静心学堂 丛书
The Mindful Peace Academy Collection
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凡圣只在迷悟间

A Moment of Awakening that Changes Everything



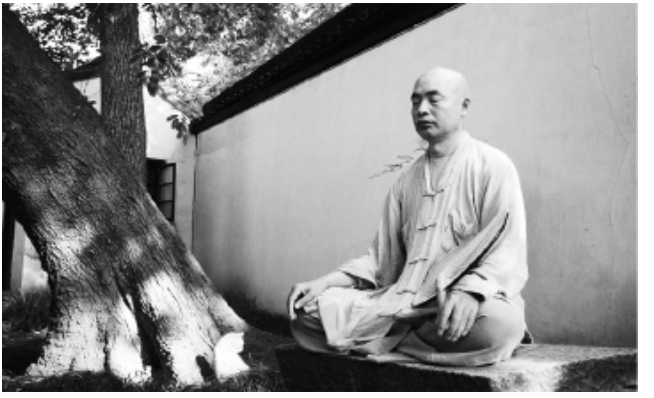
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欢迎各位参加“观自在禅修营”。这是西园戒幢律寺举办的首届禅修营，招收的学员主要面向心理学界。之所以这样定位，是因为这一领域的从业者对人类心灵有更多的了解和关注。而佛法修行所致力的，正是通过对内心的认识和观照，进而调整心行，改造人生。

目前，整个社会最大问题就是人的心态失衡，并且到了危机四伏的地步。近年来，频频发生的各类恶性事件，正是向我们敲响的一次又一次警钟。所以，对各种心理问题的疏导、调节和改善，不再局限于部分人群，而是全社会的当务之急。作为以自利利他为使命的佛弟子，我们对此有着不可推卸的责任。

但仅仅这样还不够，面对如此庞大的人群，我们的努力不过是杯水车薪。更何况，很多人对佛教充满误解与隔阂，甚至完全排斥。基于这样的现实，有必要和心理学界及社会各界有识之士携手合作，共同探讨，以期找到最易为大众所接受的、治标和固本相结合的方式。

我们目前所接触的心理学，主要是西方心理学，至今不过百余年历史。而有着两千五百多年历史的佛教，自古也有心学之称，因为它所关注的正是人类心灵。在佛典中，有大量关于心的教言，如“心生则种种法生”“心净则国土净”等。仅《大正藏》中，提及“心”之一字的即有四十多万处。可见，佛教正是以心作为认识世界和修行解脱的立足点。

当年，释迦牟尼佛在菩提树下夜睹明星，见性成佛。他所成就的并不是外在的什么，不是羽化成仙，亦非长生不老，而是对心性的透彻认识，对迷惑、烦恼的彻底解除。用佛教的话说，是证悟心的本质，也就是明心见性——这是人类最了不起的成就。因为发展科技改造的只是外部环境，而认识心性才是完善自

身的唯一途径。如果自身问题重重，即使有再丰富的物质条件，还是无法获得我们希求的幸福安乐。因为能感受幸福的不是其他，正是我们的心。

佛陀成道后，一生致力于传播真理，为我们留下了大量言教，后结集为经律论三藏，流传至今。所有这些经典及经典所开示的修行法门，都是引导我们开启生命内在的智慧，解除无始以来的迷惑烦恼。换言之，是启动心的正向能力，以此对治负面情绪。

事实上，这种负面情绪正显现出越来越不容忽视的影响和破坏力。近年来迅速蔓延的一些网络用语，如郁闷、崩溃、纠结等，无不是负面情绪恣意生长、不断侵占心灵空间的表现。若不及时对治，很可能会出现失控的局面。

对个人来说，心是幸福安乐的根本；对社会来说，心又是和谐安定的所系。所以，调心不仅是个人的需要，也是整个社会的需要。



一、见地与禅修
——佛法的两大内涵

禅修的方法就相当于技术
这是帮助我们调整
并改善内心的一门特殊技术
否则，我们即使能认出烦恼
但没有对敌的经验和武器
依然会在和烦恼的对垒中
束手无策，败下阵来

佛教在印度经过声闻乘到菩萨乘的弘扬，后流传世界各地，形成南传、汉传、藏传三大语系及众多宗派。虽然各语系和宗派的佛教呈现出变化多端的面貌，但主要内涵无非是两方面，一是见地，二是禅修。或者说，是理论和实践。由理论指导实践，又由实践深化对理论的认识，使之逐步落实于心行。

见地的作用，是帮助我们正确认识内在心灵及外在世界。人最大的问题，就是不了解自己。或许有人觉得奇怪，我们最熟悉的就是自己，难道还有什么不了解的吗？那么，你知道生从何来、死往何去吗？知道我们每天念念不忘的那个“我”是什么吗？知道“父母未生前的本来面目”吗？知道那些剪不断、理

还乱的烦恼藏身何处吗？如果不知道答案，我们不过是这个世界的茫然过客，除了随业流转，丝毫也不能改变什么。

改善生命的关键，正取决于我们对自身的认识程度。就像医生需要了解身体的病变状况方能对症下药那样，我们也要了解内心的种种问题，才能有的放矢地予以解决。但仅仅了解是不够的，还须通过相应的技术来落实，使这些见地真正发挥作用。禅修的方法就相当于技术，这是帮助我们调整并改善内心的一门特殊技术。否则，我们即使能认出烦恼，但没有对敌的经验和武器，依然会在和烦恼的对垒中束手无策，败下阵来。

不同宗派建构的修学体系，正是代表它所立足的认识与改善心行的见地，以及在这一见地指导下使用的禅修技术。这是一套理论与实践相结合的完整体系，其深度，在于对内心的透彻认识和究竟改善；其广度，在于契入角度的多样性和针对性，能为不同需求的受众提供帮助。

近几十年来，西方心理学界也逐步认识到佛法所

蕴含的无量智慧，纷纷吸收佛法义理及禅修方法，运用于心理学的研究及临床治疗，并取得了令人瞩目的成果。可以说，这既为现代心理学的发展注入了动力，也为弘扬佛法开辟了崭新道路。有鉴于此，戒幢佛学研究所也在组织专业人士翻译“佛法与心理治疗译丛”，希望将这类研究成果和操作经验介绍到国内。一方面，可使更多大众从中受益；另一方面，以此加强佛教界和心理学界的深度交流。

作为心理学从业者，大家有心认识佛法并身体力行地参与禅修，是很有远见的。我相信，这将是心理学未来发展的一个重要趋势。因为这是一个较为敏感和危险的职业，经常接触形形色色的负面情绪，如果自身没有过硬的素质，没有定期的督导和充电，是很容易受到困扰的。

二、真心与妄心
——修行的不同起点

虽然我们具有
和诸佛同样的觉悟潜质
但当下仍是活在妄心的世界
我们看到的并不是世界真相
而是被观念和情绪处理过的影像
其根源就是无明
——这才是我们的现实

佛教关于心性的理论极为丰富，主要有两大系统，一是真心的系统，一是妄心的系统。这也是修行的两个不同起点。

真心，即如来藏体系，认为“一切众生皆有佛性”，这是佛教和其他宗教、哲学不共的观点。佛教中，《楞严经》《楞伽经》《如来藏经》《涅槃经》等经典都在阐述这一思想。

禅宗也是建立在这样的见地之上。《六祖坛经·行由品》曰：“菩提自性，本来清净，但用此心，直了成佛。”菩提，即觉悟。慧能大师开宗明义，直接告诉我们：每个生命内在都具有觉性，这就是成佛的潜质。所以，成佛并不是痴人说梦，不是遥不

可及的幻想，当我们体认到内心本具的觉性，在某个层面就与诸佛无二无别了。这句话虽仅短短十六字，却振聋发聩——因为它为我们指出了生命的希望所在，出路所在。

我们还要知道，虽然有希望，但不能盲目乐观。我们不妨看看，现在的这个“我”是什么？抛开外在的相貌、身份、地位，剩下的无非是一大堆混乱情绪和错误想法。我们每天都忙于满足这样那样的渴求，实现这样那样的需要，但这些渴求和需要真的那么重要吗？真的必不可少吗？

事实上，很多人从未考虑过这些，只是随着自己的感觉，扑腾到这里，又扑腾到那里，终日忙忙碌碌。这颗心却依然动荡，依然找不到安身立命的所在。我们甚至不敢闲下来面对自己，因为这种面对会让那些貌似重要的追求变得不堪一击，这将让人多么沮丧，多么无所适从啊！

所以说，虽然我们具有和诸佛同样的觉悟潜质，但当下仍是活在妄心的世界。我们看到的并不是世界真相，而是被观念和情绪处理过的影像，其根源就是

无明——这才是我们的现实，也可以说，是我们生生世世面对的现实。因为我们虽有真心的频道，却从未启用，始终都在妄心的轨道中来来去去，生生不息。

立足于妄心的修行系统，是由认识现有心行的种种表现，从而有针对性地加以改造，转染成净，转识成智。其中最具代表性的是唯识宗，重要典籍有《解深密经》《瑜伽师地论》《唯识三十论》等。在这些经论中，详细阐明了认识和世界的关系，并以八识对心作了细致剖析。

通常，我们总以为自己看到的就是真实，故有眼见为实之说。但这究竟是什么意义上的“真实”呢？

比如，醉汉看到的是“真实”吗？色盲看到的是“真实”吗？虽然我们不是醉汉，不是色盲，而是彼此认同的正常人，但我们就看到“真实”了吗？

事实上，我们所看到的，只是世界呈现在我们认识上的影像，而不是世界本身。两者虽然有关，却不能混为一谈。若能认清这一点，不再执著于我们所以为的那些“真实”，很多烦恼就无从生起了。

唯识所说的八识有意识和潜意识之分。其中，前

六识（眼识、耳识、鼻识、舌识、身识、意识）属于意识范畴，第七末那识和第八阿赖耶识属于潜意识范畴。潜意识的概念，是由心理学家弗洛伊德在精神分析学说中提出的。但早在两千多年前，佛教就已认识到潜意识的存在，认识到意识活动不过是整个心灵世界中微不足道的一部分。

唯识宗认为，第七末那识正是潜在的自我意识，它时时影响着前六识的活动。人为什么会处处以自我为中心？为什么会认同“人不为己，天诛地灭”的观点？正是源于潜意识中的自私本性，也就是我执。

而第八识相当于超大容量的仓库，储藏着我们无始以来的一切生命信息。生命是无尽的积累，在我们解脱之前，这种积累是不会停止的。漫漫轮回路，我们时刻都在阿赖耶识中留下各种信息，佛教称之为“种子”，这是影响生命未来走向的潜在力量，也是决定性的力量。

如果不从这些根本着手，我们对心理问题的解决终归是暂时的。就像水流，必须从源头堵住，才能阻止它的漫延。同样，我们也需要找到心理发展的源头，

进而了解它的特征、作用和活动规律，并以正确方式进行引导，才能对心进行有效管理，从而阻止不良情绪，发展良性心理。

三、匮乏与自足
——生命的真假需求

这种匮乏
绝不是增加什么就可以填补的
而是要向内找寻
一旦开启生命内在的宝藏
我们就不再需要外在支撑了
就像那些水边林下的禅者们
虽然生活中一无所有
但不会觉得缺少什么

人最根本的问题，就是看不清自己。因为生命中除了觉悟潜质，还有另一种力量，那就是无明，就是不觉。所以，修行的首要任务是了解自己——知道究竟什么代表着你，什么是安身立命的根本。我们每天都在关注自己，处处以自我为中心。那么，我们现在认定的这些身份、相貌、想法等，究竟是不是“我”？事实上，这一切都是无常变化的，也许现在与你有关，但并不是你的本来面目，不是生命的真实写照。

觉与不觉，是佛法修行的两个核心概念。禅宗为什么会成为汉传佛教最直接的修行法门？——因为它的修行直接立足于觉性，这就极大缩短了凡圣之间的距离。

通常，我们总觉得自己是薄地凡夫，业障深重，烦恼重重，而佛菩萨则高高在上，耀眼夺目，所以不敢想象自己是可以成佛的。但《六祖坛经》直接告诉我们："前念迷即众生，后念悟即佛。"换言之，佛与众生的差别只是在迷悟之间，在觉与不觉之间。当你体认到觉性，当下就是佛；当你迷失了觉性，当下还是凡夫。

什么是迷失觉性？简单地说，就是把自己丢了。

佛陀在菩提树下悟道时发现："奇哉！一切众生皆具如来智慧德相。"但这一宝藏在重重无明和烦恼的遮蔽下，虽有若无，也就是佛陀接着所说的"只因无明妄想，不能证得"。这种无明，又使生命存在原始的匮乏感和失落感，使我们不断寻找外在支撑，好让这个"我"得到证明，得到肯定。问题是，我们寻找的这些支撑都是脆弱而无常的，每增加一个支撑，反而在增加一份垮塌的危险，增加一份不安定因素。

所以，这种匮乏绝不是增加什么就可以填补的，而是要向内找寻。一旦开启生命内在的宝藏，我们就不再需要外在支撑了。就像那些水边林下的禅者们，

虽然生活中一无所有，但不会觉得缺少什么。原因就在于，他们已体认圆满的觉性。

正如六祖悟道时感叹的那样：“何期自性，本自清净；何期自性，本不生灭；何期自性，本自具足；何期自性，本无动摇；何期自性，能生万法。”体认到这样的觉性，就如宝藏在握，还会为瓦砾动心吗？还会为尘埃追逐吗？

但我们迷失了觉性，不了解自己的本来面目，所以要四处找寻存在的感觉。《楞严经》谓之“迷头认影”——忘了头就在肩上，却把影子当作是“我”。我们把这种感觉投射到身体上，投射到身份上，投射到家庭上，投射到名誉上，投射到事业上，总以为抓住什么之后才会踏实。其实，我们抓住的只是一些虚幻而短暂的存在。更糟的是，当我们抓住这些之后，会在不知不觉中形成依赖。

人究竟需要多少财物才能过日子？答案是没有一定的。因为所有需要都是逐步养成的，对感情的需要，对事业的需要，对地位的需要，对生活条件的需要……一旦建立某种需求并执著于此，就会形成依赖。

久而久之，依赖又会成为习惯，成为不可或缺的需求。其实，这种需求并非事实上的不可或缺，而是我们自己设定的不可或缺。

当某种需求被满足，我们会有满足感；当某种需求不能实现，我们会有挫败感。当我们和别人比较，感觉自己的依赖更为优越，就会自大；感觉自己的依赖不如别人，则会自卑。一旦我们对依赖过分在乎，就会导致焦虑；而当这些依赖受到冲击，则会引发嗔心……所有这些情绪，都是自己一手缔造的。

我们制造了很多需求，同时也制造了随之而来的不安全感。因为世间每天都有生离死别，有企业倒闭，有频频发生的天灾人祸。只要用心观察，无常时时都在为我们揭示真相，告诉我们，永恒只是一厢情愿的幻想。这使我们的内心充满恐惧，担心失去这些就会失去自我。

那么，我们所认定的这些构成“我”的部分，究竟是不是“我”？其实不是。因为无明，我们发展出很多心理，发展出很多情绪，这些心理和情绪都是以自我为中心。而这个自我并不是真实的存在，只是我

们的错误设定，所以才会发展出种种烦恼，如瀑流般裹挟着我们，使我们沉沦其间，身不由己。

四、心念与轮回
——未来的发展方向

修行要从起心动念处下手
因为每一念都在积累不同的生命信息
可能是正面的，也可能是负面的
遗憾的是，我们往往对此一无所知
只关注看得见的外在成果
却忽略看不见的内在改变
只在乎拥有什么
却不在乎我是什么

《三主要道颂》中，形容每个生命都是“常被四瀑流所冲”。这四种瀑流，就是欲望、烦恼、见和无明的力量。欲望，就是对财色名食睡的希求，对色声香味触的希求。烦恼，就是贪婪、嗔恨、嫉妒、自私等不良心行。见，就是左右我们的观念和想法。无明，就是不觉的力量，令我们看不清自己，看不清内在的起心动念。

对于没有经过禅修训练的人来说，每当念头生起，心就会粘著其上，追随不舍，进而把这个念头当作自己。不知念头只是因缘所生，它的本身并不是你。因为缺乏观照，我们又会在不知不觉中陷入心念的瀑流，带来种种喜怒哀乐，也带来生死和轮回。

说到轮回，我们往往联想到前生后世，以为那是玄妙而不可知的另一重世界。其实轮回的内涵不仅于此。从广义上说，轮回就是一种心理重复。所以，我们不是此生结束之后才去轮回，现在的每个当下就处于轮回中。

做事业的人，因为对事业成功的渴求，会百般努力，不断追求，由此形成执著。这种执著又会继续强化对事业的渴求，进入下一轮的努力、追逐、执著。对事业如此，对感情、地位、权力的追求莫不如此。

每个人都在不同方面重复某种心理。因为重复，就把心理能量不断汇聚于此，使这个念头得到强化，进而成为生命主导。这样的例子在生活中比比皆是。对有些人来说，事业就是一切；对有些人来说，爱情就是一切；对有些人来说，权力就是一切。这个“一切”不是偶然的，也不是谁强加于我们的，是我们自己发展出来的。我们努力经营着，最后就像作茧自缚那样，把自己织进一个长不盈寸的空间，却把它当作了全世界。

这就是轮回——它的起点在我们的心，终点则是

我们执著的对象。当然，这个终点只是暂时的，因为它还会继续成为起点，展开下一轮执著。只要被某种心理抓住，我们就会不断就范，不断受其驱使。久而久之，这种心理就会形成相应的人生轨迹。有句话叫作“世上本来没有路，走的人多了，自然就有了路”，同样，心念也是在这样的不断重复中逐步定型，成为性格，成为人格。

所以修行要从起心动念处下手。因为每一念都在积累不同的生命信息，可能是正面的，也可能是负面的。遗憾的是，我们往往对此一无所知。只关注看得见的外在成果，却忽略看不见的内在改变；只在乎拥有什么，却不在乎我是什么。

其实，是什么远比拥有什么更为重要。因为外在结果和我们只有暂时的关系，而内在影响才是长期甚至永久的，才是决定生命走向的关键所在。那些不良心念，在转变之前，会生生世世缠绕着我们，就像如影随形的魔鬼那样，令我们不得安宁。如果听之任之，轮回是没有尽头的，会不断展现与之相应的生命形式，这就是佛法所说的“业力无尽，生死无穷”。

五、正见
——以观念改变心行

在佛法修行中
将见的作用比作眼睛
——看清方向
才能沿着正确道路前行
否则，即使付出再多努力
也可能南辕北辙
只要确立正见并加以运用
就能从改变观念到改变行为
最终改变人生

未来在哪里？我们稀里糊涂地来到世界，稀里糊涂地过了一生，最后稀里糊涂地离开——这就是多数人的现实。我们不知道，一旦错失今生，接着又是长劫轮回，很难再有改变命运的机会。学佛，就是帮助我们把握这一难得易失的宝贵人身，通过对自身的认识，来改造它，升华它。在此过程中，正见有着举足轻重的作用。

正见，即远离颠倒妄想的如实知见。当我们体证无常，就不再有执著恒常带来的烦恼；当我们体证无我，就不再有执著自我带来的痛苦。西方心理学的认知疗法，也是通过改变观念来解决问题。佛法所说的正见，不仅是要我们改变局部问题，更要帮助我们断

除无明，回归生命的本觉状态，这才是究竟解决一切心理问题的途径。

前面说过，佛教有不同宗派，并有各自所依的正见。虽然契入的角度不同，但目的是完全一致的，就是从不同角度建立对世界的如实认知。

在《阿含》经典中，重点是建立无常、无我的观念。很多人对佛教所说的“无我”心存恐惧，以为那就意味着“我”不存在。其实，“无我”并非否定这个色身的存在，而是否定我们附加其上的种种设定。正是这些错误设定的障碍，使我们看不到世间是无常的，看不到五蕴是无我的。问题是，这种忽略并不能改变无常的现实。我们习惯于有常、有我，一旦无常到来，将会构成突如其来的打击。反之，若能如实了知无常，就能坦然接受一切变化了——因为它本来就是世间的真相，无须改变，也无法改变。

中观经论重点讲述缘起性空的观念，告诉我们，一切存在都是由条件构成，是因缘和合的假相，没有丝毫自性可言。而我们对客观现象赋予的种种判断，如美丑、贵贱等，只是我们附加其上的标签，和对象

本身并无关系。但我们建立这套设定后，就会执著于此，将它当作真实。认为好看的确实好看，值钱的确实值钱，属于我的确实属于我——烦恼便由此而生了。如果我们了知这些存在现象的虚幻，那么，附加其上的标签就更是龟毛兔角，了不可得，还有什么值得在乎和烦恼的呢？

在唯识经论中，则是通过三性的理论帮助我们认识世界。所谓三性，即认识世界的三个层面。一是对外境的错误认识，为遍计所执相；二是缘起显现的影像，为依他起相；三是诸法的真实相，为圆成实相。比如这张桌子，我们以为它就是自己看到的样子，千真万确。但唯识宗告诉我们，我们看到的桌子，只是被自己认识加工过的桌子影像，和实际的桌子并非一个东西。这种区分，能帮助我们摆脱对现象的错误设定和执著。

在佛法修行中，将见的作用比作眼睛——看清方向，才能沿着正确道路前行。否则，即使付出再多努力，也可能南辕北辙。但抵达终点的道路并不是唯一的，我们可以从无常无我的正见入手，可以从缘起性

空的正见入手，也可以从唯识的三性理论入手。只要确立正见并加以运用，就能从改变观念到改变行为，最终改变人生。

六、选择
——以智慧作出取舍

我们对生命的认识达到什么深度
对人生就会作出什么选择
其中，对心念的选择尤为重要
因为它是左右未来生命走向的关键
从这个意义上说
选择心念
就是在选择我们的未来

我们一生都在面临各种选择，从生活中的衣食住行，到学业、家庭、事业，每一次选择都包含着取舍。这种取舍取决于我们的需求，需要什么，就觉得什么很重要，必须争取；不需要什么，就觉得什么不重要，可以舍弃。而需求又取决于我们的人生观和价值观。

我们对生命的认识达到什么深度，对人生就会作出什么选择。其中，对心念的选择尤为重要，因为它是左右未来生命走向的关键。从这个意义上说，选择心念，就是在选择我们的未来。如果一个人除了满足欲望外没有更高追求，就会走向动物的生命形态；如果一个人总是活在贪婪和渴求中，就会走向饿鬼的生命形态；如果一个人总是活在嗔恨和斗争中，就会走

向阿修罗的生命形态；如果一个人不断发展慈悲和智慧，以自利利他、自觉觉他为己任，就在不断向佛菩萨靠拢。

我们希望有什么样的未来，就要了解每个心念将发展出什么结果。知道哪些心念会给生命带来负面影响，哪些心念会给生命带来良性作用。因为心念虽然无形无相，但它的每一次活动都会在内心留下痕迹，成为储藏在阿赖耶识中的种子。如果这个念头不断重复，就会像种子得到滋养那样，发展壮大，最终成为我们的性格，成为我们的人格。如果开始就没有作出正确选择，结果将一错到底。

所以，佛教特别强调发心，一是出离心，一是菩提心。由出离心导向解脱，由菩提心导向成佛。如果没有正确的发心，即使同样在诵经、念佛、禅修，并不能得到佛法的真实利益，和解脱也是了不相干的。

大家来这里参加禅修，可能是希望了解一些禅修的基本方法，可能是希望对自身成长有所帮助，也可能是希望充电之后帮助更多的人。发心不同，从中获得的受益也是完全不同的。不要觉得念头是别人看不

见的东西，就可以随心所欲，放任自流。要知道，它的每一次活动都在对你的生命产生影响。这种影响可能在当下发生，也可能处于积累的过程中。正向心念会成为良性的生命信息，导向良性的生命结果；负面心念会成为不良的生命信息，导向不良的生命结果。这就是心灵的因果，每一念都不会空过，不会被忽略不计。

七、禅修
——以技术管理心念

禅修的作用
不仅在于管理心念
还能使心力得到极大增强
就像光，通常情况下只能用来照明
但以凸透镜聚成一点后
却能引燃火苗
心也是同样
若能将能量汇聚一处
就能“制心一处，无事不办”

我们了解到选择心念的重要性，就知道如何取舍了，但从知到行并不是说一说就能解决问题的。很多时候，我们想静，静不下来；想放下，放不下来，所谓“树欲静而风不止”。这就需要通过禅修加以训练，让这颗野马般动荡的心变得驯服，沿着我们希望的方向发展。

当然，禅修的作用不仅在于管理心念，还能使心力得到极大增强。就像光，通常情况下只能用来照明，但以凸透镜聚成一点后，却能引燃火苗。心也是同样，若能将能量汇聚一处，就能“制心一处，无事不办”。

禅修的方式很多。比如慈心观，是通过散布慈爱，帮助我们引发并强化慈悲心。佛随念，是通过对佛菩

萨功德的忆念和思维，让我们对真理和解脱生起向往之心。四念处，是帮助我们培养内在的觉知力和观照力，在念头生起时看得清清楚楚，了了分明。

每个念头都有它的指向，赚钱的人每天想着利益，争权的人每天想着权力，嗜酒的人每天想着美酒。我们从来没有去审视，财富、权力、美酒究竟是什么。一个念头起来时，马上就奔着这个念头而去，满足它的种种渴求。

今天的人，比任何一个时代的人更忙碌。一方面，因为欲望被无限放大；另一方面，我们比以往更需要逃避孤独。因为我们已经不习惯和自己相处，不习惯观照内心。那么，孤独会因为我们逃避就消失了吗？很多时候，我们只是貌似充实，貌似没有时间孤独，但这种心理还在，而且因为我们的刻意躲避，变得越发令人畏惧。

如果我们能静静地面对自己，和孤独相处，在观照力的作用下，孤独就会消失。这种解决方式才是一劳永逸的，逃避只能将问题暂时搁置一边。而在逃避的同时，我们又会制造新的心理需求。

我觉得，今天的人解决问题的能力很强，制造问题的能力更强。我们可能解决了一个问题，却制造了五个问题；解决了五个问题，又制造了二十个问题。我们不是在管理心念，而是一个将主权拱手相让的傀儡，在心念的操纵下疲于奔命。

本次禅修主要以慈心禅、四念处为主。此外，佛教中还有更高的修行，如禅宗的直指人心，见性成佛，是直接引导我们认识并开启内在觉性。当然，我们现在还达不到这个程度，先从内观入手比较稳妥。

改变生命不是一朝一夕之功。我想，你们这次所作的选择，将是人生最有意义的选择。因为你们是心理学从业者，也是服务社会的，所以将你们作为优先录取对象。目前，国内像西园寺这样能为大家提供修学条件的道场还不多，希望大家好好珍惜，在这七天中放下万缘，不要拖泥带水，将世间俗务背着不放。

学佛首先要放下。放下之后，才能安住当下。





A Moment of Awakening that Changes Everything

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Welcome to the "Guanzizai Meditation Retreat." This is the first meditation camp hosted by Xi-yuan Jie-chuang Temple, aimed primarily at practitioners in the field of psychology. We selected this audience because psychology professionals have a better understanding of the human mind than most. In Buddhist cultivation, our goal is to observe the mind, adjust our mental actions, and transform our lives.

Today, the most pressing issue in our society is the decline in people's mental well-being, which has reached a critical

level. The spate of malevolent incidents in recent years should serve as a wake-up call, showing us that addressing psychological issues is not just a concern for certain groups but an urgent task for the whole society. As Buddhist practitioners dedicated to benefiting both ourselves and others, we have an irrefutable responsibility to this cause.

While our efforts have made some progress, they only scratch the surface, considering the vast number of individuals who need guidance. Furthermore, many people harbor misconceptions and negative attitudes toward Buddhism. In response to this, we must collaborate with psychologists and experts from different fields to find the most effective and socially acceptable methods that address both immediate and long-term issues.

The psychology we are familiar with today is largely Western psychology, which has been around for just over a century. In contrast, Buddhism has a history of over 2,500 years, and has long been regarded as a study of the

mind. The Buddhist canon is filled with teachings about the mind, such as "The mind gives rise to all phenomena" and "When the mind is pure, the land is pure." In the *Taisho Tripitaka* alone, the character for "mind" appears over four hundred thousand times. Clearly, Buddhism sees the mind as the cornerstone for understanding the world and for achieving liberation.

Shakyamuni Buddha, upon seeing the morning star, became enlightened under the Bodhi tree. His enlightenment was not about attaining some external power, such as achieving immortality. Instead, it means eradicating all delusion and afflictions and gaining the most penetrating understanding of the mind. In Buddhist terms, he had realized the nature of his mind and directly experienced emptiness. This is humanity's greatest achievement. Although technological advancements can improve the external world, only by understanding our mind can we perfect ourselves. If we carry mental burdens, no amount of material wealth can grant us peace or joy. After all, happiness is something we experience through the mind.

After attaining enlightenment, the Buddha dedicated his life to spreading the truth. His extensive teachings, later gathered into the Tripitaka, continue to guide practitioners today. All these scriptures and the paths of practice that they have revealed aim to awaken our inner wisdom and dispel the confusion and afflictions that have plagued humanity since beginningless time. In other words, they help us tap into the mind's positive potential to counteract negative emotions.

These negative emotions' impact and destructive power have become increasingly noticeable. The rising popularity of certain terms on the internet like "depressed," "overwhelmed," and "entangled" reflects how much these negative emotions are intruding into and occupying our mental space. If we do not address them promptly, we may soon find ourselves in a state of crisis.

The mind is the cornerstone of happiness and well-being for each person, and it also shapes the harmony and

stability of society. Therefore, cultivating the mind is both a personal and societal necessity.

I

Insight and Meditation: Buddhism's Two Core Elements

Buddhism, after originating in India, developed from Sravakayana to the Bodhisattvayana. It then spread to many regions around the world, forming three major traditions—Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana—as well as other smaller branches. Despite diverse expressions of the Dharma across these traditions and branches, their essence remains twofold: insight and meditation, or theory and practice. Theory guides practice, and through practice, our understanding of theory deepens, allowing us to gradually embed them into our mental activities.

In Buddhist practice, insight helps us correctly understand our mind and the external world. Humanity's biggest issue is that we do not understand ourselves. Some may find this hard to believe. After all, we are most familiar with ourselves, right? But do we know where we came from before birth and where we will go after death? Do we truly know what the "self" is, the one that incessantly occupies our thoughts? Do we know our *original face* before we were born? Do we know where our tangled afflictions are hidden? Without answers to these questions, we are confused passerby in this world, unable to change anything, only drifting along the flow of karma.

The key to improving our lives hinges on how well we understand ourselves. Just as a doctor must diagnose a patient's condition to prescribe the right treatment, we need to know about the issues within our minds to address them. However, merely understanding is not enough. We must also apply appropriate techniques to make the insight transformative. Meditation serves as one such technique, helping us fine-tune and enhance our inner selves. Without

it, even if we recognize our afflictions, we may still lack the experience and tools to overcome them—leaving us feeling powerless and defeated.

Different Buddhist sects have developed distinct approaches that reflect their insights and meditation techniques. Buddhist cultivation, as a whole, is a complete system that integrates theory and practice. This system demonstrates depth through its penetrating understanding of the mind and methods to improve it, and breadth through the variety of approaches tailored to different individuals.

Over the past few decades, Western psychology has gradually recognized the profound wisdom in Buddhist teachings. Researchers have incorporated Buddhist principles and meditation practices into psychological research and clinical therapy, leading to remarkable results. This not only propelled modern psychology's development but also opened new avenues for promoting Buddhism.

In light of this, over the past two years, the Jie-chuang

Buddhist Institute has organized professionals to put together the *Series on Buddhism and Psychotherapy*, hoping to bring these research practices and findings to the Chinese audience. This will benefit a lot of people and cultivate richer dialogue between the Buddhist and psychological communities.

It is very forward-thinking of you, as psychology practitioners, to learn about Buddhism and participate in meditation. I believe this will be a key trend for psychology's future. Psychology can be a sensitive and precarious field, as it often exposes you to negative emotions. So, without strong personal qualities and regular guidance and recharging, it is easy to become affected.

II

True Mind and Deluded Mind: Different Starting Points in Buddhist Cultivation

Buddhism presents many teachings on the nature of the mind, which can be categorized into two systems: the system of the true mind and the system of the deluded mind. They represent two starting points in spiritual practice.

The system of the true mind, or of the Tathagatagarbha, teaches that "all sentient beings have Buddha-nature." This unique perspective sets Buddhism apart from all other religions and philosophies. Buddhist scriptures such as the *Surangama Sutra*, the *Lankavatara Sutra*,

the *Tathagatagarbha Sutra*, and the *Nirvana Sutra* all expound upon this idea.

Chan Buddhism is founded upon this insight. The *Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch* states in its first chapter, "Bodhi, our self-nature, is inherently pure. Awaken to it, and you will directly attain Buddhahood." Here, bodhi refers to enlightenment, and self-nature refers to our own essence. Master Huineng, the Sixth Patriarch of Chan, directly tells us that every life possesses the potential for enlightenment, the very potential for achieving Buddhahood. Thus, achieving Buddhahood is not a far-fetched dream but an achievable reality. By tapping into our inner potential for enlightenment, we are, in essence, no different from all buddhas. Master Huineng's pithy declaration has awakened many to the hope and direction of life.

However, although there is hope, we cannot be blindly optimistic. Let us look at who this "I" truly is. If we set aside our appearances, identities, and status, what often

remains is a chaotic mess of emotions and misguided thoughts. Every day, we are busy satisfying our desires and needs. But are these desires and needs really that important? Are they indispensable?

The truth is, many of us have never questioned this, simply drifting from one feeling to another, endlessly busy. This, however, does nothing to calm our minds or give us a sense of stability or purpose. We often avoid taking the time to reflect on ourselves because doing so might expose the fragility of our pursuits. What if our goals are not as significant as we thought? This realization will leave us feeling lost and disheartened.

Although we share the same potential for enlightenment as the buddhas, we are currently living in a world of delusion. What we perceive is not the world's true nature, but mental images filtered through our preconceptions and emotions, with ignorance at their root. This is our reality, the reality we have faced through countless lifetimes. Even though we have access to the true mind, we have never

used it. Thus we remain trapped in the cycle of delusion, life after life, unable to escape.

The system of the deluded mind is built upon our current state of mind. By studying how delusions manifest, we can selectively transform them—converting defilements into purity and consciousness into wisdom. The Yogacara, or Consciousness-only school, exemplifies this approach. Its foundational texts—such as the *Sandhinirmocana Sutra*, *Yogacarabhumi Sastra*, and *Thirty Verses on Consciousness-Only*—expound in detail the relationship between our consciousness and the world, and analyze the mind through the eight consciousnesses.

We often believe that what we see is the truth, holding onto the notion that "seeing is believing." But are we *actually* seeing the truth of the world? Is the world as seen by a drunk person the true reality? What about by someone colorblind? Although we may consider ourselves as normal people, not intoxicated or colorblind, do we see the "truth" as it is? Buddhism tells us that what we see are

merely images of the world as they appear to our cognition, not the world itself. Though related, they are not the same. If we can recognize this distinction and stop clinging to our perceived "truths," many of our afflictions will cease to exist.

The Yogacara school presents the concept of the eight consciousnesses, which include the conscious and the subconscious. The first six consciousnesses (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind consciousness) are part of the conscious, whereas the seventh, manas consciousness, and the eighth, alaya consciousness, belong to the subconscious. The concept of the subconscious was introduced by psychologist Sigmund Freud as part of his psychoanalytic theory. Buddhism, however, recognized the existence of the subconscious over two thousand years ago and understood that conscious activities are but a trivial part of one's mental world.

The Yogacara school teaches that manas consciousness, the seventh consciousness, represents our subconscious

self-awareness, which constantly influences the activities of the first six consciousnesses. Why are people self-centered? Why does the saying "put yourself first, or else face dire consequences" resonate with so many individuals? These behaviors stem from humanity's subconscious selfish nature, our self-attachment.

The eighth consciousness, or alaya consciousness, is like a super-sized warehouse, storing all the information of our lives since beginningless time. Life is an endless accumulation, and this accumulation will continue until we attain liberation. Throughout the cycles of rebirth, we constantly leave traces in the eighth consciousness, which Buddhism calls "seeds." These seeds are hidden yet decisive forces that shape the future course of our lives.

Without addressing these fundamentals, solutions to psychological issues will only be temporary. Just as a river must be dammed at the source to stop its flow, we must identify the roots of our psychological problems to understand their characteristics, functions, and patterns of

activity. By doing so, we can guide our mind in the right direction, manage our thoughts, curtail negative emotions, and foster a healthy mindset.

III

Insufficiency and Self-Sufficiency: Life's Real Needs and Perceived Needs

The most fundamental issue for people is that they can not see themselves clearly. This is because, in addition to our inherent potential for enlightenment, there is another force at play—ignorance, or delusion. Therefore, the foremost task of cultivation is to understand yourself—to know what represents you, brings you peace, and gives you purpose. We focus on ourselves every day, centering our lives around the "self." But are our identities, appearances, and thoughts truly the "self"? These aspects are all impermanent; they may be related

to us now, but they do not reflect our true nature or the essence of our lives.

Enlightenment and delusion are the two core concepts in Buddhist cultivation. Why has Chan Buddhism become the most direct cultivation method in Chinese Buddhism? It is because its practice directly bases itself on the enlightened nature, which greatly shortens the distance between ordinary beings and enlightened sages.

We often see ourselves as mere mortals, burdened by karmic obstacles and afflictions, while buddhas and bodhisattvas stand high above us. This makes it hard for us to even imagine achieving Buddhahood. But the *Platform Sutra* directly tells us: "If your previous thought is deluded, you are a sentient being; if your next thought is enlightened, you are a buddha." In other words, the only difference between sentient beings and buddhas is the shift from delusion to enlightenment. Directly experiencing the enlightened nature makes you a buddha in that moment. But if you lose sight of the enlightened nature, you

remain an ordinary being.

What does it mean to lose sight of the enlightened nature? Simply put, it means losing oneself.

When the Buddha attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree, he realized, "How marvelous! All beings inherently possess the wisdom and virtues of the Tathagata." But this treasure is obscured by layers of ignorance and afflictions, as the Buddha further explained, "it is solely due to ignorance and deluded thoughts that this realization remains unattained." Our ignorance fosters a primal sense of inadequacy and loss within us, driving us to seek external validations to affirm that "I" exist. The problem, however, is that these external supports are inherently fragile and impermanent. Each new support we add only heightens the risk of instability and collapse.

Therefore, we cannot remedy this sense of inadequacy by adding more things to our lives. Instead, we must look inward. Once we discover the inner treasure of life itself,

we will no longer depend on anything from the outside. Like the Chan masters living by rivers and in forests: they have nothing in their lives, yet feel completely fulfilled. This is because they have directly experienced the complete enlightened nature.

As the Sixth Patriarch marveled upon his enlightenment:

> How wondrous is my original nature, inherently pure;
> How wondrous is my original nature, inherently free from birth and extinction;
> How wondrous is my original nature, inherently complete;
> How wondrous is my original nature, inherently unshakable;
> How wondrous is my original nature, capable of creating all things.

When we grasp such a nature, which is so abundant and self-sufficient, why would we still be concerned with trivial, worldly matters?

However, having lost our true nature, we search everywhere

for a sense of existence. The *Surangama Sutra* calls this "forgetting the head to look for shadows," forgetting that the head is on our shoulders and instead mistaking the shadow as the "self." Similarly, we mistake our bodies, identities, families, reputations, and careers as the "self," believing that we will find stability if we hold onto them. But in reality, they are all fleeting and illusory. What's worse, the more we cling to these things, the more we rely on them without even realizing it.

How much wealth does a person really need to get by? The answer is not fixed. All our needs—whether for relationships, career, social status, and living standards—gradually take shape. When we allow ourselves to become attached to these cravings, they quickly turn into dependencies, and, over time, evolve into habits. Eventually, they become things we can't live without. However, these perceived necessities are not truly essential. We have just convinced ourselves they are.

When our cravings are fulfilled, we feel satisfied; when

they are not, we feel frustrated. When we perceive our dependencies as superior to others, we become arrogant; when we feel our dependencies as inferior to others, we engage in self-abasement. If we care too much about our dependencies, we may become anxious; if our dependencies are challenged, we may become irritable... All these emotions are products of our own making.

We have created many needs and, consequently, a sense of insecurity. Every day, the world experiences separation and loss, corporate bankruptcies, natural calamities, and human-made disasters. Constantly, impermanence reveals the truth, showing us that eternity is but a wishful fantasy. This often fills our hearts with fear, particularly the fear that losing what we depend on to impermanence is the same as losing the "self."

But are those things we believe to constitute the "self" truly us? No, they are not. Due to ignorance, we have developed many thoughts and emotions centered around the "self." This "self," however, is not real, but a

misconception. This misconception leads to raging currents of afflictions that engulf us, making us feel helpless.

IV

Thought and Samsara: The Direction of Our Future

The *Three Principal Aspects of the Path* states that every life is "constantly battered by the four currents." These four currents are the forces of desire, afflictions, views, and ignorance. Desire refers to the longing for wealth, beauty, fame, food, and sleep, as well as the cravings for sensory pleasures—sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile sensations. Afflictions include negative states of mind such as greed, anger, jealousy, and selfishness. Views are the opinions and thoughts that influence us. Ignorance is the force of unenlightenment that prevents us from clearly seeing ourselves and our mental activities.

For those untrained in meditation, each time a thought arises, their mind clings to it, follows it closely, and identifies it as the "self." They fail to see that thoughts are merely products of causes and conditions, not the "self." Lacking introspection, they unknowingly get caught in the flood of their thoughts, experiencing everything from joy to anger to sorrow, and enduring the endless cycle of samsara.

When we talk about samsara, we often think of past and future lives, believing it to be a mysterious and unknowable realm. But this is not the essence of samsara. Broadly speaking, samsara is a form of psychological repetition. Therefore, it does not only occur after death: samsara is in every moment of now.

Consider entrepreneurs, who often have a deep craving for career success. This craving compels them to relentlessly pursue their goals, leading to strong attachment to their career and its outcomes. This attachment, in turn, intensifies their craving for success, creating a continuous

cycle of effort, pursuit, and attachment. The same pattern goes for the pursuit of relationships, status, and power.

Throughout our lives, we often repeat certain mental patterns. These repetitions accumulate our mental energy around specific focal points, which grow in power and eventually dominate our lives. We can see many examples of this: for some people, career is everything; for others, love is everything; and for yet others, power is everything. When something becomes our "everything," it is neither accidental nor imposed by external forces, but developed by us. We pursue these "everything" relentlessly, only to find ourselves, like insects in a cocoon, trapped in a space too small to even fit our bodies, yet we perceive it as our entire world.

This is samsara. It begins in our minds and ends with the objects of our attachment. Of course, this endpoint is only temporary because it will soon become the starting point for the next cycle of attachment. As long as we are gripped by certain mental states, we will continue to yield

to them and be driven by them. Over time, these mental states will shape our life trajectories. There is a Chinese saying: "There were originally no roads, but as more people walked, roads naturally formed." Similarly, our thoughts gradually solidify through constant repetition, forming our character and defining who we are.

Therefore, the focus of practice should be on our thoughts and intentions. With each thought, we gather different influences, which can be either positive or negative. Regrettably, we often overlook this, focusing only on visible, external outcomes while neglecting our inner changes. We fixate on what we have instead of who we are. But who we are inside is far more important than what we possess, as external factors only influence us temporarily, whereas the impacts of our inner world are long-lasting, even permanent, as they determine the direction of our lives. Negative thoughts, left unchecked, can bind to us like shadows for countless lives, denying us peace. If they are allowed to persist, we will face endless cycles of rebirth, reincarnating according to our afflictions. The Dharma

describes this situation as "karma is inexhaustible, and samsara has no end."

V

Right View: Transforming Our Minds through Views

What is the future like for us? For many people, they arrive in this world confused, pass through their lives just as bewildered, and depart in the same way. They do not realize that if they miss the opportunity to attain liberation in this lifetime, they will be bound to samsara for many kalpas, with little hope of ever changing their fate again. Buddhism teaches us to make the most of this invaluable and fleeting human life: first by understanding it, then by improving it, and ultimately by elevating it. In this process, having right view is crucial.

In Buddhism, right view refers to the accurate understanding of the world's true nature, free from misconceptions and delusions. When we directly experience impermanence, we are freed from the afflictions of clinging to permanence. When we directly realize no-self, we are freed from the burdens of self-attachment. Western cognitive therapy also aims to solve problems by altering the patient's views. However, right view in Buddhism goes beyond addressing specific problems. It seeks to eradicate our fundamental ignorance and restore us to our original, enlightened state. This is the ultimate solution to all psychological problems.

As mentioned earlier, Buddhism has different sects, each with its own foundational right view. Though they approach the truth from different angles, they share the same goal: to understand the world as it truly is.

The Agama Scriptures focus on establishing the right view of impermanence and no-self. Many people fear the Buddhist notion of "no-self," thinking that it means:

you do not exist. But in truth, no-self does not reject the existence of our physical body; rather, it dispels the false assumptions we have placed upon it. These assumptions blind us from seeing the impermanence of the world and the no-self nature of the five aggregates. This is problematic because our false assumptions conflict with the truth of the world. If we are accustomed to the idea of permanence and a fixed "self," when impermanence inevitably hits, it can be a major shock. In contrast, by truly understanding impermanence, we can face all changes in life with equanimity, knowing that it is the truth of the world that need not—and cannot be—changed.

The Middle Way Scriptures emphasize the right view of dependent origination and emptiness, teaching that all existence is conditional: illusory appearances arising from the convergence of causes and conditions, possessing no inherent nature. The judgments we make of these phenomena—like beauty and ugliness, or value and worthlessness—are just labels we attach, having no relation to the objects themselves. However, once we make these

judgments, we often cling to them as truths, believing that attractive things are truly attractive, valuable things are truly valuable, and what belongs to us truly belongs to us. All these give rise to afflictions. But if we can understand the illusory nature of these phenomena, then the labels we impose become even more illusory and unattainable—what, then, is there to care about or be troubled by?

Yogacara teachings help us understand the world through the doctrine of the three natures, which describe our perception of the world in three aspects. The first aspect, the fabricated or imaginary nature, is a distorted perception of the external world. The second aspect, the dependent nature, is of the mental images arising from dependent origination. The third aspect, the perfected or consummate nature, is the true essence of all phenomena. For example, when we look at a table, we think it is exactly as we see it. But the Yogacara school teaches us that what we see is merely an image of the table, processed through our perception, and not the table itself. This distinction helps us break free from false assumptions and attachments

to phenomena.

In Buddhist practice, right view is like our eyes—we must see clearly to walk the right path. Without it, no matter how much effort we put in, we might still find ourselves going in the wrong direction. Fortunately, there are multiple ways to reach our destination, be it through the right view of impermanence and no-self, the right view of dependent origination and emptiness, or the Yogacara doctrine of the three natures. As long as we establish the right view and apply it, we can transform our thoughts, actions, and ultimately, our lives.

VI

Choices: Making Decisions with Wisdom

Throughout our lives, we make countless choices, from selecting daily necessities to making decisions about education, family, and career. Each choice involves trade-offs, influenced by our needs. We pursue what we believe is important and discard what we consider as unimportant. We make these judgements based on our needs, which are shaped by our values and view on life.

How deeply we understand life determines the choices we make. Among these choices, the decisions we make about our thoughts are particularly crucial, as they determine

the future direction of our lives. In this sense, choosing our thoughts is essentially choosing our future. If a person has no higher aspirations beyond fulfilling desires, they align themselves with the life state of animals. If someone is constantly mired in greed and desire, they move toward the state of a hungry ghost. If a person is perpetually caught in conflict and hatred, they mirror the life of an asura, characterized by strife. Conversely, those who strive to cultivate compassion and wisdom, dedicating themselves to benefiting both themselves and others, are continuously advancing toward the state of buddhas and bodhisattvas.

To achieve the future we want, we must understand the consequences of each thought, recognizing which thoughts positively influence our lives and which do not. Even though thoughts are shapeless and formless, each one leaves a mark, like seeds in the alaya consciousness. If we repeatedly entertain certain thoughts, they will grow, blossom, and eventually shape our personality and character. Thus, without making the right choices early on, our

journey will be flawed from the start.

Thus, Buddhism emphasizes the importance of "giving rise to aspirations," particularly the aspiration for renunciation and the aspiration for enlightenment. The aspiration for renunciation leads to liberation, while the aspiration for enlightenment directs us toward Buddhahood. If we do not have the right aspiration, chanting sutras, reciting the Buddha's name, and meditating will not bring the true benefit of the Dharma, nor will these efforts lead to liberation.

Everyone comes to this meditation retreat with different aspirations: some want to learn basic meditation techniques, some hope to enhance their personal cultivation, and others wish to recharge their energy to help more people afterward. These different aspirations will lead to entirely different outcomes. Do not think that because others can not see your thoughts, you can indulge in whatever comes to mind. Each thought we entertain impacts our lives, either immediately or cumulatively

over time. Positive thoughts become beneficial life information, leading to favorable outcomes, while negative thoughts do the opposite. This is how the law of cause and effect applies to the mind. Every thought matters.

VII

Meditation: Techniques for Managing Thoughts

We have grasped the importance of choosing our thoughts and learned how to make discerning choices. But putting this knowledge into action is not easy. Often, we want to remain calm but cannot quiet our minds; we wish to let go but find it difficult, reminiscent of the saying, "The trees desire stillness, but the wind keeps blowing." This is where meditation comes into play. It trains our restless minds, akin to taming a wild horse, guiding it in the direction we desire.

Furthermore, meditation not only helps manage our

thoughts but can also strengthen our mental power significantly. Just as light, typically used for illumination, can ignite a flame when concentrated through a convex lens, our minds, when focused, can achieve extraordinary things. As the saying goes, "Where the mind is focused, nothing is impossible."

Meditation takes many forms. For example, in loving-kindness meditation, we cultivate and deepen our compassion by learning to spread metta. The Recollection of the Buddha meditation helps us reflect upon the virtues of buddhas and bodhisattvas, fostering a yearning for truth and liberation. The Four Foundations of Mindfulness meditation enhances our inner awareness and observation, allowing us to clearly observe our thoughts as they arise.

Every thought has its direction. Money-driven people think of nothing but profits, power-hungry people are preoccupied with authority, and wine lovers long for fine drinks. However, we rarely stop and examine what

wealth, power, or alcohol truly are. Instead, when a thought arises, we immediately chase after it, fulfilling its desires.

Today, people are busier than ever—not only because our desires have been magnified, but also because we feel a greater need to escape from loneliness. We are no longer used to being with ourselves or reflecting inward. But can we truly escape loneliness by avoiding it? Too often, we try to appear busy and fulfilled to cover up our underlying sense of loneliness. But this avoidance makes the loneliness feel even more daunting.

If we can calmly face ourselves and make peace with loneliness, our power of observation will dissolve this feeling. This is the lasting solution. Avoidance only pushes the issue aside temporarily and often creates new psychological needs.

People today are very skilled at solving problems, but even more skilled at creating them. For every problem we solve, we create five more; and for every five problems we solve,

we generate twenty more. This is because we are not managing our thoughts. Like puppets, we surrender our sovereignty and let our thoughts pull the strings.

This meditation retreat mainly focuses on loving-kindness meditation and the Four Foundations of Mindfulness. Buddhism also offers more advanced practices, like the Chan school's teaching of "achieving Buddhahood by pointing directly to the mind and perceiving one's nature," which helps us directly experience and awaken our enlightened nature. Of course, we may not yet be at that level, so it is more prudent to start with these introspective meditations.

Changing one's life is not something that can happen overnight. But I believe the choices you make during this retreat will be the most meaningful of your life. As professionals in psychology and members of the public service sector, you are given priority to participate. There are only a handful of places in China like Xiyuan Temple, where you can find such ideal conditions for spiritual

cultivation, so I hope you will cherish this opportunity. In the next seven days, set aside all distractions and leave worldly matters behind.

Learning Buddhism begins with letting go. Only after letting go can we settle into the present moment.

国际静心协会、静心学堂简介

国际静心协会（简称 MPI）是 2021 年成立于瑞士苏黎世的非盈利组织，旨在向全球传播佛法智慧和禅意生活。

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