



今天是二月十七號，星期三；在農曆年來講才是初四。我相信在座的大家，大部分今年都是在聖城過的年。禮拜天新年那一天，我們辦護國息災法會，許多信眾從灣區，從遠地到廟上來；一早就來，整天都很多人，無非就是希望到廟上來祈福、求平安。

到現在，聖城的佛殿還掛著燈籠，還有齋堂、Office（辦公室）到處都可以講是張燈結彩。那麼，從接引信眾、廣結善緣、結法緣的立場來講，這個無可厚非，也算是好事情。

我們亞洲人過新年，跟西方人過聖誕節、感恩節都是差不多的。本來是一個世俗的日子，佛門本來不是在世俗的節慶上來做執著的，只是隨緣，隨順世間風俗。照說世俗的節慶有一種業風，假如認識業風的境界，比較不會被境界所轉；假如不認識業風的境界，可能被業風吹倒，或者吹得東倒西歪。

有一些蓮友、同修可能會覺得有點遺憾，因為許多人都是回到家鄉，去跟親友過新年；我就留在廟上來過年，就世俗的感覺，好像有點感傷。那麼，假如我們往深一層的層面來看，什麼地方是故鄉呢？

也許我們在座的一些人，出生地是在中國，或者在臺灣、馬來西亞、香港或者東岸，這些地方好像是我們的故鄉；但是，仔細思考一下：雖然我們在這個地方出生長大，跟那個地方的人，比較有點緣份；但是長遠來看，畢竟都只是一個過

到極樂世界 去過年

Celebrating the New Year in the Land of Ultimate Bliss

朱果翔 講於 2010年2月17日萬佛城大殿

A talk given by Guo Xiang Chu in the Buddha Hall of the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas in February 17, 2010

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Today, February 17, Wednesday, is the fourth day of the Lunar New Year. I believe most of us here spent our New Year's Day at CTTB. On Sunday, which was New Year's Day, there was a mantra recitation and a Dharma assembly. Many visitors came from the San Francisco Bay Area to pray for a peaceful and auspicious coming year.

We have decorated the Buddha Hall, Dining Hall, and Administration Office with colorful lanterns and banners. It feels good to make our visitors feel welcomed.

The Asian tradition of celebrating New Year's is about the same as Westerners' celebrations of Thanksgiving and Christmas. Actually, the Lunar New Year is a worldly celebration, and we Buddhists should not have any attachments to this kind of celebration. In order to make visitors feel warmly welcomed, we accord with conditions and worldly custom. According to worldly customs has a kind of karmic force, and if we do not recognize this karmic force, we will easily be moved by this kind of situation. If we recognize the situation, then we are less likely to be confused by it.

Some of us may feel unhappy or regretful because we are staying here at CTTB, unable to celebrate New Year's with our families, in our hometowns. If we investigate from another point of view, we can ask, where is my hometown?

It is very easy for us to consider the place where we were born and raised as our hometown. Actually, no matter where we were born, whether in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, or elsewhere, that place is just a temporary hometown. We are travelers. We're just passing by these places because we happen to have some affinities with the people who live there. For us

客，那個地方並不是我們真正的故鄉。其實我們在聖城，好像我們在這邊安身立命，有一個共修的地方，這也只是一個暫時停留的地方。對佛教徒來講，我們真正的故鄉，永久的故鄉，應該是在常寂光淨土，或者阿彌陀佛的極樂世界。

大概在1990年代，我們聖城有很多義務老師，有一位姜校長，在臺灣面談，找了很多的義務老師來。那時候上人還在，那麼姜校長就問上人說：「現在快要過新年了，我們學校的學生、老師應該怎麼慶祝新年呢？」那時我也在場。上人就跟姜校長講：「應該讓我們的學生在過年的時候，拜天、地、君、親、師。」這個禮拜二學校開學時，我們還是維持這個傳統，有中文比賽，還有天、地、君、親、師祭祖的這個活動。

在過年的時候，其實也是一個感恩的日子，我們應該緬懷感恩上人，創辦了這個道場，讓大家能夠在這個地方安身立命、安心辦道。假如我們想想另外一個情況：今天沒有萬佛城的話，我們在座的每一個人，今天都會有非常不一樣的遭遇；也許我們到別的小乘的道場啦，或者到別的地方，在外頭工作啦，做什麼……，所以，會是完全不同的一個遭遇。

世俗之人在過年時，見面就說「恭喜發財」；我們佛教徒，佛門的祝福通常就說「增長功德法財」、「智慧如海」、「慈悲如海」，最好將來大家一起到阿彌陀佛的極樂世界，一起去那邊過年。

為什麼要增長功德法財呢？上人說：「單單有法還是不行，一定要有功德；你若沒有功德，單單有法就會著魔。這個魔障有天魔、地魔、人魔、財魔。因為你想要修道，才來磨你；你若不修道，就沒有魔了。」

以前在老金山寺，在過年時，有一次上人就送給弟子們兩個字，大家猜這兩個字是什麼？上人拿一個字軸，上面寫著過年時送給弟子們的字——「生死」。上人就說：「這個世界就是人吃土，土吃人。我們的身體已經不知道被這個世界的土吃了多少次了！大家還不知道要覺悟。」

上人解釋為什麼送給弟子們這兩個字——「生死：不是就是說，那麼生死就算了，二死永亡。二死是什麼？假如有人問你：你在金山寺學佛這麼久了，什麼叫二死？你不能講說『I do not know.』這可就是笑話了。」「二死」，上人說明：「分段生死跟變易生死。分段生死就是你有一份，我有一份。你這一份也許是比較高，是六

Buddhists, our true hometown should be in the Pure Land of Eternal Still Light, or in Amitabha Buddha's Western Pure Land. We consider CTTB as just a temporary hometown.

In the 1990s, many volunteer teachers were at CTTB. Principal Chiang had interviewed and found many volunteer teachers in Taiwan. The Venerable Master was still alive, and Principal Chiang asked him, "It's almost New Year's now. How should the students and teachers at the school celebrate it?" I was present and heard the Venerable Master's response: "We should let our students pay their respects to heaven, earth, the country, family, and teachers." When school starts this Tuesday, we will be continuing this tradition of paying respects to ancestors, heaven, earth, the country, family, and teachers.

New Year's Day is also a day for expressing gratitude. We should be grateful to the City's founder and our teacher, Master Hsuan Hua. Had he not made his great vow to set up CTTB, we would not have this opportunity to stay here and study peacefully. If CTTB were not here today, each of us would be in a very different place. Perhaps we would not be in a Mahayana monastery; perhaps we would be working outside, or doing something else.

During Chinese New Year, people greet each other by saying, "Congratulations on making a fortune." But we Buddhists greet each other by saying, "Let's increase our merit and virtue and our Dharma wealth!" or "Wisdom like the sea!" or "Kindness and compassion like the sea!" Best of all would be if we could all go to Amitabha's Land of Ultimate Bliss to celebrate New Year's together.

Why do we need to increase our merit and virtue? The Venerable Master said, "Just practicing the Dharma is not enough; you must have merit and virtue. Otherwise, you will be possessed or influenced by demons. There are heavenly demons, earth demons, human demons, and money demons. Demons will try to give you trouble because you want to cultivate the Way; if you don't cultivate the Way, demons will not bother you."

The Venerable Master gave his disciples two words for a New Year's Day gift: "birth" and "death." He said, "Human beings eat things that come from the earth. After we pass away, the earth eats our bodies. We have died countless times and our bodies have been eaten by the earth again and again, but we still have not awakened."

The Venerable Master explained why he gave his disciples these two words: "I do not mean, we're born and then we die, and that's it. What are the two kinds of death? If someone were to ask you, 'You've been studying Buddhism at Gold Mountain Monastery for so long, can you tell me what the two kinds of death are?' You can't say, 'I don't know.' That would be a joke."

尺高，我有五尺九；這各有各的形段，這叫分段生死。」

分段生死的另外一種——變易生死。上人說：「到了四果阿羅漢，這個分段生死了了，但是變易生死卻沒有了。這個二乘人了了分段生死，沒有了變易生死。變易生死就是念念生、念念滅、念念不停。那個二乘的聖人，對這個變易生死還沒有了，菩薩才能了這個變易生死。」

在佛教有一個宗派叫密宗，密宗有一種法門，叫做中陰身的救度，就是說等到一個人死的時候，還沒有投胎轉世之前，修這種中陰身的救度法，來救度他，幫助他往好一點的地方去。這個是從這個分段生死來講，就等他死了還沒有投胎的時候，去救度他。

但是，假如從變易生死的立場來講，就是說念念之間的變易，前念生，後念滅；這個念念的生死，就在這個時候就要做中陰身的救度。就是說每一個念都是生死，每一個念都要中陰身的救度。這也就是我們平常講的，自性眾生無邊誓願度，就是念念在救度自性的眾生。

虛老開示，「人的身體跟這個天地的造化其實是一般的。我們身體的身心、動靜、行住坐臥，要順著天地的造化。隨時要調伏，就是說動中有靜，靜中有動；動的時候不要被動轉，靜的時候也不要被靜轉。那麼，這樣子，動靜二諦的圓融跟天地之氣一樣，修行、辦道無非就是調動靜而已。」

虛老又講：「白天我們應緣，遇到事情的時候，能夠做得了主；那麼白天能夠做得主，夢中才能做得了主。做夢的時候能做得主，乃至於生病的時候也做得主。這個樣子，臨命終的時候才能做得主。前面講了幾樣做得主，就是有平常能強做主宰而來的。」

這個身體要健康，就是需要有充足的血液，就是血要多、要充足，不能貧血。那麼，血要怎麼充足呢？就是要有足夠的休息，充分足夠的睡眠。一天也有生、滅，一天從晚間9點鐘到隔日凌晨的3點鐘，這個時候是一天的冬天，應該是好好地休息。假如這段時間沒有好好地休息的話，這個血液通常是沒有辦法造得充足。那麼，血液充足身體就容易健康。

同樣，修行的路要走得穩，剛剛講的就是恭喜大家有充足的功德法財，要有充足的慈悲心；慈悲心的總量要充足，這樣修行的路就可以走得比較穩。

The two kinds of death, the Venerable Master explained, are: "Physical birth and death and the birth and death of thoughts." Each person has his or her share of life span. It's like our bodies. Maybe I'm six feet tall and you're five foot nine. Each has its own length.

The other type of birth and death is that of the ever-changing thought process. The Venerable Master said, "A fourth-stage Arhat has ended physical birth and death, but not yet ended the birth and death of thoughts. Sages of the Lesser Vehicle do not end the birth and death of thoughts; only Bodhisattvas end the birth and death of thoughts."

The Secret School has a dharma called "Rescuing the Soul Between the Skandhas." People try to help a person's soul to go to a better place during the period after that person has died and before he has been reborn into another body. From the point of view of physical birth and death, people try to help someone after a person has passed away.

However, from the point of view of the birth and death of thoughts, we should try to maintain clarity during the period between thoughts. We should use the same practice to "rescue" or be aware of all of our false thoughts. This is the vow that we commonly make: "Beings of my self-nature are limitless; I vow to rescue them all."

Elder Master Xuyun said, "Our human body is just like the nature of heaven and earth. We should regulate and be mindful of our body and mind. While walking, standing, lying down, and sitting, we should be in accord with the movements of heaven and earth. At all times, we should observe the stillness within movement and movement within stillness. When we move, we should not be caught by movement, and when we are still, we should not be caught by stillness. This way, the perfection of movement and stillness is like the energy of heaven and earth. Practice is simply to regulate and be mindful of our movement and stillness."

Master Xuyun continues, "Only when we have self-mastery in the daytime in handling affairs and meeting people, can we have self-mastery during our dreams at night. Only when we have self-mastery during dreams can we have self-mastery during illness. Then we can have self-mastery when we are dying. In these instances, when we have self-mastery, it comes from the effort we put into our daily practice."

In order to keep our body healthy, we need to have sufficient blood. How should we make sure we have sufficient blood? We need to get enough rest and sleep. Every day is a time for birth and for death. From 9 p.m. to 3 a.m. in the morning is the "winter" of each day, which is when we should be resting. If we do not rest well during this period, our body is often unable to produce enough blood. So if we have enough blood, we will be

一開始的時候講到，就說在聖城過年，我們有些人也許有點惆悵，那麼祝福大家，以後有機會到阿彌陀佛的極樂世界去過年。那麼有人會說，極樂世界有沒有過年呢？也許有些人他是乘願再來，可以告訴大家那邊有過年，還是沒有過年，或者天天都過年，或者極樂世界過的是怎麼樣的年？但是，上人他是這麼講，他說：「佛教裡是有願必償。你發願要到極樂世界，就會生到極樂世界。你發願到了極樂世界，要再回來教化眾生，也會滿你的願。你願在極樂世界那裡長住也可以，願意回來也可以。但是，從極樂世界回來了，就是乘願再來，跟現在不同；現在的情況就是迷多於覺，那你是乘願再來的蓮友的話，那就是覺多於迷，覺悟勝過迷。」

healthier.

Similarly, in order to follow the Buddha's path, we need to have abundant merit and virtue, as well as compassion. That way, our practice will be more stable and steady.

Earlier I said that perhaps some people are a little sad about spending New Year's at CTTB, away from home. I hope that, in the future, everyone will be able to spend New Year's Day in Amitabha Buddha's Land of Ultimate Bliss. Someone may ask, "Is there New Year's in the Land of Ultimate Bliss?" Perhaps they can return to this world by their vows and tell everyone if they celebrate New Year there! Perhaps they don't celebrate it there, or perhaps they celebrate it every day. According to the Venerable Master, "If we make a vow, we will certainly fulfill it. If we vow to be reborn in the Western Pure Land, we will be reborn there. If we make a vow to return to the Saha world to teach and transform beings, we can do that also. In that case, it will be different from the way it is now, as we will be more awakened and less confused."