



The Poor Son Returns Home: Cleansing Myself at CTTB

童年時處理垃圾的兩個選擇

當我還是孩童的時候，令我最興奮及驚險的事情之一，就是觀看我舅舅於屋外空地，每月一次焚燒一堆垃圾的儀式。那時(1960年代)在馬來西亞北海較鄉下的地方，並沒有公營垃圾管理及資源回收；所以每家都要自行負責處理自家的垃圾。幾乎每家皆保留一塊空地來丟垃圾，然後家裡的成員再燒這些堆積物。

在每個月燒垃圾時，經常我能看見也聽到東西爆炸的聲音——可能是噴霧式瓶子裡的溶劑或容器裡的其他化學物品被燒到了。那些乒乒呼呼的爆炸聲音真的很嚇人，但我仍然覺得很好玩。

然而我喜歡觀看垃圾爆炸的童年興趣，隨著年齡的增長而漸漸消失；這不但不引起我的興趣，相反的，我不明白，為何人人皆如此做，而竟然沒有人會去考慮自己及他人，乃至周遭環境的安全及衛生？我無力阻止，也只能隨它去。

令一個我難忘的童年回憶就是：幾乎每天早上，我是被街上一個印度小販的叫賣聲吵醒：「收購舊貨啦！」他用一根扁担平均地挑了兩大簍的東西，穿過大街小巷，每家每戶的去收買舊貨，如衣服、玻璃瓶、報紙或其他可回收利用的東西。他雖然年紀已老，但他仍然以洪亮的叫賣聲來招徠生意。

窮子歸寶所 萬佛城內洗塵埃

比丘尼恒頤 文 / 譯
Written and Translated
by Bhikshuni Heng Yi

Two Choices for Trash Disposal in My Childhood

When I was young, one of the most exciting things in life was the monthly ritual of watching my uncle burn a pile of garbage outside our house. In Butterworth, a county in rural northern Malaysia, during the 1960s, there was no municipal waste management and recycling, so every family was responsible for disposing of its own trash. Each household dedicated a plot or pit for throwing and burning trash.

During such monthly burnings, I would often see and hear spray cans and bottles of volatile chemicals explode in the trash piles. Ping! Pong! It was scary, but fun!

As I grew up, I no longer felt delight in observing trash fires; instead I began to worry about the impact of this practice. I did not understand why people did not consider their own health and public safety or question the impact of such trash burning on the environment. Since everyone in the village was doing it, I felt helpless to stop it.

Another fond memory from my youth was when I would be awakened by an old Indian peddler, hollering on the streets, "Buying and collecting items, old and used." He had a long bamboo pole balanced across his shoulders, with two large baskets hanging

每當我看到母親的一些舊瓶罐、報紙、衣服類，居然能換取一些金錢時，我覺得回收真好；喔！將腐朽化神奇，垃圾也能變成寶貝！故我深深被此印度老人所吸引，雖然他賺得很少，只能糊口；但他仍然覺得回收真好，仍然是那麼的愛護資源，埋頭苦幹。

這兩種不同的際遇，讓我明白對於一切廢棄物我們都有自己抉擇的機會，是用一把火燒成灰燼，隨風而逝呢？還是把它們善加利用，重複使用？那位印度小販的良好模範及家人的簡樸節約生活，令我從小也學會愛護資源及喜愛整理東西。

心靈的塵埃與失落

當我七、八歲的時候，不是很快樂；因為我總覺得我的生命裡頭好像失掉什麼似的，想要去找。有一天跑去找到正在用縫衣機縫衣的姐姐，我從口中吐出了一些自己也不明白的話，我說：「姐姐！我不知道我在那裡？我不像我自已！」當時可能我要表示說我自己迷失了，但不知如何去表達。姐姐很好奇的望著我，然後卻見她猛然低下頭，繼續縫衣，不再理我。在一片轟轟轟的縫衣聲中我更加的迷失。

數年後，當我有機會與姐姐談及此事之時，她說當時以為我被鬼所持，所以亂講話。自從在姐姐處得不到答案後，我嘗試從書本搜尋。有一天，我從我的哥哥的抽屜內找到一本佛書（他是檳城佛教總會的會員之一），我一口氣把它讀完，知道已經找到一個寶藏。佛陀的故事令我非常震撼，我想可能從小的失落，就是在找這個！然而佛陀的真理雖然是永恆不變，恐怕現在此世上已無法找到像佛陀這樣的人天師表。

有一天因大嫂誤信邪教而中邪，父親到處求神問卜，而母親、兄長卻極為虔誠誦唸〈大悲〉向觀世音菩薩求救。當時就有人告知：不久將會有一位旅美高僧^{上宣下化}老和尚率團到馬來西亞弘法利生，屆時可向聖人求助。很奇怪，當時只是一聽到了《^{上宣下化}老和尚》之聖號，就有一種不可思議之力量及親切感。

不久宣公上人真的到了馬來西亞，並且上人非常的慈悲，特別保留一段弘法之外的時

from each end of the pole. Walking from house to house, he would buy glass bottles, used clothing, newspapers, and things that could be recycled and reused. Then he would sell them to manufacturers to be remanufactured. Though he was old, his voice was loud and clear.

I felt good about my mother receiving money for old bottles and stuff, and that good things would not be thrown away—they actually had monetary value. I was also inspired by the old peddler who worked so hard but earned so little as he carefully cherished our resources.

As you can see by these two vignettes, we have a choice in how to deal with unusable things: burn them and let them be “gone with the smoke,” or cherish them by reusing and recycling. The good role models shown me by the old peddler and my relatives who lived a simple and frugal life led me to appreciate and cherish what we had and to like cleaning and organizing things at home.

A Sense of Being Spiritually Defiled and Lost

When I was around seven years old, I was not happy because I felt that something was missing from my life and I had to find it. One day I approached my older sister, who was sewing on a sewing machine. Calling out over the noise of the machine, I blurted out something that I myself didn't understand. “Sister, I don't know where I am. I don't look like myself.” She abruptly looked away, and lowering her head went back to her sewing, completely ignoring me. With the whirring of the sewing machine in my head, I left, more confused than ever.

Years later, when I asked her about that day, she said that she thought I was possessed by a spirit. Since I could not get an answer from my sister, I looked for it in books. One day, I found a Buddhist story book in the drawer of my brother, who was a member of the Penang Buddhist temple. I finished reading the book in one sitting and immediately knew that I had unearthed a treasure. The stories helped me to realize that the deep sense of loss I felt since childhood was due to the fact that I hadn't found the Buddha and the Buddhadharma. I found in the Buddha something that was true and unchanging.



作者(右一)於1983年出家時和上人合影。The author (first on the right) finally left the home-life with the Venerable Master in 1983.

間以接見那些需要上人做個別解決問題之信眾；所以家人及我才能得於檳城馬來西亞佛教大廈中叩見頂禮了上人。當家人在求助於上人時，我卻禁不住而悲從中來，在一旁大哭了一場；當時才突然明白，為何小時有失落之感。正如《法華經》上所云，窮子捨父而逃，流浪生死，苦不可言。今日得重見大慈悲父，如絕處逢生；我心中決定：將來要皈投在上人門下！

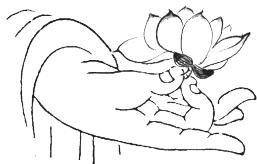
窮子歸寶所：萬佛城內洗塵埃

1982年10月中旬，我離家背親、遠渡重洋，從熱帶的樸素家園，飛往物質豐富的文明國家美國，而抵達萬佛聖城——這是我人生之轉捩點。當時我很困惑，是何等力量來改變我的人生？而同時為何家人最後也能支持我所作的決定？

當飛機起飛時，我向馬來西亞道再見。我很欣慰，起碼在離開前我曾做了一件好事。就是我以北海佛教會委員之資格，向主辦佛誕遊行之負責人建議：以後在佛誕遊行前，請勸令各個佛教單位須保持嚴肅的態度，勿在莊嚴肅穆之遊行時隨意購買飲料，然後又將空罐隨手棄於地上，製造垃圾。

或許我的態度有點唐突，他竟然對我說：「因為您心有垃圾，所以外面才有垃圾！」我覺得這句話很有意思，希望我不會把自己內外的垃圾或烏煙瘴氣都帶往萬佛聖城。

當我們一行八十多人抵達機場時，迎接我們的是一位親切的美國人果舟居士；他在上人的細心而徹底的教導下，已能講得一口流利的中國話。下飛機後，坐大巴士直往萬佛聖城；沿街所看到寬濶、清潔的大道，金門大橋跨大海，群山圍繞，高山峻嶺。這種種的一切環境，竟是那麼的熟悉、似曾相識；尤其是抵達萬佛聖城後，見到山門的兩旁燈柱上各掛了一條直的鐵片，上面黑字寫著「南無觀世音菩薩」時，頓時兩行熱淚立刻流注不止。從一個常年炎熱、乾燥的地方，到了一個正在冬季、寒冷的山谷——妙覺山下，我的雙手冷得發抖；我的心是熱切的，因為我這個「窮子」終於回到佛家了！



☯ 待續

At one time, a family member worshipped with a deviant cult and became possessed. While my father frantically sought oracles everywhere, my mother and older brother recited the Great Compassion Mantra and sought help from Guan Shi Yin Bodhisattva. Fortuitously, someone told us that a Dharma Master from America by the name of Venerable Master Xuan Hua would soon come to Malaysia and bring an assembly of Sangha with him to propagate the Dharma. We could seek his help at that time. Strangely, when I heard his name, I felt an inconceivable strength and endearing familiarity.

Once the Venerable Master was settled in the Penang Buddhist Center in a high-rise building, he met with people who needed his help. I accompanied my family to see him, and while they were seeking his aid, I stood to one side. Suddenly, I began weeping and could not be consoled. I was like the poor son in the *Lotus Flower Sutra* who abandoned his father and wandered for years, undergoing unspeakable suffering until he reunited with his father in the end. I had reunited with my great compassionate father and decided that in the future I would take refuge and leave home with him.

The Poor Son Returns Home: Cleansing Myself at CTTB

In mid-October, 1982, I left my family and hometown to embark on a journey across the oceans from the simple and rustic tropics to a materially abundant and civilized country, the United States, and to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas to attend a Dharma assembly; it was a turning point in my life. I asked myself, "Where did this strength to change my life come from? Why did my family in the end agree to support my decision?"

As the plane took off and I said goodbye to Malaysia, I was happy that at least I did one good deed before leaving. As a member of the Butterworth Buddhist Association, I suggested to the Penang Buddhist Association that for the Buddha's Birthday celebration to please advise everyone to maintain a serious attitude and not casually throw empty drink cans on the ground and create garbage.

Perhaps I was too abrupt because the leader said to me, "It's because you have garbage in your mind that you see garbage outside." I found this statement interesting and hoped that I wouldn't take my internal and external trash to CTTB.

When our group of 100 people arrived at the San Francisco airport, we were welcomed by an American layman (Guo Chou, David Rounds) who spoke fluent Chinese, having studied under the Venerable Master. On the bus trip through San Francisco, I saw that the streets were wide, spacious, and clean. After we crossed the Golden Gate Bridge and circled round the precipitous mountains and steep hills on our way to CTTB, the scenery looked familiar to me, and I had a feeling that I had been here before. Arriving at the City, I saw a sign written in Chinese at the main gate: Namó Guan Shi Yin Bodhisattva. Warm tears streamed down my face and I wept. I had just moved from a hot, dry country to a rainy, freezing valley in the winter—Wonderful Enlightenment Mountain—and although my hands were shaking from the cold, my heart was warm. I was the "poor son" who had finally returned to the home of the Buddha! I had finally returned to the home of the Buddha!

☯ To be continued