

Advice to a Cancer Patient

A conversation with Venerable Master Hua on June 10, 1985
at The City of Ten Thousand Buddhas

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上人對癌症病人的開示

講於一九八五年六月十日萬佛聖城

（此文由一位西方老弟子提供，今譯成中文以饗讀者。）

一位縣政府的官員（以下簡稱史密斯先生）對剛走進來的上人說：我知道您每個月會回來萬佛聖城兩次。

上人：不，我每週都會來。

史密斯先生：您其它時間是在舊金山嗎？

上人：是的。

史密斯先生：我不知道您住在舊金山那裡，不過您一定更喜歡這兒。

上人：哪裡都是一樣的。（一陣笑聲）每一個地方就像一間旅館。照我看來，一切事情都是好的，沒有問題。（接著轉向患有淋巴癌的史密斯太太）妳今年多大？

史密斯太太：我今年46歲。

上人：疾病是由喜、怒、苦、憂、悲、懼、驚，這些情感造成的。任何一種的情感，即使是快樂，太過份了都會損害身體。（註：上人以喜、怒、苦、憂、悲、懼、驚為「七情」。）

史密斯太太（一陣臉紅）：我就是那樣，他說的正是我。

上人：我知道。我看一下，就看出這是妳生病的原因。知道原因是很重要的，妳究竟是什麼病？

史密斯太太：已經兩年了。但是第一年醫生誤診，一年後醫生才發現問題，並確定原因。

上人：妳和丈夫會彼此生氣嗎？

史密斯先生：不會。

上人：和其他家人呢？

史密斯太太：不會。

史密斯先生：她過去常常和孩子生氣，但是他們現在都長大了。不過，我們確實對外在的情況感到憤怒。例如，（轉身對翻譯者說）我曾經告訴你，我們很在乎老人院內對待老年人的方式。

[Note: This record of an interview with Mr. Smith, a county official, and his wife who had cancer, was provided by a longtime western disciple and translated into Chinese.]

Mr. Smith to the Ven. Abbot, who has just entered the room: I understand that you are here at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas twice a month.

Ven. Abbot: No, I come up every week.

Mr. Smith: And you're in San Francisco at other times?

Ven. Abbot: Yes.

Mr. Smith: I don't know where you stay in San Francisco, but you must prefer it here.

Ven. Abbot: Every place is the same. (Laughter) Every place is like a hotel. The way I see it, everything is okay and there is no problem.

[Turning to Mrs. Smith, who suffers from cancer of the lymph system] How old are you?

Mrs. Smith: I'm 46.

Ven. Abbot: Sickness is caused by the emotions, joy, anger, distress, worry, grief, fear, and shock. The extremes of any of these, even joy, can harm the body. [Note: Ven. Abbot used these seven.]

Mrs. Smith (blushing): I am that way. He is describing me exactly.

Ven. Abbot: I know. I took a look at you and saw this was what caused your sickness. It is important to know the cause. What is the illness exactly?

Mrs. Smith: It's already been two years, but it was misdiagnosed for the first year by the doctors. Only after a year did the doctors identify the problem and realize that this was what the problem was.

Ven. Abbot: Do you and your husband get angry with each other?

Mr. Smith: No.

Ven. Abbot: With others in the family?

Mrs. Smith: No.

Mr. Smith: She used to get angry with the children, but they are grown up now. We do get angry at external situations. For example [to the

上人：你們不應該生氣。對於外在的情況，做你能做的來改善它；憤怒是沒有用的，是有害的。做你能做的，其餘的就隨它去。對於不能改正的情況，也不需要生氣。（上人接著對史密斯太太說：）妳有沒有宗教信仰？

史密斯太太：我經常去附近的天主教教堂，一個禮拜去好幾次。雖然我從小是天主教徒，但是直到得了這個病才多些望彌撒；過去的一年裡，我們也去過基督教衛理公會很多次。從天主教神父和衛理公會長老那兒，我們都得到他們的諮詢輔導，後來也和神父成為朋友。

上人：這個世界上，沒有什麼是一定的。即使某一個人的病，本來應該要痊癒的，但是可能又復發而無法痊癒。某一個人本來應該要死的，但是後來減輕，最後被治癒了。重要的因素就是這七種情感，如果它們被用得過份了，病就無法痊癒。醫生只能在皮毛上做檢查、做實驗。他們沒辦法找出造成疾病的原因，他們看到的只是疾病的結果。

史密斯先生及史密斯太太：沒錯！

上人：應該要心平氣和。不要想那麼多，要專注於可能發生的事。我認為妳與觀世音菩薩有緣，妳應該唸觀世音菩薩聖號，這會幫助妳病好。

翻譯者：如果你們喜歡，晚一點可以到佛殿和大家一起唸觀世音菩薩聖號，這樣你們就知道該怎麼做。

上人：觀世音菩薩和聖母瑪利亞有很密切的關係；他們實際上是同一位，因為聖母瑪利亞就是觀世音菩薩的化身。

史密斯太太：我會試試看。（對她的丈夫說：）我們可以去大殿，學習該怎麼來唸。

上人：佛教不只包括佛教，所有的宗教都被包括在內，任何人都能到這裡祈禱。所有的宗教是一個的，所不同的只是在於其教義有多麼究竟。在萬佛聖城，我們不反對任何宗教的教義。宗教就像世界的國家一樣，有中國、美國、蘇聯、朝鮮、日本、法國等不同，但是都居住著人類。由於有「人類」這個共同因素，所以你不能說這個國家比另一個國家好，因為所有的國家都有好人和壞人。例如（最近發生的一件新聞），如果美國人說全部的美國人都是好的，這是很愚蠢的說法；因為有些美國人成為反間諜，出賣自己的國家。

史密斯先生及史密斯太太：沒錯！

上人：所以宗教之間不應該有偏見。如果一個宗教宣稱只有它是對的，而其它是錯的，那麼這正是在反對自己的基本教義，因為偏見導致鬥爭。所以在萬佛城，我們看所有宗教的優點，並且實踐六大

translator] I've told you about how we've been concerned with the way old people are treated in convalescent homes.

Ven. Abbot: You shouldn't get angry. With external situations, do what you can to address them, but anger is useless; it's harmful. Do what you can, and then let the rest go. Don't get upset over situations you can't correct. (Continuing, to Mrs. Smith): What are your religious beliefs?

Mrs. Smith: I've been going to the local Catholic Church quite often – several times a week. I was raised a Catholic but did not attend Mass much until I contracted this disease. During the past year, we also went to the local Methodist Church a number of times and have received counseling both from the Catholic priest and the Methodist minister. The Catholic priest has become my friend.

Ven. Abbot: Nothing is fixed in this world. Even if a person is supposed to recover from an illness, there can be a relapse and the person won't recover. And if a person is supposed to die, there can be a remission and the person's illness will be cured. The important factor is the seven emotions. If they are extreme, recovery won't happen. Doctors examine you on the surface level. They can't discern the cause of sickness, only the effects.

Both Smiths: That's right.

Ven. Abbot: Maintain an evenness of mind, and let your spirit be harmonious (syin ping shi he). Don't think so much, dwelling on what may happen to you. I think that you have affinities with Guan Shi Yin Bodhisattva. You should recite Guan Yin's name. This will help you get well.

Translator: If you like, you can come to the Buddha Hall a little later and recite Guan Yin's name with the assembly. That way you'll learn how to do it.

Ven. Abbot: Guan Yin Bodhisattva has strong affinities with the Virgin Mary; they are actually one, because the Virgin Mary is a transformation body of Guan Yin.

Mrs. Smith: I could try it. (to her husband): We could go over to the hall and learn how to recite.

Ven. Abbot: Buddhism does not encompass only Buddhism. All religions are included within it. Anyone can come here to pray. All religions are one, differing only in how ultimate their teachings are. At CTTB, we don't oppose the teaching of any religion. Religions could be compared to countries. China, the U.S., the USSR, Korea, Japan, and France are all different, but all are inhabited by people. Since there is the common element of people, you can't say that one country is better than another, since all contain both good and bad people. For example (referring to an item recently in the news), it would be silly for an American to say that Americans as a whole are good, since some Americans become spies and sell out their country.

Both Smiths: That's right.

宗旨：不爭、不貪、不求、不私自、不自利、不打妄語。

史密斯先生（當翻譯者翻譯到第一個宗旨「不爭」時）：是的，您說得沒錯。因為有這麼多的宗教戰爭，而戰爭就是這樣造成的。

上人：都是因為自私。

史密斯先生：是的，因為每一方都堅信自己是對的。

上人：因為他們只想利益自己，這就是自私行為的根源。（此時翻譯者翻譯完六大宗旨）

史密斯先生：我很驚訝發現，費亞德神父（當地教會的神父）對於其它宗教的態度是很開放的。我從來沒想到他會是這麼開放，這也是為什麼我和他成為朋友的原因。

史密斯太太：講到「爭」，這的確是有道理的。一群和我年齡差不多的癌症患者，在社區成立了一個討論小組。最近我們才開完第一次的會議，而所討論的全部是對醫生的忿怒。（她稍後補充說：那些醫生只是用一種痛苦的表情看著你，然後告訴你他們無能為力，所以你只能回家等死。）

上人：不，那不能解決問題的！生醫生的氣，是不能解決問題的！妳對他們越生氣，妳的病越嚴重；然後他們更高興，因為有更多的病人需要治療！這都是因為有自利的思想，他們想變得更有錢。

史密斯先生：沒錯！現在醫學院裏，半數以上的課程是教導學生將來有錢如何投資致富。不過，這只是我個人的看法。

上人：社會上每個人都想要錢，因此他們彼此鬥爭。例如大家都知道的德州油商的例子，有六千萬的家產，結果幾年以前被兒子用槍射死，因為兒子等不及要繼承財產。人類就是這樣，怎麼樣都不夠——如果有一百萬，就想要二百萬；等有了二百萬，還想要更多。

史密斯先生：太糟糕了。他不可能得到錢的。

上人：你錯了。他被叛無罪，因為他給了律師很多錢。

史密斯太太：去年許多錢都花在醫生和律師那兒。

上人：妳不應該那麼掙扎。

史密斯太太：生病是非常昂貴的。

上人：把一切都視為假的。這世界是不真實的，就是一齣戲而已，令人們迷迷糊糊、顛顛倒倒。如果一切事情都是假的，還有什麼需要掙扎的？

（史密斯先生及史密斯太太點點頭。）

Ven. Abbot: Religions shouldn't have a one-sided and biased point of view. If a religion claims that it is right and all others are wrong, it is thereby opposing its own fundamental teaching, since bias leads to fighting. Therefore, at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, we see the good points of all religions and practice the six principles: no fighting, no greed, no seeking, no selfishness, no seeking self-benefit, and no lying.

Mr. Smith (when translator has mentioned only the first of the six principles): Yes, you're right, since there are so many religions wars. Wars arise from just this.

Ven. Abbot: It all comes from selfishness.

Mr. Smith: Yes, because each side is convinced it's right.

Ven. Abbot: It's because they seek to benefit themselves; this is the root of selfish action.

Mr. Smith: I was surprised to find out how open to other faiths Father Fields (the local priest) is. I never expected him to be so open. That's why I can be friends with him.

Mrs. Smith: It's true about fighting. For example, a group of local people about my age who are all afflicted with cancer have formed a discussion group, and we just had our first meeting. All we talked about is how angry we are at the doctors. (She added later: They all just look at you with this pained expression on their faces and tell you there's nothing they can do, so you should just go home and die.)

Ven. Abbot: No, that won't do it. Getting angry at the doctors won't do. The more you get angry at them, the sicker you'll get. Then the doctors will be even happier, because they'll have more sickness to treat! It's all because of the greed for self-benefit. They want to get richer.

Mr. Smith: Right! Half the courses in medical school these days are devoted to teaching the students how they should invest their money after they get rich. But maybe that's just my opinion.

Ven. Abbot: Everyone in this society wants money, and so they struggle with each other. For example, there's the case of a Texas oilman we know of. He was worth sixty million. His son shot him to death a couple of years ago because he couldn't wait for his inheritance. That's how people are: they never have enough. If they have one million, they want two. If they have two million, they want more.

Mr. Smith: Too bad, he won't get the money anyway.

Ven. Abbot: Actually he wasn't convicted of any crime, because he had a lot of money for a lawyer.

Mrs. Smith: Last year a lot of money went to doctors and lawyers.

Ven. Abbot: You shouldn't be struggling like that.

Mrs. Smith: Getting sick is very expensive.

Ven. Abbot: See everything as false. The world is unreal. It's

上人：退一步，看事情的全貌，並且看透它。（停頓一下，上人繼續說）也許你們與萬佛城有緣。

史密斯太太：我經常有這種想法。這裡如此地祥和寧靜，遠離外面世界的紛擾。

上人：不需要掙扎、擔心。這只會使妳生病而已。

史密斯太太：從出生的第一天開始，我就開始掙扎。

上人：是的。宗教和宗教戰爭，國家和國家戰爭，家庭與家庭戰爭，世界和世界戰爭。可是到底為了什麼？唯一的結果，就是兩敗俱傷。所以，妳應該把一切事都看做是假的。

史密斯太太：您這兒有學習不生氣的速成班嗎？

上人：你們可以晚上來聽經，你們可能和這裡有緣。（對翻譯者說）：讓他們請一本有英文翻譯的《妙法蓮華經普門品》。

翻譯者：那個翻譯的不十分正確。她是問有什麼方法可以不發脾氣。

上人：要忍耐。

翻譯者補充：有時我們會唸一個咒：「忍耐、忍耐，多多忍耐，不要生氣，娑婆訶！」

上人：那是我給道格·鮑爾的。有一次我們一起搭車，他問我在教那些高中叛逆學生時，如何才能控制自己的脾氣。但是妳（指史密斯太太）應該唸觀世音菩薩聖號，如果妳能唸觀世音菩薩聖號，並且不要生氣，我認為妳會康復的。

翻譯者：如果你們喜歡，幾分鐘後我們可以走過去參加法會，並且一起唸觀世音菩薩聖號。

史密斯先生：我有個問題，就是一旦計畫突然改變，比如您邀請我們今晚留下來，我就開始打妄想要調整我的時間表。今天聽到上人的開示，我知道這是個什麼問題。

上人：退後一步，然後看透它。（問翻譯者）：于斌樞機主教的像在這兒嗎？

（有人將樞機主教的相片拿出來。）

上人：他是中國的樞機主教，也是我的朋友。當他到這兒來的時候，他也拜佛。他也是把所有的宗教看做一個，我告訴他：「你做一個天主教中的佛教徒，而我做一個佛教中的天主教徒。」如果不是因為他是中國人，他早在1978年就被選為羅馬教皇。因為當時中國情勢還不穩定，他又是唯一一位中國籍的樞機主教，所以沒有任何的中國樞機主教支持他。

all a play. It causes people to be confused and upside down. If everything is false, what need is there to struggle?

Both Smiths nod.

Ven. Abbot: Step back and take a look at it all and see through it. *(After a pause)* Maybe you have affinities with the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas.

Mrs. Smith: I've often had that thought myself. This place is so peaceful and quiet, and so far from the hurry of the world outside.

Ven. Abbot: There is no need to struggle and worry. It just makes you sick.

Mrs. Smith: I've been struggling since the day I was born.

Ven. Abbot: Yes. Religions fight with religions; countries fight with countries; families fight with families; worlds fight with worlds. What is all the struggle about, though? The only result is that both sides lose out. You should see everything as false.

Mrs. Smith: Do you have a crash course here in not getting angry?

Ven. Abbot: You can come to evening lectures. You may have affinities here. *(To translator):* Give them have a copy of the English translation of the Universal Door Chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*.

Translator to Ven. Abbot: The translation was not quite right there. She's asking what method can she use to not get angry.

Ven. Abbot: Use patience.

Translator adds: We recite a mantra here sometimes: "Patience, patience, gotta have patience, don't get angry, *suo po he!*"

Ven. Abbot: That was given to Doug Powers when he told me one time when we were riding in a car together how he could not control his temper when teaching unruly high school kids. But *(to Mrs. Smith)* you should recite Guan Shi Yin Bodhisattva's name. I think that if you recite Guan Shi Yin's name and avoid getting angry, you can get well.

Translator: In a few minutes, if you'd like, we can go over to join the assembly and recite Guan Shi Yin's name together.

Mr. Smith: This is my problem: as soon as there's a sudden change in plans – like you're inviting us to stay this evening – my mind starts churning to reset my schedule. Having heard what the Ven. Abbot has said this evening, I can see what a problem this is.

Ven. Abbot: Step back and see through it. *(To the translator):* Is the portrait of Cardinal Yu Bin here?

The portrait is brought out.

Ven. Abbot: He was a Chinese cardinal and my friend. When he came here, he bowed to the Buddha. He too saw all religions as one. I told him: You be a Buddhist among Catholics, and I'll be a Catholic among Buddhists. If he hadn't been a Chinese, he would have been elected Pope in 1978; but there were no other Chinese Cardinals at the time to support him, since things were still very confused in China and he was the only one.