



尋獲勝地

The Search for – and Discovery of – the Perfect Place

藍玫瑰（15歲，培德女中11年級） BY LACY LACKEY, AGE 15, 11TH GRADER AT DEVELOPING VIRTUE GIRLS SECONDARY SCHOOL

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來到培德女子中學這個福地讀書，對我來說，是一樁意想不到的美事。我在外縣的公立小學讀到六年級，臨畢業的那一年，我開始考慮下一步要到何處就學。媽媽陪我參觀過幾所私立初、高中學校。我們家對宗教信仰本無特別偏好，因此學校的宗教傾向並不構成問題，費用和校風如何才是我們所在意的。看遍每期學費高達2萬美金的私立中學之後，母女倆不禁同感洩氣。

不過，好運還是眷顧我的。話說在一個鄰里的情人節派對中，當媽媽跟人訴說我們遍尋學校無著的窘境後，有個朋友開口問了一句：「你們試過瑜伽鎮的佛教學校嗎？」媽媽的心怦然一動：「佛教學校？」那位朋友由於修烹飪課而在那兒有過一飯之緣。我們為這個意外得來的訊息雀躍不已，於是決定下個週末一訪萬佛聖城。

我們驅車沿著達摩鎮市區的公路寂寞而行，待到轉個彎，萬佛聖城那金黃亮堂的山門牌樓就赫然在目了--有如埋藏於榛莽草萊、為人長久遺忘的寶物，兀自在溪底閃閃放光。它像是小鎮上古代亞洲的再現。懷著全然的敬畏，使我在通過山門，時竟然屏住了呼吸。

空中下著小雨，雨珠使樹葉震顫不已，悠悠嵐氣飄浮在空氣中，也纏繞著俯瞰聖城的鬱鬱青山。停好車，辦了訪客登記手續，於辦公室問到相關資料後，浴著清新微雨，我們逕往「君康素食餐廳」行去。途中，只見一位莊嚴的比丘尼--光頭、黃袍--撐著一把破黑傘匆匆奔行在雨幕中，身後佛殿是現成的背景。我不禁驚歎：哇！我們趨近餐廳時，一隻孔雀迎面飛掠而過，射入一株高大的紅杉

Coming to Developing Virtue Girls' School (DVGS) seemed to be the unexpected manifestation of the perfect place for me. I went to public school (in another county) up until sixth grade. It was in my last year at my elementary school that I started considering my options for continuing my education. With my mother's help, I visited several private middle and high schools during my sixth grade year. Since my family has never had a strong religious preference, religion never really affected our search. Price and atmosphere did, however. After looking at several highly priced schools (about \$20,000 per semester), my mother and I were getting very discouraged.

Luck was on our side, however. At a neighborhood Valentine's Day party, my mother brought up our predicament. A friend of ours asked simply, "Well, have you tried the Buddhist school in Ukiah?" My mom's heart leapt. "Buddhist school?" she asked. It turned out the friend had eaten lunch there for a culinary course she was taking. We jumped at the opportunity. I think we visited the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas (CTTB) the next weekend.

My mother and I drove down the lonely road that makes up "downtown" Talmage. We rounded a corner and the luminous, golden, pagoda-style CTTB gate loomed before us – sort of a long-forgotten treasure in a hidden glade. The glitter of gold at the bottom of a mountain stream. That was what it was like – this slice of ancient Asia in the small rural town of Talmage. I realized after passing through the gate that I had stopped breathing. I was in total awe.

A light rain fell from the sky, making the leaves of the trees quiver with the drops. A quiet mist floated in the air and circled the lush mountain that looked down on the City from the distance. We parked, and stopped to check in and get information from the Administration Office. Walking in the fresh rain toward Jyun Kang Vegetarian Restaurant, we saw a solitary



木，母親和我不禁莞爾，一同走進了餐廳。我不想用文字來描述這些菜--它不同於其他食物，甚至不同於我所吃過的任何一種中國食物。我能確定的是，一旦我吃過像這樣的食物，就不願意再回去吃公立學校餐廳供應的東西了。

初訪之後，我想若能親自體驗一下這個學校的生活最好不過，於是我邀了一位也對聖城學校有興趣的同學，一同到學校待了兩天，並在女生宿舍住了一夜。我喜歡這個學校，可是不習慣住宿的生活，況且這兒每件事還帶點像夢的味道。我也不習慣他們的法會或傳統儀式。這裡的人我一個也不認識，而且，白天似乎長了些（住宿的女生每天必須5：45起床，比太陽起得還早）。話雖如此，我還是決定下個學年申請入學，並獲得許可。想回家的念頭不是沒有出現過，可是我從不後悔做了這個決定。

現在的我已在培德女校邁入第四年，由於自己的努力，終於感覺有了收獲，那就是我已經成為萬佛聖城的一份子，並且習慣這兒的一切。我惋惜學校生涯的接近尾聲，但不是後悔前來，而是痛惜將要離去。培德女校已是我的家--幾年的相處，使大家從同學之誼化為手足之情。尤其我自己在身、心靈以及心境愉悅上的收獲，更是彌足珍貴、無可取代。

nun—with shaven head and saffron robes—running through the rain under a broken black umbrella, the Buddha Hall behind her. I thought simply, “Wow”. We approached the restaurant as a peacock flew past us into a tall redwood. My mother and I both smiled and went inside. I feel no need to explain the food in words—it wasn’t like any food, even any Chinese food, I ever had. Once I had it though, I was not about to go back to public school cafeteria food, that was for sure.

After my first visit, I thought it’d be best to experience the school itself. I took a friend from school who was also interested and stayed two days at the school and a night in the girls’ dormitory. I loved the school, but I knew living in the dorm would be difficult to get used to, and everything was a little surreal. I wasn’t used to any of the ceremonies or traditions, I didn’t know anyone there, and the day seemed so long. (The girls in the dorm had to wake up at 5:45 AM, before even the sun rose.) Despite all that, I applied and got accepted for the next school year. There were times when I just wanted to go home, but I never regretted my decision.

Now, in my fourth year at DVGS, I feel like I’m finally, truly being rewarded for my efforts. I’ve come to identify myself with the people and customs of CTTB. Now that I approach the end of my schooling, I feel a sinking feeling of regret, not for coming, but for having to go. DVGS is where my family is—all the girls who’ve gone from being classmates to sisters over the years. I’ve grown in person, in spirit, in mind, and in happiness, and I would not trade it for anything.

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其實真正的年輕不年輕，不在於外表，而在於我們內心是不是時時保持一個進取向上的心、願意「苟日新，日日新，又日新」，就像商湯王在盥盤上刻的這幾個字，每天來提醒自己，為自己開創生命中的新氣象，才不辜負我們今天來浴佛的目的。

同時，這麼多人共同來參與「懷少節」，也讓我們每一個人心中那個很珍貴年輕的菩提--不論你是菩提種子、菩提芽，還是菩提樹，都逐漸成長、茁壯。

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Real youth is not in looks, but in whether we maintain an enterprising heart and wish to better ourselves. We will not have betrayed our purpose in bathing the Buddha if we are willing to remind ourselves every day with these words which were carved on the bathtub of Emperor Tang of Shang Dynasty: “If we can really renew ourselves, we can renew ourselves every day and renew ourselves day after day,” hence creating a new outlook on our lives.

Furthermore, with so many people here celebrating Cherishing Youth Day, we are also letting that precious and young Bodhi—be it seeds, sprouts, or trees of Bodhi—develop and become strong over time.