



感謝父母師長教我學佛

In Gratitude to my Parents and Teachers for Nurturing Faith in the Buddha

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1968年，我父母親在舊金山皈依了宣公上人。後來，他們搬到蒙塔那，在那兒養育了我們三個孩子。如果有人到我家，一定想知道這個家庭是如何來保持他們的佛教信仰。我們家不作日課，餐前也沒有上供。表面上，我們家是看不出多少佛教氣氛的。可是認識我們的人，就會知道我們全家茹素；書架上陳列的不單是羅勃·路易斯·史提芬森、道潛、狄更斯等人的書，更有佛經和幾本從金山寺帶回來的過期的金剛菩提海雜誌。在我們那有遮布的架子上，你還會發現一幀彩色的佛陀照片，以及我們喜愛的觀音玉雕像；而且在我們平日的對話中，你也會聽到一些諸如「佛陀」、「因果」、「開悟」等的字眼。

雖然父母沒有強迫我信什麼或修什麼，可是在我很小的時候，就已經信靠佛菩薩了。母親常說佛是無所不知的，此所以當我還只是個五歲的女孩，就對佛恭敬，也自然而然地知道禮拜了。她也告訴我觀音菩薩具有大悲願力，能在眾生感覺恐懼或遇到災難時，救助他們出離苦海。從小，我常受驚、做惡夢；到林子裡玩，又擔心雷劈電擊，所以我很快學會稱念觀音菩薩聖號，這對化解我的恐懼心理非常有效。自幼至長，我一直視佛教不是我該主動為它做點什麼而是有困難時我可以求助的。如今，我對佛教的看法依舊，只不過一切眾生都不斷需要幫助，所以我們對佛教的需求是一日不可或缺，這已超越我個人面臨危機才需要它的層面了。

My parents became disciples of the Venerable Master Hua in 1968 in San Francisco. Later, they moved to Montana, and began to raise their three kids. If someone from the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas came into our home as it was back in the 70s, they might wonder where this professed Buddhist family kept their Buddhism. We had no daily Buddhist rituals, or prayers before meals. In fact, on an external level, there wasn't much of a show of Buddhism in our house or in our lives, but if you knew us, you knew we were vegetarians, and if you looked closely at the bookshelves filled with Robert Louis Stevenson, Tolkien, and Dickens, you would also find Buddhist sutras and a couple copies of the old *Vajra Bodhi Sea* journals from Gold Mountain Monastery. You would find a colored picture of the Buddha and a beloved jade statue of Guanyin among the things on the mantelpiece. Listening to our conversations, you would hear mention of the words, "Buddha," "cause and effect," or "enlightened."

My parents never forced me to believe anything or practice anything, but nonetheless, I believed in the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas at a very young age. My mother explained the Buddha as someone who knew *everything*, and such a person was quite naturally worthy of respect from a young girl of five who had so much she didn't know. For this reason, bowing to Buddhas seemed quite a natural thing to do. Guanyin was the Bodhisattva of Compassion, and the one who would help you out when you were scared or in danger, and since at that age, I was often scared, troubled by nightmares, and in what I thought of as "danger," like being caught in terrible thunder and lightning storms while out exploring the forest, the practice of reciting Guanyin's name caught on quickly, and proved to be very effective in dispelling my fears. I was brought up viewing Buddhism not as something I had to do, but as something to go to when I needed help. To this day, I view Buddhism in this way, except that now I see how all living beings need help all the time, and so Buddhism is needed all the time, not just when I, a single individual, have a problem.



或許是父母未曾向我傳教的緣故—只有在用簡單的佛法觀念來解釋，讓我明白某事何以會發生、某種行為何以不宜的情況，他們才會說一說--使我心中深信佛教為一本尚未讀透的好書，它裡面有很多故事和道理，是可以用來解決世間所有的問題。也正是母親那種不強迫灌輸、僅在言談中偶透消息的隨緣態度，使我對佛教一直很好奇與敬重。比如有一次，我一邊彈鋼琴，一邊天真地問母親：「觀音菩薩可喜歡聽我彈琴？」母親不怕我失望或困惑，就實話實說：「哦，她不喜歡，也不討厭。」這種「無著」的態度，對一個才六歲的孩子來說是太抽象了一點，我記得很清楚當時自己失望地說：「觀音菩薩怎麼會不喜歡呢？」不過，當母親的話沉入心裡，好像跟我心底某處相連接，我方才覺得母親說的沒錯，雖然當時我還不知道該怎樣解釋。透過這種簡短而饒富深義的對話，我體悟到佛「正遍知」的教義何其有智慧，並且總激發我渴望多知道一些佛教的道理。

七歲時，母親帶著我們三個小孩去見她的「老師」--宣公上人。拜見這位為母親所深敬的高僧，確實讓我既好奇又興奮。我不記得行前母親是怎樣向我們形容宣公上人的相貌了，我只記得她說上人看起來就像佛一樣。母親說的沒錯，因為當我一看見上人，就感到面對一尊「活生生」的佛、一尊披搭黃色袈裟、面帶慈祥微笑的佛。他的光，明亮通達，照遍整個房間。面見上人之前，我沒有任何預設想法，於是在發現這位「和尚」無啥奇特，甚至頗為平易近人以後，我大大吁了一口氣：「噢，原來他就像佛一樣嘛！」

在1989年，我們家搬到加州，我和哥哥、弟弟去萬佛城上小學。這所學校給我的第一印象很好，女生在用餐後，會迅速起身掃地，看到這，我就想：「這裡的學生真不錯，我想讀這所學校。」猶記頭一回，當我走進大殿，時間與我似乎同時靜止了，因為我從沒見過這麼多的佛像。當我聽到旁人的說話聲，我在心中悄悄立誓：「我絕不在此行為隨便。」

I think because my parents never preached to me about Buddhism—they only spoke about it when a simple Buddhist idea could help me understand why a certain thing happened or why a certain action was not advisable—I came to view Buddhism as a kind of wonderful unread book, full of stories and ideas that could solve all the problems of the world. I was given only glimpses of this book through what my mother told me, and not forced to read the whole thing at once, so my curiosity and sense of awe towards Buddhism never waned. As an example, once while practicing the piano, I innocently asked my mother, “Does Guanyin like it when I play?” My mother, not afraid of disappointing or confusing me, told me the truth as she understood it, “No, she doesn’t like it and she doesn’t dislike it.” This principle of nonattachment may seem a bit too abstract for a six year old to understand, but I remember clearly my response. For a second I was disappointed: “How could Guanyin not like my playing?” But then, as the meaning of all my mother’s words sunk in, they seemed to connect with something deep inside me, and I knew that what my mom said was the truth, even if I couldn’t explain why. It was through such short but profound conversations as these, that I saw how neat the teachings of the Buddha, the All-Knowing One, could be, and why I was always curious to know more.

When I was seven, my mother brought my two brothers and me to meet her “teacher,” the Venerable Master Hua. I must have been quite curious and excited to meet this Buddhist monk, my mom’s teacher, whom my mother valued so deeply. I don’t know what my mom told us about the Venerable Master Hua’s appearance, but if she had said he looked like a Buddha, she would have prepared me well, for that is exactly what I thought I was seeing when I walked into the room: a “live” Buddha, with yellow robes and a kind smile. His light was very bright, and it filled the whole room. I didn’t know what to expect before I saw him, and it was a relief to know that this “Buddhist monk,” was nothing strange or incomprehensible. “Oh, he is just like a Buddha,” I thought.

Soon after, in 1989, we moved to California, and my brothers and I began attending elementary school at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. I had a positive first impression of the schools. I saw how the girl students jumped up out of their chairs to sweep the floor immediately after finishing their lunch, and I thought, “These students are good; I want to go to this school.” Upon walking into the Buddha Hall for the first time, both time and I stood still; the hall was filled with more Buddha statues than I had ever seen before.

Hearing someone speak beside me, I silently vowed, “I will never act casual in this place.” In the early days at the school, Shifu [the Venerable Master] would occasionally come into the dining hall during

早期在學校時，師父不時會在學生用齋的時候到齋堂裡來。有時候，不用轉身我就知道師父來了，這種感覺令我既興奮又開心。

年歲漸增，遭遇的困難愈來愈多，我對佛法的興趣便也日趨濃厚。任何時候，只要我一感到彷徨痛苦，昔日萬佛城師長的教誨，就會自動出現在我心裡。更重要的是，我已能自行涉獵與佛法有關的書籍，不再仰賴他人了。我也開始把更多時間放在修行與研讀經典上面。有好幾次我夢到師父教我怎樣修行，像淨心稱念十聲聖號等等。我從不懷疑修行佛法的效益，所以當師父告訴我何者能幫助我離苦時，我全然深信無疑。

我在童年時期，對佛生出的信心，是師父與萬佛城幫我建立起來的，引領我繼續修行的也正是這一念信心。信佛，是內在的，在意念息止後，心靈的呢喃低語，為外界任何事物所不能動搖。雖然，對自己日用平常間能應用佛法的力量常缺乏信心，但我仍然相信--如我六歲時那樣--佛的教法足以解決世間所有的問題。

信為道德功德母
增長一切諸善法
滅除一切諸疑惑
示現開發無上道

—華嚴經

lunch. Sometimes without turning around, I knew he had come in, and this would always make me very excited and happy.

As I grew older and met up with more and more difficulties, my interest in studying the Buddhadharma grew, and whenever I was confused or suffering, words of my teachers at CTTB would come back to me. It became more important that I read the wonderful book of the Buddhadharma myself, instead of limiting my knowledge to what other people told me. I began to spend more time practicing and studying. After having several dreams in which Shifu told me what and how to practice, such as to recite ten recitations without any false thoughts, I didn't have doubts in the effectiveness of the practices of Buddhism. When someone like Shifu says something will help you end suffering, you can't help but to believe him.

I had faith in the Buddha as a young child, it was nurtured by Shifu and the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, and it is this faith that causes me to continue to practice. Because faith in Buddhism is based on something internal, a quiet whispering of the heart when the mind is calm, it cannot be shaken by any external conditions whatsoever. And although I often lack confidence in my own ability to use the Buddha's teachings, I still believe, like I did at age six, that they can solve all the problems in the world.

*Faith is the source of the Path,
The mother of merit and virtue.
It nurtures all good Dharmas.
It cuts asunder the net of doubts.
And transcends the flow of sensual love,
And reveals the unsurpassed Path to
Nirvana.*

The Flower Adornment Sutra

