

My Experiences at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas 我在萬佛聖城的體驗

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阿彌陀佛！我是傑西，今年24歲。我原本來自羅德島，但目前是加州攝影新聞系的學生。我住在萬佛聖城迄今已有兩個月，我想說一點我在這兒的體驗。我懷著對佛教寥寥無幾的認知來到這兒，只不過是對現代佛教徒的生涯感覺好奇罷了；自從來到這兒，我也就被孕育出對皈依佛教的人有著相當程度的尊重。

在一個充斥著暴力與自私的社會，這個致力於智慧、和平與均衡的和平避風港，就像在截然不同的荒漠裡的一片綠洲。在此一段時日之後，我真的相信：如果人們聽從佛的教導並應用於日常生活中，這個世界將受益無窮。我並不是說全球的人口都應該放下一切來受持五戒，你只消緩慢下來，並學習去領受每件於人無傷的現前經驗而已。這是我在此期間學得的最有價值的一課，幸福與苦難皆無常；因此只要放鬆自己，平等地感受每樣事物，不要為芝麻綠豆事起煩惱，那就夠了。

來此之前，我的生活是既混亂又不成章法，我想要使每一天的每一刻都高興。我是如此之缺乏耐心，連五分鐘都坐不穩，盡想著起身後要做什麼，每一刻鐘都浪費在對下一刻的期待裡。我盼望見到朋友，視工作為畏途，為財務傷腦筋…等等，不一而足。我

Amitofo. Hi, I'm Jesse. I'm 24 years old and am originally from Rhode Island, but I'm currently a student of photojournalism here in California. I've been living in the City of 10,000 Buddhas for about two months now, and would like to say a little bit about my experiences here. I came here with very little knowledge about Buddhism; I was just curious about the lifestyle of modern Buddhists. Since I've been here, I have been instilled with a tremendous amount of respect for the people who have taken refuge in the Buddha's teachings.

In a society of violence and selfishness, this peaceful haven dedicated to wisdom, peace and balance is like an oasis in an otherwise barren desert. After spending some time here, I truly believe that the world would benefit greatly if people would listen to the Buddha's teachings and apply them to their everyday lives. I'm not saying that the entire population of earth should drop everything and take the Five Precepts. All you have to do is slow down and learn to enjoy every experience for what it is while not bringing harm upon anyone else. This is the most valuable lesson that I've learned in my stay here; happiness isn't eternal, neither is suffering, so you've just got to relax and enjoy everything equally without unnecessarily troubling yourself with the trifles that we all have to deal with.

Before I came up here, my life was chaotic and disorderly. I wanted to be gratified every moment of every day. I was so impatient that I couldn't sit still for five minutes without thinking about what I was going to do when I got up. Every moment was spent in anticipation of the next. I would look forward to seeing some friends, I would dread going to work, I would worry about my finances, and so on. I never just lived in



從未只活在當下，只享受著生命，我必須藉著刺激物來感覺自己的存在。對我而言，在靜室裡毫無紛擾地坐著，簡直不可思議。現在我看清了，我整個生命是無數攪擾的組合，我的每一個念想都在致力於尋求逸樂；但是住在萬佛聖城，顯出了我過去多麼無知。

這個社區裡大體上都是快樂人，他們不需要炫耀奪目的電視或燈紅酒綠的場所來自我消遣。僧眾不需要任何東西，他們絕大多數都是我所見過最安寧知足的人。我現在是耐心未馴，但每天都有人鼓勵我致力於靜慮。而自從我開始專注於活在當下，我感覺比過去有更明確的幸福。當你的注意力只集中在你所做的事情上，生命就平和得多了。不論你是工作，參加一個宗教儀式，或者只是靜坐，每個體驗處都令人心滿意足。滿懷攪擾，你永遠無法真正滿足，只能暫時感到高興。

最後，我想居住在此的這段時光，將與我餘生常相左右，我在此所學到的課程也會一再利益我。我不是個佛教徒，因為尚未皈依；但是我聽取了佛及往聖今賢的教誨，了然他們字裡行間的智慧，和過著清淨、謙虛與知足生活的價值。我瞭解要達到和平不是光聲稱和平的行動，而是向一個殘酷社會的私欲與自衛性冷漠兩者所做的終生奮鬥。每一個和平的日子，引你離開悟更進一步；而每一個靜慮的時刻，比千日意亂情迷的優柔未決修得更多的喜悅。

假若每個人——尤其是美國人——能汲取一丁點的佛教智慧，並花時間去薰習，這世界肯定會變得更好。可能此生我們無法了悟佛性，但如果我們願意以誠心和慈悲來行事，而非與世人做無意義的權力角逐之爭，那麼獲得真正的快樂是操之在我，這唯一有價值的力量是來自內在。不論你是發願受所有的戒，或者只是努力去傳播和平，而非憎恨，你將發現自己變得更好。我來聖城時是個散亂而自私的人，而且在許多方面仍然如此；但是世界和平與快樂的種子已植根我心，我知道只要假以時間地耕耘，它們很快會開花結果。

the moment, just enjoyed being alive. I had to be experiencing some stimulus in order to feel alive. To me, sitting in a quiet room with no distractions was unthinkable. Now I see that my entire life was made up of distractions, my every thought dedicated to finding something entertaining. But living in the City has shown me how foolish I was.

Here is a community of generally happy people who don't need a glowing television or a brightly lit bar to amuse themselves. The Sangha need nothing, and many of them are the most contented people I've ever met. I am no master of patience now, but I am inspired to work on being mindful every day. And since I started focusing on living in the moment, I have felt a more pronounced sense of wellbeing than ever before. Life is far more peaceful when your attention is focused only on what you are doing. Whether you're working, attending a religious ceremony, or simply sitting in silence, every experience yields true satisfaction. With a distracted mind you can never be truly satisfied; you can only be momentarily gratified.

In conclusion, I think that the time I've spent here will stay with me for the rest of my life, and the lessons I've learned will benefit me many times over. I'm not a Buddhist, as I've yet to take refuge in his teachings; but I have listened to what he and all the other sages of the past and present have said. I see the wisdom in their words and the value of living a pure, humble, and contented life. I understand that attaining peace isn't simply the act of claiming to be peaceful; it is a lifelong struggle against both selfish desires and defensive indifference towards a cruel society. But every peaceful day brings you one step closer to enlightenment, and each mindful moment cultivates more joy than a thousand days of distracted indecision.

If everyone, Americans in particular, would take a morsel of Buddhist wisdom and spend time digesting it, I am positive the world would be a better place. We all may not realize our Buddha-natures in this lifetime, but it's within our power to be truly happy if we are willing to act with sincerity and compassion rather than battling the rest of the world in a pointless struggle for power. The only power worth having is that which comes from within. Whether you vow to take all the precepts or simply make an effort to spread peace rather than hatred, you will find yourself much better off. I came to the City a distracted, selfish person, and I still am in many ways. But seeds of worldly peace and joy have been planted in my mind, and I know that they will soon come to fruition if I simply take the time to cultivate them.