



Ten Minutes to Liberation

Cultivation in daily life with **Venerable Yongtah**

Ten Minutes to Liberation

Ten Minutes to Liberation

Copyright © 2017 by Venerable Yongtah

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without written permission from the publisher.

Published by Seoul Selection U.S.A., Inc.

4199 Campus Dr., Suite 550, Irvine, CA 92612

Phone: 949-509-6584 FAX: 949-509-6599

Email: publisher@seoulselection.com

Website: www.seoulselection.com

Printed in the Republic of Korea

ISBN: 978-1-62412-083-1 53200

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017931634



Ten Minutes to Liberation

Venerable Yongtah

Seoul Selection 



Contents

Preface 6

Chapter 1 The “Special Forces” of Happiness

Life Is Cultivation 11

Declaring Yourself a Living Buddha 16

The Three Aspects of the Living Buddha 23

The View of Great Aspiration: “When We Emanate Great Hope and Love,
Our Greed, Anger, and Delusion Vanish” 29

The Beauty of “But” 35

The Seeds of Tomorrow Lie in Dreams Today 40

Living Here and Now 45

Awakened as We Are 51

Establishing a Path of Practice 57

The “Special Forces” of Happiness 63

A Pebble Preaches the Dharma: The Dharma Preached by the Dharmakaya 69

Conversation Topics 75

Ten Minutes of Meditation, Ten Minutes to Liberation 80

The 110 Idea: Life and Values 86

The Three Beats: The Basic Faith of “Confronting Spaces” 90

Meditating on Death 95

Chapter 2 Tending the Garden of the Mind

The Conditions of Happiness	105
Jeukbi 1: "A Cup Is Not a Cup, but What We Have Named 'Cup'"	111
Jeukbi 2: A Secret Plan for Hope	117
Your Share, My Share	123
Lift Up the Consciousness: The Ten Levels of Contentment	129
Gratitude Meditation	135
Tending the Garden of the Mind	140
The Five Main Forms of "Bad Talking"	145
Riding on the Infinite	151
Buddhism's Dual Truths	157
A Dedication to Humankind	163
Have You Been Happy Lately?	169
Packaging Is Also a Gift	175
Mind Practice for Accepting the Pains of Disease	180

Chapter 3 Gaining the Ember of Awakening

The Not-the-Self View 1: Siddhartha's Puzzle	189
The Not-the-Self View 2: The Self Is the Root of Suffering and Warfare	194
The Not-the-Self View 3: When We Dismantle a Cart, It Is No Longer a Cart	199
The Not-the-Self View 4: The Mind Is Drawn by Thoughts	205
Gaining the Ember of Awakening	211

Preface

Life is a process of interaction between the power that pulls and the power that pushes away. We draw toward us things that we like and push away things that we dislike. Both the pulling and the pushing are forms of tension. Once they cross a line into immaturity, both the pulling and the pushing forces become greed or hatred. Beneath this greed and this hatred, there is necessarily a consciousness that is unwise: delusion.

Taken together, this greed, hatred, and delusion are known as the three poisons. Because of these three poisons, the uncultivated mind cannot avoid suffering. Meditation is a tool for self-purification.

Fortunately, even when our lives are awash in the three poisons, the original mind exists outside of them. Meditation is also a tool that allows the original mind, in its original purity, to reveal itself. It is as though the three poisons of greed, anger, and delusion were clouds covering up a sun or clear sky, while the original mind is like the sun or the vastness of space beyond the clouds, which shines irrespective of the clouds' presence or absence.

How do we make this sun, this vastness of the sky, emerge? How do we cause the clouds to evaporate? The path lies in meditation.

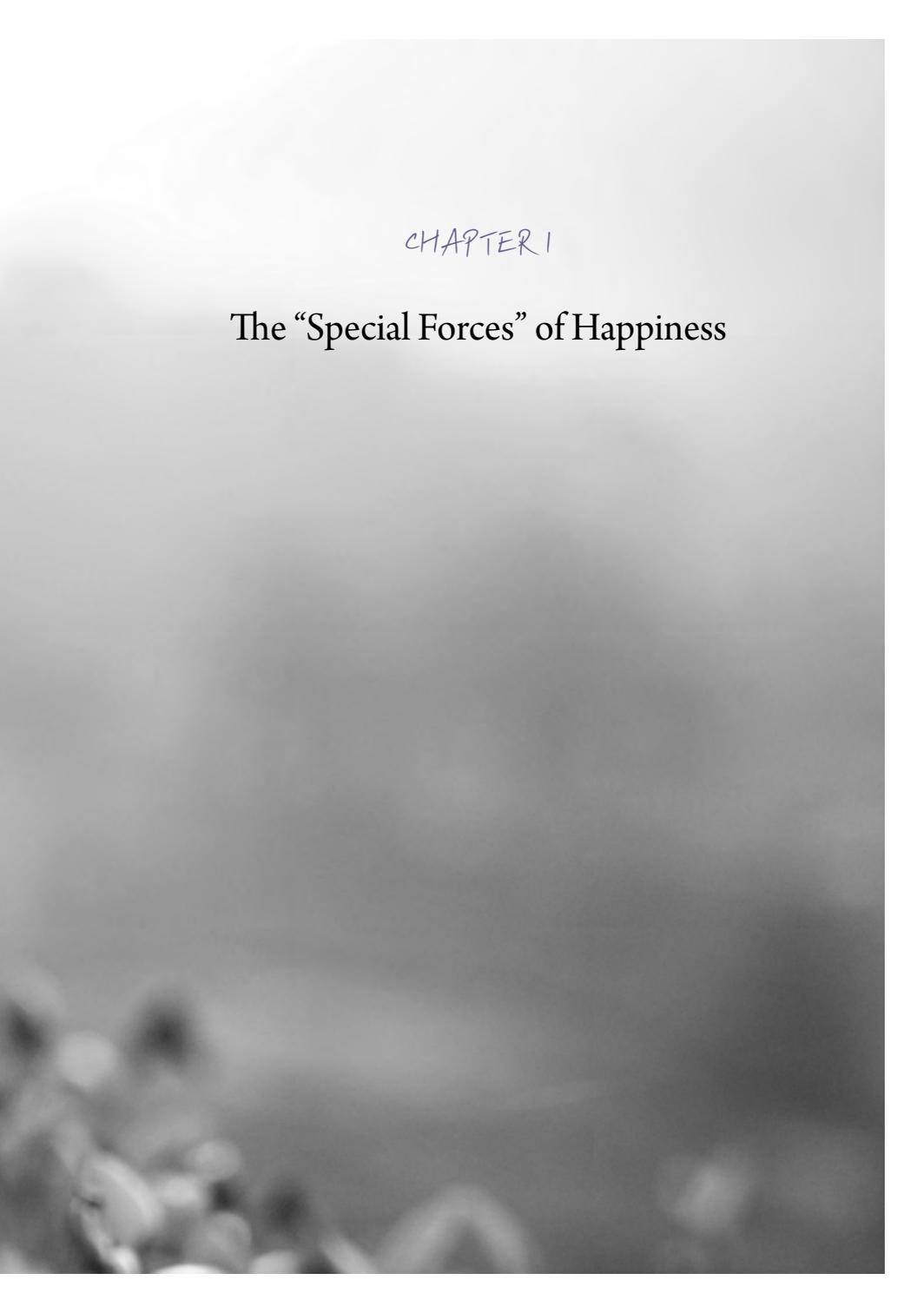
For a span of roughly three years, in the pages of the monthly Korean Buddhist magazine *Bulkwang* (Buddha Light), I applied my meager literary talents to describing the path of meditation, which causes the three poisons of greed, anger, and delusion to disappear and ushers forth the self-nature that is clean and clear.

When these writings were being compiled and edited for this book, the concern arose that they might be somewhat difficult for ordinary readers to understand and thus require some explanation. As a writer, I must of course show consideration to the intended audience. I concluded that my duty was to preserve the integrity of the message, and I resolved not to provide further explanation in the belief that doing so might actually be misleading to the reader.

May this record of meditations be a path for virtuous people with whom I have karmic affinity to sing the sun's praises and clear away the clouds of ignorance. Thank you.

On the foothills of Mt. Cheollyeongsan
Yours in the dharma, Venerable Yongtah





CHAPTER 1

The “Special Forces” of Happiness

Life Is Cultivation

If we take a moment to look at the Eightfold Path that Sakyamuni Buddha offered as a framework for cultivation, we can see that every area of life is in fact a form of practice.

It is a true pleasure for me to be able to have this exchange with all of you on the topic of Buddhist practice in daily life. It is as though the past twenty-five years of guiding people in daily life cultivation by formulating Sakyamuni's Buddhism and Zen Buddhism into a program of practice transcending religions has led me to this connection with you.

To begin, I thought I might start with an overview of cultivation in daily life. Just as every traveler must carry a map, so we should have a map for cultivation. Daily cultivation may be divided into two types: everyday cultivation and formal cultivation. We can also describe these as everyday and formal practice, or everyday and formal Zen. Through everyday and formal practice, the practitioner

is able to manage daily life from a solid foundation formed from strong aspirations.

Everyday cultivation is a matter of integrating cultivation into the entire process of life: speech and silence, action and rest, behavior and conduct, sitting and lying down. Formal cultivation is based on creating special circumstances that are not usually present in everyday life and are favorable to contemplation. In presenting the topic of Buddhist cultivation in daily life, there is often an intention to bring about transformation by encouraging a mindset that seems to regard only formal practice as cultivation. I am not suggesting that we refrain from formal practice; rather, I want us to make good use of our formal practice so that it becomes integrated into our daily activities.

If we look back culturally on the history of Buddhist practice in Korea, cultivation has traditionally been regarded as the domain of monks and nuns who attend summer and winter meditation retreats, sitting together in meditation halls for three months and spending anywhere from eight to fifteen hours a day in seated meditation.

Even among Buddhist monastics, it is a common belief that authentic practice requires us to set aside time apart from our daily activities for cultivation, to engage in seated meditation in the mornings and evenings, and, as circumstances permit, to go to a meditation hall in a mountain temple to practice such meditation without interruption for several days. Even as we speak of “cultivation

in daily life,” we consider life something separate, as though cultivation in daily life comes only when we dedicate separate time to seated meditation or the chanting of sutras. Such efforts are obviously one form of cultivation, but we are mistaken if we regard this alone as “proper cultivation.” If we take a moment to look at the Eightfold Path that Sakyamuni Buddha offered as a guide to cultivation, we can see that every area of life is a form of practice.

Life is a process of thoughts, words, and deeds—the three activities of body, speech, and mind. It is therefore more accurate for us to think of “cultivation” as correct thought, speech, and action. In order to determine what is correct, there must be a standard of values that are rooted in right view. For all of life to become cultivation, we should ensure that all facets of our lives, at any given moment—our thoughts, words, and deeds—conform to the principles of right view. Right view is the most important of virtues. So it is that in the teaching of the Eightfold Path, right view is presented as the body of the Buddha Way, while the other seven aspects are described as the Way’s limbs.

Adopting right view as our standard, we ensure that our mental processes are based in right thought, our language in right speech, and our actions in right conduct. These components of the Eightfold Path—right view, right thought, right speech, and right conduct—are the foundation of cultivation; if we broaden our interpretation of them, we may indeed say they are the whole of cultivation. For all of the

dharmas of cultivation in the thirty-seven dharmas of enlightenment, we may say that the Eightfold Path's right view, right resolve, right speech, and right conduct are the matrix from which they emerged.

It is very appropriate, then, for us to see cultivation as right thought, right speech, and right action founded in right view. Cultivation is a process of working with the Three Virtuous Practices, the Eightfold Path, and the Six Paramitas so that our greed, anger, and ignorance disappear and we become buddhas who possess great awakening, great compassion, and great freedom. For anyone who spends even a brief time in the life of faith as part of Buddhism, this is a matter of common sense. As I mentioned earlier, cultivation within daily life does not mean practicing cultivation periodically as we live our lives, but making life itself cultivation. It means that life is cultivation, and cultivation is life.

We speak of emptiness of the self and emptiness of the dharma, yet we fixate endlessly on subject and object. When we consider that all beings are buddhas as they are, we make it easy to deal with people, rather than fixate stubbornly on aspects of our experience where we could simply be changing our way of thinking. We endlessly recite the Mantra for Purification of Speech, yet we are unable to prevent alienating or malicious speech. Even as we speak of ahimsa, we have little respect for life; even as we speak of ocean seal or buddha garland samadhi, our minds are distracted and split into

a thousand or myriad strands. All of this runs counter to the idea of making life itself into cultivation. To truly create cultivation within daily life, we must meticulously examine our thoughts, speech, and actions and establish methods of transforming the automatic responses of body, speech, and mind.

This is not to say that we should neglect formal Zen practice. It is good for us to engage in formal meditation and practice, setting aside time for formal cultivation on a daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly basis. It is good for us to dedicate a few minutes or hours as our situations permit to daily seated or walking meditation, bowing, and reading and reciting of the scriptures, and to engage in exertion with all-night seated meditation or prayer on the weekends or a few times a month. As a yearly plan, we should ensure an appropriate harmony between special and everyday Zen as befits our situation by attending winter or summer retreats with Buddhist communities or training at mountain temples.

The traditional perspective on everyday life as practice was one of cultivating right thought, speech, and action founded in right view as daily cultivation, and the formulation of a schedule for daily meditation together with periodic intensive meditation practice as formal Zen practice. What I intend to do here is to demonstrate how to integrate formal cultivation into our daily lives.

Declaring Yourself a Living Buddha

Where does the Buddha exist? In you and me as we see, hear, and speak, and in all things that exist.

As I noted before, right view is the cornerstone for all virtuous practices. When our view is wholesome, it is a magical elixir; when it is unwholesome, it is poison. What am I referring to when I speak of view? It consists of our perspectives on all things tangible and intangible. Among the things in the world, what is our top priority? Ourselves—the selves that spend a lifetime crying, “Me! Me!” But what is that “me”?

All of you reading this right now—what view do you hold toward “yourself”? If I asked you to complete the sentence “I am _____,” how would you finish it? There are many aspects of right view, but right view of the self is paramount.

*If given ten minutes,
how would you manage your mind?*

Momentary liberation may be a matter of purifying ourselves of greed or anger by rolling around a single thought when greed and anger arise to harm the purity of our minds. Daily liberation is a matter of setting aside time during the day for Zen meditation—be it ten minutes, thirty minutes, or sixty or more minutes—so that the sense of self disappears. Liberation should also be discussed in terms of its different dimensions, but the most primary form of liberation is the light “no-self” feeling that one senses when the feeling of the self disappears.

Seoul Selection



www.seoulselection.com

US\$ 32.00 / 18,000 won



9 781624 120831

ISBN 978-1-62412-083-1