

White
Mountains
and
Black
Waters
Nurture
Rare Talent
(Continued)

白山黑水育奇英
(續)

記得十一、二歲的時候，到郊區和小孩子玩耍，在荒地上看見一堆捆草。捆草裡邊捆著一個小孩子，這個小孩眼睛閉著，也不喘氣。我從來也沒有看過這種事情，以為他在睡覺，我就去叫他起來一起玩。其他小孩子說：「他已經死了，你叫他幹什麼？」這時候自己不懂得什麼叫死，也不能問他們；好像問他們，自己怪不好意思似的。於是回到家問母親：「為什麼這個小孩子會死呢？我不懂得這個死。」你看，就這麼孤陋寡聞！十幾歲還不懂得什麼叫死，足見這個人很少和人接觸來往的。

我母親說：「死呀！人人都會死，不過有早死、晚死，有老死、少死。小孩子死了，就用草把他捆上，丟到荒郊外。年老了也會死，病了也會死，種種的死法不一樣。」我覺得人生既然要死，活著幹什麼？沒有意思啊！我又問母親：「人是不是能不死呢？怎麼樣才能不死？我覺得死很沒有意思。」我母親無詞以對，就沒有答覆我了。

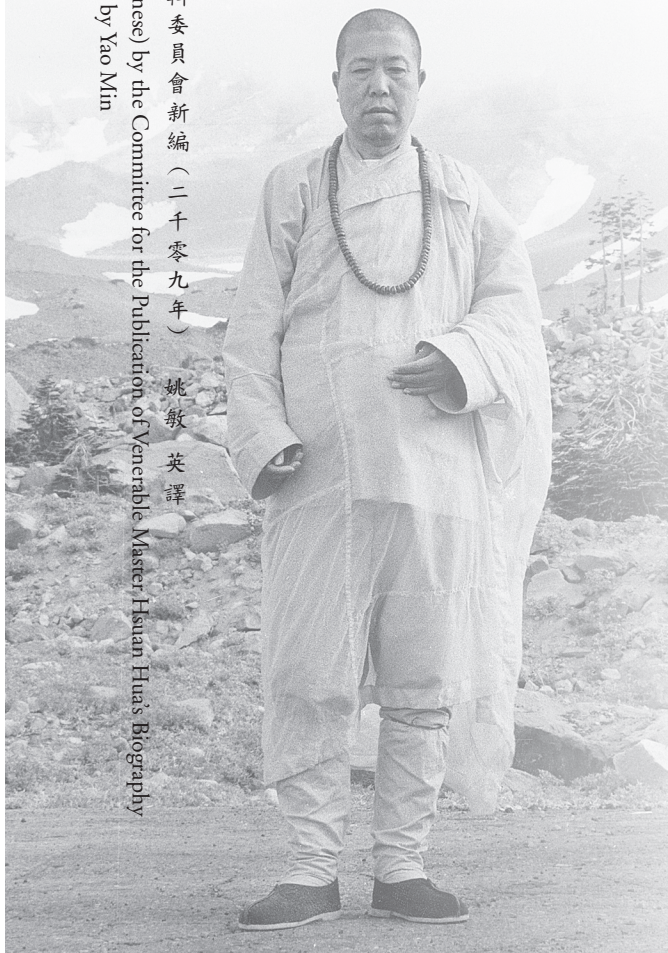
當時有個親戚姓李，叫李林，他說：「你想不死，那容易！」「怎樣容易呢？」「出家修道，做和尚；或者做老道，修道去。做和尚修行成佛，做老道修行成仙，就會不死了。」那時候我不願意死，覺得死沒有什麼大意思，生了又死，死了又生，這又有什麼好玩的？沒有什麼意思。修道能令人不死，我記住了這句話，這有出路了。

When I was about 11 or 12 years old, one day I was playing in the wilderness with other kids. We came upon a pile of thatch. Wrapped up in the thatch was a child. It was not breathing, and its eyes were closed. I never saw this before and thought it was sleeping, so I tried to wake it up to play with us. The other kids said, "He's dead. Why are you talking to him?" I didn't know what death meant, and I was too ashamed to ask. So I ran home and asked my mother, "Why did that baby die? What is death?" I was that ignorant and uninformed. At that age, I didn't know what death was. You can see that I didn't interact that much with people.

My mother said, "Death? Everyone reaches that point. Everyone dies sooner or later. People die for various reasons. Some die at a young age; some die at an old age. Some die from illnesses; others die from accidents. When a baby dies, it is wrapped with thatch and left in the wilderness." I thought, if life ends in death, what's the point of living? It's meaningless! I asked my mother, "Is it possible for a person to avoid death? How can we escape death? I think that if we have to die, there's no point to life." My mother had nothing to say and could not answer me.

A visiting relative called Li Lin said, "If you don't want to die, It's easy!" "How?" I asked. He replied, "Leave the home-life and become religious. You can become a Buddhist monk or a Taoist. As a monk, you can become a Buddha, or as a Taoist, you can become a celestial being. That way, you won't die." I didn't want to die because it was boring. What fun was there to die and be reborn again and again? In the end, I decided to follow the religious path.

宣化上人事蹟編輯委員會新編（二〇〇九年） 姚敏 英譯
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從那時候，我發心想要出家，就和母親商量，要求出家修道。母親聽說我要出家，很高興；父親聽說我要出家，就皺起眉頭來。母親對我說：「你出家是好事，我不能阻攔你，我不反對你出家。可是你現在不能出家，必須要等到我死之後，你願意幹什麼就幹什麼。我活著，你應該住在家裡，不能出家；因為世界上沒有一個不孝順的佛，沒有一個不孝順的菩薩。在我沒有死之前，你要在家裡！」母親許可我出家，但是不許可即刻出家，這是時間的問題，我就等著，在家吃齋念佛、學習佛法。

【後記】據悉在上人出生的村子周圍，有很多荒街子（荒郊野外），長滿各種雜草和野花。滿族習俗，死的小孩用穀草捆起來送到荒街子。每年春天，那兒到處可見因傷寒病或出天花而死亡的嬰兒屍體。那時山區有很多野狼，通常會在晚上出來尋食，死孩子多半被野狼給吃掉了。

04. 夢離險境

上人自述：

我在很小的時候，有一次作夢，夢見自己走在路上，那條路就像篩子一樣滿佈窟窿，窟窿底下不知有多深。那條路也就像羅網似的，在上面走，一不小心就會掉下去了！我就在這條路上走著。等我走到沒有窟窿的地方，沒有網羅的地方，到達平安的康莊大道時，往後一看，那條路上不知有多少人跟著我來！老的、年輕的，什麼樣的人都有，哪個國家的人都有。不知道這是不是現在走的路呢？

【後記】上人十二歲那一年，在農曆2月19日，觀音菩薩聖誕日的夜晚，作夢走到一個窟窿道上。四顧茫然，頓念自己出家修行之心未滿，孝敬雙親之願未終，不禁放聲大哭。突然有一位慈祥老婦人現前，項掛念珠，身穿衲衣，手拿竹杖，足穿草鞋，笑著對上人說：「不要哭！隨我走，我送你回家。小心走，不要跌倒！」於是上人隨老婦之後，須臾走出險路。回顧險路，上人發現有很多人跟隨在他的後面；有老、幼、男、女、僧、儒等。上人問老婦人說：「這些人要往何處去？」老婦人說：「這些人與你有緣，他們是跟著你走出這條險路的，你要好好護持他們！我有事要到別處去，不久當可再見。」上人在夢裡叩問她的姓名，老婦人說：「我們世為鄰居，回家便知！」說完飄然而去。這個夢，可說是上人後來普度眾生的先兆。

☞待續

From then on, I was determined to become a monk and consulted my mother. She was happy, but my father frowned upon my intentions. My mother said, "It is a good thing to become a monk. I won't stop you. I have no objection. However, you can't leave home now. You must wait until I die. After that, you can choose whatever you want to do. As long as I am alive, you must stay home and not become a monk. You cannot find a Buddha or a Bodhisattva who is unfilial. You have to stay home until I die!" My mother allowed me to become a monk but not right away. It was a matter of time. I stayed home studying Buddhism, chanting the Buddha's name and practiced vegetarianism.

Note: It is said that the areas around the village where the Master was born were filled with wildernesses where weeds and wildflowers flourished. According to the Manchu tradition, dead children were wrapped in straw and left in the wilderness. Every spring, many children died of typhoid or smallpox. The wild wolves that lived in the mountains hunted for food during the night and most likely ate the dead children.

04. Out of Danger in a Dream (or Escaping a Dangerous Path)

As told by the Venerable Master:

When I was young, one night I dreamed that I was walking on a road full of bottomless holes, like a web. Any careless move would cost me my life. I kept on walking until I reached an area where the road was smooth and level without traps. I looked back and saw an uncountable number of people following me. Some were old; some were young—all different races from different places. I wonder if this is the road I am walking on now.

Note: At the age of 12, on the night of February 19th, the birthday of Guanyin Bodhisattva, the Master dreamed that he was walking on a road full of holes and became lost. He burst into tears because he hadn't fulfilled his duties to his parents and had not yet become a monk. Suddenly a benevolent old woman appeared in front of him, dressed in monastic robes and straw sandals. Prayer beads hung from around her neck and she held a bamboo cane in her hand. Smiling, she said to the Master, "Don't cry. Follow me and I will show you the way home. Walk slowly and you won't fall!" The Master followed her, and soon they were out of danger. Looking back, he saw great numbers of people following him—old, young, men, women, monks, scholars. He asked the old woman, "Where are these people going?" She said, "They all have a predestined relationship with you. They followed you out of danger. You should guard them well! Farewell, we will meet again." The Master bowed and asked for her name. She said, "We have been neighbors for many generations. After you return, you will know." And so saying, she was gone with the wind. This dream was a sign of the Master's future work of saving all living beings.

☞To be continued