereby causing troubles to their parents, are unfilial." Thus, it can be seen that in the long history of Chinese traditional culture, endurance under the appropriate circumstances has always been highly valued.

The Spirit of Forbearance and Holding Back

Therefore, in a family, society, or between friends and colleagues, it is necessary to

cultivate the gracious spirit of forbearance and holding back, in order to achieve an amiable environment where there is mutual concern and assistance.

Take for instance the Buddhist Lodge's construction of a new building. Even though Chairman Lim has exceptional leadership qualities, he still needs the cooperation of all the other directors to execute the plan. Everyone has to do his or her best and help one another along the way in order to reach where we are today. Such a spirit is even more essential when it comes to national issues.

A long time ago during the Warring States period in ancient China, the Kingdom of Zhao had an outstanding diplomat called Lin Xiang Ru. At the same time, it had an illustrious military general named Lian Po. General Lian Po was renowned for his bravery and multiple military successes. At that time, the Kingdom of Qin was a superpower. One day, the King of Qin heard that the Kingdom of Zhao had gotten hold of the exquisite jade from the Kingdom of Chu. He sent a messenger to deliver a letter to the King of Zhao, offering to exchange fifteen cities for the jade. When Lin Xiang Ru personally delivered the jade to King Qin, the latter reneged on his words. So Lin Xiang Ru was forced to come up with a scheme to recover the jade. He had his assistant dress up as a poor villager and by travelling on the dirt road, his assistant successfully returned to the Kingdom of Zhao with the original jade hidden in his sleeves. This is the story behind the Chinese idiom, “The intact jade returns to Zhao” (which means “an object presumed lost is returned to its rightful owner intact”). Later on, Lin Xiang Ru became the premier of Zhao, but Lian Po felt indignant and jealous because he deemed himself superior to Lin Xiang Ru. Although Lin Xiang Ru knew about this, he chose to avoid a direct confrontation with Lian Po. Soon after, Lian Po realised his own mistake and shouldering a heap of thistle with sharp thorns on his naked torso, he went personally to apologise to Lin Xiang Ru. Both men were courteous and respectful to the other when they met. With these two capable talents serving the Kingdom of Zhao, the King of Qin dared not invade it. This true story has been passed down to us through the centuries. It epitomises what is meant by “swallow the humiliation and bear the burden” that forbearance entails.

The Perfection of Patience

Let us now examine the ultimate truths of what the Buddha taught, the Perfection (*pāramitā*) of Patience (*ksanti*). “*Pāramitā*” means to arrive at one's destination. That

is to say, one arrives at a calm and peaceful state after extinguishing the raging fire of hatred and anger by being patient. The realisation of ultimate truths takes place on the spiritual plane. In other words, we need to shine a light on our innate nature, which is inherently radiant and clear, as it is our Buddha nature. Why do we often flare up in anger? Or hatred? This is because our inherent Buddha nature has been obscured by dark clouds of ignorance. The stirrings of ignorance ignite the flames of anger and hatred. Beings descend into hells or bad rebirths because they are burned by such flames. Bodhisattvas are highly revered because they keep their intrinsic Buddha nature unwavering and dignified. That's the only difference. However, there is a difference between forbearance and weakness. Forbearance is illuminated by the light of wisdom, reinforced by unshakable resolve and imbued with compassion.

To endure is to bear with something stoically. It is the ability to understand the ways of the world, to see through illusory phenomena and abide in what is right or reasonable without agitation. The Buddha Dharma expounds on many different types of endurance. I shall briefly introduce them here:

- (1) there is the patience to endure all kinds of speech, and not be attached (音声忍);
- (2) the patience to persist with what is agreeable, namely, the Buddha Dharma (柔顺忍);
- (3) the patience to abide in the state of mind in which no mental objects arise (无生忍);
the patience to abide in perceiving all
- (4) as illusions (如幻忍);
- (5) as mirages (如焰忍);
- (6) as dreams (如梦忍);
- (7) as echoes (如响忍);
- (8) as reflections (如影忍);
- (9) as conjured effects (如化忍); and
- (10) as void (如空忍).

The Bodhisattva who attains penetrating insight into the empty nature of both relative worldly and absolute ultimate truths thereby gains the same insight of the Buddha (Refer to *Avatamsaka Sutra*).

The Bodhisattva who attains the above meditative insight will have unshakeable confidence. Hence, the Bodhisattva is able to meet whatever comes his way with composure and grace. In one of Han Shan Zi's poems, there is a verse:

“Someone has come to scold me,
the truth is self-evident.
Even though I didn’t respond,
I have gained from it.”

Such serenity is not what most of us mere mortals can quickly develop. However, the Perfection of Patience taught by the Buddha is based on a deep understanding of the karmic law of cause and effect. Restraining oneself, sacrificing oneself to touch or move another person’s heart is more meaningful. Do not mistake it for being scared or afraid to die, however. At the same time, it encourages people to take a longer perspective, beyond an eye for an eye because exacting vengeance is a never-ending vicious circle. Instead, the Buddha pointed out how to extinguish the root cause of the raging flames and embark on the journey towards wisdom. I hope all of us will cultivate an expansive heart with space to hold everything, in order to save the world from future atrocities.

Spread Goodwill Extensively

That is why Buddhism encourages people to spread goodwill and amity towards others, and discourages them from all negative activities like killing, to avert the future negative karmic consequences of experiencing bitter resentment arising from having to keep meeting what one detests.

The Buddha has been hailed as the most loving, compassionate, joyful and generous being. This was achieved through numerous past lives of cultivation, culminating in his magnificence, as the most illuminating, heroic and egalitarian leader. Thus, Buddhism is a religion worthy of respect and emulation by all the people in this world.

¹ Cttbusa.org/avatamsaka/avatamsaka_29.asp

The Significance of Diligence to Overcome Laziness

Diligence is imperative when practising Buddhism. It is the firm foundation to build right views and right understanding. In the past, our pioneers like Master Xuan Zhang travelled westward to seek the Buddha Dharma. If he had not had this spirit of perseverance or tenacity, how could he be able to transverse challenging terrains and travel on foot to distant lands, and became the most illustrious conduit between China and India's cultural exchange from the past till now?

Let us analyse the word for diligence in Chinese 精进. The first word 精 means “precise, pure, without any contamination”, and the second 进 means “to advance without retreat”. One steels one’s resolve, moulding one’s character to be deep as the ocean and towering like a mountain, clear-minded, bright and at ease, unwavering until the end. There are three main points to perfecting diligence: (1) untiringly refining one’s morality; (2) industriously internalising what one has learned; and (3) conscientiously benefiting all sentient beings.

Untiringly refining one’s morality means to cultivate both one’s mind internally and one’s behaviours externally. One who is morally rigorous approaches worldly affairs with gravitas and takes care of his action and speech to ensure they are scrupulous. In short, there are two dimensions: inner and outer cultivation. When the mind is cultivated diligently, then the character will rise above the superficial; when behaviours are regulated diligently, then progress is assured without obscurity or obstruction. Untiringly refining one’s morality is the foundational training to achieve purity and serenity in one’s six sense consciousnesses. It is similar to what Confucianism taught about “see no evil, speak no evil, do no evil”. However, what is meant by the “six sense consciousnesses are pure and calm” goes beyond this. It is not a restraint born from anxiety or fear. Rather, it arises from one’s relentless practice in daily life, eliminating the defilements from beginningless time, thereby giving rise to an awareness that is pure and serene. Hence, the six consciousnesses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch and thought express their highest function, such that whatever they come in contact with, or no matter who or what they meet with, they inevitably manifest naturally as pristine and unpretentious. It is completely different from the catchphrase that ordinary people quote. The sights of the Buddha and *Bodhisattvas* spontaneously evoke such a sense of awe and respect in us due to their lifetimes of training culminating in boundless virtues, which resulted from their unwavering diligence to perfect their morality.

Secondly, industriously internalising what one has learned comprises all forms of learning, including worldly and spiritual studies. Whatever is conducive to develop or train the mind and increase one’s skills, virtues, wisdom, and is beneficial to one’s family, society, country or its governance, etc, Buddhists should learn widely and absorb as much knowledge as they can. Thereafter, they should reflect on what they have learned and separate the chaff from the grain, choose what best matches their naturally-endowed strengths and abilities to acquire in-depth expertise so that they can establish themselves in their chosen field. To put it simply, one has to set one’s own goals and persevere. For example, an employee, or an apprentice, should always work

hard and be punctual, taking his or her responsibilities seriously. Or a cashier should be meticulous on the job, punctual for work and not make careless mistakes. Such a conscientious approach is even more pertinent when one undertakes research or in-depth studies to improve one's morality. It should not be undertaken nonchalantly. Instead, one should learn from Bodhisattva Samantabhadra's teaching, "In training the body, speech and mind, be tireless", in order to attain great accomplishment.

Thirdly, conscientiously benefiting all sentient beings. With the above two practices, one achieves scholastic and moral excellence, with foresight and discernment. Then the next step is to apply one's learning to benefit others. Mencius taught that the gentleman does not cultivate only his own self, but should express concern for others too. Do not adopt the selfish and individualistic idea of only focusing on your personal enjoyment and development. The basic tenet of Buddhism is to liberate oneself so as to liberate others, to benefit oneself so as to benefit others. Therefore, it is important to have this attitude that strives to be of benefit to others. This fulfils the meaning and value of being born human. In short, to cultivate the Six Perfections, unceasing diligence is a must to maintain alertness and determination, they must mutually reinforce each other in order to fully manifest their utility and efficacy. Only then would one be undeterred in the face of any difficulty that may arise and would not be defeated by challenging situations. All humans suffer from a common propensity, which is the desire to avoid hard work and to enjoy ease, the root of laziness. The way to eradicate this root is to develop diligence as an antidote to counter and transform it. That's why it is taught "Diligence overcomes laziness".

In ancient India, King Pasenadi had a prime minister named Elder Sutiga, who was fabulously wealthy. His residence was paved with glimmering lapis lazuli and seven different types of gems. In his garden, exotic plants flourished, while heavenly animals pranced around. The extent of luxury was so rarely seen that even the King's wealth paled in comparison. Thus, this aroused King Pasenadi's suspicion that Elder Sutiga was disloyal to him. One day, the King sent troops to surround Elder Sutiga's residence, like he was confronting an enemy. He wanted to capture Elder Sutiga for questioning and punishment. Suddenly, Elder Sutiga floated up into the air and waving his golden sceptre towards the troops, he paralysed them. He asked the King for the reason of this outrage. The King replied honestly and the Elder Sutiga explained thus, "All my wealth and possessions are bestowed by the heavens, they are not what humans could obtain by themselves. Many lifetimes ago, I was a merchant, and performed many good deeds, including supporting a Silent Buddha (*Pratyekabuddha*). I was relentless

and untiring in my practice, which resulted in these blessings which I'm enjoying in this life. Heavenly objects are given to those who have accumulated merits. They arise naturally, not out of greed or desire, and cannot be forcibly taken. Neither could they be obtained by corrupt means, impoverishing the people while one lives in luxury." The King realised his mistake after hearing the explanation.

Accordingly, we see from this story that by diligently doing good deeds, one is able to overcome all obstacles, subdue all fears, eliminate all doubts and receive all kinds of remarkable blessings. The scripture said, "Put on the armour of diligence and ride on the boat of wisdom to reach the shore of nirvana". That is to say that diligence can overcome one's external environment. In the turbulent, clashing waves of the samsaric seas, one must navigate with both diligence and wisdom, then one will be able to surmount the treacherous circumstances to reach the other shore of enlightenment.



Steps to Meditation

Chan Meditation, from the Sanskrit word, “dhyāna pāramitā”, means to reach a state when the mind and body are perfectly still in deep concentration, and is the necessary path in order to gain enlightenment. The first step to practise meditation is to quieten the out-of-control mind that jumps about like a crazy monkey or raging horse, so that it can be brought to focus its scattered energies on the path of diligent practice. This is similar to what the Chinese classic, *The Great Learning* prescribes: “Quieten down so that you are calm, once you are calm, you can think clearly. When you can think clearly, you can gain insight.” Or what the *Book of Poems* states: “All humans are endowed with sagely nature but when their minds are bombarded incessantly by confused thoughts, they become misguided. When they control such thoughts, they will be able to regain their original wisdom.” (Note: this refers to the confused thinking of ordinary people who mistake good for bad and right for wrong.) The objective of meditation, the preliminary step, is to do what our wise ancestors had observed, “subdue muddled thinking and return to our essentially pristine nature”. This is why the Chan master Zong Mi in the Tang Dynasty said, “All practitioners on the three paths (*Sravakayana*, *Pratyekabuddhayana* and *Bodhisattvayana*) aspiring to enlightenment must undergo training in meditation. There is no way other than through this door.” This shows that training in meditation is the precious compass to practise Buddhism.

The *Chan* tradition in Buddhism is also known as the intuitive sect. At its extreme, Chan adherents hold that words are extraneous, subject to (mis)interpretation, whereas the profound practice of Chan seeks to strike directly at the heart and mind, getting straight into one's Buddha nature. The emphasis is on actual practice, not long philosophical discussions mediated by languages or words. Nonetheless, the Buddha in his infinite compassion left many expedient means suitable for the different inclinations of individuals to facilitate their liberation. I shall speak briefly now on the three progressive steps the Buddha taught on how to meditate.

Meditation may be roughly divided into three types:

- (1) worldly meditation;
- (2) transcendent meditation; and
- (3) superior transcendent meditation.

Worldly meditation is further divided into the first *jhana* where Forms still exist, including the three stages of Four *Jhanas*, Four *Immeasurables* and Four Emptiness. The second *jhana* is Formless, and includes the Six Doors, Sixteen Victories and One-pointed Concentration. They are too complicated and onerous to go into details here. I shall speak instead on the meditation we commonly practise in our lives. There are many ways to meditate and meditation is fundamental to spiritual cultivation. At the very beginning, we seek to see our true essential nature and if our meditation practice is correct, we can also improve our health as our bodily balance is restored, our circulation improves so we are rid of ailments and experience both physical and mental well-being. Some ordinary people also practise the “Yin Shi Zi” meditation 因是子静坐法 (Note: this is a form of meditation incorporating breathing exercises popular in China in the 1910s–1920s), but it is crucial that they master the correct techniques and understand its principles, in order not to veer into the wrong path. Otherwise, not only is this type of meditation useless, but it can also be outright harmful. This is a very important point to note.

The key points to meditation are:

- (1) Sit up straight naturally, do not lean one's back against a wall to prevent blockages to one's circulation.
- (2) One's posture should neither be slouched nor overly rigid. It should not be forced but natural to prevent uneven breathing, which can cause internal injuries over time.
- (3) The head should be held erect and not tilting to left or right. Just hold it in place naturally to prevent problems or strains down the road.

Meditation is not something that can be rushed overnight. In the past, all the major monasteries in China had meditation halls with instructors to guide the learners' posture. Not only should the posture be erect and unmoving, one must also draw inwards and introspect. The point is not about sitting there blankly, assuming that sitting in a torpor will result in uncovering one's essential nature. Just sitting blankly without introspection is like a passive table or immovable mountain that just remains in place, but of what use is that? Hence, the first step is to ensure a proper posture, and the second step is to be diligent.

To be diligent means one directs one's awareness internally, eliminating the endless stream of muddled thoughts. At the same time, one should not hold any idea of seeing the Buddha or *Bodhisattvas*, or even gaining supernatural powers as a result of meditating. These are all defiled thoughts, and because of this way of thinking, one may easily be misled into the demonic path. Demons arise from our own mind, they are our karmic obstacles from beginningless time. If one persistently holds on to muddled thinking, such demons will seize the opportunity to manifest, but they are really our own ignorance showing up, there aren't any real demons creating troubles for us. As long as we do not entertain wrong thoughts, but sustain our attention and mindfulness, not mistaking shadows for real objects, we will not encounter such problems.

Many people who practise the "Yin Shi Zi" meditation craved to acquire supernatural powers from it, hence they often encountered abnormal experiences because of this reason. Thus, we must understand this principle: do not cling to any forms or manifestations while in meditation. No matter what scenario, even meeting the Buddha or *Bodhisattvas*, these are fleeting mirages and we should not be overjoyed or perturbed by them. For those who have been steadfast in their Buddhist practice and read the *Tripitaka* conscientiously, they will understand the teachings and grow in wisdom, realising the nature of emptiness so when they sit in meditation, they can do so without any disturbances physically and mentally. Master Ou Yi of the Ming Dynasty said, "The meditator is of the Buddha's mind. The teacher is of the Buddha's speech. The precept holder is of the Buddha's actions. There are those of the Buddha's mind but not of his speech or action, but are there those of his speech but not of the same actions or mind."

Mind, speech and action are all interrelated and it is inappropriate to emphasise one over the others. In the *Commentaries*, *The Treatise on the Hundred Dharmas* analyses the hundred types of mental states and their manifestations. The key point to

meditation is to ensure composure, with calm and even breathing, not giving rise to thoughts, knowing what one knows, perceiving what one perceives, and experiencing the totality of mind and one's essential nature as one unity. One's essential Buddha nature has been said to be analogous to the mind's substrate, while the mind activities are the function of the essential nature. The Buddha said that all beings possess the Buddha nature. This nature is shared by all beings as their commonality. It is also been said that the mind is the forerunner of all phenomena, it creates all the manifestations one perceives. This shows that the mind is infinitely miraculous in its function. Our bodies are driven by our mind. When the mind is aroused, our attention follows and thoughts arise. For example, while sitting in meditation, one suddenly dreams of winning a lottery. One's mind immediately turns outwards and give rise to thoughts on what to do next. Hence, one's attention is unable to focus and one can no longer continue the meditation. The wise ancients said, "The gentleman seeks the Truth, not food." When we make the aspiration to practise Buddhism, we should first loosen our grip on worldly or material possessions like fame. Instead, we should strive steadfastly to master the training in ethics, concentration and wisdom so that we attain the unsurpassed insight that will release us from the samsaric cycle of endless rebirths. We have to first see through and let go of the chains of fame and shackles of profits, then gradually progress from worldly meditation to transcendent meditation to superior transcendent meditation.

To summarise, worldly meditation takes the breath as its object. Transcendent meditation takes forms as its object. Superior transcendent meditation takes the mind as its object. All three forms are on the same continuum but have different objects to appeal to people with different levels of understanding, thus there are differences in their level and depth. Practitioners should examine their own abilities and disposition to choose what is most suitable for them. It is counterproductive to rush the process and unrealistic to do so.

Most Buddhists understand that the key teaching of Buddhism is to eradicate the Three Poisons of Greed (Clinging/Attachment), Anger (Hatred) and Ignorance. The only way to do this is to diligently cultivate one's ethics, concentration and wisdom. This threefold training is like the three legs of a three-legged cup. Each leg is essential to balance and ensure the cup stands upright. From ethics, concentration is fostered. From concentration, one acquires wisdom. If we only cultivate ethics and concentration without wisdom, we will be losing sight of the ultimate goal and thus, never be able to reach unsurpassed perfect wisdom (*prajna*) and enlightenment. If

we only cultivate wisdom but throw ethics and concentration out of the window, that is losing sight of the fundamentals, and the wisdom we cultivated is warped, and we likewise would not attain the fruit of enlightenment. Therefore, all three aspects of the path must be given equal attention. It is similar to what I just said about training one's mind, speech and action. Meditation requires taking and keeping the precepts to guard our mind and body, to stop misdeeds and to do good deeds instead, and to calm the attention and mind so that we can easily enter into an introspective state. When our meditative state is stable and unwavering, full of concentration, speedy like a lion, moving back or forth with ease, we can easily enter one-pointed focus (*samadhi*). From this state, wisdom arises, we gain the insight that all phenomena arise internally and we rely on our mind for our spiritual cultivation, we should not seek it externally. Thus, when we observe all worldly phenomena, we realise they are figments arising from our mind. All phenomena and I are interconnected, and the great heart of compassion arises from this recognition, which in turn gives rise to all the other virtues. Thus, from worldly meditation, one gradually enters into transcendent meditation, until one reaches the state of realisation that the Four Fake Notions of Ego, Personality, Being and Life 我人众生寿者四相 are vacuous. This is the progressive path of “achieving insight through reason, wisdom, understanding and practice in tandem”.

The Buddha taught for 49 years after his enlightenment. Nearing his *parinirvana*, at an assembly of monks, he took a flower and smiled, to the bafflement of his followers. Only the Elder *Mahākāśyapa* smiled back. The Buddha praised him, “I possess the true Dharma eye, the marvellous mind of Nirvana, the true form of the formless, the subtle dharma gate that does not rest on words or letters but is a special transmission outside of the scriptures. This I entrust to *Mahākāśyapa*.”² Thus began the unorthodox silent tradition of leadership succession based on unspoken mutual understanding. After that, from *Mahākāśyapa* to the Elder Ananda, the leadership was passed on 28 times until the Chan Master Bodhidharma became the 28th Patriarch of the Indian intuitive sect. In the seventh year of the Liang Dynasty, Bodhidharma came to China to teach the Dharma, becoming the First Patriarch of Chinese Chan tradition. At that time, Emperor Wu of Liang travelled a long way from Guangzhou to receive him at Jinling but both of them got off to a bad start. In a huff, Bodhidharma was said to transform a reed into a boat which he took to cross the Yangtze river to the state of Wei in northern China. He came to the Shaolin Temple on Songshan Mountain, where he sat facing a wall for nine years until the first year of Emperor Xiaoming's reign in the state of Wei. Subsequently, he acquired

a disciple Huike whom he eventually designated his heir. This verse was attributed to Bodhidharma when he passed the robe to Huike:

“I came to this land
to spread the Dharma and save its people.
A flower with five petals
blooms by itself naturally.”

True enough, the robe was eventually passed down to Huineng, the Sixth Patriarch, under which the *Chan* tradition flourished. Today, many famous monasteries in China are *Chan*, exerting great influence over Chinese culture and philosophy. This is due to the Chan tradition’s flexible, holistic and inspiring teaching methodology, which can be paradoxical, amusing, memorable, unusual but always customised to address each individual’s needs such that the student discovers for himself the answer he seeks. Thus, it has been penned:

“I have a marvellous gem,
completely obscured by dust and grime.
Today the dirt was cleaned off and its brilliance revealed,
radiating throughout the universe.”

I hope today’s talk on meditation will inspire all of you to seize the opportunity to start meditating, so as to loosen all fetters troubling your mind and reveal the pristine, radiant Buddha nature or wisdom that is always within you. Let it radiate and illuminate the world, just like in the above verse.

² www.chinabuddhismencyclopedia.com/en/index.php/Mahakashyapa

Wisdom as an Antidote to Ignorance

The Chinese word for wisdom is made up of two words. 智 or Intelligence is simply put, the discernment to tell things apart and to resolve doubts. 慧 is perspicuity that thoroughly realises the truth of Emptiness. Putting both words together means the wisdom that penetrates through all transcendent and worldly truths. With wisdom, one cuts off the sources of worries and attains enlightenment. Thus, in the *Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra*, one is urged to “use the sword of wisdom, cut off the thieves of worry”. The root cause of foolishness and confusion arises from karmic obstacles created by Ignorance from beginningless time. To cut off the knots from these vines of trouble, the only way is to use the sharp blade of wisdom to sever them. Foolishness means the lack of discrimination between good and bad, one’s mind is completely obscured by defilements, groping in the dark in a haphazard manner. Only through the light of wisdom can the darkness be illuminated.

In reality, all of us possess wisdom, it is an inherent quality in all beings. The problem is that this inner light is obscured and hidden by Ignorance that has been there since beginningless time, causing it to be shrouded and lost. When the Buddha attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree, he exclaimed, “How marvellous! All beings possess the Buddha nature originally. However, due to their muddled thinking and attachment, they are unable to retrieve it. If they realise the truth, then they will naturally recover their wisdom without any teachers, this natural, perfect and all-encompassing wisdom.” This shows that the priceless gem of wisdom is our innate endowment. The pity is that due to Ignorance and craving, we forsake the real and recognise the unreal instead, living our lives in a confused manner.

Ignorance is one of the Three Poisons of attachment (greed), aversion (hatred) and ignorance. Yet it is the root cause of all of them. In an individual, it causes this person to be confused, mistaken about right and wrong, deluded in thinking and stubborn in beliefs, without understanding the meaning of life. In society, it manifests as all kinds of messy, repulsive incidents, causing great harm. Let us further analyse the source of Ignorance to know its forms, and then talk about the utility and efficacy of wisdom.

Folly is Ignorance, it is the root cause of delusions, obsessions and all kinds of defilements. Due to ignorant foolishness characterised by irrationality, greed, hatred, pride, doubt arises leading to confusion in affairs; in turn, causing the following five kinds of wrong views:

- (1) The body is real. That is, conceiving the ultimately empty five aggregates that constitute the body that I call “mine” as real internally, and perceiving all other objects distinct from me as real externally.
- (2) Lopsided or extremist views, such as nihilism, or eternalism, or materialism, or idealism, and other such philosophies.
- (3) Delusions, which are illogical, unreasonable, absurd or false theories.
- (4) Dogmas or strong opinions that one holds as undeniably true, even when evidence suggests otherwise, and insisting that others are all wrong.
- (5) Doctrines that contradict the karmic law of cause and effect, including all kinds of prohibitions, austere practices, or superstitious beliefs.

As for the nature and forms of these root troubles and their offshoots, the scriptures explain them like this: they follow sentient beings without leaving, subtle and difficult to know, dormant like in sleep”, hence they are also known as “latent tendencies”

(*anusaya*). In the Consciousness-Only Commentary (*Vijñāpti-mātratā-Siddhi*), it is explained thus: this seed of trouble sprouts confusion, following human beings by lying dormant in the Eighth Storehouse (*alaya*) Consciousness, causing them to increase their faults, unable to be awoken from the slumber. Hence, they are also known as latent troubles. To heal this obstinate human ailment, the Buddha preached the Six Perfections as a way to sow the seeds of wisdom so that wisdom will take root, and also increase the efficacy of wisdom. Planting wisdom is the only way to uproot the extensive root system of Ignorance and allow the light of wisdom to penetrate the opaque darkness that has been there for a long time.

Let us now turn our attention to wisdom. Wisdom can mean many things. According to the Consciousness-Only Commentary (*Vijñāpti-mātratā-Siddhi*), the Buddha possessed the Mirror-like wisdom (*Ādarśa-jñāna*); the Equality wisdom (*Samatā-jñāna*); the Dharmadhatu wisdom of Suchness (*Tathatā-jñāna*); and the All-Accomplishing wisdom (*Kṛty-anuṣṭhāna-jñāna*).

In The Treatise on the Great Perfection of Wisdom (*Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa*), three types of wisdom are identified, namely: (1) the all-encompassing wisdom (*Śūnyatā-samādhi*); (2) the signless wisdom (*Ānimitta-samādhi*); and (3) wishless wisdom (*Apraṇihita-samādhi*). The all-encompassing wisdom considers dharmas as empty (*śūnya*), without “me” (*ātman*) or “mine” (*ātmiya*). The signless wisdom examines the universe and all the phenomena in life and of society, and while pursuing their root causes, and employs expedient means to liberate beings from their suffering at the same time. The wishless wisdom penetrates the empty nature of all worldly truths and reality to culminate in a comprehensive awareness that blends science and philosophy, which can be said to be a superior form of wisdom. Such explanations are too profound, so we can simplify them by classifying wisdom into three types: worldly wisdom, transcendent wisdom and superior transcendent wisdom.

- (1) Worldly wisdom encompasses all knowledge domains, such as theories, politico-economic ideologies, cultures, crafts or technical skills. In short, it refers to worldly intelligence or street smartness. Today, science and technology has advanced to the stage where humans can land on the moon, our international transportation systems by air or seas are rapidly developing, and we have inventions like wind turbines or motors. These advances are evolving at an unprecedented pace. The exchange of knowledge and know-how is a giant leap from the past, and can be easily observed.

- (2) Transcendent wisdom is the realisation that life and society are born out of karmic conditions ripening at the appropriate time. Therefore, we should be helping each other, instead of fighting against each other, trying to outdo or destroy others. Do not get caught up in the whirlpool of destructive competition, instead restrain yourself and cultivate spiritually, abandon greed, guard your morality and self-respect, “drain the river of troubles and cross over to the shore of nirvana”. In Buddhism, this wisdom is achieved by the Hearer (*Śrāvakayāna*) who attains enlightenment by hearing the Dharma; or the Silent Buddha (*pratyekabuddha* or *paccekabuddha*, literally “a lone buddha”, “a solitary buddha”, “a private buddha”, or “a silent buddha”), who spontaneously achieves enlightenment on his own.
- (3) Superior transcendent wisdom has cut off both false views of identity and dharma as inherently existent and are able to deal with worldly affairs with flexibility and finesse, employing both compassion and wisdom. Exemplars are the Mahabodhisattvas Guanyin (*Avalokiteśvara*), Mahāsthāmaprāpta, Samantabhadra, and Kṣitigarbha who can abide freely in the realms above our samsaric world but reverse course to come down to liberate beings here out of their great compassionate vows. They possess infinite power, wisdom and fearlessness. They present a sharp contrast to those practitioners in the Theravada tradition who focus solely on their own liberation and are loathe to be in this samsaric world with its endless problems. The highest and most noble manifestation of superior transcendent wisdom is to take it upon oneself to liberate all sentient beings so that they become free from suffering and achieve happiness.

Of these three wisdoms, worldly wisdom is essential to live in society, but this kind of wisdom has both bad and good sides. If it develops in a bad direction, then given the rapid advances in science and technology, to use such knowledge to research or invent weapons to kill people, build intercontinental missiles, create chemical gases to destroy other humans, or poison the organic basis or ecological balance of the environment required for human survival, as its highest aim, isn't that turning into the greatest enemy of humanity? At the same time, such nefarious intelligence can be applied to the governance of a country. Let us look back at history which has recorded so many treacherous traitors or evil villains, who were of exceptional intelligence and abilities but instead abused their intelligence, power and position to bring disaster upon their country and countrymen. Ultimately, they ended up bringing only ruin and notoriety upon themselves. Thus, misdirected worldly wisdom will only bring about negative results. On the other hand, worldly wisdom directed towards worthy causes will benefit

oneself and others. Nowadays, the trend towards so-called utilitarianism is tilted towards using worldly wisdom in a bad way, neglecting the importance of spiritual and moral considerations. To counter this undesirable current towards abusing worldly wisdom, it is imperative to advocate for a pure spiritual cultivation by developing a holistic and healthy wisdom. That is, one should understand the Buddhist teachings and apply them conscientiously in one's life, thus enabling one to abandon the unwholesome for the wholesome, transforming misfortune into a blessing. The Six Perfections taught by the Buddha are the basic training for all other teachings.

Practise giving (generosity) to overcome greed and selfishness and to extend the reach of one's compassion. Observe the precepts to terminate all misdeeds and misbehaviours, and sow the seeds of all good actions. Cultivate forbearance to counteract anger, jealousy and hatred, fostering instead a harmonious and tolerant attitude. Practise diligently to overcome laziness, and keeping up the momentum will teach us to persevere and strive on steadfastly. Meditate to control the monkey mind, steeling one's resolve and enabling one to see clearly, not shaken even under the most difficult circumstances. Perfecting the above qualities, one will naturally develop and manifest the wisdom without any teachers, spontaneously. With such holistic and perspicuous wisdom, one is able to manage all of one's worldly affairs without obstacles and to undertake major initiatives benefitting others. At the same time, one eradicates the Ignorance that has been with one since beginningless time by its roots, thereby obtaining true freedom.

The Buddha said, "All beings are born with the Buddha nature." Wisdom comes from eradicating all forms of wrong thinking. A pleasing demeanour evoking respect comes from continually doing one's best to do good deeds that benefit others. The wise ancients said, "Hidden inside but the shape is discerned externally. Prosperity adorns a house, whereas virtue beautifies the self." One's external appearance naturally reflects one's inner state, this is not something achieved through luck.

The Significance of the Five Eyes in Buddhism

It is important when teaching the Dharma to teach according to the occasion and the audience present. First, instil right views and knowledge, then explain their significance, analyse them in detail, and gradually lead listeners to the sea of wisdom. Therefore, the teacher must deliver the lecture in a clear and concise manner, while the students should listen attentively. Only then will there be clear communicative resonance and the joy of Dharma realised. When the Buddha achieved enlightenment, he spoke for 21 days on the ultimate truth of Emptiness being the essential nature of all phenomena that arise out of conditions coming together at the appropriate time. However, those present at his teaching were not able to comprehend it. As it has been said, “They have ears but can’t hear the Dharma, they have eyes but cannot see the Buddha.” None of them could appreciate the Buddha’s teaching. Hence, the Buddha adjusted his approach and appearing as a fellow practitioner, started giving simpler teachings from the collection of Agama scriptures (*nikāya*) in the Theradava tradition, and later the sutras on realising wisdom in the Mahayana tradition. Finally, he taught the *Lotus Sutra* and others on Vulture’s Peak. However, he spent the most time expounding the deep significance of wisdom, a total of 22 years. This is because wisdom is the means to penetrate both worldly and ultimate truths, it is the ultimate perfected wisdom (*prajna*), not worldly intelligence or street smartness.

Master Xuan Zang from Ci En Temple in the Tang Dynasty even annotated that *prajna* is beyond “words”, “introspection” and “materiality”, and added the dimensions of “context” and “relations”. To put it more simply in modern language we can understand, *prajna* encompasses the ability to gain insight into literature, languages, ideologies, and all phenomena in life and society, up to the ultimate truths about the nature of the universe. Moreover, it is not passive intellectual realisation alone, but applying it to undertake humanitarian actions that benefit all beings. In this way, one achieves both wisdom and blessings, a state of complete and perfect fulfilment. That is why Buddhism is widely acknowledged as vast and unbounded.

In Chapter 18 of the Diamond Sutra, the significance of the Five Eyes in Buddhism which “equally regard everything as one unified body” is taught. This follows from the teaching in Chapter 17 on “No self”. The Buddha told Subhuti, “A true disciple knows that there is no such thing as a self, a person, a living being, or a universal self. A true disciple knows that all things are devoid of selfhood, devoid of any separate individuality.” The *Bodhisattva* has realised Emptiness, the non-existence of “me, myself and I”, a convention that causes all the troubles related to adhering to an immutable self-identity. Likewise, holding tightly to the idea that there are permanent phenomena or principles leads to craving (rigidity) and wrong views, giving rise to the Four Fake Notions of Ego, Personality, Being and Life, obscuring the ultimate truth about the essential empty nature of all things, and causing misguided attachment to all kinds of things. This is the source of all human suffering and unhappiness. This is called the “obstacle of afflictions”. Rigidly holding that some principles are immutable and forever, or that phenomena can be studied to discover their underlying materiality, is called the “obstacle of knowledge” due to the failure to see that their essential nature is empty. In the Commentary on Bodhicitta, it is said that both the Hearer (*Śrāvakayāna*) and Silent Buddha (*paccekabuddha*) have attained insight into the emptiness of the phenomenal world, but not of the Dharma realm. Only a *Bodhisattva* who has realised the empty nature of both the phenomenal and Dharma realms is worthy to be called *Bodhisattva*.

The realisation that change is the only constant encourages people to detach themselves from phenomena and conventions, arouse the great heart of compassion and practise all good deeds to benefit all beings. This is the heart of what the Buddha taught.

Let us now briefly discuss the significance of the Five Eyes in Buddhism. The

meaning of true equality without any inherent self is elaborated in Chapter 18 of the *Diamond Sutra* on “equally regarding everything as one unified body”. For example, all humans, whether they are men or women, young or old, though they come with all kinds of differences, but they share the common receptivity to hear or learn, hence they are regarded as one totality. Possessing this receptivity, they have the potential to learn the Dharma. Although their understanding will differ but starting from the basics and gradually progressing to deeper studies, all of them can abandon their confusion to eventually reach the goal of enlightenment. Hence they are equally regarded. The Buddha explained the meaning of the Five Eyes in response to Subhuti’s questions, to demonstrate that beings and the Buddha are of the same body.

The Five Eyes refer respectively to:

- (1) physical eyes,
- (2) heavenly eyes,
- (3) wisdom eyes,
- (4) Dharma eyes, and
- (5) Buddha eyes.

The Buddha asked Subhuti if the Tathagatha possessed these Five Eyes, to which Subhuti replied affirmatively. The physical eyes symbolise ordinary people. Heavenly eyes symbolise heavenly beings. Wisdom eyes symbolise the Arhats, Hearers and Silent Buddhas. The Dharma eyes symbolise *Bodhisattvas*, whereas Buddha eyes symbolise all Buddhas.

- (1) The physical eyes of ordinary people refer to the eyes we are given by our parents when we are born, which is one of the six sense perceptions or consciousnesses. Due to our personal karmic obstacles (including afflictions such as greed, hatred, ignorance, pride, doubt etc), we cannot see through even a piece of paper. The Buddha manifested physical eyes to show that he was not different from any one of us. However, as a result of his practice, he obtained the Five Eyes, which he did as a human, to prove that all humans are also capable of attaining Buddhahood.
- (2) Heavenly eyes are able to view things even through obstacles. It is a sight that heavenly beings obtained through their practice. The Buddha taught to heavenly beings and possessed heavenly eyes himself. This shows that heavenly beings can become Buddhas too if they cultivate themselves.

- (3) Wisdom eyes belong to the Arhats, who have gained insight into all worldly and ultimate truths. When they arouse the great heart of compassion, they can also become Buddhas. The Buddha himself also progressed through the stage of arhathood, whereupon he further aspired to liberate all sentient beings and eventually became the Buddha.
- (4) Dharma eyes: The non-sentient world consists of mountains, rivers, all inanimate objects and plants, whereas the sentient world consists of humans, animals and all sentient beings. Whether they belong to the world with or without feelings, all of them rely on the Dharma body. Non-sentient things obtain their names from sentient beings. All sentient or non-sentient entities arise out of Dharma nature, because sensing or perceiving creates reality. As all entities rely on Dharma as their basis, the Buddha Dharma is all-pervasive, beyond time and space. The Bodhisattvas who cast Dharma eyes on all sentient and non-sentient entities, manifest from emptiness, and out of compassion, vow to help all beings according to their needs and circumstances, to facilitate their liberation towards enlightenment.
- (5) Buddha eyes are possessed only by the Buddhas, enabling them to perceptively view all the phenomena taking place in all worlds. Whether in the past, present or future, the Buddhas see things clearly as they are, without any distortion. To say that the Five Eyes are round and bright means that they are used interchangeably. For example, the Buddhas know the different mind states or thoughts of all sentient beings, which is not something that science is yet capable of. Thus, the wise ancients said, “The view of the heavenly eyes is unobstructed. The view of the physical eyes is obstructed. The wisdom eyes realise true emptiness. The Buddha eyes are like the brilliant daylight, shining on all phenomena and revealing their sameness, perfectly illuminating the Dharma realm, everything is cognised.”

In conclusion, the wisdom body is one unified whole, it does not increase in sages or decrease in mere mortals. Fundamentally, the Buddha and beings are no different. Fettered, one becomes ordinary; released from the fetters, one becomes a Buddha. The key is how diligent one practises to transform one's deluded mind into an awakened one. Therefore, all Buddhists should understand and internalise this teaching, not only to continually introspect, and guard our mind, body and speech, but at opportune times, to also teach the Dharma to others in order to

extinguish the flames of delusion burning in their mind from the past, present to the future, ebbing and flowing without stop, causing them to cycle in the clashing waves of samsara, their heads bobbing up and down in their struggles. We must learn the Buddha Dharma as early as possible, and transform our delusions into awakening so that all of us can transform from mere mortals to sages and swiftly attain enlightenment.

³ <https://diamond-sutra.com/read-the-diamond-sutra-here/diamond-sutra-chapter-17/>

Mind and the Six Root Afflictions

The annual Vesak Day which commemorates Shakyamuni Buddha reminds us not to forget his noble spirit and great achievements as we immerse ourselves in grand festivities. It allows us to imbue the Buddha Dharma, to pause and reflect as we are oppressed by the pressures of living and busy making a living: what are we busy for? For money? Career? Fame? If we are busy chasing after money, career, and fame, then what is our next goal once we have obtained them? How long can we enjoy or keep all these fruits of our hard labour? A human lifespan is only a few decades, like the reflections of the moon in rivers, or flowers in the mirror. We did not bring them with us when we are born and cannot take them with us when we die. Life is unpredictable and constantly changing, like bubbles or the morning dew, which quickly dissipate into nothingness. Hence, it is not worth sacrificing our precious time hankering after all these possessions and achievements. Instead, we should look up to the Buddha as a model, set our sight further, and see through the vacuousness and constantly changing nature of phenomena. We should follow the Buddha's lead and not be enslaved by fame, prestige, profits, money or sensual pleasures. We should steel our resolve and strive towards the highest path, seeking an end to the samsaric cycle of suffering.

To seek the highest path and obtain ultimate release from the cycle of birth and rebirth, we have to get to the root cause or source so that we do not mistake trifles for the essential. Although the Buddha Dharma has 84,000 Dharma doors or access pathways, all of them boil down to one cardinal teaching: the mind is the forerunner of all phenomena. If we can get to the heart of this teaching, then our very being right now is of the same essence as the Buddha. Otherwise, even practising for aeons will get us nowhere, because we fail to grasp the ultimate truth. Thus, the question of mind (in Chinese, this term encompasses “mind, intentions and consciousness”) in the *Consciousness-Only Commentary* (*Vijñāpti-mātratā-siddhi*) is indeed the key to realise insight and achieve enlightenment, ending the cycle of birth and rebirth. To learn Buddhism, we should start by listening to Dharma talks and reading the sutras often. After that, we should reflect on what we have heard or read, then we will be able to eventually gain understanding.

In the Sixth chapter of *Śūraṅgama Sūtra* on the Perfection of Bodhisattva Guanyin (*Avalokiteshvara*), it is said, “The Buddha taught me to listen to the Dharma and reflect on my practice in order to reach *samadhi*.” This clearly shows that learning Buddhism requires us to be studious in hearing or reading the teachings, reflect upon them and put them into practice. Through this process of constant imbue ment, one will eventually gain enlightenment. In the *Lotus Sutra*, it is said, “It is more meritorious for a person to meditate for a short time than to build a seven-storey pagoda”. This shows that the most crucial first step in learning Buddhism is to purify one’s mind.

How do we purify our minds so that we can learn Buddhism? If we want to purify our mind in order to gain the Buddha’s insight, then we have to first eradicate the Six Root Afflictions (*mūlakleśa*), because these six are the thieves that harm our innate Buddha wisdom. What are they? Let me briefly introduce them below:

- (1) Greed: Beings can be greedy for money, sensual pleasures, prestige, and profits and cause themselves much grief in the pursuit of these worldly possessions. Greed obscures our innate Buddha nature, causing us to become confused, foolish or obsessed, triggering an endless cycle of rebirths, unable to liberate ourselves.
- (2) Anger: Fighting over small issues due to blame, hatred, jealousy, and even rage, causing oneself to become negative and unhappy, like the waves at sea that cannot be stilled, ebbing and flowing in turbulence. The six sense consciousnesses

corresponding to six contaminants are completely defiled, causing one's mind to be agitated and unclean, sowing the seeds for rebirth.

- (3) Ignorance: Humans do not treasure their innate Buddha nature. They do not cultivate their inner goodness, instead running after sensual pleasures, becoming enslaved by their physical body. Some even commit killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and intoxication by alcohol as a result of their craving for sensual enjoyment, thereby condemning themselves to endless rebirths, without any possibility of release, which is the ultimate folly.
- (4) Pride: Refers to arrogance, haughtiness, and self-centredness that take oneself as real and superior to all others, thereby resulting in endless conflicts with others. The Buddha implemented the system of begging for alms in order to tame the pride of all his renowned disciples, so that they would learn to be humble, and then strive for enlightenment. Moreover, this could help them realise and internalise the teaching that the Four Notions of Ego, Personality, Being and Life are false.
- (5) Doubt: Doubt is disbelieving. There are many truths in the universe, often transcendent that are beyond what we can visibly see, or even beyond our comprehension. This gives rise to doubt in the mind, causing some to be sceptical, because they fail to realise that their failure to comprehend is due to their own ignorance. Instead, they refute the higher truths that they cannot fathom. What a pity this is, because such beings will forever struggle in the darkness of untruths and never be able to end their suffering or achieve happiness. This situation is analogous to a doctor prescribing medicine to heal a patient, but because the patient does not trust the doctor, he refuses to take the medicine and therefore cannot be healed. Isn't this a great pity?
- (6) Negative thoughts: The mind stream of ordinary beings is flooded like the crashing waves in the oceans, endlessly arising and disappearing, with more negative than positive thoughts. Such negative thoughts are the impetus driving misdeeds, because humans are ruled by their thinking. Due to the endless flow of negative thoughts, humans ended up doing many bad things. Thus, if such bad thoughts are not eradicated, the consciousness will never be purified, which will in turn lead to an increasing degree of defilement in the mind, thereby leading to rebirths in the lower realms, without any end to it.

In the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination (*pratitya-samutpada*), Ignorance and the Activities (also known as Fabrications) arising from it, are listed as the primary causes for the cycle of rebirths. The Six Root Afflictions obscure our wisdom, causing us to act out in foolish or negative ways in our folly or ignorance. Therefore, we learn Buddhism, first and foremost, to purify our minds. In our quiet moments after a busy day's work, we should constantly reflect calmly and gradually eliminate the Six Root Afflictions, so that eventually, we will arrive at a serene state. Once our mind is purified, we will be able to attain the Buddha's wisdom because "awakening means to obtain the Buddha's insight". When this happens, we can be assured that we will become enlightened ourselves.

The Twelve Links of Dependent Origination

The Buddha's vast vow to liberate all beings to reach the shore of enlightenment is thoroughly equalitarian, without making any distinction. We are born with differences due to our different karmic propensity, degree of cultivation, virtues or blessings, etc. It is not due to the Buddha's favouritism; the Buddha Dharma is completely impartial. In order to speak to the individual differences among beings, the Buddha offered many different teachings as expedient means in order to appeal to their individual inclination. As long as we sincerely and wholeheartedly practise whatever Dharma door we choose, regardless of whether it is profound or simple, success is assured and we are bound to reach our desired destination. Hence, learning Buddhism is entirely up to your own inner wisdom and willpower, you are not under the control of the Buddha. If you possess the superior wisdom, you will attain the superior fruit in the future. Those of average wisdom will obtain average fruit. Even those of lower wisdom can attain arhathood or be reborn in the upper realms. Such a just and equitable law of karmic cause and effect is not something found in most other religions.

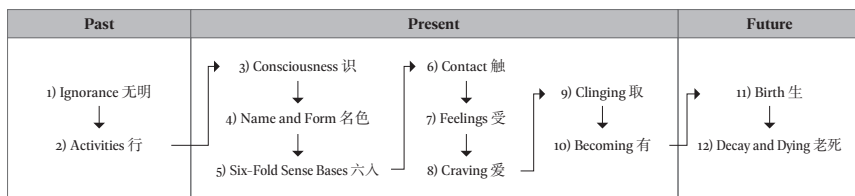
The teaching on the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination describes the source of our samsaric cycle of suffering and rebirths. Beings endlessly undergo this never-ending cycle because they fail to understand the principle underlying these Twelve Links, thereby subjecting themselves to more and more rounds of rebirths without cessation. Moreover, at the mention of “rebirths”, the intellectuals snub their nose at it as superstitious, whereas the foolish believe there are supernatural forces behind it. It is a truly lamentable situation like being stuck in quicksand, where the more one struggles to free oneself, the deeper one sinks and cannot be extricated. Actually, the Chinese word translated as “Dependent Origination” is made up of two words, the first 因 meaning “causes” and the second 缘 meaning “supporting conditions”. Causes and supporting conditions mutually interact like a feedback loop to create their results. This is analogous to planting the seeds from different species of flowers, they naturally grow into different plants. The realms of human, heaven and hell are completely different from each other in terms of pleasure or pain, but they all arise from the positive or negative karma created by people acting in good or bad ways as a result of their wholesome or unwholesome thoughts. Such realms are not immutable.

Humans can change their environment and living conditions through their efforts. The shift from hell to heaven is likewise achievable. For example, those on the *Bodhisattva* path create the cause to become *Bodhisattva*, they plant the seeds for *Bodhisattva*-hood, so that they will become *Bodhisattvas* in the future, eventually attaining Buddhahood. The Hearer or the Silent Buddha, as well as those engaged in wholesome activities that will see them reborn in the human or heavenly realms, will all attain their corresponding fruit. This is undisputable; causes give rise to their effects. Those who do many bad deeds or commit crimes, causing harm to society, they will be punished by the law if they are caught alive. Those who persist in their bad ways and do not repent will suffer the consequences when they die too, as they will be born in the lower realms and subjected to all kinds of pain and suffering. They cannot blame others for they have planted such bad seeds themselves. Thus, it is important to understand this basic teaching when learning Buddhism, so that one will evoke the aspiration to practise diligently and generate goodwill towards all beings. Then one will not be easily misled by false talk about supernatural forces and deviate into unwholesome paths. At the same time, one should understand that the latent potential in a seed requires environmental nurturing to grow. The seed is the internal cause.

Providing it with sunlight, water, soil etc is the external supporting condition. Having the seed but not nurturing it, even though the seed may sprout, it will not grow up strong or healthy. This is an analogy to describe those who hold the aspiration to tread the *Bodhisattva* path, but who do not put it into practice by cultivating the Six Perfections so as to benefit beings at their own expense. How are they to achieve the fruit of *Bodhisattva* in this way? Hence, practising generosity, observing the precepts, cultivating forbearance, diligently striving on the path, meditating and cultivating wisdom are the six supporting conditions that facilitate one's transformation onto the *Bodhisattva* path. Without such supporting conditions, it is unrealistic empty talk to speak of obtaining the great power of the *Bodhisattva*. This argument can be extended to apply to all phenomena. Therefore, when we chant the Buddha's name, we focus our mind on the rhythmic chanting to calm down the mind, to prevent the monkey mind from running out to seek external stimulation. Chanting the Buddha's name is an inner practice that needs to be supplemented by tangible behaviours to benefit others according to our means and learning to be contented with whatever we have. Such behaviours are the supporting conditions to reinforce our practice. Only in this way would we be able to transcend beyond the cycle of rebirths. Simply talking about it without doing anything, or just sitting absentmindedly waiting to turn into a Buddha will never happen.

The Twelve Links of Dependent Origination are also known as the Twelve Arisings. This teaching traces the causes for perpetual rebirths linearly from the past to pierce into the present, and from the present, extrapolates into the future. Why are beings subjected to the endless cycle of rebirths? Who is behind it? Is it God? The emphatic answer is: No! We ourselves are responsible. After understanding the reason for the perpetual cycle of rebirths, how do we halt it so that we can become carefree? This is the question we should examine.

The Twelve Links are classified as two links (causes) in the past, namely: (1) Ignorance, and (2) Activities (fabrications) in the mind, body and speech arising from the preceding Ignorance. These lead to the five links in the present, namely: (3) consciousness, (4) name and form, (5) the six-fold sense bases, (6) contact and (7) feelings. The seventh link then feeds into the three supporting links in the present, namely (8) craving, (9) clinging/grasping and (10) becoming, which in turn creates the next two links in the future, namely: (11) birth and (12) decay and dying.



This summarises the samsaric cycle of rebirths that beings are subjected to. To put it simply, originally, the essential nature of the universe neither arises nor dies, it is neither empty nor full, there is no inner or outer. There is just a remarkable “such-ness”, which is called “the unified and true Dharma realm”. However, from beginningless time, beings in their Ignorance have generated delusions, causing the confusion of the “Three Subtles and Six Crudes” (三细六粗), manifesting in all kinds of activities in thought, action or speech, which is the second link. In the Consciousness-Only school of Buddhism, there is a refined analysis and explanation. Due to these two primordial causes, the consciousness harbouring one’s past karmic imprints seek rebirth when the conditions ripen. A life form takes root, complete with the six senses. “Name and form” is a rough mould in the early stage, and progressively gives rise to the consciousness of the six sense doors. There are many similarities between Buddhist and Confucian teachings, such as the Book of Changes’ description of the formation of a human baby, which are highly detailed and accurate. Contact refers to coming into contact with the outside world after birth, which affects both physical and psychological development. Due to this contact, one experiences pain and pleasure, likes and dislikes, which in turn lead to the obsessive ideas and desires of craving, clinging and grasping. These desires give rise to greed and possessiveness in which one “grasps” at and is only satisfied when one obtains the objects of desires. Many tragedies and crimes in this world are a consequence of this grasping. With all these wholesome and unwholesome activities undertaken, a latent karmic force is created that will experience their consequences, thereby giving rise to “birth”. With birth, decay and death follows, together with the suffering, pain, worries associated with them, in a perpetual cycle. Beings bob their heads up and down in this sea of suffering, without realising that they are the ones who powered this wheel, there is no omnipotent God overseeing this process. We must make sure we get this point straight.

The point for us to learn Buddhism is to break free from the cyclical trap created by the Twelve Links. We must harness the true freedom to be masters of our own liberation, to break free from the shackles of our karma that propels continual rebirths, to escape all these obstacles and seek the root cause and know the source for samsaric rebirths,

which is due to Ignorance causing confusion. Learning Buddhism, no matter whether one focuses on meditation, teachings, precepts or purification, the point of them all is to pierce through the darkness of Ignorance, get rid of all delusions, clear out all negative habits and thoughts. It is said that a tree will flourish with a strong root system. If we forsake the root in search of the branches, we are only touching the superficial level and would not obtain the real benefits of practising Buddhism. The wise ancients said, “Another day has passed, the fish has even less water now.” (This expression means that with each passing day, our time left is less, like the water the fish needs to survive is reduced). Time is very precious, do not waste it! Be vigilant at all times, and repent often. Sweeping away the obstacles of Ignorance and defilements is the key to release from samsaric rebirths. Practise diligently in ethics, concentration and wisdom to eradicate attachment, anger and ignorance. Let us all evoke the great heart of compassion and attain enlightenment together.



The Mind Creates All Phenomena

The Buddha Dharma pervades both worldly and transcendent realms. All our actions, behaviours, objects and materials are part of the worldly realm. The worldly realm is more focused on practical issues related to daily life and society, whereas the transcendent realm pays attention to the metaphysical aspects of the universe, life, society and spirituality, analysing these in a deeper and broader manner, and is motivated to evolve to a higher plane. Both should not be divided and treated as mutually exclusive. We have all heard this teaching, “The Buddha Dharma exists in the worldly realm, it does not leave worldly consciousness”, so there is no need for me to belabour the point.

Although the Dharma taught by the Buddha is extensive and boundless, it may be summarised as mainly revealing the true Buddha nature of all beings, and to finely analyse the delusional thinking of beings. The Buddha true nature is a commonality that all beings share. Delusion thinking is caused, on the other hand, by individual differences existing among beings. This in turn gives rise to all kinds of suffering. The difference between a Buddha and beings lies in one being “awakened” while the others remain “deluded”. Beings are deluded while those who have awakened are called Buddhas. The Buddha taught from his personal experience of enlightenment to liberate beings from their delusions, and destroy their Ignorance, in order to restore their original pristine awareness and to reveal their Buddha nature, so that they will eventually be enlightened themselves. Moreover, the Buddha taught numerous methods in order to liberate beings whose level of understanding and inclination varied widely.

Today’s special theme is “All Phenomena are Created by the Mind”, which is meant to illustrate the above point. At the same time, I hope that we will not underestimate our own selves, rather we should respect our innate goodness. We should understand that we are of the same nature as the Buddha. The key difference distinguishing us from the Buddha lies in the difference between “pure mind” and “deluded mind”.

Firstly, let me briefly explain what is meant by “Dharma realm” (*Dharmadhātu*). This can be explained in two ways. The first is based on the *Notes to the Rebirth Treatise*, “The Dharma realm is manifested by the mind of beings, because the mind generates all worldly and transcendent truths. Hence the mind is the Dharma realm”. This is using the mind to explain the Dharma realm.

Secondly, according to *Foundations of Mahayana Meditation*, “All dharmas are without ultimate differences; all things and beings are therefore without any distinctions or identification of a self or an ego”. This means that our essential nature is originally the same, but various differences appear. Yet, these differences manifest as a result of the activities of the mind. As the Buddha said, “When the mind is aroused, all kinds of phenomena appear. When the mind is quietened, all kinds of phenomena disappear.” Whatever one’s mind thinks about, such a cause invariably brings forth its effects. Whether one receives a good or bad outcome, this results from the activities

of one's mind, because the mind is the motor propelling all actions, hence it is hailed as the king. It is the mastermind/main switch of all positive and negative karma. In The Mahayana Sutra of Mental Contemplation During Earlier Births (*Mūlajāta-hṛidayabhūmi-dhyāna-sūtra*), it is said, "The mind is foremost in all the three worlds. Those who are able to gaze within to study their mind will eventually attain liberation. Those unable to do so are condemned to samsaric suffering. The mind of all beings is vast like a field. The five grains and five fruits all grow from it. Such is the truth of the mind. Everything, worldly or transcendent, good or bad, the five (non-heavenly) realms, accomplished arhats or those still in training, the silent Buddhas, the *Bodhisattvas*, even the Buddha, all of them arise from the mind. Thus, the mind is the forerunner of all phenomena in the three worlds, hence it is called the foundation." This clearly illustrates the interdependence of the mind and the ten Dharma realms.

The ten Dharma realms include the Four Sagely Abodes and the Six Realms of Rebirth. The Four Sagely Abodes are: Buddha, *Bodhisattva*, Silent Buddha and Hearing Buddha. The Six Realms of Rebirth are: Heaven, Human, Demigod (*asura*), Hell, Hungry Ghost (*preta*), Animal. Within these ten Dharma realms, the human realm is at the axis. We obtain a human body, especially one that has all six sense consciousnesses intact without any handicap because, in our past lives, we had observed morality, kept the Five Precepts and behaved well, for the most part. Thus, we are reborn to experience joys and pains, prosperity and poverty, the different worldly conditions.

Moving up one step, one is reborn in the heavenly realm. Heavenly beings have practised the Ten Virtues and meditation, so they now enjoy the wondrous peace and joy in the heavenly realm. As for the Theravada practitioners known as "Hearers", they become enlightened after hearing and internalising the Four Noble Truths. The Silent Buddhas attain enlightenment by examining the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination. The *Bodhisattvas* are those who hold vast aspirations and resolve to help beings in the six realms, aspiring to Buddhahood above while reaching down to help beings below, until they finally attain the ultimate fruit. The Buddha is one who is perfect in wisdom and action, full of wisdom and blessings. Yet, all beings in these Four Divine Abodes start off in the human realm, striving and practising diligently according to their capabilities, until they reach Buddhahood.

On the other hand, if one practises the Ten Lesser Virtues, but because of overwhelming anger or hatred, plus pride, suspicion and frequent killing, then one will be reborn in the *Asura* realm. The *Asuras* are ugly in appearance and live neighbouring the heavenly realm, where they are always fighting against the heavenly beings. It is like the world now, full of wars. The painful battle experiences are a manifestation of the *Asura* realm in our world, as *Asuras* live a conflict-ridden existence. As for those humans who lose their humanity, perhaps out of excessive greed, or who behave immorally, including committing the Ten Negative Karmas, they will descend into the lower realms of hungry ghost, hell or animal to suffer the consequences of their misdeeds. They are the most pathetic. We should understand that from the most extremely painful state to the ultimate state of bliss and happiness, humans are at the axis. What causes this wheel to spin endlessly is totally dependent on one's mind, which generates the positive or negative actions that provide momentum to turn the wheel. The negative realms arise when delusions pervade, obscuring our innate pristine nature and because of this, we become confused, acting out in negative ways that create all kinds of endless suffering for ourselves.

In The *Śūraṅgama Sūtra*, the Elder Ananda was told, “Ananda! The world is spinning in delusion and confusion, causing impure energies to coalesce into numerous unwholesome perturbations, giving rise to the womb-born, egg-born, moisture-born, and transformation-born beings. The egg-born come from thought; the womb-born are due to emotion; the moisture-born arise from union; and transformations occur through separation. Emotion, thought, union, and separation go through further changes, and the maturation of such karma causes one to rise or sink. From such causes and conditions comes the continuity of beings...”⁴

This shows that the Twelve Confusions directing rebirths cause twelve unwholesome thoughts, which in turn create twelve different types of beings in the universe to receive the suffering. Delusions and obsessions are our greatest obstacles in life, the source of suffering. The most important lesson when we learn Buddhism is to pierce through the darkness of Ignorance, transforming it into insight. We should understand that it is a great fortune to be born in the human realm, which is a pivotal axis within the Ten Dharma Realms. It is precious and rare to obtain a human body, so we should seize the opportunity in this very life and with the human body we now have, to

practise diligently the Buddhist teachings on the Eight Noble Paths, observe the five precepts and perform the Ten Virtues. We should be tenacious and determined, cultivating the three Infallible disciplines of ethics, concentration and wisdom. Not just to eradicate the roots of all our false views and troubles, achieving self-liberation, but also to set forth a vast vow to benefit all beings. I hope everyone will attain enlightenment in due course.

Distinguishing Good from Bad and Unconditional Liberation

The permutations of good or bad karma are too infinite to speak about in detail but may be summarised by one word, “I”. This concept of “me, myself and I” gives rise to motivations such as craving “I like or want”, clinging “This is mine” and “my opinions/beliefs”, which in turn cause all kinds of grasping, seizing/possessiveness and all kinds of conflicts. Because of craving, one embarks on the pursuit to satisfy one’s sensual desires, resulting in all kinds of immoral activities harmful to self and others. The clinging that takes everything belonging to me to be good, and what is belonging to others as bad; or the idea that I am more important than others, these create all kinds of problems like unhappiness or difficulties. Due to one’s fixated opinions, even though one’s understanding is incomplete and one’s judgement is erroneous, one imposes one’s views on others as dogma, insisting that others are all wrong, thus resulting in black being called white and irrational situations that keep happening. This not only happens at the individual level, but extends to groups, society, countries, even international disputes. Don’t they all arise from this concept of “me, myself and I”? Hence, one fundamental teaching in Buddhism is the absence of a real, permanent self. Instead, we should cultivate a selfless spirit to nurture our spiritual practice and run the affairs of the world, then we would surely improve in moral conduct and virtue. Even if we do not strive for it, goodness automatically results if we undertake all our worldly affairs with a selfless spirit, while evil is eliminated spontaneously. This is the basic point all Buddhists must be clear on.

Whatever is called good or bad, in actuality, the essential nature of all phenomena is empty, there is no fixed manifestation. All phenomena shift and wane according to the activities of the mind. When the Buddha was in the ocean palace of the Dragon King Sāgara, he taught, “All phenomena arise from the mind, good or bad deeds, speech, intentions arise therein. But the mind is intangible, it cannot be seen or touched. Yet all delusions coalesce there. There is in fact no master/owner, no “I” or “mine” (note: “I” refers to oneself and all phenomena outside of this self is understood in reference to “I” as “mine”). Although they manifest differently due to their past karma, in actuality, they are empty in nature. Thus all phenomena are fleeting or illusory. Their nature is like a dream, only the wise have insight into this realisation. Therefore, it is imperative to do all the good one can, so that one will be reborn in a realm with dignity...”

This sutra was spoken by the Buddha to explain to the Dragon King Sāgara that the myriad manifestations of beings in various shapes and forms result from their past karma, including their propensity and actual deeds in behaviours, speech, thought, consciousness etc, there is no mastermind controlling this process. If one aspires to be born with beauty in a lovely realm, it is entirely up to one to make this happen. If one disregards morality and commits all kinds of malfeasance, whatever future consequences one meets with, these come about as a result of one's own doing. Beyond the retributive justice of the legal system, one will still have to face the consequences for one's misdeeds in future lives. That is why the Buddhist teachings emphasise the law of karmic cause and effect that permeates the three dimensions of time, namely past, present and future, to regulate people's mind or govern the country, unlike theistic religions. The principle of karma most closely matches scientific and natural laws. Buddhism teaches the karmic law of cause and effect to encourage people to voluntarily turn to doing good, to be in touch with their conscience, to be able to reflect and repent, and to resolve to become a better person. This is the solution that gets to the heart of the problem. It is not based on power imbalance, oppression, or using harsh punishment to repress bad deeds, because high-handed methods will only work in the short term but cannot cause inner transformation in a person to sincerely turn over a new leaf. There are many people who persist in doing evil deeds because they do not know the Buddha Dharma or believe in karma. They do not realise that physical death is not The End, but that they will be reborn endlessly to suffer the consequences of their misdeeds. If they can understand this principle, they will sit up and change their ways immediately, and start doing good instead.

But how do we eradicate bad karma? According to *The Discourse on the Ten Wholesome Ways* 十善业道经, the Buddha said, “The *Bodhisattva* has a method to eradicate all bad

karma. What is it? It is to mindfully keep in mind the Buddha Dharma, to cause it to keep growing, to forbid any contamination from negative thoughts. This will cause the bad thoughts to cease, the Buddha Dharma to grow, and one will get more opportunities to be close to the Buddha, *Bodhisattvas* and the Buddhist community. The Buddha Dharma is none other than the Ten Wholesome Ways, which are giving up forever: (1) killing, (2) stealing, (3) wrong conduct, (4) lying, (5) slandering, (6) harsh language, (7) frivolous speech, (8) lust, (9) hate and (10) wrong views. Performing these Ten Wholesome Ways will result in one approaching sageliness and ultimately, Buddhahood. It is also the source of happiness and peace for a country and its people. One must first start by practising these Ten Wholesome Ways, thereafter one will be able to sincerely evoke the great heart of compassion (*bodhicitta*) to benefit all beings.

The Buddha taught the Ten Manifestations of Bodhicitta, which are to show:

- (1) great compassion or the wish to benefit all beings, without causing them any harm,
- (2) great empathy with all beings, without causing them any worries or troubles,
- (3) confidence in the Buddha Dharma, even willing to sacrifice one's life to guard and cherish it,
- (4) enduring patience to practise the Buddha Dharma, but without attachment,
- (5) abandonment of greed and attachment to tangible and intangible possessions, cultivating respect and reverence, as well as purifying one's mind,
- (6) resolve to keep in mind and never to forget all that the Buddha taught and aspiring to achieve the same insight fervently,
- (7) equanimity to treat all beings equally without any sense of superiority,
- (8) detachment from worldly pursuits, while steeling one's resolve to attain enlightenment,
- (9) diligence to sow the seeds for all goodness, and
- (10) desertion of all phenomena to follow the path of the Buddhas.

If one is able to display these ten manifestations, one will realise the wonderful truth of the Buddha's unconditional compassion to release beings from their suffering, treating all beings equally. At the same time, one will gain insight into the *Diamond Sutra's* subtle teaching on "detaching from phenomena", and will resonate with the wisdom taught in the Buddha Dharma and be well-rounded in all aspects, reaching the highest exalted state.

Practising Buddhists Should Evoke Bodhicitta

The first phase of learning Buddhism should focus on purifying one's mind and ensuring one's actions are right. The mind is the master of the body. A mind that is righteous and brave will result in actions that are likewise pure. A good mind will result in actions that are good. If the mind is impure, then the actions are likewise impure. For example, a person whose mind is obsessed with materialistic thoughts will display frivolous and materialistic behaviours, even deviating into extreme negative behaviours. This is a foregone conclusion under the influence of such a mind. That is why the Buddha Dharma has many expedient doors or skilful means, all aimed at curbing the deluded mind, deluded thinking and deluded thoughts. Delusions cause the learners' mind to scatter like a mad monkey or wilful horse that keeps charging outwards. Hence, the first thing to learn in Buddhism is mindfulness. From mindfulness, the mind becomes calm and pure. Mindfulness is very important in Buddhist practice, because many horrendous or heinous deeds are committed in the spur of moment when mindfulness is lost.

Secondly, have the right understanding, which is to practise according to the Buddha Dharma taught by the Buddha. Practising the Buddha Dharma diligently as one's life goal is having the right views, i.e. the right goal and understanding. Doing so stops one from searching endlessly or seeking externally, wavering from one thing to another, or forever looking for a "higher" goal, or getting caught up by the latest fads, thus acting in ways that mislead others. This is the foundational practice for learning Buddhism, which is different from other worldly systems as it sets its sight on personal transcendence, a precious rarity. Failing to do this, one muddles through life in a state of drowsiness, wasting the time one has been given, like a person entering a mountain of treasures, only to leave empty-handed. Such people are the most pitiful ones!

Next, Buddhists should not only care about their own personal transformation, imitating those Theravada practitioners who care only about themselves, without any concern for others. Instead, after making sure one's foundation is stable, one should evoke the great heart of compassion while keeping one's feet on the ground. The great heart of compassion is *bodhicitta*. To explain it simply, *bodhicitta* is the aspiration not only to perfect one's wisdom, but to actually apply this wisdom for the benefit of all beings in practical ways by doing charity work, whether in spiritual or material giving. Evoking such a great aspiration is like fearlessly steering an ocean liner of compassion in the clashing waves of the samsaric seas, searching for survivors in the dark night by repeatedly flashing illuminating signals. In the Diamond Sutra, the Buddha told Subhuti, "All beings, regardless of how they are born, whether they are foetus-born, egg-born, moisture-born, or born from self-transformation, the Buddha strives to liberate all of them from the suffering through the endless cycle of rebirths, gradually uplifting them to the highest wisdom, with the purest consciousness. Moreover, the Buddha does this without any distinction of "I am one who can liberate others, while they are the ones I liberate", or such notions of heroism. Thus, it is said, "Liberating the masses of beings, in fact, there are no beings to liberate." This shows how equalitarian the Buddha looks upon beings, as well as how vast and expansive his heart is! Only with such a big heart will one be capable of attaining great accomplishment. This is the ultimate expression of arousing the great heart of compassion. For this reason, the wise in the past said, "To become a monastic takes great courage."

The Four Kinds of Births are:

(1) egg-born, (2) womb-born (foetus), (3) moisture-born, and (4) transformation-born.

The egg-born, like hens or fishes, come from thought; the womb-born are due to emotion or desires; the moisture-born arise from union, when warm and cool moisture meet and combine to form beings, like some species of worms; and transformations occur through separation. Transformation-born beings arise spontaneously, or from karmic causes (such as heavenly or hell beings with fleeting existence, or beings at the formation of the universe. According to Buddhist scriptures, in the beginning, there was no male or female. All beings were born spontaneously. After that, due to the arising of sexual desires, they evolved into male and female.) As for beings born alive from the womb, they are born from desires or feelings. All animals are alike in this regard. Here, desires or feelings include sexual desires, romantic love, fondness, gratitude, a wide range is included. Humans are in this category, at the apex of all animals. Within the womb-born, it is further classified into five stages each in the inner womb and outer womb. The five stages in the inner womb refer to the sequence of gestation, while the five stages in the outer womb record the journey of life.

The five stages in the inner womb are:

- (1) fertilisation (*kalaka*), (2) cleavage (*abbuda*), (3) gastrulation (*pesi*), (4) organogenesis (*ghana*), and (5) foetus formation.

The five stages in the outer womb are:

- (1) infancy, (2) childhood, (3) teens, (4) adulthood, and (5) old age, culminating in death.

(For more details, please refer to the *Abhidharmakosa-sutra* Chapter 15).

This clearly shows that human life is an endless, continuous, unstoppable process of change. We are fortunate to hear the Buddha Dharma and learn how we can transform from human to become an arhat, or *Bodhisattva* to help liberate all beings. Do not allow your precious human body to regress into the lower life forms born out of the womb, egg or moisture, or worse, descend into the three lower realms, which is doing a great disservice to your innate natural goodness. Rather, we should aspire towards higher goals and not retreat, seize the opportunity of this lifetime, and evoke the great compassionate heart to learn Buddhism. This will imbue us with great motivation, which will in turn strengthen our resolve and efforts, thus ensuring that we continue undeterred to make progress. This is a grave matter requiring our urgent attention to treasure this lifetime and push ourselves to strive forth conscientiously.

一 序

时光飞逝，宏船长老入灭，不觉已是三十年有余。由于长老在世，为佛教留下钜大的福业成果，那即是中兴光明山普觉禅寺，成金碧辉煌的大道场，照耀着新加坡共和国，新加坡佛教与四众佛徒。

长老花去数十多年的心血，将荒山小寺，变成名山胜刹大作为，表示无限地尊崇与赞仰。

如隆根大和尚所说：“因之长老色身虽灭，法身常住，慧命长存，受到海内外僧俗人士的崇仰与怀念！”

长老在生，虽是重在修福的作为，但对慧业的努力，也是极为重视的。因之长老对弘法的活动，教育的推动，也都热心的护持与鼓励。

这本书是长老在1980年代所传授的佛法合集，向这位鼓舞人心的佛教大师和光明山普觉禅寺的前住持致敬。这本书也纪念光明山普觉禅寺成立100周年。

愿没有机会认识已故宏船长老的读者，尤其是年轻一代，从他的模范生活中得到启发，作为他们修行的序言。

愿本寺在现任方丈广声大和尚的带领下，在未来一百年继续广泛利益众生，更上一层楼。

持戒之要义

佛法博大精深，其弘传之责任，不仅出家人，而尤赖在家居士共肩此艰巨之任务。俾人人皆知正觉之大道。吾人研习佛法，约有远缘，近缘两大类别之根器，其夙根敏颖者，一闻千悟，可以顿超如来地，此曰近缘。其由积渐勤学，循序而进，终至解行相应，契合佛心而成道者，虽不一定今生证得，而待来生者，即曰远缘。但不论如何，诸位如能时时得有闻法之机会，或得阅之而受文字般若之熏陶，心生欢喜，已是因缘，即是种下菩提之因，久远将来，当亦有成佛之机会。故曰佛教方便多门也。

互助和谐乐趣

本人上次所讲六度中第一项：“布施”，具有财施，法施，无畏施三种要义。列位多已明白。此三种布施，果能切实推动，普遍实践，则能使一切众生，在生活上有助和谐之乐趣，而免除一切痛苦怖畏。离诸五逆十恶之邪念，趋向纯善之精神领域，则一切时，一切处，皆能获得自在。

今日要继续讲下去的，是第二项的“持戒”。戒，简单说，乃戒法，戒条。止恶除非，使凡违背良心的事，皆予以制止根绝，不令发生。儒家所说之五伦，耶教所说之十诫，都有其共同之观点。不过佛教之戒律，更其精微，更其广泛。例如儒家所谈之孝顺父母，不仅供养父母之饮食生活所需，且须束身自爱，即是包括不敢为非作歹，以增加父母之忧苦。古人所谓：“身体发肤，受之父母，不敢毁伤。”，这是说明谨慎自爱，不敢败坏家风，以损父母名誉，不敢自暴自弃，以失父母之寄望。佛教教人报答父母恩，不单上面所述而已，更进一步，要求其能解脱父母生死轮回之痛苦，求其能使生生世世之父母，皆得上生天界。释迦世尊在世时，其父病重，则特地回来亲侍汤药，及其父驾崩之时，即回来奔亲自扶柩奉安，且登忉利天为母说法，这都是实行孝道的示范。

坚守戒律的意义

“持戒”二字，即是恒长不断，坚守戒律的意思。戒律可说是佛教的行政。当佛在世时因事制戒，随机散说，以作四众遵循的准绳。及佛灭度后，众推优波离尊者，诵出佛平时所说的种种戒律，始结集《律藏》。《律藏》可说是佛法延续的命脉，是安僧办道的指南针。因为持戒，涵有止作二持。止，是止恶。作，是修善。止作二持，同样重要，不可偏废。止恶所以截止一切罪恶的根源，断除一切烦恼恶劣习气，使之获得清静。修善则所以长养无量功德，为成佛之正因，佛法的振兴或衰微，完全视乎四众之是否能实践其应行的轨则如何以为断。佛教的真精神，可说是寄托在“持戒”二字上面。

戒律，浅显言之：犹如社会之公共秩序，集体生活之必须纪律。家有家法，国有国法，小如各社团组织，亦各有其社员遵守的社规，是同样的道理。佛教提倡持戒，即间接鼓励人民恪守法自治的精神。国家的制定法律，其功用在制裁犯罪者，不能逃越法网。使人民皆知畏法而不敢触犯。佛教的戒律，虽没有法律的权威，但注重平时的一切举动，不欺暗室，以善恶业报自造的因果法律，使其发于自心的警惕，激乎自心的改过与迁善。同时又指导其修身进德的途径，

是不但为消极的奉公守法，还更注重积极向上的精神，这是与一般世法不同之特点。

包括三千威仪

佛教僧团，比丘与比丘尼皆有极严格的戒律。所谓比丘二百五十戒，比丘尼五百戒。名曰具足戒。这是约要而说，如广说而分析之，则包括三千威仪，八万细行，为圣者的芳规，我们一般人尚谈不到。至于普通的五戒、八戒、及沙弥的十戒，均属根本戒律，在家居士的五戒，大家多能明白。因为杀生、偷盗、邪淫、妄语以及酗酒乱性，乃是酿成罪祸的根源，所以必须戒除，为做人的基本原则。亦修习善行的主要关键。至于僧伽严格的戒律，为初机之在家居士不宜研习。这并不是佛教有什么秘密，是因为其中有关人生生死，以及生理上种种微妙问题，一般程度不够者，有的心生疑惑，妄加毁谤，则自己必招谤法而坠恶趣的可怕果报，为避免这种过患，所以古来便加以禁限，以免无知者造业而受报。现在本林有如此庄严清净之道场，乃是过去历届先德先贤，现在林长及诸执事，不知费了许多苦心，财力，所成就者，希望列位林友，共体斯旨，大家遵守公供规则，个个以身作则，来发扬光大本林护法的精神；这就是持戒的一种良好表现。

释迦世尊将入灭的时候告阿难尊者言：“汝等勿谓失却师主，我灭度以后，所说法与律，即是汝等之师。”又道：“汝等比丘，于我灭后，当珍重尊敬‘波罗提木叉’（即戒法），如我住世无异。”可见“以戒为师”，是佛教徒的金科玉律。

深得佛陀悲悯

佛弟子周利槃陀迦尊者，其资质最愚钝，连扫帚二字亦无法联接记忆，后来因为他专心一志，深得佛陀悲悯，加以谆谆善诱，最后以扫帚为喻，比喻扫帚为方法，而其胸中愚暗，即等于一切尘土积垢，要他把扫帚扫除一切尘土，即好像把胸中积垢扫除净尽。周利槃陀迦，竟然豁然开悟，证阿罗汉果，且得波斯匿王的皈敬。希望大家亦要勤修戒定慧，同证无上道。

忍辱度瞋恚

人类由无始以来，即因无明集积而有瞋恨、恼怒的恶劣根性。佛经比喻这种根性。在人类三种毒性中最厉害的一种。瞋恨恚怒心，好像热火中焚，使人失却理性，产生暴力，不能自制，便很容易破坏一切。于是无端端的惹出许多是非，闯出许多大祸！人与人之间，亦难以和谐共处，甚至家庭六亲眷属，朋友故旧，亦常因细故而变成怨偶、亲仇。不但阻碍人类社会文明的进步，更是人间的最大不幸事。所以佛说六度：“布施度悭贪，持戒度恶业，忍辱度瞋恚，精进度懈怠，禅定度散乱，智慧度愚痴。”以第三种忍辱的方法，就是要来调伏这种盲目的冲动性，而消灭这种闯祸的祸根。

教徒须明教理

我们佛教徒必须明白教理，时时互相切磋。好象与六祖同时的神秀大师所说：“时时勤拂拭，勿使惹尘埃。”来对自己身心的反省和检讨。

本来对于宣扬教理，乃是出家人的天赋，但我因为寺务及人事种种牵缠，而未克如愿，可说这是我宏船本人业障的深重，所以自己感觉非常惭愧。

先说“忍”字的象形，如象一把利刃插在人的心上。可见忍，是件非常不容易的事。何况还要人家的凌辱、欺侮，不去计较，还要忍耐得住呢？就世谛与真谛分别来谈谈。世谛即是世间法，真谛乃是出世间法。佛法是包涵真俗二谛的。世谛讲得通，才能契合真谛。断没有悖情逆理，而有佛法可说的。

就从世谛而论，我们华裔固有优良的传统观念，是崇尚和平，能容忍。就算是比武练拳，也是崇尚武德，只讲究自卫，不随便打人。就算是竞交割席，也有“君子不念旧恶，绝交不出恶声”的雅度。这都是良好忍德的表现。至于忍辱，孔子说：“一朝之忿，忘其身以及其亲，非惑？”孟子说：“好勇斗狠，以危父母，不孝也。”可见历代以来，华夏的文化传统，都是不断在提倡恰当的“忍辱”。

忍让忍气精神

所以就家庭、社会、朋友、同事，都必须要有的一种忍让、忍气的精神，才能够生活在一起而一团和气，相亲相爱，相扶相助。

比如居士林筹建这座新厦的过程中，虽然仗林长之领导有方，也须要各执事的和衷共济，任劳任怨，凡事相忍为林，才能到达今天的成就。推而至于国家大事，更需要这种忍辱负重的精神。

昔时，中国战国时代，赵国有一位杰出的外交家，叫做蔺相如。同时也有一位著名良将，叫做廉颇。廉颇勇猛过人，屡建战功。那时候，秦国是一超级强国。秦昭王听到赵国得着楚国和氏之璧，就使人谱赵王书，谓愿以十五城易璧。当时蔺相如奉璧往见，即献璧，而秦王无意偿城，要自食其言。于是相如就想办法再把璧诈取回来。派其从者“衣褐怀璧，从径道亡”，所以说是“完璧归赵”。后来蔺相如为宰相，而廉颇自以为功高，对其心生嫉妒，且不服气。

相如知而避之。不久，廉颇自知错误，肉袒负荆至相如门前谢罪。两人自是互相交谦。秦国不敢加兵侵犯。这个故事，至今传为美谈。这是忍辱负重的最好模范。

忍辱波罗密

我们现在再来探讨真谛的佛说：“忍辱波罗密”。波罗密，译曰达到。就是以忍辱的方法，来消灭烦恼的瞋火，到达清凉安静的境界。真谛的了悟，是在悟人的精神。换言之，就是要返照我们的本觉性，亦即是灵明之性，是佛性。为什么我们会时常发生瞋恨心？恼怒心？因为佛性被无明的乌云遮蔽。无明蠢动，无明火便腾腾冒起。众生之所以会坠落恶趣，是因为受无明火的烧熔而坠落。菩萨之所以受人瞻仰崇拜，是因为佛性的庄严不动。其差别点，只在这里。忍辱与懦弱绝不相同，是有智慧的光，有坚强的意志，有悲悯的精神。

“忍”，是安忍。能够明白事理，了达一切，安住于道理而不动心之谓。在佛法有许多关于“忍”之名数与释义。现在简要言之：一曰：音声忍。对一切音声不起执着。二曰：柔顺忍。能逆来顺受。三曰：无生忍。即安住于无生无灭之理而不动之谓。四曰：如幻忍。了达一切诸法，皆依因缘而生，犹如幻化之性，本来空寂而信忍也。五曰：如焰忍。了达一切境界、悉如阳焰之本性空寂而信忍也。六曰：如梦忍。了达一切妄心、犹如梦境之无真实而信忍也。七曰：如响忍。了达一切世间之言语音声，皆依因缘和合而生，犹如空谷之无真实而信忍也。八曰：如影忍。了色身乃依五阴（即色、受、想、行、识）之集积而成，无有本体，犹如影而信忍也。九曰：如化忍。了达世间诸法，无而忽有，有而还无，体无真实，如化事而信忍也。十曰：如空忍。了达世间及出世种种诸法，悉如虚空之无色相而信忍也。（参阅华严经指掌三藏法数三十八）。

菩萨由于上述之禅定观察，信心不动。故能对一切顺逆之境，处之泰然。寒山子诗有句云：“有人来骂我，分明了知。虽然不应对，却是得便宜。”洒脱自在，这当然不是我们凡夫马上可以学到的。不过佛法的忍辱波罗密，是以明白一切因果法则为主要。克制自己，牺牲自己，以感化他人，具有积极的意义。勿误会贪生怕死。同时劝人从远处看，不要冤冤相报，互相杀夺，永无了期。而指出灭除烦恼焰，到达广大智慧的大道。希望以广大心量，涵摄一切，来挽救世界未来的浩劫。

结种种善缘

所以佛门时常叫人结好缘，结种种善缘，广结人缘，而劝人不要结一切恶业，结杀众生的杀业，以致结下“怨憎会苦”的恶缘，就是这个道理。

佛陀称为大慈，大悲，大喜，大舍，都是过去无量世，修成万德庄严，所以极其光明，极其伟大，极其平等，堪为普天下人所共同崇拜学习的宗教。



精进度懈怠之蕴义

学佛必须有精进的精神，乃能建立正信，正见之磐固基础。过去先哲如玄奘大师西行求法，若非有此种精进坚毅卓绝之精神，如何能远渡流沙，安履绝域，而成为古往今来中印文化交流之第一功绩彪炳之高贤。

“精进”二字之蕴义：谓精者不杂，进者不退。坚定志趣，如渊渟岳峙，明朗自在，始终不渝。且约精进之义理，约可分为三要点述之。第一：庄严精进。第二：摄善法精进。第三：利益众生精进。

庄严精进者，属于自身内心之修养，行为之薰修。庄者乃端庄正直，临事以敬。严者乃严净毗尼，言行不苟。内而身心，外而器界。身心能庄严精进，则品格自然超乎凡庸，外境能达庄严精进，则进止无不清净，境缘无不顺适。所谓六根清净，亦当由庄严精进为实际训练之功夫。儒家所云：“非礼勿视、非礼勿言、非礼勿动。”之意思殆近似之，但六根清净，并不止此。更不是由于心怀戒惧的拘谨作风。乃是由于平时之用功修持，消除其无始以来之罪垢，而产生一种清净功德，于是眼、耳、鼻、舌、身、意等六根各发无碍之妙用，所以触景应物，遇事临人，不期而然的有一种纯粹契乎自然之高尚精神表现者。与世俗口头禅截然不同。吾人对佛菩萨之庄严妙相，肃然起敬，乃是佛菩萨经过历劫修积无量功德自然之表现，此亦即是得力于庄严精进之善果。

其次摄善法精进：则属于修习一切学问而言。包括世学及出世学两大类，举凡有益于身心及增长技能、品德、智慧，以及有益于家庭、社会民生、国家治理等等学术思想，为佛弟子，皆宜博学多闻，尽量摄取吸收丰富的智识，然后去芜存菁，择其与自己天赋能力相接近者，乃专精致志，勇往力学，以竟于成。浅显论之，就是自己要有宗旨，有恒心。譬如任职做工，或习学工艺，必须勤奋守时，认真不懈。又如做个收账员，亦必须小心在意，依照约定时间，始免失时失职。何况研究学问，从事德业，更不可一曝十寒。应该学习普贤菩萨所谓：“身语意业，永不疲厌。”之精进精神，乃能有伟大的成就。

第三：利益众生精进。有了以上两种修养，达成品学兼优，识见明远；则应该更进一步来做种种利益社会人群的事业。孟子所谓不唯独善其身，切须兼善天下。切勿跟个人主义者，只注重个人的享受与发展的自私观念。佛教的根本教义，是自觉觉他，自利利人。所以要有这种利益众生的精进精神，始合人之所以为人之意义与价值。总而言之，在六度胜行之中，均要以这种精进的进度，不断提高警惕的精神与毅力，来与之互相配合，才能充分发挥其功能与效用，百折不挠，不为困难之逆境所挫败。人类有一种普遍的惰性，乃好逸而恶劳，这就是所懈怠的劣根性。要把这种懈怠的劣根性除掉，必须以精进来克服它，来对治它，来化除它。所以说以“精进度懈怠”。

昔时印度有一位波斯匿王的宰相，名须提迦长者，富甲一国。其相邸琉璃为地，明彻交映，七宝所成。园囿林池，奇花异卉，仙禽孔雀，锦衣玉璞，世所罕见，王所难及。因此引起波斯匿王之疑惑，以为他怀有贰心。一日派大军围其府邸，密密麻麻，如临大敌。乃欲捕之以治罪。尔时，须提迦长者忽然腾空而至，以金刚杵向下挥动，众兵仆伏不能起。徐向王何故如此震怒？王具以实

告。渠乃向王解释：“此乃天上之物，非人间所有所取者。臣于无量劫前，为一商人，行诸众善，供养一辟支佛。精进布施，安忍力行，以此福缘，而获今日之福报。天上品物，以善为因，获福而致。自然所化，非因贪爱，所可强求。亦非聚敛，使民穷困，而自豪富，所可比拟。”王乃憬然而悟。

据谓：此段故事乃是比喻精进行善，可以摧伏一切的阻力，调伏一切怖畏，消除一切疑惑，获得一切善果。经中有云：“披精进甲，乘般若船，到涅槃岸。”即是以精进战胜环境，在风波起伏，波涛汹涌之险恶世路苦海之中，须与智慧相辅而行，则可安然渡过险境而到达光明之彼岸。



修习禅定的步骤

禅定，梵语叫做“禅那波罗密”，意思是说要达到身心寂静入于圣道的必经途径。修习禅定的初步工夫，是在收伏奔驰的心猿意马，使散乱的心境能集中在道业上去行持，去用功。与《大学》所谓：“静而后能安，安而后能虑，虑而后能得。”有相似的地方。又《诗经》上说：“惟圣图念作狂，惟狂克念作圣。”（按：是指颠倒是非，以黑为白之意）禅定的目的，第一步工夫，就好象古人所说这“克念作圣”的原理。所以唐代宗密禅师曾说过：“三乘学人，欲求圣道必须修禅，离此无门，离此无路。”可见修习禅定是学佛的迷津宝具。

禅称心宗，讲到极则，是不立文字，不落言诠，直指人心，见性成佛的微妙法门。重在行持实证，不是语言文字所可拟议的。不过我佛慈悲方便，仍有许多方便接化的方法。我现在只就佛陀所说渐进的修习禅定的三种步骤，约略谈谈。

禅定约分三种：一曰，世间禅。二曰，出世间禅。三曰，出世间上上禅。世间禅又分为第一根本味禅，包括四禅，四无量，四空等三品。第二根本净禅，亦有六妙门，十六特胜，及通明禅等三品。说起来恐甚繁长。我现在且就常见习闻的静坐法来谈谈。静坐方法甚多，是修行的根本。初步且慢谈到明心见性，如静坐得法，亦能调和四大，使全身气血流通，却病宁神，健身养性。普通一般人也有学习“因是子静坐法”的，但亦必须得其法，明其理，庶免走入歧途。一入歧途，不但无益，而且有害。这点千万要特别注意。

静坐的要点：

- (1) 宜出于自然，坐时背不可靠壁，使气血免受阻滞。
- (2) 姿势不可太俯低，不可矫枉过正，勉强自在，因如此，会使呼吸不匀，积郁受伤。
- (3) 头部不可过仰，或倾左倾右，宜平正自然。始免日久发生毛病。

坐禅用功，非一朝一夕可以躁进者，中国过去大丛林即有禅堂之设立，亦有禅师专司纠正坐法。姿势要巍然不动而外，更须观照用功。并不是空空坐着，呆呆坐着便能明心见性。因为枯坐默照，就好比一张桌子，一座山头岂不是呆呆坐着，这有何益？所以第一步先注意姿势，第二步就要讲究用功。而用功的初步是要摄心内照，遣除一切妄想杂念。同时更不可存个意念，想在禅定之中要见佛，见菩萨，或求神通，这些都是妄想。由于这种妄想执着，是很容易入魔。魔，是我们自身的妄想引诱而来的，是我们无量劫以来的冤业业障，如果一生妄想执着，这些魔障便会乘虚而入，是自己的无明惑业所显现，并不是真正有什么魔道在作怪。只要我们没有妄想邪见，而提起精神，正念，不可误认缘影为真，便不会有这种毛病。许多学“因是子静坐法”的，也是想要得神通，而常常搞出不正常的弊病，皆是出于这种原因。所以必须明白此理，于静坐时切切不可着一切相。无论见什么境界，甚至见佛，见菩萨，都是幻相幻影，不可心生喜动。而在平时若能勤读经、律、论三藏圣典，通达佛法大旨，以增长智慧，体解真空妙谛，自然在静坐时即能扫除一切魔障而得身心自在无碍。明代藕益大师云：“禅者佛心，教者佛语，律者佛行。世安有心而无语无行，有语而无行无心乎？”“禅教律三，同条共

贯”，不宜偏重一端。又在论藏里有一部百法名门论，是阐释有百种心的名相及其活动状态，坐禅主要，须心平气和，一念不生，能知所知，能见所见，合而为一，心性一体。盖性为心之体，心为性之用。佛说：“一切众生，皆有佛性。”，此性即众生共同之本体；又曰：“一切唯心所造。”，可见心之妙用无边。吾人之身，以心为主，心动则气动，而思想行为随之。例如在静坐中忽然心想发财，于是心遂向外驰逐，于是动起应如何去作为的种种思虑，气遂蠢蠢然动，这样便不能安心静坐了。古人云：“君子谋道不谋食。”；我们发心学佛修禅，所以应先淡泊名利之心，而发出勇猛精进心，以修成戒定慧三学，得无漏智慧，了脱生死大事为第一要义。把一切名缰利锁的观念，先要看得破，放得下，然后才能由初步的修习世间禅，进入出世间禅，以至于出世间上上禅。总而言之，世间禅以观“息”为门，出世间禅以观“色”为门，出世间上上禅以观“心”为门。三种禅定，体本相同，但用心有异及各人根底程度亦各不同，所以有胜劣浅深之差别而已。学者须各量其力及志趣以行，不可躐等急功，反不实际。

学佛者，亦多已明白学佛主要在息灭贪嗔痴三毒。对治三毒，只有勤修戒定慧。这戒定慧三学，有如鼎足并峙，是相辅而相成的。因为由戒生定，由定发慧。我们如果只修戒定而抛却智慧，便是失去指归，不能得到般若智而趣佛地。如果只修智慧而抛却戒定，那便失去根本，只是狂慧或偏邪空慧，亦不能证果。所以必须三学并重，与刚才我说的禅教律三同条共贯的道理一样。坐禅亦需要以戒来约束身心，止恶行善，气不躁动，心常平和，便容易澄思静虑，以入定境。由于定境如如不动，定力充沛，定心湛然，如狮子奋迅，进退自如，便易得入神定三昧。进而无漏智慧油然而生，由自心的妙用，能生万法，依心而修，不向外求。于是观一切世间的种种事物，皆是唯心所现，物我一如，生同体大悲之心，由此而得自行化他一切功德。如是由世间禅而渐次入于出世间禅，至于泯诸我人众生寿者四相，即是“理与智冥，解与行应”的稳顺修习禅定的一种津逮。

昔日释迦世尊成道后，说法四十九年，及将圆满，于涅槃会上，拈花微笑，众皆默然。惟大迦叶尊者破颜微笑。佛即赞大迦叶尊者曰：“吾有正法眼藏，涅槃妙心，付嘱于汝，汝其善护之。”是为禅定以心传心，以心印心，所谓教外别传的法门之原始。其后由大迦叶尊者传阿难尊者，一直传至达摩祖师，共二十八传，是为印度神宗的二十八祖。逮至中国梁代普通七年，达摩祖师东来传法，是为东土禅宗的初祖。当时梁武帝闻师来，亲至广州远迎，至金陵与祖师问答，话不投机，师遂一苇渡江至魏，乃后魏孝明帝正元年，止于嵩山少林寺，

面壁九年。后得慧可，付法传衣。付法偈曰：“吾本来兹土，传法救迷情，一华开五叶，结果自然成。”其后果然传至六祖惠能大师，大阐宗风，天下名山胜迹，多为禅门道场。影响中国文化思想殊为深广。因为禅门各宗接化学人，开导方式，都有其特殊之风趣，及其独擅胜场的手法，原是极灵活，极通脱，极其善巧方便，逗机启发的圆顿法门。但其方式虽多，作风尽管不同，而其引人省悟，直指心源的用意则一。所谓“我有神珠一颗，久被尘劳关锁，今朝尘尽光生，照破山河万朵”。今日谈这六度禅定一题，希望读者及早回头，能藉修禅之功，解粘释缚，使光明清净的自性，时时显露，即是尘尽光生，智慧之光，照破山河万朵了。



以智慧度愚痴

智慧二字的涵义：简言之，分别事理，决断疑念之智。了达空理曰慧。智与慧合称，即是能通达世出世间诸法。有了智慧，即能断除烦恼，成菩提。所以《维摩经行品》云：“以智慧剑，破烦恼贼。”因为愚痴的主因，即是由于无明业障所产生的种种烦恼，要断除这些烦恼葛藤的羁绊，只有能运用智慧的利剑，把它断除，才有办法。愚痴即是不明事理，迷昧心窍，好象在黑暗中摸索，东倒西歪一般，只有借智慧的灯光，才能照见一切。

本来，智慧是人人都有，一切众生同样本具的。就是为那些无始以来的“无明”所遮蔽，埋没，以致积重难返，未能显露。昔日释迦世尊在菩提树下悟道的时候，赞叹说：“奇哉奇哉，一切众生皆有如来智慧德相，只因妄想执着，故未能证得。若悟：无师智，自然智，一切智，自然现前。”可见智慧这无价之宝，是人人本具的。可惜为无明执着，而竟迷头认影，长在糊涂里讨生活！

愚痴是贪、瞋、痴等三毒之一。却是产生三毒的根源。在个人因为不明事理，颠倒是非，妄想执着，自己得不到生活的意义。在社会又会产生出种种令人厌恶的紊乱事情，为害甚烈。我们再把这种愚痴的根源，加以剖析，知其形貌，然后再来谈智慧的功用与力量。

愚痴即无明，即是所以产生妄想执着，产生种种烦恼业障的根本，由于无明的愚昧，迷于理，那便起贪，起瞋，起慢，起疑；迷于事，就起五种的执见：

- (一) 身见 — 即内为五蕴假相的我见，外为一切事物的我所见。
- (二) 边见 — 偏于一端，或执断，或执常，或执有，或执空等等之见。
- (三) 邪见 — 一切违情逆理及各种邪说。
- (四) 见取见 — 以劣为胜。属于强词夺理，自是而非他之见。
- (五) 戒禁取见 — 不合因果法则，所作的一切禁忌，苦行，或迷信行为。

至于这些根本烦恼及枝末烦恼的性状，依有部经义之解释：说是“随着有情而不离，幽微而难了知，犹如睡眠之体状”，故又名曰随眠。又依《唯识论》之说明：此种烦恼为“惑”之种子，随逐于人，眠伏于第八识“阿赖耶识”中，使人增长过失而耽眠不醒。所以又称曰随眠烦恼。因此人类之痼疾，佛乃说六度法门，来培养智慧的根苗，启发智慧的途径，充实智慧的力量，才有办法根本铲除愚痴的盘根错节，灼破悠久而黝黑的暗昧。

现在再回头来略释智慧。智慧二字范围极广。《唯识论》说，佛有大圆镜智，平等性智，妙观察智，成所作智。

《大智度论》说，智慧有三种，即一切智，道种智，一切种智。一切智是了彻诸法真空妙理的智慧。道种智是观察宇宙万有及人生社会种种差别现象，一方面探本穷源，一方面随机度众的方法。一切种智，是了彻诸法的本体及现象的综合性智慧，熔合科学与哲学于一炉，亦可说是超胜的智慧。这些道理较深，我们再以浅近的来说：智慧亦可大别为世间智，出世间智，出世间上智。

(一) 世间智，统摄古今实见一切学术思想，政治，经济，文化，工艺。简言之，为世间辩聪。今日人类科学进步。已到登月本领，海陆空交通迅速，如风驰电掣，日新月异，对于种种知识之交流，已大非昔日可比。此为世间智显而易见者。

(二) 出世间智：乃能了悟人生社会原为众缘和合所成就，论理应该相助相成，而不是互相斗争，互相消灭之举，所以不要渗入角逐奔竞的漩涡，而克己修行，舍弃贪欲，束身自爱，所谓“竭烦恼河，到涅槃岸”。在佛法，就好似声闻，缘觉二乘圣者的修为。

(三) 出世间上上智：即能断我法二执，事理圆融，悲智双运。如观音，势至，普贤，地藏诸大菩萨，在娑婆世界以至十方世界国土，倒驾慈航，来救度救济无量众生的慈悲行愿，具有大力，大智，大无畏的精神。非如小乘行者，只顾自得清静，独善其身，而怕来世间多惹麻烦。而是要以度脱众生，离苦得乐为己任，这才是最高最上的“出世间上上智”。

在这三种智慧之中，世间智虽是为现实社会人生所需要，但这类智慧，却有邪慧与善慧的差别。如果从邪慧方面来发展，那么，虽然科学万能，物质文明极度发达，但把这些学问，去研究杀人的利器、洲际飞弹，以及化学毒气等等消灭人类，乃绝灭人类维持生命的生物之生机为能事，那岂不是变成人类的大敌？同时，若果以这种邪慧应用到社会国家上来，那诸位试想古来许多乱臣贼子，大奸大恶的人物，岂不是权势显赫，欺诡巧诈，才智过人，但结果却做出祸国殃民，身败名裂的下场，所以邪慧只能制造一切罪恶。善慧乃能实在自利利人，于世有益有用。现代所谓功利主义，多倾向于邪慧的发展，而忽视精神文明与道德观念。要克服社会倾向于邪慧的发展，提倡纯正的精神文明与健全而圆满的智慧，必须了解佛理，依照佛法奉行，始能弃邪归正，转祸为福。佛陀所说六度法门，为万行之总持。

以布施来对治悭贪克除私欲，扩大仁爱的心量。以持戒来防止一切恶劣根性及行为，实修种种善法。以忍辱来对治瞋恚，嫉妒，仇恨的心理，而滋润容忍和睦的态度。以精进来对治懈怠，来鼓励人群贯澈不渝，向上进取的精神。以禅定来对治散乱，使人们意志坚定，观察明了，不为恶劣环境而动摇。以上修为，即自然而然能使吾人本来的无师智，自然智，显发出来。由于具足上面说过的一切圆融智慧，即能理事无碍，作诸利益人群的大事业。

同时对于自己与生俱来的无明而愚痴的祸根，亦得从根拔起，而得其真正的自由自在。

佛云：“一切众生皆有如来智慧德相。”智慧是由破除一切见惑思惑而显现，德相是由力行众善，利济有情而得的福报。古人云：“藏于中，形于外。富润屋，德润身。”是一种自然而然的表现，并不是可以侥幸达致的。



五眼的蕴义

说法重在观机施教，先在扶植正知正见，然后屡陈妙义，阐幽析微，渐渐令人深入般若智海。所以讲的人要讲得显明透彻，听的人也要全神贯注，才会相应的契合而生法喜。当时释迦世尊成道得正等正觉之后，于三七日中，说华严一真法界无尽缘起之理趣，达此理趣而修万行庄严佛果等等湛深圆融之妙谛，可是当时听者，都不是大根大器的人，所谓：“有耳不闻圆顿教，有眼不见千丈身。”皆不知领会。因此释尊乃回大向小，而现比丘相。先说阿含小乘经教。其次再说方等而至般若大乘经教。最后在灵鹫山说法华等经。但独对般若深义演说开示的时间最长，共达二十二年。因为般若是通达世间及出世间诸法，是清净无漏的大智慧。与一般世智辩聪不同。唐慈恩三藏更把般若涵义，除“文字”、“观照”、“实相”三义而外；又增加了“境界”及“眷属”两项义理。如果用现代比较浅显的话语来说，是包括一切文学，语言，意识形态，以及人生社会的一切事物，以至宇宙真理的本体实相，都能洞彻无遗。不但通达了诸法性空的理体，同时更会了彻妙有的大用。达到福慧双修，事理圆融的境界。所以佛法无边，浩如烟海，是世所公认的。

在《金刚经》第十八分：“一体同视”，关于五眼的蕴意。这是承上第十七分“究竟无我”；佛告：“须菩提，若菩萨通达无我法者，如来说名真是菩萨。”因为菩萨能通达性空，本来无我，我指我相，有我相，则生一切我执的烦恼。有法相，则生一切执着与执见，有了我、人、众生、寿者四相，为不明一切事物缘起性空的真理，就生出种种颠倒取著之心，是人类产生一切扰攘痛苦的根源。名为“烦恼障”。法相，乃固执某种理论是千古不易的，或认为一切事物有其实法可求的，不知法性本空，是名“所知障”。菩提心论云：“二乘之人，虽破人执，犹有法执。”菩萨要达到我法二执俱皆遣除，不但得了我空智，又要进一步得了法空智，显出“法空真如”，才称为菩萨。这是先显无住无相之理，勉人离一切诸相，以同体大悲的精神，来修一切善法，利益一切众生，才会契合佛陀的本怀。

现在再来略加分析五眼的蕴义：第十八分一体同观，更为阐明平等无我的妙义。例如一切人类，虽有男女老少种种不同的差别，但总有一个“闻性”相同。所以叫做一体。同样由这个“闻性”，来听闻佛法，虽说深浅的领会有所不同，但终究也同样会由浅入深，以达到反迷为觉的目的，所以叫做同观。这五眼的经义，是佛对当机的须菩提尊者的问答，来印证“生佛平等”，众生与佛，亦是一体同观。五眼，即是肉眼、天眼、慧眼、法眼、佛眼。佛问须菩提，如来有具足这五种的眼力否？须菩提皆一一答曰：如是。如来具有这圆明的五眼。肉眼代表凡夫。天眼代表诸天。慧眼是代表罗汉二乘的圣者。法眼是代表菩萨。佛眼是代表一切如来。

（一）凡夫的肉眼：即我们父母所生给我们的眼睛，乃六根之一。因为各人自己业障所遮蔽，（包括贪、瞋、痴、慢、疑等等所迷昧）生来连一张纸的遮隔便看不见，世尊现凡夫身，与一般人的肉眼，表示无有差别。但因修行证果，乃得五眼圆明，佛既可由凡夫修成，即证明人人皆可成佛而无疑。

（二）天眼：能观障隔以外的一切事物。为天人所修而成、佛为诸天说法，当然亦有天眼。所以诸天修行，最后亦可成佛。

（三）慧眼：阿罗汉有慧眼，能观照世出世间诸法。阿罗汉如再发大心，当然也可成佛。因佛自己也由证阿罗汉果起，而更进一步发展广度众生同成正觉之心。所以，毕竟成佛。

（四）法眼：无情界属山河大地，一切物类，草木花卉。有情界属人类、动物、

蠢、动、含、灵。不论有情无情，皆以法身为所依。无情的东西，亦由有情之人所造作而加以假名。所以一切有情无情，皆由法性而来。因知觉性造作一切故。万物既以法身为所依，佛之法身遍一切处，一切时空。是佛与一切有情无情，菩萨法眼观彻一切，还能从空出假，以大愿行，随机摄化，即俗度生，而成佛道。

（五）佛眼：唯佛独具之眼，能视十方恒河沙世界的事事物物，皆能明察秋毫。无论三千大千世界过去、现在、未来，皆能通达明了。五眼圆明，即是五眼互用。譬如无量恒河沙数众生的若干种心，亦能悉知悉见，非任何科学界所能推想得及的，所以古德偈云：“天眼通非碍。肉眼碍非通。法眼惟观俗。慧眼了真空。佛眼如千日，照异体还同，圆明法界内，无处不含容。”

总之，般若本体，平等一如，在圣不增，在凡不减。佛与众生，本无差别，在缠为众生，出缠成佛道。惟在人人之如何努力进修，反迷为觉而已。所以凡是佛弟子，都应该深明此理，不但要时时刻刻返观自性，策励三业，尤要方便劝说一切人，明了生灭法的妄心，是从过去，现在，未来三时际中，此伏彼起，还流不息，念念不停；以致随波逐浪，头出头没。必须及早学佛，把妄心修成真心，每个人都一样可以转凡成圣，顿超佛地的。

心意识与六大根本烦恼

一年一度纪念释迦牟尼佛的圣诞，是为了要警醒世人，不要忘记释尊的崇高与伟大，且要让世人在纪念的隆重仪式中，去熏习释尊所说的佛法，使在茫茫的苦海中，每天为生活的压迫，忙得不能开交的众生得以喘息一下，回想一下，究竟我们为什么而忙呢？为金钱呢？为事业呢？为名誉呢？假使，是真的为着金钱、事业、名誉而奋斗，那么如果金钱、名誉、事业都成功了，又要为着什么而奋斗呢？而这些辛苦得来的成果，又会保持和享受多少时候呢？人生不过只有几十年的生命，真如水中月，镜中花，生不带来，死不带去，而且人生变幻无常，如梦幻泡影，如早晨的朝露，终于幻灭，一无所有，所以这些有为法，是不值得我们用宝贵的生命去牺牲去追求的，因此我们在纪念释尊的今天便应该向释尊看齐，我们应该高瞻远瞩，看破世间的空假与无常，我们应该像释尊一样，不要给名利财色所束缚，不要做假相色身的奴隶。我们应当猛省，向无上道进军，向了生脱死斗争。

我们要学无上道，要求了生脱死，那么就on该求根寻底，把握源流，才不致舍本逐末，佛法虽有八万四千法门，但是万法唯心造，我们如能抓住个重心，那么我即身是佛，是心是佛，否则千百万年修行，还是落个空妄，不能获得真如法相。所以《唯识论》的心意识的问题，确是开悟证果的根源，了生脱死的良方。我们学佛应从听闻佛法与多阅佛经入手，然后把所听所看到的经法加以一番的思虑研究，终必有所得而豁然开悟，所以《楞严经第六卷观音菩萨圆通章》曾说：“彼佛教我，从闻思修，入三摩地。”足见学佛必先多闻多阅，而后静思而修，加以熏习，才能获得开悟证果。《妙法莲花经》中亦云：“若人静坐三须臾，胜造恒沙七宝塔。”（若人静坐一须臾，胜造恒沙七宝塔）。由此可见，学佛必先净心，无可疑义。

学佛既须先净心，那么要怎样才能办得到呢？我们若要净心，藉以获得佛的知见，那么必先断除我们的六大烦恼，因为这六大烦恼，是杀害我们的佛智的大贼，什么是我们六大烦恼呢？现在我略述如下：

（一）贪：众生为了贪财、贪色、贪名、贪利，弄得人头昏脑胀，因此蒙蔽我们的真如法性，变成迷惑愚痴，以致流浪生死苦海中，而无法自拔。

（二）瞋：人类因为小事而起怨恨、嫉妒，甚至忿怒，因此弄成悲观苦乐，如水起波浪，不能宁静，沉沦于激动的境界中，六根对六尘，染尽了污秽，以致意识不能清静，变为生死的根源。

（三）痴：人类不爱护法性，不知修心养性，而追逐五欲的享受，终生变为肉体色身的奴隶，甚至为了肉身的享受，而做出杀盗淫妄酒的罪业，以致轮回生死，永远不能超脱，实是愚痴至极。

（四）慢：是自骄自傲，自尊自大，执住我为实有，以致与人斗争，无有停止的时候，释尊为了要调伏诸大弟子骄傲的心，所以实行托钵，使他们低心下气，然后才会苦心学道，且可以培养一种无我相人相，无众生相，无寿者相的精神。

（五）疑：疑是不信，宇宙间许多真理，往往是超世间的，非我们世间的肉眼所能看得见，甚至是我们的凡智所不可思议的，因此便发生怀疑，不能深信，因为他们不知是自己的迷痴，反把高超的真理加以否认，这是多么可惜，那么这种不信的众生，就会永远沉沦在非真理的黑暗中，永远不能离苦得乐。好比

医生给病人吃药，但是病人不信任医生，那么他的病，永远不会痊愈，这不是很可惜吗？

（六）恶念：众生的思潮，如海中的波浪，刹那间起伏无定，而且恶念多于善念，这种恶念就是不良行为的原动力，因为人类的行为是受思想的支配，人类既有许多恶念，便会造业结罪，所以恶念不除，意识就无法清净，心意识不清净，就要随意识的染污程度，再来受生于六道之中，如此轮回，永不停休。

十二因缘中，把无明与行，列为众生生死根本原因，这就是六大烦恼把人类蒙蔽，以致愚痴无明而做出结业造罪的事情来，所以我们学佛，必先净心，于事业忙碌之余，应时时冷静思虑，把这六大烦恼的无明逐渐断除，久而久之，终可达到清净的境地，心意识若能清净，佛智就可以得到，所谓“悟入佛之知见”，就是这个道理，如能“悟入佛之知见”，是心是佛，必定见佛成佛。



十二因缘蕴义

佛陀度一切众生同登觉岸的宏愿，是不分我、人、众生、寿者等相，是极其平等的。我们生什么差别，是众生的本身的根器不同，程度不同，各人的福德因缘的根基不同，并不是佛法有什么厚此薄彼的，佛法是绝对平等的。佛陀为适应众生千差万别的根器，所以说出种种法门来作善巧方便的指引，只要我们对所选择的那一种法门，不论是深是浅，过出殷重心，诚意的依法去实行，那就没有不成功的，没有不达到我们所希望到达的目的地。所以学佛完全由你自己善根自己支配，并不是佛加以支配的。你有上根上智，将来即得上乘的位置。中根中智即得中等地位。下根下器，亦可得阿罗果或人天福报。这种平等的因果法则，非其他宗教所可企之。

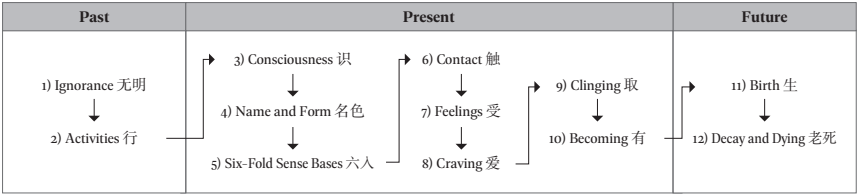
十二因缘，乃人生生死的本源。众生的轮回生死，乃因不了解十二因缘原理，以致生生死死，无有出期。而且一谈“轮回”，智者嗤为迷信，愚者信为鬼神，欲其出迷而愈甚，真是可堪慨叹。其实，“因”即原因，“缘”即助缘。因与缘是互相连系互相发生作的。因如种子，五谷花木，皆有种子，种子不同，产生各种不同的品类。人间，天堂，地狱，苦乐悬殊的境界，亦由于人的善恶念做出善恶行为所产生的业力而形成的，并非固定不变的。

人类的环境，生活，可由人的奋斗，改造而转移，地狱与天堂的判别，亦何尝不如是。譬如行菩萨道者种菩萨的因，下菩萨的种子，将来成菩萨，至证无上佛果。行声闻、缘觉、以及人天的善行与修为，将来亦各得其应得的地位与果报，是理所当然，事有所至的，若作恶多端，贻害社会，在生则受法律之制裁，若怙恶不悛者，死后乃受自己业力的牵累，以致堕入恶趣，受诸剧苦，亦是自己所种的恶因，自然结成的恶果，是不能怨天尤人的。所以学佛必先明了这种基本原理，才会发心修行，广结善缘。才不致安信祸福，倾向魔外。同时更要明白，有先天的种子，还需要后天的培植，种子属内因，培植属外缘助缘。有种子而缺乏助缘的栽培照顾，灌溉施肥，则种子虽可萌芽而发荣不大，畅茂不成。比喻虽有发为学菩萨之善念，但并不依“修菩萨行”的“六度”法门去坚决力行舍己利人，如何能成就菩萨的果德？所以布施、持戒、忍辱、精进、禅定、智慧等六度行法，便是菩萨增上的助缘，没有这些增上好助缘，大力量是根本属于空谈的理论，不能成为事实的。以此类推，对于其他一切事物，亦莫不同此。所以我们念佛，重在循着念佛的心念，来调伏心意，不要使心猿意马向外奔驰。内藉念佛的善因，外仍须作种知足常乐随分随力的善行，来作我们增上的助缘，才能解脱生死业力的系缚而超生乐国，并不是说而不行，或呆板地坐着等待成佛，是绝对没有可能的。

十二因缘又名十二缘起，是由追溯过去透视到现在，由现在再推论到将来。众生为什么会轮回不已？是谁在主宰？是神吗？肯定地说一句：不是！是我们自己。明白了流转轮回的原因，要怎样才能截止而得自在？就是大家要注意研究的问题了。

十二因缘分过去二支因：

(1) 无明缘 (2) 行，现在的五支果：即因行而缘 (3) 识，识缘 (4) 名色，名色缘 (5) 六入，六入缘 (6) 触，触缘 (7) 受，由受而缘起现在的三支因：即 (8) 爱、(9) 取、(10) 有，遂复产生未来的二支果，即 (11) 生、(12) 老死。



这是众生流浪生死的过程。简单说明起来，宇宙的本体，原是不生不灭，非空非有，无内无外，唯一真实，不可思议，故佛法称之为“一真法界”。但无始以来，众生迷真逐妄，动起妄念，遂起三细六粗的惑业，引起各种动作，叫做起了“现行”，即是有所表现。在佛教的“唯识学”，有很精微的分析和解明。由于过去这二个缘因，把过去业感动力的心识，遇缘托胎。产生生命体的形质，完成六根的模型。名色是只具雏型，渐次产生眼，耳，鼻，舌，身，意的六根齐备具足。佛教与儒教所说道理，有许多互相暗合的地方，如易经阐述人类所以形成构造的过程，亦极其细微而精确。触，即是出娘胎之后，与外界发生接触，影响到身心两方面。因有接触，即有种种苦乐好恶的感受。因感受而产生爱欲，追求，执着等等炽盛的欲望与观念。于是由达到其欲望而贪恋不舍，以欲据为己有而甘心，这就是“取”的形态。世上许多悲剧及恶行，都是由这“执取”所产生的。有了这些善不善业，就自然有一种潜在的业力，来承前继后感受“后有”之报，再行受生，既然有“生”，便必有“老死”，忧悲苦恼等等业障，如是循环不已，升沉莫定，皆由自作，并非造物或所谓“神”之所主宰，这点须要明白认识。

我们学佛目的，则超出这十二因缘万古演变的旧圈套，要学得自己主宰的真正自由的力量，免受生死业力的束缚，摆脱这些羁绊，寻源究委，知道生死之根源，皆由“无明”的迷惑而起，学习佛法，不论是禅、教、律、净，都是以破除惑障，扫除妄想，廓清一切恶习恶念为本。所谓本立而道生。如果弃本逐末，只在形式上用功夫，一辈子都得不到学佛的实益。古德云：“是日已过，如少水鱼。”，光阴是非常宝贵，不要空耗光阴！要时时警惕，常发惭愧心。灭却无明烦恼业障，是解脱生死系缚的要诀，勤修戒定慧，息灭贪瞋痴。同发菩提心，皆共成佛道。

十法界唯心所造

佛法包括世间法及出世间法。凡吾人之一举一动，一实一物，都属世间法的范围。世间法比较注重现实人生社会问题，出世间法是对宇宙、人生、社会、精神物质方面的种种问题，作更透彻的认识，作更广泛的探讨，以及更向上的进取。所以不宜加以分开的。我们都知道“佛法在世间，不离世间觉”的这个道理，不须多加解释。

佛陀所说的一切法虽然是无量无边，但总括起来，大多是显示众生的“真心”与细剖众生的“妄心”。真心是众生平等一如的自体，妄心则是众生种种差别以及造成，以及造成种种痛苦的一切现象。佛与众生，只是“觉”与“迷”的差别，众生在迷，佛称觉者。佛陀以其所修证了悟的真理来破除众生的妄心，摧伏众生的无明烦恼，以恢复众生的觉性，而把本来的真心显露出来，达到究竟安乐。所以佛为度众生，才需要说出种种法门。

现在特别提出这个“十法界唯心所造”的题目，就是要说明以上所说的道理，同时更希望我们不要轻视自己，而尊重己灵。明白佛与众生原为一体，不过最大关键，却在“真心”与“妄心”的差别而已。

首先简单解释“法界”二字的意义，约分两点来说：第一，根据往生论注云：“法界者众生心法也。以心能生世出世间法。故名心为法界。”这是就众生心法来说明法界。

第二，《依大乘止观》曰：“法者法尔故。界者性别故。此心体具足一切法。故言法界。”是说明本来如是不的体性，而有种种的差别。但这些种种差别诸相，都不出心力活动作用的范畴。因为佛说：“心生种种法生，心灭种种法灭。”一个人的起心动念，有因必有果。善恶的果报，都由起心动念而来。因为心是一切行为的原动力，故称为心王。是一切善不善业的总机关。心地观经云：“三界之中，以心为主。能观心者究竟解脱。不能观者究竟沉沦。众生之心，犹如大地。五谷五果，从大地生。如是心法，生世出世善恶五趣，有学、无学、独觉、菩萨，及於如来。以此因缘，三界唯心，名心为地。”由此可知心与“十法界”的交互关系，已经显而易明了。

十法界包括四圣，六道。四圣即是佛、菩萨、缘觉、声闻。六道即是：天、人、阿修罗、地狱、饿鬼、畜生。在这十法界中而以人乘为中心。我们能得人身，尤其是六根具足而不残缺的，都是前生能守人道，能修五戒，及行中品善行，所以受人间富贵贫贱苦乐不同的境界。

向上一级生于天界的，是能修上品十善兼禅定，而生天界受静妙悦乐的境界。至于声闻小乘行者，是依佛的声教苦、集、灭、道的四谛观法而入寂灭为乐的境界。缘觉的圣者是依十二因缘的观法而证道的境界。菩萨是发广大心，修六度万行，上求佛道，下化众生，至于成就无上菩提的境界。佛陀则是觉行圆满，福慧具足的极果。而这四圣，亦都是以人为出发，依各人的根器，

向上进取，最后即成佛道。

但是反面来说，如果能修下品十善，但由于瞋恨心特别重，又加骄傲，多疑，时常杀生，那么结局沦入阿修罗境界。因为阿修罗容貌丑恶，与天界为邻，常常战斗。好比现在的世界，战火不断，在战场上就是阿修罗的惨酷，境界的现前。至于那些平时做人而失却人性的人，或慳贪过甚，或悖理逆伦，以至于十恶罪业，致坠入饿鬼、地狱、畜生等三途恶趣的境界去受种种苦报，那就非常可怜。要知道从极苦到极乐的境界，都是以人中心而转移，而这转移的枢纽，却完全以善忍心为出发点，以善恶行为推动力。恶的境界由于妄心的发展，真心的埋没，因为迷真遂妄，便会起惑，造业，以致生种种无穷的苦果。

《楞严经》内里有一段告阿难尊者云：“阿难！由因世界虚妄轮回，动颠倒故，和合气成八万四千飞沉乱想，如是故有卵羯逻蓝（羯逻蓝，译曰凝滑，杂秽之液体）流转国土，鱼、鸟、龟、蛇，其类充塞。由于世界杂染轮回，欲颠倒故，和合滋成八万四千横竖乱想，如是故有胎遏蒲昙，流转国土；人、畜、龙、仙，其类充塞。（案：胎，胎生。遏，未详。蒲，谓有因果业感而生之类。又螺赢也，取青虫为子，而非己所生。昙，生而具聪明利根者。由因世界执着轮回，趣颠倒故，和合暖成八万四千翻覆乱想，如是故有湿相蔽尸，流转国土，含蠢蠕动，其类充塞。（案：蔽尸，译曰肉团结。胎内至三七日所结成未坚之形状。）流转国土，含蠢蠕动，其类充塞……”

如有十二种轮回颠倒之感，起造十二乱想之业，而有十二生类充塞宇宙间受诸业苦之报。可见妄想执着，是人生最大的障碍，是产生业苦的渊藪。我们学佛，最重要的，就是在乎破妄显真，转迷为悟。我们明白生而为人，至堪庆幸，乃居于十法界重要地位。因为人身难得，必须把握今生的这个机会，借着现世的这个色身，及时努力，切实依佛法所指导我们的正确途径，守五戒，行十善。敦品励行，进而勤修戒、定、慧三无漏学。不但断除一切烦恼妄想，自求解脱，而且要发广大心，学菩萨的度生利人，希望人人将来皆达到“一真法界”的境地。

分别善恶与无相度生

善恶之业，如果要详细演绎出来，则有千差万别，但综括论之，则全在一“我”字，因为有我，便有“我爱”、“我执”、“我见”、等为主动力，随着便产生种种追求、侵夺，以及发生种种纷争等等事件。因“我爱”则欲满足吾人自身五欲之追求，遂造作种种损人利己以至种种违背道德的罪恶事件。因我执，一切以我为是，他人为非，或一切认为自己最为重要，别人则不重要，因此又产出种种烦恼苦闷的问题。因我见，虽对事理认识不够，分辨不清，亦强以我的主张，意见最好，他人不对，于是一切颠倒是非及不合理事件，就又层出不穷了。个人如是，推至于集体、社会、国家，以及大至国际上的争论，亦何尝非由这“我”之问题而起？所以佛法最主要的道理，便以无我为第一要义。用无我的精神，来修身治世，必易进德昌明，用无我的精神，来做一切事业，便会不求善而善自至，不去恶而恶自断。这是学佛者首要认清楚的。

所谓善恶，自性本空，并没有固定的形式，皆随心念而转移。如佛在娑竭罗龙宫，所说：“……如是一切，靡不由心，造善不善身业、语业、意业所致。而心无色，不可见取。但是虚妄诸法集起。毕竟无主：无我我所（按：我为自身，自身以外之一切事物亦被认为我之所有谓。）虽各随业，所现不同，而实于中，无有何者。故一切法，皆不思议。自性如幻，智者知己。应修善业，以是所生蕴处界等，皆悉端正。……”

这段经文是佛为龙王演说世上千差万别众生的形相及其依止，都是各随自己的善恶业，包括各人的行为，语言，思想，意识等等不同的趋向与活动，而变现出来的。并没有谁在主宰。如果要品貌端正，环境优美，也全由自己怎样去做而已。假使不顾道德而为非作歹，将来怎样变迁与下场，也全由自己所做得来的结果。不限定法律的制裁而已，苦果还在未来世。所以佛法以因果律，通乎三世（即过去，现在，未来）来范围人心，治理国家，不同神权之谈，是最符合自然规律以及科学的原则。佛法阐明因果，使人有自动向善、自知惭愧，自省悔悟，自觉应该重新做人。才是治本办法。并不是如世间偏重强权，压制，或者以严刑酷法来加以对治，因为强权等等手段，只能令人慑服于一时，而无法使人洗心革面，悦心诚服以改过自新的。世上许多敢于估恶不悛的人，就是因为不知佛法，不信因果。不知自己的生命体，不是一死可以一了百了，而是随着自己所作所为的恶业而流转演变不止的。假使能明白这个道理，他就知警惕，知所悔改而会转恶行善的。

但要如何断除恶业？依《十善业道经》佛陀所云：“当知菩萨有一法，能断一切诸恶道苦，何等为？谓于昼夜，常念思维，观察善法，令诸善法，念念增长，不容毫分不善间杂，是即能令诸恶永断，善法圆满，常得亲近诸佛菩萨及与圣众。”

所谓善法，即是十种善业：

- (1) 不杀生，
- (2) 不偷盗，
- (3) 不邪行，
- (4) 不妄语，
- (5) 不两舌，
- (6) 不恶口，
- (7) 不绮语，

- (8) 离诸贪欲，
- (9) 息灭瞋心，
- (10) 断除邪见。

因为这十善道业，是成就一切贤圣，以至成就无上菩提的根本。也是福国利民的根本大计。先能力行十善法，进一步，才会真实发出利益一切众生的大心来，那就如佛陀所说的十种大菩提心：“一者于诸众生，起于大慈，无损害心。二者于诸众生，起于大悲，无迫恼心。三者于佛正法，不惜生命，乐守护心。四者于一切法，发生胜忍，无执着心。五者不贪利养，恭敬尊重，净意乐心。六者求佛种智，于一切时，无忘失心。七者于诸众生，尊重恭敬，无下劣心。八者不着世论，于菩提分，生决定心。九者种种善根，无有杂染，清净之心。十者于诸如来，舍离诸相，起随念心。”如果能够依这十种大菩萨心，才会体悟佛陀无相度生，平等一如的妙谛。同时对《金刚经》所说：“不住于相”的微旨，也才会契合佛法般若妙慧及理事俱圆的最高境界。

学佛当发大乘心

学佛最初阶段，在净心正行。心为一身之主，心见义勇为则行亦随之而净，心正则行亦随之而正。若心染污，则行为亦随之而染污；譬如心慕虚荣，则行为亦趋向于奢靡夸浮，甚而放僻邪等等恶习，染此乃必然之理。是故佛法设有种种方便法门，无非在制服一切妄心，妄念，妄想使学人之心猿意马不胡乱向外奔驰。故学佛第一：要有正念，正念相续，心便清净。佛法最注重保持正念，因为世上许多滔天大祸，常起于一念之差。第二：要有正信，正信乃以佛所说之正法为所依止。依正法为努力进修的目标，那便叫做有正知见。即是有正确的见解与目标。如是方不致见异思迁，朝秦暮楚，或好高骛远，或捏怪炫奇，作误人欺世的种种举措。此为学佛的初阶之要着，其所以别于一般流俗者，乃以有种出尘拔俗之见地为可贵。否则昏昏馈馈，虚耗一生，如入宝山，空手而回，在佛法称之为可怜悯者！

其次，学佛并不是独善其身，不可效法小乘人的知见，只顾自己，不理别人。应该在初步基础稳定之后，再要脚踏实地，发大乘心。大乘心，就是菩提心。菩提心简单来说，是不特要增长自己的智慧达到圆满的地步，同时还要把这活泼圆融的智慧运用起来，表现在行为方面，作诸福利事业，利益一切大众，不论是精神的领域或物质的给养。发这种大乘心，就好比一艘幢巨大的慈航，在那万顷波涛汹涌的黑夜，不惧风险，高举探海灯向黑暗中照射，搜寻万千浮沉中待援的罹难者——沉沦中的众生。《金刚经》中，佛告须菩提，所有一切众生之类，不论胎、卵、湿、化等四大类别的生物，名之曰：“四生”。佛陀都要想尽办法，使其能够解除在那辗转变易或分段生死的苦轮之中，渐渐升华到达最高智慧，识性清净的境界。且在佛陀的想念中，完全没有存着一种“我是能度的人，而彼等众生是为我所度者”的个人英雄主义的观念。所以说：“如是灭度无量无边生，实无众生得灭度者。”可见佛陀是如何彻底的平等看待一切众生，而其心量又是如何的广大无限！像这样坦坦荡荡的广大心量，才会做大事业，成大功德，那就是发大乘心的极则。古人云：“出家乃大丈夫事。”就是这个道理。

四生的类别，谓：胎以情有。卵以想生。（如鱼之比目，母鸡之孜孜不息的孵雏。）湿以气合。（由寒热之气和合而生，如昆虫之依湿而受形者。）化以利应。（无所依托，唯依业力而忽起者，如诸天与地狱及劫初之众生皆由化生而致。据佛典云：“劫初之人，男女未分，皆为化生。其后因发情欲，始有男女异性之分。”至于胎生，因情而有，一切动物，莫不皆然。盖情包括色情、爱情、感情、恩情、范围最广。而人类在胎生中，称万物之灵。则有胎内五位及胎外五位之分。胎内五位，说明生育之次第，胎外之五位，记录生命之历程。

胎内五位：

- (1) 羯罗蓝位：译曰和合成秽杂，或凝滑膜。
- (2) 琐部昙位：译曰疱。经二七日渐渐增长为疮鼓形之位。
- (3) 闭尸位：译曰血肉。经三七日渐为血肉之位。
- (4) 健南位：译曰坚肉。凝厚肉团，经四七日渐至肉坚之位。
- (5) 钵罗奢法位：译曰支节形位，五支经五七日渐具六根之位。

即完具胎儿之驱体也。（见俱舍论及同光记九。）

及其出生之后，又分为胎外五位；即

- (1) 婴孩、
 - (2) 童子、
 - (3) 少年、
 - (4) 中年、
 - (5) 老年。以至于老死。
- (见俱舍论十五)。

可见人生之过程，无时无刻不在变化中。吾人学佛贵能由人而修成罗汉、菩萨，来化度一切众生。切不可由人的本位，这样难得人身，而再退化变为其他胎生、卵生、湿身等等下等生物，或更坠落于三途恶趣，那就很对不起自己的灵性了。但是要希望向上不退，必须要趁现生的时候，发学佛的大乘心，就会发大愿力，有大愿力，就有坚固的意志与力量，来保障上进的前程。这是任何人必须及时把握自己，策励自己的一桩重要的大事。



宏船长老的一生

Life Story of Venerable Seck Hong Choon

1907

Age 岁 | 1

Venerable Seck Hong Choon was born in Xiafu Village of Jin Jiang City, Fujian Province, China on 7 October 1907 (3rd day of the 9th lunar month). He was born to his father, Zhu Yan Jia, and his mother, Li Wang Niang. Venerable Seck Hong Choon, named Zhu Cheng Ji at birth, had five sisters and was the only son.

宏船长老于1907年阳历十月七日（农历九月初三）出生在中国福建省晋江市霞福村。父亲朱簪甲母亲李旺娘。俗姓朱名成基。是家中独子，有五位姐姐。

1913

Age 岁 | 7

He started his education at home at the age of 7 years old.

他开始在家乡私塾念书。

1915

Age 岁 | 9

Venerable Seck Hong Choon's mother passed away when he was 9 years old. He was then brought up in his mother's hometown, Xin Dian Village, by his maternal grandmother and uncle. His grandmother, Lai Su Gu, a vegetarian who prayed daily and performed many good deeds, took the lead in donating and raising funds to build Qing Lian Monastery.

宏船长老母亲过世后。在母亲的家乡新店村，由外祖母和舅父抚养。外祖母名叫赖素姑，平时吃素念佛，积德行善，带头捐资倡建高山亭庆莲寺。

1918

Age 岁 | 12

At 12 years old, young Venerable Seck Hong Choon often followed his grandmother to Qing Lian Monastery to participate in the chanting of the Śūraṅgama Mantra.

12岁以后，年幼的宏船长老常随外祖母到庆莲寺念佛，诵《楞严咒》。

1919

Age 岁 | 13

Young Venerable Seck Hong Choon heard about Venerable Shi Hui Quan who gave Dharma talks at Cheng Tian Monastery in Quan Zhou province. He made an effort to attend the daily talks. Thoughts of becoming a monk sprouted after he watched a wooden puppet show on the story of how Venerable Maudgalyayana saved his mother.

他听说会泉长老在泉州承天寺大堂讲经，便赶到承天寺听讲经。后因观看《目连救母》的木偶戏而深受感动，并萌发出家的念头。

1922

Age 岁 | 16

At 16 years old, Venerable Seck Hong Choon was ordained under Venerable Shi Hui Quan at Cheng Tian Monastery. His ordination name was Ben Ci, alias Hong Choon.

宏船长老在泉州承天寺由会泉长老座下剃度出家。法名“本慈”，别名“宏船”。

1923

Age 岁 | 17

Venerable Seck Hong Choon went to Guang Hua Monastery in Pu Tian to study under Venerable Shi Ben Ru and participated in the Triple Platform Ordination Ceremony.

他赴莆田广化寺，在本如老和尚座下修学律宗，受三坛大戒。

Age 岁 | 18

In 1924, Xiamen Nan Pu Tuo Monastery's then Abbot, Venerable Zhuan Feng, proposed to change the monastery's succession system from "descendants" to a "ten directions" model. Venerable Seck Hong Choon's ordination master, Venerable Shi Hui Quan, was selected as the first Abbot of the monastery. Venerable Seck Hong Choon became the attendant to Venerable Shi Hui Quan and accompanied him for three years.

It was said that not long after Venerable Seck Hong Choon was in Nan Pu Tuo Monastery, his father came to Xiamen to forcefully bring his only son home. Venerable Seck Hong Choon's father was unaware of his son's renunciation of lay life and ordination in Cheng Tian Monastery until he appeared in a monk robe and shaved his head in front of him. By then, it was too late for his father to stop him. His father did not pursue this any further as Venerable Seck Hong Choon was residing in Cheng Tian Monastery where his father could still visit him often. However, now that Venerable Seck Hong Choon is in Nan Pu Tuo Monastery in Xiamen, with no successor to his assets, his father is heartbroken that the days when he can see his son are few and far between. He pursued Venerable Seck Hong Choon to Xiamen to force his son to give up monkhood.

1924

Venerable Seck Hong Choon wanted to become a monk wholeheartedly, so despite being taken home for three days, he rushed back to Nan Pu Tuo Monastery without his father's knowledge. Venerable Seck Hong Choon's father saw his determination and accepted his son's decision. He divided his farmland to his relatives and spent the rest of his life with peace of mind.

一九二四年，厦门南普陀寺住持转逢和尚提议把该寺的“子孙丛林”制度改为“十方丛林”制度。宏船的剃度师会泉法师因众望所归，被举荐担任第一任住持。宏船长老作为会泉长老的侍者，跟随在会泉长老身边三年。

据说，宏船长老刚到南普陀不久，他在俗的父亲朱簪甲便追至厦门来，把他硬拖回家，因簪甲只有宏船这个唯一的儿子。当时儿子要在泉州承天寺出家，他事先一无所知，等到儿子身穿海青，光着头出现在自己面前时，想要阻止为时已迟矣。承天寺毕竟离家不远，他还可以时常到寺中看望儿子，也就算了。而如今儿子却远走高飞，相见日少，又想到朱家的良田住宅，后继无人，不禁悲伤不已。赶紧追到厦门，硬逼儿子还俗。

可是，宏船长老俗念已断，一心向佛，被拖回家的第三天，趁父亲不留意，又跑回南普陀了。父亲见他心志已定，知无可挽回，便将家中良田悉数分给乡亲们耕种。自己也落得个心地清静，安度晚年。

1925

Age 岁 | 19

Venerable Seck Hong Choon followed Venerable Shi Hui Quan on a pilgrimage to Mount Pu Tuo.

宏船长老跟随会泉法长老往南海普陀山朝圣。



Age 岁 | 21

After three years in Nan Pu Tuo monastery, Venerable Shi Hui Quan stepped down and passed the monastery's abbacy to Venerable Shi Tai Xu. Venerable Shi Hui Quan brought his attendant, Venerable Seck Hong Choon to Shi Jing Hui Yue Vihara and Nan An Bi Yun Monastery to give Dharma talks. Venerable Seck Hong Choon also participated in the Dharma studies taught by Venerable Shi Tai Xu, principal of the Buddhist College of Minnan. Venerable Seck Hong Choon also mastered the Śūraṅgama Sūtra.

会泉长老住持南普陀寺三年任满，便主动告退，由太虚大师继任。会泉长老带着侍者宏船长老先后应请住锡于石井慧月精舍和南安碧云寺，开堂说法，广结善缘。宏船长老也参加厦门闽南佛教学院校长太虚大师所教授的佛教课程，以掌握楞严经。

1931

Age 岁 | 25

Venerable Seck Hong Choon was invited to Kaiyuan Temple as the 8th Preceptor for the Precept Ceremony.

宏船长老受邀在泉州开元寺传戒仪式，作第八引礼师。

1932

Age 岁 | 26

Venerable Seck Hong Choon stayed at Hu Xi Yan Monastery. Venerable Shi Hui Quan founded Luo Yan society. Venerable Seck Hong Choon helped to rebuild Wan Shi Lin into a Buddhist monastery, which was named Wan Shi Lian Monastery.

宏船长老随其师移居厦门虎溪岩寺。会泉长老创设楞严学会，而宏船长老则协助会泉长老将万石林改建为净土道场——万石莲寺。

1933

Age 岁 | 27

Venerable Seck Hong Choon was promoted to Chief Administrator of Wan Shi Lian Monastery. To allow him to give Dharma talks with peace of mind, Venerable Hong Choon worked tirelessly to ensure the smooth running of the monastery so that Dharma talks could be carried out effortlessly.

During the same year, Venerable Shi Tai Xu visited Venerable Shi Hui Quan. Observing Venerable Seck Hong Choon's mannerisms, Venerable Shi Tai Xu knew that Venerable Seck Hong Choon will become an important Buddhist figure. He said: "Above the sea lies the grandeur of Wan Shi Yan among mountains and forests; while in the human world, Venerable Hong Choon protects and saves all sentient beings."

Venerable Shi Hui Quan set up a Buddhist Studies Research Group in Wan Shi Monastery where Venerable Seck Hong Choon was a member. During this year, both Venerables went to Chao Zhou to spread the Dharma, and for the third time, to Taiwan to give Dharma talks.

宏船长老从会泉长老的侍者升为万石莲寺监院，他把寺务处理得有条不紊，让师父能够安心讲学，培育僧材。同年，太虚大师拜访会泉长老，见宏船长老言行举止，知日后必成为佛门龙相，欣然题联：“海上有山森万石；人间渡世仗宏船”。

会泉长老于万石莲寺创设佛学研究社，宏船长老为社员之一。同年，宏船长老随会泉长老赴潮州弘法，并且随会泉法师第三次赴台湾讲经。

1935

Age 岁 | 29

Venerable Seck Hong Choon was invited to be the 6th Preceptor for Cheng Tian Monastery's Precept Ceremony.

宏船长老泉州承天寺开戒，受邀作第六引礼师。

1937

Age 岁 | 31

Venerable Shi Hong Yi, who resided in Xiamen, said "Do not forget the country's salvation during your Dharma practice; to save the country is to practise the Dharma." Venerable Seck Hong Choon also joined the Sangha first aid team in his position as a venerable.

宏船长老住锡厦门的弘一法师提出“念佛不忘救国”，“救国必须念佛”。宏船也以出家人的名义，加入僧侣救护队：为弘一法师送行青岛。

1938

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1950

From 1938, Venerable Seck Hong Choon followed Venerable Shi Hui Quan to Singapore. They visited and gave Dharma talks around the Southeast Asia region and established Meow Sian Lin Temple in Penang, Malaysia. In 1940, Venerable Seck Hong Choon and Venerable Sik Zhuan Dao co-organised the “Great Compassion Prayer” at KMSPKS to pray for world peace. During that time, succession matters were also discussed, and Venerable Sik Zhuan Dao officially passed the abbacy of KMSPKS to Venerable Seck Hong Choon.

In 1943, Venerable Seck Hong Choon became the Abbot of Meow Sian Lin Temple after the demise of Venerable Shi Hui Quan. He returned to Singapore in 1945 to take charge of matters at KMSPKS. In the following year, he engaged the assistance of Venerable Shi Zhuan An to design a monastery development blueprint which eventually led to the expansion of the animal liberation garden and pond. During that time, living conditions at KMSPKS were difficult, as the monastery grounds were surrounded by wild forests and untended graves.

In 1947, Venerable Seck Hong Choon was officially appointed as the Abbot of KMSPKS. He founded the Singapore Buddhist Federation (SBF) in the following year and was later appointed its Vice-President in 1949.

1938年，宏船长老会跟随会泉法师南下星洲，在东南亚一带弘扬佛法，并在檳城落脚创建妙香林寺。1940年与转道長老于光明山普觉禅寺启建“大悲法会”，祈祷世界和平。于是转道長老传法予宏船长老作为法脉继承人。

1943年，会泉長老圓寂后，宏船長老担任妙香林住持。1945年回星洲接任光明山普觉禅寺住持。在隔年请转岸法师设计寺院蓝图，并扩建放生园及放生池。当时光明山普觉禅寺，地处荒山野林，周围坟墓遍野，生活条件非常艰苦。

1947年，宏船長老正式接任光明山普觉禅寺方丈。隔年成立了新加坡佛教总会。1949与其他宗教组织成立了“新加坡宗教联谊会”。



1951

1960

During this period, Venerable Seck Hong Choon initiated the construction of the Hall of Great Strength and Abbot's Hall. He also actively participated in community activities such as representing the Inter-Religious Organisation (IRO) in holding a prayer ceremony at Kranji War Cemetery. In 1955, with the efforts of Venerable Seck Hong Choon, Vesak Day was officially gazetted as a public holiday in Singapore.

宏船法师在这期间除了启建大雄宝殿和方丈楼之外，还积极参与社会活动如代表宗教联谊会为克兰芝阵亡战士公墓举行法会。1955年宏船长老争取到新加坡政府把卫塞节这天法定为公共假日。



1961

1970

In light of the 1964 racial riot in Singapore, Venerable Seck Hong Choon gathered religious leaders from various faiths to promote racial harmony and peace. After Singapore gained independence, he formally established the Singapore Buddhist Sangha Organisation to foster understanding and harmony among Buddhist organisations in Singapore. In the following year, Venerable Seck Hong Choon organised the Triple Platform Ordination Ceremony at KMSPKS and became one of the founding members of the Singapore Buddhist Free Clinic (SBFC).

1964年宏船长老与各宗教领袖提倡种族和谐。新加坡独立后，与上座部佛教举行会谈，注册新加坡佛教僧伽联合会。隔年光明山普觉禅寺举办律仪学会，他也是新加坡佛教施诊所的发起人之一。



1971

1980

Under Venerable Seck Hong Choon's leadership, the KMSPKS Buddha-Dharma Volunteer Group was set up and KMSPKS embarked on an expansion plan which eventually led to the construction of the Hall of Great Compassion, Bell and Drum Towers, Hall of Amrita Precepts, Dharma Hall, "Long Corridor" (长廊), Ancestral Hall, Pu An Columbarium, and Abbot's Hall, among others. From 1970, Venerable Seck Hong Choon spent a decade expanding and reinvigorating KMSPKS into a magnificent sanctuary for Dharma practice.

In 1974, Venerable Seck Hong Choon accepted the invitation to become the Venerable Elder (上座) of two Buddhist temples in the Philippines, Xin Yuan Temple and Hua Cang Temple. As the President of the Singapore Buddhist Federation (SBF), he initiated a mass joint prayer for the deliverance of departed victims of the Jurong "Spyros" ship disaster. Additionally, the construction of Bright Hill Evergreen Home was completed in 1980.

宏船长老成立护法团，扩建光明山普觉禅寺，并兴建了大悲殿、钟鼓楼、甘露戒堂、藏经楼、长廊、功德楼、普安塔、禅楼等。他从1970年开始，用10年时间把光明山普觉禅寺扩建成规模宏大且壮观的寺院道场。

宏船长老在1974年荣任菲律宾信愿、华藏二寺上座。他以新加坡佛教总会主席，在1978年主祭裕廊造船厂内在施工的油槽船“史拜罗斯”号爆炸，启建全国佛教徒祈祷超荐法会。光明山修身院在1980年落成。



1981

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1990

Venerable Seck Hong Choon initiated the Grand Diamond Gem Repentance Puja in 1981 to attract residents from Ang Mo Kio New Town to practise Buddhism. In 1983, he led the Singapore Buddhist Federation (SBF) in organising a Buddhist Artefacts Exhibition at KMSPKS and invited the then-president and Mrs. C. V. Devan Nair to the Opening Ceremony. The symbolic “Three Steps, One Bow” ceremony (三步一拜) was held for the first time at KMSPKS in 1984. In 1985, Venerable Seck Hong Choon received a visit from Her Royal Highness, Princess Sirindhorn of Thailand, where she offered robes presented by His Eminence the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand. Venerable Seck Hong Choon later invited the Deputy Supreme Patriarch of Thailand to visit and officiate the foundation-laying ceremony for the Pagoda of 10,000 Buddhas at KMSPKS. Venerable Seck Hong Choon also organised the first short-term novitiate programme at KMSPKS in the same year. In 1986, he organised a mass puja for the deliverance of victims who lost their lives in the Hotel New World disaster.

Between 1982 and 1990, Venerable Seck Hong Choon made eight visits to China, during which he met with important figures such as Ulanhu (Vice-President of the Republic of China), Zhao Puchu (Chairman of the Buddhist Association of China), Venerable Shi Zheng Guo (Vice-Chairman of the Buddhist Association of China), Qiao Liansheng (Director of National Religious Affairs Administration), His Holiness, Panchen Lama (Vice-Chairman of the National People’s Congress), and others. During his visits to China, he made trips to several Buddhist temples and famous landmarks, funded restoration works at temples such as Wan Shi Lian Temple and Cheng Tian Temple, and even returned to his hometown to pay respects to his ancestors. Venerable Seck Hong Choon’s visits played an important role in promoting deep ties and friendship between the Buddhist communities of both countries. In 1985, Venerable Seck Hong Choon led a delegation of 25 representatives from Singapore’s Inter-Religious Organisation (IRO) on its first multi-religious exchange programme to China.

Venerable Seck Hong Choon passed away at KMSPKS on 25 December 1990.

1981

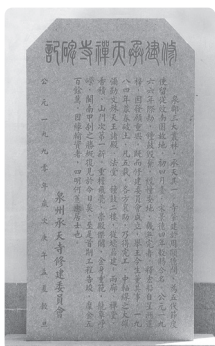
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1990

在1981年，宏船长老发起了金刚法会以吸引当时宏茂桥新镇的居民学佛。他带领新加坡佛教总会在1983年在光明山普觉禅寺举办佛教文物展，而当时邀请总统蒂凡那与夫人出席开幕典礼。三步一拜在1984年首次在光明山普觉禅寺举办。泰国公主诗琳通在1985来访光明山普觉禅寺，并亲持泰僧王之袈裟赠送宏船长老。与此同时，他也邀请了泰国副僧王率团亲临光明山普觉禅寺万佛宝塔之奠基典礼。同年，宏船长老在光明山举办了首届上座部短期出家，而在隔年为新世界酒店坍塌办大型的超度法会。

宏船长老在1982年至1990年之前，回返中国八次。他会见了一些重要人物如中国国家副主席乌兰夫、中国佛教协会赵朴初会长、中国佛协副会长正果法师、国务院宗教事务局乔连升局长、全国人大副委员长班禅大师等。他的中国之旅参访了许多佛寺和著名胜地，还不忘返乡礼祖，促进中新佛教友好关系，同时也出资帮助中国寺院修复寺院如万石莲寺、承天寺等。宏船长老在1985年带领了25名宗教联谊会各大宗教领袖一同前往中国交流访问。

宏船长老于1990年12月25日在光明山普觉禅寺圆寂。



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and its causes.

May all sentient beings be free of suffering
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May all sentient beings not be separated
from sorrowless bliss.

May all sentient beings abide in equanimity,
be free of bias, attachment and
anger and practise compassion with others.

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