



# 你幾歲了？

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## “How Old Are You?”

—Introducing Shramanera Gwo Chang

釋果昌講/譯於萬佛聖城大殿，2002年5月22日星期三晚

A TALK BY GWO CHANG ON MAY 22, 2002 IN THE BUDDHA HALL

AT THE CITY OF TEN THOUSAND BUDDHAS

上星期日(5月19日)聖城舉行浴佛節法會，恰好是釋迦牟尼佛聖誕的正日。聖城大法會都選在星期天慶祝，以方便遠來的人參加。佛誕正日落在星期天平均每七年僅一次，所以上星期天很吉祥。果昌有幸當天加入沙彌先修班，非常感激諸佛菩薩、上人及法師們的慈悲。

我也很感激家父母，他們生育我，從不要求我回饋。在台灣，大學畢業服完兵役後，我就到美國來唸書、就業，前後十二年。子曰：「父母在，不遠遊。」而我一天到晚在外流浪，真是非常不孝。之後我回台灣任教八年，起初與父母同住；後來他們搬回自家，但是經常到我的宿舍來，來做甚麼呢？清掃我的宿舍！1995年我又離開台灣，一直到今年二月才有機會再回去，和他們同住了一週。

我也很感激我的姊妹，幫我照顧父母，不管在經濟上或是精神上。我也很感激內人，雖然她對我不諒解，但她賺錢養家，母兼父職，把兩個孩子養大。對孩子我也很感激，因為他們相當爭氣，也不會對我抱怨，在過去十多年我們總是聚少離多。

當然我也很感激僧團慈悲，將先修班開訓日期延後一個月，令果昌今年得以如願加入。上人說：「既在江邊站，即有望海心。」如果萬佛城的居士，你們要出家，我是不會覺得奇怪。我個人也不例外，1999年我想報名參加第一屆沙彌先修班，不過因為內人不同意而作罷。當時我幾乎死了心，就把這事擱在一邊，專心學校的工作，沒有想到這次這麼順利就加入先修班。

最近老鮑伯走了，不久前鄭溫仁居士也意外往

Last Sunday (May 19) was a very auspicious day—Shakyamuni Buddha's actual birthday. The chance that the actual day happens to be on Sunday is, on average, only once every seven years. I was very fortunate to enter the Shramanera Trainee Program on this auspicious day, especially since it was originally scheduled a month ago. I'm really grateful to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, the Venerable Master, and the Sangha. Without their great compassion I wouldn't have entered the Trainee Program.

I'm also grateful to my parents who gave birth to me and raised me and yet have never asked anything in return. I'm ashamed to confess that I've never been filial to them. In my early twenties, I left them in Taiwan and came to US to study and then work for a total of twelve years. During those twelve years I visited Taiwan only a couple of times. During the next eight years while I worked in Taipei, they came regularly to clean up my apartment for me! In 1995 I moved back to the U.S. again and never visited them until last February.

I am grateful to my two sisters who have always been taking care of our parents for decades, both financially and emotionally.

I'm also indebted to my wife who, although she could not understand my decision, has done a wonderful job in supporting the family and raising our two children to become honest and capable young adults. I'm grateful to my son Bin and daughter Wen for their understanding for I have rarely been home with them since 1989!

Of course, I'm indebted to the Sangha. Despite the busy schedule on last Sunday, it took two most senior Bhikshus, DM Sure and DM Lai, two novice monks as cantors, the assembly and the whole Buddha Hall for an hour to transmit the eight precepts just to me.

The Venerable Master used to say that one who stands on the riverbank must also want to see the water in the ocean. It should not be any surprise if any lay resident of City of Ten Thousand Buddhas (CITB) decides to leave home. I'm no exception. In 1999, I was turned down because my wife had not yet given permission. After that I've been pretty content in my work at the school. While I've always wanted to become a monk, I didn't expect that things would happen so soon!

Recently both Bob Wanacott and William Jeng passed away. These



生。這些事情讓我想起上人說的一個故事，大意是：有一個人往生了，去見閻羅王時，抱怨說：「閻王啊！你要我來，可以的，但是你總該先給我一點警告，好讓我做點準備啊！」閻羅王答：「我已經寄了三封信給你，你怎麼說我沒給你警告？」

這個人搔搔腦袋說：「三封信？我怎麼連一封也沒收到？」閻王道：「你記得一年前，你村裡有一名長者往生了？」「我記得。」「那就是我寄給你的第一封信。」閻王又說：「大約半年前，你一個好朋友過逝了，是不是？」「那就是我寄給你的第二封信。一個月前，你鄰居的小孩喪生了，那就是我寄給你的第三封信。」我不願將來到閻王那裡時，還抱怨他沒寄信給我。上人講過，「若見他人死，我心熱如火；不是熱他人，看看輪到我。」

果昌福薄，在上人生前只和他見過幾次面；但那幾次裡，記得至少有兩次，當法師介紹我給上人時，上人都問我：「你幾歲了？」我一直不了解為甚麼上人問我這個問題。我想起釋迦牟尼佛的一個故事：有外道要考驗佛的智慧，特來問難：「窗外那顆大樹，有多少樹葉？」佛講了一個數字，但是沒人知道是對是錯。樹葉那麼多，數也數不完。這外道很聰明，就偷偷摸摸採了一些樹葉下來，再回來問佛：「現在樹上有多少樹葉？」佛回答了一個較小的數字，差額正是這外道所摘下樹葉的數字。

所以佛菩薩是無所不知的。我相信上人不需要問，也知道我的年紀；那為甚麼上人還問我呢？我不了解。我也相信上人的一言一行、一舉一動，都是在教化眾生，所以這個疑問多年來一直在我心裡。直到差不多一年前，我發覺自己有老花眼了，這才明白為甚麼上人問我那個問題。我一向不注意自己年齡，上人問的時候，我還得算一算。所以我明白上人無非是要提醒我歲月不饒人，修行要及早。

今年初果昌有幸與弘法團回台灣，一位老朋友對我說：「台灣不少佛友都想知道，果昌可曾後悔放棄台灣的工作去萬佛城常住？」我想：加入沙彌先修班，是對他們最明確的回答了。

incidents reminded me of a story told by the Venerable Master: A man died and he went to see King Yama. He complained: "How come you never warned me that I would die soon?" King Yama replied: "This is just not true! I sent you three letters earlier to warn you about this."

"Three letters? I've never received a thing!"

"Remember a year ago, an old man in your village died? That was the first letter I sent you. Then half a year ago, one of your good friends died. That was the second letter. Just a month ago, your neighbor lost a child. That was the third letter."

When it comes time for me to see King Yama, I wouldn't want to complain that he never sent me any letter. As the saying goes "When I see someone die, I worry. I worry not about others, I worry that soon it will be my turn."

I'm not as fortunate as many of you who have been with the Venerable Master for a long time before he entered Nirvana. I met him only a few times. However, in at least two occasions after I was introduced to him, he asked me the same question: "How old are you?" This question puzzled me for many years. I remembered the following story about Shakyamuni Buddha. Someone tried to test the Buddha's wisdom by asking him how many leaves there were in the big tree outside the window. The Buddha gave him an answer. Of course no one knew whether the answer was correct or not for there were too many leaves to count. However, this person from an externalist teaching was very smart; he went to pick a certain numbers of leaves from the tree. He then came back to ask the same question to the Buddha again. Buddha gave him a smaller number that matched the exact number of the leaves he had picked.

All Buddhas and Bodhisattvas have great wisdom that knows everything. I believe that the Venerable Master had the wisdom to know my age. I also believe that Venerable Master's every single word or deed was to teach living beings. Why then did he ask me my age repeatedly? About a year ago, I started to realize that I needed to wear reading glasses. All of a sudden, I found that I can't read small print anymore! And I started to realize that I'm getting old. I began to understand why the Venerable Master used to ask me my age. I've never paid attention to my own age. Every time when age came up, I always needed to calculate it. I believe that the Venerable Master's intention was to have me pay attention to the fact that "time waits for no one," so I better make sure to cultivate early!

Last February I went back to Taiwan together with a DRBA delegation. An old friend told me that many people in Taiwan wondered if I've ever regretted the decision of quitting my job in Taiwan and moving to CTTB. I believe that my joining the Shramanera Trainee Program is my best answer to the question.