

Reflections on Earth Store Bodhisattva and the Earth in Taiwan

對地藏菩薩與臺灣這片土地的省思

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Over Thanksgiving break, I had a chance to spend nine days in Taiwan. The previous time I had traveled to Taiwan was in 1993 with the delegation led by the Venerable Master. At that time I was a recently ordained bhikshuni, and I remember the Ven. Master working nonstop, giving lectures, transmitting precepts in the Banqiao Stadium, and traveling throughout Taiwan to meet people, despite the fact that he was in poor health.

This time, I was a member of a DRBU delegation, and the first event on our schedule was a visit to the newly-established Bodhi Park in Hualien. Bodhi Park covers a large area in the scenic Hualien foothills, pieced together little by little as the land adjoining DRBA's original Amitabha Monastery became available; now it has become a serene place for focused cultivation and the future location of a Buddhist Academy for Women.

On November 24, we left bustling Taipei and traveled by train to Hualien, enjoying the mountain and ocean views along the way. When we arrived at Amitabha Monastery's Bodhi Park, I felt awed by the serenity of the place – the verdant mountains shrouded in mist, the majestic tall white Guanyin image with the leaping carp at her feet, and all the people chanting Namo Guanshiyin Pusa in welcome.

First, we paid our respects in the bright and elegant Proper Dharma Hall, with its roof-tiles bearing the Venerable Master's

趁著感恩節假期，我有機會到臺灣九天。前一次造訪臺灣，是1993年隨著上人帶領的訪問團，當時我剛受具足戒，是個新戒比丘尼。當時上人的身體狀況並不好，但他還是馬不停蹄地各處弘法，在板橋體育館傳戒，而且走遍全台接引眾生。

這次，身為法界佛教大學代表團的一員，第一個行程是參訪新近成立的花蓮菩提園區。菩提園區位於花蓮秀麗的山上，佔地遼廣是通過購買法總原先彌陀聖寺周圍的土地，一點點拼湊而成的。幽靜的園區，提供行者精進辦道，同時也是將來女眾佛學院的所在地。

十一月二十四日，從繁華的台北搭乘火車前往花蓮，沿途欣賞山海美景。甫抵彌陀聖寺的菩提園區時，在雪白雄偉的魚躍觀音菩薩像下，大眾列隊齊誦觀音聖號，歡迎著我們的到來。看到青翠群山籠罩於薄霧中，這裏的寧靜、平和讓我驚嘆！

首先，我們參觀了莊嚴明亮的正法堂，屋頂上的每塊瓦片都燒鑄著上人手寫的「唵」字，讓人有一種天然渾成，與大地相連的感受。接著，我們到新建的齋堂上供。在齋堂內前方有一座巨大

handwritten “Om” syllable. This Hall has a natural, grounded feeling. Next, we attended the meal offering in the new Dining Hall. At the front of the dining hall, a statue of the Ven. Master Hua is seated, below Great Master Xuyun’s portrait and poem, on the huge polished tree trunk – what a beautiful way of extending a fallen tree’s life!

During lunch, we were treated with a “home video” of every stage of the construction process. The most striking thing in the video was that every step was done in a culture where work is cultivation, and the Dharma was infused into the work.



臺北101 (臺北國際金融中心)
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臺灣玉山 Mount Yushan, Taiwan

During the entire process, at least 3-7 times daily on site or wherever they were, the Dharma Masters led everyone in chanting the *Shurangama Mantra* and dedicating the merit to the accomplishment of this bodhimanda devoted to propagating the Proper Dharma and the Patriarchs’ mind-transmission, creating a pure land on Earth, bringing peace to the world, rescuing sentient beings from suffering, and developing talent in the Sangha.

No matter how tired they were from working, they continued; rain or shine, they worked in the day and participated in a lively sutra lecture and discussion at night. Laypeople from the north, central and southern parts of Taiwan all came to Hualien to help out. Those who could not be there in person committed to reciting, on their own, a certain number of mantras dedicated to the successful completion of the monastery.

Indeed, we could see that not merely has a monastery been created, but a vibrant community of Buddhist disciples has come together in its creation. Everyone—old and young, male and female, monastic and lay—

拋光樹墩做的佛桌（這是一個多麼美麗的方式，來延續一棵已經倒下的樹的生命！），上人的銅像安座於此，其上方懸掛著虛雲老和尚的法相和偈頌。

午齋時，我們觀賞了建築工程的影片記錄。最令人感到不可思議的是，從影片中可以看到我們的傳統：工作就是修行，佛法全然融入在工作中。

在施工中，每天法師們都會帶領著大家到工地或到園區其他地方誦念至少三至七遍的〈楞嚴咒〉，迴向功德希望道場圓滿完工。以弘揚正法及推行祖師一脈心傳，及培育僧才為使命，並祈求世界和平、眾生離苦得樂，在此締造一片人間淨土。

不管工作多麼累人，她們風雨無阻，不但白天工作，晚上也參加聽經和生動的佛法研討。居士們從北、中、南台灣各地來花蓮幫忙；不能來花蓮幫忙的居士，則各自發心誦持一定遍數的〈楞嚴咒〉，迴向功德給道場，以祈道場的圓滿完工。

的確，我們看到的，不僅是一座寺廟的創立，而是它帶動了一群生氣盎然佛子的參與。每一個人，不論男女老少、僧俗二眾，當他們在清除瓦礫、搬負重石、拉手推車、清洗道路、灌倒水泥，或者為大眾準備午餐時，臉上都充滿著笑容。尼僧們也不忘懇請當地的地神、水神等的協助，並設立了護法壇，請祂們



花蓮彌陀聖寺正法堂
Proper Dharma Hall at Amitabha Bodhi Park, Hualien



had smiles on their faces as they cleared the construction debris, lifted heavy rocks, pulled wheelbarrows, washed the road, poured cement, or cooked lunch for everyone. The nuns did not forget to propitiate the local spirits of the earth and waterways, asking for their support and dedicating a permanent altar to them.

Following the meal offering, we participated in the ceremony for Opening the Light on the image of Earth Store Bodhisattva. Earth Store Bodhisattva is named after the Earth, which nurtures all things to grow.

In his commentary on the *Earth Store Sutra*, the Venerable Master listed ten meanings of the Earth. In Chapter Two, *The Division Bodies Gather*, Shakyamuni Buddha tells Earth Store Bodhisattva, “I may appear as a mountain, a forest, a stream, a spring, a river, a lake, a fountain, or a well in order to benefit people. I use all these ways to save beings.” Not only is Earth Store Bodhisattva named after the Earth with its many virtues, but the Buddha also manifests as part of nature in order to awaken beings.

In his commentary on the *Flower Adornment Sutra*, the Master also describes the Earth as a living being: “The Earth takes soil as its flesh, and inside the flesh there is blood, bones, and muscles. The rivers, lakes, and seas are the blood circulation system. The rocks and the minerals—gold, silver, copper, iron, tin, and lead—are the bones.” The Earth is like a person but on a bigger scale, both in space and time. Just as people get sick every so often, so does the Earth. Tsunamis, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and landslides are like the colds, fevers, vomiting, and coughing of the Earth.

As humans greedily clear mountaintops and forests to reap the precious minerals and fossil fuels that she bears, dig tunnels through

護持道場。

午齋後，我們參加了地藏菩薩的開光典禮。「地」可生長、孕育萬物，地藏王菩薩因此而得名。

在上人的《地藏菩薩本願經淺釋》中，上人列出「地」的十種意義。在〈分身集會品第二〉中釋迦牟尼佛告訴地藏菩薩說：「或現山林川原，河池泉井，利及於人，悉皆度脫。」因此，不僅地藏菩薩擁有「地」這麼多的德行，為了度脫眾生，佛也會示現不同自然界的景象來令眾生覺悟。

而在上人《華嚴經淺釋》中，上人用描述人的方式來形容地球：「這個地球，以泥土為體。那麼這個體裏頭就有血，有骨頭，有筋絡。這個地球上就有江、河、湖、海這麼多的水，這就是這個世界體的血脈流通。這裏邊又有石頭，又有金銀、銅鐵、錫鉛種種的礦物，這等於骨頭一樣。」地球就像一個人，當然就空間與時間而言，它的規模是大很多。就像人有時候會生病，地球也是如此：海嘯、地震、火山爆發、土石流，就像地球的感冒、發燒、嘔吐、和咳嗽。

當人們為了取得珍貴的礦產及石油燃料，貪婪地開墾山地及森林；地球默默地忍受著這些破壞——在她的身上挖掘隧道，消耗水源。然而，

her body, or deplete her aquifers, the Earth suffers silently. But when our collective abuses reach overwhelming proportions—when karmic actions have reached their tipping point—the repercussions are inevitably catastrophic.

During this trip, several of us had the opportunity to view the acclaimed documentary *Beyond Beauty: Taiwan from Above* directed by engineer and aerial photographer Chi Po-lin. Having photographed Taiwan by helicopter for the National Highway Engineering Bureau for two decades, he had seen both its natural beauty and its rampant destruction.

He knew that if everyone could see what he saw, they would at least stop and think whether they should continue doing those things, which are so harmful. Every material object is a confluence of causes and conditions. When we eat a bite of rice, we should remember the farmer's sweat under the sun. When we use a t-shirt or a cellphone, we should know that it contains many workers' toil and that its components have traveled hundreds or thousands of miles, composed of raw materials from different countries, often involving child or slave labor or even instigating competitive struggles or war. How much pollution has resulted from its production, and how much e-waste will result from its disposal?

Once we know the devastation that consuming certain products or living a certain lifestyle does to our “mother” Earth, can we still live the same way without feeling anything? Wisdom is the ability to clearly see cause and effect and to act only in ways that will have beneficial results. We can start by opening our eyes and ears to observe what is happening to our living environment, and we can talk about it with those around us and let them be aware as well. By opening our eyes and seeing the results of our excessive drive for more stuff, more, more convenience, we can awaken our good conscience, tap into our inherent wisdom, and exert our power to change how we live and think. If we do not do this, the prospects for the future are dire indeed, and time is running out.

A natural environment and wholesome influences can help us to discover this conscience. Walking or meditating in a forest or by a mountain stream can be revitalizing. It is in the presence of Mother Nature that our own nature and conscience awaken. In Taiwan, Hualien Amitabha Monastery and Bodhi Park is a perfect place to cultivate that awakening. We can start by emulating Earth Store Bodhisattva and the Venerable Master and learning to be filial. If we can feel or realize our parents' love, we will want to repay it. Then we will have the capacity for love and respect that can extend to other people and eventually to all living beings and the Earth.

In the spirit of Earth Store Bodhisattva, may we use the power of our cultivation and dedication of merit to help everyone care for our mother Earth, as indigenous peoples in the Americas do, and learn to be filial to her and all the beings who live upon her. ❀

當我們濫用資源的程度超過了地球的負荷，當所造的業達到臨界點時，後果必然是非常嚴重的。

這次的行程中，我們其中幾個人有機會觀賞了一部備受歡迎的記錄片——《看見台灣》，是由空中攝影師齊柏林所拍攝的。為國道新建工程局，在直升機上拍攝台灣二十年，他看到了自然美麗的風光，也看到了被猖獗破壞的影像。

他知道如果每個人都可以看到他所看到的，可能人們會停下來想一想，是否應該繼續做這些傷害大地的事情。每一樣東西都有因果的牽連，當我們吃一口飯的時候，應該記得農夫在太陽底下所流下的汗水。當我們穿一件T-恤或使用手機時，應該知道這裏面包含了很多工人的辛勞；再者，這些原始物料，可能來自百里或千里之外的不同國家，而其中也常涉及了童工或奴工，更甚者造成惡性競爭或戰爭。不只如此，這些產品造成了多少的汙染？又造成了多少電子廢棄物？

當我們知道我們消耗某些產品或者過著某種生活方式，確實對我們的母親（地球）造成了蹂躪，我們還能無動於衷地繼續這樣下去嗎？智慧是一種清楚判斷因果的能力，並且只做有利於世界的事情。我們可以從打開眼睛及耳朵開始，去觀察周遭環境的變化，並且告訴其他的人，讓他們也注意到這些事。當我們看到我們為了有更多的東西，更舒適、便利的生活，所造成的過度開發，我們應該喚起我們的良知，找出我們的內在智慧，竭盡力量去改變我們的生活方式及思維。時間已經不多了，如果我們沒有這麼做，未來將會非常慘不忍睹。

和大自然相處，加上好的引導，我們的良知會被啟發的。在森林、溪邊走路或打坐可以幫助我們恢復活力；因為在大自然的懷抱裏，它會喚醒我們的本性和良知。花蓮彌陀聖寺菩提園區是一個修行開悟的好地方，我們可以從效仿地藏菩薩及上人開始，學習孝道。如果我們可以感受及了解父母對我們的關愛，就會想要報答他們。推己及人，我們也可以用這種力量去愛護及尊重其他的人，乃至於所有的眾生及這個地球。

本著地藏菩薩的精神，我們用修行的力量來迴向功德，令每一個人都來愛護、照顧我們大家的母親（地球），就像美國的原住民一樣。我們必須要學著去關愛地球，和關愛住在它上面所有的眾生。 ❀