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我的師父宣公上人（續）



It Is Hard to Encounter a Good Spiritual Teacher: My Teacher, the Venerable Master Hsuan Hua

(continued)

口述上人教化
The Oral History Project

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III. Recognized the Master

Epstein: I remember that, when I got back from Taiwan a year later, I could speak Chinese fairly well. The first thing I did when I got off the plane was to go to the Venerable Master's place to meditate. It was as if my last meditation before I left and my first meditation after coming back fit together. All my meditation time in between was at such lower quality that it didn't really count. Afterwards I talked with him and I asked him the same questions that I thought I didn't understand because of the language. I still didn't understand. It took a long time at slowly studying Buddhism and practicing before I came to understand better.

How did I recognize him? I had one really extraordinary experience meditating with him, I think it was in early June 1966, when it became very, very clear to me; I had an extraordinary experience of my deep inner being. I then looked as deeply as I could at him, and it became very clear to me that he didn't have any personal self; he was empty in the Buddhist sense. Of course whatever understanding about him I had was relatively superficial. When I had what for me was a very profound meditation experience, it was very clear that he had helped to mediate it, giving me a little assistance as I needed it. After that, it was very clear that he was my teacher. But he didn't say, "Take refuge with me."

三、認識上人

易象乾：一年之後從臺灣回來，記得那時中文已經相當不錯了。在下飛機之後的第一件事情，就是去上人那裡坐禪。就好像離開前的最後一次打坐，和回來之後的打坐結合在一起了；而之間我所做的禪修與之相比，品質差得根本不值一提。後來我與他交談，也問了當初我認為是語言的緣故，而不能理解的相同問題；結果我還是不能理解。在花了很長一段時間來慢慢學習和修行之後，我才有了更好地理解。

我怎麼認識上人的？一九六六年六月初，在坐禪時，我內心深處有種異常特別的感覺，這感覺變得非常、非常清楚。接著試著在這種感覺裏盡力去深入觀察上人，更清楚地發現，他完全沒有自我，在佛教的意義上是一種無我的狀態。當然我對上人的認識是相當膚淺的。當時的那個經歷對我來說是一個很深刻的禪定經驗，很明顯地，上人居中幫了我，在需要時給予我一點助力。從那之

Victor: Then what happened after you got back from Taiwan?

Epstein: When I came back, he was still holding meditation in the old living room, in the Victoria slum building, with the old couch cushions on the floor. I came in and he was sitting there, totally still and empty, just like when I left. The only two other people who were there were Nick and Susan Mechling. I sat down and meditated for an hour. We talked afterwards. I stayed in San Francisco until I had to go to University of Washington to study. I was going to go there as a graduate student. In September, he started moving from Sutter and Webster Streets to Tian Hou Temple, on Waverly Place in Chinatown, which may be the oldest Chinese temple in the United States.

After we helped him move, I went up to Seattle to study Buddhism. After being around the Venerable Master, again it was a big shock to see what the Buddhism was being taught at University of Washington and how people understood those teachings. It was a very difficult time for me, so I wrote to him and asked him whether I could come to the temple over the winter break. He wrote me back in English saying, yes, I could come. So I went. I wasn't prepared for how cold it was. It was a very cold winter in San Francisco. There was pretty much nobody around except him and me. He wasn't there all the time. I just sat there meditating by myself for most of two weeks. During that time, I asked him whether I could take refuge with him. He said okay and set a date.

Some friends from the University of Washington came down on their way to Tassajara Zen Center. They knew I would be there, and they were curious, so they stopped by. They were Paul Hansen, Steve Klarer, and Jon Babcock. They all met the Venerable Master. They took off to go to Tassajara Zen Center and then they stopped by again. Jon Babcock stayed for a few days. One day I was talking to the Venerable Master and he said, "Did you tell Jon you were going to take refuge?" I said, "No, why should I?" He said that I should tell him, so I did, and he requested to take refuge too. We still have a photo of the two of us with the Venerable Master on the day we took refuge, December 27, 1967. Then we went back to Seattle and set up a daily meditation group in Seattle; the participants were almost all studying Buddhism at the University.

We decided to invite the Venerable Master to Seattle for a week-long meditation session over spring break. We wrote him a letter and told him that if he would agree to come, we would buy a plane ticket and find him a place to stay. We told him there were a lot of people in Seattle who would like to meditate with him. He dictated a letter to Nancy Lovett, who was Steve Lovett's wife. (Steve later left home to become Dharma Master Heng Guan). And Nancy wrote down what the Master said. Basically the letter said: I'm sorry I cannot come to Seattle, because if I leave San Francisco, there's going to be an earthquake. You should all come down to San Francisco, and we can have a session here. So a whole bunch of us went down to San Francisco. There were also some other young Americans in

後，顯而易見，他就是我的老師。但他沒有說：「皈依我吧！」

鄭偉德：那麼在你從臺灣回來之後，發生了哪些事情呢？

易象乾：回來之後，上人還是在那所維多利亞式貧民區建築的舊客廳裏打坐，只是在地板上鋪著一些舊的長沙發墊。我走進屋子的時候，他正坐在那裏，完全地平靜、澄空，就像走之前那樣。那裏其他的兩人是尼克(Nick Mechlin)和蘇珊·麥克林(Susan Mechling)。我打坐約一個小時，隨後我們交談起來。我就一直待在三藩市，直到後來要去華盛頓大學念研究所。九月，他從沙打街(Sutter)和韋伯街(Webster)搬到中國城威弗利街(Waverly Place)的天后廟，那裡也許是美國歷史最悠久的寺廟了。

我們幫他搬家之後，我就到西雅圖讀佛學去了。由於在上人身邊待了一段時間，當我看到華盛頓大學裡對於佛學的教導，以及對於佛學的理解，我再次感到非常震驚。對我而言，那是一段很艱難的時期。於是就寫信請示上人，在寒假時我可不可以到廟上來，他用英文給我回信說，沒問題，來吧！於是我就去了。我對三藩市的寒冷沒有任何心理準備，那真是一個非常冷的冬天！除了我和上人之外，那裡幾乎沒有別人。他並不是一直都在，差不多有兩個禮拜，是我獨自在那裡打坐。在那期間，我請問上人可否成為他的皈依弟子。他說好的，並且定了一個日子。

在華盛頓大學的一些朋友準備去Tassajara禪修中心，他們是保羅·漢森Paul Hansen，史蒂夫·柯拉爾Steve Klarer，還有喬恩·白考克Jon Babcock。他們知道我一定在上人那裏，對那裏也很好奇，順便過來看看，他們都見到了上人。之後他們動身去了Tassajara禪修中心，後來再次路過。喬恩·白考克留下來住了幾天。一天我和上人講話的時候，上人說：「你和喬恩說了你要皈依了嗎？」我說：「沒有，我要說嗎？」上人說我應該告訴喬恩的。於是我就對喬恩講了，於是他也請求皈依。我們還有一張一起皈依上人的照片，那是在一九六七年十二月二十七號。然後我們回到西雅圖，並在西雅圖創辦了一個日常禪坐班；其中的成員，幾乎都是華盛頓大學裡學習佛學的人。



San Francisco who attended. We all had a week of Chan with the Venerable Master in San Francisco.

Victor: You say you noticed that the Venerable Master was very different than other Buddhists in America, when you went to Seattle and San Francisco. Can you explain?

Epstein: The Master was always very, very kind to everyone. He treated everyone with equal kindness. At that time, he had been in Chinatown. He was disappointed that most of the disciples in Chinatown were not sincere or respectful during sutra lectures. So he left. Most of the people in the Chinatown Buddhist community were outraged that he would do that, so they stopped making offerings. Just a few people continued to make offerings to him.

He was living in what was basically a slum flat in a rundown Victorian building. The altar was on some card tables. When people gave him offerings, he would share whatever there was with people in the building. Sometimes he would invite us to lunch, even though we knew nothing about Buddhism or making offerings or merit or anything like that. There were communal kitchens on the second floor and third floor and a large number of people living in individual rooms there. He would buy hundred pound bags of rice, and stick them in communal kitchens, because everybody living in the building was very poor, and he wanted to make sure that everyone would have something to eat.

What I came to realize about him is that he was different from anybody else I had ever met, because he had no vestige of self, nobody inside to bounce off. You could look into who he was, and go in and in and in and experience more and more empty space, light, and compassion. But I could never detect any distinct individual that was separate from me. I had never met anybody like that before. What was there was great kindness. I didn't understand a lot of things he said, but it was just very comforting to be around him.

☯ To be continued

我們決定寫信去請上人在春假期間來西雅圖舉行一個禪七，如果上人能來的話，我們就去給他買機票，並找一個住的地方。告訴他在西雅圖有很多人想要跟他學習坐禪。他口述了一封信給南希·婁威特 (Nancy Lovett)——就是史蒂夫·婁威特 (Steve Lovett, 後來出家，法號恆觀) 的妻子。南希轉述了上人的話：「很抱歉我不能到西雅圖去，如果我離開了三藩市，這裡就會發生地震；若是你們能來，我可以在這裡為你們辦一個法會。」所以我們這群人就都去了三藩市。其他還有一些在三藩市的年輕美國人也參加了法會。我們和上人在三藩市打了一個禮拜的禪七。

鄭偉德：你剛才說，你到西雅圖和三藩市時，你認識到上人與你所見到的其他在美國的僧人有別。你能解釋一下嗎？

易象乾：上人對人總是非常友善的。他對待每個人都是平等的慈悲。他在中國城住過，但很失望，中國城的大多數弟子在講經法會中都沒有誠心和恭敬心，所以他離開了！中國城佛教界的很多人對上人的離開非常生氣，於是他們停止了對上人的供養，只有一些人還繼續供養他。

他就住在基本上可說是貧民窟的一棟破敗的維多利亞式建築中的一層，佛案就設在一些牌桌上。有人供養上人的時候，他會把所有東西都分給那棟建築中的人。有時上人也會邀請我們一起吃午餐，儘管那時我們對佛教、供養、功德之類的事情還一無所知。那裏二樓和三樓有公共的廚房，有很多人都住在相互獨立的房間。上人會買一袋袋上百磅的米，放在公共廚房；因為那裏的大多數人都很窮，上人要確定每個人都有飯吃。

我開始認識到上人，不同於以往我所遇到的任何人，因為他絲毫沒有自我，內心沒有任何的牽絆。你可以看出他是怎樣的人，並且隨著與他越來越深入的接觸，而體會到越來越多的「空」、光明以及慈悲。但過去我從來沒有察覺到任何不同尋常的人，是超然獨立於「我」之外的，我之前從來沒有見過像他這樣的人。他是那麼的慈悲，儘管他講的有許多我都聽不懂，但是和他在一起真的非常舒服。

☯ 待續