

How Did I Start to Practice?

Hi everyone, this is Nancy. Today is May 22ed. 2021. How are you doing! I know many people who are on the same path as I am. Almost all started their journey after some life changes, so did I. There is a song saying that life is a revolving door and you don't know where you will be revolved to the next second. Life is impermanent, but impermanence also brings growth and chance to change. Today, I am going to share with you how I started to practice, to learn Buddha Dharma.

In 2010, some unharmonious things showed up in my life. Normally, I don't have much temper and stay quiet and kind, may appear a bit serious though. I am a scientist, and instruments often are my company. But the twists and turns in life at that time kind of made me crazy. I felt depressed. The worst thing was there was no one who could understand, no one to go to. It seemed that there was no way out. I did not know what to do. One time, the first time at work, I got angry. After that anger breakout, I felt that I had changed to someone who I couldn't accept. I felt that I was in a swamp. I was suffocating myself. I needed a way out.

So I started to browse the internet, looking for some information. During that time, Buddha Dharma appeared in my life. I started to hold some mantras and the heart sutra every day, trying to eliminate my karma blockage. After about three months, I had access to the group of people led by my master and started to recite sutras. The heart sutra was the first sutra that I recited and memorized, but as you know, the heart sutra, though shortest sutra, is abstract. Also, during that period, it was difficult to calm down for me. So I was just reciting the sutra without understanding much. When the list of the daily compulsory courses was given by the master, I had doubt of myself because in my mind, sutras were written in ancient language and difficult to read and understand. I was reluctant to start. One day, I was in the lab alone. I took out the little book containing all the sutras and mantras that we needed to do, and started to recite the Buddha Speaking of Amitabha Sutra. To my surprise, the sutra was easy to understand and it was pleasant to recite. With joy in heart, I recited probably six or seven times in one breath. So I began to chant the name of the Buddha, recite sutras, holding mantras, meditating every day. I would get up quite early to meditate, recite sutras and hold mantras using spare time during the day also after work, and meditate again maybe in the evening. Though it was like a baby just starting to learn walking, wobbling and not graceful, I just continued to do everything because that was my only straw. Though later, daily meditation was not mandated anymore because it might bring problem for some people. Without a master by the side, it might be a bit dangerous.

Shurangama mantra is one of the compulsory courses that we need to take every day. It's a must for master's disciples, and it's also a must for all the real cultivators at this dharma-ending age. It's a protection that every cultivator needs. When beginning to hold this mantra, I could feel clearly the resistance, the disturbance, from the invisible beings. I am a sensitive person, but many people have this problem. This mantra is too powerful, and it's called the king of mantra. But no matter what happens, just keep holding it every day. Everything will be fine. When the mantra and the mind become one, it's the best and the most powerful. This mantra is called the King of all mantras, and the White Canopy. There is a precondition though which is that you have to uphold the five precepts.

At the beginning of cultivation, it's common that karmic blockage appears. We cultivate to liberate ourselves. However, those that we hurt in the past, our creditors, do not want us to go. So this is quite normal. There was a period of time, several months or a year maybe, I would see horrible things. For example, looking at my arm or other people, I would see blood on it though there wasn't. When these things happen, again, keep doing the daily compulsory courses, don't think much, everything will be fine.

Cultivation is a process of self-rescuing. The Buddha Dharma is my life-saving straw. Without it, I

couldn't imagine how my life would be. Later, when the time was right, I went to see my master, registered the Buddhist organization, started to do many things, started to explore many places, traveled all around US, made pilgrimage trips to India many times, and joined trips to different parts of the world. The most important part is that I am not under the water anymore. I am in a much bigger world, and I understand more and more.

For a cultivator, the world is bound to be bigger and bigger; the mind is bound to be wider and wider; the door to the invisible world is bound to open. All sentient beings' hearts are connected. The invisible and the visible worlds are relative. The world we see and the world other beings see are different. For example, dogs may see some ghosts, but not most humans. I say most because some do see.

Another example, we don't see the wind, the electricity, a large range of light. These are invisible to us, but for some existences, these are visible.

Amitabha! My master always says that where there is Buddha Dharma, there is a right way out. There might be dark times in life, but always keep searching for the light and walk to it! Thank you everyone for being here with me. I will see you next time. Bye.