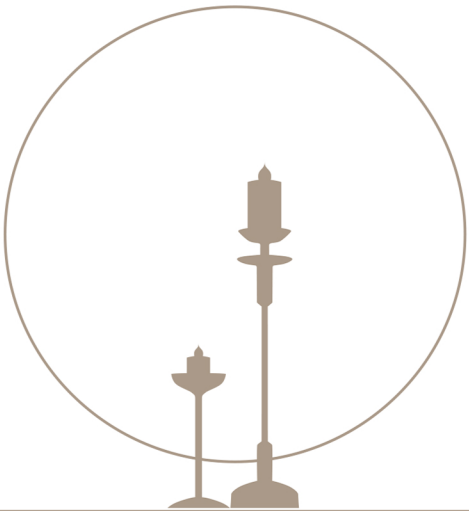
静心学堂 丛书
The Mindful Peace Academy Collection
中英双语 Chinese-English Edition

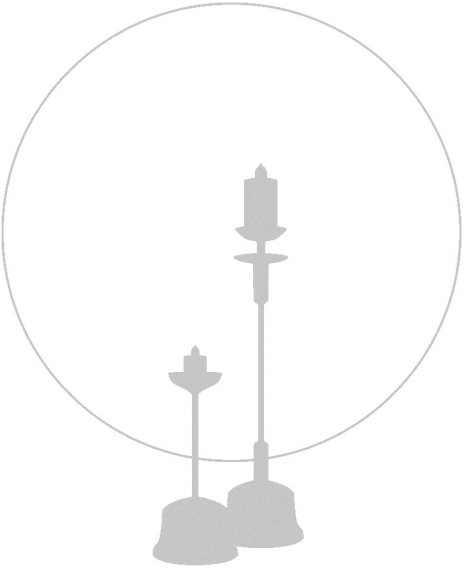
以茶入禅，回归本心

Entering Chan Through Tea: Returning to the Original Mind

济群法师 著
Master Jiqun



大千出版社



【静心学堂丛书】

文化篇

人生篇

社会篇

信仰篇

实践篇



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2022年夏月光茶会开示

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上次月光茶会的月亮超大。这次虽然还没看到，其实月亮一直都在那里，只是因缘的显现不同。我们做茶会，不是为了喝茶本身，而是要把喝茶变成禅修，变成明心见性的修行。

什么是禅？禅师说：禅在穿衣吃饭中。有人难免生疑：世间人都在穿衣吃饭，为什么不是禅？禅师的回答是：世间人吃饭穿衣，总是带着妄想、执著、分别，是从贪嗔痴出发，最终成就的还是贪嗔痴。

喝茶也是同样。近年来，茶道盛行一时。人们讲究茶叶的品质、类别，选择茶席的用品、布置，也开始关注茶所呈现的精神内涵。茶空间中，常常可以见到“茶禅一味”“吃茶去”之类的书画和装饰。但真

正想要以茶入禅，并不是挂点什么、说点什么就解决问题的。

如何把喝茶变成禅修？这事既简单，也不简单。

简单，因为禅的本质就是清明的心。这颗心人人具备，与我们须臾不曾分离。正如傅大士所说的那样：“夜夜抱佛眠，朝朝还共起。起坐镇相随，语默同居止。欲识佛去处，只这语声是。”在我们的禅修训练中，不论身体扫描还是正念禅修，不论以身体还是呼吸为锚点，都是为了引导大家体会内在的清明。我们通过这么久的训练，对此多少会有一些触及。

不简单，是因为我们无始以来一直活在无明妄想中，开启心的清明并不容易。即使偶尔亮一下，很快会有无明的云雾飘来，使心被遮蔽，被迷惑，被干扰，被各种念头带走，使人看不清自己，看不清心的本来面目。所以除了座上修，我们还要把禅的修行贯穿到一切时，才能逐步扫除内心迷雾。

这就需要在生活中训练专注和觉知，学会单纯地吃饭，单纯地走路，单纯地喝茶。所谓单纯，即带着正念，让喝茶回归本来状态。喝茶只是喝茶，没有任

何分别、评判、抗拒、贪著。更重要的，是在内心保持一份了了明知。

生命是无尽的积累。所有的身口意三业发生后，都会在内心留下烙印，使生命带着轮回的印痕，累积串习的力量。这种串习又使心不断向外攀缘，执著财色名食睡五欲，追逐色声香味触法六尘。对眼前这杯茶，同样充满了分别、好恶、贪嗔。

凡夫心的特点就是念念驰求，舍本逐末，所以祖师谆谆告诫我们“莫向外求”。关于此，临济禅师的解读是：“你要与佛祖不别，但莫外求。你一念清净心光，是你屋里法身佛。一念无分别心光，是你屋里报身佛。一念无差别心光，是你屋里化身佛。此三种身，是你即今目前听法的人，只为不向外求有此功用。”

为什么仅仅不外求，就能和佛祖无别？因为他们有的，我们也有；他们证悟的心，我们也不缺少。问题在于，我们内心还有种种妄想，总在无休止地制造并追逐影像。就像猴子往水中捞月，尽管到头是一场空，但这种追逐从未停止。

我们不知道，生命中还具有无尽宝藏，必须向内开发。修行，正是为了开启这个宝藏。刚修行时，我们的正念很羸弱，就像初生婴儿，同样是人，却没有力量。必须通过禅修不断地认识它，熟悉它，才能像婴儿逐步成人那样，变得强壮有力。

虽然心的本质清净无别，但众生根机有别，所以在显现上有利钝不同。有的众生心地清净，为上根利智，稍加打磨就能一超直入如来地。也有的众生心垢极厚，刚强难调，必须不断集资净障，以正念扫除心垢。在此过程中，除了闻思修的常规次第，还要辅以种种方便。

我们倡导的静茶七式，正是为现代人量身打造的方便和助缘。茶是生活的重要组成，既属于生活化的“柴米油盐酱醋茶”，也位列文艺化的“琴棋书画诗酒茶”，自古就深受各界人士喜爱。以茶为载体，承载禅的智慧，将泡茶、喝茶与正念修行相结合，是适合不同群体的契入点。

今天是一个浮躁的时代，人们心中充满妄想和散乱。在这样的心行状态下，修行举步维艰。所以要

借助善巧方便，把躁动的心带回当下，才能通过修止开启观慧，彻见本来。静茶七式正是针对人们普遍存在的问题而设置，那么，如何在实践过程中与禅修相应？关键在于，每一式都要善用其心。

第一式，感恩有礼

当我们带着感恩心
在茶席前入座
仪态必然是谦和的
举手投足必然是调柔的
就能营造一个正向的场

学佛人都会说菩提心、慈悲心，但往往是一句口号，并没有成为自身心行。为什么修不起来？因为我们对众生是无感的，觉得众生死活与己无关。既然没有关系，为什么要慈悲他、帮助他、利益他？

在修习菩提心的七支因果中，以知母、念恩、报恩为前提，由此生起慈心、悲心，进而从增上心导向菩提心。感恩，包含了念恩和报恩，是七因果的关键所在，可以使我们与众生建立连接，看到众生对我们的付出。

生活在世间，我们既是独立的个体，也是世界的一部分，离不开万物的滋养，众生的护佑。我们今天参加这场茶会，同样有众多因缘的成就，所以要对这

一切心生感恩。佛法说的“上报四重恩”，就是感念父母、师长、国家、众生的恩德，发愿报答。当我们生起感恩，内心是欢喜且柔软的，会主动想着为社会、为众生做些什么。这是增长慈悲心的基础。

此外，还要修习恭敬和虔诚，这点也很重要。现代社会倡导个性解放，视恭敬为卑微，视虔诚为盲从，使得很多人无所顾忌，内心躁动。事实上，恭敬是看到人生榜样后的景仰之情，虔诚是找到终极归宿后的依止之心，这些心行首先是让自己受益的。很多人在寺院看到佛菩萨像时，会觉得无比安宁。为什么会这样？正是被自己的恭敬和虔诚净化了。

当我们带着感恩心在茶席前入座，仪态必然是谦和的，举手投足必然是调柔的，就能营造一个正向的场。

第二式，静心备器

我们带着正念专心准备茶器
不散乱，不慌张
也不陷入妄想
在整个过程中
始终保持明晰的观照
心就会随之安静下来

“心本无生因境有。”凡夫最大的特点是心随境转，很容易受到外境影响。如果环境嘈杂混乱，充满诱惑，是很难令心安静的。所以我们首先要营造清净、自然、空灵的环境，可以很简朴，但不能有任何脏和乱。

更重要的，是保有一份清净心。“清净心”三个字说起来简单，做起来并不简单。虽然众生本来具足清净心，但无始以来，无明、烦恼、贪嗔痴使心总是处于混沌中，妄想纷飞，难以进入修行状态。这时就需要环境的助力。别院正是营造了这样的氛围，通过如法有序的生活，帮助大家安顿身心。进一步，通过有次第的禅修，学会以清净心待人处世，以空性见照见本来。这样才能在任何问题出现时，随时放下，不

受干扰。

此刻，我们带着正念专心准备茶器，不散乱，不慌张，也不陷入妄想。在整个过程中，始终保持明晰的观照，知道自己的一举一动，乃至所有的微细变化，心就会随之安静下来。就像一潭水，静则清，清则明。

第三式，煮水听茗

此刻是个空档
不需要做什么
可以向内观察自心
这是反闻闻自性的修行
所以听茗的重点不在于水的沸腾
而是由此体会能听的力量
体会这颗清明的心

我们坐在这里，感受天地的空旷，微风的吹拂。在阵阵蝉鸣和若隐若现的音乐中，静静聆听水沸的声音。

听，也是一种修行。《楞严经》说："反闻闻自性，性成无上道。"平常人的听，是向外追逐声尘。而追逐六尘的过程，会在内心留下很多影像。然后，我们又会被这些影像左右，活在尘劳妄想之中。

煮水听茗，是强调一种听的力量。这种力量和声音有没有关系？如果仅仅关注声音，当然觉得和声音有关——因为有声音，我们才能听到。事实上，二者并没有必然的关系。

在此刻，你们可以听到我的说话声，听到蝉鸣、

乐声和水沸声。当我不说话，水也不再沸腾时，听的作用在不在？依然是在的，我们将听到安静的声音。有声音时，听到的是声音；没声音时，听到的是安静。但听的力量始终都在，不增不减。

这一式也叫煮水观心。因为此刻是个空档，不需要做什么，可以向内观察自心。这是反闻闻自性的修行。所以听茗的重点不在于水的沸腾，而是由此体会能听的力量，体会这颗清明的心。

第四式，温器传香

除了物质内涵和文化传承
这片茶叶
还蕴含宇宙的一切信息
即我们常说的
一花一世界
一叶一如来

万物有各自的缘起，泡好一杯茶，同样要尊重它的缘起。我们现在喝的岩茶产自武夷山，有“千载儒释道，万古山水茶”之美誉，蕴藏丰富的文化内涵。武夷山和我们所在的泰宁都属于丹霞地貌，泰宁是青年时期的丹霞地貌，武夷山是中年时期的丹霞地貌，更为老辣。此间孕育的茶，吸山水灵气，收日月精华，有着独特的品质和神韵。

除了物质内涵和文化传承，这片茶叶还蕴含宇宙的一切信息，即我们常说的“一花一世界，一叶一如来”。现代的全息观也告诉我们：万物的每个部分都包含整体的所有信息和特性。为什么是这样？

华严宗杜顺祖师在诠释“一即一切”时说到，每

个点之所以能蕴含宇宙的一切，和宇宙完整连接，关键在于“理不可分割”。因为万物都蕴含着最高真理，而真理本身是相通的，不可分割。在这个本质上，一和一切无二无别。

我们看到的每片茶叶，也蕴含从山水日月到文化传承的精华。只有理解并尊重这些缘起，才能展现茶所拥有的能量。尤其是老茶，经过十年、二十年的收藏，内含物质被包裹已久，需要有醒茶的过程。

温器就是为醒茶所作的准备。用沸水加热茶器、投茶并适度摇动之后，茶的干香就被唤醒，为接下来的泡茶做好前行。

第五式，泡茶醒心

清明的心原本就在那里
只是因为我们从不和它招呼
不和它来往,才会那么陌生
这就需要通过禅修去唤醒
不论静坐、经行还是泡茶
目的都是去发现它
认识它，熟悉它

泡茶时，必须根据茶本身的特点，采用相应的冲泡方式。这个环节需要在实践中总结经验，并通过当下的观察，随时调整。即使同一类茶，因为茶青品质、加工工艺的差别，及饮者的不同接受程度，冲泡方法也要随之改变。总之，要尊重茶和饮者的缘起，既让茶的内涵得到充分展现，也让饮者如啜甘露。

我们要带着正念完成这一系列动作，对自己的动作清清楚楚，同时对每泡茶汤的表现清清楚楚，对饮茶者的反应清清楚楚。整个过程必须时时保持专注，心才能和茶相应。如果心不在焉，或谈天说地，胡思乱想，即使动作很熟练，也难以和茶建立连接，更不能以此导向正念的修行。

正念禅修中，有个项目是吃葡萄干，通过一系列仪式，细致感受葡萄干的颜色、质地、滋味，以此培养正念。泡茶同样要营造一定的仪式感。这不是某些茶道表演中的花式动作或故弄玄虚，而是把每个手法做准确，做到位，同时把握节奏，不徐不疾。在相应的仪式感中，心更容易找到目标，随之安静。否则，我们往往会随着串习的惯性行事。用现在的话说，就是不走心。

清明的心原本就在那里，只是因为我们从不和它招呼，不和它来往，才会那么陌生。这就需要通过禅修去唤醒。不论静坐、经行还是泡茶，目的都是去发现它，认识它，熟悉它。久而久之，你会发现它时时都在那里，充满力量。

修行不是修出一个什么，不是凭空造出原来没有的东西。比如航空母舰和人造卫星，完全是人为制造的。修行所体认的，是本来具足的心，“在圣不增，在凡不减”，并不因为我们现在是凡夫就少了什么。只是因为不认识，才要通过修行去开启。

凡夫被无明所惑，总是跟着念头跑，四处攀缘。

因为我们还没养成安住的习惯，没尝过它的甜头，不知道安住本心才是最自在的。所以要改变用心习惯，让心从弛求中歇下，从混沌中醒来。

为什么把泡茶和醒心联系起来？因为其中都包含对缘起的认识。我们在泡茶时，要根据茶的特性，选择相应的器具和投茶量，采用合适的水温、注水方式和出汤时间。众缘和合，才能让茶香和滋味得到充分呈现。这些要从缘起的层面深入学习，任何环节的疏漏，都会影响整体效果。

缘起是佛法的重要智慧，可以使我们改变看待问题的方式。凡夫总是活在我法二执中，由此形成自我的认知模式和需求模式。然后带着自我的认知生活，带着自我的感觉看世界，带着自我的标准评判他人，带着自我的需求追名逐利。当每个人都这么做的时候，必然会导致是非、对立和纷争，给自己带来烦恼，给他人制造痛苦。

学佛，让我们尊重缘起，尊重一切生命乃至世间万物的存在。佛法所说的随缘，就是在尊重缘起的前提下，审时度势，以适合当下的方式解决问题。这是

生命的大智慧，可以破除我执，让万物和谐共生。

这种智慧不仅可以用在生活中，还可以用在泡茶中。我们要了解茶的文化，尊重茶的特性，带着开放、清明的心泡茶，让每道茶都能发挥自身特质，完成此时此刻的圆满呈现。

第六式，平等分茶

平常心
是我们原本具足的清净心
是没有任何包装的
赤裸的心
就像清澈的水
又像无云的晴空

禅宗特别强调平常心。曾经有人问马祖道一：什么是道？马祖说：平常心是道。这句话听起来很普通，也常常被人在各种场合运用，似乎很多事都可以用“平常心”三个字来消解。

究竟什么是平常心？我们可能觉得，自己是个平常人，过着平常日子，现前的心不就是平常心吗？事实上，我们认为的平常心，是很不平常的。因为这颗心充满是非、好恶、美丑、荣辱、得失，充满由人生经验形成的评判、取舍、设定、期待，以及由此造成的种种情绪和心理。这些都不属于平常心。但因为我们把平凡错认为平常，才认识不到“平常心”的高度。在佛法修行中，二者是完全不同的。

平常心，是我们原本具足的清净心，是没有任何包装的赤裸的心，就像清澈的水，又像无云的晴空。这个心虽然是现成的，但无始以来始终被遮蔽，必须通过修行开启，否则是见不到的。

在禅修时，我经常引导大家以全然开放的心，接纳当下的种种身心感受，不评判、不抗拒、不讨厌、不贪著。这就是在训练平常心，让心像镜子一样，照见清净，照见污浊；照见日月天地，也照见阴暗角落。无论照什么，都如实显现，不起波澜。又像监控系统，小偷进门，它不会讨厌；贵客光临，它不会欢喜。只是了知当下发生的一切，不带任何评判，更不因此生起情绪。

虽然我们现在没有平等心，但内心是具备这个层面的，只要方法正确，反复训练，终有一天可以见到。平等分茶，正是帮助我们培养这一心行。不论对面所坐的是谁，是你熟悉还是陌生的，是你喜欢还是讨厌的，现在通通放下，只是把这道茶平等地分出去。分茶的杯子叫公道杯，也是说明这个道理。

我们共享这杯茶，不存在谁有谁无，谁浓谁淡，

谁多谁少。藉由平等一味的茶，平息内心的种种妄念，在平静、平和中体会平等。

第七式，吃茶去

如果我们带着贪心
分别心、好恶心喝茶
即使能在技术和经验层面
把茶味品得头头是道
也只是高级评茶师而已
和禅师的“吃茶去”了不相干

吃茶去，是禅门的重要典故。禅宗典籍记载，当时有很多学人去参访赵州禅师，不论来者是谁，禅师都以一句“吃茶去”接引。此后，这句日常寒暄就有了不同寻常的深意，也成为某些拾人牙慧者的所好。

二者的区别是什么？其实，吃茶的重点不在于茶，而是体会能吃茶的、清清明明的心。如果我们带着贪心、分别心、好恶心喝茶，即使能在技术和经验层面，把茶味品得头头是道，也只是高级评茶师而已，和禅师的“吃茶去”了不相干。只有带着专注、觉知，尤其是无造作的觉知，以茶入禅，才能和古德的教诲相应。

总之，静茶七式不仅是让我们学会泡茶，还是静

心慢生活的组成。进一步，是导向禅修的方便，乃至让泡茶成为禅修。通过这杯茶，感恩万物，体会缘起，训练专注，培养觉知，开启生命内在的清明。





花开有时，一期一会

Every Flower Blossoms in Its Own Time;
Every Encounter Is Once-in-a-Lifetime

2022年丁香茶会开示

今天这个丁香茶会，大家一起喝茶、赏花、听雨，是不是很美好？

别院的树木以银杏、红枫、老梅桩为主，之前并没有计划种丁香。后来发现有块空地，就想到了丁香。我就读中国佛学院时，学院所在的法源寺有很多丁香。花开时，会有“丁香诗会”。这是源于明清的吟诗唱和活动，很多历史名人参加过，堪称盛事。以前我去北京，如果正值花期，也会去看一看。

在别院丁香盛开之际，想到我们也可以做些什么，就有了这次茶会。以后我们不仅可以有丁香茶会，还可以有银杏、红枫、梅花的茶会，乃至一草一木，都可以成为茶会的缘起。

一、此刻不需要做任何事

我们真正的目的
不是茶，也不是花
而是以此作为修心的契机
通过相应的仪式感
让心放下万缘
安住当下

早在唐宋时期，茶就与禅结下了不解之缘，不仅是僧人修行的助力，也是向民众普及佛法的载体。依循这一传统，我们也将茶会赋予静心慢生活的内涵，以及面向社会的方便。

我们最近做了“静茶七式”“静场七事”的课件，可以让更多人学习。具体怎么运用？别院是呈现静心慢生活的样板，所以首先在这里落实。

当然，我们真正的目的不是茶，也不是花，而是以此作为修心的契机。通过相应的仪式感，让心放下万缘，安住当下。

丁香盛开，是不是所有人都注意到？我想，可能有些人并没有看到。因为我们的心总是在别处，在追

逐，在思绪纷飞，反而对眼前的美好视而不见。

茶会，正是引导我们把心带回当下。

我们静静地坐在这里，赏花就是赏花，听雨就是听雨。此刻不需要做任何事，只要带着开放性的觉知。

喝茶时，静静感受茶的味道，感受喝茶的整个过程。从端起茶杯，茶汤入口，进入身体，对所有变化了了明知，而又心无所住。

二、能吃茶的是谁

我们坐在这里
带着一份没有造作的心
没有设定，没有期待
也没有执取
让心像明镜一样
对周边的一切彻底开放
在这样的开放中
持续、稳定地保持觉知

怎么才能了了明知？佛陀十大名号中有“正遍知”，就是对一切的全然了知，通天彻地，纤毫毕现。这种遍知的智慧，是于“无所住而生其心”。

凡夫的认知都有焦点，当心关注某个对象时，会产生分别、执著，以及相应的情绪。进入这个状态，其他就被自动忽略了。就像现实中，当我们心事重重时，对外界的反应会变得迟钝。只有当心了无牵挂，才会物来影现，即刻反应。

我们坐在这里，带着一份没有造作的心，不做什么，不为什么，也不想什么；没有设定，没有期待，也没有执取。让心像明镜一样，对花木，对雨声，对周边的一切彻底开放。在这样的开放中，持续、稳定

地保持觉知。

我们也可以在端起茶杯时，参一参——能吃茶的是谁？这个探究可以引导我们认识本心，也是赵州“吃茶去”的真意所在。凡夫总在向外追逐，贪著色声香味触法，从未反观自心，看看“喝茶的心是什么”。

茶会本身就是一次禅修，藉由这些因缘，让心恢复本来状态，那是赤裸的、没有包装的心，是清净圆满、具足万法的心。

我们带着禅的见地和用心，来参加一期一会。时空无常变化，当下的这一念，亘古亘今，可谓一念万年。

三、和自己在一起

无所事事
本身是很好的状态
说明心暂时没有陷入某种执著
或是执著不深
这是摆脱能所的必经过程
也是外求和反观的交叉路口

今天这个茶会，从下雨，到阳光微微露，淡淡照。天地的变化，本身就呈现了无常之美。当我们放下设定、期待和执著，下雨时，觉得雨天很润；日照时，觉得阳光很暖，这就是禅宗的“日日是好日”。

一旦有了设定，就无法活在当下，甚至无法接纳现实，总是活在攀缘、追逐和依赖中，总要抓取什么才觉得安全。在这样的状态下，坐着会觉得无所事事，很无聊。

事实上，无所事事本身是很好的状态，说明心暂时没有陷入某种执著，或是执著不深。这是摆脱能所的必经过程，也是外求和反观的交叉路口。如果习惯性地想点什么，做点什么，心马上会落入凡夫串习，

进而建立依赖。当依赖得不到满足，我们又会感到缺憾和不安全，在串习中顺流而下。

此刻，我们要做的就是单纯地坐着，和自己在一起，和天地万物在一起。

心本身是具足一切的。当心安住在本来状态，当下就是圆满的，自在的，充满欢喜，不会觉得缺少什么。这种能力需要通过禅修，让觉知力不断增长，对外界的依赖就会随之减少，生命也会越来越自在。

随喜大家学会“傻坐”。



心月朗照，安住当下

The Mind Shining like the Moon,
Settling in the Present Moment

2021年中秋月光茶会开示

今天是中秋佳节，也是千家万户团圆的日子。我们相聚于此，一起喝茶，一起赏月，一起禅修，成就这场“中秋月光茶会”。说到茶会，给人感觉比较放松；说到禅修，又会认为比较严肃。那么，茶会怎么和禅修统一起来？

禅修有不同内涵，有禅定的禅，也有禅宗的禅。前者重视形式，从调身、调息到调心都有一定之规，重点在于得定。而禅宗的禅是属于一种慧，所以它超越一切形式，不限于座上，生活中同样可以修习。打坐观心是禅，穿衣吃饭、搬柴运水也是禅。

因为禅的本质就是我们内在觉醒、清明的心，关键是去体认这个心，所有形式只是助缘，属于辅助条

件。当然，打坐是很好的禅修方式，对开启智慧不可或缺，但仅仅停留于此还不够。我们看古代禅师的修行，不仅在座上，还在座下的行住坐卧、语默动静中。把喝茶与禅修结合，就是古已有之的传统。

此刻，我们以这样的方式相聚，意义不同寻常。

一、问月几何

人间生死无常
世事兴衰变迁
可月亮始终那么看着
一代代的轮回更替
都不影响它到了初一十五
该下班就下班
该上班就上班

“月到中秋分外明。”当我们看着今晚的月亮，会产生什么样的感受，引发什么样的情绪？

古往今来，有大量借月抒怀的诗文。“海上生明月，天涯共此时”，是表达对亲人的思念；“人有悲欢离合，月有阴晴圆缺，此事古难全”，是描写离愁别绪……这些传诵千古的名句，至今仍会拨动人的心弦，引起人的共鸣。但要小心，此时正在进入凡夫心的系统。

此外，“明月几时有，把酒问青天”，是通过追问，引发对永恒的思考：明月什么时候有的？天地什么时候有的？“江畔何人初见月，江月何年初照人？人生代代无穷已，江月年年只相似”，则是由月光带

来的遐思：人间生死无常，世事兴衰变迁，可月亮始终那么看着。一代代的轮回更替，都不影响它到了初一十五，该下班就下班，该上班就上班。

这是世人由月亮引发的感怀和思考。那么，佛法智慧又是怎么认识月亮的？

二、心月朗照

我们不仅要赏外在的月亮
更重要的是去认识心月
认识心性光明
心光和月光是一体的
月光照遍十方
心光同样照遍十方

禅宗祖师常把菩提自性比作月光，“心月孤悬，光吞万象”。月亮高挂空中，不需要任何立足点，同时可以朗照一切。我们的心月也是如此，它是超越根和尘的，所谓“灵光独耀，迥脱根尘，体露真常，不拘文字”。

今晚的天空很清澈，看不到一片云彩。而当月光没有升起时，四周一片漆黑，什么都看不清，这是代表无明的状态。处在这样的状态，就会对心灵天空出现的念头不知不觉，然后不知不觉地制造烦恼和业力，并在不知不觉中被烦恼和业力推着走。

但要知道，在无明的背后，那轮明月从未离去。即使被遮蔽，它本身还是不垢不净、圆满无缺的。当

它显现时，可以照彻山河大地，让生命亮起来，让天地亮起来。有首偈颂大家应该很熟悉：“菩萨清凉月，游于毕竟空，众生心水净，菩提影现中。”无云的天空就是毕竟空，当心不落入设定、执著及念头的陷阱时，菩提自性就会朗然显现。菩提导航第四阶段所展现的觉性，就是一片无垠晴空，东方、西方、南方、北方、上方、下方都是无限的，没有尽头。

禅茶会上，大家都有一个杯子，上面写了四个字——“回归本心”。这是提醒我们：通过赏月来认识自己的本心，像月光一样澄澈、光明、皎洁的心。所以我们今天不仅要赏外在的月亮，更重要的是去认识心月，认识心性光明。心光和月光是一体的，月光照遍十方，心光同样照遍十方。

天空会出现云彩，遮住月光。但不论有多少云彩，月光依然在那里，只是暂时看不到而已。心灵天空也是同样。如果能认识内在的心月，安住于此，即使起心动念，也不会给自己带来困扰。但如果不能体认心月，而是活在云彩中，就会被念头左右，遮蔽本心。

三、安住当下

如果分心了，打妄想了
也不必自责
但要快速觉察到
然后把心带回来
继续安住当下即可
所谓“不怕念起，只怕觉迟”

认识到这个道理，就需要了解：怎么喝茶，怎么赏月，怎么禅修？

正念禅修无非是两大要领，一是专注力，一是觉察力。在泡茶过程中，我们要对投茶、注水、出汤的每个动作保持专注，此刻世间只有泡茶这一件事。喝茶也是同样，从端起杯子，送到嘴边，喝下茶汤，整个过程了了明知。同时对茶的味道和香气清清楚楚，但不做任何评判。这比关注动作的难度更大，因为我们会习惯性地被味道和香气带跑，引发贪著等情绪，或是一系列的相关联想。如果出现这种情况，就可以把重点放在对动作的觉察，这是比较中性的。因为我们是以喝茶作为禅修助缘，不是为了品评茶的滋味，

或寻找什么感觉，否则就本末倒置了。

在此过程中，如果分心了，打妄想了，也不必自责，但要快速觉察到，然后把心带回来，继续安住当下即可，所谓“不怕念起，只怕觉迟”。空性有两个特质，一是空，一是明。空，就是空旷无限，了不可得；明，就是了了明知，而不是像木头那样。

四、歇即菩提

对一切保持觉察
云彩出现，知道云彩出现了
云彩消失，知道云彩消失了
这个了了明知之心
是我们本来具足的
也是禅修需要体认的

除了正念喝茶，今晚要学习的另一种能力，是什么都不做，什么都不想。这绝非不知不觉，而是让心恢复它的初始设置。

我们坐在这里，感受月亮的光明向宇宙无限延伸，内心的光明也向法界无限延伸。这并不是说，我们在让光明延伸。不论我们是否看见，月光都照耀天地，这是它本来具有的功能，并不需要我们做什么。心也是同样，当我们什么都不做、什么都不想的时候，心就能呈现本具的光明，就像未被遮蔽的月光。

对本心的体会不需要造作，也不需要做任何事。这对很多人来说并不容易，因为我们一直都在做各种事，工作学习，吃喝玩乐，已形成做的串习。我经常

说，现代人最大的问题是没有休息能力，不能让心静下来，歇下来，就会很辛苦。包括我们学佛，要发菩提心，做种种利益众生的事。如果在做的过程中缺乏觉察，也会形成习惯，停不下来。

如何在做事过程中保持一种超然、自在，做了和没做一样？需要去体会内心的无作无为。此刻我们安住当下，单纯地喝茶赏月，不做其他任何事，同时去体会，这个什么都不做、什么都不想的，到底是什么样的心？

外在的不做什么容易控制，但让心不打妄想就不容易了，别人管不住，自己也管不住。其实禅修的重点不是压制念头，而是不刻意地想什么，对于自然产生的念头，不迎不拒，不贪不嗔，不取不舍，保持觉察即可。

没有打妄想的时候，知道自己没有打妄想，心如虚空般清澈。当念头生起时，看到念头的来去，不讨厌，不拒绝，也不跟着跑，安住虚空而不著空相，所谓“长空不碍白云飞”。即使被念头带着跑一阵，只要及时发现，就能把心带回，继续安住。

总之，对一切保持觉察，云彩出现，知道云彩出现了；云彩消失，知道云彩消失了。这个了了明知之心是我们本来具足的，也是禅修需要体认的。





Entering Chan Through Tea: Returning to the Original Mind

Master Jiqun

Translated by MPI Translation Center

Dharma Talk at the Moonlight Tea Ceremony, Summer 2022

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The moon appeared incredibly large during the last moonlight tea ceremony. Though we haven't seen it this time, the moon has always been there; it's simply the changing conditions that affect how it appears. When we hold a tea ceremony, it is not about drinking tea, but about turning tea drinking into Chan meditation—a practice of realizing our true nature.

What is Chan? A Chan master once said: "Chan is embodied in dressing and eating." Some may wonder: "Everyone eats and dresses, but why is that not Chan?" The Chan master explained: "People often eat and dress

with delusion, attachment, and discrimination. They are driven by greed, aversion, and ignorance, ultimately reinforcing them."

It is true for drinking tea as well. In recent years, tea culture has become popular. People pay great attention to the quality and variety of tea, the choice and arrangement of tea sets, and even the spiritual essence that tea represents. In tea spaces, we can often see decorative calligraphy with sayings, such as "Tea and Chan share the same taste," "Go Drink Tea." However, truly entering Chan through tea is not a matter of simply hanging up some decorations or saying a few words.

So, how can we transform tea drinking into Chan meditation? This is simple, yet not so simple.

It is simple because the essence of Chan is a pure and clear mind—a mind that each of us inherently possesses and that never leaves us, not even for a moment. As Master Fu Dashi said: "Each night, I rest with Buddha-nature in

my heart. At dawn, we awaken together as one. Whether sitting or standing, it is always by my side; in words or in silence, we share the same abode. If you wish to find where Buddha-nature dwells, listen to this very voice—it reveals all." In our Chan meditation, whether it is body scanning or mindfulness meditation, whether anchoring on the body or the breath, the goal is to guide everyone to experience this inner purity and clarity. Through practice over time, many of us may have touched this to some extent.

It is not so simple because we have been living in ignorance and delusion since beginningless time. Therefore, unlocking the purity and clarity of the mind is not easy. Even if there is an occasional moment of clarity, clouds of ignorance quickly drift in again, obscuring our true mind. They create delusions, disturbances, and countless distractions, preventing us from seeing ourselves clearly or our original mind. Thus, in addition to seated meditation, we must integrate Chan practice into all daily activities, so that we can gradually dispel the fog of delusion within our mind.

This entails training concentration and awareness in daily life—learning to eat, walk, and drink tea attentively. "Attentively" means allowing tea drinking to return to its original state—with mindfulness. Drinking tea is just drinking tea, free from discrimination, judgment, resistance, or attachment. More importantly, it is to maintain a clear and lucid awareness within.

Life is an endless accumulation. Every action of body, speech, and mind leaves an imprint within, marking our lives with the traces of samsara and reinforcing the strengths of our habits. These habits further drive the mind to seek outwardly—attaching to the five desires: wealth, sensuality, fame, food, and sleep; and pursuing the six sensory pleasures: sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and thought. Even toward this very cup of tea, our mind is full of discrimination—likes and dislikes, greed and aversion.

The unenlightened mind constantly seeks externally, chasing the superficial while overlooking the essential,

thought after thought. Therefore, the patriarchs taught that, "Do not seek outside yourself." A Chan Master of the Linji School put it this way: "If you wish to be no different from the buddha, do not seek outside yourself. A single thought, arising from a pure, clear mind, is your Dharmakaya, the truth body; a single thought, free from discrimination, is your Sambhogakaya, the enjoyment body; and a single thought, free from duality, is your Nirmanakaya, the manifested body. These three bodies are none other than the one listening to the Dharma at this very moment—do not seek externally, and their function will naturally manifest."

Why is it that simply not seeking externally makes us no different from the buddhas? It is because what the buddhas possess is also inherent within us; the enlightened mind they have realized is also present in us. The problem lies in the fact that delusions constantly arise in our minds, causing us to endlessly create and chase after mental images. It is like a monkey reaching for the moon's reflection in water—never attaining, yet forever chasing.

In fact, we fail to realize that we possess infinite treasures within, waiting to be uncovered. Cultivation is the key to unlocking them. At the beginning of practice, our mindfulness is extremely weak, like a newborn infant lacking strength. We must continually recognize and become familiar with it through meditation, just as an infant gradually matures into a strong adult.

Although the essence of the mind is pure and no different, sentient beings have different spiritual faculties, sharp or dull. Some beings naturally possess a pure mind, with sharp wisdom and superior faculties; with just a little guidance or practice, they can directly attain the state of Buddhahood. Others, however, have deeply ingrained mental impurities—too obstinate to be easily subdued. They must continually accumulate merits, clear obstacles, and remove mental defilements through mindfulness. To achieve this, we must follow the conventional stages of study, contemplation, and practice, along with various skillful means.

"The Seven Steps of Mindful Tea" we advocate is precisely a skillful means and a supportive condition tailored for modern people. Tea is an important part of life, serving both as a daily necessity and a symbol of cultural refinement. Since ancient times, it has been cherished by people across various circles. When tea serves as a vessel for Chan wisdom, we integrate the acts of brewing and drinking with mindfulness, creating an accessible and meaningful entry point for people from all walks of life.

Today we live in a restless age. People's minds are filled with delusions and distractions. In such a state, spiritual cultivation becomes extremely difficult. Therefore, we must make wise use of skillful means to bring the restless mind back to the present moment. Only then can we, through cultivating Samatha, unlock wisdom of contemplation and realize our original nature. "The Seven Steps of Mindful Tea" is tailored to address these common issues faced by people today. So, how can we align these steps with Chan meditation? The key lies in engaging the mind wisely in every step.

I

Step One: Greeting

Buddhist practitioners often talk about "Bodhicitta" (the Bodhi mind) and the mind of loving-kindness and compassion. However, these are often treated as mere slogans rather than being cultivated as genuine inner qualities. Why do we fail to cultivate them? Because we are indifferent to sentient beings, feeling that their life or death is beyond our concern. Since there is no connection, why would we feel the need to show compassion for them, help them, or benefit them?

When we practice the "Seven-Point Cause and Effect" method, it is essential to recognize all beings as our

mothers in past lives, appreciate and repay their kindness. These serve as the foundation for generating Bodhicitta. Then, loving-kindness and compassion arise, leading to extraordinary aspiration and ultimately to the arising of Bodhicitta. Cultivating gratitude encompasses appreciating and repaying kindness, which is crucial for practicing the "Seven-Point Cause and Effect" method because it helps us to connect with all beings and recognize their contributions to us.

Living in this world, we are both independent individuals and integral parts of a greater whole—sustained by all things and supported by all beings. We are here in this tea ceremony also because of countless causes and conditions. Therefore we should feel deeply grateful for all of them. The Buddhist teaching of "repaying the Four Great Kindnesses" involves appreciating the kindness of parents, teachers, the nation, and all beings, and aspiring to repay their kindness. When we cultivate gratitude, our hearts are filled with joy and gentleness, prompting us to consider how we can help others and contribute to society.

This forms the foundation for growing our compassion.

Moreover, it is essential to cultivate respect and devotion. Modern society advocates for individual freedom, viewing respect as lowliness and devotion as blind obedience. As a result, many people act without restraint and their minds become restless and unsettled. In fact, respect arises from admiration for those role models in life, and devotion comes from a sense of refuge in their ultimate spiritual destination. These mindsets benefit themselves first. Many people feel unparalleled peace when they see the statues of buddhas and bodhisattvas in monasteries. Why is that? It is precisely because their minds are purified by their own respect and devotion.

When we sit at the tea table with a grateful heart, our posture naturally becomes humble, and our movements are gentle, fostering a positive atmosphere.

II

Step Two: Preparing the Cups

"The true mind is free from arising, while the deluded mind arises in response to conditions." Ordinary people are easily influenced by the external world. In a noisy and chaotic environment filled with temptations, it is difficult to calm our mind. Therefore, it is necessary to first create an environment that is pure, natural, and serene. It can be simple, but free from dirt or disorder.

More importantly, we must maintain a pure mind. Talking about "pure mind" is easy, but achieving it is far from so. Although all beings inherently possess a pure mind, it has been veiled by ignorance, afflictions, greed, anger

and delusion since beginningless time. Therefore, the mind remains in constant confusion, lost in wandering thoughts, making it difficult for people to engage in practice. This is why a supportive environment is essential. The Amrita Retreat Center creates such an atmosphere, helping us settle our body and mind through a well-ordered life in accordance with the Buddhist teachings. Furthermore, through systematic meditation, we learn to interact with others with a pure mind, and realize our true nature through the view of emptiness. Only then can we let go of any issues that arise at any moment, remaining undisturbed.

Here and now, we prepare the cups with full mindfulness—with no distractions, haste or delusions. Throughout the process, we maintain clear awareness, being mindful of every movement and even the slightest changes. As a result, the mind naturally becomes calm. Like a pond of water—when still, it becomes pure; when pure, it reflects with clarity.

III

Step Three: Boiling Water, Observing the Mind

Sitting here, we sense the vastness of the sky and earth, and feel the gentle caress of the breeze. Amid the chirping of cicadas and the music that shifts between near and far, we quietly listen to the bubbling of water.

Listening is another form of cultivation. The *Shurangama Sutra* teaches "By turning inward to hear one's self-nature, one attains the supreme Way." Ordinary people listen by chasing after sound objects. This pursuit of six sense objects leaves numerous images in the mind. We then become influenced by these images, trapped in

worldly entanglements and delusions.

Listening to the water bubbling emphasizes the power of hearing. Is this power of hearing linked to the sound itself? If we focus solely on the sound, we may naturally think they are linked, since it is through sound that we can hear. However, the truth is that the two are not necessarily linked.

Now you hear my voice, the chirping of cicadas, the music, and the sound of boiling water. When I stop talking and the water ceases to boil, does the power of hearing still remain? It does. We then hear the sound of silence. When there is sound, we hear sound; when there is no sound, we hear silence. The capacity to hear remains constant, neither increasing nor decreasing.

We also call this step "Boiling Water, Observing the Mind." At this moment of pause, there is nothing we need to do; we just allow our attention to turn inward. This is the practice of turning hearing inward to observe

our true nature. Therefore, the focus is not on the water bubbling, but on experiencing the power of hearing and the clarity of the mind.

IV

Step Four: Warming the Cups and Sharing the Aroma

Everything arises from its own causes and conditions, so does making a good cup of tea. The rock tea we are drinking now is from Mount Wuyi, celebrated as the "home of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism for a thousand years," and renowned for its "tea of eternal mountains and waters." This tea embodies a profound cultural heritage. Mount Wuyi shares the same Danxia landform as Taining, where we are now. Taining represents the youthful phase of this landform, while Mount Wuyi signifies its maturity, exhibiting greater depth and richness. The tea nurtured there absorbs the spirit of the

mountains and waters, along with the essence of the sun and moon, manifesting unique quality and charm.

Beyond its material quality and cultural heritage, this tea leaf embodies all the information of the universe, echoing the saying "One can see a world in a flower or a buddha in a leaf." Modern holographic theories also suggest that every part of the universe contains the information and characteristics of the whole. Why is this the case?

When explaining the principle of "One is All," Master Dushun of the Huayan School taught that each phenomenon contains the entire universe, because the ultimate truth—emptiness—is indivisible. All phenomena embody this highest truth, and the truth itself is the same everywhere and cannot be divided. In this essence, the one and the all are not two—they are not different.

Every tea leaf we see also contains the essence of nature and cultural heritage. Only by understanding and respecting its causes and conditions can we reveal the energy within

the tea. This is especially true for aged tea. After being stored for ten to twenty years, it entails an awakening process to release its internal substances.

Warming the tea utensils is a preparation for awakening the tea. By pouring boiling water, adding tea leaves and then moderately shaking them, we awaken the dry fragrance of the tea, preparing for the following tea brewing.

V

Step Five: Brewing Tea and Awakening the Mind

When brewing tea, it is essential to choose the appropriate method that aligns with its inherent qualities. We need to gain experience through practice and make timely adjustments based on real-time observations. Even for the same type of tea, brewing methods vary due to the quality of tea leaves, processing techniques, and drinkers' preferences. All in all, it is important to respect both the tea and the drinkers—allowing the tea to fully express its essence and the drinkers to savor it like sweet dew.

We must carry out each step with mindfulness, staying

fully aware of our movements, the qualities of each infusion, and the reactions of the drinkers. We need to maintain focus throughout the process so that our mind can truly connect with the tea. If we become distracted, start chatting or lost in thoughts, we will fail to create a true connection with the tea even with the most skilled techniques, let alone cultivate mindfulness.

In mindfulness meditation, there is an exercise of eating a raisin. By carefully observing its color, texture and taste through rituals, people learn to cultivate mindfulness. Similarly, brewing tea requires a sense of ritual. This is not about performing elaborate or pretentious actions as seen in some tea ceremonies, but about performing each movement precisely, thoroughly, and at a steady pace—neither too fast nor too slow. Such rituals help the mind focus and settle into calmness. Otherwise, we tend to act on autopilot—in modern terms, without mindfulness.

The clear mind has always been present, but it remains unfamiliar to us because we seldom recognize or connect

with it. So we need to awaken it through meditation. Whether through sitting meditation, walking meditation, or tea brewing, the goal is to discover, recognize, and become familiar with this mind. Over time, you will realize that it is always there, full of strength.

Cultivation is not about creating something new or different from the original. Unlike aircraft carriers and artificial satellites which are entirely man-made, what cultivation reveals is the inherently self-sufficient mind—"It does not increase in the enlightened nor decrease in the unenlightened." Being unenlightened doesn't mean we lack anything. It is only because we fail to recognize the true nature that we need to awaken it through practice.

Ordinary people, deluded by ignorance, constantly chase after thoughts and cling to external distractions. This happens because we have not yet developed the habit of abiding in true mind, nor experienced the joy it brings. We do not realize that abiding in the true mind is the ultimate perfect ease. Therefore, we need to change the

habits of engaging the mind—allowing it to rest from constant seeking and awaken from confusion.

So, why can we connect brewing tea with awakening the mind? Because this practice embodies the principle of dependent origination. When brewing tea, we must choose the appropriate utensils and tea leaves based on the tea's characteristics, and use appropriate water temperature, pouring method, and steeping times. Only by harmonizing all these conditions can we fully reveal the tea's aroma and flavor. This requires a deep understanding of dependent origination, as any oversight in the process affects the overall result.

Dependent origination is a fundamental wisdom in the Buddha's teachings. It transforms how we view problems. Ordinary people are trapped in the dual attachment to self and phenomena, which shape their patterns of perception and desire. Guided by self-centered perceptions, they view the world through their personal feelings, judge others by their own standards, and pursue fame and

fortune to satisfy their personal desires. When everyone behaves this way, it inevitably leads to conflicts, oppositions, and disputes, bringing afflictions to themselves and causing suffering to others.

Therefore, Buddhist practice teaches us to follow the principle of dependent origination, and to respect all forms of life, and all things in the world. The Buddhist teaching of "adapting to conditions" means addressing issues in a way that respects dependent origination while adapting to the present situation. This represents life's great wisdom, which can free us from self-attachment and allow all things to coexist harmoniously.

We can apply this wisdom not only in daily life, but also in tea brewing. We should understand tea culture, respect its characteristics, and brew it with an open and clear mind. In this way, each cup of tea reveals its uniqueness and presents itself perfectly in this very moment.

VI

Step Six: Sharing the Tea Evenly

Chan Buddhism greatly emphasizes the ordinary mind. Once, someone asked Master Mazu Daoyi, "What is the Way?" Mazu replied, "The ordinary mind is the Way." This sounds rather ordinary and is often quoted in various contexts, as if many issues could be dissolved by embracing the concept of "ordinary mind."

What exactly is an ordinary mind? We may think we are ordinary people, living ordinary lives—so, isn't this present mind the "ordinary mind"? In fact, the ordinary mind we think is far from ordinary, as it is filled with right and wrong, likes and dislikes, beauty and ugliness, honor

and shame, and gain and loss. It is also filled with assessments, preferences, preconceptions, and expectations shaped by our life experiences, along with the emotions and mental activities that arise from them. None of these belongs to the "ordinary mind." Because we mistake the mundane mind for the ordinary mind, we fail to recognize the true depth of the "ordinary mind." The two minds are entirely different in Buddhist practice.

The ordinary mind is our inherent pure mind, unadorned and untouched, like clear water or a cloudless sky. Although this mind is innately present, it has been obscured since beginningless time. We must awaken it through practice; otherwise, it remains unseen.

During Chan meditation, I often guide everyone to accept all bodily and mental experiences with a fully open mind, without judgment, resistance, aversion, or attachment. This is to train the ordinary mind, allowing it to become like a mirror—reflecting both purity and impurity, the sun and moon, the sky and earth, as well as the

dark corners. Whatever it reflects, it reveals things as they truly are, without stirring any ripples within. It is also like a monitoring system: when a thief enters, it feels no dislike; when a distinguished guest arrives, it feels no joy. It simply knows what is happening in the present moment, without any judgment or emotional reactions.

Although we may not have an equal mind right now, it is already present within us. With the right methods and consistent practice, we will eventually realize it. Sharing the tea equally helps us cultivate this mindset. No matter who sits in front of us—whether familiar or unfamiliar, liked or disliked—just let go of everything and focus on sharing the tea equally. The cup used for sharing tea is called the "fairness cup," which embodies this principle.

As we share this cup of tea, there is no distinction of who has or who doesn't, whose tea is stronger or weaker, more or less. Through this tea of equal taste, we quiet the many deluded thoughts and begin to experience equality—in stillness and peace.

VII

Step Seven: Go Drink Tea

"Go drink tea" is an important koan in Chan Buddhism. According to the records of Chan Buddhism, many learners visited Master Zhaozhou, and no matter who came, the Master would guide them by saying "Go drink tea." Since then, this simple greeting has taken on extraordinary meaning. But it has also become a favorite saying among those who repeated others' wisdom without truly grasping it.

What distinguishes the two? In fact, the focus of drinking tea lies not in the tea itself, but in experiencing the pure and clear mind while drinking. With greed,

discrimination and personal preferences, even if we become skilled at analyzing and appreciating the flavor of the tea, we are merely advanced tea tasters. This has nothing to do with the Chan master's teaching of "Go drink tea." Only with concentration, awareness, and especially uncontrived awareness while drinking, can we enter Chan and resonate with the teachings of ancient masters.

In summary, the practice of "Seven Steps of Mindful Tea" is not only about brewing tea but also about embracing a mindful and slow-paced life. Furthermore, it serves as a gateway to guide us into Chan meditation, even turning the tea brewing into a form of meditation. Through this cup of tea, we express gratitude for all things, understand the principle of dependent origination, train our concentration, cultivate our awareness, and awaken our inner clarity of life.

Appendix 1:

Every Flower Blossoms in Its Own Time;

Every Encounter Is Once-in-a-Lifetime

Dharma Talk at the Lilac Tea Ceremony 2022

Today, we gather at this Lilac Tea Ceremony—drinking tea, appreciating the flowers and listening to the rain. Isn't it wonderful?

The Amrita Retreat Center is home to trees such as ginkgo, red maple and ancient plum trees. Initially, there were no plans to plant lilacs. Later, when a vacant patch of land was found, the idea of planting lilacs naturally arose. When I was studying at the Buddhist Academy of China, it was located within Fayuan Monastery, which was home to many lilac trees. During their blooming season, the monastery hosts "Lilac Poetry Gathering," a tradition

of poetry recitation and singing dating back to the Ming and Qing dynasties. Many historical figures participated in these grand events. When visiting Beijing during lilac season, I would often stop by to appreciate the blossoms.

As the lilacs are in full bloom, the idea of holding a "Lilac Tea Ceremony" has arisen. In the future, we can host tea ceremonies inspired not only by lilacs, but also by ginkgo, red maple and plum blossoms—even by every blade of grass and every tree.

I

No Need to Do Anything in the Present Moment

Tea and Chan have been intertwined since the Tang and Song dynasties. Tea served as the support for monastic practice as well as a medium for spreading Buddhist teachings to the public. In line with this tradition, we enrich tea ceremonies with the essence of mindful and slow-paced life, making them accessible to the public.

We have recently developed study materials for "Seven Steps of Mindful Tea" and "Seven Steps of Mindful Space," so that more people can learn and benefit from them. How to apply them then? We first apply them in

the Amrita Retreat Center as it is a showcase for mindful and slow-paced life.

Of course, our true purpose is not about the tea or the flowers, but about using them as opportunities for cultivating the mind. By engaging in these rituals, we allow the mind to let go of all distractions and settle into the present moment.

When lilacs are in bloom, do we all notice them? Probably not. Our minds are often elsewhere—chasing after thoughts and distractions—and so we fail to see the beauty right in front of us.

Tea ceremonies are precisely meant to guide our minds back to the present moment.

We sit here quietly—appreciating the flowers simply as they are, listening to the rain simply as it is. In this moment, there is nothing we need to do, only to be present with open awareness.

While drinking tea, peacefully savor its flavor and experience every part of the ceremony. From lifting the cup, to sipping the tea and allowing it to flow into the body, we become fully aware of all changes, while abiding in nothing.

II

Who Is the One That Drinks Tea?

How can we attain clear awareness? One of the Buddha's ten epithets is "Samyak-sambuddha," meaning "Perfect and Complete Knowing"—a complete understanding of everything, from the vast to the minute. This all-encompassing wisdom arises from a mind that abides nowhere.

Ordinary people tend to perceive everything through a focal point; once their mind focuses on an object, discrimination arises, which in turn leads to attachment and the stirring of emotions. In this state, everything else is

naturally overlooked. For example, when we are burdened with worries, we respond to the external world slowly. Only when the mind is free from clinging can we respond instantly, effortlessly reflecting whatever comes and goes.

We sit here with an uncontrived mind, for no purpose—doing nothing and thinking nothing. We hold no preconceptions, no expectations, and no attachments. Just keep the mind clear like a mirror, fully open to the flowers and trees, the sound of rain, and everything around. In this openness, maintain a continuous and stable awareness.

When lifting the teacup, we can also reflect: "Who is it that drinks the tea?" This inquiry can guide us toward realizing our true mind—the very essence of Master Zhaozhou's teaching, "Go drink tea." Ordinary people are always chasing outward—clinging to sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches and thoughts. Rarely do they turn inward to examine the mind that drinks the tea.

The tea ceremony itself is a form of Chan meditation. Through the ceremony, the mind returns to its original state—bare and unadorned, pure and complete, perfectly encompassing all phenomena.

With the insight of Chan, we engage in this once-in-a-lifetime gathering. In the ever-changing flow of time and space, this present thought spans through past and future—a single thought encompassing eternity.

III

Being with Oneself

In today's tea ceremony, we have experienced the shift from rain to gentle sunlight. These changes in nature reveal the beauty of impermanence. When we let go of preconceptions, expectations, and attachments, we can feel the rain nourishing us, and the sunlight warmly embracing us. This perfectly embodies the teaching of Chan, "Every day is a good day."

Once we have preconceptions, it becomes impossible for us to live fully in the present moment or to accept reality as it is. Instead, we cling to, chase after, and rely on external things, always trying to grasp something in order to

feel secure. In such a state, simply sitting still makes us feel aimless and bored.

In fact, doing nothing can be a positive state of mind, indicating that the mind is not deeply attached—or not attached at all. This is a necessary step in breaking free from subject-object duality, and a crossroad between external seeking and self-reflection. When we habitually feel the urge to think or act, the mind instantly falls into old patterns and forms cravings. When these cravings are not satisfied, we begin to feel lacking and insecure, and are swept further along the current of habits.

Here and now, all we need to do is to simply sit here—to be with ourselves, and to be with all things in the universe.

The mind inherently encompasses everything. When it abides in its original state, it is complete, free and joyful, lacking nothing. To realize this state of mind, we cultivate it through Chan meditation—by strengthening our awareness, we gradually reduce our reliance on external

conditions, bringing greater freedom to life.

I rejoice in everyone learning to "simply sit and do nothing."

Appendix 2:

The Mind Shining like the Moon, Settling in the Present Moment

Dharma Talk at the Mid-Autumn Moonlight Tea Ceremony 2021

Today is the Mid-Autumn Festival, a time for family reunion. We gather here to drink tea, appreciate the moon, and practice Chan meditation, creating this "Mid-Autumn Moonlight Tea Ceremony." Tea ceremonies make people feel relaxed while Chan meditation seems more serious. Then, how can we harmonize the two?

Chan practice has two meanings: one refers to Chan in meditative concentration and the other to Chan as embodied in Chan Buddhism. The former emphasizes the forms of practice, offering specific methods for adjusting the body, breath, and mind, ultimately aiming to attain

Samadhi. However, the latter represents Prajna wisdom, transcending all forms. It is not confined to sitting meditation but can be cultivated throughout daily life. Observing the mind while sitting is Chan, and so are dressing, eating, carrying firewood, and fetching water.

The essence of Chan is the awakened mind—pure and clear within us. The key is to realize this mind, while all forms serve merely as supportive conditions. Of course, sitting meditation is an excellent form of Chan meditation, essential for awakening wisdom. However, if practice is confined to sitting alone, it is far from sufficient. Take the ancient Chan masters for example, they practiced not only in sitting meditation but in all aspects of life—walking, standing, sitting, lying down, speaking, silence, movement and stillness. In fact, integrating tea drinking with Chan meditation has been a tradition since ancient times.

Here and now, our gathering in this way holds special and profound significance.

I

Asking the Moon

As the saying goes, "The moon is exceptionally bright at Mid-Autumn." As we gaze upon tonight's moon, what feelings or emotions arise within us?

Throughout history, poets have expressed their deep reflections through the moon. For example, the verse "Over the sea, the bright moon slowly rises; though far apart, we share this moment together." conveys a longing for beloved ones. Similarly, another verse reads: "People experience sorrows and joys, partings and reunions; the moon waxes and wanes, brightens and dims. Life has always been imperfect since ancient times." These verses depict

sentiments of separation. These timeless verses continue to resonate deeply with us. Yet we must be cautious not to slip into the patterns of the deluded mind.

In addition, when we read the verse "When did the bright moon first appear? Lifting my winecup, I ask the deep blue sky," it invites us to contemplate eternity: When did the moon come into being? When did heaven and earth begin? In another verse, we read: "By riverside, who first beheld the moon? When did the moonlight first shine upon humanity? Life passes on, generation after generation, without end. Yet the river moon remains, ever the same." This kindles a sense of wonder inspired by moonlight—life is impermanent, and all worldly affairs rise and fall. Yet the moon remains unchanged, ever-shining. Despite the endless passing of generations, the moon faithfully clocks in and out, keeping to its eternal pace.

These sentiments and reflections are inspired by the moon in the minds of ordinary people. Then, how to perceive the moon with Buddhist wisdom?

II

The Mind, Shining like the Moon

Chan masters often compare the inherent Bodhi nature to moonlight: "The mind shines like the moon in the sky, radiating its light over all." The moon, hanging high in the sky, needs no support, yet radiates its light upon everything. Similarly, our mind is just like the moon—it transcends both the sense organs and their objects, just as the gatha goes: "The true mind shines alone, free from sense organs and their objects; its true nature reveals itself, beyond texts."

The sky tonight is crystal clear, without a single cloud in sight. However, before the moon arises, everything is

enveloped in complete darkness—nothing can be seen clearly. This represents a state of ignorance. In such a state, one becomes unaware of the thoughts arising in the sky of the mind, unconsciously creating afflictions and karma, and unknowingly being carried away by them.

But we must realize that behind ignorance, the bright full moon of enlightenment has never left. Even when obscured, it remains inherently complete and never lacking—neither defiled nor pure. When it reveals itself, it can illuminate the mountains, rivers and earth, bringing light to life and the world. You may all know this gatha: "The bodhisattva, like the cool, clear moon, travels through ultimate emptiness; when the minds of sentient beings are as pure as still water, Bodhi appears within." The cloudless sky represents ultimate emptiness. When the mind is free from preconceptions, attachments, and thoughts, the Bodhi nature naturally reveals itself. The awakened nature presented in the final stage of the Bodhi Navigation APP is like an infinite clear sky, boundless in all directions—east, west, south, north, above, and below—with no end at all.

At the Chan tea ceremony, everyone drinks tea with a cup inscribed with the words "Returning to the Original Mind." This serves as a gentle reminder for us to discover our true mind through appreciating the moon—a mind as clear, bright, and pure as moonlight. So today, we are not only admiring the moon, but more importantly, turning inward to understand the true mind—the brightness of our true nature, just like the moon. The light of the mind and the light of the moon are one; just as moonlight shines across all directions, the light of the mind illuminates everywhere.

Clouds may appear in the sky, obscuring the moonlight. However, no matter how many clouds there are, the moonlight remains, even if it is temporarily unseen. The same is true for the sky of the mind. By recognizing the true mind and abiding in it, we will not be disturbed by the arising of thoughts. If we fail to realize the true mind, like the moon, we become easily swayed by the cloud-like thoughts—and our true mind will not reveal itself.

III

Settling in the Present Moment

Knowing this, we then explore: how to drink tea, how to appreciate the moon, and how to engage in Chan meditation?

Mindfulness meditation involves two main elements: concentration and awareness. When brewing tea, we stay focused on each movement—adding tea leaves, pouring water, and serving the tea. At this moment, brewing tea is the only thing in the world. The same principle applies to drinking tea: from lifting the cup, to bringing it to the lips and sipping the tea, we remain clearly aware throughout the process. Moreover, we should be fully aware of

the flavor and aroma of the tea, without making any judgment. This can be more challenging as we are habitually carried away by the flavors and aromas, triggering craving, or a chain of thoughts. If this happens, we can shift our attention to our movements, as this is a more neutral focus. After all, we use tea drinking as a support for Chan meditation, not as a way to taste the flavor or seek any particular sensations. Otherwise, we lose sight of the original purpose.

During meditation, if we become distracted or get lost in delusive thoughts, there is no need for self-blame. Simply keep aware of them, gently bring the mind back, and settle into the present moment. As the gatha says, "It is not the arising of thoughts but the delayed awareness that is of concern." The nature of emptiness has two characteristics: emptiness and clarity. Emptiness is vast, boundless and unattainable; clarity means clear and complete awareness, not dull like a piece of wood.

IV

Subduing the Deluded Mind Is Realizing the Bodhi

In addition to mindful tea drinking, another ability we focus on tonight is doing nothing and thinking nothing. This is not about being unaware but about allowing the mind to return to its original state.

As we sit here, we sense the moonlight extending infinitely into the universe, and the inner light radiating boundlessly into the Dharma realm. It is not we who make the light extend. Whether we see it or not, the moonlight naturally illuminates the world—this is its inherent quality and requires no effort from us. The same is true

of the mind. When we do nothing and think nothing, the mind reveals its inherent brightness, just like unobscured moonlight.

Realizing the true mind requires no effort and no action. Yet for many, this is challenging, as we are so used to doing things all the time—working, studying, eating, drinking, and seeking pleasure. I often say that one of the biggest problems modern people face is that they lose the ability to rest. When we are unable to calm the mind or take a true break, we become exhausted. Even in Buddhist practice, we resolve to cultivate Bodhicitta and engage in activities to benefit all beings. However, without mindful awareness, we may still get trapped in doing things all the time, without stop.

How can we transcend what we do with perfect ease—realizing that doing something is as empty as not doing anything at all? We can achieve so when the mind is free from effort or striving. We settle into the present moment, simply drinking tea and appreciating the moon, doing

nothing else. Meanwhile, we observe what exactly the mind is like when it is free from doing and thinking.

It is easy to control our actions, but much more difficult to prevent the mind from wandering into delusive thoughts—no one can manage this easily. The key to Chan meditation is not suppressing thoughts but refraining from intentional thinking. When thoughts arise naturally, we simply maintain aware of them—neither welcoming nor resisting, neither craving nor rejecting, neither clinging nor discarding.

When no delusive thoughts arise, we are aware of their absence and can feel that the mind is as clear as the void. When thoughts arise, we simply observe their coming and going without disliking, rejecting, or following them. We abide in the emptiness without clinging to emptiness itself. As the saying goes, "The vast sky does not hinder white clouds from drifting by." Even if the mind is carried away by thoughts for a while, as long as we notice it in time, we can bring it back and continue to

abide in awareness.

In conclusion, maintain awareness of everything—when a cloud appears, we know that a cloud has appeared; when it disappears, we know it has disappeared. This clear and complete awareness is what we inherently possess and what we need to realize in Chan meditation.

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