



# 有朋自遠方來

## Friends from Far Away

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幾個禮拜以前，和各位提到佛法村的一些想法。目前，佛法村的理想，雖然還沒有完全實現；但是佛法村不可思議的力量，已有許多實例可做見證；佛法村對外界的吸引力，也是出奇的大。我想用些實例來說明一下：

十月十六日，我們開車去洛杉磯接三位由大陸來的朋友。這三位朋友是今年夏天在北京認識的，當時我們談了些幫助中國青少年，以及中、小企業轉化的項目，相談甚歡。在北京時，他們對我們殷勤招待、無微不至；爲了進一步探討項目合作的可能性，我們邀請他們到美國來訪問，介紹他們去參觀一些成功的中、小企業，並帶他們來萬佛城來參觀我們教育青少年的方法。大概因爲長途旅行的勞累，加上緊湊的參觀節目，出乎意料的發現：這三位非常彬彬有禮的朋友，居然不停的爭執、吵架，堅持己見，無法溝通。這使我想起：好像每次去大陸，都覺得他們說話好大聲，真像在吵架似的。我想這與他們經過文化革命清算、批判鬥爭等等有關；中國禮義之邦的傳統，早已不見蹤影，人與人如不能和諧相處，國家的前途是很暗淡的；中國人口的數目是如此的龐大，對整個世界有極大的影響力，這也是我們探

A few weeks ago, we talked about the ideal of a Village of Living Buddhism. Although we still have quite a long way to go to achieve that ideal, we already have numerous examples illustrating the amazing advantages of such a Village as a way of life. The attraction of the Village of Living Buddhism to the outside world is also extremely amazing. I would like to use a few examples to illustrate my point.

On October 16<sup>th</sup>, my husband and I drove to Los Angeles Airport to pick up three friends from China. We met these three people in Beijing last summer, and we discussed a potential project of transforming the youth as well as the small and medium enterprises in China. We had many insightful and productive discussions, and they really treated us royally. To further explore the feasibility of fulfilling such a dream and to meet some interested parties in the US, we invited them to come for a visit. We made arrangements for them to visit some very successful small to mid-size enterprises in California, and invited them to visit the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas to see our wonderful way of educating the youth. Perhaps due to the long tiring trip and an extremely tight visiting schedule, to our amazement, these three very polite and gracious people we met in Beijing were arguing loudly and insisting on their own opinions right in front of us, unable to communicate at all. This reminded me of the impression I have had on every visit to China that people there always talked so loudly as if they were fighting. I believe this kind of mannerism has a lot to do with the fact that they went through the Cultural Revolution — a period characterized by constant public criticisms, judgments, struggles, and persecution. The respect and integrity that are such central characteristics of traditional Chinese culture seem nowhere to be found. This is the very reason





討如何幫助中國轉化的主要原因。

帶三位朋友在南、北加州參觀了十幾家成功的中、小企業後，我們在二十日半夜回到萬佛城。第二天，我們帶他們去聽我們在女校高中教的課「生活的藝術」，那天的講題，正巧的是『雙贏』；我們正好可以借題發揮，說明為何應以達到共同的目標為重。而不是不顧一切的堅持己見，把全部的精神，都花在證明自己的觀點是最好、最對的；因為爭吵的結果，只是兩敗俱傷、一事無成。舉了許多成功與失敗的例子，來說明如何善用溝通技巧，來達成協議；才能同心協力的向共同的目標努力，達到相輔相成的效果。他們上了我們的課以後，感慨萬千。他們說：「看到兩位老師教九位小女孩，講得眉飛色舞、津津有味的，真是別開眼界！」他們體會到，做一件事的樂趣，不在於頭銜、地位、報酬、和別人的評價等等，而是事情的作用？我們能早早的把人生要義灌輸給這些青少年，幫她們創造一個省走彎路、又有意義的人生——這種對孩子們有深遠影響的教育，他們都看在眼裡了。

二十二日星期六，正好是觀音七的最後一天；我們把握機會，帶他們去拜〈普門品〉。他們看到這麼多人拜得如此的虔誠，唱誦得如此祥和、好聽，感覺到特別的平靜。晚上，我們又帶他們一起去上晚課，讓他們再次有機會去感受那寧靜、喜悅與和諧的能量。

星期日上午九點，我們帶他們拜見方丈；方丈介紹了「法總」的「六大宗旨」，以及佛教的基本概念，更說明了為什麼吃肉就是吃自己的父母。三位朋友也請教方丈他們對人生許多困惑的問題。他們發現：原來他們所受的教育與政治宣傳，使他們對宗教——尤其是佛教的認識，是非常錯誤的。他們認為所有的宗教都是愚昧、迷信的，都在騙取信眾的錢財。聽了方丈說明的六大宗旨與佛教的基本理念後，才了解：原來自己的不快樂，完全來自於「自我中心」與「貪、瞋、癡」。奉獻與做義工的

that we want to help China transform. When human relationships are not harmonious, the future of a nation is indeed very dim. China, being the most populated nation in the world, can have a tremendous influence on the whole world. That's why we had the discussion on transformation with these three people.

After visiting around a dozen small to mid-size enterprises in Los Angeles and the Bay Area, we brought the three friends back to CTTB on October 20<sup>th</sup> around midnight. The next day, we invited them to sit in the class entitled "The Art of Life" that we teach at Developing Virtue Girls Secondary School. The topic that day happened to be "win-win", and it was a perfect occasion for us to talk about how not to let one's ego get in the way of achieving a common goal, and how not to waste all the time and energy on insisting on one's own opinion, and trying to prove why one's own way is the best and only right way. Arguing will not accomplish anything except creating deep hurt in each other. We used many examples to illustrate how to apply skillful communication to reach agreements so that all the individual efforts will augment each other to achieve the common goal. On the other hand, if we spend all our energy on insisting on our own opinions, then the resulting polarization would only cancel each other's effort and leaves nothing accomplished. After the class, they told us, "It's really a first for us to see two "gurus" teaching nine young girls with such dedication as if it's all-important." Later on, they realized that the joy of doing something not motivated by what title you have or gain, how much you get paid for it, or how others see you in what you do, but rather, by what difference you make. They began to see the importance of helping young people to understand the meaning of life and create a meaningful life path for themselves. It would not only have a long-lasting effect on them, but would also help them avoid going around in circles and getting nowhere.

The next day, Oct. 26<sup>th</sup>, Saturday, was the last day of the Guanyin Session. We took the opportunity to take them to bow ... They saw that the Buddha Hall was full, heard the harmonious chanting so pleasing to ears, and sensed the rare sincerity and auspiciousness in the Buddha Hall. We also took them to the Evening Recitation that evening to give them another opportunity to experience peace, joy and harmony.

We arranged for them to meet the Abbot on Sunday morning at nine o'clock. The Abbot gave them a brief introduction of the essence of Buddhism as well as the six principles of DRBA. The Abbot also explained to them why eating meat is in essence eating our own parents. The three friends also asked the Abbot to help them understand many of their questions on life. They discovered that their education and the government propaganda had given them a





觀念，對他們來說，是非常陌生的；看到萬佛城有這麼多義工，覺得非常不可思議。和一些義工交談後，他們了解「付出勝於獲得」的道理。當我們把自己的注意力由自我中心轉移到奉獻時，會發現自己的許多煩惱，不久就很奇妙的煙消雲散了。

方丈送了每個人一個萬佛聖城的鑰匙圈，一面是山門，另一面清清楚楚的以中英文列出法界的「六大宗旨」。方丈說：「這是打開心鎖的鑰匙。」三位朋友如獲至寶似的，每天都帶在身上；每當老毛病要犯了，又要開始吵架時，立即拿出鑰匙圈來看「六大宗旨」，並對自己說：「不爭！」很妙的是，這麼一來，本來想發脾氣的那股勁，似乎突然失去了推動力，消失了！在短短的幾天裡，兩個吵了近二十年的夥伴，居然學會了理智性的溝通；也不覺得有必要堅持己見、說服對方了，而能給彼此足夠的空間。

方丈非常慈悲的為他們開示直到上供，並邀請他們一起去上供、用齋。後來他們很驚訝的告訴我們說：「我們還以為你們每天就是喝點稀飯呢！沒想到食物是如此的豐富與健康，這樣的素食，我們也愛吃！」從那天起，其中的兩位，已經開始吃素了。

在萬佛城停留的五天中，他們也有機會與多位法師與居士交談，探討他們到聖城的因緣。他們覺得所聽到的故事都非常神奇，都是個人所做的上上選擇；大家都是為了修行與奉獻而來的，而非像他們想像的，因為在世間受了挫折，而到廟裡來逃避現實。對他們來說，大家放棄所謂「美好的」一切物質享受，來過這看來簡單、清苦的生活，真是不可思議！但他們感覺到大家都很高興，他們發現萬佛城的人與一般人不同的是：大家對自己的人生目標都非常清楚，他們都是自己選擇要來萬佛城的；有些人更是必須先排除種種的障礙，才有福來萬佛城修行。而一般人，就像這三位朋友，即使「

very incorrect impression of religions in general, and Buddhism in particular. They thought that all religions were foolish superstitions, and that religious leaders only wanted to get money from their followers. After listening to the Abbot's explanation, they realized that all their unhappiness came from being self-centered and being poisoned by greed, hatred and delusion. The concepts of contributing and being a volunteer were quite foreign to them. They were amazed that almost all the people they met here at CTTB are either Sangha members or volunteers, and everyone is contributing in their own way. After many conversations with people they met, they began to understand that giving is even better than receiving. When we shift our focus from being self-centered to making contributions, we will discover that most of our worries will miraculously disappear.

The Abbot also gave each of them a key chain with the CTTB Mountain Gate on one side, and the Six Principles in both Chinese and English on the other side. The Abbot told them that this is the key to open your heart. The three friends really treasure the gift and carry it with them all the time. Whenever their habit of arguing began to surface, they would immediately reach into their pockets to get out their keychain to look at the six principles, and would nod their heads and say, "No fighting!" All of a sudden, the momentum of their anger would miraculously dissipate. In a few short days, the partners who had been arguing constantly for nearly twenty years learned to communicate rationally. It did not seem important anymore to hang on to their own opinions, or to prove themselves to be right. They learned to give each other space.

The Abbot very compassionately talked with them for an hour and half until it was time to go to the Meal Offering. The Abbot invited them to have lunch at the Big Dining Hall. After lunch, they told us in amazement, "We thought that you just had porridge everyday. We did not expect to have such marvelously healthy food. We'd have no problem being vegetarian if we could eat this kind of food!" From that day on, two out of the three friends became vegetarians.

During their five-day stay at CTTB, they had numerous opportunities to talk with many Dharma Masters and lay people to find out what brought them to CTTB. They found all the stories very interesting, and not at all what they had expected. Everyone told them that it was his/her conscious choice to come to CTTB to cultivate and to contribute. They had always thought these people must have encountered some huge difficulties in the outside world and come to hide in the temple. They could not understand why people would give up all those "wonderful things" in the outside world for this simple and seemingly hard life. However, at the same time, they sensed that people are happy here. They discovered that the people at CTTB are





很成功」了，對於「人生的目標」是什麼，仍舊茫茫然。似乎是什麼都有了，但是好像仍然缺什麼；總是覺得不快樂，但又不知道自己要什麼。他們告訴我們，在萬佛城短短的五天，他們收穫非常大，遠比參觀了十數家美國最成功的中、小企業所得到的還要多。我們看到他們在這麼短短的幾天內，能有這麼大的改變與轉化，又一次證實：萬佛城的神奇力量，正是世界上所有的人所最需要的。三位朋友發現：這種神奇的力量，正是轉化青少年與中、小企業最核心的東西。他們要把在萬佛城所見所聞的佛教理念，帶回中國大陸去！

回想在過去一年中，我們有許多朋友，包括世界級的名人、多年不見的老同學、以前的一些工作夥伴、靈修夥伴，都先後到萬佛城來訪；有些只來一天，有些住上幾天。他們多半不是佛教徒，只是出於好奇心，想知道我們為什麼會放下外界的一切而搬來萬佛城；要想知道萬佛城對我們的吸引力到底在哪裡？有的學科學的，甚至於抱著來勸我們不要著迷的心而來的。不論原來的起心動念是什麼，離開時，他們都感嘆這裡真是世外桃源、人間淨土。

就像每個銅板都有兩面一樣，每個地方都有美好的一面與可以改進的一面；但是當我們在一個地方呆久了以後，往往會忽視那美好的一面，而只看到所有的問題。在我們努力改善的同時，一定不要忘了善用萬佛城的神奇力量，把「佛法村」的知名度提高到眾所週知，就能接引更多的人來共享我們聖城的奇蹟。

different from most other people they have met in that they are very clear about their life goals. It's their conscious decision to pursue this kind of lifestyle. Some of them even have to clear all kinds of obstacles in order to come to CTTB to cultivate. In general, people, just like our three friends, are lost as to what life is all about even when they are considered successful in society. It seems that they have everything, yet they still feel as if they are lacking something, and they do not feel that they are happy. They do not know what they want. Our three friends told us that they gained a lot from their visit to CTTB, even more than what they gained from the visits to over a dozen very successful small to mid-size companies. The fact that our friends changed and transformed in a few short days illustrates the amazing force of CTTB. This is what the world needs now. The three friends realized that this amazing force is exactly what's needed to transform the youth and small to mid-size companies in China. They are going to take what they have learned about Buddhism back to China.



It just dawned on us that in the last 12 months, we have had a stream of friends visiting us, including world-renowned figures, old classmates we have not seen for years, former coworkers, and friends with whom we cultivated our spiritual path together. Some of them came for a day bringing their friends or

relatives; some of them came and stayed for a while. Most of them are not Buddhist. Some came out of curiosity to find out why we let go of "all that in the outside world", and moved to live inside a Buddhist Monastery. They wanted to know what attracted us to come here. Some scientists even came with the intent of convincing us not to be superstitious. Regardless of the reasons they came, they all had the same conclusion that CTTB is indeed a Xanadu—a place of happiness out of this world, and a Pure Land on this earth.

Just as there are two sides to a coin, every place has its bright side and a side that could be improved. When we have been in a place for a long time, we tend to take the bright side for granted, and focus on all the problems. While we are diligently making improvements, it is important to make sure that we are also benefiting from the miraculous power of CTTB. By the time our Village of Living Buddhism becomes a household name, we will be able to share our miracles with a lot of people.

