

放生心裏的毒蛇

Free the Snakes Deep in Our Mind

方丈和尚恒律法師開示於2013年3月24日慶祝觀音菩薩聖誕法會午齋 萬佛城五觀齋堂
A Talk by Abot Dharma Master Heng Lyu, at Lunch of March 24 2013, Dining Hall in CTTB,
during the Ceremony to celebrate the Birthday of Gwan Yin Bodhisattva.

我們都知道，今年是中國農曆年的蛇年。談到蛇，使我想去年的一件事。當時因為宣公上人的韓文《大佛頂首楞嚴經淺釋》在韓國出版，所以法總應邀到韓國去參訪。

我們參訪了韓國最大的叢林海印寺；「海」是大海的海，「印」是印章的印。這是出自於《華嚴經》的「海印三昧」，表示我們本具的智慧有如大海一樣，可以清澈地印現萬物的影像而沒有障礙。

海印寺是一所著名的禪宗寺院，他們的禪堂就設在後山，環境優雅。

As we know, this year is called the Year of the Snake in the Chinese Traditional Lunar Calendar. As we are now talking about snakes, it reminds me that we were invited to visit Korea last year, because at that time the Korean Version of *Venerable Master Hua's Commentary on the Shurangama Sutra* was published in Korea.

We had visited the largest monastery in Korea, which is called the Ocean Seal Monastery. The name, Ocean Seal, comes from *the Avatamsaka Sutra*. It means that the inherent wisdom within us is just like the ocean, and we are able to reflect everything above it without any obstruction.

The Ocean Seal Monastery is very well-known in the Chan tradition. Its Chan Hall, situated in a peaceful



韓國海印寺

The Ocean Seal Monastery

有趣的是禪堂的匾額不是寫的「禪堂」兩個字，而是寫著三個字。哪三個呢？「深蛇窟」。各位善知識們，請您想一想，為什麼這個禪堂取了這麼奇怪的名字呢？

有人會說，是不是那裏養了很多蛇？答對了，那裏是養了很多蛇，所以取名「深蛇窟」。但是這個蛇不是養在屋子裏，是養在我們心的深處。

在《佛遺教經》中告訴我們，我們的心中有更多的毒蛇，那就是我們的煩惱。比如說，我們的瞋恨心、嫉妒心，我們的沮喪、貪心，及種種的負面情緒。所以「深蛇窟」這三個字，就是提醒我們，要注意內心的蛇——也就是我們的煩惱。就像我們身處在一個充滿毒蛇的深深窟窿裏，要隨時都非常地小心地來處理牠們，而不要被咬到了。要如何處理牠們而不被咬到呢？

如果您會參禪的話，您可以用參禪的法門來妥善地處理。然而在我們今天早上誦持的《觀世音菩薩普門品》當中，有幾句偈頌就提供了一個非常簡單的好方法。您記不記得是哪幾句呢？那就是：「虵蛇及腹蝎，氣毒煙火然；念彼觀音力，尋聲自迴去。」

當我們感到心煩氣躁或者沮喪的時候，那就是我們內心的毒蛇跑出來了，正在「氣毒煙火然」。在那個時候，如果我們能夠誠心地誦持觀世音菩薩的聖號，我們會得到觀世音菩薩慈悲力的加持；這些心裏的毒蛇——也就是煩惱或是負面的情緒——就會安靜地離開了，這也就是真正的「放生」。

為什麼說是真正的「放生」呢？事實上，這些心裏的蛇並沒有去哪裏；當我們誠心地誦持觀世音菩薩的聖號，在觀世音菩薩的加持下，它們都變成了菩薩。換句話說，它們不再是煩惱了，而是智慧和慈悲。

在佛陀開悟的時候，旁邊就有蛇王菩薩來做護法。所以，我們或者會看到佛陀在一條非常巨大的蛇下面打坐的電影畫面或者是圖片。那條大蛇就是蛇王菩薩。

最後祝大家身心健康快樂，特別是在這個中國農曆的蛇年，大家都能夠誠心地誦持觀世音菩薩的聖號，使自己也能成為菩薩，再用我們的慈悲和智慧來利益眾生；這樣子，大家都能夠早成佛道。阿彌陀佛！

and pleasant environment, is located at the back of the property. What is interesting is the name of the Chan Hall, called the Deep Snakes' Cave. Dear good and wise advisors, please guess, why the Chan Hall has such strange name as a deep cave of snakes?

Someone might ask, are there many snakes living there? Yes, there are many snakes! And so the Chan Hall is called the Deep Snakes' Cave. The snakes are not living in the house, though, but deep in our mind.

The Sutra of the Buddha's Final Instructions tell us that there are many snakes in our mind, which are our afflictions, such as our anger, jealousy, depression, greed, and other negative emotions. Therefore, the name, Deep Snakes' Cave, is to remind us that we have to pay more attention to the snakes deep in our mind, which are our afflictions. Just like we are in a deep cave with many snakes around us, we should be very careful to deal with them to avoid a snakebite. How do we handle them then without being bitten?

If you know how to cultivate Chan Meditation, then you can use the Chan Dharma Door to deal with them well. However, the verses in *the Universal Door Chapter* that we recited together this morning has provided a simple and good method to deal with them. Do you remember what verses they are? They go like this: when facing snakes and scorpions that belch poisonous vapors like blazing fumes and flames, if one evokes the strength of Gwan Yin Bodhisattva, they will go away upon hearing his name.

When we feel annoyed, upset or depressed, that means the snakes in our mind come out belching poisonous flames and fumes. If at that time we sincerely recite Gwan Yin Bodhisattva's holy name, we will receive Gwan Yin Bodhisattva's compassionate aid. And these snakes in our mind, which are afflictions, will leave quietly. That is truly liberating lives.

Why do we say that is liberating lives? In fact, the snakes in our mind go nowhere. Due to our sincere recitation of Gwan Yin Bodhisattva's holy name and with Gwan Yin Bodhisattva's compassionate aid, these snakes become Bodhisattvas. In other words, they are not afflictions any more, but compassion and wisdom.

When the Buddha got enlightened, there was a Snake Bodhisattva as a Dharma Protector beside the Buddha. So we may see pictures or movies which show that the Buddha was meditating under or beside a giant snake, which is the Snake Bodhisattva.

I wish that all of us will be healthy and happy, especially in the year of the snake. I wish we can sincerely recite Gwan Yin Bodhisattva's holy name, and that all of us become Bodhisattvas. With our great compassion and wisdom, we can benefit living beings, and thus accomplish Buddhahood soon. Amitabha Buddha!