

一代不如一代？

Is Each Generation Becoming Worse Than the Previous?

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1999年3月，聖城為了方便接引那些發心想出家的男眾，所以成立了沙彌先修班，也就是出家前的一種訓練。當時，我們受了半年的訓練，到十月份就出家了。

2002年，我們要受戒了，戒期是在萬佛寶懺之前開始，從四月到八月，共一百零八天的戒期；所以我們的戒期包括了萬佛寶懺。但是對我個人而言，這個戒期跟沙彌的生活訓練沒有兩樣。為什麼？

In March 1999, the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas established the Pre-shramanera Training Program to guide those who had brought forth the resolve to leave the home life. This was a way to help laymen prepare for leaving the home life. That October, after we had received half a year's worth of training, we left the home life.

The year we received the precepts was 2002. The precepts period began before the Ten Thousand Buddhas Jeweled Repentance. From April to August, it would last one hundred and eight days and it would also include the entire Repentance. For me, however, this precept period

因為我們的戒期，事實上只是增加了每個禮拜兩堂的戒律課，其他都跟平時一樣——上殿、出坡。雖然很平常，但也是很特別的，因為戒期除了多了戒律課以外，同時也要求要背戒，不過背的跟各位也許不太一樣。我們當時有三個必須要背的戒律，第一是《沙彌律儀要略》，第二是〈五十三小咒〉，第三是《梵網經菩薩戒》。



戒期生活雖然是蠻緊湊的，但是因為有萬佛寶懺，所以有很多空檔的時間可以背戒。或許因為是戒期的緣故，所以整個心思就比較單純，很清淨；背戒時蠻順利的，不是那麼困難，很快就把它背完了。這也是為什麼我感覺戒期很特別的緣故。

戒期中，印象比較深的是我們的戒師，也就是教我們戒律的法師，每次給我們上課，他不多談，總是只談四條戒，四條根本重戒：殺、盜、淫、妄。多的呢，他就不想談；他說：「把根本做好了，那個細的，你自己自然就會做好了。」

所以從我開始作沙彌，到進入戒期要受比丘戒，我所聽的戒，幾乎就是這四條

was hardly any different from my day to day life as a Shramanera. Why?

The only thing that was different during the precept period was two extra weekly classes on precepts. The rest of our daily schedule remained the same: attending ceremonies and working. Although it felt quite normal, it was also a special time. Not only were there two weekly precept classes, we also had to memorize the precepts. Those precepts may be slightly different from the precepts some of you may have taken. At that time we had three things that we were required to memorize. There was the *Summary of Shramanera Precepts*, *The Fifty-Three Short Mantras*, and *The Bodhisattva Precepts of the Brahma Net Sutra*.

Even though the precept period was quite busy, there was still a lot of free time because of the Ten Thousand Buddhas Repentance. Perhaps it was because of the precept period that my mind felt more pure and uncluttered. Memorizing the precepts went smoothly and was not too difficult, so I was able to finish quickly. This is also why I felt that the precept period was such a special time.

During this period, the precept teacher (the Dharma Master who taught us the precepts) made a strong impression on me. During each lesson, he wouldn't say much; instead, he'd always focus on the four main precepts: no killing, no stealing, no sexual activity, and no telling lies. He didn't want to discuss anything else, saying, "If you can do the basics well, the rest will come naturally."

From the time I was a novice monk, until entering the precept period to prepare for receiving the full precepts, the precepts I heard and learned about were almost always those four: no killing, no stealing, no sexual activity, and no telling lies. In our class on precepts, we didn't go deeply into any of the other minor precepts.

Our teacher for the class on precepts was very strict and diligent about upholding the precepts. Something he said that left a deep impression on me was, "Each generation is becoming worse than the previous." He would repeat this phrase from the very beginning when I just became a Shramanera. When it was time for me to receive the full Bhikshu precepts, he would still say the

戒：殺、盜、淫、妄；也就是我們的戒律課裡，並沒有深入的去談那些細微的戒律。

當時幫我們上課這位戒師，他持戒是非常精嚴的，他給我印象最深的一句話是：一代不如一代！從我做沙彌，他就講這句話；到我要受比丘戒了，還是這句話。後來，他跟每一期的戒子上課，還是這句話。我相信這法師不是輕視我們，他是講實話。因此聽了這話，我們自己要好好迴光返照。

我自己在聖城住了很久了，已超過二十年；從在家人到沙彌，到受了戒，也觀察到整個聖城的變化。確實聖城改變了，跟以前不一樣，很多方面都是如此；吃的是如此、住的是如此、佛殿也是如此，不斷的在改變。

出家人，本來他出家有因緣嘛。早一點跟上人出家，法名是「果」，受戒是「恒」字輩，那個因緣跟上人圓寂以後出家，法名是「親」，受戒是「近」字輩，當然是不一樣的。

這就是我們要好好想一想，為什麼我們不能早一點出家？那確實是因為因緣不一樣。所以有時候這些法師有感而發說「一代不如一代」，不是沒有原因的。

受完戒後，當天晚上我就坐在佛殿臺上講我受戒的感想。因為從沙彌先修班到沙彌，有將近三年半的時間；我自己感覺，它是一種軍事化的訓練，跟我當年所預期出家人應該是主動積極，自動自發來修行，那種感覺是不一樣的。所以我講出家感想也是如此。

從沙彌先修班到沙彌的生涯，每天都一樣的生活；從早上殿、出坡或是參加所有的法會，幾乎是沒有一個功課會脫節的。當時訓練我們的法師，他們都是以身作則，從早跟到晚，也是沒有一個功課是脫節的。

因為這樣訓練的緣故，久了，就讓我感覺，那個戒期跟我做沙彌是完全一樣，沒有分別，只是多了幾堂戒律課，以及要求我們背誦一些最基本的戒律而已。受完

same. Later on, in the precept classes he taught other novices, he still repeated this phrase. I believe that this Dharma Master was not looking down on us, but was speaking the truth. This is why when we hear this, all of us should carefully think and reflect about this.

I have lived in CTTB for a long time: over twenty years. From the time I was a Shramanera, until I received the precepts, I've noticed the City has changed greatly. Much has changed and evolved; many things are different from what they were in the past. This is true for food, housing, the Buddha Hall and much more that is continually changing.

To leave the home life, there are always causes and conditions. Those who left the home life earlier, under the Venerable Master, received the Dharma name of "Guo," and when they received the monastic precepts, were given a title with the "Heng" character. Those who left the home life later, after the Venerable Master's Nirvana, received the Dharma name of "Chin," and when they received the monastic precepts, were given a title with the "Jin" character. This is of course a significant difference between the two generations.

For those of us who left home later, we should ask ourselves, why weren't we able to leave home a little earlier? This is indeed because our causes and conditions are different. This is why sometimes these Dharma Masters will say, "Each generation is not as good as the previous." There is a reason for saying this phrase.

That evening after receiving the precepts, I gave a talk in the Buddha Hall sharing some thoughts and experiences about receiving the precepts. Because from the Pre-Shramanera Training Program to becoming a Shramanera, nearly three and a half years had passed. I personally felt that it had been an almost military-style training process, quite different from the self-motivated cultivation that I had imagined left home life was about. That was how I felt about the left home life.

During the training period and while I was a Shramanera, my daily schedule remained the same. From attending the ceremonies beginning early in the morning, to attending the various Dharma assemblies and working, there was rarely anything that was missed or skipped. The Dharma Masters who were training us, all lead by example, attending the ceremonies and cultivating with us day and night.

Because of this training, after time I felt as if the precept period was barely any different from when I was a shramanera. There were only a couple more classes on precepts, and we were required to memorize the precepts. After receiving the precepts, I thought that there would be more freedom and flexibility. That year, I decided to focus on meditation. This determination helped me endure the pain from sitting. After the morning ceremony, I would meditate alone. But one day, the Dharma Master who had been training us before asked me, "How often do you bow to the Buddhas?" I could not answer him. I knew what he was referring to, so I went back to staying after the morning ceremony to continue with Universal Bowing.

Even though I was no longer a Shramanera, I still had to attend the ceremonies and closely follow CTTB's Buddha Hall schedule. I continued

戒，我以為是可以得到解脫自由了。剛好那一年，我想在打坐方面下工夫，多吃一點苦，多忍一點痛，所以那年比較能忍痛，每天早課完了，就回去打坐。可是有一天，我們的法師就問我：「你一天拜多少佛啊？」我回答不出來，懂得他的意思，只好早課完後留下來繼續拜願。

也就是說即使做完了沙彌，我們還是跟著這個聖城的功課表，又繼續修行了好幾年，我記得大概有五年。因為以前我們常常被提醒，受完戒不是說你就可以展翅高飛了，要依止你的戒師或是教授師五年，像沙彌一樣好好地修行。不是說你受完戒，現在就不一樣了。這個觀念其實是不對的。

因為沙彌是比丘的基礎，你做沙彌把這個比丘的基礎打好了，以後做比丘就容易修行了。可是，這個比丘也是一個新的開始啊！因為以小乘來講，比丘就是阿羅漢的基礎；比丘是因，阿羅漢是果。你這因如果不好了，將來也不會有那個果。

或是以大乘佛法來講，菩薩有兩種，一者出家，一者在家，出家菩薩名為比丘。你出家了受菩薩戒，做一個初發心的菩薩，要行菩薩道，菩薩道圓滿將來才能成佛。所以你受戒成為比丘，也是成佛的一個基礎；也就是比丘是因，將來成佛是果。

如果因為沙彌階段完成了，以為就是我受苦的階段完了，自己可以自由一點。其實，這是一個錯誤的知見！因為我們有一個更辛苦、更長遠的路要走了。所以你在比丘的因地，如果沒有做好，你將來要出離三界、要了生脫死、要成就佛道，這都是空談了！

以前，做沙彌受嚴格訓練的時候，心裡難免有抱怨。但是經過這麼長的時間，發現這才是對自己真正有幫助的，所以抱怨就轉變成感恩了。如果沒有那麼嚴格的訓練，我相信要靠我們自動自發是不可能的。

所以你受完戒，可以想想：你做沙彌時隨眾修行容易呢？還是做比丘靠自力修行容易呢？你可以去感受一下，唯有如此，才能扭轉給人一代不如一代的觀感。阿彌陀佛！✽

with this for quite some time; I remember that this lasted for about five years. In the past we were often reminded that even after receiving the precepts and becoming fully ordained, you still had to follow your precept teacher, the Dharma Master who trained you, and continue with the intense practice and rigid schedule you had as a Shramanera. You did not yet have the freedom to soar away, following your own routine and agenda. It was not the case that after receiving the precepts, things would be completely different.

Because your time as a Shramanera is when you establish the foundation for being a Bhikshu, if you work hard as a Shramanera, later on it will be easier when you are a Bhikshu. However, being a Bhikshu is also a new beginning! In the context of the Theravada tradition, being a Bhikshu is the foundation for becoming an Arhat. The Bhikshu is the cause, the seed, and the Arhat is the fruit. If you don't plant the seed, you will not have any fruits later on.

If you use the Great Vehicle to understand this, first we need to know that there are two types of Bodhisattvas. There are left-home Bodhisattvas, and at-home Bodhisattvas. Those who have left the home life are the Bhikshus. When you leave the home life and become a Bhikshu, you are a Bodhisattva who has just brought forth the initial resolve to cultivate the Bodhisattva Path. Only after the Bodhisattva Path is fulfilled and completed can one finally reach Buddhahood. So when you receive the precepts and become a Bhikshu, this is also a foundation for reaching Buddhahood. In this case, the Bhikshu is the cause, the seed, and attaining Buddhahood is the fruit.

Some may think that after you're finished with being Shramanera, you no longer need to suffer, which means that you can now have more freedom. However, this is wrong! We still have a longer, more difficult path to walk. So when you are cultivating as a Bhikshu, if you don't do it well, and then you go on to talk about leaving the three realms, about ending death and rebirth, and about achieving Buddhahood, it is all empty words!

At the time when I was a Shramanera undergoing strict training, in my heart I would complain. But after all these years, I've realized that this was actually good for me. These silent grumblings have become gratitude. If I hadn't undergone such a vigorous and strict period of training, I don't think it would have been possible for me to do the same on my own.

So after you have received the full precepts, think for a moment, was it easy back when you were still a Shramanera? Or was it easier after you became a Bhikshu, practicing on your own? Think about it. Then you may know how to help the next generation be better than the previous. Amitabha. ✽