

## Propagating Dharma Requires Supra-Worldly Wisdom and Worldly Knowledge

Shifu said, “To relinquish your worldly home for propagating Dharma, this aspiration is very rare and precious, especially for young people. But older people do not need to consider this path. Because, for propagating Dharma, you need to learn not only the supra-worldly Dharma but also the secular knowledge for worldly matters.”

Shifu always criticizes me, saying that I do not know worldly matters. I have basically lived in an ivory tower since a young age. From elementary school, middle school, university, master, to PhD, I have studied continuously, never working in society. After twenty years of studying, I taught at university for eight years. Then I quit my teaching job in order to follow Shifu and learn from him. Now I still teach, teaching Buddha-Dharma. My life experience is very simple. Shifu thus instructed me, “You must put effort into learning how to conduct worldly matters. Or else, you will have obstacles when propagating Dharma. What you speak may not match others' spiritual capacity (\*Skt. *indriya*). And if you also do not know how to create good affinities with others, people will not be happy to listen to your preaching. This is a very realistic issue.”

At that time when I heard this, I was a little bit in disagreement. I was thinking that it does not matter whether other people want to listen or not, I will learn earnestly to accomplish myself first. Shifu criticized me seriously again, “If you do so, even if you have accomplished yourself and become a Buddha, no one will listen to you.” So, Shifu urges us to create many good affinities with others, creating many happy connections.

In fact, the so-called Dharma-affinity always begins from a happy connection, letting others feel happy to be with you. They come to listen only if they are happy to be with you. Otherwise, how many people have such deep-seated good roots to come specifically to seek Dharma from you? That is not easy, these kinds of people are relatively rare.

Worldly Dharma and supra-worldly Dharma, we all need to learn, we can then propagate Buddha-Dharma well. To master both worldly and supra-worldly knowledge is really not easy. Shifu taught us “to invoke blessings with utmost sincerity.” Our true heart invokes Buddha's blessing, and Buddha's blessing will help us master our readings. Not only will we understand the text instantly and deeply, we can also comply with others' spiritual capacity when sharing our learning with them. We can only use this method. So, the path of propagating Dharma is also not easy.

If we are old now, fifty or sixty something, it will be somewhat difficult to propagate Dharma. What can we do? We bring forth aspiration, after being born into the Pure Land, we come back with our future-return-vow to propagate Dharma. At that time our Dharma propagating will definitely be better than any of the Venerables. In our speaking of the Pure Land Method, no one can surpass us. Why? We came from there, our speech will be particularly

cordial because we have experienced it in person. Therefore, if we want to cultivate, all we need is just reciting Amitabha and listening to the Dharma teachings conscientiously at home.

## Obtain Fortune Upon Hearing Amitabha's Name

Amongst Forty Eight Vows, we often see “upon hearing my name,” it is the second most used phrase other than “When I become a Buddha.” “Hearing” refers to “believing and accepting.” However, the levels of “believing and accepting” differ among individuals, leading to the fortune that each one obtains also being different.

What is the biggest fortune? You seek Sukhāvātī rebirth with a deep faith and an imperative aspiration; this is the biggest fortune you will obtain. Why? Because, when you are born into Sukhāvātī in the future, you will become an avaiartika bodhisattva and become a Buddha-Successor-in-One-Life (\*Skt. [eka-jāti-baddhā](#)).

What is the secondary fortune? If you do not have genuine faith and aspiration yet still practice earnestly, you will be born into a respectable, honorable family. This respectable and honorable family does not necessarily mean a rich and noble family. Respectable means that you are respected by others. Honorable denotes that you have lofty virtues, so you are honored by others. If you are very rich and noble, you possess wealth and social status, people will still not respect and honor you if you do not have virtues. Why? You degrade yourself.

Those who have virtues will not starve because celestial beings will bless them, but they are not necessarily rich. For instance Confucius, he was born in a respectable and honorable family; his father had lofty virtues. When Confucius' maternal grandfather was planning his daughter's marriage, he investigated Confucius' ancestors of five generations who were all practicing goodness and accumulating virtues; he then married his daughter to him. He knew that this family would have honorable descendants in the future. As expected, Confucius was born in this family.

Confucius' life did not have great wealth and social status. He wanted to be an official, yet the highest office he attained was Minister of Justice, acting as Prime Minister, in the Kingdom of Lu for only three months. Later, he did not hold any greater office than that, and his life was very rugged, wandering everywhere. He traveled through many kingdoms for fourteen years. While traveling, he had many life-threatening encounters, such as going hungry between the Kingdoms of Chen and Tsai and almost being killed by Sima Huankui (\*[An official of Song who controlled the military power of Song](#)) in the Kingdom of Song.

But Confucius was very respectable and honorable. The later generations admire him very much, not only by Chinese but also by foreigners. Koreans especially admire Confucius. So do Japanese people. A few days ago, in my free time, Laity Ye drove me to visit a place called Yushima Seido (\*[Sacred Hall at Yushima](#)). It is a Confucian Temple where there is a very majestic Dacheng Hall and a very solemn Confucius' statue. Japanese hold activities to

commemorate Confucius several times a year. Last Sunday, they held an activity worshipping Confucius. Look! 2,500 years later, foreigners still respect Confucius so much. This is true noble! What did he rely on? He relied on his virtues.

So, being born in a respectable and honorable family implies being born in a family with virtues. He will receive a good education and will not be deprived when grown up. No matter how contaminated society is, he can keep his purity, not being polluted and tempted but being persistent on his righteous path. When encountering sage teachings and Buddhism, he will learn earnestly and practice conscientiously. Why? He has good roots from past lives. Once encountering sage teachings and Buddhism, he would surely connect the good roots of his past lives. So, these people are not ordinary people, they were practitioners in past lives.

Plus, "All their sense organs will be complete without any deficiencies." This is talking about their six roots—eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and consciousness—being all complete. He is not disabled, not lacking an arm, leg, or something. He is intact, particularly in mind, the most important among the six sense organs. His mind and his thoughts are all righteous. He has good qualities and virtues, such as honesty and sincerity. He will not have evil thoughts and inordinate desires. These all belong to "all their sense organs will be complete without any deficiencies'.

These kinds of people who came to our world were spiritual practitioners in their past lives, so they also enjoy cultivation in this life. In the past life, if they upheld precepts, they will also enjoy upholding precepts in this life. They will regard precepts and hardships as teachers." The verse of the 27th Vow states, "They will constantly cultivate the supreme-sacred-conduct (\*supreme brahma-caryā)". The sacred-conduct refers to pure conduct. They have very little desire and are not affected much by wealth, lust, fame, eating, and sleeping. In our next part, we will give an example of this kind of practitioner.

Thanks everyone for learning with us! Namó Amitabha!