



楞嚴法門

The Śūraṅgama Dharma Door

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A Dharma Talk by Dharma Master Heng Syun held online in Avatamsaka Monastery, Calgary, Canada, on June 16, 2023.
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This morning at Avatamsaka Monastery, we were listening to the lecture on the *Śūraṅgama Mantra with Verse and Commentary*. The Dharma of Śūraṅgama is truly inconceivable, yet today's verses focus on the method of subduing. Let me first talk about the benefits of the Śūraṅgama Mantra. At the Dharma Realm Buddhist Association, many branch monasteries recite the Śūraṅgama Mantra during the morning recitation and three more times afterward. Some even recite it three or seven times at different times of the day. Why do we recite the

Śūraṅgama Mantra three times after the morning recitation? Let me explain the origin of this practice.

In the early 1990s, I was assigned to Gold Mountain Monastery in San Francisco. At that time, there were three female novices, including myself, who followed a daily schedule similar to that at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. We would bow after the morning recitation, taking turns between the east and west sides of the hall. However, one of us would often fall asleep during the bowing due to feeling sleepy from waking up very early in the morning. As the cantor, I often had to walk across the hall to awaken my fellow novices and then return to my side.

One day, the Master called Gold Mountain Monastery, and I asked, "Shifu, our morning bowing practice is quite challenging. With just three of us, it's a struggle to keep up.

今天早上我們在華嚴寺是聽《楞嚴咒句偈疏解》。這個楞嚴法門是一個非常不可思議的法，不過今天這幾句講的都是降伏法。我先講講〈楞嚴咒〉的好處。現在我們法界佛教總會有很多的分支道場，每天除了早課誦〈楞嚴咒〉外，早課後我們還會誦三遍〈楞嚴咒〉，也有的在不同時段再加念三遍或七遍。為什麼我們做完早課要念三遍〈楞嚴咒〉？我來跟大家講講這個緣起。

在1990年代初，我被分派到三藩市的金山寺。當時，我們有三個沙彌尼，每天做完早課，就要跟萬佛城一樣的拜願。拜願也是我們三個沙彌尼拜，東單兩個人，西單一個人。當維那的，唱了之後拜下去，另外一邊

就開始唱，可是因為太睏了，另外一邊那個人拜下去也起不來，就睡著了。一個拜願，我要跑來跑去，把那個師弟叫起來，常常這樣。

有一天，上人打電話來金山寺，我就問：「師父啊！我們早晨這個拜願很困難的，就三個人都拜不起來啊！怎麼辦呢？」其實上人是非常的慈悲，他沒有說：「妳們就是這樣，懈怠懶惰，最好就不用修行了！」他都不會這樣子罵我們。我覺得上人是非常慈悲的一個大慈悲父，這是真的！上人就說：「拜不起來，那可以做其他功課嘛！」我問：「哦，這樣子！那就我們做其他功課，要做什麼好呢？」上人說：「那妳們就商量看看。」我說：「好！」

第二天，我們討論了這個問題：早課之後，我們是要誦經？還是念咒？還是要拜願？還是怎麼樣？大家就討論說，要是誦經，早上七點鐘已經有誦《華嚴經》了；要是拜願，我們又拜不起來。於是大家就說：「我們問師父，看看可不可以念〈大悲咒〉？」當時有同參就說：「〈大悲咒〉？那我們下午的拜〈大悲懺〉，就有念〈大悲咒〉了嘛！」不過不要緊，我們還是問問師父。

所以當上人打電話來的時候，我們就問這個事情：「師父啊！五點做完早課，我們想要念經或者是念咒，不知道這樣好不好？」上人就說：「這個修行，什麼法門都好，只要大家肯用功，那就是最好的。」我們就說：「師父！我們想念〈大悲咒〉。」然後上人就說：「咒是很好的，但在三藩市這裏，若有人能夠念《楞嚴經》、〈楞嚴咒〉，三藩市就不地震了。」所以上人給我們開了一個竅，我們就念〈楞嚴咒〉，而且是念三遍〈楞嚴咒〉。這是一個緣起，從金山寺開始，後來到很多的分支道場，都是這樣子念〈楞嚴咒〉。因此，〈楞嚴咒〉的修持在所有的分支道場都變成一

What should we do?” The Master, in his great compassion, did not respond to us with harsh words, such as, “You’re not putting in enough effort; you are not trying hard enough; it would be better if you didn’t practice at all!” He would never scold us in that manner. I truly feel the Master is a great, compassionate father—this is true! The Master said, “If you can’t keep up with the bowing, you can do other practices.” I asked, “Shifu, what other practices should we do?” The Master replied, “You should discuss it among yourselves and see what works best.” I agreed, “Alright!”

The next day, we discussed the following issue: After our morning practice, should we recite sutras or mantras or continue with our bowing practice? What should we do? We considered that if we were to recite sutras, there was already a daily recitation of the *Avatamsaka Sutra* at 7 a.m. If we continued the bowing practice, we would still struggle to keep up. Everyone suggested, “Let’s ask Shifu if we can recite the Great Compassion Mantra.” Then, a fellow practitioner mentioned, “But we already recite it during the Great Compassion Repentance in the afternoon!” Nevertheless, we decided it didn’t matter and asked the Master anyway.

So, when the Master called, we brought up the matter: “Master, after finishing our morning practice at 5 a.m., we’re considering either reciting sutras or chanting mantras. Would that be alright?” The Master replied, “In cultivation, any Dharma method is good. As long as everyone is diligent, that is the best approach.” We then asked, “Master, would it be possible for us to chant the Great Compassion Mantra?” The Master responded, “Mantras are indeed excellent, but here in San Francisco if someone can recite the *Śūraṅgama Sutra* and the Śūraṅgama Mantra, the city will be protected from earthquakes.” After receiving guidance from the Master, we started reciting the Śūraṅgama Mantra. We recited it three times as a starting point. Since then, the practice of reciting the Śūraṅgama Mantra has spread to other branch monasteries from Gold Mountain Monastery. Reciting the Śūraṅgama Mantra has become a regular part of daily practice in all branch monasteries.

Today, as we listen to the Śūraṅgama Mantra, we can truly appreciate its profoundness. The Śūraṅgama Mantra is considered the “Mother of all Mantras,” the source from which we each receive the wisdom-life of our Dharma body. Reciting this mantra is, in fact, a path of returning to our original nature.

個定課很久了。

今天我們聽這個〈楞嚴咒〉，就知道這個楞嚴法門有多好。因為〈楞嚴咒〉是咒母——咒的母親，所以我們每個人都從母親那裏得到這個法身慧命；如果我們能念這個咒，其實就是一種返本還原之路。〈楞嚴咒〉能生萬法，一切的智慧都是從修持〈楞嚴咒〉中而恢復這種智慧光明。

我們就是簡單來了解這個咒的不可思議。有幾句咒講的是降伏一切天魔外道，及降伏一切的妖怪、蠱毒等等。這就是咒裏頭降伏法。我們在修持這個法的時候，必須對這個教理——就是理觀，有一個正確的正知正見。這個法在修持之後，它會被我們所用；我們修習這個法所獲得的力量，是一種任運自如的力量，而不是說我們想要怎麼樣。

〈楞嚴咒〉所講的降伏法，是一種非常非常慈悲的法。那麼這個正確的觀念是什麼呢？也就是說，我們修持這個法的人，必須是內聖外王，具足這樣的功德。在行持上，就是一種利益眾生的心、慈悲的心，即便是在講這個降伏法時，它也不是用勢力或權力來壓迫人，而是以一種德行和慈悲的光明來影響人、感化人。所以降伏法，它是從慈悲裏頭出發的。

在上人住世的那個年代，三藩市有很多不可思議的妖魔鬼怪；這些不可思議的妖魔鬼怪，就是佛教界所說的外道。這外道所修的法都是奇奇怪怪的，什麼放光了，什麼都是講見到光了、見到花了等等。在上人晚間講經後，有個徒弟就說：「師父啊！在某某道場，他都用一種邪法來蠱惑眾生，用一種邪術招人去他的道場。」有一個法師就說：「師父！那我們就用〈楞嚴咒〉去對付他。」上人就說：「光你講這句話，你就沒有資格！」所以我們學咒，修持這個法的人，對這種理觀的知見有沒有清楚，這個很重要。

The Śūraṅgama Mantra generates all dharmas, and all wisdom is restored through the practice of this mantra, illuminating our inherent wisdom.

Let's approach this mantra's profound mystery simply. These specific lines of the mantra talk about subduing all heavenly demons and heterodox paths as well as taming all spirits, poisons, and other malevolent forces. This part of the mantra, known as the "Subduing Method," is used for overcoming obstacles.

When practicing this method, it is crucial to maintain a proper understanding and a correct view of the underlying teachings. This is the essential contemplation of principles. Through consistent practice, we can develop the natural ability to effectively apply this method. The strength we gain from this practice is defined by spontaneous and effortless power, rather than being driven by personal desires.

The subduing method described in the Śūraṅgama Mantra is, essentially, an extraordinarily compassionate practice. So, what is the correct approach? It signifies that those who engage in this method must nurture both their inner wisdom and outer virtue, embodying the qualities of an enlightened sage and an honorable leader.

In practice, this involves having a heart dedicated to benefiting all beings, a heart overflowing with compassion. When discussing the subduing method, it's not about using force or power to oppress others. Instead, it's about influencing and transforming others through virtuous conduct and the light of compassion. Therefore, the subduing method is rooted in compassion.

During the time when the Master was still alive, San Francisco was a haven for numerous extraordinary and mysterious spirits and demons—entities that, in the Buddhist tradition, are known as followers of external paths. These external paths practiced all sorts of strange methods, often claiming to see lights, flowers, and other unusual phenomena.

One evening, after the Master had finished his lecture, a disciple said, "Master, at a certain way-place, they use a kind of deviant practice to deceive people, luring them to their center with sorcery." Another Dharma Master suggested, "Master, perhaps we should use the Śūraṅgama Mantra to counteract them."

The Master responded, "Just by making that suggestion, you've shown that you are not qualified." This illustrates the

我們在修行的過程中，大家都在道場裏頭，其實最大的挑戰並不是說我懂得多少，或者我懂得什麼大道理。對每一個修行人來說，他最大的挑戰就是每天所面對的境界。這種面對境界，其實它是一個菩薩道來的。就像剛剛講的那個故事，上人講「光你這句話，你就沒有資格！」這個什麼意思？因為這句話裏具足鬥爭的心，不清淨的心。那麼從這樣的一個談話裏頭，我們能不能夠理解到善知識真正想要教育我們的是什麼？事實上，當我們每一個念頭出來時，好比我們每一天的生活中都會遇到很多的挑戰，就看我們自己能面對自己挑戰的這種思維能力是否強大。

打個比方，我記得自從有機食物開始以來，道場就有護法施主專門供養法師有機的食物。這個有機的食物就有好多的法，其中一種的法，就在餐桌上放著有機的水果，同參就跑來了：「法師！這個是有機的，很好的！」餐桌上只有幾顆水果是有機的，顯然其它水果都不是有機的。這位法師，看了看水果，笑一笑，她沒有吃。後來我問法師：「妳為什麼沒有吃？」法師說：「有機的最好，應該讓給別人吃啊！」非常認真的一個回答。光是這一天的這頓飯，在我們眼前是不是有很多考驗？當肚子餓了，為飢而忘法是常有的事。

那你告訴我，這個大悲心是從哪裏生出來的？它是從我們每一天的身口意就有了。普賢菩薩講的廣修供養，不就這麼說「如說修行供養」？那麼，怎麼樣是利益眾生的供養？怎麼樣的一個舉止行為是能夠攝受眾生這種供養？

importance of having a clear and correct understanding when learning mantras and practicing these methods. It is crucial for practitioners to have a proper view and insight into these principles.

In our journey of cultivation, even though we all practice together in the monastery, the greatest challenge isn't how much we know or how well we understand profound principles. For every practitioner, the biggest challenge lies in the situations we encounter daily. These situations are, in fact, opportunities on the Bodhisattva path. For example, we just discussed the story where the Master said, "Just by saying that, you've shown that you are not qualified!" What did he mean? It's because that statement was filled with a combative and impure mind. From such a conversation, can we truly grasp what a wise teacher is trying to teach us? Every time a thought arises, just like the many challenges we face in our daily lives, the real test is whether we have the strength of mind to confront and overcome these challenges within ourselves.

Let me provide you with an example. Since the advent of organic food, there have been individuals who specifically offer organic food to the monastery. There's something special about organic food. One day, some organic fruits was placed on the dining table, and a fellow practitioner excitedly ran over and said, "Dharma Master, these are organic—very good!" However, only a few of the fruits on the table were organic; the rest were not. The Dharma Master looked at the fruits, smiled, and didn't eat any. Later, I asked her, "Why didn't you eat them?" She replied, "Organic food is the best; it should be left for others to eat."

This simple response illustrates the numerous challenges we encounter in our daily lives, even during a single meal. When we experience hunger, it becomes easy to compromise our principles in the face of temptation. Now, tell me, where does great compassion arise from? It comes from how we conduct ourselves—through our body, speech, and mind—each and every day. Samantabhadra Bodhisattva speaks of extensive offerings, emphasizing the importance of practicing what we preach.

So, what kind of offering truly benefits living beings? What type of actions can embrace and support others? And, more so, how can we provide to take on the suffering of others?

These are all part of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva's great vows that must be fulfilled before one can attain Buddhahood. Venerable Master Hsuan Hua's teachings are embedded in our daily lives, not in some distant, faraway place. The question is: Are we acting out of selfishness or from great compassion?

更別說怎麼樣來代眾生苦供養了。所以這些都是普賢菩薩的大願，所有成佛之前都具足的。所以宣公上人的教化就在生活裏頭，沒有在天涯海角，就是在我們每一天的生活中。這是自私自利的？還是大慈大悲的？

我們能夠有這種福報來聽聞這個不可思議的法，那是我們過去的善根，所以勤修善根供養也是一個供養。今天大家可以坐在大殿裏安安靜靜地聽，沒有人糊裏糊塗地聽吧？不過也都聽了，或多或少，也都是勤修善根供養；這不需要假任何外緣，你只要坐在那裏就有。所以這對大家來說，都是一份非常大的福報。

這就是聽法。我們能夠直接聽到宣公上人的法音，能夠直接在文字裏頭看得懂，其實在這裏面具足著宣公上人的願力，因為上人的願力就是：「願一切眾生見我面，乃至聞我名，悉發菩提心。」見我面、聞我名者，包括聽我的聲音，讀這個文字、我講的法，乃至於在宣公上人的道場，甚至於聽到萬佛聖城四個字、宣公上人的名字，及看到他的徒弟，都有這麼大的一個力量。為什麼有這麼大的力量呢？凡是與任何有關宣公上人的都具足力量。因為這位善知識的德行與智慧光明，非常的不可思議；換句話說，你哪怕沾到一點點邊，你都得度。

我們在華嚴寺跟金鎮晚上聽經也是這個樣子，不過我們比較更笨一點，就是聽了一段，大家輪流地唸。我們有一位法師，是來自匈牙利的，不懂中文，但在萬佛聖城學了一些中文，她就非常感激法師這麼樣子慈悲教她。可是她不能讀，就一個字一個字地認識，這樣子將近兩年的時間。她現在可以讀一整段或一大段，一個錯字都沒有，越讀就越順。為什麼？因為她認真聽法。就像前邊講的「勤修善根供養」，這個不是只有勤修善根供養，而是在修這份供養的當下，我們得到一個不可思議的加持力。❀

The opportunity to hear this profound and extraordinary Dharma results from the virtuous roots we have cultivated in the past. Thus, diligently nurturing our virtuous roots is also a form of offering. Today, everyone has the opportunity to sit quietly in the Buddha hall and listen attentively. Are we all genuinely listening with full presence?

But even if you do listen—whether fully or partially—it is still an offering of diligently cultivating virtuous roots. This does not require any external conditions; just sitting there, you already engage in it. This, indeed, is a great blessing for everyone.

This is what it means to listen to the Dharma. We have the opportunity to directly listen to the Dharma teachings of Venerable Master Hsuan Hua and to comprehend his teachings through written texts. This is made possible because of the Master's mighty vow, which states that all living beings who see his face or hear his name will develop an enlightened mind. This includes those who hear his voice, read his words, listen to his teachings, or even come across the name of the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, Venerable Master Hsuan Hua's name, or his disciples. All of these carry immense power. Why is this power so great? It is because anything associated with Venerable Master Hua is imbued with this power. The virtue and wisdom of this great teacher are truly inconceivable; even a slight connection with him can lead to liberation.

At Avatamsaka Monastery and Golden Town, we listen to the sutra lectures in the evenings similarly, although we may be a bit slower. We listen to a section, and then everyone takes turns reading. There is one Dharma Master from Hungary who didn't know Chinese, but she learned some Chinese at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. She is deeply grateful to the Dharma Masters for their compassion in teaching her. Although she couldn't read Chinese at first, she painstakingly learned each character, a process that took nearly two years. Now, she can read entire sections or even long passages without making a single mistake, and her reading has become increasingly fluent. Why? Because she listens to the Dharma with sincerity. As mentioned earlier, "diligently cultivating virtuous roots as an offering" is not just about the act itself; during the process of making this offering, we receive an incredible blessing and empowerment.❀