

# The Source of Life is Calling

## 『生命故鄉的呼喚』

Follow your Heart to where your Home is

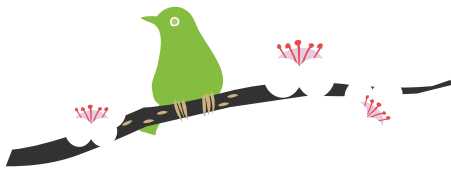
Let Your Heart Be *Alive*

The Profound Beauty in the Garden of Life

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## Chapter Eight

### The Hidden Treasures of Life

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We are too obsessed with “arriving” at our destination! Very often, this destination relates to power, wealth or emotion. These obsessions become controlling and would pull us off-course. They can blind us from living in the moment or setting our own course in life in a comprehensive manner. Once you understand this and are able to set your own course, your life will flourish. You will be free to experience the moment, whether it is feeling the caress of the light breeze or the appreciative smile of a lonely senior enjoying your visit!

We do not always have to fight or compete with others. The entire world exists to act as our frame of reference. Everything between heaven and earth exists for us. The hustle and bustle of the traffic and the crowds exist, just like the sounds of nature exist. Why can't we enjoy this rhythm of the city?

Do you feel pressured in a noisy environment? Are you unable to appreciate this vivacious concerto? Relax your shoulders and arms, slow down your steps and take a stroll along the streets. You do not need to tighten your fists and force your way. Pause for a moment when the light turns red. Take a look at those around you and do not get lost amongst the crowd. You are only a passerby, so enjoy your observations! Allow this scene to change your perspective on life. Otherwise, you will continue to be entangled by the forces of karma.

Relax! Whether we have to wait for one or more red lights, it does not make much difference at the end of the day. Look at the impatient faces of the drivers, and the pedestrians rushing through the intersections. Don't you feel the almighty is playing tricks on them? The external environment is bamboozling these crowds of people; can we afford not to be awakened from this? Why should we suffer along with these people? Why can't we become gods ourselves, live in our own heavenly kingdoms and have everything under our control! How can we manage this? First, let us minimize the importance of the illusive aspects of life such as fame, wealth, lust, shelter and food. Many people have given them great significance in their life.

We understand these illusive aspects exist and are causing serious problems in our lives; of that we are very familiar. What we are unfamiliar with is the existence, value, meaning, truth and purpose of life. Even in fleeting moments when these

topics come to mind, we have no direction on how to pursue these thoughts. What is the truth of living? This is a “passionate question” for contemplation, an existential doubt. You have to always keep this question in your mind, deliberately, repeatedly and vigilantly. Given the necessary time, like a hen hatching its eggs, the answers will come like the hatching of the chicks. It is a process that cannot be rushed!

“Mastering the skill” of minimizing the importance of the illusive aspects of life takes time. The skill will be attained with enough practice. Until you master the skill, go on living in your usual way, but temper your desires for wealth, lust, fame, shelter and food. This will enhance your appreciation of the value of life, the true meaning of existence. This experience will transform you.

There is no boundary for knowledge. Therefore it is impossible to study this infinite and ever growing knowledge within the confines of one lifetime. You must realize that if you use your Wisdom of Life -- we call it “omniscience” -- to feel and experience the value and truth of living, only then can you affirm your existence. This affirmation is all encompassing. The Wisdom of Life will then be completely manifested, and nothing will be missed. Thus you can surpass all phenomena of life and there is nothing in this world that will become a problem to you anymore.

We can still live very well without understanding the full realm of knowledge, the theory of relativity, or how the universe was created. Yet, if you cannot affirm your existence, if you do not know what your life is all about, you will be surrounded by endless predicaments and vexations.

Does life seem empty and beyond your control? You may have earned a lot of money, but for what purpose? If it is more than what you need, why did you earn so much money? Have you become a miser, a slave to money? Why would you want to be a slave to something you do not need? Like a farmer who ploughs his land without planting anything, if the land will not be used to produce food, why plough the land?

Try to reflect on your life and feel its existence. When you can affirm life’s existence, the “omniscience” will appear and everything will become clear. The value and meaning of life will also become reality. At this time, you will no longer be helpless or feel ambivalent. There will be no fear, feelings of emptiness or insecurity. There, the true value and meaning of life lies here, but how many people will get to this stage?

Worldly beings are accustomed to being preoccupied by their desires for wealth, lust, fame, food and sleep. Regardless of what they are doing, their mind-set inclines towards those aspects. When professionals are trained, they developed a certain mind-set of their own. For example, a doctor will look at life from the perspective of health or illness. An engineer will approach life from the engineering point of view. From the social point of view, there is nothing wrong, so why would you ask them to give up this mind-set? This giving up will also be rather difficult.

You should be aware that when greed and desires are incorporated into your area of expertise, your longing for wealth, lust, fame, sleep and food will emerge. If your area of expertise is not contaminated with wealth, fame, power and emotion, if you can give up these greedy desires, if you can dedicate your professional work with purity of heart, the quality of your work will be far superior.

Wealth, fame, power and emotion are not bad in and of themselves. However, when they are tangled up with desires, they become contaminated. These attributes will corrupt a person. How? Since most people are so entrenched with the concepts of wealth, lust, fame, food, and sleep that no matter what is done, their thoughts will always be tied to these areas. Once these desires are stirred into the mix of the psyche of these professionals, purity becomes corrupted. The goal to benefit mankind is distracted by the search for power or wealth.

How do we integrate the truth, value and meaning of life’s existence into the realm of professionalism? If you can reflect along this line of questioning, your expertise will be immediately transcended into Bodhisattva’s

actions. If humanity is your priority, when you perform in your area of expertise, you will consider the needs of others, instead of thinking merely in terms of profit, rank, authority or achievement. Thus, your work will be exceptionally magnificent. When an artist's creativity is based on humanity and not on market trend, the result will be very delightful; otherwise it will only be a commercial artifact.

There are plenty of products on the market. Can we duplicate a piece of art? No, if we have only marketing in mind, products tend to be over-produced and supplied. From the standpoint of marketing, reproduction can still be of high quality. But if marketing takes priority over humanity, art will be degraded to commercial product. That a piece of art is timeless and priceless relies on the eternal fact that it is unique; if it can be duplicated its value is diminished.

Due to advances in technology, many art pieces can be duplicated; but this should be done with the aim of sharing pleasure of the piece rather than strictly for marketing purposes. Inspiration of humanity and satisfaction of marketing objectives will lead to very different results. Therefore, we wish all professionals will work with humanity as an important consideration rather than putting the emphasis on wealth, lust, fame, food, and sleep. This concept is not easy to implement. From a professional point of view, marketing managers or industrialists can satisfy their commercial purposes with humanity in mind. Yet in reality, most of them focus overwhelmingly on product sales and profit margins. Thus, humanity is being distorted and degraded and social structures become deteriorate. This deterioration is a kind of virus.

Can humanity be used as the real standard of measurement?

Absolutely! That is why we are reaching out to you, hoping that you will gradually focus less on the desires on wealth, lust, fame, food and sleep. And let us use humanity and liveliness as the measurement of the existence, value and meaning of our lives. In the Chan School, this is known as "transforming the unfamiliar into the familiar"-

transforming the unfamiliar existence of life and affirmation of life into familiar territories.

"Transforming the familiar to unfamiliar"- let your desires for wealth, lust, fame, food and sleep be transformed from familiar to unfamiliar. If you can do that, your professional expertise will be elevated; you will transcend to a higher level. At this point, your mind-set will be transforming the earthly desires from the familiar to the unfamiliar. On the other hand your mind-set on "the existence and affirmation of life" and "the truth and meaning of life" should be transforming from the unfamiliar to the familiar. This is cultivation! Your expertise will definitely receive an inconceivable breakthrough; you life will enter into the most valuable and meaningful period of all your innumerable lives and deaths. From then on, your life will be transformed into another realm; you will soon be able to transform from the first quadrant to the second quadrant of life.

This transformation is something that is definitely achievable. We, ordained monks, are professional practitioners. For ordinary laymen who cannot cultivate so professionally, there are three other options for consideration: your understanding of "living", "life" and "humanity".

Firstly, you can start on the topic of "living". How do you want to live so that your life has values and meaning? What is the purpose of living? What are you trying to achieve? This is known as "assuring or confirming your position in life". If you observe the truth and existence of living with the above questions/viewpoints as your reference point, your life will be transformed. At this stage, god has no authority over you; your fate will not be predetermined. Your destiny is predetermined at birth by your past actions; nobody can change that except you. How do you change your destiny? By assuring your position in life.

... to be continued in next issue

