



My Near-Death Experience

面對死亡的體會

A talk given by Bhikshuni Heng Hwei on October 21, 2016

比丘尼恒會2016年10月21日講於萬佛聖城大殿

First above all, I'd like to thank everyone at CTTB, from branches of Dharma Realm Buddhist Association and from the group of people I met at Buddha Root Farm for dedicating merit to me when I was in the hospital. At the end of August, I fell ill, was sent to the Ukiah Valley Hospital's ER, and then flown by helicopter to the California Pacific Medical Center in San Francisco because I had liver failure.

The second person I'd like to thank is the liver donor, for donating a liver to me. I am grateful that I'm still alive and can talk to all of you tonight. The third group of people I'd like to thank is the staff, the nurses and the doctors of the California Pacific Medical Center. They really dedicate their lives to saving other people's lives, including mine. I see their smiling faces all the time. They greeted me with genuine smiles; it was really something that came from the bottom of their hearts. Like the Master said, people who work at hospitals really bring forth great vows and practice the Bodhisattva Path to benefit other people.

How did I end up in the hospital? The real reason was that my liver wasn't working. I guess I must have killed someone in my past life and that person had come back for my life this time. I remember during the first few years I left the home-life, I used to have dreams that a group of people would come for my life. They came and stabbed me to death. Luckily I could always get up and walk away from death. These dreams were probably telling me I was supposed to die early this life, but I was rescued and am able to talk to you tonight.

首先想表達我的感謝，感謝萬佛聖城、各分支道場以及今年暑假在佛根地認識的一群年輕人，感謝大家在我住院這段期間為我迴向。今年八月底，我感覺很不舒服，於是被送到附近的瑜伽谷醫學中心急診，之後被直昇機送進三藩市的太平洋醫院，因為我的肝臟失去功能，也就是肝衰竭。

再者，要感謝捐肝給我的這位捐贈者。因為他，我今天才能繼續呼吸，也才能在這裡跟各位說話。再來就是感謝太平洋醫院的工作人員、護士、醫生，他們是真心地奉獻自己照顧別人的生命，其中包括我的。在醫院裡，我總是見到他們開心的微笑，那種微笑是真心的，是真正發自心底的。就像上人說的，那些在醫院工作的人，都是發願行菩薩道，來利益眾生的。

我到底為什麼住院呢？當然因為我的肝臟停止工作，這是直接的原因。但是我也相信，過去生我曾經殺過人，而現在是我該償命的時候。記得剛出家的前幾年，我總是夢到一群人將我刺死；幸運的是，每次我都平

In everyday life we may have conflicts with people and we are not happy. The first thought that comes up is to blame the other person. We don't know how to reflect and look at our own thoughts and change. We just blame others and don't forgive them. We should try to put a stop to such thoughts of hatred. But from my years at CTTB I realized it's not only necessary to stop these thoughts but we also need to transform them into compassion.

We should not live life with thoughts of hatred because in the future these thoughts may turn to killing and other harmful actions, which would make us continue to transmigrate in the cycle of rebirth. If we want to know whether we have thoughts of hatred, we should look at ourselves. Are we always looking for faults in others instead of acknowledging our own? If we do harbor, such thoughts and attitudes, we should change.

Another thing I'd like to share is that when I was hospitalized, I did not recite the Buddha's name. No, I didn't. Why? Because when I was in the hospital for the first two days, my doctor told me I would need a liver transplant or I would die in a week's time. After the transplant I would have to take medication for the rest of my life. This truly shocked me; I didn't and couldn't believe that I was going to die. It was very hard for me to quickly uphold the Buddha's name and recite so that my life would be safe at that time.

Instead, I was happy to talk about the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. Each time when I mentioned I was from CTTB, those doctors or nurses were happy to hear the name CTTB. I think they have good roots. In the hospital they let me play the chanting of the Buddha's name. When they came into my room, they would comment on the chanting, saying it's so soothing and it had a good tune.

Even though I listened to the chanting of the Buddha's name, after some time my karmic obstacles caught up with me once more and the chanting changed into something else; I didn't even hear "Namo Amitabha Buddha" clearly anymore. So I listened to the *Great Compassion Mantra* instead. When I heard it very clearly, I was so happy that I said to myself, "I'd like to drink some Great Compassion water." I asked for some Great Compassion water from Gold Mountain Monastery and also accepted some from a nun who recites the mantra. I drank a lot of that water. In the end, the mantra recitation changed as well and it wasn't very clear to me anymore.

After two weeks in the hospital, I had my liver transplant. I had my surgery on Saturday, and woke up on Sunday. I was sleeping from day until night on Monday. I was half awake and talking to myself. I had already forgotten about waking up the next day and asked myself why I'm still groggy from surgery; I still couldn't regain consciousness and I kept talking. I tried to recite the *Great Compassion Mantra*, but because the anesthetic was too strong, I couldn't recite the mantra at all. I also couldn't figure out what my name was. Luckily I was able to remember the six-syllable mantra, *Om Mani Padme Hum*, and I recited it for some time. After a while I also got confused and couldn't recite any longer.

We sometimes say, "Oh, I've been reciting the Buddha's name for a long time, for many years. I'll recite so many times a day." Do we really recite with

安地醒來，免於一死。而這些夢似乎在告訴我，今生我應該短命；但我卻獲救了，而且能在這裡跟各位講話。

每天的生活裡，我們難免會跟人發生摩擦，然後就會不開心；生起的第一個念頭，往往都是責怪對方，而不是迴光返照看看自己，改變自己。我們責怪別人的錯誤，不願意原諒對方。其實我們應該放下這種憎恨心，而在聖城這幾年的學習，我明白不是停止憎恨，而是要把憎恨轉化為慈悲。

這些憎恨的念頭不應該一直跟隨著我們，因為來世可能就演變成殺人或是傷害眾生的行為，然後生死的輪迴就不斷地流轉，永遠無法停止。如果想知道自己是否有憎恨心，就看自己是不是總看人家不對，不認自己的過錯？如果有這個毛病，我們就要改變。

另外想跟大家分享的，就是在醫院的時候我有念佛嗎？答案是，沒有。為什麼？被送進醫院的第二天，醫生告訴我，我必須換肝，否則活不過一個禮拜；如果手術，我必須一輩子服藥。醫生的話令我很錯愕，我無法相信自己這一生就要結束了，我也無法立刻提起佛號，即使那時候念佛能令我逢凶化吉。

但是，我卻很願意提起萬佛聖城，每次我一說我來自萬佛聖城，那些醫生、護士都很開心聽到聖城的名字。我相信他們都很有善根，他們讓我在病房裡播念佛機。每次他們到我床前，都會讚嘆佛號聽起來很平靜、很悅耳。

儘管聽著念佛機的佛號，但是因為業障障著我，一段時間之後，佛號變成其他的聲音，令我根本聽不清楚「南無阿彌陀佛」這六字洪名。於是我改聽〈大悲咒〉，我很高興這次聽清楚了，我跟自己說：「我要喝大悲水。」金山寺以及一位專持〈大悲咒〉的同參送給我一些大悲水，我喝了很多。但是，後來〈大悲咒〉的聲音又變了，我又無法聽清楚。

住院兩個禮拜以後，我有機會進行換肝手術。手術是星期六，我星期天醒來，之

our energy and concentration at all times? This is the point I'd like to emphasize to all of you tonight. If we recite without concentration, then we won't have any skill to end our cycle of rebirth and won't be able to get reborn in the Pure Land.

From my experience, I failed the test. I know what it is like. Maybe there are people who think they are doing a good job at reciting the Buddha's name, but until they get tested, they won't know where they really are in their skills. I remember the Master said that we must recite the Buddha's name "Namo Amitabha Buddha" with concentration and energy. We have to recite all the time until we can recite single-mindedly, until the recitation of the Buddha's name automatically continues even when we are not reciting. Then we'd have some skill in our cultivation. If we just casually recite and don't get that kind of response, we have to apply more effort in reciting the Buddha's name.

When I heard that I was going to die, even though I didn't accept it, I had a thought of regret. I regretted that even though I've left home for so many years, I never really kept my mouth karma pure at all. I remember the Master saying that when people are going to die, they will regret things they did wrong in life. But if we wait until that time, it would be too late because we'd soon die.

I didn't know I was going to die until the doctor informed me. At that time, the impact of his words wasn't so strong, because I had yet to fully sense impending death; however, it still triggered me to reflect upon my impure speech karma. It's because of the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and the Venerable Master Hua's help that I'm safe today. I hope from now I can start a new life, a new beginning and I can become a better person. Namo Amitabha Buddha! ❀

後又昏睡到星期一晚上。我半睡半醒，而且一直跟自己說話。我不記得自己手術隔天曾經醒來過，我問我自己，手術結束了，為什麼我頭腦還是不清醒，心裡一直跟自己對話。我試著默念〈大悲咒〉，但是麻醉藥太強了，實在無法繼續，我甚至想不起自己的名字。幸好我還記得〈六字大明咒〉，所以念了幾遍「唵嘛呢叭咪吽」，然後又迷迷糊糊無法繼續。

有時候我們會說：「喔，我念佛念好多年了，我一天念好多遍的佛號。」我們確實用盡所有的心力去念嗎？這正是今晚我想跟各位分享的。如果我們平常都是散心念佛，那麼根本談不上有什麼了生死的功夫，根本沒辦法往生到極樂世界。

以這次經驗來說，我沒有通過考驗，我知道這是怎麼一回事。也許有人覺得自己功夫不錯了，可是考驗沒來之前，永遠不知道自己準備好了沒。我記得上人說過，我們念佛、念「南無阿彌陀佛」，要專一其心、全神貫注地來念。時時刻刻都要念，念到一心不亂，念到口裡不念，心裡的佛號依然持續不斷，這樣才算有點功夫。如果只是隨隨便便念，沒有得到這種相應的功夫，我們就要更努力念佛。

當聽到自己即將死亡之際，儘管不願意接受，我還是有點懊悔。我後悔自己出家這麼多年，從來沒有好好地修自己的口業。我記得上人說過，人在臨死的時候會有一種反省，對自己所做不對的事情，真正知道不對了。但是太晚了，因為快死了。

我不知道自己就快死了，直到醫生告訴我。雖然這個打擊不像臨終那麼巨大，但還是刺激我反省自己的口業不清淨。因為佛菩薩、師父上人的幫助，我平安度過這個難關，我希望自己的人生能重新開始，能成為一個更好的人。南無阿彌陀佛！❀

BUDDHISM A TO Z

八正道 *Eightfold Path*

正念。「念」就是想念。正念，就是念佛、念法、念僧。邪念，就是念見、念愛、念私。念見，念什麼見呢？也不是正見，若正見就好了，他念偏見。念愛，這種情愛總忘不了。念私，就是自私，時時刻刻都要為自己打算。

Right Mindfulness. This means mindfulness of the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha (Three Jewels). Wrong mindfulness means mindfulness of wrong views, prejudiced views, love and emotion. Wrong mindfulness means always thinking about yourself first.