

## Meditation Master JinBodhi's Dharma Teachings

# The Benefits of Meditation

How's everyone feeling after practicing for two days? Was it good? (Good.)

In the past, many did not have the chance to experience such a retreat, especially those living in the city. Many times, I've been asked, "Master, what do we learn in meditation?" My answer is that there are many answers which I consider acceptable, but they are not entirely correct. When I was in Vancouver, some English-speaking practitioners asked me, "What is meditation?" Someone answered that by coming to Bodhi Meditation, they gain freedom. I don't think that's quite right. You cannot just show up whenever you want, and when people are meditating, you cannot sing as you wish. It doesn't work that way. What sort of freedom do you gain?

### **The First Benefit of Meditation:**

#### **Externally, Understanding Natural Laws**

Studying meditation helps us realize two perspectives of life. The first is knowledge about the Universe or Laws of Nature, which includes natural phenomena such as seasonal changes. Singapore doesn't have much seasonal change and it never snows here. (No.)

But your heart feels snowed under when you are unemployed. Singapore's seasonal changes are not obvious, but seasonal changes still occur. For example,

when we know Nature, we know about seasons and the features of foods. Food is meant to be eaten, but lack of its knowledge can lead to poisoning. You should understand weather changes, especially when you leave Singapore for different parts of the world. Ignorance of weather can result in suffering. Many people travel to Tibet, but the moment they step out of the plane they start to feel dizzy. Before they start their tour, they are relying on an oxygen tank, with a tube up their nose like an extra-terrestrial. They are in the hospital for three days. If they are lucky, they can travel again after three days. For some, three days is not enough, and they have to return to Singapore because of altitude sickness. So, we meditate to understand Nature. Is it easy to understand Nature? No. In fact, it is quite difficult to grasp. Do we understand feng shui? (No.)

In the past, Chinese people did not like living by the sea. There's a saying: "Only the ignorant live by the sea." Why is that? Because it is very humid by the sea. Just a kilometer inland, the air is much drier. There is a difference of 10 percent. Cultures evolve from era to era. Many cultural changes are blunders. Do you read people's minds? No. Do you recognize your karmic bond? No. If you truly have a karmic connection with someone, you may be friends for life. With others, you are fated to be enemies. I refer to the inborn destiny. Some are destined to be your enemies. Say someone annoys you at first sight; let me tell you this: You'll still be enemies in 20 years. There is a reason for the annoyance. Your magnetic fields repel each other. If such a couple gets married, there would be conflicts and bad fights. If they become husband and wife, one of them is going to be troubled. That's how it is.

Our recognition of the Universe can be drilled down to specialists. Some spend their entire life analyzing minerals or a specific stone or metal such as a ruby, iron ore, copper, diamonds, or stones for making cement. There are some

who devote their life to one task without any achievement. This is an issue of understanding the environment. How many other professions are there? Over 10,000. Let's say some only like one skill: drawing. Sometimes a 70-year-old artist is not as artistic as a seven-year-old kid. No talent in drawing. But the 70-year old guy chose art only because he wanted a girlfriend. So, despite having persisted in drawing, he failed to sell his art. Some singers sing so badly that their audience ends up in hospital. There is such a 'talent' in Vancouver. For me, the scariest thing in Vancouver, which I avoid, is to hear him sing. I cannot take it. His wife must have an uneasy life. How strong she must be! Understanding the external world involves all of our behaviors.

No matter how capable and intelligent we are, how much time we have, it is hard to know the Universe, not mentioning fortune-telling, which is harder. Let's talk about tailoring. To even be a good tailor, you need 30 years of experience to make a masterpiece. It is hard. Meditation helps us understand the Universe and Laws of Nature, or the Natural Laws. We need to understand the ethical rules, too. It is a misunderstanding to just go with the flow and ignore the man-made rules. For example, "A life for a life and a debt repaid." Can you ignore the rules? No. You have to follow the rules. When you don't follow the rules, someone may put a bullet in your head because you killed at will. Murder is a big sin. How about stealing? What do you say?

In the past, thieves had their fingers chopped off with a knife. Those who stole a second time and got caught, had another finger chopped. What happened the third time? Any idea? Another finger? No. This time, a hand. Thus, we need to understand ethical rules. Do you understand human psychology? Many people don't know how to maintain good interpersonal relationships. I've been to many Singaporean businesses but did not find many smart businessmen. Many people

worry about not getting wealthy because they are not good businessmen. Say I'm dressed sloppily even though I wear expensive clothing. I only do my laundry once a month, so I smell bad. Salespeople refuse to attend to me, especially the expensive stores. In Singapore, I don't like shopping in Orchard Road, for salespeople give me the cold shoulder, and everything is expensive. Life is like an uphill struggle.

In Singapore, that's what I feel. Everything's expensive: buildings, houses, and cost of living. To understand the external environment: If you don't perform even a simple task well, it shows that you have not learned well. There's a Chinese saying: "Every visitor is a guest." The more visitors you get, the more opportunities to earn money. Just because I'm a sloppy dresser, I don't get treated well. Of course, I'm going to be annoyed. So, I don't visit Orchard Road anymore, in protest against their bad manners. Does anyone here have a shop there? Show yourself. You will never see me in Orchard Road. Too expensive, survival there is not easy. Lucky if you have no heart attacks while running a business there. Understanding of the Universe through meditation can be accelerated. That's one of the benefits.

## **The Second Benefit of Meditation:**

### **Internally, Understanding Inner-Self**

The second benefit of meditation is understanding the inner-self. The first part is about the Laws of Nature. The second benefit concerns the inner-self. How do we understand our inner-self? We start with understanding our own thoughts. In other words, we understand ourselves from within. We use our senses -- sight, smell, touch, hearing, etc., to understand the world around us, or to judge people, products, and the effect others have on us, or how we are influenced by others.

We use our senses to understand this world, but few use them for self-awareness of rights and wrongs. When you make judgements, are you always right? Did you view the world with the right perspective? Perhaps your perspective is skewed.

Let's use a pair of glasses as an example. If you wear rose-colored glasses, the world looks rosy. It is because the glass is tinted that your judgment is inaccurate. There is a proverbial Chinese story: "Four Blind Men and the Elephant." Four blind men touch an elephant. Each touches a different part. The first man says that an elephant is like a big hose because he is touching the trunk. The second man says it is like a pillar because he is touching the leg. The third man says it is like a fan because he is touching the ear. The fourth man says it is like a rope because he is grabbing the tail. None knew what an elephant looked like. When our state of mind is not expansive enough to evaluate things across time and space, our understanding and judgment might be biased. When biases exist, our emotional state and self-expression become skewed.

Sometimes we are angry when there is no need to be angry. For example, a couple feels anxious if they are unable to conceive after three years. When they do give birth, they get aggravated because the child is mischievous. They wonder why the child is not as obedient as the grandfather. Of course, your child is not as calm as his grandpa. Imagine a grandpa behaving like a mischievous monkey; then it must be a grandpa monkey that is even too old to move around. Do you get my point? Thus, the feelings that make us feel troubled or joyful are not real. From a perspective of time and space, your troubles arise from your ignorant mind. Your joys are delusions that are like the bubbles of hand soap. Soap bubbles are only a form of air. They occur because of sunlight, which makes them glisten, but you think you found treasure. So, you are joyful. Humans can be emotionally sensitive or responsive easily. Because of a split-second perception, we respond.

This is a key source of our afflictions. Understanding our inner-self and the Universe can go deeper. It would resolve our physical and mental ailments and afflictions. I will just touch on it a bit here, since I don't know much regarding your mental state. We should learn to understand inner-self. Why? Because life situations and illnesses bring us afflictions, boredom, or complaints of no friends. A painful life. Did you try to make friends? You treated everyone like an enemy. Use the young people chatting as an example. Say A and B are good friends. They are neighbors and chat often. They share meals and help each other. A complains bitterly to B because he doesn't have good friends. Just take it as a joke. How would B feel when he hears that? If B were rude, he'd say, "I've wasted my time helping you, wasted money buying food for you, set you up on dates, and you don't consider me a friend and tell me you don't have friends?" Our mental pain is often caused by ourselves. When I was young and was a little enlightened, I realized that Buddha sits in the heart; demons arise in the heart, too.

Sometimes both the Buddha and demons are born from our mental state. Why do you feel uneasy and troubled? Neither do you have true love. These are the traits of selfish people. Selfish people take an extremely sensitive perspective when observing others' behaviors. If a selfish person sees two innocent strangers chatting and giggling, he thinks he is being teased. If two strangers are yelling, he thinks the strangers are yelling at him. Some of us pick up coins on the street, and some pick up scorn. This is human vulnerability, the lack of broadmindedness. A small heart means you are selfish. You fear that you give too much, and that you are misunderstood. The fear is caused by a lack of self-confidence.

Due to ignorance and lack of ability, when you don't receive recognition, you slowly lose self-confidence. It is everyone else's fault. You may make negative judgments about people and become isolated at last. To step out of such mental

ailments, expand your heart. If you have loved ones, do your best to serve them. Leave that lonely feeling and start to love another person, and then love a third one. I'm not talking about girlfriends. I'm talking about offering more help to friends. Slowly your heart is expanded, and the troubles melt away. When we look into our heart, how many problems do we have? I'm just scratching the surface here. What's in our heart determines our action.

## **The Third Benefit of Meditation:**

### **Improve One's Health and Replenish One's Energy**

With gradual understanding of my teachings and meditation practice, health starts to improve. The more we meditate, the healthier we are. Sometimes ailments have causes that we will never know. To heal many diseases, spending time on meditation is essential. Weigh the importance of health versus income. You have to be clear on this.

Just like car maintenance, if you know that there are issues, but you ignore them and keep driving, your car might be on and off, until finally your car is dead, and you are stranded in a place with a malfunctioning car without assistance. What about your body? You need to have regular physical check-ups and consult with your doctor if necessary. Don't use the excuse of working for your family. The stress comes from yourself. If you can let go, there will be no stress. Sometimes I admire people with simple minds. They live in a hovel, but they are happy. How is it possible that they are so happy? They say, "I don't have a mortgage." That's a good attitude toward life. Happiness has nothing to do with how much money you have. It is about how you view the Universe and manage your mental world.

After we study meditation, our health will improve as practice time accumulates. Such accumulation is what improves our health. I talked about the causes of diseases in the last class. Let me tell you now: With the right training, health can be improved. For example, one's energy level is increased. In cases where unbalanced energy causes illnesses, through meditation practice, the balance of energy is restored, and health is gained. There are people whose ailments linger for years or never get cured. It happens to immortals in Chinese folklore. There are records. Have you heard about The Eight Immortals? The elderly know this folklore. One of the eight immortals, Li, is a disabled man with crutches. There were no wheelchairs at that time, otherwise, Li would have used one.

Then people would have said, if cars were invented earlier, that Li's wheelchair would have run on its own, solar-powered, with no need for fuel, or he uses his mind to control it. In other words, enlightened people might still have imperfections that are permanent. Why? I have a couple of explanations. First, there is no absolute perfection on Earth, only relative perfection. There is no absolute perfect human. Perhaps someone is a great philosopher, but he is physically challenged. I knew a scientist who possessed incredible mathematical abilities. He is a world-class master with an imperfection. When he entertained his guests, he would get drunk to the extent that he became a fool. When he was drunk, I'm sure the waiters couldn't tell he was a famous scientist. They thought he was a lunatic. Yet, once he sobered up and put on a suit and tie, he went back to being a scientist. There are no perfect humans. Gain more understanding of the world and accept it wholeheartedly. When you associate with family and friends, do you have high expectations of them? You thought someone was wonderful, until you realized his fart smelled horrible.

Accept him as he is. If you were to compare yours with his, you are even. Yes, make it a competition. It sounds crude; however, such crudeness is in everybody. This is a natural phenomenon of being alive.

Aside from being imperfect, "Li the cripple" demonstrates that you cannot escape karma. Maybe he broke someone's leg even though the person had helped him. Therefore, this person holds a grudge. Instead of repaying his gratitude to this person, Li repaid with harm. I'm just guessing. I hope, upon hearing this, Li will not get mad. Anger might cause an issue with his other leg. Too bad. Just joking! Immortals shouldn't quibble with mortals. Karma erupts when the time is right. For example, you suddenly become deaf at age 40.

There are worse cases where others are born disabled. Poor parents, they must decide between abandoning the child and caring for him for a lifetime. How much patience and effort! I have deep respect for families with kids born disabled. Compared to the average family, they invest a lot more effort. I have seen many parents like this. Many years ago, in Mainland China, there was a scientist couple who conducted scientific research. They were famous chemists, and one was in the top ten in the country. Their kids, however, were strange. I had never seen such weird kids before. They had the intelligence of a six-month old, though they were 17 years old. The mom was suffering so much that she had chronic cold sores. She had no way to release the suffering. It was impossible to abandon them or kill them. That was indeed great suffering. What's the cause? Karma. What is karma then? Karma is the result of an action.

There is positive karma, neutral karma, as well as negative karma. Deciding what to make for dinner does not generate any negative karma. But if you butchered a pig to serve at dinner, or maybe roasted a pig for dinner, that generates negative karma. Actions that cause no harm are not an issue, but

actions that do are. And, there are actions that protect others from harm. Now, I'm talking about negative karma. Negative karma can be caused by acquiring wealth by killing or cheating. Say, someone doesn't inflict physical harm, but cheated others of their fortune or wealth and made them bankrupt, causing them the pain of living in poverty and struggling to survive. This creates a lot of negative karma. What's the effect of negative karma? The one who activates negative karma shoulders the consequence. For example, nobody saw you steal, but the moment you committed the act, the act is recorded by Nature through the air that surrounds you on this living Earth. The Earth itself is alive and is able to record the act.

Thus, the impact is already underway. As for the impacts, as mentioned, actions can generate good, neutral, or negative karma. Harmful actions generate negative karma. Some are born with congenital issues while others fall ill at a specific time. I have met all kinds of people with all kinds of fates. Some were extremely wealthy once, millionaires or billionaires. A couple of decades later, they were penniless, robbed blind by others because they too cheated others. That's how their wealth disappeared. Some never cheated in this lifetime and worked diligently at their trade, but still wound up penniless. Perhaps their bad deeds of another life or that of their ancestors had ripened in this lifetime. Negative karma is an extremely sticky issue to deal with.

The founder of Buddhism, Sakyamuni Buddha, dealt well with this. On facing negative karma, how did he deal with it? Here's how: His cousin Devadatta plotted against him. While the Buddha preached true dharma, his cousin acted against that by preaching the false dharma with the hope of influencing others with his evil intention. Differentiating the two was difficult. Because they were cousins and came from the same imperial family, there was nothing suspicious. It

was hard to tell the difference. Devadatta's preaching of false dharma angered Sakyamuni at first, but only for a while. As Sakyamuni grew older and was in his 80s, he would tell his disciples, "My cousin should be considered a manifestation of Buddha; we are in a competition. If there was no competition, then even a buddha would take it easy. Meditating alone is our choice. The serenity is comfortable. With no enemies in my retreat, I enjoy tranquillity and freedom." As the ancient Chinese poets said, "Out of three realms, out of five elements, free, like wild cranes in the sky." This is the liberated state Chinese intellectuals yearn for on their spiritual journey. There are paintings of hermits.

Check them out online.

Paintings are often composed of a mountain and an elderly person with a child in tow or a person leading a donkey. Other paintings have snow-covered mountains and a person with a fishing rod, fishing alone. What does it all mean? These people have transcended desires for money, power, happiness, and prosperity. Hermits say: I'm one with the mountains, water, sky, and Earth, with no competition or attachment.

Once upon a time, there was a famous scholar in the imperial court. With power comes competition, never-ending competition. He decided to resign from his position and retreated into the mountains to be free like mountains and springs, to feel the calmness found only there, to feel the nourishment of the breeze, and to be a companion to the cranes. A new emperor took the throne. This may have happened in the Tang dynasty. The new emperor knew that this scholar was competent, talented, and stalwartly upright. He sent a messenger to convince him to come back to court.

The scholar was found on a snowy mountain. He sat next to a fishing rod. The river had frozen over, but there he was with his rod.

The messenger explained his mission and said, "You appear to be so lonely, without even a servant. It is so cold and desolate here. Why are you sitting here?"

The scholar answered, "I'm catching snow. Most people catch fish, but I catch snow."

"Did you catch any snow?"

"I caught an entire hill of snow."

The messenger asked, "Are you lonely?"

The scholar said, "Peace is rare." The scholar had withdrawn from heartless competition at the cost of blood and loved ones. He retreated from so-called prosperity. Sakyamuni Buddha was no different. He preferred peace, too. He was enlightened after seven years of meditation. Wouldn't he have liked to stay in that meditative state? But Fate said, "The Buddha has practiced for seven years. It is time to graduate from meditation." To covet staying in a meditative state would constitute greed.

So, his cousin Devadatta was sent to spread false dharma, so that Sakyamuni would be lured out to spread the true dharma, and tell all not to trust Devadatta. Devadatta was full of energy. Even though his dharma was false, he was always energetic enough to lead Sakyamuni on a merry chase from one province to another. If Devadatta was coming here, Sakyamuni would grab his horse and hurry to Singapore to deliver public teachings so that Singaporeans wouldn't be led astray. Yes, that's the way. So Devadatta forced the Buddha to hurry about, spreading true dharma. In Sakyamuni Buddha's old age, he became truly enlightened and told his disciples not to hurt Devadatta, as he was sent to inspire Sakyamuni. He wished to be left in peace, too, not running around like crazy, constantly exhausted and irritated, faced with acclimatization and language

barriers. "Despite how hard it was, I had to, because my cousin ran fast!" the Buddha said.

In hindsight, an awful situation may not be so bad. Your mental elevation and expansiveness determine your perception of things. The Buddha thought that if Devadatta's appearance was negative karma from his past life, so the Buddha responded, "You teach your false dharma, so no matter if it is my negative karma or not, I need right intentions, thoughts, and actions to counter the negative karma. Though you torment me, I put in more effort in preaching the true dharma." This is true cultivation and the only way to face karmic troubles. In the face of negative karma, it would be wrong for the Buddha to say, "Devadatta's evil is due to suffering by my hand in another life, so I will just surrender." Will he? No. Only through spreading true dharma would the Buddha make up for past sins. Thus, when facing your own troubles or negative karma, only continued self-cultivation can bring transformation. With meditation, face afflictions and bad karma with right intentions, right thoughts, and right actions.

Everyone must be tired of sitting. Slowly bend forward and rotate your upper torso from the waist. Move your body around. Many are inexperienced meditators. Your back is probably hurting. Not bad. Everybody is persevering. If you can persevere, then you have potential in meditation. From my experience, I can tell you that when you meditate, especially in deeper meditative states, your past and future compress. When you are a novice meditator, after an hour of meditation, countless changes have occurred inside your body. Sometimes you feel sore, sometimes pain, sometimes numb, and at other times hatred, saying, "I think I have come to the wrong place!" To hear you laugh, I guess you have had this experience. Right? Karma! This is what happens.

## Do No Bad Deeds, But Do More Good Deeds

During meditation, especially when you are practicing in a compassionate state, past experiences are being compressed. If you dedicate yourself to cultivation and chant for the Buddha and bodhisattvas, negative karma is clearing. While your karma is clearing, you are also gaining immeasurable merit. That's why you experience suffering during meditation. Not the bitterness of food, but soreness, numbness, pain, and swelling as if something is ticking within, scolding, or cursing you. There are all kinds of sensations. There is actually one more like ants crawling on you. Has anyone felt insects crawling on you? Raise your hand. I'm talking about imaginary ants, not ants in the forest. Those are real ants. Here they are imaginary. It is a good thing, especially when you are meditating here, and your face starts itching. Try not to touch your face. That is a face massage. During meditation, when feeling such sensations, you are changing your karma. The pain you feel in an hour here may have caused the Buddha to resolve your negative karma accumulated in a life, and that's why you feel pain.

When I practiced as a young man, I lost track of the soreness and pain. They were so bad that I felt like giving up on life. That's how I thought. Later, it became clear to me that because negative karma has been compressed through time, the soreness and pain, as well as other discomforts, aches, and soreness are the consequence of injuries inflicted on other sentient beings. You feel pain in this time warp. Imagine that in one hour, an entire lifetime of negative karma is cleared. What a deal! You are here to improve your life, right? You all want to be healthier, happier, or luckier, so you come here to meditate. What you don't know is that if you are only here to gain, but have no idea of "debt," it is useless. You need to repay your debts for sure. Say, you have killed 100 people in a previous life due to your profession. Maybe you were a bandit or a soldier, who knows?

Do you know the kind of shop that sells contraband? The kind of shop where, if you are a traveler, your food could be drugged, and you pass out after eating. Then the thugs chop you up to use in meat buns like in *Outlaws of the Marsh*. They were true killers, and they really chopped people up. Could you, by any chance be the bun seller? Could you be the notorious thug? Could you be the thief? Could you be the swindler? You could be anything. Some might think that's impossible. Let's do an experiment. Have you ever stolen anything in this lifetime? Raise your hand if you have. Have you lied before? Everyone is a thief and a liar. Some cheat at everything. Right? There is not one perfect person. You are all qualified to join a gang. You are all living in a civilized country, yet you are all liars and thieves. Perhaps in uncivilized times, you did countless bad deeds. You cannot remember. Too many bad deeds to remember, right? The harm you perpetrated on others circles back to manifest in your current life, this lifetime. You cannot escape karma.

Why is it many people forever chase things in this life without success? When they chase after wealth, money slips through their fingers. The money doesn't belong to them. Some might have acquired wealth, but it slips away after a while. Like the frog you catch, it is yours while it is in your hand, but it escapes when you lose your grip. It is a golden frog if you know what I mean. Many people go through life like this. Some lose a good partner because they don't cherish him or her. Why do these tragedies happen? Negative karma. Some don't think themselves intelligent. Why aren't they intelligent? Negative karma. Some might say it is hereditary as his parents aren't so bright, either. Then how come he ended up as his not-so-bright parents' child? Negative karma. He got the wrong parents. Karma determines the parents. There is no other way to explain this. I tried other explanations instead of karma, but couldn't find another answer that fits the concept. So, karma is the answer.

How do we change karma? Accumulate merit by doing good deeds. Provide for senior meditators, donate your money or capability to help those in disaster areas. That's a charitable act. Sakyamuni Buddha set some rules. For those who are disciples, I will run through them briefly. No killing. No stealing. No sexual misconduct. No lying. No liquor. The following are rules I added. No drugs. No gambling. No eating turtles, snakes, or dogs. And no cannibalism. People may eat whatever is not on the list. Finally, don't eat very expensive food. Expensive food is not always good. Don't eat too much swallow's nest. Do you agree? (Yes.)

Swallow's nest is expensive, right? (Yes.)

Just substitute it with white mushrooms. Is swallow's nest really that great? The vendor will definitely say yes, but does he eat it all day, every day? Definitely not, right? I will skip the negative effects of bird's nest. To change your lives for the better, follow those rules, and also do the opposite. Instead of killing, protect all sentient beings. Instead of stealing, donate to worthy causes. It means giving or offering. Have you ever donated? No? A man says, "I helped my mother-in-law." That's what he should do. That's not contributing. They have to. Many aren't fond of their mother-in-law, but for your wife's sake, you help her out. Some say, "I help out my wife a lot." Is there any husband who won't help his wife? You are living under the same roof, so you have to. No sexual misconduct. Such acts bring family problems, as well as emotional stress. Sometimes, two families are broken. Not only does your family suffer, but another family does, too. "No lying" is the toughest rule. That means no lies, at all. Who doesn't lie? Right? That's why it is tough. White lies can be pardoned. A friend asks if you have eaten. You know he is a cheapskate, so you say you have eaten. Such cases don't matter because it doesn't hurt.

Even if you answered otherwise, he is stingy and would say, "Too bad." To avoid this scenario, I often respond, based on who I'm talking to. Sometimes, untrue replies aren't lies. You are just replying after analyzing the person's nature and behavior. It is not lying, and there's no guilt attached. To change your fate for the better, to put it bluntly, you need to do more good deeds. Buddhist scriptures have recorded how doing good deeds changes one's fate. There are many kinds of good deeds. Help print a Buddhist scripture that benefited you; support an eminent master who has achieved great merits. Such a master can alleviate your karma to the extent that you are spared from Hell, or it is possible that all your negative karma will clear. Supporting an average Buddhist practitioner is enough to keep you from Hell. But an eminent meditator has immense wisdom and light from helping so many people. His energy and auspiciousness, or just a word from him, could erase all your negative karma.

It is no different than a mediator refereeing a debtor and lender. When asked, the lender says that he is owed two million. The mediator offers three million. He would warn against lending money from now on, and don't lie to people. The lender promises to change. Issue resolved. An accomplished practitioner can use his blessings and merit for the benefit of all sentient beings, saving those who have karmic connection with him from Hell, and allowing them to be reborn in the preferred Pure Lands. That is to say, the Western Pure Land or the Eastern Land of Lapis Lazuli, as long as they have such a wish. Of course, those who live happily don't think of such things, but energy of cumulative merit makes it possible to do this. Transform fate by doing fewer bad deeds and more good deeds.

## **Meditation Transforms Life**

I have an elderly relative who passed away. Before this, when he was still alive, he worked in the government. As he aged, his health worsened. I sent someone to teach him. He did not have the chance to learn from me. He lived in Mainland China. He practiced *The Meditation of Greater Illumination*, chanting and prostrating. He had refused at first. Then the doctor told him that they couldn't do much for him. His diabetes was so bad that he was almost blind and could barely walk on his own. Quite serious, right? Finally, he decided to practice. His daily practice averaged between four and seven hours for three to four years. One day, he said to his family, "I thought the buddhas were invented by people. But I see for myself that the Buddha is here, floating in the sky, talking with me and smiling at me, with other buddhas behind him." He asked why he was seeing so many buddhas. His family thought he was seeing ghosts, and they were scared. He saw the buddhas.

He wasn't lying. You could tell from his expression and tone. He could describe in detail the garments that each Buddha wore, and what they looked like. He also heard celestial music. Two hours later, he passed. He was counting the Buddhas one by one; he saw so many that he lost count. He died auspiciously, not from disease, at over 80 years old. Yes, that's what happened. It was very special. Those of us living now should try to live healthier and freely. How powerful the energy from meditation practice is! Those who have meditated a short time will experience many physiological changes. Testimonials over the last two days are good examples. You can learn from each other about the benefits of Bodhi Meditation.

For those present today, who has benefited from Bodhi Meditation? Please raise your hand. That's many; hands down, please. There are many different reactions. Some diseases are slowly transformed, some will be lessened, and

others will be fully gone. There are other physical reactions. For example, your hands become smooth. Many people with dry skin have never had smooth hands. Some people's palms don't sweat, about ten percent of the population doesn't sweat. After a period of practice, about a month, your hands and feet, as well as your body, will start to sweat. Not sweating means there is a blockage. If you can sweat, your meridians in your arms are open. That's how much energy comes from meditation. It is amazing that many diseases disappear. Let's talk about skincare for the elderly. As people age, from 60 onward, many get age spots on their face, arms, and body. Many age spots begin to fade after three months of practice. Let's discuss this phenomenon constructively. Sharing stories of recovery is common here, not rare. It is due to the incredible energy produced in meditation. That explains how Sakyamuni Buddha attained Buddhahood. He achieved it after practicing for seven and a half years, about seven and a half to almost eight years. As a young meditator, he accumulated sufficient energy to awaken.

Let's put aside whether he was a buddha or bodhisattva in a previous life. He awakened wisdom with persistent practice. For middle-aged or elderly practitioners, physical changes occur, such as age spots disappearing. Some elderly practitioners had previously lost teeth. There are cases of teeth re-growing after one or two years of practice. These are true stories. Sakyamuni Buddha, along with many of our ancestors who meditated, attained incredible wisdom and bodies that did not decay. In the mountains of China and India, there are many accounts of this. I'm not sure about India, but I'm sure about China. Take the example from Shanxi province. Do you know about Shanxi province? Mount Wutai is located there. There's a cave with roughly 12 statues of arhats. They appear to be made of clay, but they are the remains of 12 meditators. They attained the level at which bodies don't decay. They are called full-body bodhisattvas or the golden arhats.

After the meditators died, their disciples painted their bodies with gold and covered them with clay, just like clay buddhas. Although the bodies were covered, they looked the same as when alive. The statues have lasted for more than 1,000 years in a cave in Shanxi province. I forgot what the cave is called. A couple of days ago, I watched a documentary from China. It is not fiction, but truth. There was a man, a shepherd, with his sheep, who ducked into the cave to escape a downpour. The cave was dark, and he did not have a torch. He touched what felt like human bones. He was scared to death when he touched some teeth. Later, he led others to the cave and found more than ten statues, some were exposed skeletons. Everyone wondered what had happened. Archaeologists later discovered the statues were intact Buddhist relics, whole bodies that hadn't decayed. How could this be? People may think that if a body dries up, it will not rot or decay. Well, not really. One would still decay. Yet, there were more than ten bodies that did not decay, were covered in gold and clay, and had survived as full-body Buddhist relic statues. The statues still sit in that cave after having undergone restoration work. Some had suffered damage during wars, so the damage was repaired, and they still sit there.

Sakyamuni Buddha, before dying, instructed that his body be cremated. After cremation, there were many Buddha relics. Today, there are Buddha relics around the world that have been confirmed to be relics of Sakyamuni Buddha. I believe that many meditators in Thailand, Burma, and other countries attained Buddhahood and left behind Buddhist relics. Some relics are a piece of bone, or transparent, multi-colored beads. I have seen relics that are like gold. There was an old Bodhi disciple, who died. I can assure you that he did not wear jewelry, did not have gold teeth, and had no surgical metal in his body. His body contained nothing metallic. After cremation, I collected the ashes and found 130 relics when combined altogether. Very beautiful and special indeed. When practitioners get

to a certain level, their body changes at the core. Everyone has watched the video *The Miraculous Messages From Water*. Our bodies are about 70 percent water. Let's not question that. Perhaps after much practice, some of the body's water transforms into a carbonized entity like diamonds. The hardness of Buddhist relics often is rated between eight and ten, close to that of a diamond. That's really hard.

For people who meditate a lot, there aren't logical answers to explain an enlightened body. The fact is, they've transformed. How? I'm not sure everyone knows this. I believe the meditator is an all-compassionate heart. After clearly seeing natural laws, you shall feel free, and you'll be able to let go of attachments. Understanding that, you can cast away all attachments to release yourself. You have a compassionate heart without asking for more. You have the desire to give of yourself. This is the best possible way. You feel no stress at all. Everyone always asks for more, whereas you give more and more. As well, you are meditating using the most correct methods. Therefore, your body undergoes change. How powerful is this energy then? For most beginners, diseases are cured. After seven years of practice, is it possible to, like the Buddha after cremation, leave behind Buddhist relics? It is possible. Sakyamuni Buddha said, "Everyone can attain Buddhahood." With correct practices, if you keep practicing like this, you shall attain Buddhahood. Through practice, age spots fade, the body gets stronger, and aches and pains disappear.

If you continue practicing, through the accumulation of energy, your body transforms into a state beyond human comprehension. This is why many practitioners gain wisdom. An inexperienced meditator may think he has no wisdom. In fact, there's a reason in the human body. Through practice, the human body actually transforms. Let's say elements of A, B, and C formed your physical body. Those elements become diamonds, agates, and rubies. Of course, the body

changes. A non-practitioner leaves behind ash upon cremation. That's not to say that all accomplished practitioners leave behind relics. That's decided by karma. But I would say that about half of the accomplished practitioners, especially those who meditate diligently using my methods instead of simply subscribing to a belief system, will leave behind relics. Don't come to me tomorrow bringing fake relics made of dead cells and dirt. I can see through them. I can produce fake and soft relics, too. I'm talking about true transformation.

We are not going after relics, you see. Relics indicate that your practice not only transforms your mind, but also your human body. Why do you get healthier and finally learn to let go of things after practicing? How come practicing helps you bicker less with your spouse? You feel that there's nothing to bicker about. Why? Your brain has evolved, the blood vessels in your brain have expanded. Trifling matters no longer seem like obstacles to you. After practicing, you no longer care when someone scolds you, or your colleague gets a raise, but you do not, or even when your boss criticizes you. You are in a tranquil state of being. Nothing seems to worry you. You have a more open heart. The same problems that made you suffer emotionally don't bother you anymore. A practitioner once said, "After four days of practice, I no longer scolded my spouse. After six days, I cooked a nice meal for my spouse." After 16 days, she might give him a massage. Why? Your inner-self is transforming. Aside from cognitive change, something inside has changed, too, and you have become wiser. You used to get mad for no reason. You had narrow blood vessels. Your brain was dull from lack of oxygen and blood flow. Your head was muddled.

After meditation, improved blood flow allows your brain to function better and brings wisdom. After even more meditation, you will transform at a cellular level. Every one of your cells will shine forth with the light of compassion. You gain

great wisdom, so you are not only able to manage your spouse but also your business. You can go from staff member to boss. It is all possible. A disciple invited me for a meal. He had recovered from an illness. I couldn't find a toothpick, so I used a chopstick to pick. He was puzzled. "Are you fixing your teeth?"

"I don't have a toothpick."

"You must be really enlightened!"

"What?" I replied. "A chopstick instead of a toothpick! That's nothing, I could use a rolling pin," I said. It is no big deal to let go of your ego when there's no harm involved. I don't mind being made fun of. It is not as though I have sinned. I'm just trying to bring humor, and that's not a big deal. Letting go of your pride and shame means letting go of unnecessary afflictions and burdens caused by miniscule issues. We find that with practice, we become much more big-hearted. When you practice to the point where our body shines like diamonds with wisdom and energy at a cellular level, then our life will have truly changed. Just look at the Buddha-light cast by the relics housed at the Famen Temple in Xi'an. Meditation changes you inside and out; your lives will be transformed.

## **Meditation Transforms Decayed Into Miraculous**

I was like a piece of rotten wood. When I was a child, I had no intelligence. How difficult it was for my teacher! My teacher would ask us how much one plus one was. All the students answered two. I would echo two. When I was asked again, "How much is one plus one?" I did not know.

"You had an answer."

"Yes, but I forgot. Whatever you say is the answer." I was like that. Once, my mom knew I had a test. She was home from work, and I came home to report that I was the first one in the class. My mom asked if the count began at the top or the bottom. The bottom. The next year, however, I was a little smarter. "Mom, I did not come in first place this time. I scored 40 points."

"For how many subjects?" she asked.

"For three subjects." The perfect score was 100 each. I thought I had done better, earning 40 points in total. Thus, don't look down on yourself, or your kids, or your friends. Feeling inept, incompetent, weak, and powerless? With the blessing of Buddha-light and meditation practices, you could be an incredibly successful person in your field or industry, even a superstar. This is quite possible. Please believe in yourself. I am the perfect example, living evidence. Thank you.

In my experience, since I began teaching, I have only used an outline for my lecture once or twice. Both times, I froze instead. I almost never draft speeches and never prepare in advance. I believe in spontaneous speech. In my early days of teaching, there were seven colored beads that ran around in my forehead, pattering back and forth. The beads would just keep on running. Practitioners with a Divine Eye could see colored lights in my brain. I told them that I saw colored beads rolling back and forth. I don't need to think hard to teach. Instead, there are seven little beads, seven colored relic beads, circling and providing me with correct information. I no longer fear exams. Meditation practice can transform all. To those who came here today by fate, this is what I believe. If I were to search for the reasons to explain the benefits of meditation, and convince you about the depth of transformation that meditation and the Buddha brought me, as in my transformation, I wouldn't know where to start. In short, it is from decayed to

miraculous. I hope that everyone here today, and all with karmic connection with me, will achieve the greatest glory possible. Bless you.