



【點點滴滴憶上人】

【Memories of the Venerable Master】

Tirelessly Rescuing the Living and the Dead

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A talk given by Roger Kellerman at the Buddha Hall of CTTB on June 3, 2018

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柯果民2018年6月3日講於萬佛聖城大殿

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I'd like to share a story from the 1990s. That year, I was on a delegation tour with the Venerable Master to Europe. The details of this story was when we were in Poland.

I think we stayed a day in Warsaw, the capital. We then went toward the country through a town called Wroclaw and to a mountain retreat called, Jelenia Gora. Jelenia Gora was a facility that could be used by religious groups and the local organizer in Poland had rented it for our stay of two or three days. There were boarding houses for residents, a main hall, and a two-story building that was much smaller than our Buddha Hall. It was a bit larger than our Rebirth or Long Life halls.

On this particular evening, we left our rooms and ascended a staircase outside of the building to the second floor, which was the Dharma Hall, for a Dharma event. It was a particularly calm evening. But when we walked out from our place of residence, a huge wind came out of nowhere. As we walked up the stairs, it was blowing our robes. Although it wasn't a hurricane, but it felt like it nearly was! The Venerable Master lectured to the assembly, and members of the delegation also gave talks. There were many young Polish people, about 70 of them. Afterwards, we went back to our rooms.

Whenever we were on tour with the Venerable Master, each morning, we had a meeting with the Master, and he would ask us things or we'd discuss topics. The next morning, when we had our delegation meeting, and the Venerable Master asked, "Does anyone know what that wind was about?" No one knew or responded. The Venerable Master said, "What you felt last night was thousands of souls who had not been released; they had come to ask me to take them across. These souls came from the World War II concentration camp of Auschwitz." Auschwitz was about 60 miles away from where we were giving the Dharma assembly.

I should explain a little background of World War II. The Nazis tried to exterminate the Jewish population of Europe. Having invaded different countries, they would round up the Jews and send them to



今晚想和大家講一個發生在1990年的故事，當時我跟隨上人帶領的一個訪問團到歐洲去，這個故事發生在波蘭。

訪問團在首都華沙待了一天之後，路過弗洛茨瓦夫小鎮，前往一座位於山上的靜修中心耶萊尼亞戈拉。這座靜修中心有宗教團體可以使用的設施，因此波蘭當地的信眾租來讓訪問團使用兩、三天。裡頭有幾間房子，剛好可以讓訪問團的成員住，另外還有一間兩層樓的禮堂，比萬佛城的佛殿小得多，比我們的往生堂或延生堂略大一些。

有一天傍晚，我們從住的地方要到禮堂的二樓，那裡是晚上講法的地方。到禮堂二樓的樓梯是在戶外，我記得那天傍晚的天氣很平靜，可是當我們從寮房出來，突然間不知道從哪裡吹來一陣巨風，所以爬樓梯的時候衣袍全被吹起，強度實在驚人。這陣風不是

these concentration camps with horrible conditions as a means of killing them.

Auschwitz was the largest camp. I didn't check the exact number, but over a million people passed through there during World War II. I should explain that my family are Jewish. My parents were born in Hungary but left before the Second World War. During the war, they got as far as England, but many of my relatives were left behind in Hungary. When the Nazis invaded Hungary in 1944, they wanted to make a real demonstration of the ethnic cleansing of the Jews in Hungary, so they sent about 400,000 Jews from Hungary to Auschwitz.

Growing up, when we looked at our family tree, over half of the members on both sides of my parents died in Auschwitz. So our delegation had come to Poland around 45 years after the end World War II. The Venerable Master's words about crossing over the souls who had not been released were so meaningful to me. This, of course, was through the power of the Venerable Master. I can't remember exact Chinese phrase to describe this, but the implication was that tens of thousands of souls were released that night and obtained liberation.

Now I'd like to tell a personal story that happened to me at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. I arrived here in the summer of 1978. I had come from a scientific background, having taken a lot of science courses in college. One of the causes and conditions of my getting interested in Buddhism was the sudden death of my father the year before.

He died very suddenly and I didn't have a chance to say goodbye; I only saw him in the hospital when he had gone into a coma after an operation. I didn't realize it at the time, but the awakening to impermanence of my father's death, the realization that you can't take anything with you when you die, and other events, led me to CTTB.

The first session after I came to CTTB was the summer Guan Yin Session. In those days, this hall was here but the rebirth and long life hall weren't built yet. In those days, what we now call the small dining hall where the students eat, was actually a Buddha hall, called the Akshobhya Hall. At that time, the kitchen hadn't been built. So if you entered the hall from Great Compassion House, in front of you would have been an image of Medicine Master Buddha. On either side at the back of the hall, where it now joins the kitchen, was the Long

颶風，但強度幾乎是。那天晚上團員都上台講法，上人也給大家開示，聽眾裡面有很多年輕的波蘭人，有七十位左右。講法結束之後，我們就回寮了。

通常跟上人出去弘法，每天早上都會開會，上人會問我們一些事情，或者大家一起討論一些議題。因此隔天早上開會的時候，上人就問：「誰知道昨天那陣巨風是怎麼回事？」在場的沒人回答。上人就告訴我們：「昨天晚上感覺到那陣風，是成千上萬還沒有解脫的眾生，他們來找我希望得到超度。」他們是從六十英里外，二次大戰奧斯韋茨集中營那裡來的。

我要稍微跟大家講解二次世界大戰的歷史背景。當時的德國納粹試圖滅絕歐洲的猶太人，因此侵略並且佔領了其他國家之後，就把當地的猶太人捉起來關在集中營。集中營的生活條件極為嚴苛，目的就是置猶太人於死地。

奧斯韋茨集中營，是當時最大的一個集中營。我沒有確認詳細數字，但是估計二戰期間有上千萬的人在此喪命。我的家族也是猶太人，二戰爆發之前，我的父母就設法離開他們的誕生地—匈牙利。戰爭期間，我的父母最遠走避到英國，但是還有很多親人留在匈牙利。1944年，納粹入侵匈牙利，他們想在那裡示範種族清洗，於是把在匈牙利逮捕的四十萬猶太人，送進奧斯韋茨集中營。

長大後回顧我們家族的族譜，在我母親和父親這兩方，都有一半以上的成員死於奧斯韋茨集中營。當我們訪問團抵達波蘭時，距離二次大戰結束已經45年了，居然還有這麼多的亡魂等著被超度。這件事對我來說格外有意義，當然我要感謝上人的力量，我不記得那句中文怎麼說，意思就是讓成千上萬的亡魂當晚得到解脫，離苦得樂。

現在我講一個和自己有關的故事，這件事情是發生在萬佛聖城。我是1978年的夏天來到聖城，我是學科學的，在大學裡修了很多科學相關的課程。促使我對佛教感興趣的其中一個因緣，就是父親在前一年的遽逝。

父親去世得非常突然，他在手術後陷入昏迷，當我趕到醫院時，根本沒有機會跟他說再見。我當時並不了解，直到父親過世後，我才懂得無常，也才意識到人死什麼也帶不走。再加上其他的因緣，讓我來到了聖城。

我到聖城以後的第一個七，是暑期觀音七。當時這個地方是佛殿，但還沒蓋往生堂和延生堂。現在學生用餐的小齋堂，當時我們稱它做藥師殿。現在我們用的大廚房當時並沒有，所以從大悲院走進來會看到一尊藥師

Life altar, and on the other side near the garden, was the Rebirth altar.

The halls were very simple then, only with little tables and the plaques were stuck to the wall. It wasn't like the really adorned halls we have now. That hall was just "okay" for use. There were no marble permanent plaques, but there might have been permanent paper plaques.

So I was new to Buddhism then and I joined the afternoon rebirth transference. I asked, "What's this about?" The person explained to me that I could write the name of a deceased person, and put it up on this altar. At the end of the week, the paper plaques would be burned, allowing those souls whose names we had written to be sent off for rebirth.

Immediately I thought about my father, and I thought it was a really nice idea, so I asked how to put up a plaque and they told me to go register. In those days, there was no plaque department; it was done through the office. At that time, the office was not where it is now but in what we call the guest building or the old DRBU building with stairs in the front.

It was not like general offices you see around; it was just a little counter in the lobby. So I went to register. I said, "I'd like to put up a plaque for my father." The person taking care of the office said, "That'll be \$10, please." My scientific mind kicked in, "Are you guys crazy? \$10 to burn a piece of paper?" That's where it stopped at that point.

In those days the laymen lived in Tathagatha Monastery, and I had a layman's room on the second floor. That night in the monastery, I had this state. It was much more real than a dream, very three dimensional. I was back in my house in London. I was in the restroom and saw my father, who looked like a ghost. He was white and he had his palms together. Then he disappeared down the toilet bowl.

In the state, the rest of my family was in the kitchen, which was about as far as the other side of this hall where the women's side is. My whole family was there and I cried out, "Help! Help!" But they couldn't hear me. At that point, I realize that I was the only person who could help my father. If anyone has been in Tathagatha Monastery then, they would have woken up to my echoing cries of "Help! Help!" that rang down the corridors.

After that, I put up a \$10 plaque for my father. That's the end of the story. Nothing else happened to me. I no longer saw my father or anything else. Deep down I knew that by putting up a plaque, I could really help my father through transferring of merit. In the 40 years of being here, this is the only personal religious experience I've ever had. From this, I really believe in the efficaciousness of setting up plaques. ❀

佛。藥師殿的後面，也就是和現在大廚房相連的那一邊，當時是放置延生堂的供桌；靠近花園的那一邊，則是往生堂的供桌。

那時候的延生堂和往生堂，其實就是擺張桌子、牌位貼在牆上而已，沒有像現在這麼莊嚴，只能算勉強可用。當時也沒有雕刻精緻的大理石牌位，頂多就是紙做的永久牌位。

當時的我對佛教很陌生，下午參加往生堂迴向，我就問別人：「這在做什麼？」他們跟我解釋，我可以為過世的人設牌位，然後放在往生堂的桌子上，等這一週的法會結束，我們就會化掉這些牌位，可以幫助這些亡靈往生到更好的地方。

聽完這話，我馬上想到我的父親，覺得這真是個好方法。於是我問他們，我可以幫我父親寫一個牌位嗎？他們說我得先去登記。早期聖城沒有設功德部，這些手續都是在辦公室處理；當時的辦公室也不是現在的位置，而是在客房，就是那棟前面有台階的法大舊教學大樓。

當時的辦公室也不像一般的辦公室，其實就是大門入口的一個小櫃台。我走進辦公室說：「我想為我的父親設牌位。」工作人員回答我：「一個牌位十塊錢。」頓時間觸發了我的科學腦袋，我心想：「有沒有搞錯？燒一張紙要十塊錢？」於是打消了幫父親寫牌位的念頭。

早期男眾在家人是住在如來寺，我住在二樓。那天晚上出現一個境界，它不像夢，因為感覺非常真實。我回到了倫敦的家中，並且在廁所看見像鬼魂一樣的父親，他是白色的，雙手合十消失在馬桶裡。

當時家人都在廚房，距離我大概就是這裡到講臺的另一端，現在女眾坐的那邊。我的家人全在那裡，當我大喊「救命！救命！」的時候，竟然沒有半個人聽到。當下我就意識到，我是唯一可以幫助父親的人。如果有人到過如來寺，就知道如來寺走廊的回音效果有多好，當時我就是被自己的呼救聲驚醒。

故事的結局，就是我花了十塊錢為父親設牌位。牌位設了之後，什麼事情也沒發生，我也沒有看見父親，或者有什麼感應，但是我深知設牌位、迴向功德真的可以幫助我的父親。而這也是我在聖城待了四十年，唯一一個親身的宗教體驗。經過這件事情，我真的相信設牌位是有效的。❀