

# The Importance of Repentance Ceremonies in Cultivating the Buddhist Path

## 懺悔的重要

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謝果馨中譯



照片攝於1974年宣公上人訪泰期間。  
Photos taken during Venerable Master Hua's  
visit to Thailand at 1974.



BODHI FIELD | 菩提田

One of the first things I always tell my students in my high school class for seniors on Buddhism is that the teachings of the Buddha are quite special and unique. Unlike any other religion or philosophy, Buddhism teaches that no matter how evil you are or how bad you do, you can always redeem yourself, to make amends. Even the worse types of entities in the universe – like the demon King Mara – still have the potential to change and become fully enlightened Buddhas. This is pretty amazing and incredible: no living being in the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth (Samsara) is condemned to be forever bad or stuck in birth and death. Everyone, regardless of whom or what they are, has the potential to change for the good and ultimately become a Buddha. And this potential can never ever be lost!

Probably one of the most extraordinary examples of this is a story about one of the disciples of our Shakyamuni Buddha.

我在男校高年級教一堂佛學課，我經常告訴學生的一個觀念是：佛陀的教化是獨特超凡的，他的教義和其他宗教截然不同。佛教的觀念是，不管我們有多壞、做了多大的惡事，都可以彌補。即使是魔王波旬——宇宙裡面最壞的個體——都還是可以改變而成佛。沒有任何眾生是命中注定無可救藥，或是永遠沉溺於生死輪迴中。每個眾生，不管是誰，都有變好的潛能而究竟成佛，而這個潛在的能力是永遠跟隨著我們。這個道理真的很神奇，也很不可思議。

最顯著的一個例子，就是釋迦牟尼



We know that every Buddha has two great disciples: one who is foremost in spiritual powers and another one who is foremost in wisdom. For our Buddha, Shariputra was foremost in wisdom and the great Mahamaudgalyayana was foremost in spiritual powers. The Sutras we study tell about a past life – millions of kalpas in the past – in which Mahamaudgalyayana was actually a Mara, a demon king, in another world system. Even though he was a demon king in a past life, he was still able to atone for his mistakes and become one of the foremost followers of

佛一個弟子的前生故事。每一位佛都有兩位大弟子，一位是神通第一，另一位是智慧第一；以釋迦牟尼佛來說，舍利弗是智慧第一，目犍連是神通第一。有一部經典描述目犍連尊者在無量劫以前，是另外一個世界的魔王波旬。雖然過去生中曾經是魔王，但是他贖去前生的惡業，成為佛陀忠心的大弟子，而且是神通第一。這實在是最佳的寫照，即使最頑劣的眾生也能夠返迷歸覺，不僅成為佛陀神通第一的弟子，在《法華經》裡目犍連尊者也得到佛的授記，當得成佛，佛號「多摩羅跋耆檀香如來」。

接下來，談談我個人對懺悔法門的體悟，不過先要描述一下我的背景。1974年我在泰國當沙彌的時候，讀到了關於上人的事蹟，於是決定到金山寺，依止上人座下修行。本來我是打算在曼谷的巴婆尼瓦斯寺修行幾年，然後到泰北（烏東省的帕邦塔寺）當一輩子的森林比丘。我的目標是希望在阿姜摩訶布瓦（阿姜曼尊者的著

the Buddha. This is a perfect illustration of how even the worst kind of evil entity still has the potential to become enlightened. In addition to the fact that he became the disciple of the Buddha foremost in spiritual powers, in the *Lotus Sutra* Mahamaudgalyayana receives a prediction that he will eventually become a perfect Buddha, Tamālapattracandana-gandha Buddha.

Now I would like to talk about my first experience with the Dharma of repentance. First, I need to explain a little of the background behind this experience. In 1974, I was a novice monk in Thailand. I just heard about the Venerable Master (Venerable Master Hsuan Hua), so I decided to come to Gold Mountain Monastery in America and cultivate the Buddhist path under his guidance. Originally I had planned to spend a couple of years studying in a monastery in Bangkok (Wat Bovornivet). Then after that period of study, I planned to spend the rest of my life practicing in a forest monastery in Northern Thailand (Wat Pa Baan Taad in Udon Thani) associated with Wat Bovornivet. My goal had been to strive for personal enlightenment under the tutelage of Ajahn Maha Bua, one of the great monks in the Ajahn Mun forest tradition. However, after reading the Venerable Master's biography, I changed my mind and returned to America to study under him. I felt certain that he was the spiritual teacher I had been searching for.





I came to Gold Mountain in June of 1974. And because I had a Small Vehicle (Theravada) orientation, I found it very difficult and went back to Chicago after a week. However, a couple of months later in the beginning of August, I came back to Gold Mountain for the second 6-week summer session (August 3 to September 14, 1974). A couple of days after I arrived, there was a 7-day Chan Meditation session (August 5-12), which went from 3:00 a.m. to midnight each day. I could barely cross my legs for half an hour, let alone sit in half-lotus or full lotus posture. It actually took me three years of training, before I was able to sit in full lotus posture even for 5 minutes. However, at that time I somehow toughed it out and made it through the week. Afterwards I ended up staying for the rest of my life.

The first experience with repentance at Gold Mountain Monastery in 1974 was when we did the *Great Compassion Repentance*. We did this repentance one day a week in Chinese (on Saturdays) and the *Medicine Master Repentance* once a month (in English). Some of the monks and nuns had translated the *Medicine Master Repentance* into English, and they made up their own tune to do it in English. It was quite nice. Doing these two repentance ceremonies were the first time in my life that I did a repentance ritual.

Now there were two reasons why I was able to make it through this first important stage of adapting to the way of life at Gold Mountain Monastery. The first thing occurred during that one week Chan session. It was so difficult that after about five days, I was on the verge of leaving. However, on the sixth

名弟子之一)的指導下,得到開悟證果。但是讀了上人事蹟之後,我改變計劃回到美國跟隨上人,因為我心裡很確定,上人是尋找已久的心靈導師。

1974年,我來到了金山寺。因為以前是學小乘(南傳佛教),所以開始的時候很不習慣,只待一個星期就跑回芝加哥。幾個月後,大約是八月初,我又回到金山寺參加第二屆六週的暑假班(1974年8月3日到9月14日)。暑假班一開始先打一個禪七(8月5日到8月12日),每天早上三點到半夜。當時的我,連散盤都撐不到三十分鐘,更不用提單盤或雙盤;我是練習了三年才有辦法雙盤,而且也只能坐五分鐘。不管怎樣,那個星期還是咬著牙撐過去;從那次以後,我就留下來了。

第一次接觸懺悔法門是1974在金山寺,當時每個禮拜六拜〈大悲懺〉,是用中文唱的,每個月拜一次〈藥師懺〉,是用英文唱的。有些出家人發心翻譯〈藥師懺〉的懺文,調子也是他們自己編的,很好聽。〈大悲懺〉和〈藥師懺〉是我生平第一次參加的懺悔法會。

剛到金山寺,我一直無法適應道場的作息,是後來的兩件事情幫我度過這個難關。第一件事是發生在禪七的時候。因為太嚴格了,所以到禪七的第五天我實在受不了,想





照片攝於1975年金山寺。

Background Photos from GMM in 1975.

day of the meditation session, the Venerable Master gave a detailed lecture on the *Four Noble Truths*. Again, you have to understand that, as I mentioned before, I had been studying Theravada Buddhism for years and was originally planning to spend the rest of my life in a forest monastery in Thailand. So I was still quite attached to the teachings of the Small Vehicle. I was still struggling with the teaching in the Mahayana that everyone can become a Buddha. It was hard to fathom that this was possible. Then the Venerable Master gave a lecture on *the Four Noble Truths* that was better than anything I had ever heard before. This remarkable lecture helped convince me to stay.

The second thing is after that, for many weeks and months I still struggled to adjust to the strict schedule of Gold Mountain. Let me first explain in a little bit more detail about the way of life at Gold Mountain at that time. The original monastery on 15th street in the Mission District of San Francisco was a three-story building. The main Buddha Hall on the first floor was about 120 feet long and 30 feet wide. In addition, when we got the statue of Guan Yin Bodhisattva before it was gilded, the statue just made it by an inch in the Hall. So the ceiling was slightly more than 20 feet high. Right next to it was another hall, which was about the same size. That was where the kitchen and dining hall were located.

So all day long from the time we first came for the Morning Recitation Ceremony at 4:00 AM until 9:30 at night, we couldn't go back to our personal room on the third floor. We were always in the Buddha Hall or Dining hall – doing work, studying, or meditating. In other words, we

打包走人；直到第六天，上人對「四聖諦」做了一個非常詳細的開示。正如前面說的，我一直都是學習南傳佛教，而且準備在泰國的森林寺廟過一輩子，因此還是非常執著南傳的教理，對於大乘佛法「眾生皆堪作佛」的道理，我實在無法想像它的可能性。然而上人對「四聖諦」的解釋，卻是我聽過的開示中講的最好的；也因為這個開示，讓我有好的理由說服自己留下來。

雖然如此，金山寺緊湊的作息，我依然無法適應。在講第二件事情之前，要先描述一下當時金山寺的生活。最早的金山寺在三藩市的十五街，是一棟三層樓的建築。佛殿在一樓，大約是120呎長、30呎寬、20多呎高。現在聖城這尊千手觀音，當時還沒貼金，高度幾乎要碰到佛殿的天花板。佛殿旁邊是廚房和齋堂，面積加起來跟佛殿差不多。

從早上四點鐘的早課做完，一直到晚上九點半，整天都不會有時間回到三樓的寮房。大



were constantly in the public view of everyone else. We never had any place to go and hide and have some privacy. The only time we went back to our room was after the final ceremony at 9:30 PM. After we returned, we had to get back up at 3:30 the next morning for the Morning Ceremony again. So it was very difficult to adjust to that way of life.

I'll just briefly elaborate a bit more on the schedule. In the morning, we did the Morning Recitation Ceremony for 50 minutes to an hour. Then we had a little 10 to 15 minute break. At about 5:10 we had a silent meditation sit for one hour. After this sit we had a 20-minute period of walking meditation, and then another silent meditation sit for one hour. Afterwards, we worked at the temple and conducted whatever jobs or duties we had to do. Before noon we had the High Meal Offering Ceremony

at 10:40 AM (not 10:30 as we do now) and then our daily meal. After lunch with the exception of Saturdays there was no repentance ceremony like we have here at the City everyday, so we continued to work.

Then we had another meditation sit from something like 5:30 to 6:30 PM or 5:40 to 6:40 PM. In the evening we had the Evening Recitation Ceremony. It was at 7:00 PM rather than 6:30 PM. And then after the one-hour ceremony, the Venerable Master lectured on the *Flower Adornment (Avatamsaka) Sutra* for one hour. This included the time for the English translation. The Master would lecture for about ten minutes at a time and then it would be translated into English after each ten-minute period. When I first came in August of 1974 the Venerable Master was on Chapter Three, *Samantabhadra Bodhisattva's Samadhi*. Also, at that time the last ceremony that we did after the Sutra lecture was the *Ten Thousand Buddha's Repentance Ceremony*. This had already been done for years before I came. Each evening we would bow a small portion of the Ten Thousand Buddhas. This final evening ceremony ended at about 9:30 PM.

部份時間我們都在佛殿或者齋堂，工作、讀書或是打坐；換句話說，不管你做什麼，都是在眾目睽睽之下，沒有所謂的私人空間。晚課做完，九點半上樓休息，隔天早上三點半起床準備做早課。對我來說，這樣的生活真的很難適應。

再描述得詳細一點，早課差不多五十分鐘到一小時，然後休息十到十五分鐘。五點十分，開始打坐一小時，然後行香二十分鐘，接著再坐一個鐘頭；打坐完之後，就是出坡時間，每個人都有分配的工作；十點四十分上供（跟現在不太一樣，現在是十點半），然後用齋；結齋之後，又繼續工作。現在萬佛城是每天下午一點鐘拜〈大悲懺〉，那時只有星期六才拜〈大悲懺〉。

下午五點半到六點半，有時候是五點四十分到六點四十分，是打坐時間。七點做晚課，現在聖城是六點半做晚課。一個小時的晚課之後，上人就講解《華嚴經》，包括弟子英文翻譯總共一小時；上人大約每講十分鐘，就會停下來讓弟子翻譯成英文。1974年8月我剛到的時候，上人正在講第三品〈普賢三昧品〉；聽經結束後是拜〈萬佛寶懺〉；在我來之前，他們已經拜了好幾年。每天晚上拜一點，拜到九點半，也結束一天的功課。



After the Chan session, I made it to the summer session; I still struggled. I continued to grapple with the teachings of the Mahayana and how we can all become Buddhas for many more months. However, by doing the *Great Compassion Repentance* once a week, I could see and feel that my karmic obstacles were gradually becoming less and less. This occurred even though the *Great Compassion Repentance Ceremony* describes some pretty incredible things that were at first very hard for me to understand. For example, the idea that we have all created so much bad and evil karma for so many millions of lifetimes. Yet every time I did the repentance ceremony, I felt that my obstacles and difficulties were slowly melting away until at some point — I don't remember whether it was a half year or a year — I knew I had made it and I would be able to continue to follow the Mahayana path in the monastery for the rest of my life. The *Great Compassion Repentance Ceremony* was so powerful and transformative. And at that time many other people had a similar experience in doing the repentance ceremony. It was such an important part of our spiritual cultivation. Therefore, bowing the *Great Compassion Repentance* was the second thing that helped me stay in the monastery.

Soon after this rather dramatic change, I became a novice monk, a Shramanera. This was about a year after I had come to the monastery in August. A few months after that, the Venerable Master told us that we were going to do the necessary training to become fully ordained Bhikshus and Bhikshunis. This was during the beginning of 1976 (March or April). There were probably 7 or 8 monks and the same number or more of nuns. At that time, we were doing the remodeling of Gold Mountain Monastery to make it more livable and earthquake-proof. We were doing six to seven hours of rather strenuous physical labor every day. What was the training for us to become fully ordained monk and nuns? We just worked for the monastery and did formal bowing in repentance. We bowed an hour and a half after our normal schedule in the morning — starting at around 8:00 AM (just like we have alternate bowing here at the City of 10,000 Buddhas from 5:00-6:00 AM). Then in



禪七之後，雖然還是很掙扎，但我還是繼續參加暑假班。對於大乘的「眾生皆可成佛」的理論，有好一段時間我無法接受。不過，參加一個禮拜一次的大悲懺法會，讓我覺得自己的業障越來越少。雖然〈大悲懺〉裏面描述的某些道理，譬如「我與眾生，無始來今，廣造眾惡」，我並不是很了解，但是它真的有效果，每次拜我都可以感覺自己的業障一點一點地銷融。我不是記得很清楚，大概是半年到一年的時間，我覺得自己終於過關了，可以安住在道場，毫無疑悔地終身修習大乘佛法。〈大悲懺〉的確有大威神力，能讓人脫胎換骨。那時好幾位一起拜懺的同參，也有同樣的感覺，這是修行過程中很重要的一環。因此，幫助我留下來的第二件事，就是拜〈大悲懺〉。

在這個始料未及的轉變沒多久，我就剃度為沙彌，距離我八月份剛來，大約是一年的時間。幾個月之後，大概是1976年3、4月，上人宣佈我們要開始受訓，以準備成為比丘、比丘尼；當時男眾大約有七、八個人，女眾差不多也是這個數目。由於正值金山寺的防震補強工程，我們每天都要作六、七個鐘頭的工。那具足戒的課程呢？就是作工、拜懺。所以每天早上的功課做完，八點鐘開始，拜一個半鐘頭，和我們現在早上五點到六點拜願的形式一樣；晚課之前，再拜一個半鐘頭。這就是我們受戒的「基礎訓練」。師父有交代，要誠心地懺悔自己做錯的事，和不好的習氣毛病。當然，我們都依照上人的話去做。

如果沒記錯，這就是每天做的功課與工作，沒有其他特別安排





by Master Lian Chi, we were not required to memorize it. That was the training for most of us who became ordained at that time (the full ordination was in August 1976). We did this as novices, for close to a year.

Although we didn't have all these different classes, every night we got to hear the Venerable Master lecture on the *Avatamsaka Sutra* for an hour, which included the English translation. As many of you who heard the Venerable Master lecture know, and even those who have just listened to the tapes of his lectures also have realized, whenever you listen to his Dharma lectures you often get the sense that it is exactly what you needed to hear. It's kind of magical. In those days when the Venerable Master was physically present, it was pretty amazing. The Venerable Master seemed to address everybody's issues, needs, and aspirations during the lecture he gave every evening. It was all we needed.

Now here is some background history on my personal experience with the Dharma of repentance. I already mentioned the repentance ceremonies we did at Gold Mountain Monastery at this time. In addition to the normal public repentance ceremonies, when I first became a novice monk, I was inspired by some other monks who had done a particular repentance practice in the past. This practice was bowing to each character in the *Avatamsaka Sutra*. This was a form of repentance, because it involved saying a repentance verse with every full prostration to each character. The verse was from the verse section of Chapter 40 on the *Practices and Vows of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva*:

*All the evil karma that I have created in the past,  
Is all due to beginningless greed, hatred, and delusion,  
Generated in body, speech, and thought,  
I now repent and reform of it all.*

the evening before the Evening Recitation Ceremony, we bowed in repentance again for an hour and a half. That was our “basic training” to become fully ordained Bhikshus and Bhikshunis. Of course, the Venerable Master told us to be really sincere and honest about our mistakes and shortcomings and to earnestly repent and reform. And that's exactly what we all did.

As I recall, that was all we did. We did not have any other regular scheduled classes, but we still had to do study and memorization on our own. We had to memorize all the 53 verses and mantras in the *Vinaya Daily Use*, as well as the entire text of the *Essentials of the Shramanera Vinaya* by the Great Master Lian Chi. Although we studied the Rules of Deportment

的課程。不過我們都有自己的功課，譬如背《毗尼日用》五十三小咒，還有蓮池大師節錄的《沙彌律儀要略》，下篇的威儀門雖然也要讀，但不要求背起來。我們大概準備了一年的時間，隔年（1976年8月）我們就都受了具足戒。

儘管當時受戒沒有像現在上很多的課，但是每天晚上師父都會講解《華嚴經》，連英文翻譯在內一共一個小時。不管你是親自聽過上人開示，或是聽過上人開示的錄音帶，都會有一種感覺，就是好像他是針對你講的，實在很不可思議。那時候，師父常常就坐在前面為我們說法，那種感覺真的很不一樣；神奇的是，他往往都會講到我們心裏的問題、需求或者願望，而這些正好都是我們想知道的事。

接下來是我對懺悔法門的經歷和感想。前面有提到當年金山寺裡舉行的各種拜懺法會，在剛出家做沙彌的時候，除了這些法會，我聽說有些師兄弟修過一種特別的懺悔法門，令我很感動，那就是拜《華嚴經》。雖然是拜經，事實上也是一種拜懺，因為一字一拜，拜下去的時候唸〈懺悔文〉：

往昔所造諸惡業，  
皆由無始貪瞋癡，  
從身語意之所生，  
一切我今皆懺悔。

這段懺悔文是出自《華嚴經》最後一卷〈普賢菩薩行願品〉。



So I made a public vow that I would bow to each character of the *Avatamsaka Sutra* for an hour every morning, and an hour every evening. I ended up doing that practice for about six years. About a half year before we had the full ordination, the Venerable Master had me start working in the front office at Gold Mountain. I served as the assistant to the head monk at that time named Heng Guan (恆觀). At that time I rarely ever talked to the Venerable Master directly, because I lacked both the merit and ability to speak Chinese that well. Rather I would always go through Heng Guan. From the time I first came in 1974 all the way through the mid 1980's Heng Guan was the American monk that we all looked up to and respected. Although he did have a bit of a temper, he was extremely talented and sincere. Most importantly he was quite devoted to the Venerable Master. I worked as his assistant in the office, and then as time went on, I created some good karma and was able to also learn Chinese.

One day in 1977, several months after Dharma Master Sure began his "Three Steps, One Bow pilgrimage" the Venerable Master made a public announcement that he was no longer going to lecture the *Avatamsaka Sutra* at Gold Mountain Monastery. He was going to move the *Avatamsaka Sutra* lecture series to the City of 10,000 Buddhas. The lectures that we are listening to now on every Wednesday on Chapter 26, *The Ten Grounds* were given predominantly at Gold Mountain Monastery and only once in a while at the City of 10,000 Buddhas. The lectures on the Ten Grounds were given from about February to July of 1977 and the Venerable Master moved the lecture series to the City in about October of 1977. Shortly before he made that announcement, he asked me to become the permanent "wei no" or cantor for all the daily ceremonies at Gold Mountain Monastery. Before that time, the Bhikshus and novice monks would take turns being the cantor. We would each do one week at a time. So this was a big change.

於是我對大眾發願，也要一字一拜《華嚴經》，每天早晚各拜一個鐘頭，這樣持續了六年。大概是受具足戒之前的半年，上人讓我在金山寺的辦公室當恆觀的助手，恆觀當時是金山寺的當家。我很少和上人直接講話，因為福德不夠，也不太會講中文，所以都要透過恆觀。從我1974年剛到金山寺，一直到八零年中期，恆觀是我們大家欽慕而且尊敬的一位美國比丘。雖然有點脾氣，但是他非常能幹而且誠心；最重要的一點，他對師父非常忠心。當他助手的期間，我得以能夠積功累德，同時也學會一些中文。

1977年，在恆實法師他們開始三步一拜的幾個月後，有一天上人對大家宣佈，要改在萬佛聖城講《華嚴經》；也就是說，在金山寺這邊就不講《華嚴經》了。現在我們每個禮拜三聽的〈十地品〉，上人是從1977年2月講到7月，在金山寺講的，偶而幾次在萬佛城。而從1977年10月開始，上人就完全改在萬佛城講《華嚴經》了。在宣佈這件事之前沒不久，師父突然問我可不可以當金山寺每日課誦的專任維那，因為本來是比丘和沙彌輪流，一個人輪一星期，因此這算是一個蠻大的改變。上人雖然是我們的師父，我們也視他如父親般的敬仰，但他從來不會命令我們去做任何一件事；他總是會詢問我們的意



And I say that the Venerable Master “asked” me because that was just the way the Master was. Even though he was our teacher who we looked up to like our own father, he would never order us to do anything- he would always ask to make sure we were okay with whatever he was suggesting we should do.

So at that time, most of the monks and nuns moved up to reside here at the City, with the exception of a couple of us monks at Gold Mountain Monastery. And most of the nuns and other laywomen had already moved to the City of 10,000 Buddhas a little earlier in the year. After everyone moved up here and the Master only lectured the *Avatamsaka Sutra* here at the City, he would come up for three days every week. He'd come up on Friday and stay until Monday morning. So he'd spend three days here at the City of 10,000 Buddhas and four days at Gold Mountain. In general this was the Master's regular schedule starting at the end of 1977. Heng Guan was the main person who drove the Venerable Master back and forth. I always stayed at Gold Mountain Monastery. Now although the Venerable Master no longer lectured Sutras at Gold Mountain Monastery, he still gave Dharma lectures there. He lectured all the Patriarchs in the series we know as the *Reflections on the Way of the Buddha and the Patriarchs* and the biographical sketches of various historical figures in the series known as *Records of the Water-Mirror Reflecting Heaven*. So I got to hear lectures on all the Buddhist Patriarchs in India, as well as all the Chan lineages in China. It must have been a total of about 300+ lectures over the years. And I also got to hear over a hundred lectures on the biographical sketches from *Records of the Water-Mirror Reflecting Heaven*.

One day sometime at the end of 1977 or the beginning of 1978, I got a message from Heng Guan. He said, “Shr Fu told me to tell you that from now on you can talk to him whenever you wish. You don't need to go through me rather you can just talk to him directly by calling him.” We were always in the office on the first floor and the Master was normally in his own area on the third floor. So this was another big change for me.

Several years later the Venerable Master had everyone at the City do the Ten Thousand Buddhas Repentance. The first year was in 1983. Of course, living at Gold Mountain Monastery, I never got to do it. Unfortunately, Heng Guan returned to lay life, in 1985. That was a huge change, because at that time we took care of so many different things for the Venerable Master: immigration, real estate, income tax, correspondence, etc. The headquarters for most of the administrative activities for the Buddhist Association was still at Gold Mountain Monastery. So when that occurred, it meant that I had a tremendous amount of work and responsibility to take care of. So what did the Venerable Master do? This is a good example of the Venerable Master's “skill-in-means”. The Venerable Master said, “You have so much work to do. Therefore, for the time being, we will discontinue having public lectures at Gold Mountain. We will only have the normal public Evening Recitation Ceremony, and then afterwards you can do your work. That way you'll have more time to take care of your responsibilities.” He allowed me to do this for over half a year.

☯ To be continued

願，確定我們同意照他建議的去做，而不是被強迫的。

那時候大部份的出家人都已經搬來萬佛城，只剩下幾個比丘還留在金山寺，甚至有些尼眾和女居士更早就先搬來了。當大家都搬到萬佛城之後，上人就只在聖城講《華嚴經》。上人每個禮拜有三天住在聖城，星期五來，住到星期一早上離開，其他四天在金山寺。這就是1977年底開始上人每週大致的行程，恒觀負責開車接送，我則一直待在金山寺。雖然不在金山寺講《華嚴經》，但是上人還是有其他開示，他會講《佛祖道影》，也跟我們講敘述歷史人物的《水鏡回天錄》。所以我聽過的印度歷代祖師和中國禪宗歷代祖師事蹟，加起來大概有三百多回，還有《水鏡回天錄》的講解至少也有一百多回。

大約1977年底或是78年初，有一天恒觀跟我說：「師父要我告訴你，從現在開始，任何時候你都可以直接打電話找他，不用再經過我。」我們平常都在一樓的辦公室，而師父通常是在三樓他住的地方。可以直接打電話給師父，這對我來說也是一個很大的改變。

搬來聖城之後幾年，上人就教大家每年要拜一次萬佛寶懺，第一次舉行就是1983年。當然，住在金山寺的我一直都沒有機會參加。令人遺憾的是，恒觀1985年還俗，那是個莫大的轉變，因為當時我們幫師父處理許多事情，譬如簽證、不動產、稅務、信件等等，佛教總會的行政管理中心就設在金山寺，所以當他離開以後，我的工作和責任增加很多。面對這樣的情況，上人怎麼做呢？上人非常善巧地給我一個方便法門，他對我說：「因為你有很多事情要做，所以從現在開始，晚課還是對外開放，但是晚課以後的開示我們先暫停，讓你有較多的時間去處理公務。」師父就讓我這樣子做了半年多。

☯ 待續