

美國中西部感恩節之旅

A Thanksgiving Journey to the Midwest

比丘近佛文
劉馥華 英譯

By Bhikshu Jin Fo
English Translation by Cara Liu



DHARMA REALM NEWS | 法界音

1989年9月10日是美國中西部歷史上重要的一天。宣公上人帶領三位出家弟子，前往明尼蘇達佛教會弘法，播下佛種。24年後，近永、近聖及近佛三名比丘秉承師志，於感恩節前夕，赴明州及愛荷華州佛教會，與佛友們結法緣。九天期間除了每天的早晚課及上供外，還拜大悲懺，並傳授三皈、五戒及八關齋戒，作為送給兩地佛友感恩節的最佳禮物。居士們踴躍拜懺，往往將道場擠得水洩不通。

上人曾經開示：「皈依三寶是人生第一件大事，是睜眼投胎重新做人，千萬不要走錯了路。」在明州六天期間，近永法師每天為居士們詳細講解在家律學，包括《五戒相經》以及傳授三皈、五戒及八關齋戒儀規。藕益大師說過：「五戒乃是三世諸佛之父；依於五戒，出生十方三世一切諸佛。」五戒也是人天之基，所有戒律的根本。八關齋戒則是佛陀慈悲為在家人設的出家戒；清淨受持一日一夜，臨命終時，阿彌陀佛及其眷屬會親自前來迎接行者，往生西方極樂世界。

居士們在充分了解三皈五戒的意義後，都法喜充滿，並踴躍發心皈依及受戒。明州計有16位佛友皈依、20位受五戒（其中11位發心受持滿分戒）；愛荷華州則有5位皈依、11位全數受持滿分五戒。

在兩地法會開始前均有灑淨儀式；尤其愛荷華州的道場係新購，灑淨更具意義。居士們另帶來四尊觀音菩薩及地藏菩薩像，請求開光。值得一提的是，兩地的居

September 10th, 1989 is an important date in the history of Midwestern United States. The Venerable Master Hsuan Hua, along with his three disciples, headed to Minnesota to spread Dharma at a Buddhist group, thus planting the seeds of Buddhism. Twenty-four years later, three Bhikshus, Jin Yong, Jin Sheng, and Jin Fo, followed in the Venerable Master's footsteps and came to the Minnesota and Iowa Buddhist groups before Thanksgiving to create Dharma affinities with Buddhist friends. During their nine-day stay, other than doing the daily Morning, Evening and Meal Offering ceremonies, there was also the Great Compassion Repentance Ceremony as well as the transmissions of the Three Refuges, the Five Precepts, and the Eight Precepts; these were the special gifts we bestowed for these two places in the spirit of Thanksgiving. The laypeople attended the ceremonies with vigor, often crowding the Buddha Hall to its maximum capacity.

The Venerable Master once said: "Taking Refuge with the Three Jewels is the most important thing in one's life. It is the opportunity to open one's eyes, be reborn, and begin life anew, so be sure you do not miss out on it and risk walking down the wrong path." During our six-day stay at Minnesota, Dharma Master Jin Yong took great care to explain the details of the precepts for laypeople, including the *Five Precepts Sutra* and the rituals for transmitting the Three Refuges, Five Precepts, and Eight Precepts. Great Master Ou-Yi once said: "The Five Precepts is the father of all past, present and future Buddhas; all the Buddhas everywhere at all times are born from the Five Precepts." The Five Precepts is the foundation of becoming a human or a heavenly being, and it is also the basis of all precepts. The Eight Precepts were given by Shakyamuni Buddha out of compassion for laypeople who wanted to uphold the left-home precepts; it is stated that one who sincerely upholds these eight precepts for one day and one night will, at the end of their life, be received by Amitabha Buddha and his followers, and they will be taken to the Land of Ultimate Bliss.

After the laypeople have better understood the significance of the Three Refuges and the Five Precepts, they were filled with Dharma joy and were eager to take refuge and the precepts. In Minnesota, 16 took the Three Refuges, and 20 received the Five Precepts (among them, 11 made vows to

士們都非常誠心；尤其明州一名八十多歲的老居士發心受持滿分五戒，愛荷華州則有好幾位越南信眾，雖然語言不通，仍然前來聽法；更有一家祖孫三代一起皈依、受戒！

這次近佛返回曾經居住二十年的明州，發現很多佛友或已往生或搬離明州，真的感嘆人生無常！另一方面卻也看到許多新進，既年輕又精進、誠心，真是可喜！這趟感恩節之行，特別要感恩24年前上人將佛法帶到美國中西部，並感恩明州及愛荷華州佛友們的護法。阿彌陀佛！☸



2013感恩之旅—於明尼蘇達州
A Thanksgiving Journey to Minnesota in 1989



2013感恩之旅—於愛荷華州
A Thanksgiving Journey to Iowa in 2013



1989年上人於明尼蘇達佛教會
Venerable Master visited Minnesota Buddhist Association in 1989

uphold all five precepts); in Iowa, five members took refuge and all 11 received all the Five Precepts.

In both places, before the ceremony began, the ritual of Purifying the Boundaries was performed; especially in the newly bought house in Iowa, the Purifying of Boundaries became even more meaningful. The laypeople also brought over four statues of Guan Yin Bodhisattva and Earth Store Bodhisattva and requested an inauguration ceremony be performed on them. Another thing worth mentioning is that the laypeople from both places were all very sincere; especially the eighty-year-old laywoman who vowed to uphold all five precepts, and several Vietnamese Buddhists in Iowa who, despite not being able to understand much Chinese or English, still came to listen to the Dharma. There was also three generations of family who took the refuges and precepts together!

After returning to Minnesota, a place where I once lived for 20 years, I discovered that many fellow Buddhists have passed away or moved away from Minnesota; how impermanent life is! On the other hand, I was very happy to see many newcomers who are young, diligent, and sincere. For this Thanksgiving journey, we are especially grateful to the Venerable Master for bringing the Buddha Dharma into the Midwest 24 years ago, and we are also grateful to all our Buddhist friends in Iowa and Minnesota. Amitabha! ☸

