

十二年來的修行與體驗

Twelve Years of Cultivation Experience



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A talk by Song Li Juan at Buddha Hall
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BODHI FIELD | 菩提田

編按：宋立娟老居士，1924年生。十二年前住進萬佛城後，即每天從早到晚與大眾在佛殿共修，其精進比年輕人有過之而無不及；雖不識字，但能誦《華嚴經》、《金剛經》，講法則字字分明，條理清晰。故推薦讀者應仔細聆聽，玩味其意。

今天是感恩節，我以感恩的心情來跟諸位講幾句話。我來萬佛聖城十二年，這十二年中諸位法師對我慈悲，諸位佛友對我愛護，我內心感到非常溫暖。

大家如今一起共修，相互之間難免有摩擦；但是透過互相切磋琢磨，我們的污垢才能磨掉，我們自性的光才能顯現出來。

修行這條路一定要小心翼翼地往前走。我們若在平地，跌倒了還可以自己爬起來；假使我們已經攀高，攀到半山腰了，假如再邁錯一步的話，就跌到山谷裡起不來了。縱使起得來，也要經過很長的時間，並且要重頭開始修起，以及重新經歷那些痛苦。

我們這個頭腦是一部錄音機，我們一切的言行都被錄音機錄下來。每個人都有生、

Upasika Song Li Juan was born in 1924. It has been twelve years since she moved into the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas (CTTB). Since then, she has cultivated with the assembly in the Buddha hall from dawn to dusk. She is even more vigorous than young people. Although she is illiterate, she can recite the Avatamsaka Sutra and the Vajra Sutra. When she speaks Dharma, she enunciates her words clearly and her speech is also lucid. We encourage readers to ponder and pay close attention to her talk.

Today is Thanksgiving. I am here to express my feelings of gratitude and appreciation for the compassion and care I have received from all of you in the past twelve years. My heart is filled with an abundance of warmth.

When we cultivate together, having frictions is unavoidable. But it is only through this mutual “chipping, filing, polishing, rubbing” practice that we will be able to remove our defilements and unveil the light of our inherent nature.

While we are walking on the path of cultivation, we must move each step forward cautiously. If we were at a leveled ground, we can still get up by ourselves after falling to the ground. However, when we climb up to greater heights—halfway up the mountain—if we make a wrong move, we would fall to the valley, it would also take us a longer time to get up again. We would have to start anew and go through all the sufferings once more.

Our brains are like recorders which document all our activities and words. Everyone undergoes birth and death. We all die. It's just a matter of

有死；有的早死、有的晚死；有德行的人就到西方極樂世界去，持善的人就到天堂去享福。其他的人就到閻羅殿去報到，到時候閻羅王會問：「你在陽間做些什麼事？是否做了善事？」你如果忘了，閻羅王會說：「忘了沒關係！你把自己的錄音帶拿出來聽一聽，應該到哪裡去，就到哪裡去。」所以，並不是閻王爺定我們的罪，是我們自己定自己的罪。世間因果不虛，有因就有果，就有報。

學佛，一切都要忍，不能忍的也要忍，能忍的更要忍；忍到極點，就可以成就道業。任何事情都不要看得那麼重，一切都是假的。師父說：「我們學佛要學吃虧，不要學佔便宜。」

修行，一定要把自己管好，師父說：「把我們自己管好就可以，不要管別人。」有句話說：「玉不琢，不成器」，所以周圍的人來磨我們，就是幫我們修行。我們是一塊玉，沒人雕刻我們的話，我們還是一塊石頭；有人雕刻的話，就把我們雕成一尊佛，或把我們雕成一尊菩薩。所以遇到一切事情，都要逆來順受。

修行，就是凡事一定要做到很紮實，並且要走到中道；不走中道的話，會走偏，那就很麻煩。

如同水往低處流，修行一定要和藹，因為我們和藹，觀世音菩薩的甘露水會流到我們心裡，來滋潤我們的心。

修行這條路，說難也不難，說容易也不容易。所謂的不難，就是我們不需要大做文章，我們只要把自己管好就好。可是，管自己很不容易。我們這個心，如果管不住，它就會亂跑，愈叫它不要跑，它就愈跑。所以，修行也不是件容易事，把我們自己管好，就很不容易了。

說到萬佛聖城，萬佛城的功課是佛教裡面的大學功課；大學畢業了以後就到西方極樂世界去修博士。博士拿到以後呢，就等著成佛。我來到萬佛聖城十二年，我距離畢業還有很長很遠的路！所以師父開示六大宗旨的時候說：「你不要看這六大宗旨這麼簡單，你要真的做到了，一切做得很圓滿，成佛有餘啊！」

time. The virtuous person will be reborn in the Western Pure Land. People who cultivate themselves with wholesome deeds will be reborn in heavens and enjoy blessings; while other people may fall into the King Yama's court. When you are in front of the King Yama, he will ask: "What have you done when you were living? Did you do good deeds? Can you describe any good deed that you done?" You may reply: "I already forgot everything." Then King Yama may ask you to playback your tape to see what has been recorded. Your deeds will decide how and where you will be reborn. Actually, King Yama does not decide our destinies; we sentence ourselves to be reborn to certain places. If there is a cause, there will definitely be an effect and a retribution—the operation of this law never errs.

When practicing Buddhism, we have to be patient with everything. Whatever we cannot bear, we should bear. Once we practice patience thoroughly, to the ultimate point, then we can realize the Way. Everything is an illusion, so we should not take everything too seriously. The Master once taught us that in cultivation we learn to take more losses than advantages.

When cultivating, we must watch over ourselves. The Master said: "Always watch over yourself and don't meddle in other people's business." *The Chinese Three Character Classic* says: "If jade is not polished, it cannot become a utensil." Therefore, whoever comes to us and gives us tests will help our cultivation. We are all diamonds in the rough. If no one shapes us and brings out the diamond within us, we will remain like rough stones. On the other hand, if we let people polish and carve us, our Buddha nature will be revealed. Thus, no matter what conditions we encounter, we just roll with the punches. We need to accept everything as it is.

When we cultivate, we have to do everything in our power to make sure things stay solid and remain in the middle way. If we do not practice the middle way, we will easily take the wrong direction, like water flowing downhill. We should be amiable when we cultivate. If we are amiable, the sweet dew of Guan Yin Budhisattva will perfuse and moisturize our mind.

Walking the path of cultivation is not too hard or too easy. It is not too hard, so we do not need to overdo our cultivation; the only thing we need to do is to discipline our minds. However, the mind is really difficult to control. The more you want to control it, the more wandering it does. Thus, cultivation is not too easy as well—watching oneself is certainly not a simple task.

The lessons at CTTB can be thought of as exams a university level in Buddhism. Once we graduate from this university, we will be reborn to the Western Pure land to continue a doctoral program. After getting a PhD, we will be able to realize the Buddhahood. I have been living at CTTB for twelve years now, and I still have a long, long way to go before I can graduate from this university. When the Master lectured on the Six Great Guiding Principles, he once pointed out: "Do not underestimate the Six Great Guiding Principles; if you can perfectly uphold those rules, you will definitely become Buddhas."

Among many different Buddhist practices in CTTB, I first cultivated

在萬佛城學習，我先學「定」。有定力的話，就不會隨境界轉；隨境界轉的話，是是非非就出來了；是是非非出來以後，煩惱馬上跟著來。所以定力非常重要。雖然我覺得學「定」很好，可是我「定」了沒有呢？還沒！

所以說「佛」是「定」，佛心是「定」，「佛」的心是清淨的，一塵不染。學「佛」在「定」裡，一切就不會染到我們。所以學「定」非常重要。

社會是一個大染缸，我們每個人都從這個染缸走過。可是我們要走中道，才不會被染到；靠一邊的話就會被染到了，所以一切要走中道。

我在萬佛聖城這十二年來，經過很多的考試，這裡面的天人師教學非常嚴厲，非常嚴格！我很感激那些考我的法師，我非常感激，因為他們是在幫助我修行。沒有人考我，我沒辦法修行。

我在這裡的生活，可以說過得很愉快。我每天早上三點鐘起來，三點半來大殿；來大殿就是做早課；做完早課就拜佛，一直到六點才回房休息。休息完畢，起來就讀《華嚴經》和《金剛經》。我在這兩部經裡學到很多哦！

我在萬佛城，每天都是高高興興地過。雖然有考試，我不會跟著境界轉；一切考試是我的好老師，我心存感激；心裡有感恩的心，所以就過得非常愉快。

我講一講我的打坐，諸位聽一聽。師父講：「學打坐修定，就像燒開水一樣，每天燒，這開水就會燒開；你僅僅燒幾天，這水永遠不會開。」所以，禪七過了以後，我就在房裡坐；在房裡坐，不行！坐一坐就腰痠、腿痛，然後就躺一躺；躺一躺之後，就睡著了。

所以我就改到大殿來坐。到大殿坐了三、四天，就來個天人師；天人師就跟我講：「妳吃飽喝足了沒事幹，到大殿來坐著喔！妳沒事幹就去掃樹葉啊！清理清理環境啊！妳不要以為妳已經交錢了就什麼都不做。」雖然她這麼說，我當自己是木偶，她說她的，我坐我的。

Samadhi. If we have enough Samadhi power, we won't be turned by surroundings. If we are turned by surroundings, we will judge between right and wrong, and if we do that, afflictions arises. Therefore, Samadhi is extremely important in our cultivation. I emphasize the value of Samadhi, and you may wonder whether I have attained Samadhi. My answer is, No.

The Buddha constantly remains in Samadhi. The mind of Buddha is always in Samadhi, free of impurities, unstained by a particle of dust. If we can learn from the Buddha's Samadhi, we will never be defiled by anything. Therefore, I cannot say enough about the importance of Samadhi.

Society is like a big dye vat where everybody walks through. However, if we can follow the Middle Way, we won't be polluted. If we go to extremes or go down the wrong paths, we will get afflicted easily. As a result, when we cultivate the Way, we should cultivate the Middle Way.

During these twelve years in CTTB, I have been tested by different kinds of people. Those tests were extremely difficult. However, I deeply appreciate those people whoever gave me tests. They have been helping my cultivation. Without those tests, I wouldn't be able to practice at all.

My life experience here is very pleasant. Everyday, I get up at 3:00am and arrive at Buddha hall at 3:30am. After arriving at the Buddha hall, I join the assembly for the Morning Ceremony. After that, I bow to the Buddhas until six o'clock. Then, I go back to my room and take a break. After the break, I recite the *Avatamska Sutra* and the *Vajra Sutra*; I have learned a great deal from studying these sutras.

I live here happily. Although I have received numerous tests, I try not to be turned by them. I have realized that all those tests are my good advisors, and am grateful for those examinations. I flood my mind with gratitude, so I can happily live my life here.

Now I would like to share my past experiences of meditation with you. The Master said: "Learning meditation is like boiling water. You need to boil water everyday until it starts bubbling. If you are inconsistent about boiling water, you will never heat the water." Bearing Master's words in mind, I started meditating in my room after one of the Chan sessions. However, I found that meditating in my room did not work at all. After sitting for a short period of time, I started to feel back pain and leg ache. So I lay down but I fell into sleep. As a result, I decided to practice my meditation in the Buddha Hall. I did that for three or four days. Then here my test came. A person came to me and told me: "You eat your fill and have your sleep, so that's why you have the luxury of time sitting in the Buddha Hall. Stop being an idler and go out to sweep the falling leaves or the surroundings. Do not think that you can do nothing here just because you've paid some money." I remained silent sitting like a wooden puppet and gave no reply.

After a few days later, another test came along. A person told me: "Do not just sit here. You can guard the front gate and keep a close watch on the squirrels. Those squirrels always climb the altars to steal fruits." Again, I remained like a wooden puppet and gave no reply. I tried to practice "my ears hear sounds but the mind does not know". I kept on sitting in the Buddha

過幾天又來位天人師，說：「妳不要在這裡坐，妳到寺門去站崗看松鼠，松鼠會上供桌去偷水果。」我還是一個木偶，也就是「耳聽心不知！」妳說妳的，我坐我的；我還是在這兒坐著。

過幾天又來位天人師，說：「妳不要在這裡坐，妳坐到藥師佛前面，在那裡看孔雀，孔雀進來會大便。」我還是一樣，「耳聽心不知」，我是木偶。

她又說：「妳不要再坐了！妳起來巡邏！去監看會偷東西的香客。」我還是一個木偶，繼續閒坐在那。最後，她沒意思，就走了。

就這樣子，大殿的考題出完了，沒有了，從此我就在大殿裡很清淨地在坐著。那坐呢？坐是坐，心卻到處亂跑，沒有定！我這樣坐得腰痠背疼，可是心還是亂跑，管不住。所以我就不坐了，開始訓練我的心，不叫它亂跑，也就是說念動意不動。

今天浪費各位的寶貴時間，說了這麼多的廢話。我希望諸位不要像我這樣，我就是會說不會做。我是一個很笨，很愚蠢的人，所以來萬佛聖城學佛。當初學佛，我跟師父說我不會學佛，我不要學。師父說：「佛法沒有別的，就是妳把自己修煉好就可以了。妳不會管妳自己嗎？」我被師父修理過後，就開始跟師父學佛。

學佛，非常非常好，佛法也說得非常清楚。我讀《華嚴經》、《金剛經》，我從這兩部經典裡就瞭解得很多。你看，我這人就是會說不會行，距離真正的行，我還是很遠很遠的。

最後，祝福諸位早日成就道業！我能夠在萬佛聖城修行，已經是很幸運了。

阿彌陀佛！



Hall without moving.

Again, in a few days, another person came to me and told me: "Move your seat now and sit in front of the Medicine Master Buddha statue. You can keep a close eye on the peacocks. They always try to step inside and poop around." I remained the same as before. Even my ears heard defiling sounds, but my mind did not move. I was like a wooden puppet.

"Get up now, do not sit here anymore. You can do the walk-around inspection. Some visitors like to steal things from the Buddha Hall," she continued. Still I remained sitting on the chair and acted like a wooden puppet. Finally, getting bored with me, she left.

At last all my tests in the Buddha Hall came to an end. I had all my tests done. From that moment on, I sat there and felt calm and peaceful. And that was the end of my story. "How's your sitting meditation going then?" You might wonder. Well, I had pain on my waist and back during meditation practice. My mind was still restless and uncontrolled. As a result, I achieved no Samadhi at all. So I decided to free my legs and began to train my mind from wandering around. It means that a thought arises but no movement of my will.

Today, I have wasted all your precious time by talking to you such rubbish. I am not a good example to all of you. I only know how to talk the Way but unable to walk the Way. I know how dumb and foolish I am, so I come to CTTB to learn the Buddha Dharma. When I first encountered Buddhism, I told the Master that I did not know how to practice so I had no interest in learning Buddhism. He told me: "Buddha Dharma is nothing else but exerting yourself in cultivation and self-discipline. Don't you know how to discipline yourself?" After the Master's scolding, I became his disciple.

Learning Buddha Dharma is extremely fantastic; it gives clear explanations of how things are. I gained a lot of insights from studying the *Avatamsaka Sutra* and the *Vajra Sutra*. Ha! You see! I am still talking about the Buddha Dharma. The Dharma is in practice, not in talking. I am really far from being a good practitioner.

And now, last but not least, I bless and wish you all will accomplish Buddhahood quickly. I feel so blessed and lucky to be able to cultivate in CTTB. Amitabha!



《金剛菩提海》對於我們近幾個月出刊的延期，向所有的讀者表示最誠摯的歉意！同時感恩您一直以來的支持！《金剛菩提海》歡迎您的來稿，稿件請寄vbs@drba.org.

——《金剛菩提海》編輯部

VBS apologizes to all readers for the recent delays in publication. Thank you for your understanding and support. As always, we welcome your contributions of essays. Please send them to vbs@drba.org.

— VBS Editorial Department