

保持工夫

Persevere in One's Practice

恒興法師講於2023年12月7日加拿大溫哥華金佛寺禪三
晨瑛譯組 英譯

A Dharma Talk by Dharma Master Heng Hing during the Chan Session
at Gold Buddha Monastery, Vancouver, BC, Canada on December 7, 2023

English Translated by Early Bird Translation Group



諸佛菩薩，師父上人，各位法師，各位善知識：阿彌陀佛。

我們用功，有個問題需要知道：我們用功都用得不持久。因為我們在用功的時候，很容易在不知不覺中就忘失了自己要做的工夫，甚至沒有意識到。剛開始用功的時候，用得還好好的，但過了幾分鐘、十幾分鐘，或者是半個小時，那個工夫就不知跑到哪裡去了。甚至是自己打妄想，自己都不知道，從來這個工夫不持久。這就是說我們的心，經常在變，我們在用我們的妄心，妄心在做工夫。

妄心是常變的，這是我們人生的一個特色，從來是不能夠持久地用功下去。

這可以說是娑婆世界一個本有的樣子，這就是佛說的成住壞空、生住異滅。心有生住異滅四相，當我們的念頭一生出來，就進入這個「住」；一「住」了，很快就「異」

Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, Venerable Master, Dharma Masters, Good and Wise Advisors: Amitabha.

In our cultivation, there is a problem we need to understand: We often fail to persevere. It is very easy for us to unknowingly lose track of the very practice we ought to be mindful of. Initially, our efforts are effective, but after a few minutes, ten minutes, or half an hour, we forget our objectives and the diligence seems to vanish. We may even give rise to false thoughts without awareness, leading to a practice that never lasts. This reflects the nature of our ever-changing mind, and it is because we are actually using our false mind when we apply effort.

The false mind, being ever changing, is a characteristic of us humans, causing our efforts to never be sustained.

This can be said to be an inherent aspect of the Saha world, similar to what Buddha spoke of regarding the four stages of “formation, existence, destruction, and

了；「異」過去了，也就「滅」了，不斷這樣周而復始。心念就是這樣成住壞空的周而復始，所以我們妄心總是不能停下來。

因為這樣，所以我們在六道之中總是跑不出去，不斷在六道輪轉。有時候做得好一點呢，就可以享一下天福，可以開心一下；但是這個天福一完，這個因緣已結束了，就隨著這個成熟的業力又跑到別的果上去了，有的時候是人，有的時候是修羅，有的時候是地獄，有的時候是畜生。

我們的工夫也是一樣，是隨著我們的業力而衍生出來的樣子。你這一刻用功用得很精進，這就是我們過去生中那個精進的種子成熟，所結出來的果。一下子就過去，到下一個因緣是怎樣，就要看下一個因緣是什麼成熟了。

你打了一個妄想，在過去曾經打過追求名、追求利的妄想，等種子成熟的時候，你這些名利的念頭就會跑出來，跑出來怎麼樣呢？就來干擾你這一刻的用功，當下你的心念，就會生出來一些個追求名利的妄念。這些妄想又會用掉了你一段時間。如果你一下子到畜生的業力生起，又會怎樣呢？不知道做什麼好，癡癡呆呆——你叫這種狀態，掉舉也可以，昏沉也可以，總而言之，就是沒有智慧的業力生起。畜生就是沒有智慧，因為沒有智慧才墮落，做了愚蠢的事情才跑去做畜生。

那麼，阿修羅的業力也是如此，瞋的種子突然從一念中生起，而且無緣無故就生起來。瞋不一定要靠什麼外緣而起，當然得要成熟，還要有一些緣境來觸發這個業力。但是這個瞋種生起來，它不需要靠什麼外緣境，如果你當時能覺察到這個瞋念，你就不會隨著念頭去做；如果你覺察不到，而又有外緣對境讓你去碰觸，你就會成熟這個瞋念的業行。

我們在用功的時候，就會察覺到很多

emptiness” or “birth, staying, decaying, and perishing.” Once our thoughts arise, they enter the stage of abiding, which also quickly passes, and then they perish, continuing this cycle. This cycle of formation, existence, destruction, and emptiness repeats over and over, thus our false minds cannot stop.

Therefore, we are stuck in the Six Paths and cannot escape from the cycle of six realms, constantly revolving within it. Sometimes, when we do wholesome deeds, we enjoy heavenly blessings, but once those blessings come to an end, we move on according to our matured karma to another realm. Sometimes, we become human, sometimes asuras, sometimes in hell, and sometimes we are reborn as animals.

Our skill of practice is also the same way — shaped by our karma. We are diligent for a moment, because we had planted the seed of vigor in the past, but it does not last long and passes quickly. What comes next depends on the subsequent causes and conditions, on what karma matures next.

When we harbor false thoughts of human beings, we think of pursuing fame and fortune; then these thoughts of longing for name and gain will arise to disturb our practice. This is a typical mindset of human beings, and such false-thinking lasts for a while, and then “switches gear” when our karmic force of the mindset of animals surfaces. What will happen? It will cause us to become dazed and not know what to do, falling into a stubborn and ignorant state. You can call such a state of mind either restlessness or dullness. All in all, animals lack wisdom. Due to a lack of wisdom in their past lives, they engaged in foolish acts that led to a fall into the animal realm.

(Just as the mindset of animals surfaces), so does our karmic force of asuras from the past: We may suddenly give rise to the seed of anger without any reasons, not necessarily being triggered by external conditions. Of course, when our karmic seeds ripen, some conditions will trigger their actions, but, the arisal of seeds does not necessarily depend on external forces. If we can detect the arisal, we will not be following along in action. If we fail to detect them and come into contact with external conditions, we will give rise to angry behavior.

Thus, when we apply our efforts, we will notice many strange thoughts. If you don't pay attention to them and remain focused, then those seeds in the karmic consciousness will be eradicated, this is what is commonly referred to as eliminating karmic obstructions. Once the defiled and polluted seeds

奇奇怪怪的念頭。如果你不理睬它，能夠定得住，業識的種子就會化解、消除。這也就是我們所說的消業障。當你內裡的污垢種子被除去之後，你內心自然就會有一分的清淨。這個是最能直接消業障的方法。

如果用拜懺、念佛、持咒這一些的法門都可以，但是我們要知道，所謂的拜懺、念佛、持咒這些，我們是在種善根。所以你可以把這些善根種子，多種在你的內裡面，再加上佛菩薩的加持。雖然種有善根種子，但如果我們心中的不善、惡的業識種子不清除的話，它就會變成善惡夾雜的業。

所以真正的懺悔就是要將我們的心清空，一旦你的心空了，這就是清淨。由一個無常的心，恢復到一個真常的心，禪宗的就是用這樣的方式；也就是用一個站不住的心，去尋回我們那個源遠流長不斷的真常心（常住真心）。

「真常」，真常是不動的，所以真心才能常住；它就是所謂的「空性」，空性是不動的；即是「如來」，如來也是不動的。但我們現在用的是妄心，妄心是站不住的，而且經常變的。現在要去找回我們本有的常住真心，怎麼找呢？就在這個「誰」字上去找。

參禪，一般多數是參「念佛是誰？」這一句話頭。「念佛是一一」這三個字是引線，引出這個「誰一一」，重點在「誰」字。也有的參「父母未生之前，如何是我本來面目？」父母未生我之前，我的本來面目是怎樣的？有的參「搬柴的是誰？」搬柴的這個人是誰呢？「運水的是誰？」擔水的這個人是誰呢？更有的參「拖死屍的是——誰——？」拖著這個臭皮囊，拖著這個死屍到處跑的又是誰呢？是誰在拖著這個死屍呢？也就是講我們人，東跑西跑，一下子就跑到美國去，一下子就跑到中國去，一下子就跑到澳洲去，跑來跑去的主人公是誰呢？這個死屍東跑西跑的人是誰呢？

話頭很多，都是叫你起疑情，叫你去尋

inside of you are cleared, you will feel a natural state of purity from within. This is the most direct method of eliminating karmic obstructions.

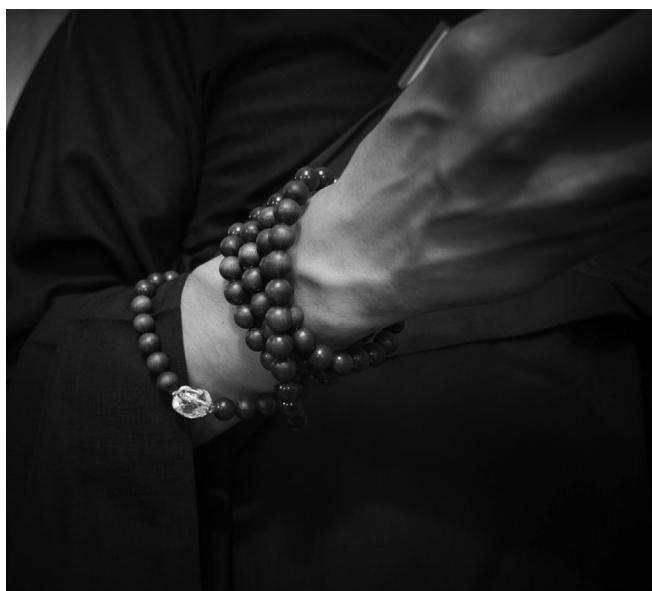
If we practice Dharma-doors such as repentance, reciting the Buddha's name or upholding mantras, these can all be effective as such practices are methods of planting good roots and with the blessings of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, you then plant a large amount of seeds of goodness in your heart. But you need to know that if the unwholesome seeds or seeds with a mixture of good and evil within our karmic consciousness are not eradicated, then what we have will be a mixture of good and evil.

Therefore, true repentance is to completely clear and empty our minds. With the mind cleared and empty, we attain purity and tranquility. From the impermanent mind, the true permanent mind is restored — such is the approach of the Chan School, using a thought that can not stay put to seek out the everlasting true mind, hidden like a distant and deep source where water flows continuously.

True permanence is unmoving, thus permanent. It is the often-discussed concept of emptiness, which is unmoving. The Tathagata, the Thus Come One, is unmoving. The false mind that we are currently using cannot stay put in one place; it constantly changes. Now, we seek our original, true permanent mind. How do we find it? From the mediation topic “Who.”

Generally, some investigate “Who is mindful of the Buddha?” The phrase “... is mindful of the Buddha” serves as a thread leading to this “who.” Some also investigate, “Before my parents gave birth to me, what is my original appearance,” or “Who is it that hauls wood and carries water,” or “Who is it that drags around this stinky skin-bag, this dead corpse,” meaning people move from place to place, one moment in America, another in China, and another moment in Australia — who is the person that runs here and there?

There are many meditation topics, all about arousing inquisitive doubt and prompting you to search for your original appearance, what does your inherent self look like. When you trace this thought to its very end, when false thoughts no longer arise, your mind will be able to reach purity, but you still have to continue to search and question yourself.



找自己的本來面目。本來的面目，又是什麼樣子？你能夠找到這個，到念頭盡的時候，到妄念不再起的時候，到心能夠清淨下來的時候，還要繼續去追，繼續去問你自己。

要一直追尋下去，到你這個黑漆桶底，到你妄念的巢穴粉碎了。古德有很多來形容破參，有的是：「虛空粉碎，大地平沉」；有的說：「翻身跳出太虛空」；也有的形容很文雅：「自從一見桃花後，直至如今更不疑」。

那麼，種種的覺受，種種說法，古德悟道都有不同的形容。好像虛雲老和尚悟道的偈頌，大家有沒有印象？

「燙著手」，因為當時的行堂師父倒茶水給大家喝，老和尚伸手去拿杯子，行堂師要倒茶水，一不留心，把熱水濺到老和尚的手，燙著手，杯子掉落地上。

杯子撲落地，響聲明瀝瀝；
虛空粉碎也，狂心當下歇。

老和尚聽到杯子落地的響聲，一下子就悟道了，整個意識、妄念、虛空都粉碎了。

又有另一首偈頌講：

Searching and pursuing all the way, when the bottom of the pitch black barrel, the very nest of your false thoughts, shatters, the ancients have many descriptions. One describes it as “Empty space shatters, the ground evenly sinks,” another as “rolling over and tumbling out of empty space.” There are also more poetic expressions such as “Ever since seeing the peach blossom, I harbor no doubts till this day.”

Various feelings, perceptions, descriptions — ancient virtuous ones who realized the Way all described it differently, such as Venerable Master Xu Yun’s verse of enlightenment. Does anyone remember it?

I am referring to the story of Elder Master Master Xu Yun’s hand being scalded. During the Chan Session while serving tea, the kitchen monk accidentally poured hot water onto the hand of the Venerable Master Hsu Yun as he reached out to take the cup, which scalded his hand and caused him to drop the cup.

*The cup crashes to the ground,
Loud and clear is the sound,
Shatters empty space,
The restless mind is no more.*

When Elder Master heard the sound of the cup hitting the floor, he attained enlightenment — right then, the whole of empty space shattered.

Another verse says,

Scalded hand, shattered cup,

燙著手，打碎杯，
家破人亡語難開；
春到花香處處秀，
山河大地是如來。

第一首偈，是老和尚證入空性的一種體悟；也就是意識之流，當下就粉碎了。第二首偈，「燙著手，打碎杯，家破人亡語難開」，這是表示我們的八識種子，在阿賴耶識、藏識、如來藏，用粉碎來形容。我們本有的如來藏裡面有很多的種子，善惡的種子都有；在這些種子裡，我們和無量的眾生都有緣的，和一切的眾生都有善緣、有惡緣，大家就好似一家人。「家破人亡」，現在這個家破了，人也亡了。

「春到花香處處秀，山河大地是如來」，這個是形容自性。我們的如來藏性，我們的自性能生萬法，能夠含藏萬法，一切萬法都是從我們自性中生出來的，都是我們造出來的。所以說山河大地、房廊屋舍都是我們的本來。一切的眾生同我們都是一體的，不一不二，是同一個地方來的，並沒有分別。

虛老先證了這個「空」，跟著證了這個「有」，空有不二，這就是他老人家工夫的呈現。

我們用功也是一樣的，要從分別的識心，停不下來的妄心，去追這個妄念的源頭。追到源頭的時候，源頭是不動的，但卻能生出一切法，取之不盡，用之不竭。所以，我們要先清空了，把妄心打破。分別的識心，分別就是我們最大的障礙。

我們人往往是用分別心來生活著，而這種分別的識心是根深柢固的，不容易撬動或消除。因此，我們要恒常、持久來用功，不要起分別的心。

怎樣才能不起分別的心？在生活中，我們人總是在分別，分別美與醜，長與短，好吃與不好吃。我們用慣了

*Words fail when family falls apart, its members dead;
Spring arrives, fragrance of flowers everywhere blossoming,
Mountains, rivers, and earth are the Tathagata.*

The first verse explores kind of the Elder Master Hsu Yun's experience of attaining emptiness. The second verse, "*Words fail when family falls apart, its members dead*" represents the seeds within our eighth consciousness, the Alaya-vijnana, also known as the storehouse consciousness or Tathagatagarbha. The Tathagatagarbha was described as having "shattered." That is to say, originally, there are many seeds in our storehouse consciousness, both good and evil; in here, we and countless sentient beings — all sentient beings — share affinities both good and evil. Everyone is as if one family, but now, the family falls apart, and its members pass away.

"*Spring arrives, fragrance of flowers everywhere blossoming, Mountains, rivers, and earth are the Tathagata*" describes the self-nature. The richness within our fundamental nature, the Tathagata Treasury nature, can produce and store all the myriads of phenomena. Also, all phenomena are born from our fundamental nature. So when it comes to mountains, rivers, earth, buildings, and dwellings, all of them are our fundamental nature. All sentient beings are the same as us, not one or two but a whole. We all come from the same place, with no distinction.

First, emptiness is attained; then, existence is attained. Emptiness and existence are not two. This is the culmination of Elder Master's practice.

In cultivation, we ought to be the same as the Elder Master, to distinguish the origin of our ceaseless false thoughts, the source that gives rise to such false thoughts. When we reach this source, it is immovable, yet capable of giving rise to all phenomena; it's inexhaustible and unending. However, we must first empty our minds, shattering our false thoughts. The discriminating mind is our greatest obstacle.

We humans often live by making distinctions. Therefore, this discriminating mind is deeply rooted and not easily moved or eliminated. So, we must consistently and persistently practice without giving rise to a discriminating mind.

How can we avoid having a discriminating mind? In life, we constantly differentiate between beauty and ugliness, long and short, tasty and nasty. We have grown accustomed to a discriminating lifestyle, and it is not easy to suddenly stop using

這種識心來生活，現在不讓你用這個識心了，是不容易的，沒有辦法一下子不用，況且你是控制不了它的。所以給你一個方法，去專一用功，就是用這個「誰」字。把你所有的專注力，放在這個「誰」字去鑽研。

在「誰」字去鑽研，上人有幾個比喻，說是「如錐子鑽木頭」這個狀態，又像「龍養珠」這種心態，又如「貓捕鼠」這樣動靜，來去用功。這都是叫我們專注來用功，不起任何念頭，在「誰？」上用功。

禪宗有句話講的「離心意識參」。這是因為我們用慣了心意識，一旦落入意識就有形相，有形相就會有分別、認知等等，所以要叫你離心意識。我們用功要在這個上面，要提起這個「誰」字，單單看住這一個「誰」字，要在「誰」字上面來用心。

看住這個「誰」字，並不是說在我們腦海中有「誰」字的樣子去想，有想就會有形相，都是一種意念，參話頭並不是這樣！它沒有一個型態形相，讓你去想像，而是要你從這個「誰」字上，起一個疑的情緒，這是什麼來的呢？「誰」呢？就是因為你不知道，所以你要去追尋它，你要知道它。這個就是「離心意識參」。

不要用我們平常的那個識心去用功。我們平常用的識心，是分別的意識，總是有聲音：好聽的聲音，不好聽的聲音，小鳥的聲音，貓的聲音，狗的聲音，人的聲音，汽車的聲音，有種種的分別。這是我們的意識心，這個意識心從哪裡來？是從我們的眼、耳、鼻、舌、身，這五根對著五塵產生出來的法塵，屬於第六意識，再由這個第六意識，經過第七識再入這個第八識。

我們雖然是這樣講，但是它過程很快，一下子就過去了。它就藏在我們的第八阿賴耶識裡面，我們做人是這樣，做貓、做狗、做阿修羅，乃至做天人，都是這樣的。我們現在用功，就是要離開前六識所造成的妄識，離開這種妄心來用功，這就

the discriminating mind. Therefore, I offer you a method to singularly focus and apply effort, using the word “who,” Direct all your concentration and mental energy to delve into the word, “who,” and explore and contemplate it deeply.

The Venerable Master used the following analogies to describe the method of practice: “drilling wood unceasingly with an awl,” “a dragon keeps nurturing its pearl,” or “a cat keeps waiting to pounce on a mouse.” All these analogies call for our undivided concentration and effort, devoid of any thoughts, focusing our efforts on the meditation topic of “who.”

The meditation topic of “who” is not about visualizing a character in your mind, because visualizing involves having an image in the mind; thus it becomes a thought — that is not the case in the practice.

Rather it is meant to have you investigate the “who,” giving rise to a sense of inquisitive doubt. What really is it? You are meant to work to the point in which you are free of all forms or appearances; appearances will cause you to think and imagine. Because you do not know the answer, thus you want to know. You keep searching and inquiring — this is the process of investigating Chan by being apart from one’s mind, cognition, and consciousnesses.

Do not use the usual discriminating mind for cultivation. The ordinary discriminative mind is characterized by the consciousness which constantly distinguishes sensations such as sounds: pleasant and unpleasant sounds, the chirping of birds, human voices, the noise of cars, the sound of cats and dogs, among others. This is the working of our conscious mind. Where does this consciousness come from? It arises from the interaction of the five senses — eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body — with the five sense objects of the external world. All these data are passed to be processed by the sixth consciousness, before being passed on to the seventh consciousness and finally to the eighth consciousness.

We are just discussing the process conceptually, in reality, the actual process is much much faster, occurring almost instantaneously. All these data (seeds) are stored hidden in our eighth consciousness, the alaya vijñana. Regardless of who we are — whether we are humans, cats, dogs, asuras, or even heavenly beings, it is all the same. Now, our practice of Chan aims to detach from the influences of our six consciousnesses

是「離心意識參」的意思。

這個用功的方法，希望大家能夠懂得如何去用功。了解禪宗這個法，為什麼會出這麼多的祖師呢？它就是這麼直接了當！無論你只是想消業障，還是想大徹大悟做個祖師，你都是要經過這些階段。

大家可以討論一下，如果有什麼不明白的，我們可以研究。

問：我想請問剛剛法師開示的時候，講到上人說的三個方法：「錐子鑽木頭」、「龍養珠」、「貓捕鼠」。這三個例子，是我們要用這樣的態度去靜坐禪修，還是我們在靜坐的時候要觀想去揣測這三樣東西呢？

答：不是不是！不是用來觀想的。是形容你用功的程度，參「念佛是誰？」參到那種狀態。

問：剛才法師講的參「誰」，我剛剛試了一下，是可以比較專注。是不是因為參這個「誰」字，就停止了其他的名相？

答：這個「誰」字，虛雲老和尚形容「誰」字就好像一根指路棒、引路棒。這個「誰」就好像引路棒一樣，它會帶著你開悟，帶著你到這個悟的境界裡面。

在這個過程當中，因為你不明白，你不知道「誰」是哪一個，但你要去知道，這樣你就會一直追問下去，究竟是「誰」呢？究竟是「誰」呢？一路追下去，這個「誰」字的攝持力就好像一個漩渦一樣，一直轉、一直轉……，轉到最底下的時候，這個漩渦就會越轉越大；大到你自己的識心不能容受的時候，這個漩渦的力就會爆開、就會破開，一爆開，這個漩渦就消失。

when we apply efforts in cultivation — that is the essence of investigating Chan apart from mind-consciousness.

In terms of Chan practice, I hope everyone grasps how to apply effort correctly, and understand why so many Patriarchs emerged from within the Chan School— because the approach is so direct and straightforward.

Whether you wish to eliminate karmic obstacles or achieve great enlightenment to become a Patriarch, you must go through this stage of Chan practice. We can all discuss this; if there's anything that is unclear or hard to understand, we can study it further.

Q: Are these three examples, such as “drilling wood unceasingly with an awl,” “a dragon keeps nurturing its pearl,” and “a cat keeps waiting to pounce on a mouse” meant for us to approach meditation and Chan practice with such an attitude, or are we supposed to visualize and speculate about these three things while meditating?

A: No, it is not for visualization. Depending on your level or degree of practice, you should be investigating the meditation topic —say, if you are reciting the Buddha's name, you should investigate who is reciting and being mindful of the Buddha.

Q: Just now, you mentioned contemplating “who,” and I just tried it out. It seems like I could focus better. Why is that? Is it because when we think of “who,” we stop all other names and forms?

A: The word “who” has been described by Master Xu Yun as a guiding pointer, leading you towards enlightenment, guiding you into the realm of realization.

In this process, because you do not understand, you do not know which one it is, but you still want to know, so you keep asking, “Which one is it?” As you pursue this question, the drawing power of “who” becomes a whirlpool, constantly spinning and swirling, and when it reaches its greatest power, beyond what your consciousness-mind can bear, this whirlpool will explode. Once it explodes, the whirlpool disappears.

When the whirlpool explodes, that is the moment you attain enlightenment. Hence, it is said, “Great doubt leads to great enlightenment, moderate doubt leads to moderate enlightenment, small doubt leads to small enlightenment.” The greater level of

當這個漩渦一爆開的時候，就是你悟道的時刻。所以說大疑就大悟，小疑就小悟，中疑就中悟，就看你疑情這個漩渦轉的力度，你所用的工夫逼激旋轉的疑情越大。有的人用功用到不知天、不知地、不知道時間，好像有的古德用功用到雖然在吃飯，但是依然參他的話頭。

有的人在吃飯時候，筷子夾著菜，也不往嘴裡送，整個人就定在那裡，就入了那個參禪的三昧。

有的人在行香跑香的時候，也在參禪，參參參。維那師站板一打，停住腳步，有的老參在當下就不動了；再打一下木魚，如果維那師不說「坐香」，他就會一直定在那裡，動也不動，還在參。

你看，這些人用功就用到這樣程度上。所以我們要知道，「疑情」就是要你進入那個「參」的狀態，進入這個「疑」的狀態；而「疑」的狀態，自然能讓你整個身心投入到這個「誰」字上，直到疑情爆破。

另外一種，當我們看住這個話頭「誰？」的時候，疑情就會像漩渦一樣不停地旋轉，而我們八識田裡面的妄識，這些妄識的種子依然會跑出來。你用功也好，你不用功也好，它都會跑出來。

這些妄識跑出來的時候，它們就是我們過去生中所種下的種子。妄識就好像一粒種子，會發芽、含苞待放、開花結果。它會從你的阿賴耶識裡面跑出來，就到你的內心，所以在你差不多要看到的時候，種子就會慢慢打開裡面的資訊：或者是一些聲音，或者是一些信息，或者是一些影像，或者是人的形相，或者是恐怖的樣子，或者是貓貓狗狗，什麼都有。就是你以前見過的东西，聽過的聲音，都會成為種子。

當它們從八識田裡跑出來的時候，

your enlightenment indicates the whirlpool's swirling power, and the degree of your pressing doubt in your Chan cultivation. A practitioner may work on Chan to such a point that they are unaware of Heaven, Earth, and time. Some ancient virtuous ones were so devoted to their practice that even while eating at the Dining Hall, they continued to investigate the meditation topic. While eating, some may hold up a pair of chopsticks full of food without bringing it to their mouth, frozen there, as if entering into Chan samadhi.

Some other practitioners will come to a standstill when the Cantor hits the board to signal "Stop." If the Cantor does not go to tell him to go sit on his mediation seat, he will remain motionless there still investigating Chan. That is the very extent of their working on the meditation topic; we need to know that that is the way Chan is supposed to be — one should enter such a state of investigation: One plunges oneself wholeheartedly into Chan practice — investigating this "Who" until one's doubt explodes.

Another scenario is that: When investigating "Who" one's inquisitive doubt may keep swirling and spinning like a whirlpool, while one's eighth consciousness will churn out false thoughts — seeds planted in the past will emerge from the field of consciousness like this.

Whether one applies efforts or not, these seeds will come out. These false thoughts emerge as a result of our planting the seeds in our past lives. Just as a seed is planted, the plant grows and awaits to blossom, our karmic seeds will come out too and come back to our minds, enabling us to see their gradual "unfolding and blossoming." From within our alaya consciousness, the seeds of karma will surface to our minds — with all their karmic information revealing and manifesting in the form of either sounds or appearances, such as appearances of a human, cat, dog. Some may be horrifying appearances; some may be things that we have seen or heard in the past. When they manifest in front of us, they are as powerful as the life-force which a plant exhibits in its growth: a seed becomes a bud, and will blossom into a flower.

The power of investigating the Chan is like a whirlpool sucking in our karmic seeds' blossoming power as our karma unfolds. The ripening power of our karmic seeds are then overcome by this swirling pool. Therefore, more false thoughts come out from our consciousnesses.

The power of this understanding from meditation can be

這個種子就來到你的跟前，因為種子含藏著力量，它會開花。種子本身也必須有能力來打開花苞，它才會形成花朵。這個「參」的力量，就是能夠將種子打開花苞時的能力，把它們捲入漩渦中——開花的力量就被漩渦的力量所攝受了。

所以，你越用功，就有越多的妄識跑出來；你所吸納的業識種子，它所衍生出來的力量就會越來越多，而且越多就越大。這就有點像太極拳中的「借力打力」那樣。

問：這是不是染污的種子？

答：善惡都有。

問：法師，您說善惡的種子都有，然後您又說用功的時候要「離心意識參」，那我有兩個問題。要「離心意識」，那我要怎麼活著？還有，參禪的時候起疑情，參到你能定在那個地方，那我們是用的心意識裡面的哪一識？

答：參禪參到定在那裡的時候，並不是一個什麼意識，它是一種狀態，是參禪用功的一種狀態。至於說「離心意識參」怎麼活，誰願意回答？

問：把心意識都離了，那我不就像個死人一樣嗎？

答：你沒聽到上人說要做個「活死人」嗎？你用功的時候，是這樣的狀態；那你不用功的時候，依然還是用回你的六識，是不是？

問：法師，剛才您說那個漩渦的力量，是不是能把壞種子的力量互相逼迫了？

答：不是。是種子開花結果的那種力，生長的那種力，它被漩渦吸收了。

問：那漩渦的力不就越來越大？

答：是的，就越來越大。

likened to the force when opening the bud of this seed caught in a whirlpool. The power of this flowering is controlled by the vortex, so the harder you work, the more delusions you have of running out, the more karmic seeds you absorb, the greater the power it generates, it's like borrowing strength to exert oneself to fight in Tai Ji.

Q: Are those karmic seeds tainted seeds?

A: Both good and bad seeds are included.

Q: Master, you said that there are seeds of both good and bad, and also mentioned that we should aim in our cultivation to transcend all thoughts, cognition, and mind. But, when I am without thoughts, cognition, and mind, how can I still be alive? How should I live? Moreover, when investigating Chan and attaining samadhi, which consciousness do I use?

A: When you investigate Chan and attain samadhi, it is not about mind consciousnesses, but a state in your cultivation of Chan. When you transcend thoughts, cognition, and consciousness, how do you live a life?

Q: When I am without thoughts, cognition, and consciousness, am I just like a dead person?

A: Didn't you hear Master Hsuan Hua say that in cultivation we should be like a living dead person? You are in such a transcendental state when you are practicing diligently. When you are not practicing, you naturally revert to using your six consciousnesses, don't you?

Q: Just now you mentioned that the whirlpool absorbs bad seeds. Does that mean that karmic seeds' forces are against each other?

A: The seeds' power of growth and blossoming is all absorbed into the whirlpool.

Q: Then wouldn't the whirlpool just keep getting bigger and bigger?

A: Yes.

Q: Does that mean the more bad seeds that come out, the better?

A: Not necessarily bad ones; good seeds are the same. Good

問：是不是表示越多壞的種子跑出來就越好。

答：是。不一定是壞的，好的也是一樣吸，出來什麼種子就被漩渦吸進去。

問：吸種子是吸所有的？也包括念頭？善惡結果都一樣？

答：吸所有的，它不會去分善的或惡的。一個好人和一個壞人掉到漩渦裡面，結果不都是一樣嗎？好人和壞人都是我們的分別。在佛菩薩來說，沒有好人也沒有壞人，都是人，都可以成佛。

問：是不是越多種子跑出來就越好？八識田裡有無數的種子，是因為這個疑情讓它跑出來？

答：你有疑情，它也跑出來；你沒有疑情，它也會跑出來，任何時刻。

問：這個漩渦只有參禪的時候才有，對嗎？

答：這要看因緣。

問：那這個漩渦吸收這些種子，它的力量就越來越大，會不會爆開？

答：當這個漩渦吸收到，大到你的心識無法容受的時候，它就會爆開。

問：如果我們沒有這種意識跑出來，它就不會爆？

答：不會。你自己有自己用的功，只不過是疑情有這樣的作用。

問：法師，是不是說我們參禪要參到這個漩渦出來才可以？

答：講「漩渦」，是一種譬喻。在用功的時候，你要專注在話頭，提這個「誰？」看著話頭。疑情生起的時候，有工夫多了，就會有「漩渦」這種作用，你不需要理會的。❀

seeds are absorbed in the same way.

Q: So, it applies to all seeds, all thoughts.

A: It (the whirlpool) doesn't differentiate; it doesn't distinguish between good and bad. A good person and a bad person falling into a whirlpool are the same. Good and bad are distinctions we make. From the perspective of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, there are no good or bad people; everyone is a human being, and everyone can become a Buddha.

Q: Does that mean the more seeds that come out, the better? And how do they come out? Do they come out when we have doubts?

A: Seeds will come out whether we have doubts or not, at any time, any moment.

Q: The whirlpool only appears when we are practicing Chan meditation, correct?

A: It depends on causes and conditions.

Q: Then, when this whirlpool keeps absorbing, the power of these seeds becomes bigger and bigger, will it explode?

A: When the whirlpool absorbs to the point where your consciousness-mind cannot contain it, it will explode.

Q: Then, if no consciousness (false thoughts) comes out, will we explode?

A: No, you have your own practice; the whirlpool appears because your inquisitive doubt takes such an effect.

Q: Does that mean that, in our Chan cultivation, we need to investigate till the whirlpool manifests? practice meditation until we reach the whirlpool?

A: Talking about the whirlpool is an analogy. When you apply efforts, focus on investigating the huatou, looking at "who." When your efforts build up some skills which give rise to doubt, you will have this kind of function; and still you don't need to pay attention to it. You don't need to pay attention to the "whirlpool;" it's just an analogy.❀