

回顧我的人生到目前為止，佛法為我的生命中帶來許多方面的影響。今天想跟大家分享的，就是佛法如何幫助我活得更有意義。這其中有好幾個里程碑，先跟大家分享的，就從我皈依上人那刻開始。

在我七歲時，媽媽帶著全家人到廟上皈依上人，那時是1988年上人率團到馬來西亞弘法。對於這件事情，我有一些模糊的記憶，比如：我們很早很早起來到機場去迎接訪問團；再來就是總有好長的隊伍等著要頂禮上人，並且希望上人用他的拐杖加持我們，這樣就可以消除我們的業障。另外每天晚上上人開示，在櫃台都有很多糖果是給小朋友的。其次就是皈依之後，我們得到上人的德相，就是黃色邊框、相片中上人結雙跏趺、手上拿著一個拂塵的那張相片。法會之後，媽媽叫我要頂禮師父，我就拿著那張上人的德

相，眼淚不知不覺地就掉了出來。

皈依之後，我們家人的生活方式逐漸地改變，第一個就是我們的飲食習慣。這個改變並不是一夕之間發生的，而是母親付出許多努力和耐心才促成的。首先媽媽開始吃素，同時也勸我們一起吃素。我相信這對母親來說是很不容易的，因為我的祖母，還有我的叔叔、姑姑他們是非常反對素食的。有一次我記得非常清楚，那時候我還沒有開始吃素，我們一家人包括我的叔叔、姑姑在內，在海鮮店舉行一個宴會。那天媽媽沒有來，我叔叔真的很幽默，他趁我吃飯時拿出照相機，要我在正享用到一半的明蝦大餐前擺個姿勢，然後他就拍照存證，用這個來提醒我媽媽說：「喂！妳女兒在吃肉。」

後來我試著開始要吃素時，我的這些伯叔阿姨對此

佛教怎樣改變我的人生？

How Has Buddhism Changed My Life?

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A Talk by Laitheng Leong on August 5, 2008

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Looking back at my life so far, Buddhism has influenced my life in many aspects. Today, I would like to share how Buddhism has impacted me to take some major milestones in living a meaningful life. I will start from the point I took refuge with Venerable Master Hsuan Hua.

When I was seven, my mom took our whole family to the temple to take refuge with the Venerable Master (during his Malaysian Dharma propagating trip in 1988). I have a few vague memories about this event such as (1) waking up really early in the morning to greet the arrival of the whole delegation at the airport; (2) the very long queues of people waiting to bow to the Venerable Master and hoping that the Venerable Master would bless them and hit away their bad karma with his cane; (3) candies being given to children during evening Dharma lectures; (4) getting the Master's photograph after the refuge ceremony—the one with the yellow border and Shr Fu holding a whisk sitting cross-legged; (5) after the ceremony, while holding Shr Fu's

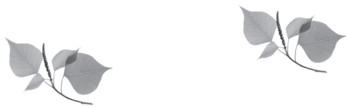
picture, being in tears not knowing why as I was instructed by my mom to bow to my new Shr Fu.

My family's lifestyle gradually changed from then on. The first major change was our diet, which did not happen immediately, but took some work and patience on my mom's part. My mom first became a vegetarian and she tried to convince the whole family to be vegetarians as well. It must have been a tough challenge for my mom because my grandmother, uncles and aunts were completely hostile towards the vegetarian diet. They couldn't understand: why vegetarianism? I remembered vividly one time, when none of us were vegetarians yet except my mom, my whole family including my uncles and aunts were having a celebration at a seafood restaurant. My mom was not there and my uncle, being humorous, wanted to remind my mom that her daughter was eating meat. While I was in the middle of the meal, he took out his camera and asked me to pose next to my giant prawn dish, so he could send that picture to my

深表關心，總是不斷地來告訴我媽，小孩成長時不適合吃素，要吃肉才有營養。就這樣過了好多年、試了好多次，我終於和姊姊、爸爸跟著媽媽吃素了。身為一個素食者，我開始體驗並認識到慈悲的精神。我很慶幸自己沒有爲了維持自己的生命，而去傷害其他眾生的性命。要不是媽媽當初發的菩提心，我可能就沒有機會認識佛法，也不可能力行這種護生的飲食。

另外一個里程碑，就是我發願受持五戒。那是1994年大家在沙加緬度爲上人慶生，當時我十四歲。我是自願跟著媽媽一起來受戒的，因爲在我的印象裏，一個佛教徒如果想要修行更上一層樓，那就應該要受戒。可是那時候我對五戒只有很初淺的認識，認爲只要我們身不犯這個戒，那就算是守戒了；那時並不知道除了身以外，心也要持這五戒。但雖然如此，受了五戒之後，這些規範在我青少年時期，無疑是一個非常正面的影響。

在沙加緬度受了五戒以後，我就回到馬來西亞照常地過日子。這五戒對當時讀高中的我而言，不是



mom later.

When I was trying to be a vegetarian, my extended family, being very concerned, would constantly tell my mom that I was still growing and needed all the possible protein from meat. Years later and after several tries I finally became a vegetarian together with my sister and father. This was the first major positive influence that Buddhism brought to my life. As a vegetarian, I began to experience and understand compassion. I was glad for not having to harm other living beings to sustain myself. Without my mother's initial resolve to seek the path, I may not have had the chance to encounter Buddhism and consequently not have the opportunity to awaken to the possibility of such harmless diet.

Another milestone in my life was taking up the vows of the Five Precepts when I was fourteen during Shr Fu's birthday ceremony in Sacramento back in 1994. At that time, I was taking the precepts voluntarily together with my mom because I somehow understood that was what Buddhists do next to deepen their practice. However, I have a crude understanding of the Five Precepts. I figured that as long as you did not violate the precepts physically, you were upholding them. At that time, I was not aware that there are two levels to upholding the vows--the physical level and the

一件很困難的事，因爲我被爸媽保護得無微不至，所以很容易持。我是直到在藝術學院讀書時，才體認到五戒的價值，這些規範更加明顯地浮現在我的思想和生活中。因爲在大學裏，我有更多的「自由」去建立自己的社交生活；然而爲了守持這些戒律，會讓我變得跟一般「正常」的人不太一樣。

比如開始的時候，同學有點嘲笑我吃素，但是後來他們也接受我的選擇，而且出去吃飯時，他們都很尊重我的需要。雖然好幾次，爲了讓自己能在那些「正常」團體中尋找一個平衡點，我都要掙扎一番，但最後我還是很慶幸自己的選擇。能在年輕的時候認識五戒，讓我不用花很多腦筋去想，自然而然就遠離許多不好的行爲。很多時候我會想：「我是不是不開心受五戒啊？可是我可能因爲要變成那種所謂的「正常」人，而去做很多不好的行爲，比如說喝酒啊、抽煙啊、或者是很隨便的男女關係，這些對我身心都是一種傷害。」當然在那個時候，我絕對是不夠成熟，也沒有足夠的智慧，去明白這些不好行爲會造成什麼樣的結果。



mind level. Although my understanding of the Five Precepts was crude, it nonetheless positively influenced my teenage years.

After receiving the vows of the Five Precepts in Sacramento, I was back in Malaysia and life went on as usual. The Five Precepts did not seem like a big deal to me throughout my high school years, as I was fairly sheltered by my parents. I didn't see the value of the Five Precepts until years later when I went to an art college in Malaysia. The Five Precepts began to surface more visibly in my consciousness and life. During my college years, I had more "freedom" and was building my social network. Keeping these vows made me different from the average "normal" crowd.

For example, in the beginning, my college friends were mildly teasing me about my vegetarian diet, but they eventually accepted my diet and were respectful about my needs as they know me better. Although there were times where I had struggled to find balance for my difference from the "normal" crowd, I usually end up feeling relieved because of my different lifestyle. Knowing the Five Precepts since I was young had helped me in college to naturally stay clear from all major negative behaviors without having to think much. On many occasions, I thought to myself, "Am I not

現在回想起來，五戒看起來似乎是一些規矩，但實際上是一種智慧；它讓我不至於在年幼無知的青少年時期犯下錯誤，造成不必要的麻煩和傷害。如果沒有這些戒律幫助我，我很可能會做出許多不智的抉擇，而陷於種種的困擾之中；然後再用我後半段的生命，來彌補這些少年時期留下的傷害。所以我真的非常感恩，因為守持五戒，我才能遠離這些不必要的困擾。

在馬來西亞的藝術學院畢業後，我決定到美國繼續深造。我很幸運當時我的姊姊住在萬佛聖城，所以聖城自然就成為我在美國第一個生根的地方。當時我正在準備申請大學，所以我有五個月的時間都住在萬佛城裏。這段時間，朝夕相處的都是出家人和虔誠的在家修行人。雖然來美國前，有八年的時間，我每個禮拜天都到馬來西亞的分支道場共修，可是住進聖城後，讓我覺得自己在佛教裏就像一個小孩子似的，什麼都很新鮮。

聖城裏的經驗，成為我生命中的第三個里程碑。在聖城裏，我有無數的機會來為人服務。從早到

晚，我就是忙著為別人，不是為我自己。有趣的是，這段日子呢，卻是我人生最寧靜的時光。有一天在福居樓，我躺在房間裏，突然有個念頭：「我在這裏擁有的是這麼地少，不像我在馬來西亞的房間，到處都是我數不清的東西；在這裏，甚至連房間都不是我的。這裏什麼都很節省、很簡單，可是我卻很快樂、很寧靜，而且很滿足。為什麼會這樣呢？」後來我瞭解了，以前在家時我每天都花時間在想：「我能做什麼？我需要什麼？或是應該為自己做些什麼？」可是相反地，在聖城裏，是絕對沒問題的不用去替自己著想。在這個環境裏，我才真正有機會去體驗生命的本質，不需要為了保護自我而奔波忙碌，活在擔憂、恐懼之中。

這些年來，我在萬佛聖城和法界佛教青年會認識了「行菩薩道」的觀念，菩薩總是替人著想。我不敢講說我現在是在行菩薩道，但是我卻非常高興，也覺得非常幸運能聽到這個道理。這種希望別人好、甚至比自己更好，希望別人幸福、甚至比自己更幸福的思想，在當今這個社會實在是太少見了；而且我覺得，



glad that I have taken the Five Precepts and haven't ended up like the "normal" crowd engaging in all sorts of negative behaviors such as drinking, smoking or casual relationships—all of which could harm myself physically and emotionally?" Of course during that time, I wasn't mature enough nor did I have the wisdom to really see the consequences entailed by these negative behaviors.

Now looking back, the Five Precepts that seemed like rules at that time, were instead wisdom that kept me liberated from unnecessary problems and harm during my naïve, immature, young-adult life. Without these precepts, I may have made unwise choices and would be stuck with unfavorable consequences or problems for me to clean up later in life. I am still very thankful to the precepts for shielding me from all the possible unnecessary problems.

Upon graduating from the art college in Malaysia, I came to the States to continue my studies. I was lucky to have a sister living at the City of



Ten Thousand Buddhas (CTTB) at that time. So, CTTB became my natural choice of stay in this new country while applying to universities. Living full-time in CTTB for five months, I was surrounded by the monastic and sincere lay cultivators twenty-four seven. Although I had been going to the Malaysian branch temple every Sunday for the previous eight years, I felt like a newbie to Buddhism. This monastic immersion became my next major milestone.

At CTTB, I was given countless opportunities to offer service to others. From morning to night, I was busy doing things not for myself, but for the community. Interestingly, this time was one of the most tranquil times of my life. I

remembered that once, laying on my bed in my room at "Fu Ju Lou", I had a thought, "I own so little here. I don't have all my things like I do in Malaysia. This is not even my room; everything here is minimal, yet I am joyful, tranquil, and satisfied. Why is that?"

I realized that back home,

有些人壓根兒就沒有這種觀念。若沒有這種思想，生命就像失去最珍貴寶貝一樣的貧乏；如果凡事都只想到自己、都只想到如何踩在別人的頭上，那是絕不可能活得自在、滿足、快樂的。所以我非常高興，因為學習佛法，我的生命多了一項選擇——一個真正解脫的人生。

接觸佛法後的這些年，讓我有機會認識善知識。我碰到很多的好朋友，大家都希望不僅在行動上，同時也在內心裏，能夠成為一個更好的人。正如上人說的：「近朱者赤，近墨者黑。」跟這些好朋友在一起，自然而然地也啟發我去學習做一個更好的人。又者，見賢思齊，這種學習方式是最快



I spent all my time daily thinking about what I can do, need to do, or have to do for myself. In contrast, at CTTB, it is actually okay to not think about yourself. This environment had given me the chance to experience life as it really is without the constant fear of protecting that “self” or finding ways to build a life for that “self”.

Over the years, CTTB and Dharma Realm Buddhists Young Adults (DRBY) have introduced the concept of the Bodhisattva path to me. I learned that the Bodhisattva always wishes for others to be well. Although I am not even close to practicing this Bodhisattva path, I am nonetheless, very happy and feel very blessed to be exposed to this concept. This idea of wishing for others’ well-being or even better, wishing others to be more blessed than ourselves, is not a common concept we can casually pick up in this modern world. In fact, I think that this concept does not even exist in the minds of some people. Not knowing this concept is like losing a precious gem because I will not be able to live a life that is truly free, contented and joyful if I am constantly thinking about myself and ways to get ahead of others. I am glad that Buddhism allows me to explore a different option - one that actually liberates - in living this life.

Throughout the years of studying Buddhism, I have met many good Buddhist friends. I’ve met many people who strive to be better humans in their actions and also from within. As Shr Fu said, if you are smeared with a red crayon, you will be red and if you are smeared with green, you will be green. Surrounded by these good people has always, without fail, inspired me to be a better person. As we also learn best

的。這些善知識是真正的言行一致，他們的身教成為我很好的榜樣，讓我知道如何成為一個好人。

我一直將佛法形容為是個正面、積極影響我生命的「一樣東西」。但事實上我知道，能遇到佛法（或者說這「一樣東西」），並不是某種神奇力量帶來的，或是從天上掉下來的一個禮物；而是很多人，包括我的父母、家人、老師、前輩、朋友、著書的人、翻譯的人、講法的人，甚至包括那些令我起煩惱的人，是這些人將佛法帶進我的生命裏。如果沒有這種人與人之間的互動、連結，我是永遠不可能認識佛法的。所以最後，我要藉這個機會感謝一切的眾生，也希望我會永遠記得他們的恩德。



by seeing examples, the good Dharma friends I’ve met have modeled to me many ways of being a good person. I am very lucky to constantly see people who actually walk their talk.

I have been using the term “Buddhism” as “something” that has positively influenced my life. However, I realized this “something” or “Buddhism” was not brought to me by a higher force nor was it a package with instructions that fell from the sky. It was the people—parents, families, teachers, elders, friends, writers, translators, speakers, and not excluding people who gave me afflictions—who brought and made Buddhism real to me. Without these humanistic relationship and ties, Buddhism would never come close to my understanding. So, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude towards all beings and hopefully, I can always remember their kindness.

法界佛教青年會的成員多年來互相關照，互相鼓勵，都希望能把這份共修的法喜，分享給每一位正在學佛路上摸索的人。

The DRBY community has cultivated and matured together over the last few years; we really want all Buddhists to share in the same joys and experiences as they learn to cultivate the Buddhadharma.

