



化城與聖城

The Transformation City and the City of the Ten Thousand Buddhas

比丘近梵 二〇〇八年四月二十日講於萬佛聖城大殿

SPOKEN BY BHIKSHU JIN FAN ON APRIL 20, 2008 IN THE BUDDHA HALL AT THE CITY OF TEN THOUSAND BUDDHAS

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編按：上人爲所有的修行人準備了一個人間淨土萬佛聖城來修行，此地人人向佛，環境自然、和諧，是修行的最佳場域。然而，修行之路不易行，需受得起考驗，有正信、正念、一心不亂，時時反觀自照、刻刻瞭知自性，一步一步向成佛之路邁進。

Editorial note: Venerable Master Hua prepared a Pure Land, the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, for all cultivators; its tranquil surroundings provide a natural, harmonious atmosphere for practicing the Buddhadharma. However, the path of cultivation is not always easy; we have to take the challenges along the way. If we have proper belief and proper views, single-minded focus, and self-reflection, and understand our inherent Buddha nature, then we are one step closer to Buddhahood.

今晚是由近梵來跟大家結法緣，我所要講的主題是「化城與聖城」。因爲我們剛才聽《法華經》，正好在第七品〈化城喻品〉，所以就聯想到這樣的一個主題。

Tonight is Jin Fan's turn to create affinities with everyone. Because we are now listening to the chapter of the Analogy of the Transformation City in the *Dharma Flower Sutra*, I thought of a related topic for tonight's talk: the Transformation City and the City of the Ten Thousand Buddhas.

〈化城喻〉是《法華經》第七品，也是《法華經》的第四個譬喻。所謂化，就是變化，從無化有，也可從有化無，所以它是很不可思議的。譬喻中的化城是佛的神通所變現出來的。爲什麼佛要變現這個化城呢？

The Analogy of the Transformation City is the seventh chapter and the fourth analogy of the *Lotus Sutra*. The meaning of 'transformation' is to transform, or create, something from nothing, and also to transform something into nothingness; therefore, 'Transformation' is quite inconceivable. The City in the analogy was thus transformed; it manifested from the Buddha's spiritual powers. Why would the Buddha want to create such a city?

我們都知道釋迦牟尼佛，經過三大阿僧祇劫勤苦修行，難行能行，難捨能捨，修種種的苦行，經過這麼長的時間，勇猛精進才能成佛。如果眾生不能像釋迦牟尼佛這樣的道心來修行的話，可能八萬個阿僧祇劫都還不能成佛，還在輪迴。

We all know that Shakyamuni Buddha cultivated for three great *asankhyeya* eons, practicing difficult deeds, renouncing that which is not easy to renounce, and engaging in all sorts of austerities. Through this incredibly long period of vigorous cultivation, he was able to finally become a Buddha. If living beings cannot bring forth the kind of commitment to cultivate that Shakyamuni Buddha did, then they won't be able to become Buddhas even after 80,000 *asankhyeya* eons and will remain trapped in the cycle of birth and death.

佛知道這個佛道太長遠了，如果要叫眾生依法修行，那眾生一定會退轉。因此，佛就用一些方便法，他先去鹿野苑教導五比丘修四聖諦法，讓他們證聲聞乘的阿羅漢果；也教導一些根器比較好的眾生十二因緣法，讓他們成就了緣覺的果位；然後又教菩薩法，讓所有眾生繼續向佛道邁進。

The Buddha knew that this was too long of a path for us to traverse, and if we attempted to, we would surely retreat. Consequently, when he became enlightened, he first expediently taught the Dharma of the Four Noble Truths to the five bhikshus, who realized Arhatship. He also spoke the Dharma of the the Twelve Factors of Conditioned

不管是聲聞或是緣覺，乃至菩薩都已

經超越三界，不受生死輪迴了。但是他們都還住在化城裏面，這個化城只是成佛過程中的一個休息站，只是佛的一個善巧方便，不是真正的究竟涅槃處。

剛剛我們聽上人說修行要斷煩惱。那煩惱怎麼斷呢？你看阿羅漢，要先斷見惑思惑，見、思惑斷了才出三界的；菩薩更進一步要斷塵沙惑，最後還要破無明惑，才會成佛。然而阿羅漢只是一個自了漢，把自己的苦給了了，自己度了自己，但是卻不管別人。

說實話，如果這些阿羅漢都成了定性聲聞的話，那是很可惜的！定性聲聞，就入滅了，不來這個世間，他也不度化眾生了。你看一個修行人，花這麼長的時間來修行，到最後有成就可以利益眾生了，可是他不願意，這樣很多眾生就不能得度。

因此佛就在法華會上開權顯實，說聲聞、緣覺及菩薩這三乘法，都只是一種權法，方便法而已，不是實法。所以佛要這些阿羅漢迴小向大，就是不要再做自了漢，不要在化城裏中道自畫，應該發大菩提心，自利利他，繼續向寶所（成佛）前進。

現在我們回過頭來看看聖城。本來也沒有聖城，這聖城是上人慈悲，發願要讓所有願意守規矩的人到這裏來修行，歷盡千辛萬苦所創立的。我們看看上人的十八大願，每個大願都是要眾生成佛。上人更強調說，到萬佛聖城的人，一定會成佛。

可是事實上，你在聖城修行，也不會在聖城就成佛。所以「聖城」其實也只是個「化城」，是上人方便度化我們成佛的過程中，所變現出來的一個「化城」罷了。

爲什麼呢？很多人都是先在分支道場修行，然後才知道有聖城。他們嚮往這裏的修行，就進一步搬來長住。那我也做一個譬喻好了，就像大法會時，有很多碗盤要洗，那麼多的碗盤，我們需要用很多的水。爲了省水，第一次，就會把碗盤放在第一桶水裏面洗，稍爲乾淨後再到第二桶去洗，然後就一直換過去。

如果以這個譬喻來解釋的話，很多人在法總分支道場，也許是剛剛學習佛法，好像

Origination to cross over those who had the potential to become *Pratyekabuddhas*, and he spoke the Dharma of the Bodhisattvas so that all living beings would progress towards Buddhahood.

Hearers, Those Enlightened to Conditions, and Bodhisattvas have already transcended the three realms and no longer undergo birth and death. However, they still live in the Transformed City, which is only a rest stop on the road to becoming a Buddha; it is only one of the Buddha's expedient means. They have yet to completely realize nirvana.

Earlier, we heard Venerable Master Hua speak about cutting off afflictions in cultivation. How do we do this? Take the Arhats, for example. They must first cut off their afflictions of view and of thought. Only when these delusions have been extinguished can they escape the triple realm. Bodhisattvas must go even further and cut off afflictions as many as dust motes and grains of sand, and then cut off the affliction of ignorance before they can become Buddhas. Arhats are more selfish: They only end their own suffering, and don't care much about others.

To tell the truth, it's really a shame if these Arhats become fixed-nature Arhats. A fixed-nature Arhat enters Nirvana without residue and no longer has any interactions with *samsara*. He spent such a long time cultivating and achieves the ability to help and benefit many living beings. However, he is not willing to, and consequently, many living beings cannot be saved. This is why the Buddha 'opened up the provisional to reveal the actual' at the Dharma Flower Assembly, and explained that the dharmas of the Three Vehicles (*Shravakas*, *Pratyekabuddhas*, and Bodhisattvas) are all just expedient dharmas, not the true Dharma. The Buddha wanted all the Arhats to leave the small vehicle behind and study the Mahayana, which means he wanted them to not be selfish Arhats who stay in the Transformation City just minding their own business. He wanted them to bring forth the Bodhi resolve, benefit all living beings, and continue to work towards becoming Buddhas.

Now, let's take a look at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas (CTTB). Originally, there was no CTTB. This City is the result of the Venerable Master's great compassion and vows. He wanted to let everyone who was willing to follow the rules have a place to cultivate. Only through numerous hardships did this city come into being. Recall Venerable Master's 18 great vows, all geared to helping all beings to become Buddhas. He emphasized that anyone who came here would eventually become a Buddha.

However, this does not mean one will become a Buddha just by being at CTTB. This place is actually just a Transformation City, only an expedient method of the Venerable Master to cross us over.

Many people learn about CTTB only after they have cultivated at other branch monasteries. They find that they like cultivating there, and so they take the next step and move here to stay for a long time. Now, it's my turn to use an analogy. When we have a Dharma assembly, there are always many dirty dishes to wash; with so many dishes, a lot of water must be used. In order to conserve water, the dirty dishes are first placed

對佛教有一點了解了，煩惱也少一點了，就像是碗盤在第一桶水裏面洗乾淨了一點。接著就發大心，希望能夠有長遠修行，所以就到聖城來了。可是聖城還是第二桶水呀！這個水裏面還是髒的，洗來洗去，不可能是很乾淨的，還必須換到另一桶水裏去洗。所以說聖城也不是一個究竟處，還只是一個化城而已。

幾乎是每個人都帶著貪瞋癡到聖城來修行。來這裏的目的，就是要改變自己的習氣毛病，讓自己返本還原，朝佛道邁進。因為我們還有世俗的貪瞋癡，所以到聖城來，不是保證你的修行就一定會成功。在這裏可以看得見，居士是來來去去，像潮水般的，很多人發大心來了，但是也很快又退心走了。出家人也是一樣，雖然發菩提心出家了，但是退轉的也有，到別的道場也有，罷道還俗的更不用說了！

我自己的感嘆是，從2002年受戒以來，就一直站在第一排或第二排，為什麼這樣呢？前面這些已經出家比較久的人去哪裏了呢？這就是問題！所以在聖城，並不是你來出家，永遠就是出家人；你來做義工，就永遠做一個很發心的居士。不是的！上人曾講過，聖城是沙中澄金。這裏有很多考驗，如果你是真金就不怕洪爐火！坦白地說，在聖城，給我的感覺是，在這裏的存活率是不高的，能夠留下來的人是很稀有難得的！

很多人都說萬佛聖城是極樂世界，其實這只是跟外面的世界相較而已。好多人讚歎聖城的孔雀，但是孔雀的大便卻讓很多人生煩惱，到處製造髒亂，不小心就踩到了「地雷」。有段時間，因為繁殖過盛了，不得已還把牠們帶到核桃園去放生。我曾親眼看到孔雀把出生不久的小鳥，一口就吞下去，可見牠和美麗的外表是不相干的。反觀極樂世界的孔雀出和雅音，都在演說妙法，和聖城是截然不同的。

你看聖城的道路，千瘡百孔，高高低低，不小心可能就會摔倒；但是極樂世界是黃金為地，七寶莊嚴。聖城早晚溫差這麼大，又冷又熱，把很多人給嚇跑了；可是極樂世界，是不冷不熱的，大家擠破頭爭著

into a basin of water to be cleaned. After grease has been cleaned off, they are washed again in a second basin to further clean them, and the process continues for however many basins are being used.

People at branch monasteries and other wayplaces are perhaps just starting to learn the Buddhadharma. They are just starting to understand a bit of it, and to lessen their afflictions. This is just like passing through the first basin and being cleaned of superficial grime. Following that is to bring forth a great mind of wanting long-term cultivation, and coming to CTTB. However, CTTB is just the second basin of water! It is dirty inside the basin, and no matter how you wash, you still won't completely clean off all the filth; you still need to go to the next basin. So, our city is not the final destination; it is only a Transformation City and we have yet to reach the ultimate goal.

Almost everyone brings with them to CTTB their greed, hatred, and ignorance. The goal of coming to this place is to change our bad habits and problems, and advance on the Buddha path. It is because we still have our worldly burdens of greed, hatred, and ignorance that we have come to CTTB; it isn't guaranteed that our cultivation will be successful. You can see that many laypeople come and go, like the ocean tide. Many people are very determined to come here, yet before long their resolve fades and they leave. It's the same with monastics. Although they brought forth the Bodhi resolve and left home, some retreat, leave to different wayplaces, or even return to laylife.

I am a bit saddened by the fact that, ever since my full ordination in 2002, I have always been standing in the first or second row in the Buddha hall. How did this happen? Where have all the elder monks who stand in the front gone? This is a problem. So, at CTTB, just because you are a monastic doesn't necessarily mean you'll always be one; just because you come and do work for the City doesn't mean you'll always be such a resolved layperson, not at all! The Master once said, this city is like a furnace. There are many tests here. If you're pure gold, then you needn't be afraid of the fires! To put it bluntly, in my opinion, the chances of survival here aren't very high. To be able to be one of the few that are able to remain here is very hard, indeed.

Many people say that CTTB is like the Land of Ultimate Bliss. Well, it is like the Land of Ultimate Bliss, but only compared to the outside world. Many visitors are awed by the peacocks here, but anyone who's lived here knows better. The peacocks defecate all over the place, resulting in the extreme displeasure of many an unwary walker. One time, we even had to release them at the walnut ranch because the grounds were so overpopulated by them. I once saw, with my own eyes, a peacock devour a newborn chick in one bite. Perhaps the deceptively beautiful feathers they present aren't accurate renditions of their true nature. Peacocks in the Land of Ultimate Bliss, on the other hand, sing forth wondrous sounds that proclaim the wonderful Dharma.

Take a look at the roads here at CTTB. Cracked and uneven, pocked and broken; if you're not careful, it's very easy to fall. In the Land of

去！再看看我們現在在拜《萬佛寶懺》，每天平均拜五百尊佛，供養五百尊佛，已夠辛苦了；可是到極樂世界，一個早上就周遊十萬億佛土，就可以供養他方十萬億佛，這麼快！所以，怎麼比啊？

這麼說，聖城就一無是處嗎？不是的！聖城只是一個報名的地方、訓練的地方，讓我們因而能更順利地去極樂世界修行的踏腳石罷了！

早上我們在拜懺的時候，那些佛的世界，還有佛號都是很長很長的，拜完我都忘了，可見十方世界佛國土的佛跟我們是這麼陌生！因此我想請問大家，哪一個世界我們是最熟悉的？哪個世界？（有人回答：極樂世界啊！）那為什麼沒有去呢？為什麼留在娑婆世界呢？其實我們最熟悉的是娑婆世界！所以我們來這裏，不用人家教，每次都自動回來。

省庵大師就做了一個譬喻說，如果一頭牛走在一條牠很熟悉的路，即使沒有駕牛車的人，牠也知道走到哪去，回到哪裏。這頭牛，是比喻我們的心；這很熟的路，比喻的是娑婆世界。我們的心對娑婆世界太執著、太熟悉了，所以就一直在三界裏頭出頭沒，枉受生死輪迴。

如果走很陌生的路，就像要去西方極樂世界，從來都沒有去過，那怎麼去呢？大師就教我們說，應該有自己的願力——要發願往生西方極樂世界。因為這個願就是駕牛車的人，有這個人駕著牛車，那頭牛就知道往哪個方向走了。

剛剛講的阿羅漢，他們在化城是很安全的，因為他們不會墮落，不會再到三界輪迴，只是如果裹足不前，就不能成佛而已。可是在聖城是不保險的！這輩子在這裏，下輩子又不曉得跑去哪裏了？六道裏頭不知道又在哪一道？我們都是好不容易才到聖城，就要有一種覺醒：「聖城」只是一個「化城」，它只是在我們修行過程中，讓我們再往前提昇的轉運站，讓我們到一個更安全，完全沒有染污，又可以保證我們成佛的世界，這樣的修行才是最方便也是最穩當的。預祝大家下次在極樂世界拜《萬佛寶懺》！

Ultimate Bliss, however, the ground is yellow gold and adorned with the seven jewels. There is such a drastic difference in the temperature here during the day and night, and it has caused many people to pack up and leave. In the Land of Ultimate Bliss, it is neither hot nor cold, and people scramble head over heels to get in! Then, look at our “Ten Thousand Buddhas Jeweled Repentance” that we have been doing. Everyday, we bow and make offerings to 500 Buddhas, and it is already very difficult for us. In the Land of Ultimate Bliss, it only takes one morning to make offerings to a trillion Buddhas! So, how can these two places be compared?

Well, does that mean there is nothing good about the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas? Of course not! CTTB is just a registration center, a training place for the Land of Ultimate Bliss. It's just a stepping stone to cultivating in the Land of Ultimate Bliss!

In the repentance text that we bow to in the morning, the names of the Buddhas and their worlds are very long; once we finish bowing to them, we forget them right away. It looks like we're quite unfamiliar with the Buddhaholds of the ten directions! And so, I ask all of you, which world are you most familiar with? [Someone says: “The Land of Ultimate Bliss, of course!”] Well, if you're so familiar with it, then why don't you go there? Why are you still in the Saha World? So, in reality, the world that we are most familiar with is this Saha World. That is why we keep returning here, without anyone having to tell us.

Great Master Xing An gave an analogy. If an ox walks down a familiar path, it knows where to go without a person directing the oxcart. This ox is just like us, and the familiar path is just like the Saha World. We're too intimate, too familiar with the Saha World, and that is why we keep revolving in the cycle of birth and death in the Triple Realm.

Trying to get to the Land of Ultimate Bliss is like walking down an unfamiliar path. You've never been there before, so how will you get there? The Great Master teaches us to use the power of vows, to make vows to be reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss. This vow is just like an ox driver; with a person directing him, the ox will know the right direction to go.

Remember the Arhat we were just talking about? He is very safe in the Transformation City, because he will not fall into lower paths of existence and never again undergo the cycle of birth and death; it's just that if he doesn't keep progressing, he can't become a Buddha either. However, at CTTB, there's no such insurance! You might be here this life, but who knows where you'll be in your next life? Who knows which of the six paths you'll end up in? Being able to come here isn't an easy task, and so we must realize, CTTB is just a Transformation City, it's only a dharma-door in our cultivation. It's just a stop on the way up, just a helping hand to a pure and safe place that can let us become Buddhas. Cultivating in this way is the most expedient and effective. I hope that next time, we will be bowing the Ten Thousand Buddhas Repentance together in the Land of Ultimate Bliss.