

金山通訊 2005 年四月份目錄

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人生如夢要清醒

◎宣化上人開示

來，從什麼地方來的？

去，往什麼地方去呢？

人來到這個世界，把真的放下，拿起假的，所以生生世世背覺合塵，醉生夢死。醉生就是在生的時候，好像喝醉酒似的，不知怎樣生來；夢死就是在死的時候，好像在做夢似的，不知怎樣死去。人人皆在夢中，不知何日能清醒，所謂「人生如夢」，以假為真，為名為利，貪無止盡。

你在夢中，又升官，又發財，又有地位，又有名譽，嬌妻美妾，兒孫滿堂，榮華富貴，享受不盡。假設這時，在夢中有人對你說：「這都是虛妄的，不是真的。」你絕對不會相信。等你的甜蜜夢清醒時，沒有人告訴你這是做夢，你自己也知道原來是在做夢哪！

你昨夜在夢中，讀書中狀元，當了宰相，作了皇帝，成了神仙，其樂無窮。今天早晨醒了，啊！原是一場夢啊！這是清醒了；如果沒有醒，認為是真的，就貪戀不捨，不肯放下，執迷不悟。

我們現在就是在做白日夢，沒有清醒，所以糊塗而來，糊塗而去。來，從什麼地方來的？去，往什麼地方去呢？不知道；一輩子也沒有清醒。各位想想看！這有什麼意義？有什麼可留戀？有什麼值得放不下呢？

我們一生被「三毒」及「五欲」的繩子纏得結結實實，連轉身的自由都沒有，更談不到解脫。所以發心出家修道，用功打坐，努力拜佛，就是解三毒和五欲的繩子，終有一天，能完全解開。那時候就清醒了，回頭一看，過去所作所為，完全如夢，一切不如法。現在清醒了，便能出三界，不受生死的限制，生死自由，願死即死，這種境界，遂心如意，來去自由，才是真正解脫，所謂「大夢初醒」。

我們現在把假的抓住，把真的忘了。什麼是假的？財色名食睡這五欲的快樂是假的。什麼是真的？涅槃四德—「常樂我淨」的快樂是真的。可是奇怪的人類，真的丟了也不怕，

把假的丟了卻起恐怖。為什麼？因為認賊作子，捨本逐末，以假為真，沒有清醒，還在夢中，貪戀夢中的境界。

我們因為起惑造業受報的緣故，好像一粒微塵，在空中飄上飄下，做不得主，隨著業力在六道輪迴中轉來轉去。所謂「打不破名利關，跳不出輪迴圈」，什麼時候不為名利境界所轉，那時就脫離六道輪迴的樊籠。

Life Is Like a Dream : Wake Up!

Talks on Dharma by Venerable Master Hua

Where do we come from when we arrive?

Where do we go to when we leave?

When people come into this world, they put down the real and pick up the unreal. That is why in life after life we turn against enlightenment, unite with the dust, and muddle our way through life as if drunk or in a dream. When we are born, we seem to be drunk and unaware of how we got born; when we die, we seem to be in a dream, unaware of how we die. People are all dreaming, and there's no knowing when they will wake up. It's said that life is like a dream. We take the false for the real, and become insatiably greedy for fame and profit.

In your dream, you are promoted and become wealthy; you have high social status, a good reputation, a beautiful wife, lovely mistresses, and a house full of children and grandchildren; you enjoy boundless affluence, wealth and honor. If at some time during the dream someone were to tell you, "These things are all unreal," you would never believe that person. However, after you woke up from your sweet dream, even if no one told you it was a dream, you would know that you'd been dreaming.

Last night in a dream, you came out first in the imperial examinations, got appointed prime minister, later became emperor, and finally became an immortal enjoying boundless happiness. This morning you wake up "Oh! It was a spring dream!" That is when you are awake. If you don't wake up and you continue to think it's real, then you become enamored of it and can't let go. Unable to let go, you become deeply attached and deluded. Right now we are daydreaming, not awake. So we come into this world muddled and leave muddled. Where do we come from

when we arrive? Where do we go when we leave? We don't know. During our whole life long, we are never once awake. Think about it: Is that meaningful? What do we want to stay around for? What is so precious that we cannot bear to put it down?

In our lives, we are tightly bound by the ropes of the three poisons and the five desires. We don't even have the freedom to turn around, let alone be liberated. Hence, we must resolve to enter the monastic life and cultivate the Way, meditating and bowing to the Buddha with vigor. Those are the ways to untie the ropes of the three poisons and the five desires. The day will come when the ropes are completely untied. At that time, you will be awake. Looking back on what you have done, you will find that it was completely like a dream, and nothing you did was in accord with the Dharma. Since you now are fully awake, you can leave the Three Realms and not be bound by birth and death. You will have control over your own birth and death: you can be born if you like to and die when you want to. This state, where everything is just as you wish, where you can come and go freely, is true liberation. It is like waking up from a big dream.

But now we hold on to what's false and forget about what's true. What is false? The objects of the five desires: wealth, sex, fame, food and sleep. What is true? The happiness of the four virtues of Nirvana-permanence, bliss, true self, and purity. And yet we human beings are so strange: We're not afraid of losing what's true, but we're terrified when what's false is lost. Why is that? Because we take a thief for our son, we reject the roots in favor of the twigs, take the false for the true, and are continually dreaming, hooked by dream states.

Because of delusion, we create karma and then receive the retribution. We are like a dust mote floating up and down in the air, led by the power of our karma, revolving in the six paths, with no control of our own. It is said, "If you can't clear the hurdles of fame and profit, you won't be able to leap out of the cycle of rebirth." When fame and benefit cease to attract you, you'll escape the trap of rebirth in the six paths.

佛法與人類和平

這契合佛制三和原則的社會，國家是傾向於大同的國家；國際是不礙國家的國際。基於平等原則，和平精神來推進，國的局限性，逐漸鬆弛；國際的統一性與無礙性，逐漸增強。大同而自由的人間和平，將不經戰爭而實現，實現為人間的淨土。這裡面，才有真正的平等，真正的自由，真正的民主，這才是實現真正的和平。

五、著重內因的心地和平

外在的事緣與內在的心因，有相互的關係：如外緣的諍事，逐漸趨向和平，內心的諍因--有關思想的偏見，有關權力的我慢，有關經濟的貪欲，也受到限制，而自然會漸漸淡薄起來。政治修明的國家，民眾的道德，每不需勸教而提高，即由於此。同時，真正和平工作者，如調治身心--修正智而伏偏見，修慈悲而伏瞋慢，修戒定而薄貪欲，這對於以身作則而實踐的和平工作，必更有力量，更易成就。所以，政治不是道德的，而決不是不道德的，彼此有著相互關係。上來說人世的和平重於外緣，這不是說不需內因的和平，是說內因是次要的。因為人事錯綜的社會不和平，有關於大眾，決不能做到人人的心地和平。反之，即使有少數能心地和平，對於大眾的人世和平，也不能起著決定性的作用。所以人世的和平，重於外緣，要基於平等原則，和合精神，從人事法制（政治）的革新中，促其實現。

內因為重的心地和平，著重身心淨化。真能心地和平，必有和平處世的表現。然社會不和不平，或極度的不和平，卻不妨實現個人的心地和平。這由於人有個性，前後延續中有著統一性，表現為個人活動的緣故。在佛法中，三乘聖者是同證涅槃解脫的。解脫，是不受煩惱繫縛，而得活潑潑的，無拘無礙的自由自在。涅槃，梵語有消散的意味，稱歎為止、息、沒、靜、寂滅、安隱，實形容心與理冥，心地的最極清淨，最極和平。一切煩惱，不外乎知情意的偏頗的分裂，缺乏完整性，統一性，而各相對立、自相矛盾。這心海的動態，如海水一樣，相推相盪，不能和也不能平。而心中重煩惱的現起，那等於海浪的洶湧而已。所以內心的淨化，消除煩惱，即自然的達到心地和平的涅槃，心地自由的解脫。這內心為重的心地和平，是徹底的，究竟的。從正覺人生真相，體達空無我性而破盡愚癡。我執為本的煩惱根源淨除了，從我執而來的瞋慢、貪欲、執見等，也不再存在。這樣的心地和平，名為「無諍論處」，為佛弟子身心修持的目標。從此心地的和平與自由，流露出的身心活動，待人處世，決不會違反人世和平的精神。佛制教團的真和平真自由，可以作為最有力的證明。

〈續下期...〉

Dharma and the Human Peace

A society or nation that follows the Buddhist Principle of the Three Harmonies as explained earlier, will be inclined to progress towards a nation of common principles. Internationally, no nation would interfere with other nations. Based on the progress arising from the principle of egalitarianism, and the spirit of peace, the limit and boundaries of each nation become less strict, the unification of nations and the non-interference between nations become a reality. A peaceful world of common principles and freedom becomes a reality without the need for wars on this very pure land that is inhabited by humans. Here, there is true equality, freedom and democracy. This is the real attainment of true harmonious-and-equitable peace.

5. Emphasis on Internal Causes and Peace within Our Minds

External conditions and internal causes within our minds are closely inter-related. For example when disputes arising from external conditions are gradually resolved peacefully, then internal causes - biased perception arising from thoughts, the pride arising from authority, and the greed arising from economic matters - will be subdued and gradually dissipate. For the same reason, a nation in which the politics is honest and liberal, the ethics and morality of its citizen will be high regardless of whether any specific education was instilled or not. At the same time, people who strive for peace can cultivate their body and mind: by cultivating wisdom to overcome their biased views, acquiring compassion to overcome their hatred and pride, and upholding the precepts and concentration to overcome their greed and desires. By conducting themselves as role models as they work towards universal peace, the effect would be even more cogent, and it would be easier to achieve their goal.

Thus, politics is not entirely ethical or unethical, because these have a mutual inter-relationship. Previously, it was put forward that the attainment of world peace relies primarily on the external conditions. However, this is not to say peace within the mind is not necessary but that it is of the next level of importance. If society, which is complex in its human relationships, is unfair and in disharmony, it is impossible for everyone in the society to attain peacefulness of mind within themselves.

Conversely, if only a minority group can achieve peace within their minds, this does not cause any definite effect on the peace enjoyed by the wider community. Thus, to have world peace, importance must be placed on external conditions, which must have its basis on egalitarian principles and the spirit of harmony and unity. Through innovations in the legal system (politics), peace can then be realized.

Those who recognize the importance of internal causes in achieving peace within our mind, will place emphases on the purification of the body and mind. One who truly attains inner peace will reveal this through their peaceful way of life. Although our society may be disharmonious and unequatable, or is extremely unpeaceful, it does not obstruct the realization of peace within our own minds. This is because everyone has their own personality that is integrated and consistent within themselves. This is revealed through one's activities and actions.

In Buddhism, the Noble Ones in the three vehicles, all work towards gaining Nirvana and liberation. Liberation is to be free from anguish and sufferings and allows the achievement of being totally carefree and without any restraints. In Sanskrit Nirvana means 'extinction.' It can have further meanings such as 'stop,' 'rest,' 'disappearance,' 'tranquility,' 'cessation,' and 'calmness.' Nirvana is used to describe the mind and the absolute truth. Which is, when the mind is of the utmost purity, it has fundamental equanimity and ultimate peace.

All defilements arise because our understanding, rationality and emotions are biased; they lack completeness and total integration, and are in opposition and self-contradictory. The anxiety in our mind is like the waves in the sea, always mutually interacting, pushing and swaying; there is never harmony or calmness. The revelation and origination of defilements in our mind, is like the surging waves of the water in the sea.

Thus, by purifying the mind and eliminating our defilements, we will naturally realize Nirvana - state where the mind is at peace, liberated and is totally carefree. This internal peace achieved within our minds, is the ultimate and most thorough. By understanding the truth about human existence, one can completely conquer stupidity and ignorance through the realization of emptiness and that there is in fact no ego-nature. Once we have eliminated the root source of defilement, which gives rise to egoism, then, pride, greed, obstinate views and the like, all of which arose from ego, will cease to exist. Such internal peace of the mind is referred to as

'without conflicts and arguments.' This is the goal which Buddhist disciples strive for in their cultivation. A person who has internal peace and is carefree will always reveal it through their physical and mental activities and in the way they treat people and deal with worldly matters. They will never go against the true spirit of worldly peace. The strongest evidence to support this is in the true peace that prevails in the Sangha community that was set up by Buddha.

(to be continued...)

法語篇 - 菩提心

發菩提心之後，好像放下麵種，久而久之，麵便會長大。

什麼是菩提心？我有一個很簡單的比喻：未發菩提心之前，好像麵粉未下發粉；一但發菩提心之後，好像放下麵種。久而久之，麵便會長大。若問菩提心像個什麼樣子？本來它是無形無相，只是個覺道。覺者，覺悟也，就是明白，明白道理。不單是明白，還要修這條道。也可以用寶塔來比喻菩提心：這一座寶塔，無論它多高多大，必要從地上修起；地，就是我們的心地。要從地上建這座寶塔，使它一層比一層高。菩提心，也是從地上建起，越發越大，越發越高；本來只是一點點，很小的，但逐漸膨脹、發大、等到功德圓滿了，最後可以成佛。

The Bodhi Resolve

What is the Bodhi resolve? I have a very simple analogy: Before we bring forth the Bodhi resolve, we are like flour before yeast is added. Bringing forth the Bodhi resolve is like adding yeast to the dough, so that it will rise and expand over time. What is the Bodhi resolve like? It is without any form or mark; it is only the enlightened Way. To be enlightened means to understand; to understand the principles of the Way. Yet we should not stop at understanding the principles; we must also cultivate the Way.

The Bodhi resolve can also be compared to a pagoda: no matter how tall a pagoda you plan to build, you have to start from the ground. The ground is analogous to our "mind ground." Just as we have to build a pagoda story by story from the ground up, the Bodhi resolve is similarly built

up from the mind ground. Starting very small, it gradually grows greater and higher. And eventually, when we perfect our merit and virtue, we will become Buddhas. This is only a very simple and rough analogy.

一般道德與佛化道德

六、學佛即是道德的實踐

學佛是道德的實踐，這說明了學佛是人人應學，不論男女長幼的。信佛的，到寺裡來進香禮佛，持名誦咒，這是對於佛菩薩的崇敬，或請求佛菩薩的加被。真正學佛的不但是信仰，不但是遵行佛教的禮儀，而要信智並重。學佛也不是專重教理，研究一番就算數，而要解行並重。

學佛的主題，不外乎三學——戒、定、慧，或開廣為六度，這都是實踐德行。其中，戒是一般的德行，重在止惡防非。然不單是止，如應作而不作，也是違犯的。能夠持戒，身語的行為，就會合乎法度。不過，外表的行為雖謹持不犯，而還不能將內心的亂念息下。散亂，失念，不正知，這都是使心地蒙昧不明，使我們走向罪過的動力。所以進一步，應當集中精神，專心一境，使內心進入安定而純淨的境地，這就是定。得了定，部分的煩惱降伏了，但要斷除煩惱，非引發無漏慧不可。真慧——二無我慧，是廓清我見、妄執的利器，如熾烈的猛火一樣，燒盡一切的煩惱。內心經過慧火的鍛鍊，畢竟清淨，這才能內心外身，所行都能合法。慈悲心淨化而增長了，能捨己為人，顯發為圓滿的德行。從這學佛的過程看，學佛不是別的，只是從外表清淨而到內心清淨，從內心淨化而使外表的行為，更完美，更圓滿，學佛實只是道德的實踐。這一完美的實踐過程，雖不能人人都做到，但要做一世間的善人，也得合乎學佛的戒學才得。

〈全文完〉

Common Morality and Buddhist Moral

6. Buddhism is the Practice of Morality

To practice the Buddha's Way is to put morality into practice. In other words, it is something that everyone should learn, either young or old. Buddhists chant and offer incense in temple either to express their utmost respect towards the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, or to seek the blessings of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

However, true Buddhist practices are not based on faith or rituals only. There must be equal emphasis on both the development of faith and the cultivation of wisdom. Merely studying and researching the teachings of the Buddha is not sufficient. We should be able to understand and put the teachings into right practice.

Practicing the Dharma involves three main practices (the Three Studies). These are the observance of the precepts, the development of concentration, and the cultivation of wisdom. This can be further extended into the Six Paramitas.

The observance of the precepts belongs to common morality. Its aim is to prevent evil and wrong doing. However, if we do not do what is supposed to be done, this is also a violation of the precepts. If we can abide by the precepts, our actions, and speech will be in accordance with the teachings of the Buddha.

But external good actions and speech are not sufficient to calm a bewildered mind. A bewildered, unmindful, and ignorant state of mind, will blind our conscience, and drive us towards immorality. Therefore, this is why it is necessary to go a step further in developing our mental skills. Mental training involves the practice of one-pointed concentration. Through this, we can develop a peaceful and pure state of mind that can help us diminish or remove some of our defilements or frustrations. However, to obtain the complete elimination of all mental defilements, perfect wisdom, Prajna, is required.

Perfect Wisdom is the wisdom that sees the void nature of self and Dharma. It is the key to clarify our attachment to our view of 'Self.' The flame of wisdom can incinerate all our defilements. It is only then that we can achieve a pure and undisturbed mind. Every action performed, word spoken, and intention arisen, will then be in accordance with the Truth. Our loving-kindness and compassion will grow, and we will be able to forgo ourselves for others. Perfect morality may then manifest.

Through the stages of practicing Buddhism, it can be seen that to practice Buddhism is to begin with the cultivation of an outer peace, then an inner peace, and then finally achieving a perfect and flawless behavior. Practicing Buddhism is merely the realization of morality. On this path of perfecting ourselves, although not everyone can put in enough effort to attain the completion of this process, following the precepts is the first step, even if we just wish to be a good person in this life.

《午齋結法緣》

佛是人修行而成 不是神

居士篇／何潔貞居士

世間各種宗教，除了佛教之外，沒有一個宗教的教主不是以超人的神而自居的。信徒往往稱這神可以呼風喚雨，點石成金，祂可以主宰人類的吉凶禍福、操縱萬物的生死榮辱。人們應將好的美食供在祂的面前，並全心虔誠的讚美與歌頌，把自己的一切成就、榮耀都歸於萬能的神。強調唯有信祂的才能上天堂享福，不信的就會墮地獄受大苦，絕無抗辯申訴的餘地。

而佛教的教主—釋迦牟尼佛，他來到人間的第一句話就說：「天上天下唯我獨尊。」

「唯我獨尊」這四字裡其中的「我」字，並不是指釋迦牟尼佛自己，而是指全人類的每一個人。其實這句話的正確解釋應該是：人在宇宙中是頂天立地，每一個人都是自己的主宰，以所作的業來決定自己的命運，而不受任何人或任何超乎人的神所控制。釋尊將他的覺悟及成就，完全歸功於自己的努力與智慧。

釋尊認為一個人的吉凶禍福，成敗榮辱，決定在自己的行為的善惡與努力與否。沒有外人可以指定或分配上天堂，或推入地獄。單靠讚美與歌頌是不能離苦得樂，只有腳踏實地去修心養性，才能淨化、昇華自己的人格，使自己現生就可以體驗身心的清淨快樂。釋尊提倡階級平等，就好像他雖出身貴為太子，而他的僧團中卻是平民、奴隸皆一視同仁，不分高底。由於他這種大公無私，沒有人可以做到的，所以他才是真平等者。

同時佛教又主張「無緣大慈」與「同體大悲」，將平等的意義推上更高的境界。在這裡，我簡單的解釋「無緣大慈」和「同體大悲」是什麼意思？「無緣大慈」佛教主張不但對與自己有親密關係的人要慈愛，如自己的父母、親戚，朋友等；同時對跟自己沒有血緣關係的人也要有慈愛的心，就算與我們從不交往或素不相識的人，也一樣地關懷愛護。無緣大慈，用儒家的話來說就是：「老吾老以及人之老，幼吾幼以及人之幼。」

同體大悲：同體大悲就是稟著人飢己飢，人溺己溺的精神；看見人家飢寒交迫，就等於自己也是受著飢寒交迫的痛苦；人家受苦，亦等於自己受苦。我們把宇宙間一切眾生看成人我一體，苦樂同享。儒家有說：「海內存知己，天涯若比鄰。」又說：「四海之內皆兄弟。」無論我們去到什麼地方，所相遇的每一種人，他們都是自己的朋友、親人，就好像自己在家中一樣，和自己的兄弟姐妹在一起沒有分別。

想起上個月的南亞海嘯大災，死傷逾三十萬人。在剎那間，他們的至親及朋友就不見了，他們受盡生離死別之苦，絕非筆墨所能形容，就算不是學佛的人，也都發出無緣大慈及同體大悲的心，從各方面盡力去接濟救助這個災難。我本想出一點力去災地幫助他們，但在環境上不能許可，所以，我每天的早晚課都虔誠迴向給這些死難者，以及在生而與家人分離的人，希望仗佛慈悲力令他們可以早日離苦得樂。

如今我們有機會每星期六、日可以坐在這裡聽法、誦經、拜懺，真的很有福報。我們一定要好好的把握時間趕快努力去修行。前幾天，我在夢中見到宣公上人，他面對我，說了一些話，我聽不懂，也聽不清他說什麼，但在意識上我知道他是說：「你這個佛弟子，已經休息了好一陣子了，現在要加緊努力，不要再懶惰了。」

佛教的平等觀念，不局限於萬物之靈的人類，反對除了人類以外的一切動物，都是被人享口腹的論調。我們若見聞到動物臨死的悲鳴哀號、掙扎，就會深深感受到慘不忍睹，聞其聲而不忍食肉。大家想一想，如果我們有小小刀傷的時候都會覺得很痛，那麼各種動物牠們也愛生命，也有感覺，雖然我們聽不懂牠們說什麼，但想到被人屠宰時慘痛的景象，就應該等同自己身受一般的不忍。

佛教更進一步，肯定這些被我們所捕殺的動物，無不具佛性（若眾生有緣聽聞佛法，認真實踐，都可以成佛的潛能。）縱使人與其他動物之間，在形體上，智慧上有所不同，但在求生存的權力上，在成佛的機會上卻是平等的。這就像一個窮兇惡極或是愚蠢無知

的人他亦具有人性一樣。古人說:「上天有好生之德。」又說:「萬物與我並生。」都是一種視萬物為一體的平等思想。只不過是沒有佛教說的如此透徹罷了。

歸納以上種種，我們可以明白，佛是凡夫經由努力修行而成就的，佛與眾生平等的說法。

Dharma Talks Given During Lunch Time

Buddha Attains Buddhahood Through Cultivation, He is a Man, Not a God.

Series of Talks by Laities / Upasika Betty Ho

With the exception of Buddhism, all worldly religions are upholding their almighty gods as ones who can command the wind and the rain, turning a stone into a piece of gold. Their gods predestine the fate of all men, be it good or bad, honored or dishonored. When good food is offered to their gods, these god followers will sing and praise their gods, and return all their accomplishments and glories to their almighty gods. They emphasize that only those who believe in their almighty gods may enter the heaven, and all non-believers will be condemned to the hell; and there is no ground for argument.

Soon after Shakyamuni, the founder of Buddhism, was born, he declared, "In heaven and on earth, I am supreme." In the sentence of "I am supreme", the word "I" does not refer to Shakyamuni Buddha himself, it refers to all human beings. The proper meaning of it is that each man on earth can stand upright, and be responsible for one's own fate, that is, one's fate is determined by one's karma resulting from one's acts, rather than determined by any man or almighty god. Upon his enlightenment, the Buddha understood that his accomplishment was the result of his own efforts and wisdom.

The Buddha understands that each person's life, good or bad, with blessings or calamity, success or failure, honor or dishonor, depends upon one's good or evil deeds, and the extent of efforts in so doing. There is no one person or god who can deliver us to the heaven or condemn us to the hell. Praising one's almighty god may not help one get out of suffering, only through practical cultivation that one can purify oneself, attains perfect personality and experiences pure happiness. The Buddha advocates equality among all beings. Even though the Buddha was once

a prince, in his sangha, he treated all sangha members who were ordinary men, and slaves as equal. His act is selfless, and there is no man who acted in the same way at his time, so I say that he is a true advocate of human equality.

Buddhism also advocates "Great kindness even to those with whom one lacks affinities" and "Great compassion to all beings of identical substance," and the Buddha advances the meaning of equality to another level. Here I will provide a simple explanation as to what is the meaning of "Great kindness even to those with whom one lacks affinities" and "Great compassion to all beings of identical substance."

"Great kindness even to those with whom one lacks affinities" means that we do not only love those with whom we have close relationships, such as our parents, relatives or friends; we must also love people with whom we have no personal relationships or even people whom we don't know, and show them our care as well. From a Confucius perspective, "Great kindness even to those with whom one lacks affinities" means "To treat other old folks as our parents, and to treat other young kids as our own kids."

"Great compassion to all beings of identical substance" means that when others feel hungry, we feel the same; when others get drowned, we feel the same; when we see others suffer from coldness and hunger, we feel the same. That is, we regard all beings in the universe are of identical substance like ours. Confucius followers said, "To have intimate friends afar, it is like having close neighbors". Another saying goes, "For all people around us, they are our brothers." Wherever we go, whoever we meet, they are like members of our families; we get along with others just like our brothers and sisters.

When I think about last month's tsunami in South Asia, over 300,000 of people died in an instant, their close family members and friends were gone like the wind. Their suffering from the loss of their loved ones was beyond description of any words. Irrespective of whether people have learnt about Buddhism, they can still feel their pain, and want to help in whichever possible way they can. Due to practical constraints, even though I very much like to help them in a small way, I was not able to, therefore, I dedicate my daily morning and evening dharma homework to those killed in the tsunami, and to those who have lost their loved ones, and pray that the Buddha's love and compassion can help them relieve their suffering and attain happiness.

Now we have the opportunity to sit here, listen to dharma lectures, and chant the sutras and participate in repentance dharma assemblies each Saturday and Sunday, we are indeed very fortunate, so we must waste no time and work hard in our cultivation. A few days ago, I dreamed of Venerable Master Hua, he told me something which I could not hear clearly or understand what he said. But I guess he must be saying, "You, as a Buddhist disciple, have rested for a while, you must work harder, and should not be lazy any longer."

In Buddhism, the concept of equality is not only limited to man. Buddhism opposes the view that all animals other than man are to be killed for human consumption. We can hear all sorts of dying calls from the animals in slaughter houses, it is truly disheartening to see their suffering, hearing their calls for sparing their lives, and how cruel it is for us to consider eating their meat. Let's think, when we have a small cut, we can feel great pain. All animals too have feelings, when they are being killed, even though we cannot make out what their calls at the time of their being killed, we must feel their pain and stop eating their meat.

In Buddhism, it is also believed that those animals which are killed for human consumption also have the Buddha nature (that is, if all sentient beings have the opportunity to listen to the Buddhadharma, and practice in their lives, they also have the potential to become Buddhas). Even though men and animals appear to have different forms and different level of intelligence, they have equal rights to life and the same potential to become Buddhas. Just like we can understand that in the case of an extremely evil or stupid, or ignorant man, he must still be regarded as a man. An ancient saying says, "The heaven cherishes each life," and another says, "All beings live on earth just like me." These show that all beings in the universe is equal, only that the concept of equality among all beings is not expressed in a way as explicit as what the Buddha teaches.

In summary, we can conclude that the Buddha attains Buddhahood through cultivation, and that the Buddha and all beings are equal.

弟子規

金山寺中文學校學子：黃樂斯

弟子規是子女和學生做人和在社會上對待別人的標準。弟子規是聖人的教訓。首先我們要孝順父母和長輩。其次，我們做事情要謹慎和講誠信。對大眾要有愛心，親近有仁道做個有愛心的人。最後，有多餘的力量和精力，就要好好的學習知識，充實自己，回報社會，做一個對家庭對社會有用的人。

自從學習了弟子規以後，我的言行舉動都有了很大的改變，在家裡很自覺的做家務，到外面又很樂意幫助別人，父母跟朋友都覺得我有了很大的改變。

Standards for students

Standards for students gives children instructions on how to behave themselves. Reciting some Chinese classics plays an important role in helping shape children's personalities and their views of the world. These guidelines aren't written down by common people, but ancient sages. The basic guidelines are to be filial to your parents and elderly, love and be kind to your siblings. Draw near to those who are good. Finally, whatever time you have left should be devoted to learning.

By learning this, my attitude has changed in many ways towards my parents, families and friends. It has made a great impact on me, and my parents are deeply grateful and proud of this change.