

## Practice

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In this world, there are good people and bad people, strokes of good fortune and misfortune, joys and sorrows—in this complicated mix, life is very difficult to comprehend. The Buddha, with his wisdom, can penetrate all these seemingly inexplicable phenomena and illuminate their underlying principle. He tells us that it all comes down to the law of karma, the law of cause and effect. The Buddha also tells us that all phenomena in the world are ultimately "empty, yet with wondrous being". These may be simple words, but their meaning is profound and they encapsulate many truths.

How can we come to gain deep understanding and not merely a superficial knowledge of these principles? The only way is through true practice. If we don't put the teachings into practice, they will remain remote concepts.

What does "practice" entail? It is, in truth, "inner work"—working on our inner heart and mind, so that they become more in harmony with the teachings. Our heart and mind were originally very pure; the Buddha nature is our true original nature. But, over the course of time, we have drawn away from our Buddha nature as afflictions, delusions, and impurities arose within. The Buddha reminds us, however, that our Buddha nature is never fully lost; it has merely been blocked or pushed very far away. Our practice is to use the Buddha's teachings to overcome these afflictions, delusions, and impurities, and gradually bring our heart and mind back to its original pure state. Then, we will return to our Buddha nature.

From Dharma Master Cheng Yen's Talks  
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