

The Source of Life is Calling

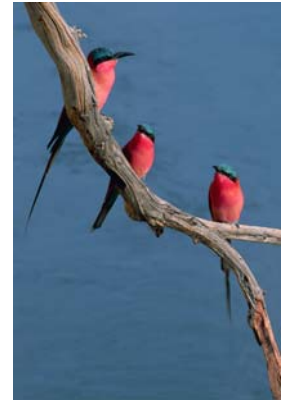
『生命故鄉的呼喚』

Follow your Heart to where your Home is

Let Your Heart Be *Alive*

The Profound Beauty in the Garden of Life

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should still strive to work earnestly and live conscientiously. Understanding this will help us reflect on our approach to living and can guide us to set our course in life wisely.

How can we be mindful and act wisely as a parent? To do it well, we must be mindful of how our children are growing up, understand their desires and act wisely. If you are mindful only in selecting the schools, teachers or subjects of study, your mindfulness is misplaced

Let us look at waking a child up for school on a cold winter's morning. If you scream and yell and flip off his comforter, you have stripped away the feeling of warmth and fuzziness that your child longs for.

Children are very perceptive and sensitive. They learn quickly in order to survive in the family, to gain acceptance and to avoid punishment from their parents. Therefore, they will soon learn to get up when the alarm goes off even though they would much prefer to stay in their warm and cozy bed. The expectation of the adults is being met, yet the warm side of humanity is being lost.

As time goes by, after they grow up, a void in their heart will build up without their even being aware of it. This emptiness and regret will urge them to keep on looking for that warmth that they

Chapter Nine

Living and Practicing

... continued from HYQJ Spring 2007 issue # 5
(posted on <http://www.huayen.org> –
Quarterly Journal)

What others think of me or what they can give me is really irrelevant. It is not the “ultimate goal” of my existence. However, the present social value system and practices can easily mislead us into the maze of desires.

So, what is the purpose of your existence? You are brought here by a set of cooperative causes. When these cooperative causes are reorganized, you may be sent to another venue with a different set of circumstances. You may end up in yet another location if these cooperative causes are reorganized again. Therefore, romance, wealth, fame, social status, or power is just illusion that does not warrant much attention. If these things have been guiding your direction in living, then think again? Regardless of circumstances, we

were deprived of as children. They will be discontented to just have power, wealth, or love, because part of their humanity is lacking, and they will always be pursuing.

Any damage to a child's psyche is irreparable. This loss can only be corrected through meticulous and assiduous Chan meditation training where the child can regress to his childhood to find out the issue and repair and heal its loss within the Chan state. Only then will the void in humanity be returned to its original fullness. At that instance, by simply turning around, we can return to our homeland of True Nature.

We will not be able to return to our True Nature as long as long as there are deficiencies within character. No religious rites can bridge this gap. If this gap exists, regardless of which religion you uphold, the barrier will be too wide to cross over. In order to be by the side of our Higher Power, the source of our True Nature, we must repair the damage first, otherwise we can never start the journey of going back to our homeland.



Please remember that we should never act indifferently to our children. But unfortunately, this happens just too often. "Get up! Get up!" Your screaming will only increase the damage. Have you ever considered organizing yourself with breakfast and other morning tasks first? Then, you can play and snuggle in bed with your child so as to wake him up? Getting up like this will not be difficult, and your child will start the day in a happy mood. A child between 6 to 9 years old needs tender loving and nurturing. You may need to spend more time for a week or a year. But, in the blink of the eye, your child will have grown up. But, he will not have the sense of emptiness or the feeling that he has been deprived of love. In either approach, the parents have to put forth effort and time. Unfortunately, our energy is often misdirected.

In the example above, we have shown how the mother, by not paying much attention to the child has resulted in the child's sense of internal regret. Fathers too can cause harm to their children if they are preoccupied by their own careers and do not spend sufficient time with their children. Or, they may have unrealistic expectations of how the children should behave, or how to interact with them. For example, a crying child longing for his father's hug may be pushed back, slapped because the father is having a bad day at work, or simply told that "boys don't cry"!

These repeated reactions can destroy the child's innocent longing for fatherly love, resulting in permanent injuries to the child's heart and mind. Can you appreciate how this can be heartbreaking for children? Will this cause young people to become juvenile delinquents and criminals?

You may not know how to nurture your children perfectly. Even if you did, you may have done so with clinging stubbornness. Most parents will not hurt their children intentionally. But, it is very common that their ignorance will have caused damage to their children's development. Many parents want their children to achieve what

they could not do themselves but do not realize the harm this can do to their young minds. If we have been unable to live up to our own expectations, why would we foster that expectation on our children? This point alone is worth our reflection. If we are not mindful on this, how can we act wisely, or even speak of cultivating our practice in life?

"Applying our mind skillfully": speak not of grand schemes but of day-to-day matters. How do you dispose of the garbage? How do you use electricity and water? How do you handle household chores? How do you perform your job? Do not apply your mind in grabbing more power or profit, in competition or rivalry. Being mindful skillfully is generated by our conscience, the sense of responsibility to life, the desire to do our

job well and to live well. Whether we have money, authority, social status or love is irrelevant!



Why do we always crave for intimacy and love? The void produced by the absence of closeness to our parents creates the need for the intimacy of another relationship. From a worldly perspective, love can satisfy our inner emptiness and insecurity, but from the perspective of ultimate goal of living, this is still incomplete.

We should cherish our achievements and success in life, and hope that others can succeed as well. But living for the pursuit of these desires is a reflection of a serious void deep within our hearts. I hope this illustration will help you understand how to cultivate your practice within the activities of daily living. Wearing the prayer beads, the Crucifix, or the Buddha statue on a bracelet or necklace may demonstrate you are a sincere believer; those articles have admiration value but have nothing to do with actual practice. Practice is reflected in how you behave and from the intention behind each of your actions.

Some people have been learning Buddhism for a long time and they are familiar with the different practices. They have made pilgrimages to the famous temples in China and India, and they have befriended important spiritual leaders. Yes, they are very knowledgeable of the people, geography and general history, but it does not mean they are true practitioners. Performing rites do not equate to true practice. Similarly, visiting the various venues may have nothing to do with practice but everything to do with traveling and sight-seeing.

Others often tease me for not having been to the holy lands in India, Nepal, Tibet, or even the main temples in China. True, from this perspective, I may not be a good practitioner, let alone a Buddhist. But, this is not important to me. True practice lies not in touring those special sites. Of course, if you are blessed with the merits, you should go. My focus has been on preaching the Dharma and Sutras. Trying to find time for practice is a luxury to me, and traveling to these places is not a priority. Even though I have not been there physically, they exist within me. Buddha is within me, Buddha is here with me!

Rushing around to the various temples will serve no purpose and it is not practice! It is an excellent experience to meet those who are holy and highly respected, but can you really meet the true holy and respectable ones? What can you really benefit and learn from them during that time? Other than being acknowledged and recognized for having made big donations, what else will you gain? We want something real, not hypocritical fame.

If we can let go of fame, love attachments, status and power, then what is the point of gaining recognition within the temple circles? If you know how to harmonize every aspect in life, then you have succeeded in integrating practice into living. Let us start with our day to day activities, conduct ourselves in an upright manner. We may not be able to attain one hundred percent uprightness, but eighty or eighty-five percent is okay. Of course, the higher, the better.

We must try to develop a hale and hearty character, a healthy and wholesome mindset towards life, an unblemished and undistorted personality and good interpersonal relationships. We will be able to live true to life, with a clear conscience and faithful to our responsibilities regardless of others' criticism. True Practice is when we take responsibility for our actions as it relates to our conscience and to the *karmic outcome*.

It is upon this foundation that we can become liberated by Buddhism. This is known as "Performing good deeds at the worldly level". Only when we are able to consummate the

“performing of good deeds at the worldly level”, can we begin to truly cultivate our practice. The maras, imps (bewitchers) or spirits who are often mentioned in Buddhist teachings are people who cultivated their practice without a healthy character, personality and perspective towards life. Therefore, their achievements will lead to deviations from the true path. They will use the supernatural powers they have developed for wrongful purposes. Therefore, it is important to emphasize again that in order to cultivate our practice, we must first work towards perfecting our character.

We are not expecting 100% perfection. Minor imperfections can be tolerated. If we have trouble dealing with people, we do not have the foundation to start cultivating practice. We must satisfy the basic requirements in human character before we can consider seeking the higher aspirations of the Buddha who embodies the truth and dharma – The Dharmakaya Wisdom Body.

This Body is equivalent to the Essence, using the Truth as the Essence (體) or Body of our lives, applying Wisdom on the Function (用) or performance of living, that is what we meant by “The Dharmakaya Wisdom Body”. The development of this Body takes time, just like raising a child. The repeated acts of feeding the baby will nurture him to grow, without knowing how or why! You do not need to teach the baby how to grow, just keep on feeding him; he has the ability to grow up naturally. That is the key to development: time and nourishment.

But nowadays, people do not realize this is the key. Instead of nurturing what is basic and allowing it to mature naturally, we focus our energies to rush achievement and success. Stretching a baby will not make the baby grow up faster! The maturation of our Dharmakaya Wisdom Body cannot be rushed. We need to follow the natural process with its natural timing. As long as we try our best in carrying out our duties and responsibilities, the outcome will be satisfactory.

It is not difficult to liberate ourselves from worldly troubles and obstacles of life, to base our

nature on the authentic Truth and to carry out our actions with wisdom. The difficulty lies in establishing the wholesome character on a fundamental level. Having a character with integrity, a healthy mental state, a balanced perspective towards life, the skills to have excellent interpersonal relationships, an unblemished upright personality are the prerequisites for the “Holy Womb”. Once the fetus of “Dharmakaya Wisdom Body” is delivered, we need to nurture and cherish it through each and every day. In our daily activities, we need to apply our mind skillfully, earnestly working and sincerely living. This fetus of the saint, the foundation of Dharmakaya Wisdom Body will naturally grow and mature.

This is the truth in cultivating our practice through day-to-day living. Its thrill does not come from mastering any supernatural powers. When our day-to-day troubles start disappearing, when there are no more unnecessary desires, we are succeeding. During this process, nobody can cheat or injure us. We seek not to be the judge of mankind, but to live without lies or pain. We will just be an ordinary, happy, free and truly liberated person!

The lesson of Buddhism is instructing us how to uncover our True Nature, to return to our Homeland, to rediscover our Original Face through living a relaxed, carefree, brilliant and happy life regardless of circumstances!

... to be continued in next issue.

