



【紀念宣公上人傳法西方60週年】

【Commemorating the 60th Anniversary of Venerable Master Hua's Bringing the Dharma to the West】

Reflections from the Convent

來自寺廟的迴響

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Some people start on the spiritual path as monastics and go out into the world to pursue academic degrees. I have had the opposite experience: I came to the monastic life through the door of academia.

I was born and raised in the intellectual community. My father was a professor at Stanford, then later transferred to UC Berkeley. Even before high school, I began asking questions like, “Do I believe in reincarnation or not?” In the U.S., our schooling was largely scientific, so I was really asking, “Does reincarnation match my scientific beliefs?” Actually, it did. I had learned the principle of the conservation of matter, and thought, Why shouldn't there also be the conservation of spirit? If matter changed into different forms, including energy, then why shouldn't spirit, from life to life?

As a student at Berkeley High, I took a course in Far Eastern religions. In those days, although the term Buddhism was thrown around, it usually meant Zen. People were reading Suzuki Roshi and writings from the Theravada tradition, and I found this interesting, but there wasn't much written in English that explained Mahayana Buddhism. It was much later that I discovered Mahayana Buddhism, which resonated more deeply with me.

As a graduate student at UC Berkeley, I studied Sanskrit because I wanted to gain insight into the messages of the ancients, to understand the philosophers, theologians and religious voices from the past. In retrospect, I think that language is one key, but the pitfall of trying to understand Dharma from the point

有些人是從修行之路開始，例如出家，再入世去攻讀學位。而我是個剛好相反的例子，我是從學術界的大門進入僧門。

我出生於書香世家，在學術環境裡成長。我的父親原本是加州史丹福大學的教授，後來轉到加州大學柏克萊分校任教。我甚至在上高中之前就開始問這類的問題：「我相不相信輪迴？」在美國，我們的學校教育偏重科學，所以我是很嚴肅地在問：「轉世一說是否符合我的科學信念？」事實上，它是符合的。我學過「物質不滅定律」，那麼，為什麼不可能也有所謂的靈魂不滅呢？如果物質能變成不同的形式，包括能量，那麼為什麼靈魂不能從一個生命變到另一個生命呢？

在柏克萊讀高中的時候，我修了一門有關遠東宗教的課程。在那個年代，雖然佛教這個名詞四處傳播，但它通常意味著禪宗。人們閱讀鈴木俊隆和南傳佛教的傳統著作，我對這挺有興趣，但闡釋大乘佛教的英文著作並不多，許久之後，我才發現了大乘佛教，並對它產生更深的共鳴。

在加州大學柏克萊分校讀研究所的時候，我修習梵語，因為我想藉此洞察古人的資訊，瞭解過去的哲學家、神學家和

of view of language is that it takes a lot of time, and I got sidetracked studying the language. One day, however, after a class on the Bhagavad Gita in Sanskrit, I had a discussion with one of the members of the class. His name was Ron Epstein, and he looked very much like a mainstream, nonspiritual student about to pursue an academic career. Something clicked for me in that discussion. Soon I received in the mail the first issue of the journal called *Vajra Bodhi Sea*, and inside it I found Mr. Epstein introduced as both an intellectual scholar and Buddhist practitioner. He was the president of the just formed *Vajra Bodhi Sea Society*, which was publishing that journal.

The first issue appeared in April 1970. At that time the journal was small, printed only in English, and it looked like it was mimeographed. The cover was gold, representing the center and the earth element. That little journal was a genuine eye-opener for me. It offered real answers to my questions about what was important in this world and what we were supposed to do.

The special thing about the *Vajra Bodhi Sea* issue was that it talked about the Venerable Master Hsuan Hua, the spiritual life and the temple. An international group studied at the temple, and it was meaningful for me that they were not cut off from the larger intellectual community of the world. Many of them were graduate students who had been at the University of Washington and had come down with Ron Epstein to attend a session on the Buddhadharma, or the teachings of the Buddha.

The Venerable Master Hsuan Hua led the session. His composure, knowledge and gentility must have been the reason why many people transferred down from the University of Washington to study in the Bay Area even though they lost credits in the process. They were an impressive group, including three monks and two nuns. Still, it took a while for me to get over to the temple and find out that there were nuns who would be role models for what I would want to do.

Why did it take me a long time to get to the temple? I was in the Sanskrit department. There were people in the department who were members of ashrams. I knew the kind of life they lived. They would get up at four or five in the morning, meditate and chant on their own, and regularly go to their temple, which was far away. There's a lot of commitment in religious practice. How could that possibly be compatible with being a full-time graduate student?

I found a key in the *Heart Sutra*. During a university summer session in Seattle in 1970, a graduate student handed me a mimeographed manuscript of the *Heart Sutra* lectures by the Venerable Master and also introduced me to the sutra in Sanskrit. It was like a puzzle—very

宗教都說了些什麼。回想起來，當時的我認為語言是一把鑰匙，但試圖從語言的角度來理解佛法卻有個陷阱，那就是得花很多的時間，而我在語言學習上走偏了。然而有一天，上完有關「薄伽梵歌」的梵語課，我與班上一位學生一起討論，他的名字叫羅恩·愛普斯坦（易果容），他看起來就像是個主流派、非靈性的學生，即將開始追求其學術生涯。那次的討論突然點醒我一些事情。很快的，我收到寄來的這本名為《金剛菩提海》雜誌的第一期，在裡面我發現對愛普斯坦先生的介紹，他既是一名學者，也是一名佛教修行者。他是剛剛成立的「金剛菩提海」月刊社的社長，該社負責出版這本雜誌。

第一期出版於1970年4月，那時的雜誌很小，僅有英文版，看起來像是油印的。封面是金色的，代表著至中及地球的元素。那本小雜誌真是讓我大開眼界，它真實地回答了我的許多問題，例如：在這個世界上什麼才是重要的，以及我們應該做些什麼。

《金剛菩提海》的特別之處在於，它談到了宣公上人，談到修行和佛堂。一個國際團體在寺廟裡學習，對我來說很有意義的是，他們並沒有與世上廣大的知識界隔絕，他們中的許多人都是在華盛頓大學就讀的研究生，在羅恩·愛普斯坦的指導下，來這裡參加佛法，或可謂佛陀教義的研習會。

宣公上人主持這研討會，他的沉著鎮定、淵博的知識、和藹的風範，想必是許多人即使犧牲學校的學分，也要從華盛頓大學來舊金山灣區學習的主要原因。那是個令人印象深刻的團體，包括三位比丘和兩位比丘尼。儘管如此，我還是花了一段

fascinating. The sutra talked about the five skandhas, so I set out to research the nature of these five “aggregates”: form, feeling, thinking, formations and consciousness. In 1970 there was not much available except the translation by the Pali Text Translation Society. It didn’t answer all of my questions, but everything I read there was fascinating. My wish to learn more and more about the *Heart Sutra* grew that summer. My approach was to memorize and recite the *Heart Sutra* in Sanskrit, along with the mantra. I found it incredibly meaningful to recite the *Heart Sutra*, but it also had the intellectual content I needed.

When I finally made it to the temple, I immediately felt that I belonged, that these were the people I had been looking for. It was my intellectual and spiritual community. During my first visit to the temple I encountered the Venerable Master for the first time. After sitting in meditation we attended a class taught in Cantonese by a very learned lay lady and translated by another person. The text was the “Palm Treatise” from the Consciousness-Only School.

As the class progressed, the Venerable Master came into the room very quietly, without fancy clothes or fine marks of being someone special, and sat listening to the lecture. He left just as quietly. Much later, I realized that there was a message for me in the way the Master had presented himself. The message was about arrogance, showing off, ego and wanting people to know who you are. In explaining the *Confucian Analects*, the Master gave us an example. If you are a famous professor and go some place where nobody pays any attention to you—they don’t ask you to talk, they don’t give you a big introduction, they just ignore you—and that doesn’t bother you at all, then you are a superior person.

In the past I might have sought to place myself at the center of attention, thinking, “This is where I’m supposed to be.” Today I try to remember the Venerable Master’s lessons.

時間才進到佛堂，並發現那裡的比丘尼們可說是我完成理想的楷模。

為什麼我花了很長時間才進到佛堂？我在梵文系，那裡有些人是印度教道場的成員，我知道他們過著什麼樣的生活，他們會在清晨四、五點起床，各自打坐和誦經，並定期去他們的寺廟，寺廟通常都在比較遠的地方。宗教修行中有很多的承諾，這怎麼可能跟我全職研究生的身分相容呢？

我在《心經》裡找到入門之鑰。1970年，在西雅圖的一次大學暑期營裡，一位研究生遞給我一份油印的上人講述心經的手稿，並以梵文向我介紹了心經，它就像是個非常吸引人的拼圖遊戲。心經講的是「五蘊」，所以我開始研究這五個「蘊」的性質：色、受、想、行、識。在1970年代，除了巴利文翻譯協會的一些翻譯著作外，幾乎沒有什麼其他可讀的，我在那裡讀到的一切都很吸引人，但那些並沒有回答我所有的問題。我想要多學習瞭解《心經》的念頭，在那個夏天日益增長。我的方法是背誦梵文的《心經》及咒語。我發現背誦《心經》非常有意義，而它同時包含我想要的學術內涵。

當我最終進入佛堂時，馬上就感受到一種歸屬感，這些人正是我一直在尋找的，我的知性和靈性的大家庭。我第一次去佛堂的時候，第一次見到上人。打坐後，我們上了一堂課，是由一位非常博學的女居士用粵語講授《成唯識論掌中樞要》，由另一人翻譯成英文。

課程進行中，上人靜悄悄地走進來，他沒有講究的衣著，也絲毫沒有顯現出他是個什麼特殊的人，就只是坐下來聽講。他離開的時候也是一樣靜悄悄的。很久以後，我才意識到，師父如何以呈現他自己的方式，給了我一個訊息。這個訊息是有關於傲慢、愛炫耀、自我中心，以及愛好名氣。在解釋《論語》時，上人給我們舉了一個例子，他說：「如果你是個有名的教授，到一個地方，大家對你很冷淡的，他們不請你講話，不特別介紹你，只是忽視你。如果你也沒有脾氣，都沒有問題的，那你就是個君子了。」

在過去，我也許總試圖得到眾星拱月的關注，心想，那才是我該有的。今天，我試圖謹記上人的教誨。

☞ To be continued

☞ 待續