

Putting Down Her Burdens and Setting Out at Ease Highlights of Dharma Master Heng Jen's Final Year in Vancouver

放下包袱，輕鬆上路：

側記恒貞師在溫哥華的最後一年生活



貞守毘尼志，妙語嫻辭轉法輪。
恒行春風道，苗長果熟稱仁師；

（釋近賦作）

*Constantly, she practiced the way of teaching like a spring breeze.
As sprouts grew and fruits ripened, she became known as a humane teacher.
Virtuously, she guarded the intent of the Vinaya.
With skillful speech and clever phrasing, she was adept at turning the Dharma wheel.* (Translated into English by DM Heng Chih)

比丘尼恒瓏 文 By Bhikshuni Heng Lung
徐秀儀 英譯 Translated into English by Chee, Siew Yee

去年6月20日恒貞師回到溫哥華後，常說她肚子痛。8月10日做腸鏡檢查，確定是大腸癌，馬上開刀切除6英吋的大腸和11條受感染的淋巴腺。恒貞師一直在檢討自己得病的原因，也思惟師父曾跟她說的：「不可扛債不還！」

後來恒貞師精修大悲法，在眾人迴向和親人支持下，身體明顯好轉。今年2月23日恒貞師決定回萬佛城，獻身教育。一個月後她發現肚裡有硬塊，於是返溫哥華複診，可是報告卻說正常。她說這真是業障！我明明摸到肚子裡有硬塊，可是一到醫生那裏，硬塊就消失了；從診所出來，這個硬塊又出來了。這個業障會躲醫生，我看這是來要命的！

Last year, after Dharma Master (DM) Jen went back to Gold Buddha Monastery (GBM) in Vancouver on June 20, she often mentioned she felt pain in her stomach. On August 10, she had a colonoscopy. After the doctor confirmed that it was colorectal cancer, he immediately arranged for an operation to remove six inches of the colon and eleven infected lymph nodes. DM Jen kept trying to discover the cause of her cancer. She also pondered what the Venerable Master had once said to her, "One cannot refuse to pay back one's debts!"

Later, DM Jen vigorously practiced the dharma of great compassion. With the transference of merit and support of her relatives and many others, she seemed to experience a marked improvement in her health. DM Jen decided going back to CTTB to re-devote her life to education on February 23, 2010. One month later, she found a lump in her abdomen. Hence, she flew back to Vancouver for a check up, but the medical report was normal. She said, "This is really a karmic obstacle! I obviously felt a lump in my belly. However, it disappears when I'm in the clinic. It comes back after I step out of the clinic. This karmic obstacle really knows how to hide from the doctor; I think it has come to take my life!"

6月3日在臺北榮總，檢查出癌細胞已經擴散到肝臟，大到無法開刀。「我現在要做的，是積極面對死亡，而不是對過去種種的回顧！」這是恒貞師在給我的信中提到的。

「我們常說把死掛在眉梢上，其實只是藉這假想來警惕自己不要放逸。當死神離我那麼近時，我對修行有不同的體會。修行是騙不了人，我還是那句話：『講經說法很可貴，但不能總是拾人牙慧。』如果真能把生死的問題看得那麼自然，我們所說的一切都會令人心服的。」

8月5日，恒貞師從臺灣回到溫哥華。我問她路途這麼長，體力怎麼受得了？她說：「我上飛機前求師父，一定要讓我安全回到加拿大。結果一上飛機就呼呼大睡，醒來沒多久就到了。就這麼神奇，我們的師父真好！」

在這一年來，恒貞師經常翻閱思惟《地藏十輪經》。她說讀了《十輪經》才發現自己有很多地方都做不好，在修道上我們欠缺深禪的功夫，都是屬於下根的。對於經教的學習，恒貞師以研究「論」為主；這麼多論中，她很歡喜《菩提道次第廣論》。她曾感慨自己生病以後，才發現出家這麼多年未能真正體會生死，只是拾人牙慧，停留在下士道「念死無常」的學習階段，並沒有發起中士道的「出離心」，乃至上士道的「發大菩提心」。

翻譯《梁皇寶懺》，是恒貞師在法大的碩士論文。有一天她交給我一個隨身硬碟說：「裡面有我翻譯的《梁皇寶懺》卷一到卷八，請幫我交給良法師。最難翻譯的我已完成，別人續譯卷九和卷十會容易些。」

恒貞師的腫瘤日益擴大，腳也開始水腫、無力，經常痛到徹夜未眠。於是9月20日她開始服用止痛藥，但一劑的止痛藥量，令她不能保持正念念佛，所以自行減半。為著念佛，她寧願忍著痛。

10月17日醫生來探望她，並告知我們她明天會開始陷入昏迷，兩天後就會走了。18日（往生當天）早上5點，恒貞師跟身旁的人說她已經沒有心跳了。於是他們趁機告訴恒貞師：「今天是很重要的一天，你的心跳會慢慢地減弱，漸漸進入休克。妳要在意識清醒的時候念佛，不要等到休克。」她很篤定地回答：「不用擔心！」當下就一起念佛。

The cancer had metastasized to the liver according to the medical report from Taipei Veterans General Hospital on June 3. The cancer was too huge to be removed by operation. "The thing I need to do now is to face death with a positive attitude and not to reminisce about all the events that happened in my past." This was part of the letter DM Jen had sent to me. She added, "In our practice we always say, 'hang the word "death" from our brow,' and that is only an imaginary symbol of vigilance to warn ourselves not to be laggards. You will have a different understanding towards practice when you are on the edge of death. In practice you can't deceive others. Then again I still will say the same thing, 'Giving lectures is worthy, but you can't always quote other people's sayings.' If we can see the problem of birth and death as natural, I believe whatever we say then will be convincing."

When DM Jen came back to Vancouver from Taiwan on August 5, I asked her, "How can you bear traveling such a long distance?" She said, "Before boarding the plane, I prayed to Shr Fu [Ven. Master] to let me come back safely. I was sound asleep once on the plane, and it landed soon after I woke up. It is amazing. Our Shr Fu is the best!"

During this year, DM Jen often read and contemplated the *Earth Store Bodhisattva Sutra of the Ten Chakras*. She said, "I just realized I didn't do that well in many areas after reading the *Earth Store Bodhisattva Sutra of the Ten Chakras*. In the scope of practice, if we have not reached a profound stage of Chan meditation, we belong to the class of people with small capacity." In the study of Buddhist texts, *shastras* (treatises) were her priority. The *Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* was her favorite. She said with regret, "Since I got sick, I have realized that I really don't understand the meaning of birth and death even though I have left home so many years. I am still at "the stage of people of small capacity" who are only mindful of death and of the impermanence of things. I have not brought forth the mind of transcendence and great Bodhi resolve."

DM Jen's Master's thesis from the Dharma Realm Buddhism University was the translation *Emperor Liang's Jeweled Repentance*. One day, she handed me her USB flash drive, saying, "In it is my translated file from roll one to roll eight of *Emperor Liang's Jeweled Repentance*. Please pass it to Dharma Master Liang. I completed the most difficult sections. Others will find it easier to translate rolls nine and ten."

DM Jen's tumor became more and more swollen day after day. Her legs had edema and were weak. She could not sleep all night due to pain, so she started to take painkillers from September 20. She found out she was not conscious enough to concentrate on reciting the name of Buddha if she took the prescribed dosage of painkillers. Therefore, she halved the dose. She would rather endure the pain in order to recite the name of the Buddha.

On October 17, the physician came to examine her and told us that she would pass away after staying in a coma for two days. On the day she passed away, October 18, at 5 a.m. she told people around her that she did not have any heartbeat. They took the opportunity and told

9點多鐘，她突然要求身邊的人將她扶正，並結上跏趺坐，戴上眼鏡（病榻中的恒貞師鮮少戴眼鏡）凝視著牆上的西方三聖像和上人法像，口中默念佛號。約略經過10分鐘，她說眼睛看不見了，身旁的同參便在她耳際提醒：「沒關係，用想的。」恒貞師說：「我是想著師父。」同參緊接著說：「師父就是阿彌陀佛！」

恒貞師雖然眼睛看不見了，但耳識仍非常清楚。當從萬佛城趕來探望她的同參進入她房間時，她很高興地發出幾聲「阿、阿、阿」的聲音。11點20分，恒貞師在眾人念佛聲中端然正坐，如入禪定，捨報安詳。金佛寺所有的住眾以及許多護法居士，聞訊後都趕來助念，佛號持續不斷至當晚九點結束。助念的過程中，時而飄出陣陣的花香與檀香味；而恒貞師的雙唇，也綻放出她生前燦爛的笑容。

恒貞師96歲的母親，在恒貞師要往生的那一刻心跳不已，於是吵著要來探望她的小女兒。以前我曾和恒貞師聊起，萬一妳媽知道了，我們要怎麼回答？她笑說：「人生本來就是無常，不過，我會做個榜樣給她看！」

晚上七點半，恒貞師的母親來到金佛寺，法師們先跟她談人生無常，再提到恒貞師已經解脫了。當下，她放聲大哭！法師安慰她說：「貞法師是坐著往生的，這很不容易的！」九點左右，坐在輪椅上的她在眾人的陪伴下，來到恒貞師的遺體前。忍著痛苦，她對恒貞師說：「貞法師，妳修得很好，媽媽以妳為榮！妳就安心放下，媽媽會用功的，會照顧自己的！」在場的人聽了無不動容。

【附錄】夢如小死，死如大夢

比丘尼恒貞講於2009年7月25日台北法界印經會果殊 英譯

在我還沒遇見師父前，就像一般的人生生活。幸好曾經參加過學校的佛學社，所以知道一點點佛法。在佛學社裏，我不是一個很用功的人，人家研究經典，我還在睡覺。佛學社注重念佛法門，他們告訴我：「人死以後，會看到一道光，而你會不由自主地往那道光的地方跑去，這也就是去投胎，繼續生死輪迴。」他們的這個說法，深深的印在我的腦海。

her, “Today is an important day; your heartbeat will gradually become weak, and you will go into a coma. You need to recite the Buddha’s name while you are still conscious. Don’t wait till you have gone into a coma.” DM Jen said assuredly, “Don’t worry!” Then they all recited the name of the Buddha immediately.

Around 9 a.m. she asked people to help her sit upright in full-lotus, put on her glasses (she rarely wore glasses after being sick), and gazed at the opposite wall, at a picture of the three Sages of the West and a picture of Venerable Master Hua, while reciting. After ten minutes, she said she couldn’t see anything. Her fellow cultivator said in her ear, “It’s fine, you can imagine them in your mind.” She replied, “I am mindful of Shr Fu.” Her fellow cultivator added, “Shr Fu is Amitabha Buddha!”

Even though DM Jen couldn’t see, her ear consciousness was clear. When her fellow cultivators from the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas came to visit her and stepped into the room, she seemed happy, and said, “Ah..Ah.. Ah...” At 11:20 a.m., she sat upright as if entering samadhi. With a clear mind she passed away peacefully in the sounds of Amitabha recitation. All the Sangha members of GBM and other lay people heard the news and came in one after another to assist in reciting continuously till 9 p.m. The room was filled with the fragrance of flowers and sandalwood during the recitation. DM Jen’s mouth burst into a bright smile as if she were still alive.

DM Jen’s 96 year-old-mom had fast irregular heartbeats at the moment of DM Jen’s death. She kept demanding to see her youngest daughter. One time when I was chatting with DM Jen, I had asked her how we should talk to her mother when she found out. DM Jen said with a smile, “Life is impermanent, and I myself will be the example for her!”

It was 7:30 p.m. when her mother arrived at GBM. The Dharma Masters first talked with her about how impermanent life is, and then they informed her that DM Jen had been liberated. She cried out loud after hearing it. The Dharma Masters comforted her, “It is very rare because DM Jen passed away in a sitting posture.” Her mother, seated in the wheelchair and accompanied by others, went to Dharma Master Jen’s body around 9 p.m. She subdued her grief and said, “DM Jen, you practiced well. Mom is proud of you. You can leave at ease. Mom will practice hard. I will take care of myself.” All those around her were moved by her words.

Appendix: A Dream Is Like a Temporary Death; Death Is Like a Big Dream

A lecture delivered by Bhikshuni Heng Jen on July 25, 2009 at Dharma Realm Buddhist Books Distribution Society, Taipei, Taiwan
Translated into English by Gwo Shu

I led an ordinary life like everyone else before I met Shr Fu [Venerable Master]. I’m lucky that I had joined the Society of Buddhist Studies in school, so I knew a little bit about Buddhism. I was not a hard-working

他們又說：「不想再受輪迴之苦，唯一的方法就是念佛。只要好好的念阿彌陀佛，肯定會去西方極樂世界。」我聽他們說西方極樂世界好，那我一定要去！我真的很感激當時的佛友，教我這個法門。因為在我出國之後，忽然有個境界發生，在我慌亂無主時，念佛法門解救了我要命的劫難。

我在溫哥華的生活作習，是早上五點拜地藏菩薩，然後七點小睡一會兒，再開始忙一天的事。有一天早上，在睡回籠覺時，做了一個夢。有句話說：「夢如小死，死如大夢。」我們在夢裡，絕對不會感受我們是在做夢。我夢見一個大廣場，又像是在捷運站的地方排隊，大家很有秩序的站著。我看到有個像售票亭的地方，有人在叫一些人的名字，好像在叫人，隔不久又叫下一個，我聽到有人在叫我的名字。

我想：「我為什麼要在這裡排隊？我到底要去那裡？」我轉過身想問站在我後面的人。結果看到一個穿著黑袍，個子很高的男人；他的臉色慘白，眼睛黑黑的，有點凹進去。他的樣子，讓我不由自主地害怕起來，我不想問了。在夢中，無法選擇離開或是換排站；只能往前走，完全沒有選擇的餘地。我只好告訴自己：「我不要問了，到了售票亭再問也不遲。」等我到了售票亭，問售票亭的人：「請問你，我為什麼要排隊買票？」那個售票人說：「妳難道不知道妳已經死了嗎？」在他跟我講話的一剎那，有兩個行李放在我的面前，而我竟然想也沒想地拿了行李就走了。

在當時，我沒有想：「我是怎麼死的？是病死的？還是被人家害死的？」我只有一念：「如果真的死了，我要去的是西方極樂世界！」這個念頭非常的強，我開始念「阿彌陀佛！阿彌陀佛……」當時我的四周黑暗，前面有一道的光亮了起來，我身邊出現一個人，他好像是看管我的人。

我看見那些光，心想：「完了！完了！我要投胎了！可是我要去西方極樂世界！」我告訴自己絕對不能投胎，我要往生西方極樂世界。「阿彌陀佛！阿彌陀佛……」，我就這樣一直念。可是我看到那個光愈來愈大，我就哭了，在夢裏哭了。

我跟旁邊的這個人說：「你知道嗎？我是

person in the Society of Buddhist Studies. I slept while other people were studying sutras. The Society stressed reciting the Buddha's name. I was told, "People see a beam of light right after death and they run uncontrollably toward that source of light. This is to be reborn and to continue the cycle of birth and death." This kind of talk was deeply ingrained in my mind.

I was also told, "The only way to free yourself from the cycle of birth and death is to recite the name of the Buddha. You will definitely go to the Western Land of Ultimate Bliss if you are good at reciting Amitabha Buddha's name." I heard them mention how wonderful it is in the Western Land of Ultimate Bliss. So I decided that I must go! I really appreciated my Dharma friends at that time who taught me this method. Later, I ran into some sudden difficulties when I left my country. Reciting the Buddha's name saved me during a critical situation when I fell into a panic and didn't know what to do.

My lifestyle in Vancouver was to bow to Earth Store Bodhisattva at five in the morning. Then I would go back to sleep for awhile at seven before getting started for a busy day. I had a dream one morning when I was taking my nap. There is a saying: "A dream is like a temporary death, and death is like a big dream." We do not know we are dreaming when we are in a dream. In my dream, I saw a huge public square where people were waiting in an orderly line at what looked like a ticket kiosk in a subway station. Someone was calling out people's names, one after the other, pausing for a while in between. Then I heard someone call my name.

I thought: Why do I need to line up? Where am I going? I turned around, wanting to ask someone behind me. I saw a tall man wearing a black robe. He had a pale face with sunken black eyes. I was so scared that I didn't want to ask anymore. I somehow knew I wouldn't be permitted to change stations. I had no choice but to move forward toward the front. I told myself, "I am not going to ask until I reach the ticket kiosk." When I reached the kiosk, I said to the ticket agent, "I want to ask you why I need to line up here." The agent said, "Don't you know you are already dead?" Two suitcases appeared in front of me while he was talking. I didn't even think. I just picked them up and left.

At that time, I didn't think about how I had died – about whether I had gotten sick or whether I'd been murdered. I had only one thought: If I'm really dead, then I must go to the Land of Ultimate Bliss. This thought was very strong, and I began reciting: "Amitabha Buddha, Amitabha Buddha..." A light grew brighter in front of me while my surroundings were all dark. A person appeared next to me as though keeping an eye on me.

As I stared into the light, I thought: I am dead! I am dead! I will be reborn again. But I have to go to the Western Land of Ultimate Bliss. I told myself that I must not be reborn along any other path. Again, I started reciting "Amitabha Buddha, Amitabha Buddha..." I kept reciting like this. As I watched the light getting bigger and bigger, I cried. I cried in my dream.

要往生西方極樂世界的！我只要去西方極樂世界，你不要逼我去投胎！」我邊哭邊說：「我是念佛的，我是念佛的，我絕對不投胎，我要往生！」我拚命地、懇切地念「阿彌陀佛！阿彌陀佛……」。這個人被我吵得不耐煩了，拿起我的行李，往我身上一丟：「好啦！你去你的西方啦！」剎那間我醒了，這時是中午十二點了；我平常是八點鐘一定起床，那一天竟然睡過了時間。

師父說過有人是在睡覺時死的，相信當時我若不是那麼懇切地念佛，必定死在睡夢裡。我醒來的時候，全身無力，身上卻出了很多油。我問自己：「我現在人在那裏？」我整個的意識都沒有了，沒法想。過了一會兒，我對自己說：「我現在在溫哥華，在加拿大。」那天中午，我開車找我一個朋友，她看到我第一句話就說：「哎唷！妳的臉怎麼是青色的？」

真的相信我若不是在夢裡念佛，今天在這裡和你們講話的，就不是恒貞了！我想這夢境絕對是一個無常的大警告！警告——「境界來的時候就是在考驗，考驗你平常有沒有真用功。」

I said to the person next to me, while crying, "You know what? I want to be born in the Land of Ultimate Bliss. I will only go to the Land of Ultimate Bliss. You can't force me to be reborn in any other place! I am a person who recites the name of the Buddha. I recite the name of the Buddha. I absolutely will not be reborn in any realm other than the Land of Ultimate Bliss!" I desperately and sincerely recited "Amitabha Buddha, Amitabha Buddha..." The person I was talking to grew impatient with my hysteria. He picked up my luggage and threw it at me. "Good!" he said, "Go ahead! Go to your Land of Ultimate Bliss!" I woke up that very moment. It was 12 noon. I usually get up at 8 o'clock, but that day I overslept.

Shr Fu said some people pass away in their sleep. I believe that I would have died in my dream if I hadn't sincerely recited the Buddha's name. I had no energy when I woke up, and my body was covered with oily sweat. I asked myself, "Where am I now?" I was totally disoriented. I couldn't think. After a while I said to myself, "I am in Vancouver, Canada." I visited a friend that afternoon. The first thing she said when she saw me was, "Ugh! Why is your face green?"

I believe that if I hadn't recited the Buddha's name in my dream, I would not be here talking to you today. I think this dream was definitely a big lesson. The lesson was: When a state comes, it is a test to see if you've been practicing on a daily basis.

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齊心協力種菩提：

記2010年11月6日彌陀聖寺新園區灑淨暨放生法會