

【佛青文選 DRBY Literary Selections】

# 碗空了

## Empty the Bowl

白親立 2005年6月7日講於萬佛聖城萬佛寶懺圓滿日

A TALK BY HENRY BABCOCK ON JUNE 7, 2005, THE LAST DAY

OF 10,000 BUDDHAS BOWING SESSION AT THE CITY OF TEN THOUSAND BUDDHAS,

PUBLISHED IN DHARMA MIRROR

無盡意 中譯 CHINESE TRANSLATED BY INFINITE RESOLVE

我從1986年起就住在（加州）瑜伽市，得以親近萬佛聖城。事實上，我這一生除了頭六年之外，都住在萬佛聖城附近，因此有幸參加聖城裡的功課及佛事。我也在城裡的男校上了八年學。我常以作為「美國第二代佛教徒」自豪，但是在這麼多年萬佛寶懺裡，我從來沒有全程拜完過。因此在去年起，我就預先下決心在今年一定要拜完全程的萬佛寶懺。果然，今年我如願拜滿全程！

剛一開始，雖然我很高興看到佛殿有這麼多人從各地來參加法會，我也注意到其中很少有西方人（白人）在拜。我一開始拜時，就知道是什麼原因了。主要的原因就是懺本上每尊佛名及唱誦，都是以中文進行，難怪西方人就覺得很困難了！我還可接受，雖然我能講的中文不多，但是因為我事先知道所有的儀軌都是以中文進行，心裡早有準備。雖然我是美國白人，我覺得自己有一部份還真是中國人。在唱誦佛名的時候，我覺得比較困難一點，因為我沒辦法能以每尊佛名的涵意來作觀想，因此我就專注在自身禮拜的動作上，以及大眾和我自己唱誦時的聲調，再加上我堅持的意志力，我因此能不斷地拜下去了。

我拜懺這段經歷很是困難的。頭幾天我拜得全身痠痛。正當痠痛好轉時，我就病了，而且病得很厲害。有一天我拜下後甚至連站都站不起來，之後病情又好轉了一些。但就在這時

I've been living in Ukiah and coming to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas (CTTB) since 1986. For all but the first six years of my life I've been near CTTB and have been fortunate enough to be able to come to ceremonies and events. I also attended the Boys' School here for eight years. I'm proud to call myself a second generation American Buddhist. But in all these years, I never participated in an entire 10,000 Buddhas Repentance session. Last year at some point I made the decision ahead of time that I would do it this year, so finally, I did.

Right from the beginning, although I was happy to see the Buddha Hall full of people from all over, I noticed there were very few Westerners (Caucasians) here. Doing the bowing, I quickly realized that the main reason for this was that all the Buddha's names and everything else being chanted is in Chinese! So no wonder it is difficult for Westerners. It was okay for me, because although I don't speak much Chinese, I knew the ceremonies were going to be in Chinese, so I knew what to expect. And while I am a white American, I think really I'm part Chinese too. So although it was difficult not having the descriptive mental visualization of each Buddha to go along with the recitation, I just focused on the physical act of bowing and the sound of the assembly and myself reciting. This, along with a stubborn will, kept me going.

The experience of bowing the Repentance has been difficult. The first few days my body was really sore from all the bowing. Then just as that was getting better, I got really sick. One day it was so bad I could barely force myself to stand up again after each bow. Then I started to feel better, but right at that time it started to get really hot (it was the beginning of summer.) So for a few days I cheated and didn't wear my robe in the afternoons. But I managed to keep going, knowing that these were all just tests I had to pass. Another



候，天氣轉熱了（那時正當初夏），所以有幾天我就有點偷懶，下午上殿時就沒穿海青，但是我還是堅持拜下去。我知道這都是我必須忍受的考驗。我又有一種看法，就當它是我的業，是我必須消的業。我心甘情願在這裡受這幾星期的苦，讓我有機會消除一些舊業，並且不造那麼多新業。

最後，我想提供大家一個我在拜懺期間的想法；不是在拜佛的時候，而是在用齋時的一個想法。一天午齋時，我正吃著碗裡的飯菜時，我注意到自己吃飯的習慣。我那習慣是，首先我會把碗裡所有飯菜都攪和在一起，但是吃的時候，下意識地，我會把我最愛的那道菜留到最後才吃；換句話說，我最先動筷的不是我最愛吃的菜，而是我最不歡喜的。因此，我每吃掉一口，碗裡剩下的菜就越來越好吃了。到最後當然就剩下我最愛的那道菜啦！在我嚥下最後那口最美味的菜時，我的碗空了，而我也飽了！

我坐著邊吃邊注意到自己的這個習慣時，我就想，這好像我們修行一樣。一般人都喜歡容易的，願意執取自己最喜愛的：這是我執心來行事。但在修行上，我們就刻意要難行能行，與我執心背道而馳。就好像那碗飯，我們先吃最不好的那部份，剩下的就會越來越好。每吃一口，我們就往好的做，就進步那麼多，我們的心性就越來越清淨，直到吃到最後最好的那一口時，我們就再沒有東西可吃了，也再沒事可做了；因為我們飽了，滿足了。我們的那碗飯菜，我們的自我，或者說我們的業，經過所有的「吃（修行）」就完全空了，但是我們也因此就「飽」了。我們的自性本就具足，但是我們的碗不空時，我們就看不見，不認識。

所以，我很感激萬佛城提供了這樣一個殊勝的機會給我們修行，令我知道自己還有許多的「吃」的工作要做——有很多的修行要行。我也期盼將來有一天我再來拜懺時，是以英文來拜，如此有很多西方人也能隨喜參加法會，共霑法益！

編按：白親立之父白文天為上人早期的美國皈依弟子；其姐白慧學是萬佛聖城法界佛教大學中文講師。繼去年，白親立在聖城今年再次圓滿拜完全程的萬佛寶懺。

way I looked at it was that this was all my karma that I was burning through. Voluntarily undergoing some difficulty here for a few weeks gave me the chance to work through some karma and also not create so much new karma.

To conclude I'll offer a thought that I had during the session. It wasn't during the bowing, but during lunch one day. While eating my bowl of rice and vegetables, I noticed the way that I like to eat. First I mix everything up together. But then while I eat, almost unconsciously I like to save the pieces of food that I like the best for last. Instead of going for the yummiest parts first, with each spoonful I take the parts that I like the least first. So this means that with every spoonful I eat, my bowl of food gets better and better! Finally when I get to the last bite, it's the best of all. Eating that final, most delicious bite, my bowl is empty, and I am full.

While sitting there eating, noticing this, I realized this is a lot like cultivation. People like to go with what's easy; we like to take what we like the best. This is using the ego-mind. In cultivation, we deliberately take on what is difficult. This is working against the ego-mind. But like the bowl of food, as we keep going, taking the hard parts, we get better and better. With each bite we take, we're improving, and things get that much better. Our character becomes more pure, until eventually, when we get to the very last bite, it is the best bite of all. Then there is no more to eat, nothing more to do. We are full and content. Our bowl of food, our self, or perhaps our karma, through all the eating (cultivation), is totally emptied, but somehow we're completely full. Our true nature is already complete, but we won't see this for ourselves until we empty the bowl.

So until then, I remain grateful for the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas and the community here for providing such a wonderful opportunity for practice. Because I know I've got a lot more still to eat, a lot more cultivation to do. And I look forward to sometime in the future when I might be able to do the 10,000 Buddhas Repentance again, but in English, so that more westerners can participate in the ceremony and get benefits!

Editor's note: Henry's father was an early American disciple of the Venerable Master. His sister Sarah is a CSL instructor at the Dharma Realm Buddhist University. Following last year, Henry completed bowing the whole 10,000 Buddhas Repentance Session at CTTB.