



My Affinity with the Venerable Master Hua 我和上人的因緣

A talk given by Christine Buck at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas on November 20, 2018
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My name is Christine Buck, and I am an MA student at DRBU. I am going to tell a story that includes my sisters Jean Buck and Tony Buck, who became fully-ordained members of the Buddhist Sangha. They used to be nuns. I am the oldest of the three sisters.

In 1969, I was in a terrible accident. I could not do much so I would go out to this communal farm where my sister Jean was living with several people, one of whom was Tim Testu who later became Dharma Master Heng Ju and the first bowing monk. We all knew him as Cousin Tim; he was a great guy.

Fast forward to 1973, my sister Jean and I were both living in the Bay Area. She was in a library one day. When she looked out of the window, she saw two figures slowly coming up the road. Her fiancé downstairs looked out and saw the same two figures. So her fiancé went out and stopped those two men who were taking three steps and bowing all the way to the ground, he realized they were monks.

One of them turned and pointed to the house where Jean and her fiancé lived in and said, "Does Jean Buck live there?" Well, indeed, she did. It was Tim Testu, our friend from the communal farm. They came in and spent the rest of the night talking Dharma. My sister was enthralled. The only question she had was, "Can women join?"

From that day, she found out [there was] a Chan session at Gold Mountain at San Francisco. She was going to go there. She started dreaming of a Chinese monk, whom she later recognized as the Master when she met him. So he was—I guess—kind of inviting her then. She soon moved to San Francisco to cultivate. And when I heard that she had left her fiancé, I did not know what to think. But as her big sister, I needed to go and investigate what this group of Chinese people in Gold Mountain Monastery were about.

我的名字是克莉絲汀·巴克——法界佛教大學碩士班的學生。今天和大家分享一個故事，和我的兩個妹妹也有關。我的大妹叫珍，小妹叫湯妮；她倆都曾出家。故事中另一個人物是提姆·泰斯迪，就是後來出家的比丘恒具法師——第一次三步一拜的兩位法師之一。

1969年，我出了一個嚴重的事故，我不太能做事了，於是就到一個社區農場去幫忙。當時我的大妹珍和其他幾個人也住在那裡；其中一位就是提姆·泰斯迪。他就像是我們的表兄弟一樣，是一個很好的人。

把時間轉到1973年，當時珍和我都住在灣區。有一天，珍在一個圖書館裡往外看時，看到有兩個人慢慢走過來。她的未婚夫正在圖書館的樓下，也看到這兩個人，就走上前請正在路上進行三步一拜的這兩個人停下來，交談中發現他們是出家人。

其中一位比丘轉身指著珍和她未婚夫的房子，問道：「珍·巴克是不是住在這裡？」原來他就是我們在農場的朋友提姆·泰斯迪！於是他們留下來過夜，整晚談論佛理。珍相當感興趣，她唯一的疑問就是——女眾可以參加嗎？

後來，珍聽說舊金山的金山寺要舉行禪七，她就準備去參加。她開始夢到一位中國比丘，後來在她見到上人的時候才認出他就是夢裡的人。我猜上人當時的意思是邀珍去參加法會。不久，她就搬到舊金山

This was 1973. My little sister Tony was living with me so I brought her with me to see what was going on here. The three of us were standing at the back of the monastery and this Chinese monk started walking toward us. And he was smiling from ear to ear, almost laughing. And I thought, "How odd. Why he is smiling like that?" He got closer and closer, and then just looked at us from one to the other. And I just—I did not get it. I had spent most of my time not being terribly virtuous. I did not know why a man would look at me with—I do not know what to say—caring. But it was just different. I did not know why he was smiling like that and looking at us like he knew us. That was the first time I met the Master.

I am embarrassed to say that I met the Master all those years ago. I took refuge with him in 1974. I didn't seem to have the deep roots like my sisters did, but I kept going back. I kept going back to listen to his lectures. I knew it was the right thing to do even though I would return to my life that was not so virtuous.

I went to Washington Street in San Francisco, where the women lived [and] where my sister Jean moved [to]. I met Dharma Master Chih, who has been a family friend all these years. I told her a story because I never quite understood something. When I was in the accident back in 1969—before the accident actually happened—something traumatic happened between a boyfriend and I who were traveling in the car. At that time, I didn't believe in God (I didn't believe in anything) but I knew that I needed some wisdom and I didn't know who to pray to or what to do.

Some old hippie had taught me to say nam-myoho-renge-kyo. With all my heart I said those words in the car hoping to get some wisdom, fell asleep, and woke up 10 days later in a hospital back in Seattle, having lost a good portion of my face and teeth—but I was alive.

I certainly didn't know whether that had anything to do with the fact that I lived when others died.

It was just that when I told the story to Dharma Master Chih she said, "but that's not Buddhist..." She said, "Well it's the Japanese pronunciation of the Lotus Sutra title." I decided I needed to become a Buddhist.

So I stayed in the area until 1980. I came up here to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas before it was even bought. It was kind of a trip with the Master and some of the other people to check out what the place was like.

One day when I was talking to the Master Shr Fu, I had put a lot more effort into cultivating, and I think he gave me this as a gift: I was talking to him and I looked down at his hands and they emitted light. I looked and I just thought, "Well, of course." I realized then what I had

去修行了。當我聽到她離開未婚夫時，我不知該怎麼想。但身為大姊，我覺得需要去金山寺了解這幫中國人到底在做什麼。

那時是1973年，小妹湯妮和我住在一起，於是我就帶著她一起去金山寺了解情況。我們三個人站在金山寺的後邊，有個中國比丘朝我們走來，臉上掛著大大的笑容，笑得非常開懷。我很納悶，心想：「奇怪，為什麼他笑得那樣？」他走近前，看著我們幾個人。當時我還沒開始修行，所以不明白為什麼有人會用那種——不知道該怎麼形容才好——關切的眼神看著我，好像認識我們一樣。這是我第一次遇見上人。

我講這些話覺得很不好意思，我很早以前就見過上人了。我在1974年皈依上人，我的善根遠不如兩個妹妹深厚，我只是會去廟上，會去聽上人講法，也知道這是正確的事情。雖然聽完經之後，我還是渾渾噩噩地過日子。

後來我去舊金山的華盛頓街，是當時女眾的住所，我的大妹珍也住在那兒。我在那兒認識持法師；從那時開始，持法師一直是我們家的好朋友。當時我跟持法師講了一個故事，因為有些事我一直不明白。我在1969年發生事故之前，我和男友兩人在開車旅行中發生非常糟糕的事。當時，我不相信上帝，也沒有任何信仰，但是我知道我需要一些智慧。可是我卻不知道該向誰祈禱，或者該做麼。

曾經有個老嬉痞教我用日文的方式念誦「南無妙法蓮華經」。為了想要得到一些智慧，當時我很誠心地在車上念誦「南無妙法蓮華經」，之後我就沉沉睡去。十天後我在西雅圖的一個醫院醒來時，已失去半邊的臉和牙齒，但是我還活著。

我不知道自己能活下來是否跟念誦

seen so, of course, the light went away. I'm so happy that he gave me that.

Later I moved back to Seattle and came often to Gold Summit Monastery, and sometimes we would go to Snow Mountain Monastery. Dharma Master Heng Lai is the abbot up there. I had one of the worst years of my life in 2016. I won't enumerate the things that happened, but we all have years like that. We all have worst years, but I was at the point where I did not know what to do with my life—everything had fallen apart.

I just didn't know what to do with my life, and I really wanted to talk to Dharma Master Chih. But I didn't know where she was. I kept in contact with her, but at that point in 2016 I didn't know where she was. And then on my computer came a message that she was going to be lecturing at a retreat at the Sudhana Center in Ukiah in 2017. I immediately signed up.

When I was here [in Ukiah], it was so great to see her. She is like the big sister that I never had. She invited me to lunch and got all the updates on my family. Both my parents took refuge with the Master, as [did] two of my sisters, a niece and a nephew. We are all pretty close.

Dharma Master Chih invited me to lunch again. She said, "I think you should come to the Dharma Realm Buddhist University and get your master's degree." I thought, "No—me?" I was so excited. I thought, "But how can I do that? I have a home, I have everything in Seattle. I can't just do that, can I?"

So here I am and I've got two sisters back in Seattle, who are pretty excited for me. And who would think that I'd be ready for my second year of the MA program at DRBU at this point in my life? Well, I said I couldn't do it. But I did it! I sold and gave everything away [and] just came down here. Here I am, and I can't believe it took me this long to get here, but I'm so happy. I am so happy to be here.

Just one last thing—there was a time when the Master just walked up to me, looked at me and said, "You're going to have to work very hard." It has taken me all these years to figure out: he was probably talking about Sanskrit. Thank you for letting me share my story with you. Amitufo. ❀

『南無妙法蓮華經』有關係。我和持法師說，「但這並不是佛教……」；持法師告訴我：「這是用日文念『南無妙法蓮華經』。」當下我就決定要做佛教徒。

我在灣區一直待到1980年。在有萬佛聖城之前我就已經來過這個地方。那時我和上人還有一些弟子們來這裡看地。有一次，正當我跟師父講話時，我低頭看看他的手，他的手居然在放光！我心想：「那當然啦！」但是當第二念頭起來的時候，這個境界就消失了。當時我還蠻用功的，所以我覺得這個境界是師父給的禮物。我很高興上人讓我看到這種境界。雖然我並是不像兩個妹妹那樣清淨地修行人，但是上人還是給了我這份禮物。

後來我搬回西雅圖，我們就去金峰寺；有時也會去雪山聖寺，來法師是那裡的主持。2016年是我生命中幾個最難熬的時期之一；我不說細節，我想大家都有這種經歷，就是墜到谷底的時候。但在當時，我完全不知該如何做，好像所有的事情都脫序了。

我不知道該怎麼處理，只想和持法師談談。我們一直都有聯繫，但是當時我不曉得她在什麼地方。後來，我收到一則消息——2017年，持法師會在瑜伽鎮的善財參學中心講法，我馬上報名參加。

之後，我非常開心可以見到持法師，她就像個大姊姊一樣；她邀我一起吃午飯，了解我們一家的近況。我的父母、兩個妹妹、我的侄子和侄女也皈依上人，我們都很親近。

後來持法師又建議我說：「妳應該來法大念碩士班。」我心想：「不會吧…我？」我很開心，但是該怎麼做呢？我的房子和所有的東西都在西雅圖，我怎麼可能說來就來？

但是我還是來了，我的兩個妹妹在西雅圖，也都為我感到開心。誰會想到我有這一天？我已準備進入法大碩士班的二年級。我曾說沒辦法來聖城，但是現在我來了！我在短時間內就把房子賣了，把東西送人，接著就來了。至今，我還不敢相信我居然要花那麼久的時間才做到，但是我真的非常開心自己能夠來到這裡。

最後跟大家講一個小故事。有一次，師父走到我面前，看著我說：「妳以後要非常非常努力。」過了這麼多年我才明白，上人可能指我要努力在法大學習梵文。謝謝大家聽我的故事。阿彌陀佛！❀