



萬佛城求學散記(一)

— 入 山

Studying at City of Ten Thousand Buddhas—Part One
Traveling to the Mountain

王乃人 文 BY RENA WANG

洪蘭英 英譯 ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY CELESTE M. ANG

終於來到了加州！十多年前的一個偶然，在朋友家的書架上，翻到一本《宣化上人開示錄》，使當年尚未學佛的我愛不釋手，對萬佛聖城，心嚮往之。到如今忽忽兒女已成行。突破了種種障礙，經過了無數的祈禱，終於得以成行，奈何聖者往矣，緣慳一面！深悔自己福德淺薄，磋跎歲月。

從矽谷出發，帶著兩個五歲的雙胞胎女兒了緣、了果，沿101公路蜿蜒北上，窗外是久違的群山，遠遠近近，綿延起伏。在地處亞熱帶平原的佛羅里達州長大的兩個孩子，忙問我那是什麼？我才想敢情她們還從未見過山！得到答案後的孩子，指著前方煙鎖霧繞的雲深不知處，問：「我們要到那裏去嗎？」「是啊！」「那…去幹什麼呢？」「去…去找神仙，媽媽帶妳們去找神仙好不好？」「媽媽神仙長什麼樣子呢？」「我也不知道呀！」最小的女兒一聽，哇地一聲哭了出來：「媽媽我不要去找神仙，神仙不好玩，我要爸爸！」唉，鬧了半天，想要成仙還是源於我們大人的一念貪心

，貪求長生不老，所以尋仙訪道才顯得又神秘又浪漫，而在孩子無染的心中，遠比不上對親情的企盼。心中不禁又多了一份擔憂，究竟帶著兩個這麼小的孩子去萬佛城求學，是否只是我單方面的一廂情願

We finally arrived in California! More than ten years ago, I happened to come across a copy of *Talks on Dharma by the Venerable Master Hua* on a bookshelf at my friend's house. I enjoyed it so much that, even though I had not studied Buddhism, that I wished in my heart to visit the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas (CTTB). Now I already have several children and I am finally able to make the trip after much praying and many setbacks. My only deep regret is that my blessings and virtues are shallow because I wasted so much time and unfortunately the Sagely One has departed.

Setting off from Silicon Valley with my twin daughters, Liao Yuan and Liao Guo, we followed Interstate 101 north. Outside the windows we could see rolling mountains ranges, some near and some far away. My two children, who grew up in the tropical climate of the low-lying countryside of Florida, were busily asking me what these mountains were. I realized that they had never seen mountains before! After I had told them what they were, they pointed to the mist that surrounded the mountains and asked if that was where we were going. "Yes," I replied.

The children then asked, "Why are we going there?"

"We are going to look for the immortal. I am taking you there to search for the immortal. Is that okay with you?"

"Mommy," my children asked, "what does the immortal look like?"

"I don't know!"

Hearing this, my younger daughter started crying and let out a wail, saying "Mommy, I don't want to look for the immortal, I want Daddy." A worry crossed my mind and I wondered if my decision to bring two very young children to CTTB was a selfish act on my part. Seeking immortality is a desire that originates in the mind of an adult. The thought of immortality is both fascinating and mysterious, yet in the pure and undefiled mind of a child, it cannot be compared to the longing for a father.

After pacifying my younger daughter, the older one asked, "Mommy, does the mountain have a name?"

呢？

好不容易安撫了小女兒，大女兒又問：「媽咪，山有名字嗎？」「當然有啊！」「那麼這座山叫什麼名字呢？」孩子隨手指著其中的一座就發問。這可難倒我了，鬼才知道那座山該叫青松嶺還是萬壽山？不對，應該是有個古古怪怪的英文名字才對，正躊躇間，孩子得意地宣告：

「媽咪，我知道它叫什麼名字！」「哦！那這座山叫什麼名字呢？」我也有樣學樣地向外隨手一指。「那個叫樹山，那個叫草山，這個叫石頭山…」孩子十分肯定。我一驚之後，笑了，對呀！好簡單的答案，卻硬生生地被自己固有的成見弄得複雜化了。六祖云：「何期自性本自清淨，何其自性本自具足。」或許，明心見性並不似我們想像的那般難於登天吧！我們或許應該多向小孩子學習，放下成見與執著，返璞歸真就可以了。…只是，談何容易！

漫山遍野的，是不盡的葡萄園，在北加州寒冷的冬季裡，傲然伸展著它們黑褐色的枝幹，即使已失去了曾有過的繁枝茂葉。是在追憶，曾有過的秋季的豐碩，亦或是在無言地等待春姑娘柔柔的指尖輕撫？這便是美國最為著名的葡萄酒產地了。常將人生比做葡萄，經過冬季久遠的等待，在春的陽光雨露下抽枝發芽，猶如無憂的年少，再經過夏的蒸烤，進入中年滾滾紅塵中五欲熾盛的煎熬，結出滿枝滿掛秋的甘美，猶如人生晚秋的成功名就，然後呢？幾度霜雪

，只留下白茫茫大地真乾淨！那曾經有過的甘美，要麼就隨那秋風而去，朽了

，敗了，猶如世間混混噩噩的眾生，就這樣一年又一年，一生又一生！要麼，就被釀酒人采擷，毫不留情地碾碎所有的陶醉與美夢，經過幾番粉身碎骨的洗煉，徹底拋卻掉每一粒個體的自我之後

，化作濃冽的美酒，隨著歲月的遷移，愈

“Of course,” I replied.

Pointing to one of the mountains, she asked, “What is that mountain called?”

This caught me by surprise. How would I know what the mountain was called? It could be Green Pines or Long Life Mountain, or it could have some strange English name. This was a dilemma for me and as I wondered about it my child announced proudly, “Mommy, I know what the mountains’ names are.” Following her cue, I randomly pointed to one of the mountains and asked, “Oh! Then what is this mountain called?”

“It is called Tree Mountain, the other one is called Grass Mountain and this one is called Rock Mountain.” She seemed so sure. Caught by surprise, I smiled, and after a while thought, yes, what a simple answer. It is only my preconceptions that complicates things!

The *Sixth Patriarch Sutra* states: “How unexpected! The self-nature is originally pure in itself! The self-nature is originally complete in itself!” Using a clear mind to see our own nature is not as difficult as we thought. Perhaps we should learn from children who do not discriminate and are not stubborn in their way of thinking. We need to keep our thoughts simple and pure. This is easier said than done!

In the wild mountainous ranges of Northern Californian grow stretches of grapevines. In the bitter cold of winter their dark brown branches proudly grow strong and upright even though the grapes have been harvested and the branches have lost their leaves. The mountains seem to be telling us of their memories – of the abundant grape harvest of Autumn and the silent waiting for the awakening touch from the fingertips of Lady Spring. This is the famous grape-growing region of America.

Life can be compared to the growing of grapes. The long wait through Winter is followed by Spring sunshine and rain. Finally new branches grow, very much like our youthful days, which are carefree and without worry. Life, like the grapes’ growth cycle, moves on into the hot steaming Summer. Finally we enter our middle age with the struggle with our five desires. Late Autumn produces an abundant harvest, almost like the successes of our middle age. Then what? After a period of frost and snow, what remains is a land covered in a mass of white that is truly clean and pure.

The sweet nectar of the grape can stay on the vine and wither away with the Autumn wind, diminished and lost like the “mixed up” lives of human beings in the world, repeating the cycle year after year, life after life. Or else the grapes can be smashed into tiny pieces by the wine maker. We too can have our dreams and fantasies smashed unfeelingly just like the grapes. In this way, we endure a few rounds of toil and struggle, and having been cleansed and relinquishing every bit of ourselves, a rich wine is produced. With age, the wine develops a rich and fruity flavour. Looking at the two small “green grapes” of mine in the vehicle, I wondered

久彌醇…。望著車裏那二粒青澀的小小“葡萄”，想到她們即將進入的育良小學，那裏的老師們是否就是我心目中的釀酒人？

到了，終於到了！莊嚴的山門在青天白雲下默默地迎接著我們這三個遠來的不速之客。一陣心悸，猶如十年前在歸國的飛機上，俯首望到北京機場璀璨的燈光時的心境，莫非，這裏也是我的故鄉嗎？我魂牽夢繫心靈的故土？

☞待續

if the teachers at Instilling Goodness Elementary School would be the wine maker of my choice?

We finally arrived. The majestic entrance stood before us under the bright blue sky, silently welcoming the three of us who came from a long way away.

A wave of awe filled my heart. It is just like ten years ago when I flew to my homeland and saw the bright, shining lights of Beijing airport. Could this also be my “homeland?” - that home which has been lingering in my dreams and in my soul?

☞To be continued

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雖然名為淺釋，可是妙法卻在上人旁徵博引，遠取近譬中，自然地宣洩出來，時而深入，時而淺出。正是：

法華經義妙，無慧誰能了？
宣公悲心切，現身作明導。

如果我們能像日月燈明佛講《法華經》時那樣，「時會聽者，亦坐一處，六十小劫，身心不動，聽佛所說，謂如食頃。是時眾中無有一人，若身若心而生懈倦。」那我們絕對可以體驗到這部經的妙處了。



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Although named “simple explanations,” the Venerable Master used a wide variety of examples from the past and the present not only to explain it in simple language that is easier to understand, but also to give us a deeper understanding of the wonderful Dharma in the sutra.

Without wisdom who can understand
The *Dharma Flower Sutra*'s wondrous principles?
Venerable Master Hua, with earnest compassion,
Personally provided wonderful guidance.

When Brightness of Sun Moon Lamp Buddha spoke the *Dharma Flower Sutra*, “Those assembled listening also sat in one place for sixty small eons with bodies and minds unmoving, listening to what the Buddha said as if it were but the space of a meal. At that time, in the assembly, there was not a single person who grew weary, either physically or mentally.” If we can be like the beings in that assembly, we will definitely experience the wonder of this sutra.

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上人打時臉上帶著溫暖的笑容，有時對那些他特別要教化的人會多打幾下。果舟和小沙彌果童，都曾挨過這樣子的香板。

這就是我所懂少少的佛法，大家都要把愛欲完全斷了它！

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The Venerable Master had a big warm smile on his face while he did this. Sometimes he would single out someone for a few extra taps from the board, someone whom he was working extra hard to teach. David Rounds was the recipient of extra taps on one occasion. Gwo Tung, the young novice and son of Dharma Master Chih was another.

Here is what little I know about the Buddhadharmā: We should all completely sever love and desire!

