

# 萬佛聖城為山谷大火災民提供週末素食午餐

## City of Ten Thousand Buddhas Served Weekend Vegetarian Lunches for Valley Fire Evacuees

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萬佛聖城所屬曼都仙諾縣隔鄰的湖縣，於2015年9月12日發生山谷大火，火勢猛烈，延燒至索諾瑪縣與納帕縣，燃燒面積總計七萬六千餘英畝，造成近兩千戶房屋全燬，4人死亡，1人失蹤，4名消防員被火牆困住燒傷，3,000多人無家可歸，其中以湖縣的中城災情最嚴重。

萬佛聖城住眾史提夫·塞特拉表示，火災後，平日照顧法總在湖縣產業的中城居民鮑勃葛洛斯電郵告訴他，葛洛斯全家平安，房屋也完好，但災民中心缺乏素食，許多災民心靈嚴重受創，需要打氣。因此史提夫·塞特拉與同修阿曼達、男校教師羅傑·凱勒曼、男校學生家長周惠卿等人，一起到災區了解情況後，向法師報告，因而促成週末素食賑災。

萬佛聖城的法師、居士與學生，利用週末五度前往中城，為當地災民供應素食中餐，廣受歡迎。女校學生也曾到中城附近的澄清湖青少年中心幫忙，將數量眾多的捐贈物品分類，以便災民領取。

Neighboring Mendocino County, where the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas (CTTB) is located, is Lake County, where the catastrophic Valley Fire started on September 12<sup>th</sup> 2015. The raging fire spread into Sonoma County and Napa County. The burnt area is over 76,000 acres. Nearly 2,000 structures were destroyed, four people killed. Four firefighters, trapped inside the “wall of flame” were injured. The fire rendered more than 3,000 people homeless. Middletown suffered the most devastation.

Steve Setera, a CTTB resident, said that after the Valley Fire broke out, Bob Gross, who took care of a DRBA ranch in Lake County, emailed him that his family was safe and his house was not burned, but the evacuee center there did not serve vegetarian meals. Because many evacuees suffered from Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome, they would need encouragement. Therefore, Steve, his wife Amanda, Roger Kellerman, a teacher from the boy's school, and a student's parent May Chew, went to the evacuee center and then reported back to the Dharma Masters; as a result, vegetarian meals from CTTB were arranged to be served on weekends.

Subsequently Dharma Masters, Laity and students from the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas went to Middletown five times on weekends to serve vegetarian lunches, which were greatly welcomed. Girls school students also helped sort donations at the Clear Lake Youth Center.

Bhikshuni Jin Rou met two vegetarians from a spiritual community there. They said that the community was divided into two sects before the fire. The Fire had a cathartic effect, cleansing their minds so that the

比丘尼近柔師在賑災現場遇到兩位來自一個靈修團體的素食災民，他們表示，這個靈修團體在火災前原已分裂成兩派，如今這場大火正足以掃淨心靈，讓兩派在重建家園的過程中互相幫忙，恢復和合。

比丘尼近經師則遇到一家四口，從年初至今，已經歷四場大火，逃難四次，另一位災民則是逃難三次，近經師體會到他們的無奈，以及無法解脫的痛苦。前往賑災途中，看到路旁盡是焦土，讓她深刻感受「世間無常、國土危脆」的衝擊。

這場火災後，很多民衆慷慨發心，物資捐贈十分踴躍充裕。近燈師聽到一位取用素食的女性災民說，雖然這場大火燒得她一無所有，但看到這麼多的捐贈，這麼多人熱心幫忙，讓她備感人性溫暖的一面，並對未來充滿希望。

負責組織賑災隊伍的恒音法師感嘆道：「這場火災燒掉了貧富、種族、文化與社會階級的差距。很多人都發出了惻隱之心來幫忙，我們本來想帶領大家打坐或念咒，但是現場播放的搖滾音樂太大聲，所以無法打坐，只能為他們迴向。」

聖城一位資深比丘尼指出，其實萬佛聖城無形中已對災民提供很大的幫助。大火發生兩三天後即開始下雨，似乎正是感應。

10月10日最後一次在中城提供素食午餐後，鮑勃·葛洛斯在電郵中指出，很多災民都非常感謝萬佛聖城的賑災隊伍，尤其是素食餐點更是「棒極了！」就連死硬派的肉食者，雖然一開始對萬佛聖城這群佛教徒覺得很神秘，但對其提供的捐贈物品、衣服、多種食物、不盡的正向思考與愛心分享，這些肉食者都十分喜愛。鮑勃·葛洛斯說：「由於你們的努力以及提供的幫助，我感覺佛陀已經進入很多人的心裏。所以你們做了很多好事！現在我的鄰居們對佛陀以及佛教徒的無私與溫和方式有更深的了解。」

到聖城擔任義工多年的黃家玉，正是住在最先起火的湖縣柯部山。火災後她無法返家，只能祈禱家中供奉佛菩薩、上人、已故家人牌位的角落千萬別被燒。而在火勢控制住，獲准返家時，發現她家所在的整條街都沒被大火燒到，房屋完整無恙，讓她驚喜不已。✿

two sides are now helping each other rebuild, and in the process have restored harmony to the community.

Bhikshuni Jin Jing met a family of four who had escaped four fires this year. Another evacuee had escaped fire three times. Dharma Master Jin Jing said that she could feel their despair and pain at the utter hopelessness of their situation. On the way to the disaster area, seeing the scorched land along the road, she deeply felt the full impact of the truth from a verse in the Sutra text, "The world is in a constant state of flux and the land is susceptible to peril."

After the fire, many people generously donated ample amounts of material goods. Dharma Master Jin Deng heard an affected woman who came for the vegetarian meal saying that even though she lost everything in the fire, upon seeing so many donations and so many people come out to warmly offer help, she felt the warm side of human nature and thus nurtured a lot of hope for the future.

Dharma Master Heng Yin, who organized the vegetarian lunch team, reflected that, "The fire burned down the gap between rich and poor, between ethnic groups, between different cultures and social classes. Many people came to help out of the sense of compassion (or sympathy). We intended to teach people to sit in meditation or recite mantras, but the rock-and-roll music played on site was too loud so we couldn't meditate, and could only transfer the merit and virtue silently in our minds."

A senior Bhikshuni at CTTB pointed out that actually CTTB had been giving invisible support since we heard of the Valley Fire. The rain that came a few days after the fire seemed to be a response.

After the last vegetarian lunch was served in Middletown on October 10<sup>th</sup>, Bob Gross said in an email that CTTB's presence in Middletown was felt and enjoyed by many. The food was especially great! Even some VERY hardcore omnivores shared their delight with CTTB vegetarian lunch team's offerings, as "The Buddhists were all a mystery at first - with all those different items, garments, different food type and endless positivity and love to share." Bob Gross wrote, "I sense Buddha entered the minds of many with this effort and your group's offering of help. So a lot of good was done!!! Now my neighborhood may better understand The Buddha and Buddhist ways."

Chia-yu Huang, a long-time volunteer at CTTB, lives on Cobb Mountain in Lake County where the Valley Fire started. After the fire broke out, she was not allowed to go home. She prayed that the corner of her house where she had an altar for the Buddha and Bodhisattva statues, Venerable Master Hua's picture, and the memorial plaques for her deceased elders would not be burned. After the fire was contained, she was allowed to go home. To her great surprise, the entire street where her house was located was not burned; all remained intact. ✿