

辭歲日日新・迎春大馬行(二)

Malaysia Trip Report (II)



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四、慈悲道場懺法法會

從正月初二早上八點開始，舉行為期八永日的護國息災法會——慈悲道場懺法（俗稱梁皇寶懺）。這部懺法係梁武帝為超度其亡后郗氏，禮請誌公禪師集十位高僧所作之懺法。懺文集大乘經典之精華，深具意義，隨文入觀，發人深省。後人復於卷首卷尾添加讚辭，及入懺出懺文，以六朝駢文方式撰寫，其辭句生動，文義優美，佐以獨特之唱誦風格，故千餘年來，深入民間，影響深遠。現在法總分支道場，多於過年期間或重大慶典時拜此部懺法。

4. Repentance Session

From the second day of the Lunar New Year, at eight in the morning, the temple started a repentance session to protect the nation and eradicate disasters—Kindness and Compassion Bodhimanda Repentance (also popularly called the Emperor Liang's Jewelled Repentance). This volume of repentance was compiled by Chan Master Zhi Gong and ten other revered and highly cultivated monks upon the request of the Emperor Liang, who wanted to eradicate the offenses of the late Empress Xi after her passing. This volume captures the essence of the Mahayana Sutras with its profound meanings and is very engrossing to

read, causing the reader to reflect and introspect. After it was first published, people added some praises to the beginning and end of the repentance, and these praises are written in the style of the six dynasties of China, with elaborate, eloquent verses, that bring about a distinct style of recitation. After thousands of years, the repentance found its way into the hands of the ordinary people and has had a deep impact on them. Now many of the branches of the Dharma Realm Buddhist Association hold this repentance ceremony during the Chinese New Year or during some other major celebrations.

As it was a long holiday to celebrate

因正值春節長假，信眾前來拜懺者相當踴躍。平常的法會都是陰盛陽衰，但此次有很多男眾居士搭縵衣全程參加，可見他們對這個法會的重視。有位法師讚歎說，這次男眾居士這麼多，這麼勇猛精進，是很稀有難得的現象。每天佛殿常常是座無虛席，大家誠心禮佛，求哀懺悔，精神抖擻，越拜越有精神，響亮的唱誦聲頗有令人盪氣迴腸之感。

年長的老居士或身體不適的人，則於兩側之座椅上隨眾禮懺，誠心與精進力不亞於身強體健之人。有些信眾七點一過，即到廟裏靜坐或禮佛，不講閒話；在每枝香的休息時間也是如此，可見信眾已逐漸明白少講話就是真修行的道理。由此也可看出，馬來西亞信眾修行的道風已提升甚多。

值得一提的是，當家章法師在法會前就患病，也是頭痛發燒，但他堅持不看病、不吃藥，中午只用點稀飯和青菜，在有限的體力下，每天都振作精神領眾修行。七十出頭的祥法師，老而彌堅，早課、拜懺直到晚課，從未缺過一枝香。比丘尼恆揚師午齋後，緊接著為信眾講解懺文，連片刻休息也沒有。其他法師也是除了參加法會，還得張羅裏裏外外大小事務，從早到晚，忙個不停，個個為法忘軀。看在眼裏，自己內心是既感動又慚愧。

初九下午三點，法會圓滿，信眾個個法喜充滿，在八天中，藉懺悔的力量，使每個人的身口意清淨了不少。晚上七點到十點放大蒙山，施食給餓鬼道之眾生，這個儀式在大馬甚為風行，因此與會的信眾坐滿了整個佛殿，法會過程非常莊嚴隆重。

五、海上放生法會

二月十六日（陰曆初十），天尚未亮，法師們與居士已經抵達距吉隆坡四十分鐘車程之漁港，他們摸黑把一箱箱

的螃蟹和一袋袋的貝類眾生，以接力方式搬到遊艇上。船上坐了約一百人，年輕的佛學班學生也來參加盛會。八點過後，遊艇朝著外海開去，隨後與另一艘漁船會合，兩艘船以繩子結合在一起，準備舉行放生儀式。

漁船上有多位義工，他們到海上養殖場買魚，把多種生鮮的海魚裝到漁船上。這是馬來西亞今年首度海上放生。去年曾有居士告訴我，他們第一次海上放生時把幾個養殖場當天待售的魚都買下來，據說那天吉隆坡市場上生鮮的魚因而缺貨。

漁船首先開到適合海魚生存的海域，在放生儀式後，信眾們以虔誠肅穆之心，開始為這些眾生念佛，希望牠們永得解脫惡道之報，男眾以魚網將魚從船艙中撈出，放入大海。「海闊從魚躍，天空任鳥飛」，如果人們都能茹素不殺生，這些眾生就不會有這麼多死亡的恐懼。

放完海魚後，遊艇與漁船分道揚鑣。遊艇駛到一個比較靠岸的海域，把一箱箱的螃蟹放生，這些螃蟹生性兇悍，所以牠們的大甲鉗都被用草繩綁起來，以免傷人。放生時，需用剪刀把草繩剪斷，再放入海中。有經驗的義工都已駕輕就熟，知道怎麼抓螃蟹；沒有經驗的人一不小心，就會被



傷到，甚至把螃蟹也給傷了。我也是一時疏忽，沒看到箱子裏的一隻螃蟹繩子已脫落，伸手進去時，馬上被狠狠地咬住，頓時皮破血流。如是因，

如是果，如果不是曾傷害過牠，怎會有這種下場？其他人則把數十袋的貝類眾生，一一放到海裏，讓牠們得到自由，免除被烹煮之厄運。

放生法會在十點鐘圓滿，遊艇靠岸，與會者個個興高采烈，因為把外邊的眾生給放生，就是給自己放生，讓自己得到自由與解脫。上人曾開示說，身體就是一個大監牢，我們時時都在這個監牢裏，不得自由。透過有形的放生，何嘗不是為自己放生做準備？

六、感觸與結語

此次大馬之行，對個人而言，其實充滿戲劇性的變化，因此體驗到世間的種種無常，感觸甚為深刻。在梁皇寶懺時，整個過程非常順利，直到最後一枝香結束，發覺喉嚨有點沙啞，回到寮房休息時，突然失聲，講不出話來。

事前曾應允在放生法會當晚，與信眾結法緣。因此在遊艇上，有位居士宣布今晚近梵將在法界觀音聖寺與大眾結法緣時，當時還是發不出聲來，可是心裏有一個很強烈的信念：「我不會爽約，今天晚上一定會有聲音的！」所以那時候並沒有提出拒絕。只要心中有願，諸佛菩薩絕對不會令我們失望的。

果然在晚上七點，當我對著麥克風，以沙啞的聲音面對熱誠的信眾時，他們可以清清楚楚地明白我的意思。經過連續十天考驗體力與耐力的法會，信眾仍舊不顧自己身心的疲憊，扶老攜幼，回到道場聽法，讓我深受感動。

馬來西亞的法師們，稟承上人的家風，胼手胝足地在這個國家開荒闢地，把正法的種子深植在信眾的菩提園裏；而信眾們求法若渴、為法忘軀的精神，正是鼓舞我這個在修行路上還在跌跌撞撞的人，三度回到馬來西亞的原動力啊！

the spring, many devotees came to participate in the repentance. Usually, the women outnumber the men at Dharma sessions held at the monastery, but this time, there were many laymen in their sash, which showed their reverence for this repentance ceremony. One of the Dharma Masters commented, "It is such a rare occurrence to see so many male disciples here who are so vigorous and diligent!" Every day of the repentance session, the Buddha Hall was filled to capacity, and all who attended were sincere and spirited in their repentance. Their earthshaking voices made everyone there feel more energized and brought up the collective energy during the repentance.

Elderly people and those with physical handicaps sat at both sides of the Buddha Hall, and they were just as sincere and vigorous as the able-bodied. Some devotees began sitting in meditation or bowing to the Buddha after seven, and they did not sit around idly chatting; this was also true whenever there were breaks between each repentance session. This showed that the devotees had gradually realized that less chatter was real cultivation. Also, from this incident, one can tell that the Malaysian devotees have improved immensely in their cultivation and propriety.

One noteworthy fact is that the Abbot Jang had already become sick before the session with headaches and a fever, but he refused to consult physicians or even take medication. He only ate some porridge and vegetables for lunch daily. Even with his limited energy, he would still lead the assembly in their cultivation. Also, Dharma Master Xiang, who is more than seventy years old, still persisted in his cultivation and never missed a single ceremony, from morning till evening. Immediately after lunch every day, Dharma Master Yang explained the repentance text without even taking a break. The other Dharma Masters, other than attend-



當家章法師領眾修行

THE ABBOT JANG LED THE ASSEMBLY IN THEIR CULTIVATION.

ing the sessions daily, also busied themselves with various errands big and small from morning till night and hardly got any rest themselves. In propagating the Dharma, they forgot their own tired bodies. This made me feel ashamed for I was not as diligent in my practice.

At three o'clock on the ninth day of the lunar calendar, the repentance session was finally completed. The devotees were all filled with joy, because the eight day repentance session had purified their body, speech, and mind. From seven till ten at night, there was a Great Meng Shang Ceremony, the grand offering of food to the hungry ghosts. This ceremony is very popular in Malaysia, and so once again, the Buddha Hall was filled to capacity. The Dharma assembly was dignified and adorned.

5. Liberation of Life at Sea

On the 16th of February (tenth of the lunar calendar), the sky was still dark, but already the Dharma Masters and devotees had reached the seaport, which was a forty minute drive away from Kuala Lumpur. In the dark, they loaded up a ship with boxes full of crabs, shellfish, and other

sea creatures, and also climbed on board themselves. There were approximately a hundred people, because the youths in the religion class of the monastery had come to join the liberation of life. After eight in the morning, the boat set off for the sea and met with another vessel, a fishing boat, half an hour later. The two vessels then used ropes to stay anchored to each other, and everyone started preparing for the ceremony of liberating life.

There were many volunteers on board, many of whom had gone to the fish market early in the morning to buy fish and other sea creatures, as well as to load these sea creatures onto the ships. This was the first time in Malaysia that there had been a liberating-life ceremony since the year the monastery started. Last year, a volunteer had told me that the first time they held a liberating-life ceremony, they had bought all the fish they could find, resulting in a shortage of fresh fish that day in Kuala Lumpur's market.

The fishing boat had first found a spot suitable for the release of the fish, and



after they were all liberated, the devotees began to recite the Buddha's name with utmost sincerity and earnestness, in hope that the fish would leave the three evil destinies forever. The laymen used nets to fish out the fish on the boat and transfer them to the sea. "The wide, open ocean for fish to leap; the grand sky is free for birds to fly": If all the people on earth could be vegetarians, then these beings would not have to suffer such fear of cruel deaths.

After releasing the fish, the two vessels parted ways. The boat moved closed to the shore and people prepared to release many boxes of crabs. These crabs were very fierce, and so their claws had already been tied up with string, so as to keep them from harming anyone. During the liberation, we had to cut off the string before releasing them into the sea. Seasoned volunteers caught the crabs and cut the strings easily, while those with no experience often hurt themselves as well as the crabs they were releasing. I was one of the latter. When I reached into the box for a crab, I did not notice that the crab I



was trying to get had already gotten its claws freed. The crab ferociously cut my finger, and my blood began to gush out. There is cause and there is effect. I had no resentment toward the crab, for if I had not harmed it in a previous lifetime, how could I have gotten harmed by it? Some other volunteers started to release several dozen bags of shellfish into the sea too, giving them back their freedom and sparing them from the fate of being cooked and boiled alive.

By ten in the morning, the liberation of life was finally complete. After landing back in Malaysia, the devotees were all rapt, because by liberating others, they had also liberated themselves. As the Venerable Master once said, "The body is the large prison from which we cannot break out. By liberating other beings, we are preparing ourselves for our own liberation."

6. Feelings and Conclusion

This trip to Malaysia was dramatic and theatrical, because I had experienced all sorts of impermanence, leaving a deep impression on me. The Emperor

Liang's Jewelled Repentance session was exceptionally smooth until I realized that my voice had gone hoarse in the last incense. Upon returning to my room to rest, I discovered that I had lost my voice and could not speak at all.

Before the liberation of life, I had once made a promise to share Dharma with devotees that night, so while I was on the boat liberating life, one volunteer announced that I was going to share the Dharma at the Dharma Realm Guanyin Monastery with the assembly that night. At that point, I was still unable to speak, but in my heart, I had a strong will and confidence that I would regain my voice in time: "I will not miss my appointment. I will definitely regain my voice tonight!" That was why I did not object to the announcement. If there is a vow in the mind, all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas will not let us down.

Indeed, that seven o'clock that night when I was handed the microphone, I managed to speak in a raspy voice to the assembly, and they understood me perfectly. After the obstacles that were presented to all during the past ten days, the assembly was still very spirited. Both young and old devotees ignored their tired bodies and returned to the monastery to listen to Dharma—they moved me deeply.

The Dharma Masters of Malaysia have inherited the style and conduct of the Venerable Master, as they worked together hand-in-hand to cultivate the undeveloped regions of this country and to plant the seeds of Proper Dharma deeply within the Bodhi minds of the devotees. The devotees have an unrelenting thirst for the Dharma, to a point of forgetting about themselves and their tired bodies. This inspired and encouraged me, a person who still bumbles along the path of cultivation; it is also the primary motivating force for me to return to Malaysia for the third time!

