

# 雪山中的淨土

The Pureland at Snow Mountain

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DHARMA REALM NEWS | 法界音

While the whole nation was celebrating the July 4<sup>th</sup>—the Independence Day, a group of practitioners gathered at Snow Mountain Monastery near Index, Washington, for a 3-day Buddha recitation session. This was hosted by Dharma Master Heng Lai and led by two bhikshus from the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, Ukiah, California—Dharma Master Jin Xing and Dharma Master Jin Xiao, as well as four bhikshunis from Gold Summit Monastery in Seattle, Washington.

Around 75 people joined in the session from different places—California, Oregon, Washington, and Texas. Some came by plane or train and others by car. Some drove about 15 hours to come and participate and draw close to the monastics. They were also of different age groups, men and women, and many young people who showed up including students from Dharma Realm Buddhist University. It was very inspiring to see everyone gathered together for the Dharma.

Because of limited accommodation at Snow Mountain, men camped outside the house while women stayed inside. Those from the Seattle area commuted every day—arriving before 8 am and leaving after 5 pm.

The weather was very auspicious and supportive of the session—instead of the usual overcast, it was always sunny, pleasantly warm yet not too hot. Led by the Dharma Masters, the whole assembly recited the Buddha's name in the open under a big tent—we were in nature

2015年7月4日，當全美都在慶祝美國獨立日的時候，一羣虔誠的修行者聚集在華盛頓州Index小鎮上的雪山寺，共同參加三天的念佛法會。這項法會由恒來法師主持，並由加州瑜伽市萬佛聖城前來的比丘法師（近幸師、近孝師）以及四位西雅圖金峰寺的比丘尼法師輪流帶領。

整個法會大約有75人參加，分別來自不同的地方加州、俄勒岡州、華盛頓州、德州等等。有人乘飛機、搭火車、坐汽車、自駕來到雪山寺，更有人開車十五多個小時來參加這個法會。大家都認真投入，親近僧寶。參加法會的男女眾涵蓋各年齡層，其中不乏年輕人和小孩兒，還有法界佛教大學的學生。大家為法在此相聚，令人備受鼓舞。

由於雪山寺住宿的地方有限，那些遠道而來的善信們男眾在戶外露營，女眾則在室內住宿；而住在西雅圖附近的居士，則每天駕車往返，早上八點以前到雪山寺，下午五點以後離開。

infused with the sound of recitation - it was peaceful yet lively, mystical yet grounded.

To many, reciting the Buddha's name is a devotional practice. During these three days, however, Dharma Master Lai shared his insight into this practice, linking it to Chan. "In the infinite light of Amitabha Buddha, we are building the foundation of our mindfulness," he said during one of his Dharma talks.

Upasaka Spike Morelli (CTTB), reflecting upon his experience at Snow Mountain, said:

"When I first encountered Buddhism, I understood it as mostly a philosophy, not a religion. When people say 'Buddhism', I'd first think of meditation or Chan. However, what I have discovered over the last two years living in CTTB is that reciting the Buddha's name is a powerful way to purify and concentrate our minds. It is possibly the best method since reciting the holy name can be done at any time, in any place, in any position, with no requirements other than one's complete focus."

During the 3 days Amitabha retreat, Dharma Master Lai spoke of just that, pointing out how reciting the Buddha's name is in fact no different than Chan or any other practice for that matter. In the act of reciting, if we can do it single-mindedly, we are ceasing our false thinking and glimpsing our True Nature. Put it simply, if your mind is focused on Amitabha, your mouth is uttering the word Amitabha, your eyes are visualizing the word Amitabha and your ears are listening to the word Amitabha, then for that moment you are truly not committing offenses and right there in that moment you are in the Western Pure Land.

A student from Lewis & Clark College named Thao Tran said:

"This is my first time coming North to attend a Buddhist session. Before, I had headed south for retreats such as ones at CTTB and the most recent one at Reedsport, Oregon.

"I have just graduated from college and am looking for jobs. This summer is the most significant one for me as I have just finished a week-long retreat at Reedsport and then quickly embarked on a new session at Snow Mountain. For sometime I was quite worried as I wondered: 'Am I spending too much time on Dharma activities? Shouldn't I be looking for jobs right now? Am I just trying to get away from my problems?' However, the session at Snow Mountain changed such mindset. As I was focusing on cultivation like reciting the Buddha's name or chanting, I could see myself being at peace with myself and things just followed easily after that.

I really liked what one of my friends said. 'Before you come to the retreat, you have many thoughts of different importance but after the session, the order of thoughts changes which makes things seem easier to handle than before.' Or as Master Heng Lai puts it, 'The Pure Land is right here and right now'".

Lisa Liang is a student from Dharma Realm Buddhist University. When reflecting on her experience she said:

"This is my first time doing the 3-day Amitabha Session at Snow

佛三期間的天氣十分吉祥，晴朗、溫暖而不酷熱，一反往常的陰霾。法會大眾在法師們的帶領下，在戶外搭建的帳篷內誦念佛號沉浸在原始的大自然裏，融入琅琅的佛號聲中安寧而又充滿生機，如同仙境而又真真切切。

對於很多人來說，念佛是一種虔誠修持的法門。但在三天的念佛法會中，來法師與大眾分享了他對念佛法門的見解念佛也是參禪，「我們在阿彌陀佛的無量光中，為我們的正念打基礎。」

萬佛聖城來的居士 Spike Morelli，分享他此次佛三的心得時講到：

「當我最初接觸佛教時，我覺得佛教更像是一種哲學。當別人講到佛教的時候，我會先想到打坐或者是參禪。但是在聖城住了兩年以後，我了解到念佛其實是一個清淨和專注內心的有力法門也許是最好的法門。因為念佛是在任何時間、地點、姿勢都可以做到的，除了專心以外並沒有其他的要求。」

在雪山寺的佛三期間，來法師講到的正是這一點。他指出念佛其實就是參禪，也是其他任何法門。在念佛時，只要我們能做到一心不亂，就可以滅除妄想而一窺我們的自性。簡單來說，如果心中專注在阿彌陀佛上，嘴裏念著阿彌陀佛，眼中觀想阿彌陀佛這幾個字，耳朵聽著念阿彌陀佛的聲音，那麼當下就沒有造業，當下就在西方極樂世界。

路易斯克拉克大學學生陳滔，談到她的感想時說：

「這是我第一次北上參加法會。以前我曾南下去萬佛聖城參加過法會，最近的一次是在俄勒岡州的里茲波特參加過法會。

我剛從大學畢業，現在在找工作，這個暑假對我來說十分重要。我剛從里茲波特的法會中回來，就又來雪山寺參加新一輪的法會，有時我會焦慮地想：『是不是參加的法會太多了？是不是應該去找工作？是不是在逃避現實？』但是雪山寺的法會改變了我的觀念。在我專心念佛和誦經的時候，我可以看到自己平靜了下來，以後事情也發展得十分順利。

Mountain Monastery. During the first day of the retreat, the environment took my breath away. I was shocked by the beauty of the surroundings. The serene, idyllic and open space of the field fills up my whole body. I entered the realm of nature that is permeated with trees and natural habitats. I immediately felt a strong belonging. I felt calm, but uneasy at the same time. The struggle for me was to single-mindedly recite the Buddha's name.

"Many times, I had the false thinking of engorging myself in the natural beauty, rather than reciting the Buddha's name. I looked around and everyone was sincerely reciting. The enthusiasm and energy everyone put into reciting was very touching. Everyone was reciting in a beautiful tune that is like music to my ears.

"On the second day, all my senses were again gravitating to the beauty of the surroundings. I could see a bright light radiating from the tree branches, shining on all of us. It seemed like the trees here were radiating Amitabha's light. The light was warm and receiving. And I wished time could stop right there. In one of the lectures, DM Lai shared about



illuminating our light like Amitabha's light. Instantly, I was reminded of my experience when I was mesmerized by the light during the walking recitation.

"Also, it reminded me of a text I studied in DRBU, *Da Xue*, "The Great Learning." The text urges that the initial path of great learning "...lies in causing the light of one's inner moral force to shine forth..." The moral force can be understood as the moral and spiritual goodness within us (our human nature). In order to shine forth one's inherent virtues or morals, one needs to nourish one's good behavior and foster moral principles in one's life. The reason why one has to shine forth one's inherent virtues is because they are not preserved and instead we are aroused by human desires such as food, form, taste, objects of touch, and so forth. This is similar to the human nature found in Buddhism where our Buddha-nature is inherently pure, but is covered up by defiled dust.

我很喜歡一位法友告訴我的一段話：參加法會以前你的人生重點以及想法，和參加法會以後會不一樣。那個變化會讓你的人生變得更輕鬆，就像來法師講的『淨土就是當下』。」

法界佛教大學的學生梁麗珊，也分享她這次佛三的心得：

「這是我第一次來雪山寺參加佛三。法會第一天，這裏的環境美得讓我屏息，周圍的美好讓我十分震撼。我進入漫山遍野的樹林中，立刻融入了自然，成為它的一部分。我很平靜但同時又有些不安。讓我感到困難的是一心念佛。

很多時候對外在景色的貪戀，讓我起了很多妄想而不能專心念佛；而看到周圍的人都在虔誠地念佛，他們念佛的熱誠與精神讓我很感動。大家唸誦的調子，在我耳中彷彿音樂一般。



第二天，我的六根又不由自主地趨向自然美景。陽光從樹枝間灑下照在我們身上，彷彿這些樹木都放著阿彌陀佛的金光，溫暖而又包容，我真希望時間可以停留在那裏。來法師在一次講法時，講到我們應當放出像阿彌陀佛一樣的光，馬上讓我想到了那在光中繞念的美妙經歷。

同時我也想到在法大學習《大學》時，提到的『大學之道在明明德』。這裏的『德』，可以理解為自性中的善；若想要『明德』，就要修善行來培養德行。德若不能明，就會因為食色味觸等等的欲望而減損，這和佛法中講的『佛性本自清淨，但被塵埃覆蓋』是很像。





“The retreat was a fruitful experience because it reminded me to cultivate myself and get rid of desires and attachments so that we can all become like Amitabha Buddha, who shines forth his inner moral virtues. Also, I would like to thank the Dharma Masters and lay cultivators who took good care of us during this retreat.” ❀

這個法會對我來說收穫很大，因為它提醒我要修行，斷去欲望及執著，像阿彌陀佛一樣從自性中放光。同時也要感恩各位法師以及居士們，在法會期間對我們無微不至的照顧。」❀