

Compass Spirit Montreal



October 2017

To Meditate is to Forgive

Have you ever hated anyone? When we hate someone, we always think about him/her. It's difficult to get that person out of our mind. Have you loved someone very much? When we love someone, it's also difficult to get him/her out of our mind. Loving or hating is a way to invite someone to stay in the hotel of our mind, and it is hard to get rid of them.

When we meditate, those love and hate stories that we can't resist will come to our mind, not the people. They are very powerful emotional memories. For example, about 10 or 15 years ago, someone unknown to us berated or smeared us online, making us very mad. We couldn't do anything to retaliate, so our anger just stayed on. Gradually, it sank down into our subconscious and became an emotional memory in our brain, having its own place there.

A dozen years later, we might be sitting in a lovely setting when all of a sudden, that memory emerged. It was so powerful that we couldn't stop thinking about it. We kept asking ourselves, "Why didn't I retaliate then? Why didn't I smear them back?" and so on. Unexpectedly, we spent 10 or 15 minutes in meditation just to think of them, of those who slandered us 15 years ago, for example. When we got out of that sitting, our memory of anger and revenge just intensified. It turns out that the more we pay attention to it, the angrier we get. The level of anger and hatred gets even higher in meditation.

Dear everyone, there will be countless emotional memories constantly emerging while you're meditating. That's because in your real life, you haven't learned how to forgive, how to let go, how to comfort, and how to open your heart completely. After months and years, those memories will go on staying in your mind and getting more powerful.



Actually, there are two paths in meditation:

1. We look back at those memories with a forgiving mind to dissolve karma and untie knots. When those memories come, we have to smile so they can go away.
2. We create more karma when we get angry with those memories during meditation, then once the sitting is over, we'd call up this or that person, or angrily speak our mind, or vent our anger on others with very negative actions.

In general, we're the victims of those memories. Sometimes we live in the past for months and years because we always remember a certain person or we bury certain past event in our mind without ever learning to forgive.

So why do we meditate? To forgive. But how do we forgive?

Let those memories come and go, emerge and disappear. But we don't forget them. We recognize them, smile with them, and realize clearly that they are our life experiences. Whether they're good or bad, beautiful or ugly, sad or happy, love or hate, have or have not, gain or loss, etc., we clean them all up, sweeping away all karmic hindrances when we meditate. Their power can no longer hold the attention of our consciousness. Therefore, we dissolve our karma. They won't bother us again. On the other hand, if we keep them, bury them deep inside, and deny them, we get mad, argue with them, fight with them while we're meditating, they will continue to show up in our life. We call it karma catching up, i.e. our karmic hindrances will come and hold us forever.

Therefore, we should open our heart and always think that to meditate is to forgive.

Meditating is not for reaching beautiful altered states. The more we want to have them, the easier we'll have nightmares or painful dreams, not while we're sleeping, but while we're meditating. So, we should sit and be still. That stillness is often stirred. For instance, if we visualize our consciousness is like a straight thread, the stirring of our consciousness is our past memories. The only way to still them is to forgive, accept, and look at them with very kind eyes. Let them come, witness them, recognize them, and then let them go.

Every moment of the life we're living is a beautiful experience. Be aware of each experience; let it come, then let it go. While meditating, don't hold on to it, tug with it, and react negatively, or even positively. Look at it very gently, and let it go away. Thus, to meditate is to forgive.

From Dharma Espresso by Master Heng Chang
(Translated and transcribed by Compassionate Service Society)



Invitation Letter



Dear Friends,

Every year we hold the World Peace Gathering in Orange County to bring our community to a common purpose of generating goodness, wholesome energy, and love to a chaotic world. Since 2009 to now, we have an increasing number of participants attending each year of WPG with great enthusiasm, care, and support. We know there is a great need for emotional support, especially in this world of unrest and violence. We know our community needs spiritual inspiration for its own wholeness and healing. We know each of us wants to feel at home and included when we come together celebrating or praying. We all want peace and healing, first within our hearts, then within our family, then to our community, and the world. Our World Peace Gathering is just for these purposes.

Compassionate Service Society and Venerable Master Heng Chang cordially invite you to join our 2017 World Peace Gathering on:

Friday December 8, Saturday, December 9 and Sunday, December 10, 2017

At the **Anaheim Convention Center** 800 W. Katella Ave., Anaheim, CA 92802

Highlights of the 2017 World Peace Gathering include many educational and spiritual activities with the theme “Mandala of 1000 Lotus Petals for Peace and Healing” such as: Prayers, dharma talks, meditation, Exercise for world peace, Three-Steps-One Bow for world peace, Tea Meditation for world peace and Peace Mandala Ceremony.

Peace Mandala Ceremony, the main attraction of the World Peace Gathering, will be held on Sunday

December 10, 2017. Mandala is a dharma assembly where the aggregation of spiritual power of myriads of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and thousands of attendees takes place. The function of the Mandala is to bring peace and healing to the sick and the suffering and liberation to those who have passed away. It also has the unique power to transform karmic obstructions of all those who attend.

In addition, Compassionate Service Society also offers the 12-day **Altruistic Home-Leaving program** (from 11/30/2017 to 12/11/2017) that provides the unique opportunity for participants to experience the transcending path toward Truth, Goodness, and Beauty, and to inspire practitioners to integrate the essence of Buddhism into their daily life. This short-term cultivation is called Altruistic Home-Leaving, or the practice of leaving home for 12-days with request for practitioners to cultivate on behalf of one (or many) loved ones. The dedicated practice will also help lessen our own karmic hindrances. But only when we cultivate “on behalf of others”, then we can develop true loving-kindness and render our cultivation a manifestation of the altruistic bodhisattva practice.

For more details about registration to attend the Dharma Assembly, participate in the retreats, volunteer, or donate, please visit our website: <http://wpg.compassheart.com>. The Organizing and Service Committee sincerely requests all who wish to attend to register soon to help facilitate their meal and transportation planning for these three days. Meal tickets for lunch and dinner will be distributed when you come to the Dharma Assembly. Please register at:

Online: <http://wpg.compassheart.com>

Phone: 714-561-5974

In person at CompaSS Center: 420 S. Brookhurst St., Anaheim, CA 92804

May you and your family be well in body and mind, and your wishes be fulfilled.

Namo Amitabha Buddha,
Venerable Master Heng Chang and Compassionate Service Society

A Weekend at CSS South

At the end of June, I had the opportunity to join our CSS South in Houston, Texas, for a wonderful few days of teachings with our beloved teacher, Master Heng Chang. The title, “The Power of Life Principles: fulfilling personal relationships, harmonious family, and successful career”, of Thay’s weekend workshop certainly got my attention!

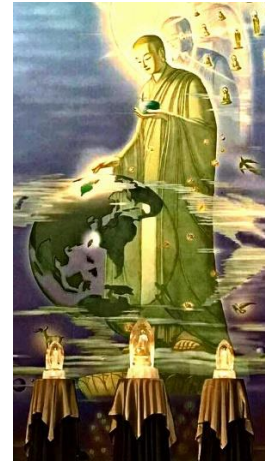
Given that I had accepted that I would not be able to attend the big event “Meditation for Religious Unity” in July, I felt that this would be a wonderful “middle ground”. The main reason for my choice not to attend the event in California had to do with wanting to balance my personal relationships and ensure harmony within my family.

I had decided to visit my sister in North Carolina. When I received the emails from CSS South about the weekend in June, I excitedly told my dear husband that I could go to Texas before going to visit my sister. Of course, I was so happy to find a way to spend some days learning with Thay, and visiting people in Houston as well.

The event of June 24 & 25 was held at the Tzu Chi foundation center in Houston. I was fascinated to learn about this amazing foundation whose website states:

“We started with 30 women who saved 2 cents daily while making a vow to help others. Over 50 years ago, housewives inspired by Master Cheng Yen’s vow to serve others joined her mission of love by donating from their humble grocery fund.”

From what I have been able to gather, Master Cheng Yen started a foundation that has become world-renown for helping individuals, families and communities across the globe during crisis, and has become extraordinarily adept at raising funds for their cause. For further information about all the services and aid that they provide, I invite the reader to look them up on the world wide web.



As this lovely center welcomed our CSS family for Thay’s two-day workshop, I had the opportunity to hear the beautiful voices of the choir practicing for a concert, as well as to visit a quiet meditation hall, a bookstore, and to read beautiful posters depicting some of their works of loving service around the world. To say the least, I found this foundation and its members to be very inspiring.

Additionally, there were cards being given out advertising a performance that was coming up in Houston. The cards, similar to a postcard, caught my eye as they reminded me of the most recent teachings that we have been receiving of the “Hands & Eyes” Dharma of Kuan Shr Yin. The cards advertised the performance of “Thousands of Helping Hands: Heart to Heart” to be performed in September by the China Disabled People’s performing Art Troup.



Synchronicity and Serendipity being what they are, I find myself writing this article for our Montreal CSS newsflash much later than originally intended (I started in July!). In the meanwhile, there have been so many events these last weeks which have grabbed the collective conscious' attention. From Hurricanes Harvey, Irma & Maria, and two major earthquakes in Mexico, to social injustices and political unrest scattered around the globe, it is clear that we are living in tumultuous and challenging times.

Not being of Asian or Buddhist descent, I sometimes wonder how this wondrous and fortuitous opportunity has arisen in my life and how I have found myself here among this wonderful community.

My birthday has recently passed, and I found myself thinking about the tradition in our CSS family to make vows on our birthdays. While it may seem unimportant to some, I have made vows this birthday to "write for four hours per week in the year to come". Without going into huge details here, let me say this:

I have been "pondering" writing for upwards of 35 years. With the recent teachings and talks from Thay about finding "one's life mission", I am increasingly convinced that writing has something to do with my life mission. For many years, I have struggled with this, always being concerned that I am somehow being egotistical to think that I may have a story to

write which could ultimately help and serve others on their journey of life. I have now reached the ripe young age of 54, and it seems that I am being called to make a "commitment" to this venture. I therefore am sharing this here with our community, in the spirit of making my vow public on my birthday. Please know that my intention to write is ultimately to serve humankind and to perhaps help some with their wounded pasts.

All of this being said, I will of course continue to do and be my very best as a cultivator of the Avatamsaka teachings as well as the 42 Hands & Eyes practices which Thay gives us and guides us through.

In Peace, Love, Gentleness, and with Greatest Humbleness, I bow to each and every one of you who may read these few paragraphs.

Pamela



The Three Virtues (part 3)

(From the book "Altruistic Home-Leaving: A Bodhisattva Path" by Master Heng Chang)

3- Wisdom

Prajna, or Wisdom, is the third virtue of the Three Virtues. Prajna means the supreme wisdom that always helps us to transcend.

Dharma body is the *nature* of the True Mind, of the absolute universe. Liberation is the *manifestation* of the True Mind, the light that always radiates over the relative and dual universe. Prajna is the *effect* of the True Mind connecting the absolute universe with the relative universe. That effect is the wisdom that helps us to constantly evolve spiritually, to transcend from all states and all attachments to the dual nature, so we can constantly experience the non-dual nature of the absolute True Mind anytime and anywhere.

How to experience the non-dual nature? It is to experience the nature of Emptiness. Use what method to experience Emptiness?

If we use the methodology of the Avatamsaka School, we can use the Precious Bowl Hand-Eye dharma to experience Emptiness. Why? Because the Precious Bowl is an empty container, so it can symbolize the wide opening of consciousness and the void, the serenity, and the absence of suffering of Emptiness.

In the Hand-Eye dharma, Kwan Yin Bodhisattva used the Precious Bowl for the following purposes:

- To realize the empty nature of the Eternal True Mind
- To unfold the Emptiness in the stillness, void, and clarity of consciousness. This clarity is the base of all expedient means wisdom, namely the wisdom to see through all causes and effects, all truths working in the world of phenomena.
- To unfold Emptiness in the realm of subconscious habits at the bottom of Alaya storehouse consciousness, creating the power to stop all irrationally destructive habits like sulking, anger, or resentment.

These habits are often called Mara hindrance, which lie beyond the control of reason and perception. Cultivators are most fearful of these irrational habits since they can ruin all their hard practice in a blink of an eye. Therefore, eliminating all irrational habits is the primary practice of the Precious Bowl Hand-Eyes dharma.

- To unfold Emptiness in the mental and rational realm, creating insight and clarity in all thought objects. The most important manifestation of clarity is, instead of looking back in the past and getting stuck in it, the mind always stays in the present moment; it *immediately becomes aware of everything in all aspects*, and then orderly arranges the appropriate implementation and management.
- To unfold Emptiness in the psychological realm, creating the ability to embrace, like the boundless sky can embrace all things, helping us accept all the good and bad, sadness and joy, surprised coming and going, with a calm and understanding mind. From this acceptance, the power of Emptiness helps us open our hearts and minds, ready to forgive unconditionally. Then, we can forgive those who have hurt us or are hurting us, and forgive mistakes that are hard to forgive.
- To unfold Emptiness in the physical realm, creating the ability to endure and heal all bodily illnesses. To endure is to be full of energy, powerful life force, and strength to cope with all kinds of stress coming from the external life environment and from the internal suffering.
- To unfold Emptiness in the netherworld, creating positive power to transform all negative energies and extremely wicked, selfish, cruel consciousness of ghosts, devils, demons, and delusions. That power does not make enemies, but can tame and persuade all those ghosts and demons to change their character.

Please email all suggestions to: thuyv@videotron.ca