

中國之行側記

Sidelights on Travels through China

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昨天是達摩祖師聖誕，就從這個地方說起。我們都知道達摩祖師他把佛法從印度帶到中國來，然後把法傳給二祖神光大師，最後他就圓寂了。隔不久中國有一位大臣就在西域遇到達摩祖師，問他：「大師您到甚麼地方去？」他說：「我回印度去。」那這位大臣回到中國，才知道達摩祖師已經死了，把他的墳墓打開一看，裏面空空如也，就剩一隻鞋，所謂「隻履西歸」。那麼，達摩祖師到那裏去呢？說不定到美國來了！

宣公上人把佛法從中國帶到西方來，他是在西方建立三寶的第一人；所以有人稱他「大法西傳——美國的第一位祖師」。這一次我們到中國，行程來到南京古棲霞寺時，當知客法師跟我們介紹，廟上有一幅達摩祖師的真跡，那是古代一位畫家所畫的。當他講時，我腦海裏浮現，在兩三天前，有人才跟我講：「我們要出發前，有人夢到達摩祖師跟他說，我要回中國了。」所以，當我們聽到有達摩祖師真跡畫像在這裏，我們都很高興，很想看一看。可是，該寺幾天前他們做水陸大法會時，用一個很大的幢幡把畫像蓋住了。因為達摩祖師的畫像很大，掛得很高；我們努力把幢幡完全揭開來看，可惜只能看得到達摩祖師的雙腳跟。難道這是在給我們說法嗎？

上人曾指示弟子們，將來要把佛法帶回中國，也向他美國弟子說，你們以後一個一個都要流到東方去弘法利生。這次我們去中國訪問主要是把法寶流通到大陸，至今我們已經有

Yesterday was the birthday of the Patriarch Bodhidharma. Let's start from this place. We all know that the Patriarch Bodhidharma brought Buddhism from India to China; subsequently he transmitted the Dharma to the Second Patriarch Shen Guang before entering Nirvana. Not long after, an ambassador from China met Patriarch Bodhidharma somewhere in western China (Qing Range) and asked him: "Great Master, where are you going?" He said, "I'm returning to India." After this ambassador returned to China, he learned that Patriarch had already passed away; when they dug up his grave and opened his coffin, it was empty except for one shoe. This is known as "with one shoe returning to the West." Where did the Patriarch actually go? Perhaps he came to America!

The Venerable Master Hsuan Hua brought the Buddhism from China to the West. He was the first person to build the Triple Jewel in the West; therefore, some people refer to him as "the First Patriarch in America—Transmitting the Great Dharma to the West." This time during our trip to China, when we arrived at Nanjing's Gu Xi Xia Temple, the abbot there told us that their temple had a true painting of the Patriarch Bodhidharma that was painted in the ancient times. As he was telling us, I immediately thought of someone who had told me two or three days prior, "Before we left for this trip, someone dreamt that Patriarch Bodhidharma told him that he is returning to China." Hence, when we heard that this monastery housed the true painting of the Patriarch, we were all delighted and wanted to see the painting. During our visit, the temple was conducting a Water-Land Dharma Assembly and the painting of Bodhidharma was covered by a very large canvas. This painting was so enormous and hung so high that we could only see the heels of Patriarch Bodhidharma's feet. Was this some kind of Dharma he was trying to tell us?

The Venerable Master once told his disciples that in the future, he will bring the Buddhism back to China. He also told his American disciples that, in the future, each one of them must go to the East

九本DRBA經書在大陸流通了。六本是簡體字；另外三本是用正體字和英文，如果較難的正體字，我們旁邊另括弧簡體字；總共有將近五萬本，今年在大陸流通結緣。

最初以為在中國流通法寶一定要用簡體字，沒想到就在我們出發前，我在金山寺聽到一個消息。最近有一位居士訂了一年的金剛菩提海，是要送去中國大陸的，我們很好奇問他說：「中國大陸都看簡體字，這本金剛菩提海是正體字，他們看的懂嗎？」那居士說：「大陸法師說，現在中國已經有些省份和學校都在教正體字了。」

當我們要飛去哈爾濱的飛機上，我的鄰坐是一位哈爾濱醫科大學醫學系四年級的一個女學生，我就跟她提到，在哈爾濱現在有三本新書，是採用正體字（他們是說繁體字），我就問她：「繁體字妳看得懂嗎？」這位女學生說，不久前她被學校派到香港大學去作學術交流研究，在那邊接觸到繁體字。她覺得繁體字好美，而且繁體字字的本身有智慧，她看了很歡喜；回頭來看看這簡體字，實在是越看越沒意思。這兩個消息給我們很大的鼓舞，因為上人說過，簡體字是破壞中華文化，上人不准我們寫簡體字。

前幾天我接到一個email，也是一個繁體字復甦的因緣，這個消息是十一月初在北京，由中國教育部主辦的會議，是以繁體字為主，要進行漢字統一。中國原來對繁體字是採消極的抵制，後來他們喊出口號說「簡繁共存」，就是簡體字和繁體字一起存在的口號。由哈爾濱女學生這個case來說，其實中國大陸年輕人只要有機會接觸到正體字，他們會很歡喜，很好悅地來學習。

這一次去中國訪問，除了略微認識中國佛教的情況；對上人說，「二十一世紀是中國人的世紀，只要中國人好好做」，感受很深刻。中國明年要辦二〇〇八年的奧運，可以說他們全國總動員。

to propagate the Dharma and benefit all beings. The primary objective of our visit to China this time was to introduce some Dharma treasures; currently, nine volumes of Sutras from Dharma Realm Buddhist Association are being circulated there. Six books are published in simplified Chinese characters and additionally, three are published in traditional Chinese characters and English. More than 50,000 volumes of these nine books are currently in circulation in China.

Initially, we assumed that one must publish all Dharma treasures in simplified Chinese if they are to be circulated and read in China. However, before we embarked on the trip, I heard a piece of news from Gold Mountain Monastery about a lay person who recently subscribed to a year's worth of *Vajra Bodhi Sea* magazine to be mailed to mainland China. We were curious and asked him, "People in mainland China read simplified characters, but *Vajra Bodhi Sea* is published in traditional Chinese. Will they understand it?" The lay person replied, "The Dharma Masters in China told me that now there are some schools and provinces teaching traditional Chinese."

Later when we were on the plane to Harbin, I sat next to a female student who is a fourth-year student at Harbin Medical University. I told her that there are three new books in Harbin and that they are published in traditional Chinese. I asked her, "Do you understand traditional Chinese?" This student said that not long ago she was sent by her university on an academic exchange program to Hong Kong University. She encountered traditional Chinese there and found traditional Chinese characters to be quite beautiful and full of inherent wisdom. She began to like traditional Chinese characters more and upon returning to simplified characters, she gradually found them to be uninteresting and dull. We were greatly encouraged by these two pieces of news because the Venerable Master once said that simplified characters are destroying Chinese culture. The Venerable Master prohibited us from writing in simplified characters. A few days ago, I received an e-mail about a Beijing conference focusing on traditional characters sponsored by China's Ministry of Education in early November. They wanted to unify the Chinese writing. Originally, China had been passive in its policies on traditional characters, but later on, they adopted the slogan of "coexistence of both simplified and traditional characters." Using the case of this student from Harbin, we know that actually if Mainland Chinese youths have the opportunity to encounter traditional characters, they will like them and be glad to learn them.

On this trip, other than getting acquainted briefly with the status of Buddhism in China, I also became deeply aware of the Venerable Master's statement that "the 21st century is the Chinese people's century—if Chinese people know how to do things well." China will organize the 2008 Summer Olympics, which means that the entire nation will be involved with this event. No matter where we went—whether in the cities or in the countryside—we saw and heard about the Olympics. This is an indication that everyone is joyously organizing and participating in this activity.

Furthermore, no matter where we went, we encountered lots of people, which was quite unexpected. At Beijing's Heavenly Temple, Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City, and the Imperial Garden, there seemed to be endless

不管是城市，或鄉下也好，我們走到那裏，眼睛所看的，耳朵所聽的，都是這奧運，可以說大家都歡喜來舉辦這件事情。

我們到那裏，人潮都好多好多，真的出乎意料之外。北京天壇、天安門、故宮，還有頤和園，都是人潮洶湧。當地導遊說，「其實人這麼多，不是來自國外的觀光客，是從中國各地方來的，因為這幾天剛好放長假，而且是農閒的時間，所以到中國各地去觀光旅遊。」我很訝異，尤其來到天壇，很長的一條長廊都擠滿人。高高興興在彈琴、唱歌、跳舞、打太極拳、下棋-----，等各種休閒活動，看得出他們真的很快樂。在我們團員中，有位長者感慨說，在美國的老人家都沒有像他們那樣優閒，這麼快樂。

後來，我們一大早六點就去西湖，同樣也是看到很多老人家很安祥在打太極拳、太極劍、作運動。為甚麼會有這麼多人到處去觀光旅遊，很優遊自在作運動呢？這顯示出中國整個經濟復甦起來，人民觀念也在慢慢地改變，有時間，也有這個心情。所以從一個國家的旅遊興盛，可以看出該國的國富民安，預期國勢會強盛起來。

這次我到了中國，也深深體會到上人的慈悲、智慧的教化，他的遺澤一直還在庇蔭著我們。中國人有句俗話：「人在人情在；人不在，甚麼都沒有了！」上人圓寂十二、三年了，然而我們這次到東北，是上人的家鄉，可以感受到他們都把我們當成是代表上人回來了，非常恭敬、供養。除了白天想要親近我們，甚至晚上都有很多人到旅館來親近、請法、供養。上人是一位頂天立地的大丈夫，在中國儒家思想來講，他是位「完人」，有完美人格的人，所以可以超乎這些人情的觀念，不受人情的束縛。

越受人恭敬、供養，內心越惶恐，所謂「忖己德行，全缺應供」，我們應常常迴光返照自己。達摩祖師到中國來把法傳給三個人——慧可祖師得到達摩祖師的髓；道育禪師得到達摩祖師的骨頭；道濟比丘尼師得到達摩祖師的肉。我們身為上人的弟子，怎樣把上人的法傳承下去，這是我們大家都須認真思考的課題。

waves of people. Our tour guide said, “Actually all these people are not just tourists from all over the world, but they are also tourists from elsewhere in China. We have holidays during these few days and this is also the time when farmers take a break from agricultural work, so they travel and tour different places in China.” I was surprised, especially when we went to the Heavenly Temple and saw a very long corridor crowded by people. Who were these people? They were elderly people—everyone was happy and joyously playing *qing* (ancient string instruments), singing, dancing, doing tai-chi exercises, playing chess, and so on. Engaged in a variety of recreational activities, they appeared to be genuinely happy. An elderly member of our delegation remarked that American elderly people don’t appear to be as relaxed, leisurely, and happy as them.

Later, we traveled to the West Lake in Hangzhou. We arrived at the West Lake at six o’clock in the morning and saw the same scene of many elderly people peacefully practicing tai-chi boxing, tai-chi sword, doing exercises, and chatting. Why were there so many people who would travel as tour groups to different places and still exercise with such leisure? This is an indication that as China’s economy revives and prospers, people’s notions are also changing gradually, that now they have leisure time and the mindset to do leisurely activities. From how a country’s tourist industry thrives, one can see that this nation is becoming wealthier and its people more peaceful, so that its national strength will be bolstered.

From this trip to China, I could deeply feel the kindness and compassion of the Venerable Master’s teachings, how his bequeathed treasures are still benefiting us. Chinese people have a popular saying, “If people are still there, the feelings are still there; if people are not there, then there’s nothing left!” The Venerable Master entered Nirvana thirteen years ago, but this time when we traveled to Northeastern China, the Venerable Master’s homeland, we could feel that people esteemed us and treated as representatives of the Venerable Master. They were highly reverential. In addition to wanting to be close to us during the day, many people came to our hotel at night to be close to us, to request Dharma, and to make offerings. The Venerable Master is a great and superior man who could hold up the sky. According to Confucian conceptions, he is a “perfect man,” a man with perfect character, so he is able to exceed traditional values of human emotions and not be constrained by them.

As we received the respect and offerings of others, we became ever more fearful and anxious. “Do we have the virtuous conduct to receive others’ offerings?”—we must constantly turn the light inward. Patriarch Bodhidharma came to China to transmit the Dharma to three people—Patriarch Hui Ke received Patriarch Bodhidharma’s marrow; Chan Master Dao Yu received Patriarch Bodhidharma’s bones; and Bhikshuni Dao Ji received Patriarch Bodhidharma’s flesh. We are the disciples of the Venerable Master, so we must seriously investigate the topic of how to transmit the Venerable Master’s Dharma.