

# 發願 Making Vows

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A Dharma talk given by Dharma Master Heng Lai on the completion day of the Amitabha Session at Gold Summit Monastery on December 1, 2019  
Chinese Translated by Janet Lee



Okay, soon you're going to finish up the Amitabha session. So all of you probably have Amitabha on your mind, right? When you are asleep, you have Amitabha. When you are awake, you have Amitabha. When you are reciting, you have Amitabha. When you are sitting in quiet meditation, you can still have Amitabha, right?

Just now the Venerable Master on the tape lectures was talking about making great vows. I remember in those days, when he was lecturing, at Gold Mountain, we all used to make vows. We would wait till the evening lecture, and then when it was time to go request the Dharma, then you would go there, light the incense, and circumambulate the altar three times, then you would kneel. A lot of people made their vows then. That was how we did it in front of the whole assembly. You couldn't back down.

今天是佛七的圓滿日，是不是阿彌陀佛已經在你們心裡了？入睡時，心裡有阿彌陀佛；清醒時，心裡有阿彌陀佛；念佛時，心裡有阿彌陀佛；打坐時，心裡一樣有阿彌陀佛，是不是呢？

剛才錄音帶播放的上人開示提到發願。我記得早期上人在金山寺講法的時候，我們經常發願。我們會等到晚間講法，請法的時候，上前燃一支香，繞佛三匝之後跪下；很多人會在那個時候發願。我們在大眾面前發願，讓自己不能打退堂鼓。

當時我心裡有一個很棒的點

So I had this really, really good idea. I was going to make a special vow. So I waited until the evening ceremony, then I reached to light the incense, circumambulated the Buddhas, and then knelt in the front of the assembly while Shifu was on the high seat. I said, "I vow to only eat raw vegetables, nothing else, no cooked vegetables." So Shifu didn't say anything. He just sat there seemingly thinking, "Ah, whatever." He didn't say okay, and he didn't say it wasn't okay. So I tried doing the vegetable dharma of only eating uncooked vegetables for about two weeks. I ate no cooked vegetables; they were really bitter and hard to eat.

So after two weeks, I got in the way of the evening lecture again. I took the incense, circumambulated, and then said to Shifu, "I made this vow to only eat raw vegetables. But it's really difficult to do, and I don't see any advantages." Shifu replied, "Who told you to do this stupid thing?"

The Master says when you make a vow, you want it to have some principle in it. You want it to be able to save all living beings. You want to make vows in your cultivation so that you can become a Bodhisattva and a Buddha. Those are the reasons for making vows, not just to eat raw vegetables. That was a stupid thing. Shifu would seem to think something like, "I don't know what you are doing. You are doing a stupid thing," but that's the way Shifu used to teach us. He would never say "no." Now, he could have easily told me that at the beginning, but he didn't say, "No, that's a stupid idea!" He didn't say anything. He just let me do it at first. Later, I realized that this is the way the Buddha taught too. If you read how the Buddha used to teach his disciples, he let them mess up first.

Then when you make them, you see your mistakes and oh...after a while, you start to get that something isn't working, but if you just tell disciples, "Oh, that's bad idea." They might not understand. They might not learn and probably won't get it. But if they really mess up, then they can understand why you have these kinds of rules.

子，想發一個特別的願。等到晚間講法的時候，上人坐在講法座上，我點了香，繞佛三匝之後，在大眾前跪下，說道：「我發願除了生的蔬菜，不吃其他食物，也不吃煮過的蔬菜。」上人當時不發一語，坐在高座上，似乎在想：「唉，隨便你。」上人既沒說好，也沒說不好。大約有兩週的時間，我練習這個吃生蔬菜法門。沒煮過的蔬菜，不僅味道苦澀，也難以下嚥。

兩週之後，晚間講法的時候，我再次燃香請法，繞佛三匝，然後在上人面前跪下，說道：「我發願只吃生的蔬菜。但真的很難行，而且我看不到任何好處。」上人回答說：「誰教你做這麼愚痴的事？」

上人說道，發願的時候，心裡要有一些準則，要為救度眾生而發願；要為成就道業，早成佛道而發願。發願應該是基於這些理由，而不是吃生的蔬菜那麼愚痴的事。上人可能心想：「我不知道你在幹什麼，做那麼愚痴的事。」這就是上人教導我們的方式，他從不對我們說「不行」。上人大可在我發願的時候就告訴我這些，但他並沒有說：「不行，那個想法很愚痴！」上人什麼都沒說，他先放手讓我自己去嘗試。後來，我才明白原來這也是佛陀的教法。如果你讀過有關佛陀如何教導弟子，佛陀會先讓弟子去嘗試，任由他們失敗跌倒，讓他們意識到自己的錯誤。如果直接告訴弟子，說：「哦，那不是個好方法。」他們可能不明白，也無法從中學習或理解。只有等他們跌倒失敗了，才能理解為什麼要有這些規矩。

我剛講了一個有關上人怎樣教導弟子在錯誤中學習的故事。如果哪位有問題，可以提問，阿彌陀佛！

**問題：**請教來法師，您曾經打過幾週的餓七。是什麼因緣讓您發願打餓七？成效如何？

So I just told a little story about what was hardest. If people have questions, they could have ask questions. Otherwise Amitofo.

**Question:** In the past, you have practiced fasting during a session for many weeks. Under what kind of conditions did you make this vow to do the fasting and what was the result?

**Answer:** Well, Shifu used to tell us there are many kinds of ascetic practices in Buddhism that are not required, but for those who want to practice them, they can help out, and for those that don't want to practice them, no problem. They were not a requirement. One example of these ascetic practices is the dharma of fasting, and he said that there are three or four kinds. There is the one where you fast for ten days, which requires no special preparation. Anybody can do that. Then there is the 18-day fast; that's more like you have to go through a secret Dharma Door preparation to do that one and you need to be near a good-knowing adviser. Then, there is the thirty-six day fast and that is the same thing. Then, there is the seventy-two day fast, and then the six month fast. After that, then you are fed by the gods; you don't need to fast anymore. You won't need to eat anymore. There was actually a bhikshuni who lived in Hong Kong who achieved that.

Fasting is an ascetic practice. It's not a required practice in Buddhism. so some people do it, others cannot. I found this out when we, we first all a whole bunch of us did the ten-day fast, tried it out when Shifu first brought it up. At that time I was a layman. There was a bunch of layman tried it and there was also some left home people tried it and some people couldn't get to ten days. Like Heng Sure from Berkeley, at that time it was before he did three steps one bow. So he probably just tried fasting. I think he tried to do the eighteen-day and he was like a couple of weeks in or something, ten days, twelve days or something like that. Finally Shifu came up to him and says, this is not your Dharma door,

來法師：上人常說，佛教有很多修苦行的方式，絕非必須。對於想嘗試苦行的人來說，可以做為增上緣；對於不感興趣的人，也不受影響。苦行在修行中並非必須。這些苦行中有一項是打餓七，打餓七的方法大約有三到四種。第一種是打10天的餓七，並不需特別準備，任何人都可以嘗試。第二種是打18天的餓七，這比較像修密法，需要做一些特別的準備，身邊也需要有一位善知識。第三種是打36天的餓七，條件跟第二種一樣。最後是打72天和6個月的餓七，經歷完這些階段之後，得到天人供養，就不需要再打餓七，你不再需要人間的食物。香港有位比丘尼真的達到這種境界。

打餓七是一種苦行。在佛教並非必要的修行，有些適合，有些不適合。上人告訴我們打餓七這個法門後，很多人都嘗試打十天的餓七。那時我還是一個在家人。很多在家眾參與打餓七，也有幾位是出家眾，有些人根本撐不到十天。比方在柏克萊的實法師，在他開始三步一拜之前，他嘗試過打餓七。我猜想他可能試過打18天的餓七，大約進行到第十天、第十二天左右，上人過去對他說：「這不是你的法門，為什麼還要繼續？」

結果實法師的法門居然是三步一拜！每個人有不同的特長和因緣來修習不同的法門。沒有哪個法門跟所有人都相應，有些法門不適合，有時適合。因此，你需要有善知識的引導。發願也是如此。上人說，我在往昔發願這輩子要幫助他，但是我不記得。我對他說：「師父，如果我不記得……」。他回答我：「不要緊，我記得！」

早在七零年代早期恒具和恒由就從舊金山一路三步一拜到華盛頓州的大理石山。當時，我是一個能量充沛的在家人，認為自己應該加入他們的行列。於是，我搭便車到他們所在之處。那時，他們已經在俄勒岡州了。我花了一週的時間在俄勒岡州跟他們一起三步一拜，後來覺得還是回到金山寺好



why do you continue doing this kind of cultivation?

But his Dharma door turned out to be three-steps-one-bow so everybody has a different skills and kinds of conditions for doing different kinds of study practices. So, it's not for everybody and sometimes it's not the right thing for you and sometimes it is the right thing. So, it takes somebody with great wisdom to help you out there. I know that as far as the vows though, I mean, Shifu told me that I promised to come back this life to help him out. And I still don't remember, "Shifu, I don't remember." He would say, "I don't care. I remember!" Heng Ju and Heng Yo did the bowing first back in the early seventies, from San Francisco to Marblemount, which is up here in Washington. During that time I had really good stock, I was a layman. I said that I should join them. So I caught a ride up to where they were by then. They were in Oregon already. So I spent a week with them bowing in Oregon and three-steps-one-bow and then I said, well I better get back to Gold Mountain. So I got a bus ticket and called Gold Mountain to tell him I'm coming back and Shifu picked up the phone. He goes, "Yeah." I say, "Shifu this is Gwo Wei. I'm up here in Oregon doing three-steps-one-bow with Heng Ju and Heng Yo, and I'm coming back."

He said, "I don't know. You do what you do, I don't know what you are doing." I go back to Gold Mountain and I realize on the bus trip back, "Oh I really made a mistake. I forgot to ask Shifu's permission." So I went and bowed to Shifu and repented. He said, "This Dharma door of three-steps-one-bow is not your Dharma door." So everybody has different Dharma doors.

**Question:** People are getting cancer nowadays. One method that is used is to address it now is to fast for a couple of days to starve the cancer. There is a woman considering the ten-day fast, what can you do during those ten days? Can you do normal work and physical activities? And what can you drink? Can you drink water and juice?

**Answer:** I can't talk about whether fasting's going to cure cancer. It's a little bit of a stretch. The Master used to tell

了。於是，我買了一張車票，打電話到金山寺跟師父說要回去了。師父接起電話，我說：「師父，我是果回，我在俄勒岡州和恒具、恒由他們一起三步一拜，我要回去了。」

上人回答我說：「我不知道。你想做什麼就去，我不知道你在做什麼。」回金山寺的路上，我在公車上意識到：「我確實犯了錯。我忘了得到師父的許可。」回去之後，我頂禮師父，在他面前懺悔。上人就說：「三步一拜這個法門不是你的法門。」所以每個人都有自己的法門。

**問題：**現今人們罹患癌症。有個療法主張要進行數日的斷食，讓癌細胞挨餓。有位女眾正在考慮打十天的餓七。請問這十天要做什麼？可以照常做平常的工作和從事體能鍛鍊嗎？能夠喝什麼？可以喝水和果汁嗎？

**來法師：**我無法談論有關打餓七是否可以治癒癌症，這可能有點離題。上人告訴我們，打餓七的時候，最重要的是要不斷地念佛，念觀音菩薩或阿彌陀佛。不能攝取太多水分，每天只能喝一杯水。很多人都犯這個嚴重的錯誤，喝太多水。因為你沒吃任何食物，就會想喝更多水。如果你真的這樣做，水會直接流向你的腿部和腳踝。很快地，你會腫得和大象一樣，腳踝會腫脹得厲害，非常不健康。

即便是打十天的餓七，也不能喝超過一杯的水，上人非常嚴格的要求—每天不超過一杯水。不喝果汁也非常重要。停止打餓七的步驟也非常要緊。在第11天，你不可以馬上吃很多東西，如果這樣做，不僅會生病，甚至會致命。因此，上人教導我們，只能喝米粥（熱粥），將米和水煮成粥，然後熬煮成湯狀。粥不能加鹽、不能加胡椒粉、不能加醬油、什麼都不能加。整整三天，只喝水和粥。直到餓七結束後的第三天，可以把一顆蘋果切成薄片，加

us when you're fasting, the most important thing is to recite something like Guanyin or Amitabha. Also, don't drink too much liquid. Don't have more than one glass of water a day. That's a big mistake that lots of people make; they drink way too much water. Because you haven't had any food, you want to drink more water. Then, if you do, the water goes right down into your legs and to your ankles. Pretty soon you'll look like an elephant. Your ankles will swell up like crazy. It's very unhealthy. Even for ten days, you don't want to take more than one glass (of water), he was very strict about that - no more than one glass of water a day. No juice is also very important. Then it is very important how you stop the fast. On the eleventh day, you don't just stuff yourself full of food. If you do, you'll get really sick. You could even die. So he always told us, you eat just rice *zhou* (hot porridge), rice *zhou* is just rice and water, made like a soup. It should have no salt, no pepper, no soy sauce, no nothing, nothing added at all. Just eat water and rice porridge for three days. On the third day, you can take one apple, slice it up, and put it in the rice *zhou*. That's it. Then slowly, you can go back to normal eating after that.

This former monk Heng Kung, Richard Josephson, he lives at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas (CTTB) now. Back in those days he was pretty good at fasting. In fact, he fasted as long as I did. We were doing the thirty-six day fast together, and at the end of that, we had to start the rice *zhou* routine. But after the first day of that, he just couldn't take it. So he went down that night and stuffed himself full of food from the refrigerator, and he got really, really sick. He looked like he was going to die, Shifu had to come down, rub his stomach and recite for him. It was really pretty intense, so you have to be very careful coming off of even a ten-day fast.

**Question:** Dharma Master Lai, if you made a vow in this lifetime but you cannot fulfill it, what will happen? Will this vow go with you to the next life, or will the vow disappear and you need to make a new vow?

**Answer:** One of the questions was if you make a vow if it'll stick with you or not, Shifu used to tell us when you make a vow, if you're really sincere, when you make the vow, it's like planting a seed in the ground, well, if it doesn't germinate this life, it'll still germinate in a future life. So I always, uh, that's why he always encouraged us to make Bodhisattva vows, because even if we can't accomplish it now, in this moment, that doesn't mean it goes away, it's still there, the fact that you planted that seed and you were sincere about it. If that seed is in your seventh and eighth consciousness, so that's going to germinate someday when the time is right and even if it's not this life. ❀

入粥裡面吃；如此慢慢回到正常的飲食。

理查·約瑟夫森就是以前的恆空法師，他現在住在萬佛城。那時，他非常擅長打餓七。事實上，我們一起打餓七，我們一起打了36天的餓七。到了最後階段，我們開始進行喝粥的步驟。但是過了一天之後，理查餓得受不了，半夜跑下去開冰箱，吃了一大堆食物。之後他病得相當嚴重，幾乎就快死了。師父不得不下來給他揉肚子，為他持咒。打餓七是需要相當專注的，即使打到第十天，都不能掉以輕心。

**問題：**請教來法師，如果今生發願卻做不到，會怎麼樣？這個願會跟著自己到下一世，還是會消失？需要再重發新願嗎？

**來法師：**我們先回答其中一個問題，如果發了願，這個願是不是會一直跟著自己？師父常告訴我們，發願的時候，如果非常的誠心，你所發的願就像在地上播下一顆種子。即使它今生不發芽，也將在來生發芽。因上人總是鼓勵我們像菩薩一樣發大願，即使我們現在做不到，並不意味著這個願就會消失，它依然存在。你種下那顆種子，如果非常誠心，種子會深植在你的第七和第八識裡，即使今生沒有發芽，將來因緣成熟，就會發芽。❀