

我到聖城的因緣

How I Came to the City of 10,000 Buddhas

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A TALK GIVEN BY CHEN HSIU-CHING IN THE BUDDHA HALL OF THE CITY
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諸佛菩薩、上人、諸位法師、各位善知識，阿彌陀佛！

我叫陳秀菁（法名果菁），今晚跟大家分享我第一次到聖城的因緣。早在（1995年）上人圓寂時就想辦簽證來聖城，後來決定由同修代表全家來聖城參加茶毗大典，我就沒來。

1996年我們帶孩子辦簽證來聖城，心想由同修帶孩子去可能比較容易過，所以就由他帶同三個孩子去。結果小女兒的照片竟然在路上掉了，當天只好先辦兩個大的孩子的簽證，稍後我再帶小女兒去簽。後來聽人說「三個孩子一起簽太醒目了」，還好照片掉了，否則可能全簽不成。

1996年3月臺灣選總統前，大陸對臺文攻武嚇，海外人士都很擔心，日本政府甚至在臺撤僑。上人生前心繫兩岸人民安危，關心臺海兩岸情勢，聖城的功課、立的牌位，都迴向世界，祈求和平；臺北法界印經會鼓勵大家來聖城參加法會，於是我決定帶小的兩個來聖城常住。我預定在3月22日生日那天走，心想能在生日那天來聖城，太吉祥了！這是我的第一次美國之行，奇怪的是，我好像總理不好東西，就在19日開機票那天早上，法師忽然說她有事不能來了，要我先帶孩子來。那時「法界」只有兩位常住法師，工作繁忙，我不能在這節骨眼走，所以決定留下幫忙。

這時我已辭了工作，索性就到「法界」當義工，展開了我全職義工的生涯，想不到這竟是我一生過得最充實，最有意義的一段時間；每天親近善知識，得善知識教，受益良多。同

Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, Venerable Master, Dharma Masters and good advisors, Amitabha!

My name is Chen Hsiu-Ching, and tonight I am going to share with everyone the circumstances of my first visit to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. As early as 1995, when the Venerable Master entered stillness, I thought of applying for a visa to come to the City. Later I decided to let my husband come instead so I did not apply.

In 1996, my husband and I decided to bring our children to the City of the Ten Thousand Buddhas (CTTB). I thought it would be easier for my husband to take the three children to apply for visas. However, my youngest daughter's photograph was lost on the road, so that day only two of my children got visas. Later I brought my youngest daughter to apply. Someone later told me, "Three children together would attract too much attention." Thank goodness the photograph was lost on the road. Otherwise, perhaps all the visas would have been denied.

In March 1996, before the Presidential Election, China used a military scare tactic against Taiwan. Many foreigners were worried, and the Japanese government withdrew its presence in Taiwan. When the Venerable Master was alive, he was concerned about the people of China and Taiwan. The merit from the work done at CTTB and the plaques that were erected, was transferred towards world peace. Dharma Realm Buddhist Books Distribution Society (DRBBDS) encouraged us to participate in the Dharma assemblies at CTTB, so I decided to bring my two youngest children to the City on March 22nd. It was my birthday so I thought, "I'll be able to go on my birthday! How auspicious!" This was my first trip to America but strangely enough I couldn't finish packing. On the morning of the 19th when we had to book our air tickets, the Dharma Master of DRBBDS said that she could not go to America and asked me to go ahead. At that time, DRBBDS only had two Dharma Masters. I could not, on seeing that there was so much work to be done, turn my back and walk away. I decided to stay behind and help out.

Since I had already quit my job, I went to DRBBDS to volunteer full



修說：「妳是傻人傻福，若是早期的師姊們還在，哪輪得到妳？」

那年夏天，我帶兩個孩子來聖城參加夏令營，同修送我們去機場後回辦公室，一看，掛在座位上方的壓花，竟然跌落下來，鏡框玻璃的碎片掉得滿桌滿椅；他要不是送我們去機場，一定讓玻璃砸破頭。

所謂「書到用時方恨少」，以前唸的英文早還老師了，就這樣帶著兩小，及一位同行的老人家，忐忑不安地上了機。飛機上，孩子開心得很，我則不停地念觀音菩薩聖號

，心裡盤算著到了美國怎麼出海關，連接機的人都不認識。停機後，在機場出口處看到很多高舉的各式牌子，上書人名，等著接人，接機的人很快就找到了我們，一切順利。

出了機場，心胸頓寬；看見聖城山門，倍感親切。當時城裡正舉辦「華嚴法會」，在祖師殿前搭了大帳篷。印象最深的就是華嚴字母的唱誦，那種環場的效果，好像置身在華嚴海會一樣，真是攝心，在聖城各角落都聽得到。我腦海裏整天盤旋的都是華嚴字母，每天哼著唱著；法會結束後，緊接著慶祝聖城廿周年紀念，分送上人舍利給各分支道場，又辦書展、觀音七法會，一連串的法事，處處充滿法喜。

說聖城是孩子的天堂，一點不為過，孩子在聖城玩得很開心，每晚拖著一身疲憊才回來。從小孩子自己帶，很少離開我的視線，但在聖城，孩子常一轉眼就不見了。聖城遼闊，也不知去哪找，還好有孔雀；孩子每天跟著孔雀、兔子後面轉，到處玩，只要聽見孔雀的鳴叫聲，就一定有孩子的蹤影。

怕孩子亂跑，就把聖城的規矩，「男生不能獨自到女界，女生不能獨自到男界」，告訴兄妹倆。結果他倆追著追著，妹妹跑到女校前停了下來，哥哥追到女界界線就不敢再追了，只聽到妹妹在那喊：「哥哥，來啊！來啊！來抓我啊！」老實的哥哥，竟不敢越雷池一步；妹妹開心地笑著，哥哥也笑，是苦笑，沒想到這條規矩竟成了妹妹的「護身符」！

time, starting a new chapter in my life. I never thought that that would be the most fulfilling and most meaningful period of my life. Everyday I drew near to good advisors and I benefited greatly from their teaching. My husband said, "You have 'a fool's luck'. In earlier days when other Dharma sisters were still around, how could ever have this opportunity?"

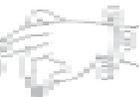
That summer, I registered my two children for the summer camp in the City. My husband took us to the airport, and upon returning, discovered that the dry flowers in the glass picture frame above his chair in the office had fallen, and splinters of glass were scattered all over his table and chair. Had he not taken us to the airport, he would certainly have been hit on the head by the picture frame. He had escaped this accident by taking us to the airport.

It is said that "When it's time to use your knowledge, you regret you did not study more." I had forgotten all my English. With two children and an elderly fellow traveler, I boarded the airplane apprehensively. On the plane, the children were exhilarated, but I recited the name of Guanyin Bodhisattva nonstop, and wondered what would happen at American customs. I did not recognize the person who was to meet us at the airport. After debarking the plane, we saw many people waiting at the exit carrying various signs with people's names. Our person quickly located us, so all went well.

Leaving the airport, my spirits lifted, and when I saw the mountain gate at the City, how familiar it felt! At that time the "Flower Adornment Dharma Assembly" was in progress at the City, and a big canopy was erected in front of the Patriarch Hall. The tune of the Flower Adornment Syllabary left the deepest impression on me. It seemed to revolve around the entire Wayplace, and I felt as though I was in the Flower Adornment Sea-vast Assembly. It had such a focusing effect, and it could be heard in every corner of the City! The Flower Adornment Syllabary reverberated in my mind all day. Everyday I hummed it, and when the Dharma assembly ended, we proceeded to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of CTIB. We distributed the Venerable Master's *sharira* to the various branch temples, and organized a book exhibition and a seven-day Guanyin Dharma assembly. These Dharma activities filled me with Dharma joy.

To say that CTIB is a children's paradise is not exaggerating in the least. The children played happily till nightfall, then dragged their weary bodies to bed. I had raised my own children and they were seldom out of my sight, but at the City they were constantly disappearing at the drop of a pin. The place was so big; it was impossible to know where to go looking for them. But thank goodness for the peacocks. The children followed them and rabbits everywhere while they were playing. I only had to listen for the peacocks' calls to know that the children were not far behind.

Afraid that the children would run all over the place, I enforced the City's rule: 'Males may not enter the female areas, and females may not enter the male areas.' So when they played tag, my daughter would run to



那年恰逢法界佛教大學，及僧伽居士訓練班的畢業典禮，兩個孩子分別跑來說，法師要他們回去「穿漂亮一點的衣服，要去頒獎」；心想他們頒什麼獎；

一問，原來叫他倆捧放畢業證書的盤子，羨煞城內的孩子，都說，「我們住這麼久都沒得捧，你們一來就可以捧！」

夏令營登場，男校校友自己買機票回聖城當義務小老師，還到城外幫人割草，換得借用他們的房子露營。夏令營的孩子有阿媽（祖母）帶來的，有跟媽媽來的，我們這一群婆婆媽媽也跟著他們去露營。記得那裏的水很涼，沙很美，從營火會用的東西到早餐，一切一切都由孩子們負責打點。晚上，房子讓給我們這群婆婆媽媽們睡，老師和孩子們拿著睡袋房外睡；早餐時，我們想幫忙，結果那群孩子又獨立

，又能幹，說他們自己弄就行了。聖城的孩子除了不會變壞，還真能幹！那次大家玩得太盡興了！

夏令營結束了，老師們都願意我們留下來，但孩子還小，而且家人分在二個地方，所以孩子的爸說先回來再說吧！沒想這一說，就拖了好幾年才再見著聖城，但總算回來了！

阿彌陀佛！



the girls' school and stop there, and her brother dared not go beyond the boundary markers. She egged him on with 'Come, come and catch me!' but her brother was too shy to move an inch forward. She laughed merrily at her helpless brother. Who would have thought that the rules of the Sagely

City would become a 'protective charm' for her!

Coincidentally, the graduation ceremonies of the Sangha and Laity Training Program and Dharma Realm Buddhist University were held that year and the two children told me that they were asked to dress up and 'to give prizes'! Inquiring further, I found that they had been asked to carry the platter of graduation certificates. The other children were envious, saying, "We have been here so long and never had the chance to carry the platter. You get to carry it as soon as you arrive!"

As the summer camp arrived, boy school alumni returned to the City to volunteer as counselors, mowing the lawns of people outside the City in exchange for using their cabins at a campsite. The mothers and grandmothers who accompanied the children also went along on the camping trip. I remember that the water there was cool and the sands beautiful. The children did everything from starting the campfire, to cooking breakfast. At night, the grandmothers and mothers slept in the cabins, and the teachers and children slept in sleeping bags outside. At breakfast, we wanted to help, but the children were very independent and capable, and said they would do everything themselves. The children of the Sagely City are not only well behaved, but very capable too! During that trip we all had a great time!

When the summer camp ended, we were asked to stay behind, but the children were young and our family would be separated--staying in two different countries. Their father said, "Come back first and we'll talk about it." I did not realize then that it would be a good many years before I would see the City again! But at the end we did come back!

Amitabha!