



A Conversation with Dharma Master Heng Lai

與恒來法師對話

Given by Dharma Master Heng Lai to DRBU Students via Online Conferencing on July 11, 2020
Chinese Translated by Zhang Chin Fa, Janet Lee

恒來法師講於2020年7月11日法大線上專題
張親法、李采真 中譯

Question: Dharma Master, I wonder, if you could talk about your transition in life to becoming very serious about your practice.

Dharma Master Lai: I didn't get serious until I was at Gold Mountain Monastery. I still wasn't feeling that I was good or ready enough to live at the temple. Then, it was just a big empty mattress factory. At that time, they were doing a lot of remodeling work. I still had a lot of false thinking, so I caught a bus and went to Florida; then I flew over to the Bahamas, because I used to live in the Bahamas, and I tried to just forget about everything. It was too much for me. I used to be in the charter business and went about goofing this way and that, wasting time on sailing yachts. Finally we went back to Fort Lauderdale and I was working on somebody's boat. One day I went to a park and sat there and just thought about my situation. I said to myself, "I can't keep doing this."

I really needed to return to Gold Mountain and start getting serious. At that time, I still hadn't taken refuge; I still was not a disciple. I said, "I really need to start being serious about this." At that the moment I had thought this, all the birds around, pigeons and others, lit in the air and everybody in the park looked up watching them take off. Then I felt Shifu's presence with me, even though I was in Fort Lauderdale. He was with me and said, "Everything's okay." To me, what I experienced pretty much cinched the deal. I said, "Woah, this person really is a spiritual

問題：請問來法師，您能不能談談是什麼契機讓您開始認真修行呢？

恒來法師：直到在金山寺，我才開始用功。但是我不認為自己有辦法或者準備好住在廟上。這裡之前是一個空蕩的床墊工廠。當時，他們做了很多內部改建工程。而我仍然有很多妄想，因此，就搭巴士前往佛羅里達，然後飛到巴哈馬群島，因為我曾住在那兒。我試圖忘記這一切，修行對我來說實在太難了。過去我是從事租船生意，總是開著遊艇各處閒晃，虛擲光陰。最後，我回到勞德代爾堡，在別人的船上工作。有一天，我坐在公園裡回顧自己的情況；跟自己說：「不能再這樣下去了。」

我覺得自己需要回到金山寺，開始認真修行。那時，我還未皈依，也不是上人的弟子。我跟自己說：「我真的得開始認真修行了。」在我產生這個想法的當下，周圍的鳥兒、鴿子全都飛向空中，公園裡的人們仰頭看著鳥群飛翔。然後，我感覺到上人來了，雖然當時我人遠在勞德代爾堡。上人在我身旁，說：「一切都會沒事的。」對我而言，我所經歷的事情讓我肯定「這個人真的是我的精神導師。」這並不是玩笑話，這是前所未有的經歷。我需要回金山

master.” It was no joke; I never had an experience like this. I needed to get back to Gold Mountain. With \$20, I started hitchhiking; I left Fort Lauderdale and got back to San Francisco in four days. When I’d stuck my thumb out for a ride, people immediately picked me up. I knew the Bodhisattvas were helping me, because it was just so unnatural. I was about 22-23 years old. My thoughts were confirmed when a young, single, blonde girl my age picked me up. She said, “I’d never picked up a hitchhiker in my life. I’ve never done this in my life, but somebody came to me and he said, ‘it’s okay.’” She told me this when I got in the car. And it was like this all the way across the US. I got rides from everybody.

I got back to Gold Mountain very quickly. It was amazing. I didn’t even spend the money; I still had the \$20. So this pretty much cinched the deal for me. I started getting serious about cultivating, because I realized this was a real master. I better start doing what he wants me to do. I knew he needed to be there for a reason. I didn’t know what it was, but I knew that it was above my power to add or detract from whatever it is. I needed to really seriously just do what I should be doing. I am not philosophical; I just care about telling you the truth. I was brought up as a Catholic and I rejected all the teachings pretty much; I just was not into it. But when you meet a real spiritual cultivator with real spirituality, you just know it in your guts. That’s what kept me going.

I only knew why I came many years later when the Master told me: “The only reason you’re with me now is because in a past life you were in China with me and you made a vow to come back and help me in the West. That’s why I keep bugging you. And so I keep you around me.” “Okay, sure. I don’t remember all of this.” and he said it doesn’t matter if I don’t remember. So that’s how I got to where I was.

Question: I heard that if you meditate for a long time, one might encounter demons and weird spirits. Does one always have to face demons in Chan in order to advance the next level or can one get to the next level without the demon part?

Dharma Master Lai: I have demons in my own thinking.

寺。我帶着20美元，開始搭便車離開勞德代爾堡，四天後，抵達舊金山。每當我在路邊伸出大拇指，很快就有人讓我搭便車。我知道這是菩薩加被，因為實在是超乎尋常的順利。當時，我大約22或23歲。當一個和我年紀相仿的單身金髮女子讓我搭便車時，我的想法得到證實。她說：「我不曾讓陌生人搭過便車，這輩子都沒做過這種事。但是有個人跟我說：『沒事的。』」我上車時，她這麼對我說。這橫跨美國的旅程一路都是如此，每個人都願意讓我搭便車。

很快地我就回到金山寺，這真是太神奇了。我一毛錢都沒花，身上還有20美元。這對我來說是一錘定音。我開始認真修行，因為我意識到這是一位真正的高人。我最好開始做他要我做的事情。我知道他在那兒是有原因的。我不知道理由是什麼，但我明白以自己的能力是無法揣測的。我需要好好認真做自己該做的事。我不是哲學家，我只想告訴你們真相。我從小就是天主教徒，但我幾乎拒絕接受所有的教義，也不感興趣。當你遇到一個真正有修證的修行者，你心裡會曉得。這也是讓我堅持下去的原因。

多年後我才曉得自己為什麼會來金山寺，上人告訴我說：「你現在之所以和我在一起，是因為過去生你同我一起在中國，你發願要去西方幫助我。所以我才一直盯着你，把你留在我身邊。」我說：「是嗎？好吧，我不記得這些了。」上人說我不記得也無所謂，這就是我的情況。

問題：聽說，如果長時間打坐可能會著魔。禪修是否需要魔考才能有所提升？還是說可以不經過魔考也能進步呢？

來法師：我的想法中就有魔，所有的魔都是我們自己造成的。佛法說「一切唯心造」，的確如此。我們的魔都是自己造的，是我們把魔造出來。魔是一種靈體嗎？是的，在某種程度上，是的。有一

We create all the demons by ourselves. In Buddhism they say everything is made from the mind alone. That's a real statement. We create our own demons; we just make them up. Are demons spiritual beings? Yes, in a way, there are. One time, Shifu showed me what they look like.

It wasn't like what I thought it did. I couldn't see it, but it was these obstructions that are really your own false thinking. We create our own roadblocks and we call them demons. But could it be spiritual being? Could it be another being another person or another creature out there? It is a demonic force. So, yes, I suppose so. But the real thing is we've got to get ourselves over our own demons.

You can handle any demon down the road. It's about you and yourself. You really need to get by the false thinking mind, as Shakespeare said it is the "pale cast," a flaw. We all live in this pale cast. It's like an overcast sky above us every day that we get so used to. We think that's what reality is when it breaks open for the first time. When you see yourself, there's a sun and a blue sky; it's not just overcast. With the first taste of this, you'll know. It was the same with Elder Xuyun. The Venerable Empty Cloud cultivated until he was 54 years-old before he had any spiritual experience. He worked intensely hard at cultivating.

All of us have our own karmic obstructions created by past lives. These aren't created by demons, but by you and me. Our mess is the karmic webs we've created for life after life. We've created this big mess and now we got to get out. That's what the Buddhist path is, the eightfold path. What did the Buddha do? The first thing he did was cultivate all aesthetic practices. He fasted and discovered that it was not the Middle Way. He sat under a Bodhi tree. "I'm not leaving this spot until I wake up, period." Then in the early morning, the Buddha saw a bright star and woke up. What did he say upon waking? He said that everything is made up by people's minds due to their attachments, that all sentient beings have the Buddha nature and can become a Buddha like him.

He had discovered the essence, the truth of all sentient life, all living things. Over the years he cultivated the eightfold path of how to do it back then, 2,500 years ago. He showed people that if you do this and that, you're going to wake up sooner or later and be able to obtain Buddhahood.

This is one thing I've always experienced with the Master. He's lockstep with the Buddha all the time. He teaches us just

次，上人讓我看了它的模樣。

它並不像我想的那樣。我看不到它，但這些障礙其實就是自己的妄念。我們給自己造了路障，並稱之為魔。但它是一個靈體嗎？會不會是另一個人或是眾生的靈體？它是一種魔力，我認為是。但真正的重點是，我們必須克服自己的心魔。

將來，你有辦法面對任何的魔考，這些魔其實就是你自己。你真正需要做的就是除去妄念，正如莎士比亞說的：「我們要突破這覆蓋我們思維的陰霾。」這是一個誤區，我們生活在這個思想的陰霾中，就像天空被陰霾蓋住一般。我們習以為常，以為它是真的。當你初次打破，看到自己、看到太陽、藍天，就不再只有陰霾。有了第一次的經歷，你會知道的。虛老也是如此。虛老非常精進努力的修行，一直到54歲才開悟。

我們每個人都有自己過去生所造的業障。這些都不是魔造的，而是你我自己造的。我們生生世世所交織的業網是一個爛攤子。我們造了這個爛攤子，現在要想辦法出離。這就是佛道、八正道。佛陀是怎麼做的呢？首先，他嘗試各種苦修、食一麻一麥，卻發現這些都不是中道。他坐在菩提樹下，說道：「不成正覺，誓不起座。」最後在清晨，佛陀因為看到一顆明星而開悟。開悟之後，佛陀說了什麼呢？他說：「一切眾生皆有如來智慧德相，但以妄想執著，不能證得。」

他發現一切有情生命、一切眾生的本質、真理。佛陀在2500年前就修行八正道。佛教導大家，只要你做這個、做那個，那麼你遲早會開悟成佛。

在上人座下，我一直以來的一個體會就是上人和佛陀的步調是一致的。上人教我們的方式，就像佛陀親自教授，就像佛一直在教導我們。如果你讀過佛陀的故事，以及他如何教導他的弟子；佛陀從來不會說要做這個或做那

like the Buddha taught it himself. It's like he's always teaching us. If you've ever read the tales of the Buddha and how he taught his disciples, he never says do this or do that. He'd always wait until living beings mess up; he waits till they're in a real bad situation. It was just like with Ananda who messed up with Matangi's daughter. He waited for some kind of situation to develop and he'd pull them out of the fire just in time to let them understand and see their situation and not to go that route. That's how he taught, and that's how the Master taught. He used to feed us all kinds of "ropes" that we about ready to hang ourselves with it. And at that right moment, he would come and save us and basically say, "Can you see what your mistake is?" It happened all the time like this. So one experience I really had with the Master was I realized he was teaching just like the Buddha taught. He was teaching us the same way, a real way—that's a real teacher.

Question: Dharma Master Lai, how did you continue to practice after so many years? What is the advice from the Master that you remember until now?

Dharma Master Lai: "Patience, patience, gotta have patience. Sou pe He." You need to have patience. I'm really impatient, because I want to have full enlightenment, and I wanted it right now without waiting. Shifu says, "Nah, it doesn't work that way." We all have our karmic obstructions that we have to work through. Just have patience with yourself. I'm not talking about being impatient with others. I'm just talking about being patient with yourself. You already have the Buddha nature. It isn't going anywhere, even when you die. You always have it and will have it for unspeakable immeasurable kalpas, so just have patience when you cultivate. This was my biggest problem. At first, I was so impatient especially with sitting in Chan. We had a 21-day Chan session at Gold Mountain. It was two or three weeks and it was 21 hours of Chan a day. I tried really just pushing for myself to enlightenment. I wanted to have that state I previously had again, so I pushed and pushed

個。他總是等到眾生自己搞砸了，等他們陷入困境，就像阿難遇到摩登伽女的困境。佛陀會等到時機發展成熟再及時將弟子們從火坑裡拉出來。讓弟子們明白、看清自己面對的境界，不再重蹈覆轍。佛陀是這樣教的，上人也是如此。上人曾給我們各種的「繩索」，當我們差不多要把自己吊死的時候。在恰當的時機，上人會幫我們解套，然後問道：「你能看到自己哪裡錯了嗎？」這樣的事情屢見不鮮。我和上人在一起的一個真正的感受就是，我意識到上人的教導就像佛陀一樣。上人用同樣的方式、實在的方法教導我們—上人是一位真正的明師。

問題：請問來法師，您如何做到堅持修行這麼長的時間？有什麼上人給的建議，您一直銘記在心？

來法師：「忍耐，忍耐，忍耐娑婆訶」。你需要有耐心。我真的很沒耐心，因為我想開大悟，我想要無需等待，馬上就開悟。上人說：「不，不是這樣的。」我們每個人都有自己要克服的業障，要對自己有耐心。我指的不是對別人沒耐心，而是要你對自己有耐心。即使你往生，你本有的佛性也不會到任何地方去。縱使經過不可言說的無量劫，佛性也一直與你同在。所以，修行時只要有耐心就好。這是我最大的問題。剛開始，我很沒耐心，特別是坐禪。我們在金山寺進行21天的禪七，大約兩、三個星期，每天打坐21個小時。我試著逼自己開悟。我想再進入之前擁有的境界，所以我不斷地努力。每天我都熬夜坐到半夜，後來有一天上人下來，看到我正在埋頭苦幹。他走過來說：「你在幹什麼？」我回答上人：「師父，我正努力開悟。」上人說：「傻瓜！開悟不是這樣硬開的。時候到了，自然就開悟了。不要急。」上人說我們都已經都有佛性，只要耐心等待就好。當你的業障消了，你就會重新看到本有的自性。每個人都有自己的時間表，不要讓別人強迫你制定一些錯誤的計畫。只要每天好好修行，每天一早醒來就像禪宗名言說的那樣—饑來吃飯，睏來即眠。於是我再度回到禪

at the “ship.” Every day I stayed up till midnight sitting and then the Master came down one day and saw me grinding away. He walked over and said, “What doing?” “Shr Fu, I’m trying to wake up.” “Stupid! You know? You don’t, you can’t force enlightenment. It just comes when it’s ready. Don’t be so impatient.” He says we all already have the Buddha nature, just be patient with it. When your obstructions are worn out, then you’ll see your true nature again. Everybody has his or her on time schedule. Don’t let other people force you into some false schedule. Just cultivate daily; get up in the morning, as the famous Chan saying goes, “You get up, you eat, sleep, and go back to bed.” So I walked and I sat in the Chan Hall.

That’s the biggest thing I’ve learned from the Master. Well, the biggest I learned from him is how incredibly compassionate he was. If you asked me one word, or one sentence, to describe the Master, I would just say a compassionate, incredible heart that is totally into you. He’s into whomever he’s dealing with completely, because he wants you so much to be able to attain Buddhahood. He said that otherwise he wouldn’t want to be in this world. This world is nothing but a toilet and he doesn’t want to hang out in it. “The only reason I’m here is to make Buddhas.”

Question: Can you speak about your relationship with Master Hua, and from your perspective, what does it mean to be filial to one’s teacher?

Dharma Master Lai: To be filial to your teacher ultimately is to become a Buddha or Bodhisattva. That’s the ultimate way of being filial, because that’s what Shifu wants you to do. That’s what the Buddha wants you to do. They want you to wake up, because, as the Master used to tell us over and over again, everybody has this nature; it was not just one person’s. We all have it. Even an ant and cockroach has it. You start learning to be filial to your teachers by cultivating the way, waking up, and doing your practices. That’s being filial. Likewise, when you do not practice, you are being unfilial. That’s pretty much it. The Master always kept it simple. We get caught up sometimes as we study very articulate and profound sutras such as *the Avatamsaka* and others, especially if you are studying at school, because the texts are sophisticated and extreme. But really it comes right back to just being a Buddhist cultivator, day by day. We all have this incredible nature in us, like a diamond. We’re a

堂裡用功。

這是我從上人身上學到最重要的東西。親近上人得到最大的收穫就是看到上人無與倫比的慈悲心。如果要我用一句話來形容上人，我會說上人對眾生有一顆無與倫比的慈悲心。上人對每個眾生都是全心付出，因為他非常希望每個人都能成佛。上人說，如果不是為了度眾生，他根本就不會在這個世界上。他在這世間就像住在廁所裡，完全不想久留。「我在這裡的唯一目的就是為了造佛。」

問題：能否談談您和上人的關係，從您的角度來看，孝順師父是什麼意思？

來法師：孝順師父的終極方法就是成佛、成菩薩；這就是孝順最崇高的方式。上人希望你這麼做，佛陀也希望這麼做，他們都希望你開悟。上人總是一再告訴我們，佛性不是只有一個人有，每個人都有。我們都有佛性，就連螞蟻、蟑螂也有。對師父的孝順就是好好修行、開悟、不斷用功，這就是孝順。同樣的，你不修行，就是不孝，大概就是這樣。上人總是把它簡單化。當我們學習像《華嚴經》這類精煉、深奧的經文時，有時會覺得很吃力，特別是當你在課堂學習時，因為這些文字都相當精闢。但其實這只是回歸一個佛教修行者的修行日常。我們每個人身上都有這種不可思議的佛性，就像一塊鑽石。我們目前是一塊未經琢磨的原石，非常粗糙；但是每個人的內心都有佛性。佛教是世界上最民主的宗教，它主張我們每個人都是佛。我們頂禮我們的本師釋迦牟尼佛，但是我們禮拜的意義深遠，因為佛是我們的本師，並非因為他是神。這不是因為我們認為「我們永遠都不可能像您一樣，我們總是比您低下。」

diamond in the rough, a very rough one. But inside everybody has this Buddha nature. Buddhism is the most democratic religion in the world. It states that we all are basically Buddhas. We bow to our original teacher, Shakyamuni Buddha, but we do it in the profoundly, because he's our original teacher, not because he's a god. It's not because we think, "Oh we'll never to be like you. We're always gonna be below you." We don't have that attitude in Buddhism. In Buddhism, we say, "You all can be also be Buddhas." Our job is to wake up to this and help others wake up too—that's the Bodhisattva Path.

Several years later in 1975, I asked Shifu if I could leave home. I thought, "Well, Shifu's been really patient with me. I better go up and see if I can leave home." So I went up there to Gold Mountain. At that time, Loni was there, the former Heng Yin. She was there with an old woman in her 90s, who wanted to become a Bhikshuni. She was very old and she was going to leave home. I went up and bowed to Shifu and I said, "I wanna leave home," and he says, "Why do YOU wanna leave home?" He said this in a way as if he said, "What are YOU doing here?!" I thought he was going to be so happy that I wanted to leave home. But, no, he asked me what I was doing there. "Why do YOU want to leave home?" I told him that I wanted to leave home ... to cultivate. And then he says, "You know the Elder Master Xuyun lived for many, many years without any kind of enlightenment. And he was very, very sincere." He told me that one time, Elder Master Xuyun attended a Chan session at a monastery. He stayed in the full lotus for two weeks without moving. He sat there without moving or eating or anything. He suffered enormously because he had not woken up to the Way yet, and was unable to enter samadhi. But he stayed there anyway. He wanted to be an example for others, so that they would have the mind and heart to cultivate the Way: to see if people could do that too. That's the character of a real Bodhisattva. That's the kind of way you lead by example. Now we know what to aim for. But I was really surprised by the Master's reaction, because I always thought that he really wanted me to leave home. No. Whether or not you leave home or is irrelevant to the Master. He wanted you to be a Buddha. He wanted you to wake up to your true nature.

☞ To be continued

我們在佛教並沒有這種思維。在佛教中，我們說：「你們也都可以成佛。」我們的工作是讓自己開悟，並且幫助別人開悟-這就是菩薩道。

在1975年之後幾年，我請求上人允許我出家。我想：「師父對我還真是有耐性。我還是問問看自己能不能出家。」於是，我就去金山寺。那時，羅妮在那兒，就是前恒隱法師。她跟一個九十多歲想出家當比丘尼的老太太在那裏。她年紀很大，想出家。我上前頂禮上人，說：「我想出家。」上人說：「你為什麼要出家？」上人說這話的語調，就像在說：「你在這裡幹什麼？」我以為上人會很高興聽到我想出家。結果沒有，他問我在那裏幹什麼。「你為什麼要出家？」我回答上人：「我想出家……修行。」上人說：「你知道虛老（開悟前）已經出家很多年，卻遲遲沒有開悟的消息，而他修行是非常非常的誠心。」上人告訴過我，有一次，虛老在一個佛寺打禪七。他沒有絲毫懈怠的以雙盤坐了整整兩個星期。他坐在那兒動也不動，飯也不吃，什麼事都不做。他忍受相當的折磨，因為他還沒悟道，無法進入三昧；但他還是留在那兒。他想做別人的榜樣，讓他人也有這種看看別人是否能做到的心態。這才是真正的菩薩，總是以身作則。現在，我們知道要如何設定目標。但是上人的反應真的讓我很驚訝，我一直以為他很想要我出家。結果並不是，你要不要出家，都和上人沒關係。他希望你成佛。他希望你開悟，證入自性。

☞待續

