

# Starting Out From Buddha Root Farm

## 始於佛根地

A Talk Given by Peter Schmitz at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas on February 27, 2019

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In the year 1974, two American Bhikshus did the first three steps-one bowing pilgrimage from San Francisco through Oregon to Seattle, Washington. In 1975, the owners of Buddha Root Farm held a seven-day Amitabha retreat on the coast of Oregon. Shifu agreed to give Dharma talks at the University of Oregon in Eugene, the monks and nuns came up to my friend's property outside Eugene, and my friend invited me to come to see them. It was a warm sunny afternoon, and everyone was enjoying the nice weather outside.

I went into my friend's house alone, and no words were spoken by Shifu, who was standing in the room. Some kind of mysterious communication occurred. I looked at Shifu and knew that he was my teacher, and that Buddhism was the path for my future. At Christmas in 1976, that same friend invited me to drive with a group to Gold Mountain Monastery in San Francisco to attend a seven-day Amitabha meditation retreat.

I had never done a retreat before, and never done meditation at all. During that first meditation retreat, I had a very unusual experience. During one of the sitting periods, a white tiger with horns came walking down the aisle. Shifu was sitting in full lotus on a white lotus flower on the tiger's back. Later, I learned that the vision was a manifestation of Manjushri Bodhisattva. When I saw Shifu riding on the tiger, that visual experience was amazing, but

1974年，兩位美籍比丘首次三步一拜，他們從舊金山穿越俄勒岡州，一直到了華盛頓州的西雅圖市。1975年，俄勒岡州佛根地農場的主人在海岸邊舉行了一場為期7天的佛七。上人應邀到俄勒岡大學尤金分校講法，僧眾們也來到我朋友在尤金市附近的住所；朋友邀我去拜訪他們。那是一個陽光溫暖的午後，每個人都在戶外享受宜人的天氣。

我獨自走進朋友家中，站在房裡的上人沒開口說話，我們彼此間卻有某種神祕的交流。我看著上人，知道他就是我的老師，而佛教是我未來要走的路。1976年的聖誕節，同位友人邀我和他們一起開車去舊金山的金山寺參加為期七天的佛七。

我從未打過佛七，也沒有打坐經驗，這是我人生中的第一次打七。我有相當不尋常的體驗。在坐念的一支香中，有一隻長角的白老虎沿著走道走來，上人在虎背上的一朵白蓮花上打雙盤。後來，我才知道這是文殊菩薩所現的相。當我看到

my understanding was weak. I was only 30 years old and knew nothing about Buddhism. That kind of teaching from Shifu is called a gathering in Dharma. Over 40 plus years of cultivation and practice, the meaning has become stronger and deeper, especially when one has to talk about it in front of the great assembly.

At the completion of that meditation retreat, a refuge ceremony was held for a family of one Vietnamese monk. They asked me if I wanted to join the ceremony; I did attend the refuge ceremony and became a disciple of Shifu. It is impossible to explain how deeply Buddhism helped me transform my life for the better. In other words, I had a very great need for improving my life. After we returned from the meditation retreat, my normal life continued. One night when I was sleeping at home, Shifu appeared in my room. He said, I should come back to the monastery. There was a picture of my girlfriend on the dresser. Shifu looked at the photo and said, "Get rid of that person." I arranged my affairs, drove to San Francisco, and started living as a volunteer at Gold Mountain Monastery. ❀

上人騎著老虎，那種視覺體驗很奇妙，但我卻不太理解。當時我才三十歲，對佛教一無所知。上人的這種教法是一種攝受眾生的教法。經過四十多年的修行，這段影像的意思變得越來越深刻、越來越鮮明，特別是當我在大眾面前談起這件事的時候。

在那個佛七的圓滿日，要為一位越南法師的家人舉行皈依儀式。他們問我是否有意願參加；我參加了這個皈依儀式，也成為上人的弟子。實在很難用文字解釋佛教影響我的生活變好有多深，換句話說，我渴望改進自己的生活。從打七回來後，我繼續平常的生活。有天晚上，我在家裡睡覺時，上人出現在我的房裡。他說，我應該回到金山寺去。櫥櫃上放著女友的照片，上人看了看照片說：「離開那個人。」我聽從上人的指示打點好一切，驅車到舊金山，在金山寺開始我的義工生活。❀

在這個國家，我又提倡叫人念佛，又提倡叫人參禪。為甚麼呢？因為我願意教化出一些個「帶角的老虎」，人人見著都很害怕的。這個虎本來就很厲害了，又帶上兩個犄角，就更厲害了。所以將來你們各位都要做帶角的老虎。這個老虎帶上角，不是叫你們去吃人，而是叫你們到處去弘揚佛法，降伏這個天魔外道，令魔王一見著就都老實了。這是個比喻，你不要以為這就是真的老虎生了兩個角，滿山各處去跑。這是言其「有禪有淨土，猶如帶角虎」，你又參禪又念佛，這就好像老虎有了角似的。

—宣公上人一九七五年八月開示於佛根地 • 杜親誠 英譯

I advocate people recite Amitabha Buddha's name; I also advocate people to investigate Chan in this country. Why is that? Because I am willing to teach some people to be the "Tigers with horns," so others are scared when they see these people. A tiger is powerful originally, but it is even more ferocious with two horns. Thus, you all shall be tigers with horns in the future. Be a tiger with horns; I am not asking you to eat people, but asking you to carry forward Buddha Dharma in all places, subdue the celestial demons and the externalists, make the demon king regulated as soon as he sees you. I said it is a metaphor; you should not think yourself is a real tiger with two horns, and run all over the mountain and all places. What I said is, "A site with Chan is a pure land, just as a tiger with horns." You investigate Chan and recite Amitabha's name, and then you are just like a tiger with horns.

—Instructional Talk Given by Venerable Master Hsuan Hua in August, 1975 at Buddha Root Farm • English translated by Cindy Wang