

My Winding Path of Affinity to Leave Home



曲曲折折出家路

沙彌 果度 2008年1月20日講於萬佛城大殿

A talk given by Shramanera Guo Du at the Buddha Hall of the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas on January 20, 2008

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今天晚上輪到果度練習說法，報告出家的因緣。這一次我能夠出家最主要有三個原因：第一、要感謝如來寺的法師們給予全力的支持；第二、就是往生的同修 Sonya；第三、是這次佛七所遭遇的一些感應。

這一次佛七，是我那麼多年來第一次全程參加，第一次慎重其事跟大眾一起共修，也是第一次對阿彌陀佛生起真正的信心，這完全是 Sonya 給予的力量。因為我從來沒有看過一個臨終的人，像她這樣子真誠，這樣喜悅地在念佛。

佛七第二天，我發願要往生西方極樂世界。在第三天下午靜坐念佛的時候，突然間有一個穿白衣的女子出現了，剛開始以為是 Sonya，就很注意的看著她的臉，慢慢的才發現是觀世音菩薩。觀世音菩薩帶我到一個地方，我看到一尊佛像，心想那一定是阿彌陀佛，因為整個蓮池海會現了出來，蓮花遍佈，就如經中所講大如車輪。

我看到蓮池裡的沙子很軟很軟，發出金色的光芒，想這大概就是金沙為底。那個水呢？想那一定是八功德水。這時西方三聖在前面出現，阿彌陀佛頭頂射出重重的金光，照耀整個蓮池。他的後面是重重樓閣，沒有窮盡。

第四天的下午，還有這個景象。在蓮花池的角落，突然間看到一個蓮花苞。當我注意蓮花苞的時候，突然它就展開了，裡面冒出來一個小孩子，向阿彌陀佛頂禮。當時打了一個妄想，「你是誰？你是不是我呀？」那個小孩子突然回過頭來，說：

Tonight it is my turn to practice speaking Dharma by reporting my conditions for leaving home. There are three reasons why I am able to leave the home life this time. The first is the full support given by the Dharma Masters at the Tathagata Monastery, to which I'd like to express my gratitude. Second is because my wife, Sonya, has passed away. Third is because of some responses I have encountered during the Amitabha Session.

This is the first Amitabha Session I have participated full-time during all these years. It is the first time I have cultivated together with everyone so seriously. This is also the first time I have really given rise to true faith toward Amitabha Buddha. It is completely attributed to my wife, Sonya, who gave me strength. I have never seen a dying person recite the Buddha's name with such sincerity and happiness as she did.

On the second day of the Amitabha Session, I made a vow to be born in the Western Land of Ultimate Bliss. On the afternoon of the third day, during meditation, I was thinking about Sonya's expression while she was reciting the Buddha's name. Suddenly a woman dressed in white clothing appeared. At first, I thought it was Sonya. So, I paid attention to her face. Slowly, I came to realize the woman was Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva. Then, she led me to a place where I saw a Buddha statue. My heart knew it was Amitabha Buddha because the entire Lotus Pool Sea-like Assembly was unveiled, covered by lotus flowers as big as cart wheels, just like the description in the sutra.

The sand in the Lotus Pool was very soft and radiating golden beams of light. I wondered if it was a reflection caused by the golden sand at the bottom of the pond. What about the water? I thought that it must have been the Water of Eight Merits. At that moment, the Three Sages of the West appeared in front of me. The head of Amitabha Buddha radiated layers upon layers of golden light, illuminating the entire Lotus Pool. Behind him were endless rows of buildings and towers.

Another image occurred on the fourth day. I was gazing into the lotus flower pool when, in the corner, a lotus bud appeared suddenly. While I was watching, the lotus bud opened quickly. A little child emerged from the inside of the bud and paid respect to Amitabha Buddha. I had a stray thought: Who are you? Are you me? The child turned his head to me and

「你就是我，我就是你。」那個景象在第二天還存在著。

佛七過後，是連續三週禪七。禪七第二天、第三天，只要靜下來或是走路的時候，心裡就隱隱約約地在念：「南無阿彌陀佛」，念阿彌陀佛的音樂就在腦海中冒出來，這個旋律是二十年前聽到的。我想參禪也沒有辦法，乾脆就念佛，一直到現在它還會冒出來。由於有這三種主要原因，所以今天才能夠完成這個出家的心願。

事實上，在二十年前開始學佛時，就想要出家，後來結婚了，可是還抱著希望。1996年Sonya生病了，醫生說沒救了。我就發願，如果她的病好了，就出家；後來她的病況雖然沒有完全好，至少她活了過來，連醫生都說這是個奇蹟，三、四十個醫生每天來研究她的病。

過了二、三年後，她的病稍為好一點，心想應該還願，雖然她的病沒有完全好。1998年我第一次申請出家，但是女界法師有意見，說我如果出家，Sonya會受不了，所以也就沒有辦法出家了。直到現在，才恍然大悟，她是在幫助我修行，是來成就我的。假如那時候出家的話，一定很早就「陣亡」了，因為我有很多黑業。

出家真是不容易，每個人有每個人的因緣。我的因緣就是這樣曲曲折折，這也是莫可奈何的事，只有隨緣。其中最大的曲折，就是去年十一月，要出家的當天突然延期，曲曲折折，到今天才舉行剃度的儀式。這個期間，讓我遭受到從所未有的壓力，心裡的激戰是很難描述的。

在聖城住了將近十五年，直到加入僧團訓練，才發覺那是完全不一樣的生活；即使能夠日中一食，能夠跟隨聖城的全部日常課程。不在僧團裡，不可能真正體會什麼是聖城出家眾的生活，而且這只是修行的一個開始而已。

我曾經研究禪宗將近二十年，一直不敢參話頭，經過十多年才知道什麼叫參話頭。知道什麼叫禪淨不二，但從來不去想淨土宗，對極樂世界並沒有多大的興趣，後來經過Sonya的事情，才徹底知道錯了。這種種的事情，都是需要一種因緣，也是需要你自己去體會。

said, "You are me, and I am you." The next day, that image was still in my mind.

Following the Amitabha Session, there are three consecutive weeks of Chan. On the second day of the Chan Session and continuing into the third, when I had a quiet moment or was walking, my heart was softly reciting Namó Amitabha. The music of reciting Amitabha Buddha's name floated up into my head. This melody was something I heard 20 years ago. I began to think there is no way I could meditate and investigate Chan. Therefore, I decided to recite the Buddha's name instead. Still now, the music is floating up. Because of these three reasons, my wish to leave the home-life was fulfilled today.

In actuality, I thought to leave the home-life 20 years ago when I started learning Buddhism. Later I got married, but I held hope. Sonya became ill in 1996. The doctor said she could not be saved. So I vowed, if she could recover from her sickness, that I would leave the home-life. She lived, although she did not completely recover. The doctor said it was a miracle. Thirty to forty doctors came every day to study her condition.

Her condition improved a little over two to three years. I decided it was time to complete my vow although she had not recovered completely. I applied to leave home in 1998, but the Dharma Masters on the women's side had reservations, saying that if I left home, Sonya would not survive. There was really no way to enter the monastic life for me. To this day, I suddenly realized that Sonya was helping me cultivate. She enabled me to have some achievement. If I had left the home-life at that time, I would have been "killed in action" because I had a lot of black karma.

It's not easy to leave home. Each person has his own affinity. My affinity was to follow a winding path. There was no choice but for me to follow my conditions. The most challenging bend was in November of last year. There was an unexpected delay on the day I was supposed to leave the home-life. The shaving ceremony was rescheduled on a day due to some complicated circumstances. Consequently, I had to endure pressure I have never experienced. The fierce fighting inside my heart was indescribable.

I have lived in the sacred City for almost fifteen years. It was until I have entered the Sangha training, I discovered that life is totally different as a monastic. Even if I could eat one meal a day and follow all the daily training schedule of the sacred City, as a resident, I couldn't really experience the monastic life in the City. Yet, as a trainee, this is just the beginning of my cultivation.

I had studied Chan for nearly 20 years. I never dared to meditate on the Chan topic. After more than ten years, I finally came to understand what was meant by meditating on the Chan topic and what was meant by nonduality between Chan and Pure Land Schools. I never considered the Pure Land School and didn't have interest in the Land of Ultimate Bliss. The incident with Sonya brought me to realize that I was completely wrong. Everything that happens requires a type of affinity and requires us to understand for ourselves.