

Memories in Vancouver

溫哥華·憶當年

選摘自金佛聖寺二十週年紀念刊 恒實法師 文

By Rev. Heng Sure

Excerpted from Red Lotus Abound in the Valley of a Thousand Mountains,
Commemorating the 20th Anniversary of Gold Buddha Monastery

大悲懺

師父帶我和恒朝啟開這個號稱加拿大的第一間寺廟時，那兒原有的都是一些在家人團體，十九街的觀音寺也早已在那裡了。他們哪敢跟出家人較量啊，尤其我們師父還這樣有名。其實他們很想保住信眾，怕他們轉去追隨這位美國來的和尚。

就在這種微妙的情況下，師父居然把我們這兩個朝聖的美國人給丟到加拿大來。「我起先就打算把金佛寺的擔子交給你們了，好讓你倆在加拿大有個新的開始。」他說，「只有在這種情況下，你們才能真正靠自己站起來，而不被漂亮女孩子吃掉。」師父第一次來的時候，邀同兩位當地的老師參加我們的大悲懺。他說如果我知道怎麼做，就由我來領懺吧。我說懺我拜過，可是沒帶過。師父說：「你既然聽過，就一定能做。我年輕時候，也沒學過這些。只是聽過一次，就能照做了。只要運用你的智慧，不管怎麼做都是好的。這裡是加拿大，我們甬那麼死板。」

到了那一天，佛殿擠滿了人，師父站在正中央。懺儀一開始，我就出了紕漏。不僅歌唄唱頌的調子我不熟，儀式的進程我也不清楚，因此整個懺儀讓我搞得亂七八糟，只好重來。我央求尼師幫我在每次讚頌前起個調門。懺儀一結束，師父一張臉鐵青，兩寺廟住持則是滿臉驚愕，我真恨不得有地洞可鑽。

「等我回到美國，我要你們每個週末都到金佛寺拜大悲懺。果真，這是我對你的期望，你懂吧？」



The Great Compassion Repentance

When Shr Fu [the Venerable Master] brought Heng Chau and myself there to open his first Canadian monastery, there were several lay groups; Guan Yin Temple on 19th Avenue were already in place. While they did not dare compete with a Sangha member, especially one as renowned as Shr Fu, on the other hand, they would have been happy to keep their disciples and not lose them to the monks from America.

In the midst of this delicate situation Shr Fu dropped his two American pilgrims to Canada. "Originally I planned for Gold Buddha to be your permanent assignment, to give you both a new start in Canada," he said, "on the condition that you can stand on your own and not get eaten up by the pretty girls." On the first visit Shr Fu called in the two local lay teachers, and invited them to join us for a Great Compassion Repentance. He asked me to lead it, if I knew how. I said that I had bowed it before, but had not lead it. "If you've heard it, you can do it. I never studied those ceremonies when I was young. I just heard it once and went ahead. Use your wisdom. Anyway you do it is fine. This is Canada and we are not bound by the old traditions."

When the time came, the Buddha hall was full of guests, with Shr Fu in the middle. I started the ceremony and got into trouble in the first minute. I did not know the tunes, fumbled the order of ceremonies and made a terrible mess of the ceremony. We had to restart twice and I had to ask the nuns present to cue me on some of the tunes. By the time it was over Shr Fu's face was stony, and the two leaders of the local temples were slacked jawed with amazement. I wanted to crawl in a hole.

"When I go back to the USA I want you all to come Gold Buddha and bow the Great Compassion Repentance every weekend. That is my wish for you, Guo Zhen, do you understand?"

The next Saturday came and without Shr Fu, the neighbor

下星期六來臨了，這次師父不在，那些住附近的在家人就不再客氣了。一名來自觀音廟的年輕人，甚至連問都沒問過我是否介意之類的话，就大刺刺地帶起懺儀。他做得很花俏，結束的時候，活像一名歌劇男高音，竟把鐘鼓高舉作勝利狀，在家眾紛紛為他的表演鼓掌叫好。我沒吭聲，只在暗暗發願要把懺儀學好。

師父的話語適時而至

師父是透過電話來教我們這兩個遠在金佛寺的和尚的。那段日子挺難捱，因為師父會不時糾正我的言行。我們時常覺得師父好像遠遠就能洞悉我們心意。他會適時電告我們，修行的意義在於如何將世間法轉成正法知見。例如，我在禁語的第六年，開始不耐與恒朝的依存關係，他又一直沒有離開的跡象。

有一天中午，我責罵大眾，因為上供他們都遲到。在沒意識到大家畏懼和失望之前，我是相當理直氣壯的。沒有一個在家人敢拿正眼瞧我，只是面帶痛苦地望向別處。午齋一過，師父電話來了：「怎麼搞的？」我告訴他大家參加法會遲到，所以我才罵人。師父說：「你正是那個立下壞榜樣的人，你自己就是時常法會遲到。」而後，他把聲調轉成平常的說話語氣：「真正精進的修道人，是不會亂發脾氣的。在家人當然受不了你的脾氣，因為你跟以前不一樣了嘛。人在發脾氣的時候，好像原子彈爆炸似的。你得在忍辱上多下功夫。」

師父是意在言外的。他留意我的毛病以改變我的心境。他從舊金山打電話過來，教一個冥頑的美國弟子，一個有著壞脾氣和傲氣的弟子。儘管許多要事需要他費神，但他仍是一再地將我從自疑和可能放棄的險境中救拔出來。師父和我都知道某個笑話接龍。他那通及時而至、悲心洋溢的電話進入尾聲時，他會說：「好了，我想我又救了你一命。」中文說法是「一條命」。我則回以：「對呀，師父又救了我一條命。」

行過地獄

一天，我對恒朝大為光火。他曾做過我六年禁語期的護法。那是一段完全靠自己走出來、學習如何運用智慧判斷何時該語、何時該默的時光。我的脾氣上來了一一脾氣中攪和著嫉妒，嫉妒恒朝會做大悲懺儀，嫉妒恒朝必須

laymen were not polite. The young man from Guan Yin Temple lead the ceremony, without even asking me if I minded. He carried it off with a great flourish, and ended like a star tenor at the opera; after the final transference he held the bell ringer aloft in a gesture of triumph, while the laity applauded his performance. I was humbled and vowed to learn the ceremony right.

Shr Fu's Timely Phone Calls

Master Hua taught the two monks at Gold Buddha by telephone. I was going through many challenges and was being taught vigorously. We often felt as if Shr Fu was reading our thoughts from a distance. He would call at the opportune time to teach us how to cultivate our worldly ways into proper Dharma. I was in my sixth year of silence and had begun to chafe under the dependent relationship with Heng Chau. He was long past ready to be free of his responsibilities towards me.

One day I scolded the entire assembly at noon, because they all came late for the meal offering. I felt righteous and decisive, until I realized that everybody looked shocked and frightened. None of the laity would look me in the eye. Instead of looking at me, they looked away with a pained expression. Master Hua called right after lunch and said, "What's up?" I told him that I had scolded everybody for coming late to ceremonies. Shr Fu pointed out that I was the one setting the bad example, having been late to many ceremonies on a regular basis. His tone became more conversational, "When a cultivator of the Way is working hard and applying himself to his practice, he cannot carelessly get angry. The laypeople cannot endure your temper. Because you are not the same as you were before, when you get angry it is like an atomic bomb going off. You have to practice patience."

Shr Fu's attention to my problem somehow changed my state of mind. He had called Vancouver from San Francisco to teach a stubborn American disciple about his bad temper and his pride. With all the important matters that required his focus, Shr Fu had once again saved me from serious self-doubt and perhaps giving up. Shr Fu and I shared a running joke. After one of his timely, compassionate phone calls he would say, "Well, I guess I've saved your life again." The Chinese measure word is "one piece" of a life. I would say, "Right, Shr Fu, another piece of a life saved."

Traveling to the Hells

One day I gave Heng Chau a blast of my rage. I had been relying on his Dharma-protection for six years of silence. The time was coming for me to step out on my own, to learn to use my own wisdom. My temper was building up -- it was fueled by jealousy at the projects that Heng Chau was able to accomplish he Great Compassion Repentance and the interesting people that he got to talk with. I lacked samadhi in holding the new energy that

與之談話的對象盡是有趣之人。所以如此，部分原因來自我缺乏定力，以及未因修行而獲得新的能量；另一部分原因則是出於嫉妒。總之，一點小事就能使我不快，任令怒火到處飛颺。正當我在斥責恒朝有一堂法會沒來時，我感覺自己的臉正在漲紅、變黑。我知道我已在心裡發給許可自己對恒朝發怒的通行證了。其實這種任由自己跟著情緒走、怒斥恒朝的想法是很不對的。待他一走開，我立刻知道自己犯錯，某些東西已經離我而去了。

那天晚上，我夢見遊地獄。地獄每一絲駭人的景象、氣味、聲音和感受，於我都是那樣的真實，好像我真到過那裡一樣。我驚出一身冷汗，醒來嚇得渾身發抖，因之沒有參加課誦。早晨五點，電話鈴響了：「果真嗎？」是師父，「怎麼了？」

「師父，我想……我是說我相信……我剛剛夢到遊地獄，感覺就像真的一樣，師父。」

「現在，你知道地獄長什麼樣子了，為什麼你要上那兒去呢？」

「我不想再去那裡了，師父，它好恐怖，好嚇人哦！」

「對呀，沒錯。你想你為什麼會做那個夢？」

「因為我的生氣嗎？」

「完全正確。我常常告訴你，不可以隨便發脾氣，可是你總當作兒戲。現在你已經知道事情的嚴重了，可能你現在肯相信我說要修行的話了吧。」

跟師父談談雖然有助於我恢復正常，可是夢到地獄的恐怖記憶和感受依然揮之不去。

那天晚上又再夢到一次，我再次前往地獄。第二天早晨，在驚恐的狀態中我聽到電話鈴聲一聲又一聲響著，正在我魂不守舍的當兒，師父打來的。

師父聽我說完後，他說了一些頗不尋常的話語。他要我諦聽，他說：「我不只是你眼睛見到的這個現出家相的師父，我還是孔子、是老子、是達摩祖師。你沒辦法真正認出我來。這不是打比方，我是說老實話。」

「你還有很長的路要走，可是所有你必須做的，得轉變你自己，那事情就會不一樣的。你只是還沒下決心去做罷了。一旦你下定決心，就會漸漸到達那兒。記住我今天告訴你的話。」

cultivation generated. At any rate I got upset at something slight and I let my anger fly. I scolded Heng Chau for missing a ceremony and I felt my face turn red and then black. I knew that I had given permission in my mind to really let go and show him my anger. That silent thought of allowing myself to follow my emotion and blast Heng Chau was the real mistake. He walked away and I felt immediately that I had made a mistake. Something had left me.

That night I had a dream of traveling to the hells. Every detail of the horrifying sights, smells, sounds and feelings of the hells was as if I was really there. I woke up in a cold sweat, trembling and terrified. I missed chanting and at 5:00 AM the phone rang. "Guo Zhen?" It was Shr Fu. "What happened?"

"Shr Fu, I think...I mean I believe that...I just dreamt that I went to the hells. It felt real, Shr Fu."

"Now that you know what the hells are like, why do you want to go there?"

"I do not want to go there again, Shr Fu, it was terrible and frightening."

"Yes, it is. Why do you think you had that dream?"

"Because of my anger?"

"That is correct. You have heard me tell you so often that you cannot casually get angry, yet you still take it as child's play. Now you know it is more than that. Now perhaps you will believe me and get serious about your cultivation."

Talking with Shr Fu helped bring me back a great deal but the memory, the sense impressions of the experience persisted.

That night the dream repeated; I traveled to the hells once again.

The next morning, in a terrified state, I heard the phone ring again and once again, it was the Venerable Master. I was nearly hysterical, beside myself.

He listened to my story for a moment and then took the conversation in a different direction. He told me to listen carefully. He said, "I am not just the teacher you see in this body. I am Confucius, I am Lao Tzu. I am Bodhidharma. You do not recognize me. I am not just similar to them. I am not telling you this by analogy. This is the truth."

"You still have a long way to go. But all you have to do is to turn around and everything can be different. You simply have not made up your mind to do it yet. When you do, you will get there, bit by bit. Remember what I told you today."

