

BITTER PRACTICE, SWEET HEART

苦盡甘來

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BODHI FIELD | 菩提田

I was honored when I was asked to contribute an article to *Vajra Bodhi Sea*, despite the fact that I am not an expert of Dharma. Honestly, I feel that even after twelve years as a Buddhist Studies student, my learning has only just begun. I count many members of the DRBA – readers of this very magazine – to be among my many teachers. Although I am by no means an expert, I am still very happy to share a few of my thoughts and experiences.

Before I begin, I would like to present a little of my personal background. My interest in Venerable Master Xuan Hua and the Dharma Realm Buddhist Association began when my Buddhism teacher at McGill University – Professor Victor Sogen Hori, who is also a Zen monk – suggested I do a research project on the Huayen Sheng Si (華嚴聖寺), aka. the Avatamsaka Sagely Monastery in Calgary, Canada. I visited the Avatamsaka Sagely Monastery twice

《金剛菩提海》邀請我寫一篇文章，個人頗感榮幸，儘管我對佛法所知有限。坦白說，縱使做了研究佛教十二年的學生，我的學習才剛剛起步。我將許多法界佛教總會（編按：以下簡稱法總）的成員——包括這本雜誌的讀者，視作善知識。雖然我並非專家，卻樂於分享一些想法和體驗。

首先，我簡單介紹自己的背景。我第一次聽到宣化上人的名字，並對法總發生興趣，是緣於日本禪宗和尚Victor Sogen Hori的介紹。Hori博士執教於麥基爾大學（McGill University），他是我的佛學教授，是他推薦我到加拿大卡加利市的華嚴聖寺做研究。2011年，我造訪華嚴聖寺兩次，每



in 2011 – living in the dormitories, following the monastic schedule, and trying to learn as much as I could from the monastics and laypeople there. I was so moved by the nuns' commitment to Dharma and their intense disciplinary practice that I decided I wanted to continue learning more about Venerable Master Xuan Hua and the DRBA.

I then had the good fortune (or perhaps it was karma!) to visit DRBA temples in Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Taiwan during the summer of 2014. I spent six weeks staying in monasteries, participating in daily monastic life, and absorbing everything I could. This was such a fruitful experience that even now, many months later, I continue to learn new lessons when I reflect back on my experiences over the summer. This is one of the very wonderful things about studying the Dharma: everything you learn is not merely a lesson for the moment you learn it, but the lessons continue to grow, expand, and deepen throughout your life. In this sense, one's learning is never done. When it comes to studying Buddhism, I am happy to call myself a lifelong student!

Today, I would like to share a few ideas I am working on as part of my PhD in Buddhist Studies at Harvard University, which draw directly on my personal experiences living in DRBA temples. One of my primary research interests is contemporary Buddhist monasticism in the modern, globalized world. As we all experience in our different ways, modern life has impacted how religion exists and is practiced in the world today. At this very moment, for example, the internet and modern communication technology make it possible for people all around the world to simultaneously read this magazine! We now live in a world that is connected in new and unprecedented ways, and this also gives rise to new complexities of identity, community belonging, and different ways of understanding the meaning of our lives. While it is clear that modernization and globalization have affected all of us, what these changes mean for how should we live our lives is still an open question.

So, what does all this have to do with Buddhism? Many scholars say that we must not speak of 'modernity' in the singular, but instead of "multiple modernities". That is, we live in a world of many different interconnected and overlapping realities. We are not just a single "global village", but many different "villages", worldviews, religions, and value-systems – all mixed together. Scholars of Buddhism have followed this line of argument, suggesting that in the modern world, we can no longer speak of "Buddhism" in the singular but must instead speak of many different "Buddhisms". After all, Buddhism includes a vast array of different traditions, lineages, philosophies, schools, and cultures. How, they ask, can we reduce such complexity down to a single label: "Buddhism"?

Although I do not entirely agree with this point-of-view, I see its value in certain ways. For example, we should remember the powerful

次都住在女眾的宿舍裏；除了依照寺院的課表生活，我盡己所能用功學習。華嚴聖寺的比丘尼們一心奉持佛法以及嚴持戒律的修行，深深觸動了我。因此，我下定決心要繼續向上人學習，並深入瞭解法界佛教總會。

2014年夏天，我有幸（或業力使然！）走訪上人在香港、馬來西亞和台灣所建立的道場：佛教講堂、慈興寺、法界觀音聖寺（登彼岸）、般若觀音聖寺、彌陀聖寺與法界佛教印經會。前後六個星期，我浸潤在佛寺日常的生活裏，並竭盡所能吸收一切。即便在個把月後的今天，當我回顧這趟碩果豐富的夏日之旅，依然有新的斬獲。學佛的甚妙之處頗多，其一便是：所有的學習不僅僅適用於一時一刻，佛法的體驗會隨著生命的進程不斷成長、擴大和深化。換句話說，佛法的學習是永無止境的。我很高興能做為一位終身學佛的弟子！

接下來，我想分享個人正在哈佛大學撰寫的宗教學博士論文中的某些想法，這些想法乃直接借鑒於住在法總道場的經驗。這篇論文的主要研究趣向是全球化與現代化下的佛教寺院生活。顯而易見地，當代的生活方式已經影響到宗教的生存以及修行方法。比方說，此時此刻，現代通訊技術與網絡使得住在全球各個角落的人都能夠同時閱讀到這本雜誌。我們所居住的世界，現正以一種史無前例的方式彼此連結，同時也引發錯綜複雜的新糾葛：如身分認同、社區歸屬、以及多元方式理解存在的意義。雖然全球化與現代化已經全面影響我們的生活，然而這些變化如何影響我們應該如何生活，仍然是道懸而未決的問題。

這跟佛教有何關係呢？許多學者認為談到「現代化」時，它的英文詞性不該是單數，現代化是多元的，應該使用複數來表達。也就是說，我們所居住的世界，是由不同的現實交互關聯，重重疊疊而生。因此「地球村」不是單一的「村落」，而是由不同世界觀、不同宗教信仰、不同價值系統的「村落」連結而成！同理，許多佛教學者也認為：當代沒有「一種佛教」（或客觀佛教），而是「多元佛教」。畢竟，佛教廣博浩瀚地容納了不同傳統、不同法脈、不同哲思、不同宗派和不同文化。以是之故，豈能將如此複雜且多樣性的佛教，簡化成一個單數的稱號或標籤？

雖然我不完全同意這種看法，但它頗有幾分道

Buddhist teaching about the danger of clinging to labels. We find this eloquently expressed in the metaphor that Buddhism is like a raft used to ferry sentient beings from the shore of samsara to the shore of nirvana. Once you arrive at the far shore, according to this saying, you can let go of the raft. In other words, Buddhism teaches that we should not cling to the label “Buddhism”. Instead, we should focus on what the teachings of Buddhism point us to:



namely, that we should investigate the causes of suffering, realize its cessation, and practice compassion in everyday life.

The problem, however, is that simply because we must not cling to the label Buddhism, it does not follow that there is no such thing as “Buddhism” in the singular. In this, I disagree with the view that because the world is full of so many different ‘Buddhisms’, we should stop using the singular term “Buddhism” altogether. Proponents of the latter view say, There are as many forms of Buddhism as there are Buddhists! To each his or her own! Here we find that what “Buddhism” is varies from person to person. There is no objective measure; Buddhism becomes whatever I believe it to be. Although this point-of-view helps awaken us to the rich variety of forms Buddhism has adopted throughout its transnational history, I believe it is still worthwhile to ask ourselves the difficult question of what it means to speak of “Buddhism” in the singular.

This question connects with the larger ethical issue of how to live a moral Buddhist life: that is, should Buddhism

理。舉例來說，我們都應該記得佛教中關於取相有害的重要開示，佛陀對取相的精彩教導表現在「筏喻者」的譬喻上：佛說，佛法就像一艘竹筏，用來橫渡眾生從輪迴的此岸到涅槃的彼岸。一旦到達彼岸，便可放下竹筏。佛陀教導我們不應該取著法相。相反地，我們應該專注於佛法所指引的方向。換言之，我們應該研究痛苦的起因，了達滅苦的方法，並在日常生活中修習大悲。

問題是，即使不應取著法相，並不意味著「佛教」一詞沒有意義。站在這個立足點上，我並不同意那些學者們的觀點，也就是即使世界上充滿著多元性的佛教（Buddhisms），並不意味我們應該停止使用「佛教」（Buddhism）



一詞。有人說：「有多少佛教徒，就有多少種佛教！各人有各人的佛教。」這番話讓佛教成為隨人各解其趣的宗教，沒有客觀衡量的標準。雖然從超越國界的歷史觀點來看，這種觀點幫助我們發覺並欣賞佛教的多元性，與此同時，我們也得認真思量這道難題：當佛教一詞以英文單數形式出現時，其意趣為何？



change to better suit our modern life, or should we change ourselves to become better Buddhists? If we believe in a relativistic, individualistic Buddhism – that there are as many “Buddhisms” as there are Buddhists – then there is no need to change ourselves. Buddhism can simply be what we are, as we are. But there is a danger here. As Sakyamuni Buddha himself said, the teachings of Buddhism are like medicine to treat the sick. If we were not ill, we would not need the medicine. But, in truth, we turn to Buddhism because we want to change; we know we must change; we know we are ill and we want to be better. From this perspective, the value of Buddhism is precisely that it calls us to change; that it refuses to celebrate our everyday delusions, desires, and attachments.

One of my deepest impressions from my time living in DRBA monasteries is how strictly DRBA monastics adhere to the precepts, disciplinary practices, and the rigors of the daily monastic schedule. I once heard a monastic describe this with a memorable idiom: “Bitter Practice, Sweet Heart.” Although there were of course differences between the DRBA monasteries in Canada, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Malaysia, I found that monastics in every place shared a common commitment to self-cultivation through discipline. This is not a case of people adapting Buddhism to suit their desires; rather, it is a case of exceptional people, working with great resolve every day, to reshape themselves into alignment with the principles of the Buddhist path. In contrast to those who think the abstract and

這個問題牽涉到更廣泛的倫理議題，也就是佛教徒該如何過一種道德的生活？佛教是否應順應現代人的生活而有所改變？亦或，我們應該改變自己而成為更好的佛教徒？如果我們相信相對主義、個人主義式的佛教——有多少佛教徒，就有多少種佛教！那麼我們便無需改變自己，佛教不過是從心所欲就好。但是這個看法很危險。套用釋迦牟尼佛的話，佛法是藥，眾生都是病人，我們的病是貪、瞋、癡；如果眾生沒有這三種病，我們也不需要這帖藥。事實上，我們之所以親近佛教是因為想要改變，我們知道自己必須改變；因為瞭解自己病了，所以想要做更好的自己。因此，佛教的價值及重要性正在於喚起改變；佛法讓我們避免隨著日常的妄念、欲望及執著起舞。

住在法總道場令我印象最深刻的事情是：僧團嚴持戒律、規律的修行以及精勤的課表。我曾聽法師說過一句令我難忘的諺語：「Bitter practice, sweet heart（苦盡甘來）」。雖然法總在加拿大、台灣、香港及馬來西亞的分支道場各有各的特色，但是每個道場的比丘和比丘尼都有共同的目標：依戒修行。他們不是讓佛教牽就自己，相反的，這群卓越的出家人以堅決的願力向戒律看齊，在成佛的道路上日夜相繼重塑自己。有些人認為，佛教教義抽象的理論及觀點對日常生活不起什麼作用；然而在法總的道場中，我看到佛教的戒律與教理，時時刻刻體現在僧人們的行住坐臥裏。縱使身居鬧市



theoretical ideas of Buddhist doctrine have little impact on everyday life, I found that the ideas of Buddhist doctrine, and their concrete manifestation in disciplinary practice, infuse every moment of everyday life in the DRBA. Although there are differences between life at the bustling Deng Bi An temple in Kuala Lumpur compared to that of the rural Mi Tuo Sheng Si temple in Hualian, we must not overlook the formative ways in which the doctrines of “Buddhism”, in the singular, infuse and shape everyday monastic life in each place.

As someone who not only seeks to learn about Buddhism, but also from Buddhism, the question for me is whether and why we might speak of “Buddhism” in the singular and “Buddhisms” in the plural. And I think Buddhism itself offers a tool for how to negotiate this dichotomy: we must seek a middle way between absolutism and relativism. On the one hand, if we deny the multiplicity of “Buddhisms” in the modern world, we overlook one of Buddhism’s great strengths, namely, the many creative and skillful ways the Dharma has historically adapted itself to suit the needs of sentient beings in different times and places. Yet, on the other hand, if we deny the category of “Buddhism” in the singular, I fear we will lose sight of the significant commonalities that unite the many individual manifestations of Buddhism throughout different historical periods and cultural settings. To deny “Buddhism” in the singular is to overlook the important ways in which enduring ideas about discipline, morality, and the necessity of self-transformation have shaped all of Buddhist history, right down to the present day. While it is true that we cannot know what “Buddhism” is apart from our individual experiences of “Buddhisms” as they manifest in the world, we also must not, as one of my teachers once said, mistake the forest for the trees: we must not be so distracted by multiplicity that we fail to see how particular instances of “Buddhisms” help us to better see “Buddhism” as a whole. ❀

的馬來西亞登彼岸道場跟臺灣花蓮鄉下的彌陀聖寺在起居步調上不同，我們絕不能忽略它們最主要的共同性：每個分支道場堅決地注重佛教的戒律與紀律。

作為研究佛教的學生，我不僅渴望瞭解佛教，也想從佛法中學習。我想探討的是，當論及「佛教」時，我們是否需分別「佛教」是客觀的佛教（Buddhism），還是多元化的佛教（Buddhisms）？如果需要，理由為何？我認為佛法提供解決此二分法的工具：那就在絕對主義和相對主義之間尋求中道。如果我們否認佛教的多元性與多樣性，我們便忽略佛教最具優勢的一面，那就是佛教自有歷史以來，能因時因地以不同善巧方便順應眾生的需求（佛教在地化的能力）。但是，從另外一面看來，如果我們拒絕有客觀準則的佛教（Buddhism），恐怕我們會忽視佛教重要的本質或共性，這份本質讓佛教在歷經漫長的歷史及不同文化環境下，依然團結了各種表現形式的佛教。如果我們否認有客觀佛教的存在，便是忽視佛教的戒律、道德與自我轉化的必要性。因此，為了真正瞭解佛教（Buddhism），我們便要從當今世界的多元佛教（Buddhisms）裏找到答案。一旦瞭解佛教的多元性，我們便更能看清楚佛教（Buddhism）的整體性意義。套用我的教授說過的話：只見樹木，不見森林。❀



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