

# 玉米田捕手

## Lessons from the Cornfield

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SPOKEN BY LING LING ON SEPTEMBER 30, 2008 IN THE BUDDHA HALL AT THE CITY OF TEN THOUSAND BUDDHAS

陳果璞中譯 CHINESE TRANSLATED BY YVONNE CHU

大家晚安！我的名字叫玲玲，我是聖城的義工。你可能會在有機農場看到我，或者在廚房、學校、齋堂；或者是你根本都看不到我——我什麼地方都在，也什麼地方都不在。

我第一次來到萬佛聖城，是在今年七月來當義工。當時有一連串很奇怪的事情發生，所以我才來到這裏。但是基本上，最主要的原因，是我對外面世界的不滿，以及一種想要當好人的自負；很多事情我都逆向思考，把小問題看得很大，對大問題又視若不存在。我剛從大學畢業，但是發現自己死氣沉沉。而大部份的同輩朋友似乎都隨著美國追尋快樂的模式，在他們的人生遊走：從大學畢業，找一份高薪工作，結婚，買房子，生兒育女，就這麼隨波逐流度過餘生。我不明白：為什麼這些讓我朋友這麼快樂的事情，對我來說，一點快樂都沒有？所有這些問題，在我到有機農場工作期間，便溢出心海而氾濫了。

當你一片空地種玉米，又一次只能種一棵的時候（可能必須要種幾百棵或幾千棵），就有時間迴光返照，明白自己真正的問題是什麼？我的結論是：每一棵深深種入污泥的玉米種子，是清淨無邪的示現，而污泥就是我們混亂的心。在外面的世界，不會去注意到這些；因為有很多分心的事情來誘惑，讓你沒有辦法去照顧這個玉米種子。憂慮、錢、工作，認為快樂是實有的東西而想要跟得上別人。所有的這些事情，造成雜草叢生；很快的，你就會錯認為這些雜草就是玉米梗。

My name is Ling Ling and I'm a volunteer here at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. You might have run into me at the farm, the kitchen, the school, the restaurant or perhaps not at all—I'm everywhere and yet nowhere.

The first time I came to CTTB was during a volunteer week in July. A series of strange events led me here, but it was mainly my disenchantment with the outside world and an overwhelming desire to become a good person. I had things backwards, thinking little problems were big problems and big problems were non-existent. I'm a college graduate and I was finding myself stagnant. Most of my peers seemed to be gliding through life, following America's formula for happiness: graduate from university; get a high paying job; get married; buy a house; have kids, and coast through the rest of your life. I couldn't understand why these things that made my friends happy didn't bring joy to me. All of these questions flooded my mind while I was working on the farm.

When you're out in an empty field planting one corn seed at a time (and you have to plant hundreds), you have time to reflect and learn what your true problems are. I came to the conclusion that each little seed is like a manifestation of purity that is planted deep within the dirt, like our pure mind being clouded by the dirt. In the outside world, you don't take notice because of all the distractions that lure you away from tending that little corn seed; the worries, the money, trying to seek happiness that is something tangible. All of these things cause weeds to sprout in multitudes, and before long you mistake the weeds for the corn stalks. When you harvest, thinking corn will be on the menu, you get nothing but inedible, thorny weeds. (You certainly reap what you sow, or what you don't sow.) But when you're in a

當收成時，以為就要有玉米可吃了；但是得到的，只是多刺而無法食用的雜草。（當然，種瓜得瓜，種豆得豆；沒有耕耘，也沒有收穫。）但是一旦拋開社會上對快樂的這種認知，把它完全放下而置身於一個佛教廟宇，會發現這規則已經不適用，而另外一個新的、真實的問題就會出現了——那問題就是：面對自己跟內心的魔。以前我曾經自以為是的優點，慢慢地在我眼前瓦解；壞習氣在我每一個生存空間氾濫，我的雜草取代了一切。

上人說：「一切是考驗，看你怎麼辦；對境若不識，須再從頭煉。」第一次讀到上人的這首偈頌時，好像被某個東西敲了一下，開始醒悟！開始努力除草，灌溉這個正在成長的玉米，就好像它是我的心似的。每次一根雜草生出來，就把它拔掉——壞習慣再見囉！如果它長回來，又再把它拔掉。這樣子做了兩個禮拜以後，我回家了，覺得渾身輕鬆，好像變了個樣子。

六個禮拜一眨眼就過去，對於再回萬佛聖城充滿了興奮，我想：「這次一定會容易多了！」恐怕我是完全沒有留意到上人偈頌的含意。剛踏入有機農場，我簡直被玉米迷住了；原本空曠的原野，已經是一排一排的玉米梗，長得比我還要高！啊，菩提樹已經開花結果了！錯了！我的期望太多，妄想也太多了；我錯認眼前的景象是真理，我的自大也使我不能開始從頭煉。

玉米的收成是無常的，不錯，它是經過辛勤耕耘才有的收穫；但是在收成之後，必須為下一季的收成而重新翻土耕耘。所有的玉米梗都已被拔掉，玉米已不復為菩提樹了。耕作是不能只因為小有收成就停止的，這小小的成就只是在提醒——內在擁有極好的本質，但是你必須經常保持專注。我發現我從來都沒有很專心過，這是我學到的第一課。

我表示有興趣做一些不同的工作，來感受寺廟的社區氣氛。我真有福報，能被允許去嘗試這麼多不同的工作；因為它證實了無常的道理。

我有一個機會到小學去工作，這個環境教導我要有耐心，還要怎麼樣多作佈施。我跟二、三年級的小孩在一起，看到這些純真快樂的孩子，讓我感到很滿足；尤其是知道她們正在這裏學習怎麼樣當一個有道德跟孝順的孩子，這也導至我發心對父母更加孝順。我想到以前怎麼樣的對媽

Buddhist monastery, the external world, along with its problems, set of rules and expectations, no longer applies. Instead, a new set of problems arises from within: problems with facing yourself and your demons. All the good that I ever thought about myself was slowly deteriorating before my eyes. The bad habits flooded my every being, my weeds were taking over!

*Everything's a test,  
To see what you will do.  
Mistaking what's before your eyes,  
You'll have to start anew.*

-Venerable Master Hsuan Hua

When I first read the Venerable Master's poem, something clicked. I was starting anew! I began diligently weeding and cultivating the growing corn seedlings as if it were my own mind. Every time a weed popped up, I'd pluck it out! Goodbye bad habit! If it grew back, I'd pull it out again. After two weeks of this, I felt as if I had purged all my afflictions. I went home feeling light, changed and excited about returning to CTTB.

Six weeks passed in the blink of an eye. "This is going to be so easy!" I thought. I suppose I didn't take heed of the Venerable Master's poem after all. When I first stepped onto the farm, I was so ecstatic about the corn. The once empty soil was filled with rows of corn stalks, taller than me! Ah, the Bodhi tree has come to fruition! Wrong. I expected too much, held too many false thoughts. I had mistaken truth before my eyes and my ego didn't want to start anew.

The corn crops were impermanent. Sure, it took a lot of hard work to yield a crop, but after you harvest, you must turn the soil and till it for the next season's crop. All stalks needed to be pulled out. Corn is not a Bodhi tree. Cultivation can't stop just because you get a little result. The little result simply reminds you that you have great good within you, but you mustn't slack off. You must always be persistent and keep going! I learned that I was not persistent. Lesson one noted.

I expressed interest in working on different jobs to get a feel of the monastic community. I was blessed to be allowed to try out so many different jobs, because it hit me with the idea of impermanence.

I was given the opportunity to work at the elementary school, which taught me patience and how to be more giving. I worked with grades two and three, and seeing those happy, pure children made me feel content, especially knowing that they were here learning how to be virtuous and filial. It gave me the resolve to be more filial to my own parents. I cringed with guilt at the thought of how I used to treat my mother unkindly, and knew I had to reform.

Working with children really reflects on you as a person.

媽不好，就會因為罪惡感而整個捲縮起來，我知道自己需要改進。

跟小孩子在一起工作，真的反應出自己到底是一個怎麼樣的人；因為自己的態度還有看法，不管是好或不好的，喜歡或不喜歡的，馬上就會被模仿，而回到身上。小孩子們的誠實，有時候溫和得像海風一樣，有時候痛苦得像胸口被刺了一刀。對好與不好的反應，不應該在他們身上停留太久，因為他們畢竟只是孩子。對他們生氣，其實只會讓他們更加的恐懼，而且表現出自己不慈悲；所以跟孩子在一起，真的需要很注意自己的行為。

這個專心與耐心的重要性，是我學習到的一



個很重要的教訓。所以要：「忍耐、忍耐，婆婆訶。」如果有忍耐跟慈悲的話，就會比較容易不自私。所以小孩子就好像神的賜與——其實是佛的賜與；這是我的第二課和第三課——忍耐與慈悲。

我記得讀《地藏經》的時候，讀到「地藏王菩薩會護持頂禮他的眾生」這一點，所以我就決定也要禮拜觀世音菩薩一萬拜。剛開始，禮拜的整個過程讓我很迷惑，不知道為什麼要這樣做？直到最近才明白，我是在懺悔往昔所做的一些錯事。有時候，我們很容易發現自己，否定自己的自性。我們不喜歡把自己定位在以前我們所做的一些錯事上，所以就把它收藏在內心深處。我們可以跑，也可以躲；但是，到哪裏都無所謂，這些記憶總會跟著我們。我一直都是個常常突發其想而去到處旅行的人，以為這些病態會很神奇的消失掉；但是我每一次還是都要回到家，來還這個很容易就遺忘的債。這次回來還債，我又好像很心不在焉，這樣子就形同沒有還。要是沒有發

Your attitudes and views are mimicked right back at you, good or bad, whether you like it or not. Their honesty can be as gentle as a sea breeze or as painful as a stab to the heart. Your reactions to the good kids should never be sought after or dwelt on and the bad kids, well, they're kids. Getting angry and erupting at them only instills fear and shows how truly uncompassionate you are. You really have to be mindful of your actions around kids and be patient with them. "Patience. Patience. Got to have patience. Don't get angry. Swo po he." Working with children was huge lesson for me where I learned about the importance of mindfulness and patience. Once you acquire these two things, it becomes easier to be selfless. Lessons two and three: check.

I remember reading somewhere in the *Earth Store Bodhisattva Sutra* about that, and decided I could perform ten thousand bows of respect to Guanyin Pusa. The purpose of bowing was not clear to me until recently. I'm repenting for my past misdeeds. Sometimes, it's easy to get caught up in denial about your true self nature. We don't like to dwell on the wrongs we've committed in the past, so we store it deep within the recesses of our minds. We can run and hide, but ultimately it doesn't matter where you go because it's always with you. I've always been a flighty person, traveling all over thinking these ills would vanish but I always came back home, as if to settle some debt I had conveniently forgotten. This time I had come to pay, but I was doing it absentmindedly, which is like not paying at all. You only wind up making the same mistakes if you don't pay attention to what you did wrong in the first place. Lesson four.

The biggest lesson I've learned since being here is the need to learn how to be kinder to myself. Like the saying goes, "If you don't love yourself, you cannot love others." Well, if you are not compassionate to yourself, you cannot be compassionate to others. I gave myself a lot of slack in the wrong areas and held onto all my negativity as if my life depended on it. Venerable Master said to "try your best." I wasn't even trying for fear of failing because of my stupidity. Instead of just taking one step forward, I took two more steps backward. I was actually moving backwards. I know that I'm not perfect, that none of us are, but the thing about CTTB is that everyone is trying to be the best person they can be and that's what makes good people. It's not about wealth or material possessions but about your very own self nature. We all have something priceless that resides in our hearts that shines so brilliantly: patience, mindfulness, selflessness, filiality, compassion and cultivation. I'm no longer holding on to any plans, and will go wherever the wind takes me. I wish to take all the lessons that I have learnt here back into the outside world with me and I will try to uphold them. I hope that I am able to return to CTTB one day to learn more from each and every one of you. Thank you for having me here. Amitabha.