

【點點滴滴憶上人】

【Memories of the Venerable Master】

懺悔與感恩

Repentance and Gratitude

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我在香港出生，十六歲時遇到宣公上人，就皈依了。我爸爸常常去一個商人聚會的道教場所「通善壇」，因為爸爸年紀快八十了，所以他晚上出去我都會跟著。

那時候通善壇有扶乩，師父上人在那兒講《地藏經》的最後一個晚上，扶乩出來一段乩文，每一句用一個數字開頭，最後幾句是這樣說的：「願與世人來說法，談經念佛理所宜……內修功果好皈依。」爸爸看了那篇乩文，就和一班人一同皈依了。

爸爸皈依之後就帶我們去見師父，師父那時候暫住在請他講經的陳瑞

I was born in Hong Kong. When I was sixteen, I met the Master and took refuge with him. My father used to frequent a Taoist Temple called Tung Sin Tan (roughly translated as The Platform to Expansively Spread Goodness). Since my father was near his eighties, I would follow him whenever he went out during the night.

At that time, Tung Sin Tan had facilities for planchette-writing (similar to an Ouija board.) On the last night when the Master was lecturing on *Earth Store Sutra*, some verses were produced from the planchette device. Every verse began with a number. The last few verses goes like this: "Vowing to expound the Dharma to all living beings, /Sutra lectures and Buddha name recitation all accord with the Buddha's teaching, /Cultivate inwardly to reap wholesome rewards in order to take refuge with a good teacher." Upon seeing the verses, my father and a group people took refuge with the

昌居士家裡的閣樓，因為上人在香港興建的第一所佛堂「西樂園」的工程還在進行中。當我第一次看到真正的佛教出家人（不像那時粵語電影裡看到的），上人那種無法形容的莊嚴與威儀，是我前所未見的。在天主教學校我有很多機會看到神父、修女，他們就像普通人一樣，可是師父上人的四大威儀卻是與眾不同。跟著在1952年上人生日那一天，我和媽媽都皈依了。

師父在通善壇講經的時候，有一個十三歲的女孩看到上人在法座上全都是光。那時候我聽說佛教裡有所謂「五眼六通」，那個女孩子有天眼通。等我皈依之後，另外一個比我先皈依的也有天眼通。所以那時候我對神通很有興趣，求師父教我，心裡以為自己很聰明，如果師父肯教我，我一定很快就像她們一樣。

可是師父只教我念〈楞嚴咒〉第三會的第一段，我認為師父是故意不想教我，心裡又氣憤又嫉妒。以前每天放學就去西樂園拜見師父，我知道師父不想我們這麼年輕交男朋友；可是一氣之下，我就決定去找男朋友。

在天主教女校念書沒機會認識男朋友，所以我就去參加一個話劇社，裡頭的朋友都是懶讀書好玩的一類。同時我晚上去念會計夜校，夜校的男生都是日間上班，晚上進修，年紀比較大。因為參加話劇社和夜校，我認識了一些男朋友，所以就很忙了。

不知道師父怎麼知道，他就告訴我的同學文果殊，叫她告訴我以後不許我去西樂園。師父也把事情告訴我媽媽，所以我跟媽媽也鬧翻了。那時我正要考會考，所以我就對果殊說：「不去就不去，反正我也沒空。」在香港，會考是很重要的，不及格就不能高中畢業，不能上大學。

會考過了，也開始放暑假。雖然很幸運榜上有名，可是心裡總是悶悶不樂，忐忑不安。一天下午，我決定去西樂園找

Master.

My father brought us to visit the Master after he took refuge. At that time, the Master was temporarily staying at the mezzanine of Upasaka Ruichang Chen's house while lecturing on the Sutra, because the first temple the Master established in Hong Kong, Western Bliss Gardens (Xi Le Yuan) Monastery, was still under construction. When I first saw a genuine Buddhist monk, not the kind you see in the movies, the Master had a kind of indescribable loftiness and deportment, which I had never seen before. In Catholic schools, I have seen many priests and nuns, but they were just like ordinary people. However, the Master's four great deportments stood out from the crowd. On the Master's birthday in 1952, my mother and I took refuge.

When the Master lectured on the Sutra in Tung Sin Tan, a thirteen-year-old girl saw the Venerable Master emit light that filled up the entire Dharma seat. At that time I knew about the spiritual penetrations and that girl had the penetration of the heavenly eye. After I took refuge, I got to know another person who took refuge earlier than I did who also had the penetration of the heavenly eye. I was very interested in the spiritual penetrations and begged the Master to teach me. I thought I was very smart; if the Master would teach me, I would soon be like them.

However, the Master only taught me to recite the first section of the third assembly of the *Shurangama Mantra*. I thought the Master deliberately did not teach me and I became very angry and jealous. During those days, I would pay my respect to the Master at Xi Le Yuan every day after school. I knew he didn't want us to have boyfriends at such a young age. However, when anger took over me, I decided I was going to have a boyfriend.

Studying at an all-girls Catholic school, there weren't any opportunity to know boys, so I joined a drama club and the people there were not into studying but were instead socially active. Concurrently I was also attending night school in studying accounting. The boys at the night school generally worked during the day and went to school at night, and they were usually older. With the drama club and night school, I got to know some boys and became very busy.

I don't know how the Master knew, but he told my classmate Guo Shu to tell me that I was not allowed to go to Xi Le Yuan anymore. He also told this to my mother and I had a big fight with her. At that time, I was about to take the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination so I told Guo Shu: "What is the big deal about going? I have no time anyway." The exam was very important. If we failed the exam we would not be able to graduate from high school and go to college.

After the exam, summer break came. I was very fortunate to pass the exam. However, I felt very uneasy. One afternoon, I decided to visit the Master. When I rang the bell, my Dharma sister Guo Ping turned around as soon as she saw me. I knew she must first notify the Master before opening the door. After a while, she came out again and told me: "The

師父。到了之後按門鈴，看門的果平師姐一看到我，立刻轉身回去，我知道她是要先稟告師父才敢開門。一會兒再出來的時候，她就說：「師父叫你跪在佛前。」

大概從一點多跪到五點多吧，所有來訪的人都走了，師父才叫我到他身邊。師父跟我說直心是道場，還說了關於佛教因果的道理。師父說如果沒有因緣，前生不是修行人，也沒有修某一個法門，教也教不來的。那天晚上我就在西樂園掛單，現在想起來，要不是師父明白我驕傲好強、走極端的性格，後果真的不堪設想。從那時起，我開始明白因果的道理，更不會嫉妒任何人了。

之後每次去西樂園，師父會跟我講很多關於修行的故事，比如道教的「七真傳」，特別是孫不二和邱長春的故事。師父也跟我解說《菜根譚》裡面的道理，例如「欲做精金美玉的人品，定從烈火中鍛來；思立掀天揭地的事功，須向薄冰上履過」。可惜師父的教導，我都付之流水。辜負師恩，至今仍耿耿於懷。

還沒有真正瞭解佛法之前，我在佛教裡做了很多錯事，令師父很煩惱。有一次我跟媽媽去西樂園，師父不在，他的師侄恒智法師在。因為我很想學佛教的梵唄，我就請恒智法師教我；他可能不好意思推搪，就略略告訴我關於鍵椎的用法。

過了幾天，我再到西樂園，才知道恒智法師去東普陀寺掛單了。那時候我並不知道出家人對戒律是這麼嚴格，直到看到清涼國師十事自勵中的「足不履尼寺之塵」，我才明白。師父上人對戒律是非常嚴謹的。

經過這幾件事之後，我就比較認真了，比較明白佛法。後來師父還教我們念《正氣歌》，他說我們每個人都有一股正氣，有骨氣，不要因為環境而改變，而動搖。從此之後，我對佛教更加有信心了。

1955年，我得到來美國的批准，師父希望我能為佛教做點事，要為佛教爭光。來美國幾個月之後，我告訴師父我想回去，那時候我感覺離開師父就會做錯事。師父

Master told you to kneel in front of the Buddha.”

I knelt there from around 1 o'clock to 5 o'clock. Only when all the visitors left did the Master call me to his side. The Master said this to me: “The straightforward mind is the Bodhimanda” and he told me stories on the principles of cause and effect. He said if people have no causal conditions, if they weren't cultivators in their past lives, and if they have not practiced any Dharma door, it is impossible to teach them. I slept at Xi Le Yuan that night. When I think back about it now, I think the result would be disastrous if the Master did not know how proud and strong-headed I was. From then on, I started to understand the principles of cause and effect; I would not harbor jealousy towards anyone anymore.

After that episode, whenever I went to Xi Le Yuan, the Master would tell me many stories about cultivation. For example, the Taoist's *Qizhen Zhuan* (*Biographies of Seven True Cultivators*), especially the stories about Bu'er Sun and Changchun Qiu. The Master also explained the principles in the *Vegetable Root Discourse*. For instance, the verse that goes “Those who aspire to attain the character of fine gold must be forged from the flames; those who want to accomplish momentous, earth-shattering meritorious undertakings must be cautious as if walking on thin ice.” It is a pity that I have not been able to live up to all the teachings from the Master. I carry this great sense of letting down even to this day.

I had many wrongdoings in regards to Buddhism before developing true understanding and these caused the Master many headaches. One time I went to Xi Le Yuan with my mother. The Master was not there but his nephew-in-dharma, Dharma Master Heng Jr, was there. Since I always wanted to learn the Buddhist liturgy, I asked Dharma Master Heng Jr to teach me. He probably was too polite to decline and briefly told me how to handle the Dharma instruments.

After a few days when I went back to Xi Le Yuan, I found out Dharma Master Heng Jr had moved to East Putuo Temple. At that time, I did not realize how strict the precepts were for the monastics. Only when I read vows of Great Master Qinliang of which one of them states: “I will not step on the dust of any nunnery” did I understand. The Master was very serious and strict about the precepts.

After a few incidents, I was more serious and developed a better understanding about Buddhadharma. Later, the Master taught us to sing the *Song of Proper Upright Energy*. He said: “Each of us must have proper and upright energy, and to have a strong backbone. We should not be moved or swayed by our changing environment.” From then onward, I developed more faith in Buddhism.

In 1955 I was granted a visa to come to the United States. At that time, the Master had hoped that I could do the Buddha's work. After just a few months, I told the Master I wanted to go back. I felt that I would be in the wrong if I were not at the Master's side. The Master wrote me a letter and told me to stay; he told me not to give up just because of some temporary loneliness. Also my father had to deposit five thousand dollars

寫信要我留在這兒，不要因為一時的寂寞而放棄，同時為了讓我來美國，美國領事規定爸爸要放五千元美金的存款在銀行才批准，怎麼可以隨便放棄呢？

不久，我跟著一位堂兄（譚文讓，法名果權，後來寫信皈依上人的）去了一個又佛又道的道壇，就是後來搬到中國城的正善佛道研究會。當時有十多個男眾居士也去那兒，也是有道長扶鸞的。然後我又跟著同學去參加美洲日本佛教會的祈禱，又去參觀一間由家族管理的佛禪會禮教堂，他們的法會儀式都仿效天主教堂的方式。

我寫信告訴師父，師父叫我們在美國另開一個佛教道場。當我妹妹譚果式來美國時，她把佛像、法器、課誦本都帶過來了。當時還在念書沒錢，所以只能在中國城租一個地下室。佛教講堂開幕那天，那些道教的信徒都來參加。以後人多了，我們就租個好一點的地方，是一個商店鋪位，簽了兩年合約。

我們每週六晚上聚會，有時請一些資深人士，如中華民國駐三藩市領事、知識份子孫慕迦等人講一點中國文化。最多時有一百人參加，平常有二十多人。之後信眾請求皈依，師父就把法名和皈依日期告訴我們，我們就在這裡給他們進行皈依儀式。於是全體確定申請三藩市佛教講堂為不牟利機構，並一致署名聘請宣公上人來美住持。

1960年底，佛堂合約到期，必須搬到其他地方。我們以為負責打合同的居士已經找到地方，殊不知他是想另起爐灶，開設一個在家人管理的美洲佛教會，財務由在家人管理，出家人只能管理法事。

於是，我們就分裂成兩個團體。美洲佛教會開光後，只有少數忠貞之士還留在佛教講堂，我們只好把講堂搬

in the bank to fulfill the visa requirement from the US Embassy. How could I give up so easily?

Not long after that, I went to a Taoist temple which was both Taoist and Buddhist with my cousin, Guo Quan Tan, and he also took refuge with the Master. The Taoist temple is the present “Jeng Sen Buddhist and Taoist” in Chinatown. At that time, over a dozen men were there and they also had a Taoist Priest who did planchette-writing. Later, I attended the service of the Buddhist Churches of America. We also visited the Buddha’s Universal Church which was very much a family establishment. Their services emulated the style of the Catholic church.

When I wrote to the Master about it, he told us to establish another Buddhist temple in the United States. When my younger sister Guo Shi Tan came to the United States, she brought along with her Buddha images, Dharma instruments and recitation handbooks. Since we were still at school and didn’t have much money, we could only rent a basement in Chinatown. On the grand opening day, all the laypeople from the Taoist temple came and joined us at the Buddhist Lecture Hall. When there were more people, we rented a better place: a storefront with a two-year contract.

We would gather every Saturday evening. Sometimes, we would invite some knowledgeable people from the Chinese Consulate in San Francisco or scholars such as Mujia Sun, and others to talk about Chinese culture. At the peak, we had about one hundred participants and about twenty regular participants. Later, the laypeople requested to take refuge. After they had submitted their application, the Master would send us their Dharma names and the date for taking refuge. We would conduct the ceremony in the Buddhist Lecture Hall. Together as a group, we applied for non-profit organization status for the San Francisco Buddhist Lecture Hall. At the same time, we unanimously agreed to invite the Master to run the San Francisco Buddhist Hall Lecture.

When the contract of the storefront was up, we had to move. We had always assumed the person who helped us set up the initial contract would find us a good place. Little did we know he had other plans. He wanted to establish another Buddhist temple that was managed by laypeople. He wanted all the finances to be managed by the board of laypeople and the monastics would only run the ceremonies and rituals.

So our organization split into two. When the new place called the Buddhist Association of America opened, only a small group of loyal disciples remained at the Buddhist Lecture Hall. All we could do was to move the Buddhist Lecture Hall to the basement of my father’s property in Chinatown. At that time, I had already graduated for two years and had been in the United States for more than six years. My father also wanted me to go back to Hong Kong. The Master was in Australia then and we couldn’t locate him. The lawyer said the embassy was not able to contact the Master. Due to all these reasons, I was totally depressed and decided to return to Hong Kong.

I returned to Hong Kong in July 1961. In November of that year, The Master returned from Australia. At that time, I wanted to leave the householder life. My father was eighty-eight years old then so my mother said to wait until

到我爸爸在中國城的一座物業的地下室。那時我已畢業兩年了，來美國六年多了，爸爸也盼望我回去。師父當時在澳洲，我們找不到師父，律師說領事館也聯繫不到師父。因為種種原因，使我萎靡不振，於是決定回香港。

1961年七月，我回到香港；十一月，師父從澳洲回來。那時候我想出家，可是爸爸當時已經88歲，媽媽說要等爸爸去世之後才行，師父當時也沒有同意。1966年，我被聘為香港新界藍地妙法寺內明書院的教務主任。本來以為可以離開市區的引誘，誰知道卻在內明書院認識了我的天主教徒同修。

1967年，媽媽決定移民美國；1968年，美國領事館批准我們的申請。五月，我和母親到三藩市的天后廟見師父，師父當時很高興，叫我跟上課的美國大學生們談話。又過三、四個，我的男朋友從香港也批准來美國，我沒有告訴師父就結婚了。

婚後，我覺得很慚愧，沒辦法再跟師父談話，只在師父生日和農曆新年的時候一定去拜見他。每次要離開，師父都會拍拍我的頭，好像是幫我消除業障。1987年，突然發現得了胃潰瘍，流血不止，要進醫院輸血，一年之間就去了五次醫院。每次出院後到佛堂，師父都會問我：「又去醫院了嗎？」我不知道師父怎麼知道，因為除了我同修和兒女之外，母親和兄弟姊妹都不知道。

最後一次很危險，三、四天沒吃東西，輸血也沒用，胃流血不止，到最後他們把我送到開刀前的準備室。那時候我心裡一直默念佛號和上人的名字，突然間醫生很高興地走進來說：「妳的胃流血停止了，不用做手術了。」父親因為胃潰瘍做手術而不治，而我幸運地至今沒有再發作。

回想過去，出家真的不是一件容易的事情，要有很大的福報，所以說：「莫謂出家容易得，皆因屢世種菩提。」希望已經出家的法師們好好珍惜，有志出家者能精進向上，立堅固願，發菩提心。是所至禱！✿

my father has passed. The Master did not agree to it either at that time. In 1966, I was hired as the Dean of Academic Affairs at the Nei Ming College of Miao Fa Buddhist Monastery near the New Territories. I thought I could leave all the temptations of the city, but little did I know that I would meet my future husband, Catholic, at Nei Ming College.

In 1967, my mother made a definite decision to emigrate to the United States. In 1968, the Consulate General of the United States in Hong Kong allowed my mother and me to come to the States. In May, mother and I saw the Master at the Tin How Temple in San Francisco. At that time, The Master was very happy and he even told me to talk to the college students from the United States. Three or four months later, my boyfriend from Hong Kong was also allowed to come to the States and I got married without telling the Master beforehand.

After getting married, I felt so remorseful that I couldn't bring myself to talk to the Master again. I would only pay my respects on his birthday and during Chinese New Year. Whenever I was about to leave after paying my respects, the Master would pat my head as if to help me get rid of my offense karma. In 1987, I suddenly discovered I had serious stomach ulcer and it would bleed non-stop. I needed a blood transfusion at the hospital. Within one year, I was admitted to the hospital five times. After being discharged, I would go to Gold Mountain Monastery the following Saturday. Whenever I go to the temple after being discharged, the Master would ask me: "Did you go to the hospital again?" I don't know how the Master knew because only my husband and my children knew about it; even my mother and siblings had no idea.

The last time I was admitted was the most serious. I couldn't eat for three or four days; the blood transfusion didn't help and my stomach was bleeding continuously. Finally when they wheeled me into the surgery room, I was reciting silently in my heart the Buddha's and the Master's names. Strangely indeed, the surgeon suddenly came in and very happily declared: "The report shows the bleeding in your stomach has stopped so you don't need surgery." My father passed away after surgery from stomach ulcers. I am very fortunate that the illness has not relapse even today.

When I look back, it is indeed not a trivial thing to leave the householder's life. One needs great blessings to be a monastic. As the saying goes: "Don't say that leaving the householder life is an easy thing to do. It comes about because one has planted the seeds of Bodhi in life after life." I hope all Dharma Masters who have left the householder life would cherish it dearly. I also hope all who aspire to leave the householder life would progress forward, make strong solid vows and bring forth the great Bodhi resolve. This is my greatest wish. ✿