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

正念，使浮躁远离

Mindfulness Calms the Restless Mind



济群法师 著
Master Jiqun

大千出版社



【静心学堂丛书】

文化篇

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实践篇



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2011年讲于“观自在禅修营”

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一、浮躁的时代，浮躁的心

今天的人普遍活得很累
我们总要不停地做着什么
总要把时间塞得满满的
才觉得踏实
否则就会“闲得发慌”
是什么让我们如此不安
是什么让我们没能力享受清闲

很多人都在说，今天是一个浮躁的时代。这种浮躁表现在哪里？不在别处，就在我们每个人身上，在我们当下的心理状态。我们不妨看看自己的心，其中有多少妄想在此起彼伏，又有多少情绪在纠缠不休？在这些没完没了的念头中，我们就像波涛上摇曳的孤舟，时而被冲向这里，时而被甩向那边，片刻不得安宁。

现在有个说法叫作“亚健康”，事实上，这正是多数人面临的现状，似乎还没有病倒，但潜在的问题很多，健康的隐患很多。值得关注的是，亚健康不仅是身体上的，同时也是心理上的。对于现代人来说，交通和资讯的发达，已经使我们的生活空间比以往有

了极大拓展，但我们的内心并没有随着视野的开阔而开阔。正相反，它似乎有了更多的焦虑、恐惧、紧张，有了更深的忧郁、孤独、不安。

这些情绪就像不速之客，常常在我们毫无防备的情况下突然造访，并且轻易地反客为主。于是乎，我们只能在情绪的攻击下束手就擒，毫无招架之力。想静，静不了，心乱如麻；想睡，睡不着，辗转反侧；想放，放不下，患得患失。可以说，很多人甚至已经失去了休息的能力。原因是什么？就是当我们面对各种情绪时无法自主，只能无奈地处在被选择中。

当焦虑袭来，我们无法化解；当孤独袭来，我们无处回避；当忧郁袭来，我们无力对抗。我们只有被动地承受着，又或者，投入另一个目标来转移焦虑、孤独带来的痛苦。我们常常把时间消磨在没完没了的工作和娱乐上，以为这样就能把痛苦远远地甩在身后，让它追不上。事实上，这种做法只能让心变得迟钝，变得麻木，变得对痛苦不那么敏锐，不那么在意，除此而外，什么也改变不了。当我们拼命工作或纵情娱乐时，痛苦只是暂时潜伏起来，却从来不曾离开过。

所以，今天的人普遍活得很累。我们总要不停地做着什么，玩着什么，总要把时间塞得满满的才觉得踏实，否则就会“闲得发慌”。是什么让我们如此不安？是什么让我们没有能力享受一份清闲？没有能力静静地面对自己，和自己相处？

二、寻找调心之道

禅修就是一门调心的技术
掌握这门技术
我们就能让那些
反客为主的念头各就各位
从它们手中夺回主权
所以佛法自古便有“心学”之称
是帮助我们从认识心灵
到体证觉性的修学体系

原因不是其他，正是我们与生俱来的无明，以及由此带来的烦恼和痛苦。所谓无明，就是看不清自己的内心，看不清生命的真相，看不清那些此起彼伏的念头是什么时候生起，又是什么时候占据我们的心。我们以为，所有念头都是这个“我”想出来的，都是为这个“我”服务的。事实上，我们很多时候都没有能力主动选择念头，而是被念头所选择。

如果我们有能力选择，一定不愿意在负面情绪中无法自拔，彻底失控。当我们生气时，能让自己马上心静如水吗？当我们紧张时，能让自己立刻放下包袱吗？我们没有能力选择念头，也就没有能力选择行为，没有能力选择命运。这使得人生陷入一种身不由己的

状态。对于这样的生命状态，我们是否感到满意？我想，多数人之所以来参加禅修，正是不满于这样的现状，不满于这样的被选择。

禅修，是要帮助我们改变这样一种状态。这就需要看清那些来来去去的念头，进而对它们进行管理，进行规范。发展其中的正向心理，制止其中的负面心理。从这个意义上说，禅修就是一门调心的技术。掌握这门技术，我们就能让那些反客为主的念头各就各位，从它们手中夺回主权。其实，禅修并非佛教所特有的，而是世间和出世间的共法。两者的不同之处是在于见，这就需要以佛陀教导的法为实修指南，为检验标准。

佛法有三藏十二部典籍，也有众多的修行法门。前者是理论，是见地；后者是实践，是禅修。所谓见地，是通过学习佛法，了解心念的运作规律，了解心灵世界究竟有哪些内容，每种心理又是如何形成并发展的，以及调整的方法和次第。所以佛法自古便有“心学”之称，是帮助我们从认识心灵到体证觉性的修学体系。

三、贪嗔痴制造问题

负面情绪的根源就在于贪嗔痴
而由无明产生的种种错误观念
又对负面情绪起着推波助澜的作用
在这些情绪的攻击下
我们常常连对手在哪都分辨不清
自然不会有还手之力
结果就是不断纵容这些情绪
任其兴风作浪

佛法以缘起看世界。这就告诉我们，每种想法和情绪既非无中生有，亦非一成不变，而是在特定因缘和观念引导下形成的。错误的观念，正是负面情绪产生的土壤。

就像我们对某人或某物生起贪心，这种贪从哪里来？为什么我们会贪恋这个而非那个？为什么我们会被贪心驱使着，得不到就寝食难安，得到了又唯恐失去？正是来自我们的价值观、审美观，以及这样那样的种种观念。

我们觉得这个人或物很重要，很喜欢，当这种思维被反复强化之后，贪心就会随之增长，从动心发展为动力。最终，从开始的一点点贪念，逐步增长到铺

天盖地的贪，彻底地笼罩你，左右你，使我们不断地为之奋斗。而在奋斗过程中，这个对象的重要感又会得到进一步巩固。

贪是如此，一切心行的运作规律都是如此。我们对某人生起嗔心，反复想着他的坏处，嗔心就会迅速扩大。我们对自己生起执著，时时想着自己的长处，我慢就会随之增长。我们不妨观察一下，有哪种心理不是在相关因缘下产生并发展的？

身为凡夫，我们的心念往往和贪嗔痴密切相关。事实上，这正是我们之所以成为凡夫，之所以流转生死的根本。因而佛教称之为三毒，即危害心灵健康的三种病毒。其中的痴就是无明，也是一切问题的源头。

无明就是心灵的黑暗——看不清自己的本来面目，看不清内在的觉悟潜质。因为看不清，就会对自己产生错误设定，把种种不是“我”的东西，当作自我的替代品——比如身体，比如相貌，比如地位，比如身份。我们已经完全认同了这种替代，从未产生怀疑。对很多人来说，如果这个与生俱来的身体都不能代表“我”，恐怕是一个近乎荒谬的观点，并且远远

超出我们的理解和承受力。

事实上，我们安立为“我”的这一切，包括身体、相貌、地位、身份等等，虽然和我有关，但只是暂时而非永久的关系，更不能真正地代表“我”。如果对这点定位不清，就会产生坚固的执著，进而形成依赖。因为依赖，就希望它是永恒的，希望身体永远健康，希望相貌永远年轻，希望地位永远稳固，这样才足以成为我们的支撑，让我们觉得安心，觉得安全。

但我们面对的现实是，身体会死亡，相貌会衰老，地位会失去，身份会改变。不必说整个世界，仅仅是我们生活的这个城市，每天都有许许多多的人走向死亡，每年都有许许多多的天灾人祸发出警报。这些现实不断冲击着我们的安全感，使我们觉得这些依赖是岌岌可危的，是靠不住的。仅仅因为担心失去自己所拥有的，就足以使我们产生焦虑，甚至是非常严重的焦虑。一旦真的失去，孤独、沮丧乃至嗔恨也就在所难免。

所以说，各种负面情绪的根源就在于贪嗔痴。而由无明产生的种种错误观念，又对负面情绪起着推波

助澜的作用。在这些情绪的攻击下，我们常常连对手在哪都分辨不清，自然不会有还手之力。结果就是不断纵容这些情绪，任其兴风作浪，泛滥成灾。

四、戒定慧成就解脱

当内在的观照力产生
我们才有能力看清心的一切活动
在念头生起的每个当下都清清楚楚
因为清楚
就不会盲从，不会随转
当我们对念头和情绪保持距离
就有能力照破它，化解它

禅修所做的，就是帮助我们培养正念，把心带回当下。这样，我们才能从情绪和妄想的缠缚中脱身而出。如何才能把心带回当下？佛教中，最基本的修行就是戒定慧，又称三无漏学，是三种导向智慧的途径。其中又以戒为基础，所谓由戒生定，由定发慧。

今天这个世界为什么有那么多问题？物质条件日益改善，自杀率却居高不下；娱乐方式应有尽有，抑郁症却不断增多。而从环境来说，看看这些年频频发生的各种灾难，就知道我们生存的环境已经恶化到多么严重的程度。所有这些问题，归根结底，是源于人的心理问题，源于人类的生活方式。

我们的内心躁动，就会有错误的人生观；我们的

行为失控，就会有混乱的生活方式。现在有个流行词叫作“某某控”，而这个“某某”，可以是娱乐，可以是衣食，可以是工作。更具控制力的，则是日新月异的电子产品，以及伴随这些产品而来的种种功能，或者说，是种种诱惑。面对这些无所不在的诱惑，我们是无力自主的，只能被它们牵引着，不断追随一代又一代的新品。我们只知道新一点，更新一点；潮一点，更潮一点。却不曾看到，这种追逐使我们的心变得多么混沌，多么盲目。

人类如果不建立一种智慧的生活观念和健康的生活方式，是不可能改变心态，也不可能改变生态环境的。佛教所说的戒律，正是帮助我们通过简化行为和生活方式，达到简化内心的效果。如果把心比作一潭水，负面情绪就是其中的垃圾。我们的生活越复杂，制造的垃圾就越多，带来的污染就越大。

平常的人，心总是在东攀缘，西攀缘，片刻不得停息。这就会使内心的垃圾不断搅动起来，翻滚起来。通过专注一个所缘，其他念头就不再有活动机会。当妄心渐渐平息，我们会发现，原来每个人内心都有认

识自己的功能，都有觉知心念活动的功能。

所以在禅修过程中，需要有止有观。所谓止，就是使心持续安住在一个对象上，以此培养心的专注力和稳定性。在此基础上，可以进一步修观。就像一潭水，当杂质沉淀下来，它就恢复了原有的清澈，恢复了原有的照物功能。这时再往里边扔一根草，扔一块石头，就会看得清清楚楚，但又不会去追逐这根草，追逐这块石头。

当内在的观照力产生，我们才有能力看清心的一切活动，在念头生起的每个当下都清清楚楚。因为清楚，就不会盲从，不会随转。当我们对念头和情绪保持距离，就有能力照破它，化解它。

事实上，这种力量是心本来具备的。所以佛教提倡“自依止”，也就是依靠自己。在修行路上，每一步都要靠自己去走，每一个障碍都要靠自己去跨越，没有谁可以代替，没有谁可以包办。但仅仅靠自己还不够，因为心灵世界错综复杂，有暗礁，有歧路，有陷阱，有幻象。没有经验丰富的老师，没有切实可行的方法，随时都可能迷失方向，半途而废。所以，我

们在自身努力的同时，还需要方法，需要有善知识的指引，也就是“法依止”。

五、从内观到禅宗

如果把觉性比作阳光
那么尘垢就像遮蔽阳光的云层
如果云层太厚，就会遮天蔽日
使阳光难以照射出来
同样，我们虽然具有觉性
但因为烦恼深厚，尘垢重重
使慧光无法显现

佛，就是觉者，意味着生命的彻底觉醒。反过来说，众生就是迷者，是处在颠倒迷惑的状态。但我们不必气馁，因为佛陀已经告诉我们转迷成悟的方法。佛陀出现在这个世间的最大贡献，就是发现每个众生都具有觉悟的潜质，具有自救的能力。

这个觉悟潜质就是佛性。禅宗正是立足于这样一个见地，讲直指人心，见性成佛。所谓直指，就是通过特定手段，帮助学人以最直接的方法体认内在觉性，完成生命的自我解脱。这正是《六祖坛经》所说的“菩提自性，本来清净，但用此心，直了成佛”，每个人都具有本来清净、无垢无染的菩提自性，只要体认到这个觉性，我们在生命的某个层面就与佛菩萨无二

无别了。

也正因为方法直接，手段猛利，所以禅宗对学人的根器要求很高，必须上根利智方可。所谓上根利智，就是心灵的尘垢很薄。只有这样，才能在善知识的点拨下直接契入，彻见本心。如果把觉性比作阳光，那么尘垢就像遮蔽阳光的云层。如果云层太厚，就会遮天蔽日，使阳光难以照射出来。同样，我们虽然具有觉性，但因为烦恼深厚，尘垢重重，使慧光无法显现。

禅宗在唐宋时期大德辈出，盛极一时。有记载的开悟者达数千人，但宋以后却逐渐衰落。原因虽然很多，但主要在于两点，一是大善知识越来越少，二是学人根机每况愈下。很多人虽然喜欢禅宗，但多半流于口头禅，能依禅宗见地着手修行者为数不多，相契者更是寥寥无几。

我们看到这样一种现状，同时也看到，南传的内观正可以弥补这方面的不足。一方面，它和禅宗有某些相通之处；另一方面，操作起来较为容易。可以说，我们只要用心去做，都是可以修起来的。所以，“观自在禅修营”的定位，既有内观的观，也有禅宗的

禅；既有观照般若的层面，又有实相般若的层面。

有因缘来参加这样的禅修活动，非常难得。希望大家在这几天放下万缘，不论在座上还是座下，都要保持观照，精进努力。禅是无所不在的，是超越任何形式的。打坐是修行，吃饭是修行，走路也是修行。我们要把每件事都作为禅修的所缘，作为培养觉知力的所缘，时时提起正念，安住当下。让每一分都不要空过，让每一秒都了了分明。

大家在社会上都很忙，能够请七天假，想必不大容易。而寺院要组织这样一次活动，也要投入许多人力物力。希望大家珍惜因缘，莫将容易得，便作等闲看。现在社会上，佛学已成为热门，不少高校和机构在举办与佛学有关的课程，收费很高。有些人可能觉得交了钱会比较珍惜，会比较用心。但作为寺院来说，我们是以成就大众为目的。大家能在七天的活动中有所收获，才是我们最欣慰的事。从另一方面来说，你们唯有认真修行，才不辜负护持你们前来禅修的家人和同事，以及为大家创造禅修环境的道场，为大家提供各项服务的义工。





七日禅开示

Dharma Talks
at the Seven-Day Chan Retreat

2010年讲于戒幢佛学研究所

这次过来，正好是研究所的禅修周，机会难得。我平时四处弘法，真正和大家在一起的时候不多，这次会尽量安排时间参加禅修。

目前佛教界的修学，尤其是学院式的教育，过于偏向理论学习，在实修方面引导不足。很多佛学院的学生，包括一些法师，虽然懂得很多教理知识，但有能力用起来的却寥寥无几。就像一个学了无数治病方法的人，以为自己包治百病，但操作起来，却连头疼脑热都治不了。更糟的是，我们学的法虽多，可习气毛病也很多。甚至可以说，只是为了学而学，为了文凭而学，我们已经忘却学佛的真意所在。

是不是要学那么多教理？是不是学得越多越好？

其实，关键不在于学了多少，而在于为什么学，能不能学以致用，能不能解决当下的心灵问题。

如果不知道为什么而学，即使学得再多，只是增加了一些佛法知识，人生观不会因此改变，认知模式不会因此改变，起心动念不会因此改变，甚至生活方式也不会因此改变。我们所学的这一切，就像漂在水面的油花，看起来虽然斑斓，但对内心没有丝毫影响。在它的下面，还是原来的观念，还是原来的心态，还是原来的习气，还是原来那个十足的凡夫。这样的学，真是一件悲哀的事。

那么，所学怎样才能产生作用呢？我们需要做的，就是把听闻的法义转化为正念，转化为自身认识。

正念有两种，一是观念上的，一是心行上的。首先要确立观念上的正见，进而通过禅修，将之落实到心行。这一转化至关重要，否则，佛法还是佛法，我还是我，就像水和油，即使放在一个容器中，还是各自为政，互不相干。

在我们生命中，最重要的是什么？影响最大的是什么？左右未来发展的是什么？无非是一个念头。正

是这个念头，促使我们去选择，去发展，去经营自己的人生。在我们做出的决定中，有哪一项不是念头决定的呢？在人生道路上，又有哪一个片段离得开念头的作用呢？所以说，念头虽然无形无相，却有着举足轻重的作用。

可是，我们常常把学习教理当作目的，甚至把经营法务当作目的，却很少关注自己的心，关注自己的念头。换言之，我们都是活在不知不觉而非觉知的状态。

因为对念头缺乏觉察，我们就无法将所学教理用来认识自己，改造自己。我们更多只是将之当作一种知识，最后把搞研究、写文章当作目的。这是目前佛学院教学中相当严重的一个弊端——道理学得越多，我慢越重，凡夫心越重。

我不希望以这种模式来培养学生，也不希望戒幢佛学研究所成为这样一个研究所。因为这样的人既不能解决自身问题，也无法为社会带来真实利益。

当今社会最大的问题，就是人的心态不好。很多人因为这样那样的问题寻求佛法，寻求帮助。当然，

这一情况并非始于今日，早在佛世时就已存在。所以，佛陀说法不是为了谈玄说妙，不是为了建立一套形而上的思想体系，而是为了帮助人们解决心灵疾病，解决生命存在的烦恼迷惑，是非常务实的。正因为如此，佛陀又被尊为医王。他了解众生的病状，了解治疗的方法，能够根据对方的不同问题善加对治，毫无谬失。

作为大乘佛子，我们同样应该承担起这样的使命。这就需要有健康的心理素质，有解决问题的见地和操作经验，否则是无法解决实际问题的。即使能照搬一些经典中的道理，也不过是纸上谈兵，作用有限。唯有将所学教理落实到心行并融会贯通，才能在面对问题时成竹在胸，对症施药。这就需要通过禅修，通过切身实践，将书本中的法义进行转化，转化为用得起来的能力。

当下的五蕴身心，就是我们最好的道场。修学佛法，就要以此作为切入点。现代社会很重视管理，学校也设有许多相关专业。但他们所说的管理，只是管理企业，管理员工。而佛法所说的管理，是管理我们的心，管理我们的念头，这才是人生最重要的管理。

如果对心缺乏了解，我们就会陷入不良串习，陷入重重烦恼。所以，没有什么比正念更重要的。我们所学的教理，包括出家的生活方式，最终都是为培养正念服务的。树立正见，是为了培养正念；诵经念佛，也是为了培养正念；受持戒律，还是为了培养正念。如果没有正念，就不可能有健康的心灵，不可能有自在的人生，更不可能给予他人究竟的帮助。

佛法的所有修行，无非是解除妄念和培养正念，此外别无其他。我们必须认识到这个重中之重，否则，学得再多也是南辕北辙。

对学佛来说，善学和不善学有很大差别。善于学，即使所学不多，但每一点都能汇归到内心，使之产生作用。而不善于学的话，学得再多都是表面功夫，缺乏实际内涵。

什么是善学？这在很大程度上取决于我们的态度。我们有没有迫切的希求解脱之心？有没有强烈意识到烦恼对生命的过患？如果没有这样的希求和意识，学佛是很难相应的。此外，方法也非常重要。在未来的教学中，研究所将把禅修作为一项重要课程，

生活上的管理也会更加严格。

对修学来说，如法的生活也是重要助缘。佛世时，比丘们生活在水边林下，一无所有也一无所求，从而全身心地精进于道业，这就很容易和法相应，和修行相应。

禅修不是要修出什么外在结果，它所做的，是帮助我们认识内在觉性，这是每个人本自具足的，从来没有离开，也从来没有欠缺。但这种觉性却被无始以来的妄念之流所遮蔽，想用短时间的禅修来截断众流，是做不到的。这就需要从日常生活着手，让生活变得简单、清净。没有如法的生活，不能严格要求自己，在今天这个红尘滚滚的时代，我们简直是没希望的。

为什么说现在是末法时代？因为众生的烦恼特别重，干扰修行的诱惑特别多。所以修行者少，成就者更少。以往只要山门一关，寺院就能和外界彻底隔绝，故称方外之地。但在今天，很多寺院都成了旅游胜地，终年游人不绝，加上无孔不入的网络、手机，如果不具备相应定力，是很容易受到干扰的。

所以，七天的禅修不只是在这里坐一坐，而要摒

弃诸缘，带着觉察的心做每件事。不论座上座下，都要专注于正念的训练，专注于觉察力的培养。

希望大家在七天中过这样一种生活。

【一】

我们为什么要禅修？通过禅修，究竟要获得一种什么能力？

简单地说，禅修就是帮助我们培养专注力、觉察力和观照力。这种能力是心本来具备的，但因无明所惑，使心总处在不知不觉的混沌状态。这种状态就像泥潭那样，使内在的专注力、觉察力和观照力淹没其中，失去作用。

同时，无明带来的烦恼妄想，又在内心形成巨大的生命瀑流——既是心念之流，也是生死之流，轮回之流。在这样的瀑流冲击中，我们是不能自主的，时而散乱，时而掉举，时而昏沉。散乱，就是追逐外境；掉举，就是摇摆不定；昏沉，就是昏昧不觉。

这就是我们现前的心行状态。我们是否意识到这

种状态带来的过患？是否意识到，正是这种状态使我们活得很累，很疲惫？因为心总是在追逐这样那样的念头，忙个不停。更要命的是，这种忙乱是永久的，没有尽头的。只要没有解除无明，没有平息妄念之流，我们就会在追逐念头的过程中，不断纵容它，强化它，不断制造更具冲击力的瀑流。

如果不停止这样的追逐，痛苦是没有尽头的，轮回也是没有尽头的。禅修所做的，就是改变这样的生命现状，从心念之流中脱身而出，进而平息这些奔腾不已的瀑流——这是我们最重要也最紧迫的任务。不要以为出家就万事大吉了，很多时候，我们依然在原有串习中。刚出家时可能会有所收敛，如果不是刻意防范，这些串习很快会卷土重来。

禅修也是缘起的，离不开良好的助缘。打坐时，坐姿和身体状态都很重要，都是培养正念的增上缘。虽然说禅超越一切形式，但念头和气脉有一定关系，所谓“心息相依”。所以，各种禅修方式都很重视调息和调气的基本训练。此外，如法的生活也很重要。不同的生活方式，代表不同念头的需要。这些念头驱

使我们追求相应的生活方式，反过来，这些生活方式也纵容并发展了我们的念头。

所以佛陀特别制定戒律，帮助我们建立健康的生活，这是成就正念的重要助缘，所谓“由戒生定”。戒律的作用大体有两方面，一方面是通过止持阻止不良行为，这也是对不良心念的阻止。另一方面，戒律又以种种规范令我们简化生活，减少贪著，从而将全部心力用于发展正念，而不是在妄念之流中左冲右突，精疲力竭。

有了戒律的保驾护航，我们就容易把心带回当下。其实，当下的训练并不复杂，关键是认真对待——认真地走路，认真地吃饭，认真地待人接物。所谓认真，不是常人以为的较真，而是把心专注于当下。吃饭的时候，专注地吃饭；经行的时候，专注地经行，专注地走好每一步——抬腿、落腿，抬腿、落腿。

在座上的禅修中，则要选择一个善所缘境。大家不是第一次参加禅七，都有自己比较相应的方法。佛随念也好，观呼吸也好，只要认真去做，都是训练觉察力的重要基础。

【二】

对学佛者来说，生命中最重要的是什么？答案就是正念。

修行所做的一切，都是围绕这个核心——因为念头不仅影响了我们的过去，影响了我们的现在，更是主导未来生命走向的力量。

世人总是忙于学习、事业、家庭，这就是相应的念头在产生作用。事实上，我们早已成为这些妄念的奴隶，受其驱使，为之奔忙，结果却依然沉沦。如果不加改变，这种打工是没有尽头的，生命也是永远不能自主的。

这样的生命现状，从另一个角度说明了选择心念的重要性。这就需要知道，在我们的种种心理活动中，究竟哪些属于正念，哪些属于妄念？《百法明门论》就是帮助我们了解内心的一部重要典籍，告诉我们，心理可分为遍行、别境、善、烦恼等类。其中，遍行包括作意、触、受、想、思；别境包括欲、胜解、念、定、慧。此外，还有善心所十一种，根本烦恼心所六种。这些心所代表着不同的心理力量，由此构成生命

的延续，构成我们的心态和人格。

在这些心念中，我们往往是不知不觉的。因为缺乏观照，所以就不能自主，不知道未来去向。就像无根的浮萍，在轮回之流中盘旋往复，被激流冲向哪里，哪里就是随处的家。这样的生命，何其悲哀。

所以，我们应该赶紧培养正念，为正念而活——这不只是为了自己，同时也是为了普天下的众生，令他们也能拥有正念，拥有健康的心灵。因为正念决定了一切，所以，我们要把所有修学都围绕这个目标进行。

不论是受持戒律、闻思正见，还是读诵经典、修习忏悔，都要和正念联系在一起，因为这些都是修行的辅助手段。真正的修行是一种见地，一种用心，所以禅宗有“只贵子见地，不贵子行履”之说。见地达到了，我们所做的一切才能真正进入实质的修行，否则还是在外围打转。如果不是把所学教理用于发展正念，不仅不能成为建立正念的增上缘，甚至会成为妄念，成为增长我慢的助缘。

在生活中，我们能否带着正念去做每件事？这是

非常重要的一门功课。什么叫“生活禅”？就是带着正念生活，否则就还是“生活”，所谓的“禅”，不过是装饰性的点缀，是徒有其表的。因为我们还是生活在串习中——吃饭的时候，遇到对味的，贪心就现起了，反之，烦恼就生起了；待人接物的时候，遇到投缘的，执著就生起了，反之，嗔心就出动了。这些问题不会因为戴了一顶叫作“禅”的帽子，就发生实质性的改变，而是要从当下的每个念头用功，并把正念贯穿到一切行为中。

学过《百法》就知道，当我们接触外境后会有想象并安立名言，然后就会造作、取舍。在受想行识的过程中，如果没有正念进行监督，很容易发展出贪嗔痴。

用十二因缘来说，受了之后是爱，爱了之后是取，取了之后是有，然后就是生、老、死，这就构成了轮回。每件事、每个行为，都能建立相应的轮回。这些行为之所以会构成轮回，正是因为我们缺乏觉察，所以就会不断地爱，不断地取，不断地有，不断地生老死。

正念的训练，就是把心带回当下，不让烦恼再有可乘之机。最高的正念，是无念之念，就像《坛经》所说的“无念为宗，无相为体，无住为本”。无念之体，就是般若。当然，这对很多人来说并不容易。但也有我们可以修起来的正念，就是在做每件事的过程中培养觉知力。

有了止的基础，接着对当下所行保持观照并安住其中，不让心陷入贪嗔痴的状态。对于凡夫来说，我们不可能一下子就无贪无嗔。在觉知过程中，可能还有烦恼生起，但没关系，能对这些心理保持觉知即可。修觉知的过程，就是在培养正念的力量。

所以，我们做每件事都要作为训练觉知力的增上缘——那就是为正念而活。只要时刻都能如救头燃般的，带着强烈的警觉心做每件事，正念之力将不断强大。相应的，妄念就会逐渐弱化。

现在，我们就在坐禅中训练正念。

【三】

今天，禅修进入第四天，大家至少在外在形象上还过得去，不过也有个别在不停地动着。打坐一方面是要降伏念头，一方面是要降伏身体。这两件事都不那么容易，但我们别无选择。如果不加改变，苦日子是没有尽头的。比起轮回之苦，生死之苦，现在这点不适真的算不了什么。就像治病也要忍受针扎甚至开刀的痛苦，但比起恢复健康来说，每个人都会心甘情愿地忍受这种痛苦。因为一时之苦带来的，是长久的安乐，长久的自在。

所以，我们需要精进，需要忍辱。当然这个精进是有前提的，那就是已经找到正当的努力方法，已能安住于正念精进，而不是盲目用功，那是很容易出现问题的。而忍辱主要指安受苦忍，开始打坐，都会面临腰酸、腿痛乃至全身不适，同样要接受它、观察它，把它作为训练觉察、强化正念的助缘。

前面说过，整个佛法都是为建立正念服务的。佛教虽然有种种法门，有种种修行方式，但每个宗派都是以见地为核心。像阿含法门讲述了苦、空、无我，

这是解脱道的正见；唯识宗阐明了诸法唯识，中观宗论证了一切无自性空，这是大乘菩萨道的正见。这些见地是佛陀为不同根机者安立的用心方法，虽然契入点不同，但目标是一致的，那就是解脱。从修行来说，只要掌握并使用一宗正见即可，不必面面俱到。

见地的作用，就像金刚宝剑那样，能斩断无明，破迷开悟。所以八正道就是以正见为首，其次是正思维，最后是正念和正定。可见，正念和正定必须以正见为前提，以正思维为基础。

我们要学会用正见观察人生，观察五蕴，观察世界。四念处就是对治性极强的一种认知方式，以身、受、心、法为所缘，由此建立正念——那就是观身不净、观受是苦、观心无常、观法无我。

身就是色身。在这个五蕴中，九孔常流不净。所谓的青春美貌，不过是转瞬即逝的缘起假相，在它的下面，是同样的骨骼、血肉，同样令人作呕的污秽之物，有什么值得贪著和爱恋的呢？

受就是感受。在十二因缘中，受是非常重要的环节，因为对受不能正确认识，就会产生爱、产生取、

产生有，从而导致生和老死。如果了解受的本质，知道它是建立在惑业基础上，其本质都是痛苦的，我们就不会产生执著，进而发展出爱、取、有。

心就是念头。我们之所以被念头左右，主要是不了解心念真相，不知心念的缘起性和无常性。其实，每个念头都是众缘和合而成，也会随着因缘的变化而变化，只要不再执取它，发展它，左右我们的不良情绪就会消失。又因为心是无常的，所以才能对它加以改变，加以引导。

法就是诸法实相。佛法是以缘起对五蕴和世界进行归纳，缘起的特点，就是空、无我、无自性。这种无我的观察非常重要，如果认识到五蕴色身乃至每个起心动念都不是我，就能解除对“我”的执著；如果认识到世间种种乃至宇宙万有都没有自性，就能解除对“法”的执著。否则，我们是无法从我法二执中脱身的，这种执著会不断制造轮回的相续。

四念处的修行特点，是入手容易且次第清晰，可以作为初期禅修的重要基础。

【四】

举办禅七的目的，是通过集中式的训练，令大家在禅修上有所突破。未来的教学中，这将成为研究所定期举办的重要课程。

禅修，是佛教徒尤其出家人的重要修行方式。两千多年前，我们的本师释迦牟尼，就是在菩提树下通过禅修证道的。但在今天，如此重要的一种修行却被很多人所忽视，其结果，就是使我们离解脱的目标越来越远，甚至以为那是一种不可企及的境界，一种不再存在的传说。

长期以来，佛教界的修行更多是停留在一种表面形式，使所学和所修严重脱节。因为没有禅修，闻思经教成了理论研究，管理法务成了经营寺院。最后，虽然文章写了很多，但和学者没有区别；虽然寺院日益扩大，但和企业也没有什么本质的区别。这些问题，都是因为缺乏正见和禅修造成的。

虽然我们这里是研究所，但并不是学术机构。应该说，我们这里是修学机构——因为我们研究的重点是心而不是书本。而禅修正是这项研究的一个重要环

节，希望大家引起重视。

和出家人对禅修的忽略相反，社会上正有越来越多的人开始关注并参与禅修。西园寺举办的“观自在禅修营”，每次报名都非常踊跃。因为现代人活得太累，压力太大，所以需要解压，需要寻找调整身心的有效方法。禅修就是帮助我们培养内在的觉察力，从而平息内心躁动，获得安心的能力。

对于禅修来说，正念是必不可少的重要前提。这是我们生命中的无价之宝，但必须去训练，否则它的力量不会自动产生。更为重要的，则是具足正念，这样才能通过禅修达到破迷开悟的目的。因为禅修并非佛教特有的修行方式，而是印度各种宗教的传统，佛陀之所以能够通过禅修证得究竟圆满的智慧，关键还是在于见。

我们可以先以南传禅观为基础，获得一定止的能力。在此基础上，把所学正见用来观照心念，观照世界。比如唯识正见，是帮助我们了知一切境界皆唯心所现；中观正见，是帮助我们认识念头本身了无自性，当体即空。此外，禅宗也有很多直接的用心方法，但

起点较高，需要具备一定基础才能契入。

除了方法以外，我们还要端正对禅修的态度，不断练习。这个练习就是摆脱错误，重复正确。相对无始以来的串习力量，我们现在培养的正念是微不足道的，只有反复强化，才能改变这种敌强我弱的现状。但仅仅数量上的重复还不够，更要全身心地投入，就像禅宗说的，要成为一个“活死人”。

在正念力量培养起来之前，随意性的禅修是不可能达到良好效果的。所以，下次禅修还要加大力度。这里平时每周都有禅修，大家也参加过禅七，方法应该不是什么问题，主要是勤于练习，使研究所逐步形成重视禅修的氛围。

通过禅修对空性有所领会之后，你们会发现，对教理的理解容易了很多，这就是教和禅相辅相成。我们要有一个够用的正见指导禅修，然后在禅修过程中印证教理。所以说，学修并重不是一句口号，希望大家共同努力，把它变成一种现实，一种学风和道风。这个风气一旦形成，将成为研究所的一大特色。我相信，这种特色对当今的僧教育具有重大意义。





Mindfulness Calms the Restless Mind

Master Jiqun

Translated by MPI Translation Center

Lectured at the Guanzizai Meditation Retreat in 2011

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I

Restless Times, Restless Minds

Many people say that we are living in a restless era. Where does this restlessness manifest? Not anywhere else, but within each of us, in our present state of mind. Let us take a moment to observe our mind: How many distracting thoughts are bothering us? How many emotions keep us entangled? Amid this ceaseless torrent of thoughts, we are like a lone boat drifting on turbulent waves, tossed here and there, never reaching a moment of true peace.

The term "sub-health" is used to describe the condition many people face today. One may not be visibly ill, yet many underlying health risks remain. It is worth noting

that sub-health is not only physical but also mental. In modern society, advancements in transportation and information technology have vastly expanded our living space. However, our inner world has not grown more open along with our expanding horizons. Instead, many of us feel even more burdened by anxiety, fear, and tension, as well as deeper melancholy, loneliness, and unease.

These emotions arrive uninvited, often catching us off guard and effortlessly taking control. Therefore, we find ourselves completely defenseless against their dominance. We long for peace, yet our minds are restless; we long to rest, yet exhaustion leaves us unable to truly unwind; we long to let go, yet we are trapped in the constant worry of gaining and losing. In fact, many people have lost the very ability to rest. Why is that? This is because we find ourselves unable to take control of our emotions, leaving us with no choice but to passively endure.

When anxiety strikes, we cannot resolve it. When loneliness sets in, we have nowhere to escape. When worries

overtake us, we are powerless to resist. We can only passively endure—or throw ourselves into new pursuits to distract from the pain of anxiety and loneliness. We often immerse ourselves in endless work and entertainment, hoping to leave pain far behind. Yet in reality, this only dulls our minds, making us numb to pain but never free from it. Nothing truly changes. As we bury ourselves in work or indulge in pleasure, our suffering merely lies dormant—it never truly leaves.

In this restless era, people live in a constant state of exhaustion. We feel the need to ceaselessly work and play, as if only by filling every moment can we find a sense of security. Otherwise, even idleness unsettles us. What makes us so uneasy? What keeps us from enjoying a moment of mindful peace? What renders us incapable of calmly facing ourselves and simply being with ourselves?

II

Seeking the Path to Cultivating the Mind

The cause of restlessness is none other than our inherent ignorance, along with the afflictions and suffering it brings. In this sense, ignorance refers to the inability to clearly perceive our own minds, to understand the true nature of life, and to recognize when our thoughts arise and when they take hold of us. We assume that every thought is consciously created by an "I" and exists to serve this "I." Yet in reality, most of the time, we do not have the ability to actively choose our thoughts—our thoughts dominate us.

If we could choose, we would never allow ourselves to be caught in negative emotions and lose control. When anger strikes, can we quickly calm our mind? When stress weighs on us, can we immediately let go of our burdens? If we cannot choose our thoughts, how can we truly choose our actions, and ultimately, our path in life? Life then falls into a state of helplessness, where we can no longer act in accordance with our true will. Are we truly content with such a way of living? I believe many of you have come to this meditation retreat because you are no longer satisfied with such a passive existence.

Meditation aims to help us transform this state. It involves clearly observing the ever-changing flow of thoughts, managing and disciplining the mind to foster positive mindsets and restrain negative ones. In this sense, meditation is a practice of cultivating the mind. With this practice, we can observe our thoughts with clarity rather than being ruled by them, reclaiming mastery over our own minds. In fact, meditation is not exclusive to Buddhism, but rather a universal practice that applies to both the worldly

and the otherworldly. The main difference between them lies in the view, which makes the Buddha's teachings essential as both a guide for actual practice and a standard for evaluation.

The Dharma encompasses the Tripitaka and twelve categories of texts. In addition, there are numerous schools of cultivation. The Tripitaka offers the theoretical foundation and the view, while the different schools of cultivation emphasize practice and meditation. The view refers to the understanding gained through studying the Dharma: comprehending the patterns of the mind, exploring the various aspects of the inner world, recognizing how different mindsets form and develop, and grasping the methods and stages of their transformation. This is why Buddhism has long been regarded as a "study of the mind" that offers a systematic path from understanding the mind to directly realizing one's intrinsic enlightened nature.

III

The Root of Our Suffering: Greed, Hatred, and Ignorance

Buddhism views the world through the lens of dependent origination. This teaches us that thoughts and emotions arise under specific causes and conditions, shaped by our views. They do not appear out of nowhere, and they are constantly in flux. Misguided views serve as the very soil where negative emotions take root.

When we develop an attachment to a person or an object—where does this craving originate? Why do we long for one thing but not another? Why are we driven by greed, feeling restless when we cannot attain it, yet anxious about

losing it once we have it? The root lies in our values, aesthetic preferences, and other ingrained beliefs.

We might see someone or something as important and desirable. When this thought is repeatedly reinforced, attachment grows. A fleeting desire gradually takes root and transforms into a powerful force—a craving so consuming that it drives us to pursue it relentlessly. In this pursuit, the perceived significance of this object becomes even more deeply ingrained.

Greed operates this way, and so does the formation of every mindset. When we develop an aversion toward someone and fixate on their faults, our resentment rapidly escalates. Likewise, when we become attached to our own strengths, arrogance naturally grows. Let us take a moment to reflect—is there any mental state that does not arise and evolve under specific causes and conditions?

As ordinary beings, our thoughts are often entangled with the "three poisons" of greed, hatred, and ignorance.

In fact, this is precisely what defines us as ordinary beings and keeps us trapped in the cycle of birth and death. Buddhism refers to the three poisons as the primary afflictions that harm our mental well-being. Among them, ignorance, or benightedness, is the very root of all suffering.

Benightedness is the darkness that clouds the mind—an ignorance that veils our true nature and obscures our innate potential for awakening. Shrouded in this darkness, we construct misguided perceptions of the self, mistaking various external forms—such as our body, appearance, social status, and identity—as substitutes for the true self, even though they are not truly "me." So deeply have we identified with these substitutes that we never pause to question them. For many, the idea that even the body we are born with does not define the "self" may seem inconceivable, far beyond our comprehension and acceptance.

In fact, all the things we designate as the "self"—our body, appearance, status, and identity—are only temporarily connected to us and cannot truly represent a permanent

essence of who we really are. If we are unclear about this distinction, we develop strong attachments, which in turn leads to dependence. And because of this dependence, we long for their permanence. We wish for eternal health, everlasting youth, and unshakable status, believing that only their constancy can provide us with true peace of mind and security.

However, the reality is that our body is bound to decline, our appearance to fade, our status to waver, and our identity to shift. Not to mention the broader world: even in our city, countless lives end each day, and numerous natural disasters and human calamities send their warnings year after year. These realities continually unsettle our sense of stability, reminding us of how precarious and unreliable our attachments truly are. The mere fear of losing what we have is enough to breed worries, sometimes even overwhelming anxiety. And when loss becomes real, feelings of loneliness, distress, and even resentment become almost inevitable.

Therefore, the root of all negative emotions lies in greed, hatred, and ignorance. The misguided views born from ignorance further fuel these emotions, amplifying their impact. Under their assault, we often lose sight of what we are truly up against, leaving us defenseless. As a result, we unwittingly indulge these emotions, allowing them to run rampant and spiral out of control.

IV

The Path to Liberation: Precepts, Concentration, and Wisdom

Meditation serves to cultivate mindfulness and bring our mind back to the present moment. Only then can we free ourselves from the entanglement of emotions and wandering thoughts. How do we bring our mind back to the present? In Buddhism, the most fundamental practice consists of precepts, concentration, and wisdom—collectively known as the Three Trainings, a path leading to boundless wisdom. Among them, precepts form the foundation, as it is said: from precepts arises concentration, and from concentration emerges wisdom.

Why does the world face so many problems today? Despite continuous improvements in material conditions, suicide rates remain alarmingly high. Entertainment is more abundant than ever, yet depression continues to rise. As for the environment, the frequent disasters in recent years reveal how severely it has deteriorated. Ultimately, all these issues stem from the human mind and our lifestyle.

Our restless mind often leads to misguided views of life, and our lack of self-control results in a distorted way of living. Nowadays, there's even a term for this—being "a slave to" something, whether it's entertainment, food, or work. Even more gripping are the ever-evolving electronic devices and their countless functions. We find ourselves powerless against these ubiquitous temptations, constantly chasing after the latest trends. All we care about is having something newer, something trendier. Yet, we fail to see how this relentless pursuit clouds our mind and blinds our judgment.

If humanity does not cultivate a wise view of life and adopt a wholesome lifestyle, we can neither change our mindset nor our environment. The precepts in Buddhism simplify our daily actions and lifestyle, thereby fostering inner clarity. If our mind is like a pond, then negative emotions are the pollutants that contaminate it. The more complex our lives are, the more impurities we produce, and the more polluted our mind becomes.

We constantly cling to external things—our minds wander from one attachment to another, never finding a moment of stillness. This restless grasping stirs up the impurities within, keeping the mind in turmoil. By concentrating on a single object of attention, other thoughts cease to arise. As our mind gradually settles, we come to realize that within each of us lies the capability for self-awareness and the ability to observe our thoughts.

Therefore, in meditation, both Samatha and Vipassana are necessary. Samatha, or calm abiding, means to keep the mind steadily focused on a chosen object, cultivating

concentration and stability. With this foundation, we begin to develop Vipassana, or insight meditation. Imagine a pond—when the impurities settle, the water restores its original clarity and regains its ability to reflect. If a blade of grass or a stone is thrown into the water, we can see it clearly for what it is—yet we don't follow it or get caught up in it.

Only when inner awareness arises do we gain the ability to clearly observe all mental activities, recognizing each thought the moment it arises. With such clarity, we neither follow blindly nor get swept away. By maintaining a mindful distance from our thoughts and emotions, we gain the power to see through them and resolve them.

In fact, this strength is inherently present within our mind. That is why Buddhism emphasizes "self-reliance." On the path of cultivation, every step must be taken by ourselves, and every obstacle must be overcome through our own strength. No one else can cultivate the qualities of our life for us. However, relying solely on oneself is not

enough. The path of inner cultivation is far from simple, as the inner world is intricately complex—filled with hidden reefs, diverging paths, concealed traps, and deceptive illusions. Without experienced teachers and practical approaches, we can easily lose our way or give up halfway. Therefore, while we must put in our own efforts, we also need effective methods and the guidance of virtuous teachers. This is why Buddhism also emphasizes "reliance on the Dharma."

V

From Vipassana to Chan Buddhism

A "buddha" is a fully awakened being, one who has completely realized the true nature of life. In contrast, sentient beings are the unawakened, caught in delusion and misconception. However, we need not despair, because the Buddha has already revealed the path through which we can transform delusion into awakening. The Buddha's greatest contribution in appearing in this very world was his revelation that every sentient being has the potential to awaken and the capacity for self-liberation.

This innate potential for enlightenment is what we call

Buddha-nature. Grounded in this insight, Chan Buddhism teaches a direct path: directly pointing to the true mind, realizing one's nature, and attaining Buddhahood. This "direct pointing" refers to using specific methods that guide practitioners to directly realize their inherent clarity and thus attain liberation. As stated in the *Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*, "The self-nature of Bodhi is originally pure and undefiled. By simply using this mind, you can directly attain Buddhahood." All sentient beings possess this originally pure and undefiled Buddha-nature. Once we recognize this purity within, we become, in essence, no different from the buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Because the methods of Chan Buddhism are direct and rigorous, they require practitioners to possess a high level of spiritual aptitude. Only those with sharp faculties and keen wisdom—a mind with only a thin veil of mental impurity—can, under the guidance of a virtuous teacher, directly awaken to their true nature. If we liken our Buddha-nature to sunlight, then mental impurities are

like clouds that obscure its radiance. When the clouds grow too thick, they block out the sky and the sun, preventing the light from shining through. In the same way, although each of us inherently possesses the Buddha-nature, the heavy accumulation of afflictions and mental impurities conceals the light of wisdom, keeping it from fully manifesting.

Chan Buddhism flourished during the Tang and Song dynasties, a time when great masters emerged in abundance. According to historical records, thousands of practitioners attained enlightenment. However, after the Song Dynasty, this number gradually declined. While many factors contributed to this, two primary causes stand out: the dwindling number of virtuous teachers and the weakening spiritual aptitudes among practitioners. Although many people still express interest in Chan, most remain at the level of mere rhetoric. Few are able to ground their practice in the genuine principles of Chan, and even fewer truly resonate with its essence.

While Chan Buddhism faces certain limitations in contemporary practice, we find that Vipassana meditation from Theravada tradition can help address these limits. Vipassana shares some underlying principles with Chan, but its methods are generally more accessible. In this sense, with sincere effort, we can all undertake the practice. The Guanzizai Meditation Retreat brings together the contemplative awareness of Vipassana and the direct realization of Chan. It embodies both the wisdom of contemplation and the wisdom of ultimate reality.

It is a precious opportunity to join a meditation retreat like this. I hope everyone can set aside all worldly concerns during these few days. Whether it is in sitting meditation or in other activities, stay mindful and diligent in your practice. Chan is not confined to any particular form—it permeates every aspect of life. Sitting meditation is Chan, eating attentively is Chan, and walking mindfully is also Chan. Every moment can serve as a meditation opportunity to cultivate awareness. Let us nurture mindfulness and remain fully present in each moment. Ensure that no

moment passes in vain, and every second is lived with clarity and presence.

You all lead busy lives, and taking seven days off from work is no small task. Similarly, organizing such a big event at the monastery requires a lot of human and material resources. Let us not take for granted what comes easily, but instead, cherish it with a grateful mind.

In today's society, Buddhist studies have become increasingly popular, with many universities and institutions offering courses related to Buddhism, often with high tuition. Some may feel that by paying for these courses, they will value the experience more and take the teachings more seriously. However, for the monastery, our goal is to help all sentient beings achieve awakening. The greatest joy for us is to see you gain something meaningful during this seven-day retreat. On the other hand, only by practicing diligently can you honor the support of your family and colleagues who have helped bring you to this retreat. It is also a way to show your

appreciation for the monastery that has created this environment for your practice and the volunteers who have provided various services.

Appendix

Dharma Talks at the Seven-Day Chan Retreat

Lectured at the Jiechuang Buddhist Research Institute
in 2010

It is a rare opportunity to be here during the meditation week. Since I am often away teaching Dharma, I seldom have the chance to spend time with everyone. This time, I will do my best to join the meditation sessions.

Currently, Buddhist education, especially in monastic colleges, focuses on theoretical studies but lacks sufficient practical guidance. Many students in Buddhist academies, including some masters, know loads of theory, but very few can actually put it to use. It is like a doctor who learns countless cures, thinking they can heal any disease, but

in reality, cannot even treat a headache. Even worse, our Dharma knowledge grows, but our ingrained habits and flaws do not diminish. We are just studying for the sake of study or for diplomas, losing sight of why we walk the Buddhist path.

Do we really need to learn so many teachings? Is learning more always better? The truth is—what matters is not how much we study, but why we learn it, whether we can apply it, and whether we can resolve current spiritual issues.

If we do not know why we are learning, then no matter how much we study, all we gain is more Buddhist knowledge—our worldview will not change, our way of thinking will not change, our thoughts will not change, and our way of life will not change. All this learning becomes like mixing oil with water: it may glisten with color, but never sinks in. Beneath the surface, it is still the same old views, the same old mindset, the same old habits—the same utterly unawakened being. Learning like this is

truly a sad thing.

Then, how can our learning make a difference? We need to convert the teachings we have learned into mindfulness and our own understanding.

There are two kinds of mindfulness: conceptual and practical. First, we need to establish the right views conceptually, and then implement them through meditation. This transformation is crucial; otherwise, the Dharma is still the Dharma, and I am still me. Like oil and water, even in the same vessel, they still stay apart, never really mixing.

What matters the most in our lives? What influences us the most? What determines our future? None other than a single thought. It is this thought that prompts us to choose, to develop, and to manage our lives. Is any decision we make free from its command? Does any moment on life's journey escape its influence? Thus, though formless, our thoughts wield decisive power.

However, we often take studying the teachings or even managing Dharma affairs as our goals, rather than focusing on our thoughts and mental states. In other words, we are living in a state of unawareness instead of awareness.

Because we lack awareness of our thoughts, we are unable to use the teachings we have learned to understand and transform ourselves. Instead, we merely treat them as knowledge, making research and essay writing our goals. This is a serious flaw in our current Buddhist academies—the more we learn, the more arrogant we become, and the stronger our deluded mind grows.

I do not wish to train my students in this way, nor do I want the Jiechuang Buddhist Research Institute to become such an institute. Because individuals like this can neither resolve their own afflictions nor bring real benefits to society.

The greatest problem of today's society is people's unwholesome state of mind. Many turn to the Dharma for

help because of various issues in their lives. This phenomenon did not originate today—it has existed since the time of the Buddha. Thus, the Buddha taught not to engage in abstract speculation, nor to create a metaphysical system. Instead, he taught to help people cure mental issues and liberate themselves from confusion and affliction, which is a profoundly practical approach. Therefore, he is revered as the King of Physicians, diagnosing and treating the unique mental issues of each individual precisely.

As Mahayana Buddhists, we should undertake such a mission. This requires a wholesome mindset, a discerning view, and practical experience. Without these, we cannot resolve real issues. Even if we can apply some teachings from classical Buddhist texts, they are just empty talk, and their effect is limited. Only when we truly integrate them into our mental states and mental activities can we confidently address problems with the right remedies. This requires meditation to turn teachings into practical abilities.

Our current body and mind—the five aggregates—are our best place of practice. This is where our Buddhist practice begins. Modern society puts emphasis on management, and there are many related courses in universities. Yet their management means administrating enterprises and employees. In contrast, Buddhism teaches us to manage our minds and thoughts, which is the most important kind of management in life.

Without understanding the mind, we may fall into ingrained habits and become overwhelmed by afflictions. Therefore, nothing is more important than mindfulness. All Buddhist teachings and the monastic lifestyle ultimately serve to cultivate mindfulness. We establish the right views, recite sutras and chant buddha's name, and adhere to precepts, all to cultivate mindfulness. Without mindfulness, there can be no wholesome mind, no liberated life, nor ultimate help for others.

All Buddhist practices aim to eliminate delusions and cultivate mindfulness, nothing else. We must take it as the

top priority; otherwise, no matter how much we learn, it will lead us in the opposite direction.

In Buddhism, there is a significant difference between learning well and learning poorly. If we learn well, even a small amount of teaching can sink into the mind and begin to truly take effect. But if we learn poorly, no matter how much we study, it all stays on the surface, with no real impact on our mind.

What does it mean to learn Dharma well? It largely depends on our attitude. Do we have an urgent yearning for liberation? Are we keenly aware of the dangers afflictions pose in our lives? Without such yearning and awareness, it is difficult to truly connect with the Dharma. Also, methods are crucial. In future teachings, the Institute will integrate meditation into the core curriculum and make daily life more strictly regulated.

For our practice and study, living in accordance with the Dharma is also a crucial supportive condition. In the

Buddha's time, bhikkhus lived by the water and in the forests, free from possessions and desires, so they could devote themselves wholeheartedly to spiritual practice. This naturally resonated with the Dharma and deepened their practice.

Mediation is not about achieving external results; it is about uncovering the Buddha-nature within us—always present, never lacking. Yet this awakened nature remains veiled by the ceaseless torrent of delusive thoughts since beginningless time. It is impossible to cut off its flow in a short period of meditation. So we must start by simplifying and purifying our daily life. Without a Dharma-aligned lifestyle and strict self-discipline, we have no hope of withstanding the worldly temptations around us.

Why do we call this era the Dharma-ending Age? Because sentient beings are overwhelmed by afflictions and easily tempted by the countless external distractions. As a result, there are few practitioners, and even fewer attain enlightenment. In the past, closing the mountain gate could

isolate a temple from the outside world, turning into what was known as "a land beyond the mundane realm." Today, many temples have become tourist attractions with constant visitors year-round. Moreover, the pervasive influence of the Internet and mobile phones makes it even harder to maintain focus. Without the power of concentration, it is easy to be distracted.

Therefore, the seven-day meditation retreat is not just about sitting here, but rather abandoning all worldly distractions and doing everything with awareness. Whether during sitting meditation or in daily practice, we should focus on training mindfulness and cultivating awareness.

I hope everyone can embrace this way of living for seven days.

I

Why should we practice meditation? What kind of ability are we trying to gain through it?

Simply put, meditation helps us cultivate concentration, awareness, and insight. These abilities are naturally present in the mind, but ignorance veils the mind, leaving it trapped in a confused and unaware state. It is like being stuck in a mire—your concentration, awareness, and insight get totally buried and stop working.

Meanwhile, the afflictions and delusions born of ignorance form a torrent within us—a torrent of thoughts, a torrent of birth and death, and a torrent of samsara.

Carried by this torrent, our minds lose control: sometimes scattered, sometimes restless, and sometimes dull. "Scattered" means the mind chases after external objects; "restless" means the mind clings to one object but stays overactive; and "dull" means the mind loses its clarity and awareness.

This reflects the current state of our minds. Are we aware of the problems this state brings? Do we realize that it makes us feel exhausted? Our minds are constantly chasing one thought after another, always on the go. What's worse, this mental busyness is permanent and endless. As long as we do not dissolve ignorance and extinguish delusions, we will keep chasing thoughts, indulging them, strengthening them, and creating even more powerful mental torrents.

If we do not stop such pursuits, suffering will never end, and neither will samsara. What meditation does is to change this state of being, to break free from the flow of thoughts and to calm these raging torrents—we must

make this our most important and urgent task. Do not think that being ordained as a monastic solves everything once and for all; often, we still find ourselves in ingrained habits. When newly ordained, our habits may seem temporarily subdued, but without deliberate guarding, these habits will soon return.

Meditation also arises from conditions and relies on supportive factors. In sitting meditation, both posture and physical conditions are crucial, as they support the cultivation of mindfulness. Although Chan transcends all forms, thoughts and *qi* channels are interrelated, as the saying goes, "The thought and breath are interdependent." Therefore, all meditation methods emphasize basic training of regulating the breath and qi. Additionally, living aligned with the Dharma is essential. Different lifestyles embody different thoughts. These thoughts push us to pursue corresponding lifestyles, which in turn feed and deepen those thoughts.

Thus, the Buddha laid down precepts to help us establish

a wholesome lifestyle. This is a vital supportive condition for achieving mindfulness, as the saying goes, "From precepts arises concentration." The precepts serve two main functions. First, they prevent us from harmful behaviors, which also helps curb unwholesome thoughts. Second, the precepts guide us to simplify our lives and reduce attachment. This way, we can devote ourselves to developing mindfulness, rather than ending up exhausted while chasing after deluded thoughts.

With the guidance and protection of precepts, it becomes easier to bring our mind back to the present moment. In fact, abiding in the present moment is not complicated; the key is to take it attentively—walking attentively, eating attentively, and treating others attentively. Being attentive does not mean being nitpicky or rigid, as some people mistakenly believe. It means focusing the mind on the present moment. When eating, we focus on eating; when walking, we focus on each step—lifting and placing the foot, in a continuous cycle.

During seated meditation, we should choose a wholesome object of focus. Since this is not your first seven-day retreat, each of you has a preferred method. Whether it is recalling the Buddha's virtues or observing the breath, as long as we practice diligently, both lay the foundation for cultivating awareness.

II

For a Buddhist practitioner, what is the most important thing in life? The answer is mindfulness.

Everything in practice revolves around this core because our thoughts not only tell our past and present, but also the direction of our future existence.

People are always busy with studies, careers, and family life—these are the direct results of their corresponding thoughts. In reality, we have long become laborers to these delusive thoughts, pursuing them and yet still sinking deeper into delusion. If we remain unchanged, this labor will perpetuate, and we will never gain true freedom

over our lives.

From another perspective, our current state of existence highlights the importance of choosing our thoughts wisely. This requires us to tell the differences between right mindfulness and delusive thoughts. The *Treatise on the Hundred Dharmas* is an important text that helps us understand our inner world. It puts mental activities into categories, such as universal, particular, wholesome factors, and afflictions. Among them, the universal mental factors include attention, contact, feeling, perception, and deliberation; the particular factors include aspiration, determination, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom. In addition, there are eleven wholesome mental factors and six fundamental afflictions. These mental factors represent psychological forces that shape our continuous existence, mindset, and character.

We are often unaware of these mental activities. Due to a lack of mindfulness, we become passive and unaware of our direction—like rootless duckweed, drifting round

and round in the current of samsara, being swept away whenever the tide is strong. How tragic such a life can be.

Therefore, we need to cultivate and live for mindfulness—not only for our own sake, but also to help all sentient beings gain mindfulness and a wholesome mind. All our practices should be focused on this goal, as everything in our lives is determined by mindfulness.

Whether it is observing precepts, studying and contemplating right views, reciting scriptures, or practicing repentance, all of these must be connected to mindfulness, as they are all supportive methods in practice. True practice is about cultivating the right view and using the mind wisely. As Chan Buddhism states, "What is prized is the practitioner's view, not the outward forms of practice." Without the right view, all actions remain superficial and do not become actual practices. If our study of the teachings is not applied to cultivating mindfulness, it not only fails to support mindfulness but even fosters delusion and arrogance.

Can we bring mindfulness into everything we do in daily life? This is a crucial part of practice. What is "Living with Chan"? It means living with mindfulness. Without it, it is just ordinary living, and "Chan" becomes nothing more than a decorative label, because we are still caught in our old habits. For example, when eating, if we like the food, greed arises; if we dislike it, aversion arises. When interacting with others, if we like someone, attachment arises; if we do not, aversion arises. These negative mental states will not change just because we call them "Chan." True practice comes from observing each thought as it arises, and weaving mindfulness into everything we do.

The *Treatise on the Hundred Dharmas* teaches that whenever we encounter external objects, we start imagining them and giving them names. After that, our mind begins to reflect on them and make choices. In this process of feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness, if we lack mindfulness, greed, hatred, and ignorance can easily arise.

According to the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination, sensation leads to craving, craving leads to clinging, clinging leads to existence, and from existence comes birth, aging, and death, thus forming the cycle of rebirth. Every event and every action can establish its own cycle. The reason these actions create such cycles is that we lack awareness, so craving, clinging, existence, and birth and death keep repeating.

Training mindfulness means bringing the mind back to the present moment and preventing afflictions from arising. The highest form of mindfulness is the state of no-thought—as the *Platform Sutra* states, "No-thought is the principle, no-form is the essence, no-dwelling is the foundation." The essence of no-thought is Prajna wisdom. Of course, this is not easy for most people. But we can cultivate mindfulness by staying aware of everything we do.

Once we have concentration, we then stay aware of what we are doing in the present moment, so the mind does not fall into states of greed, hatred, or ignorance. As ordinary

people, we cannot eliminate these afflictions all at once. Even while maintaining awareness, afflictions may still arise—but that is fine. What matters is simply staying aware of them when they appear. Through this process, we gradually strengthen the power of mindfulness.

Therefore, we should take everything we do as a factor that enhances our mindfulness training, so that we live for mindfulness. If we approach everything we do with the same urgent awareness as putting out the fire burning on our head, the power of mindfulness will grow stronger, and delusive thoughts will gradually fade.

Now, let us cultivate mindfulness in this sitting meditation.

III

Today is the fourth day of our meditation practice. Right now, everyone's posture looks fine, though a few are still fidgeting while sitting. Meditation means both calming the mind and settling the body—neither is easy, but we have no other choice. If we do not change, suffering will never cease. Compared to the suffering of samsara, the discomfort we feel now is nothing. It is like receiving medical treatment: we may endure the pain of injections or surgery, but for the sake of long-term health, everyone willingly accepts that temporary pain. In the same way, short-term suffering in practice leads to long-term peace, happiness, and freedom.

Therefore, we need both diligence and patience. But diligence must be based on a proper method. Once we have found the right approach, we can abide in steady effort. Blind or aimless effort, on the other hand, easily leads to problems. As for patience, it mainly means enduring discomfort with acceptance. When we begin sitting meditation, we will inevitably face back pain, leg soreness, or even full-body discomfort. We must accept these sensations and observe them, using them as opportunities to train awareness and strengthen mindfulness.

As mentioned earlier, all Buddhist teachings aim to establish mindfulness. Although Buddhism offers various methods, each school is centered on its own right view. For example, the Agama teachings emphasize suffering, emptiness, and no-self—these form the right view of the Path of Liberation. The Yogacara school teaches that all phenomena are mind-only, while the Madhyamaka school teaches that all things are empty without inherent nature. All of these are the right views of the Bodhisattva path in the Mahayana tradition. These views were taught by the

Buddha as skillful means tailored to different people's faculties. Though the approaches differ, the goal is the same: to attain liberation. In practice, there is no need to pursue every approach; mastering and applying the right view of one school is enough.

Right view functions like a vajra sword, cutting through ignorance and turning delusion into awakening. That is why the Noble Eightfold Path begins with right view, followed by right thought, and concludes with right mindfulness and right concentration. It is clear that right mindfulness and right concentration must be based on right view and right thought.

We must learn to observe life, the five aggregates, and the world through the right view.

The Four Foundations of Mindfulness constitute a highly effective method for establishing right mindfulness, through contemplating the body, feelings, mind, and dharmas:

1. Contemplating the body as impure
2. Contemplating the feeling as suffering
3. Contemplating the mind as impermanent
4. Contemplating the dharmas as non-inherent self

First, the body is the physical form, made up of the five aggregates, constantly oozing impurities from its nine openings. What we call youth and beauty is just a fleeting illusion arising from conditions. Beneath it all are the bones, flesh, blood, and filth—what is there to crave or cling to?

Second, feeling refers to sensations. In the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination, sensation is a crucial link. If we fail to understand the nature of sensation, it gives rise to craving, clinging, and existence, eventually leading to birth, aging, and death. But if we see that sensation is based on delusion and karma, and that its true nature is suffering, we will no longer cling to it. And once clinging stops, craving and becoming will naturally cease as well.

Third, the mind refers to the thought. We are often controlled by thoughts, because we do not understand their true nature. We fail to see that thoughts arise from various conditions and are impermanent. In fact, every thought is formed by many conditions and changes as those conditions change. If we do not cling to thoughts or keep developing them, the negative emotions that control us will naturally fade. It is precisely because the mind is impermanent that it can be changed and guided in the right direction.

Fourth, dharmas refer to the true nature of all phenomena. Buddhism explains the physical body—made up of the five aggregates—as well as the world through the principle of dependent origination. Dependent origination reveals that all things are empty in nature, without inherent self, and without inherent nature. Observing no-self is especially important. When we realize that the body and every thought are without self, we free ourselves from attachment to self. When we see that all things in the world, even the entire universe, lack an inherent nature, we will

break free from the attachment to all dharmas. If we fail to understand this, we cannot free ourselves from attachment to both self and dharmas. This very attachment keeps us trapped in the cycle of samsara.

To sum up, the Four Foundations of Mindfulness are easy to start with and follow a clear step-by-step process. It serves as an important foundation for the preliminary stage of meditation practice.

IV

The purpose of holding a seven-day meditation retreat is to provide an intensive training that allows participants to make breakthroughs in their practice. This will become a regular course offered by our institute.

Meditation is an essential practice for Buddhists, especially for monastics. More than two thousand years ago, our teacher Shakyamuni Buddha attained enlightenment through meditation under the Bodhi tree. However, in today's world, this crucial practice is often overlooked, which causes us to drift apart from the goal of liberation. Some even believe that enlightenment is an unattainable state or nothing more than an ancient legend.

For a long time, Buddhist practice has remained at a theoretical level—what is studied is disconnected from what is practiced. Without meditation, studying Buddhist teachings becomes mere academic research, and managing monastic affairs becomes no different from running a business. In the end, monastics have written many articles, yet they have become much like secular scholars; and although monasteries continue to expand, they run like businesses. All of these issues stem from a lack of the right view and meditation practice.

Although we are a research institute, we are not an academic one. This is a place for both study and practice, because our focus is not on books but on the mind. Meditation is a vital part of what we do here, and we hope everyone will take it seriously.

While some monastics may overlook meditation, more and more people in society are starting to pay attention to it and take part in the practice. At Suzhou West Garden Monastery of Vinaya School, for example, the "Guanzizai

Meditation Retreat" consistently attracts a large number of participants. As so many people today live exhausted and stressful lives, it is natural that they seek ways to release pressure and restore balance to body and mind. That is where meditation comes in. It helps cultivate inner awareness, so that we can calm our restlessness and cultivate the ability to settle our mind.

For meditation, mindfulness is an essential prerequisite. It is an invaluable treasure in our lives. However, it must be trained; otherwise, its power will not arise on its own. More importantly, we must develop mindfulness, so that we can break through delusion and attain enlightenment. Meditation itself is not unique to Buddhism; it has been a tradition in many Indian religions. The reason the Buddha attained ultimate wisdom through meditation was the right view.

First, we can cultivate the ability to concentrate through Theravada meditation. With that as a foundation, we then observe our thoughts through the right view we have

learned. For example, the Yogacara school helps us understand that all phenomena arise from the mind, while the Madhyamaka school teaches that thoughts are inherently empty and devoid of self-nature. In addition, Chan Buddhism provides many direct methods for cultivating the mind, but these require sharp faculties before they can truly be applied.

Beyond methods, we must also cultivate the right attitude toward meditation and keep practicing. This practice means eliminating wrong views and reinforcing right views. Compared to the habits we have accumulated over countless lifetimes, the mindfulness we cultivate now is still very weak. Only through repeated practice can we gradually reduce old samsaric habits and strengthen mindfulness. But repetition alone is not enough, we must fully dedicate ourselves to cultivating mindfulness. As Chan Buddhism teaches, we must devote ourselves completely, like a "living dead person" who has already put life and death aside.

Before mindfulness is truly developed, practicing

meditation now and then will not bring good results. So next time, meditation retreats will be more intensive. At our institute, we hold weekly meditation sessions, and many people have joined seven-day meditation retreats. You all probably know the methods. Now the key is to keep practicing, so that we gradually build a strong meditation-focused atmosphere here.

When we realize emptiness through meditation, we will find it much easier to understand Buddhist teachings. This shows how Buddhist teachings and meditation practice can support each other. We must establish a solid right view to guide our meditation, and through meditation, we can realize the true meaning of the teachings. That is why integrating study and practice is not just an empty slogan. I hope everyone will make a steady effort to put the teachings into practice and help create an atmosphere of study and practice. Once this atmosphere takes shape, it will become a defining feature of our institute. I believe this approach will have a meaningful impact on monastic education and the future of Chinese Buddhism.

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。

静心学堂为“国际静心协会”旗下的核心公益品牌，致力于传承生命觉醒教育，为现代人提供安顿身心、安身立命之道。我们推广的静心学堂课程体系，为汉传佛教济群长老以四十年修学所证，对当代佛教教育的探索，包括禅意生活、智慧人生和觉醒之道。同时，我们将在世界各地营造具有禅意的空间、彼此增上的氛围，为大众修学保驾护航。

“静心学堂丛书”呈现了禅意生活、智慧人生的部分课程。我们衷心希望，更多人由此了解生命觉醒的教育，共享东方智慧给人类带来的福祉。

Mindful Peace International & Mindful Peace Academy

Mindful Peace International (MPI), established in 2021 in Zurich, Switzerland, is a non-profit organization dedicated to spreading Buddhist wisdom and promoting a Chan-inspired life globally.

The Mindful Peace Academy serves as the core public welfare brand under Mindful Peace International. We are dedicated to passing on education about life awakening and offering modern individuals ways towards physical and mental well-being, thereby helping them ground themselves and discover their life's mission. The curriculum we promote at the Mindful Peace Academy has been authenticated by Master Jiqun, an eminent elder of Han Buddhism, through forty years of study and practice. It represents an exploration of contemporary Buddhist education, encompassing teachings on the Chan-inspired Life, the Wisdom for Living, and the Path to Awakening. Moreover, we are committed to creating Chan-inspired spaces and fostering mutually enriching environments worldwide to safeguard the public's learning journey.

The Mindful Peace Academy Collection showcases a selection of courses on the Chan-inspired Life and the Wisdom for Living. We sincerely hope that through these courses, more individuals will engage with life awakening education and share in the blessings that Eastern wisdom brings to humanity.

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