



放下屠槍

Throwing Guns Away



三十年前，就是1978年，我第一次來到萬佛城。我們有八個人來，開兩部車到這附近，有一個目的就是想看一看萬佛城。

我們為什麼打算來萬佛城呢？因為我們還沒到萬佛城以前的前幾個月，我夢見一位和尚著袈裟結跏

趺坐，飛到我的面前來；我在夢裏就叫他師父，知道那是我的師父。以後也沒有怎麼樣去想它，作夢就作夢嘛！後來我在報紙上看到「金山寺」這三個字，對我有很大衝擊，我心想：一定要找到這個地方！而且也沒覺得那個地方很陌生，總覺得它是在Mission那個地區，或者是十五街那兒。我就開始在那個地方找，希望找到金山寺；但是我們開車找了幾天都沒找到。等找到以後，才發現原來我們就在金山寺兩條街的附近。從那時我們會到金山寺裏邊找一點資料，我也不知道為什麼要來到金山寺？就是有這麼一個想法而已！

當時聖城還沒有山門，要從現在辦公室那個鐵柵那兒轉進來。那天是觀音法會，我們來晚了一點，大概法師們都在大殿，所以門已上鎖關著。照我平時的脾氣，門就是關著我也可以進來的。但是那一次我們就沒這麼



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沙彌尼近經英譯 ENGLISH TRANSLATED BY SHRAMANERIKAJIN JING

做，就在門口等著，看看有沒有人出來，或者有沒有人進去，這樣我們可以一起進去。我們在門外向裏看，知道裏邊是很大的一個地方。

大概等了一個鐘頭左右，突然有一個出家人好像騎著腳踏車出來，後來才知道他是恆來法師，很高的一位美國比丘。他說：「你們要進來啊？」他也沒說第二句話，就開門讓我們進來。進來以後，我們到處走一走，也來到大殿。當時很多人看著我們，就當我們是個怪物；看起來有很多人都很怕我們，是不是因為我們的樣子？我不知道；也很難想像當時的樣子為什麼會讓人怕？但是沒有人叫警察。後來我們聽師父說才知道，我們在門口等的時候，上人正在法座上講法；突然間他就叫恆來法師去門口看看，說有人要進來。大家都知道，這萬佛寶殿裏邊是沒有窗子的；但是師父在那個法座上，就知道有

人在門口等著。

我們八個人都坐在大殿最後邊，我們什麼也不懂，但覺得很好玩，就在那兒坐著，我們那時坐得不是像大家這這樣有規矩，我們坐得很難看的；沒有一個正正經經的坐著，跟大家比起來真是天跟地比，那時我們真的沒有規

矩。當時上人在法座上講法，我們就在下面看，看看會怎麼樣？後來上人講完法就走下來，坐在放在走道上的椅子上。

上人宣布說：「有沒有人有興趣，跟我到我那個地方去看一看啊？」那時也不認識上人，心想：「喔！有地方可以看？我們就參觀一下好了！」所以就跟著去了。那時上人住的地方，就是後面那棟房子，我們就跟著到後面去。我也曾經想過我們又不認識，彼此又陌生，跟著去幹麼呢？但是上人說「去」，很奇怪的就不由自主地跟著去了。那時比較清楚地看著上人，我整個人一陣恍然：「哎呀，這位老和尚怎麼這麼面熟呢！」

到了上人住的房子，有一位居士叫Helen Woo，胡果相居士，我想大家可能不認識她；Helen Woo就招呼我們八個人，找位子給我們坐。上人在另一邊跟很多法師、居士講話，我們就

這麼坐著。等了5至10分鐘左右吧？胡居士就問我：「你們想不想皈依啊？」「皈依？什麼是皈依？」她說：「皈依就是拜這位做師父囉！」我說：「喔！拜他做師父啊？」我心裏這麼想：「好啊！」但是我沒有說出來，我說：「等等，我要問問他們。」我問其他七個人，我說：「嗨！你們要不要皈依？」他們問我：「什麼叫皈依？」平常他們問我事情，我不會不知道怎麼樣答他們，但這次我真的不知道什麼叫皈依。唉！那個時候真是糊里糊塗，什麼都不知道。他們說：「你皈依，我們就皈依！」我心裏就打算：「好！我們皈依吧！拜一位師父。」我就對Helen Woo說：「好啊！皈依吧！」我們就這樣申請皈依。Helen Woo先跟師父報告一下，就過來說：「上人說可以！」我就問：「那怎麼做啊？」她說：「過來！你們八個都跪在這兒！」跪就跪囉！平常我們都沒跪過人的，所以不懂得怎麼跪，就是拜神也是馬馬虎虎的拜一拜。真的跪下，那是第一次！我們都不習慣，也不明白為什麼要跪。他們看著我跪下，我說：「跪下！一起跪！」他們說：「跪啊？」有的人覺得很勉強，但是看見我跪，也只好跪了。我們全跪在那兒，正式開始皈依儀式。

我們跟著師父念「自皈依佛、皈依法、皈依僧」，就這樣一句一句跟著師父念。儀式完了後，師父就跟我們講話。師父第一句就問我們：「你們誰帶槍了？你們有沒有人帶槍啊？」當時師父一問，我也不知怎麼答他，就在那兒心裏打算：哎呀！

要不要講？因為那天出來，我告訴大家都不要帶槍；但有一個年紀很小的，他平常頑皮，那一次沒有聽我的，偷偷的帶著槍出來，這件事情我也不知道。我回答上人說：「沒有啊！」上人就說：「沒有？」我說：「我沒有啊！」上人又說：「真的沒有啊？」我說：「我真的沒有！」那個時候，我就想：哎呀！怎麼他會這麼問我？我真的沒有帶槍啊！等我們站出去外邊的時候，才發覺是有人帶槍，我才知道為什麼師父那麼問。我問另外七個人：「你們誰有帶槍？」那個人不敢到我面前來，站在很遠的地方。我就找那個人來，果然他就帶著槍。我心想：哎呀！這位老和尚怎麼知道啊？奇怪了！這是師父給我的第一次感覺。

◎待續

It was about 30 years ago, in 1978, that I came to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas (CTTB) for the first time. We were in a group of eight, driving two cars to this place. All we wanted to do was to take a look at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas.

Why did we plan to come to CTTB? It was because a few months prior to coming to CTTB, I dreamed about a monk, sitting in full lotus posture and flying to me. I addressed him as "Shifu" in my dream knowing that he was my Master. I didn't give it too much thought afterwards. It was a dream after all! Later, in the newspaper, I saw three characters, Gold Mountain Monastery, which had a huge impact on me. I thought to myself, "I must find this place. This place was not strange to me." I kept thinking it was located either around the Mission district or

by 15th Street. Then, I started looking for this place hoping that I could find Gold Mountain Monastery. However, we drove for a few days failing to find the monastery. Eventually, we found it and realized that the monastery was only two streets away from where we lived. From then on, I would go to Gold Mountain Monastery to look for some information, but I had no idea why I went there. It was just an idea!

At the time, the mountain gate at CTTB was not built yet. We had to go in from the iron gate near the administration office. That day, there was a Guanyin Dharma Assembly. We came a little late. The Dharma Masters were all in the Buddha Hall and the gate was locked. According to my usually temperament, I could have gone in even though the gate was closed and locked. However, we did not do that then. We waited outside by the gate to see if anyone would go in or come out so that we could go in. We looked from outside knowing it was a huge place.

We waited for about an hour. All of the sudden, a left home person came out riding a bike. Later, I came to know that it was Dharma Master Lai, a very tall American monk. He only said, "You want to come in?" He opened the gate to let us in without saying a second word. We came in and walked around. Then we came to the Buddha Hall. As soon as we walked in, everyone was looking at us treating us like monsters. Many people were really afraid of us, perhaps because of the way we looked. I didn't really understand and it was hard to imagine why people were scared of us. No one called the police or anything like that. Later, we found out from the Venerable Master

that when we were waiting at the gate, the Venerable Master was sitting on the Dharma seat speaking Dharma. Suddenly, he told Dharma Master Lai to go and open the gate indicating that someone wanted to come in. We all know that the Hall of Ten Thousand Buddhas has no window; nonetheless, the Venerable Master knew someone was waiting outside of the gate.

Eight of us were all sitting in the very back of the Buddha Hall. We did not understand anything back then and just thought it was kind of fun. So, we just sat there. At the time we really didn't sit as properly as you all do now. We were in really poor postures and sloppy in appearance. Compared to you, it was like heaven and earth. We were very unruly back then. While the Venerable Master was speaking Dharma on the Dharma seat, we were just "looking" from down there to see what would happen. After the lecture, the Venerable Master walked down from his seat on the platform and came to the back of the Buddha Hall. Usually, a chair was placed there and that was where the Master would sit after speaking Dharma.

Then the Venerable Master announced, "So are people interested in going to see my place?" I didn't really know the Master and just thought, "Oh, a place to see? Sure, we will take a look." We followed along. The Venerable Master was living in the back. Even though I thought, "I don't know. He is a stranger to me. Why go with him?" flashed in my mind, I could not help but follow along after the Master said, "Let's go!" It was then I was able to see the Master more clearly. For an instant, I was a bit dumbfounded and then realized, "Hey, how come this monk looks so familiar?"

Having arrived at where the Master lived, a laywoman named Helen Woo, whom most of you probably don't know, greeted us and found seats for us. The Venerable Master was talking to many Dharma Masters and other lay people on the other side of the room. About five or ten minutes later, Helen Woo came and asked, "Do you want to take refuge?" "Refuge? What is taking refuge?" She answered, "Taking refuge means you bow to this person as your master." In my mind, I thought, "Sure!" but I did not say it out loud. I replied, "Wait, I need to ask them." I asked the other seven people, "Do you want to take refuge?" They asked me, "What is taking refuge?" Usually when they asked me something, I would have an answer for them. There was never a case I did not know how to answer them. But this time I really did not know what taking refuge means. [Sigh.] We were just very confused without knowing anything. The other seven told me, "If you take refuge, then we will take the refuge with you." I had planned on taking the refuge in my mind. "Sure. Let's take refuge and bow to a Master as a teacher." I told Helen Woo, "Sure, we will take refuge!" That was how we applied. Then Helen Woo went ahead to report to the Venerable Master. She returned, "The Venerable Master said OK." I then asked, "What do we do?" She said, "Come over here! Eight of you, all kneel here!" Fine! So be it; we just knelt down. We had never knelt down in front of anyone or to anyone before. So we didn't really know how. Even if we had to kneel as form of respect to the spirits and gods as a folk-custom, we just perfunctorily did it. But that was the first time we knelt seriously. We were really not used to it and had no idea why we had

to do that. The other seven watched me kneeling, I said, "Kneel down. Just kneel together!" "Kneeling?" They retorted. Some felt forced but seeing me kneeling down, they just followed along and knelt. Then all of us knelt there and the ceremony for taking the refuge began.

We followed Shifu in reciting, "We take refuge with the Buddha, we take refuge with the Dharma, we take refuge with the Sangha and so on." We repeated after Shifu. After the ceremony, Shifu talked to us. The first thing he asked was, "Which of you has brought a gun? Did any one of you bring a gun here?" When he asked me, I didn't really know how to answer the question. I was thinking in my mind, "Should I tell him or not?" Because when we left that morning, I told everyone not to bring guns with us. However, there was a young mischievous one who did not listen to my instruction. He had snuck the gun out with him. I was not aware of this either. I answered, "No guns!" The Venerable Master replied, "No?" He then repeated, "No guns, really?" I said, "I really have no guns!" I was wondering then, why he had asked me such a question because I really had no guns with me. After going outside, I then discovered that someone did bring a gun and that was why Shifu asked me that kind of question. I asked the other seven people, "Who brought guns?" Of course, the guilty person did not dare to stay around me but kept his distance. I found that person and it turned out that he really had a gun. I thought in my mind, "Hey, how come this old monk knows about this? It's strange!" This was the first impression Shifu gave me.

☞ To be continued