

憶師父西方弘法的點滴



How the Master Taught the Dharma in the West

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A few days ago, I was at Gold Buddha Monastery in Vancouver and someone asked me a question: "Think about what it would be like if the Master had never come to the West? What would it be like?" I said, "Who could possibly answer such a question?" But I thought about it in the reverse. There are certain things that we know the Master brought west, which have endured for forty years now. So, by process of elimination, we can know that certain things that might not be here had the Master not come west. I will talk a little about these things.

First, by 1969, he allowed Caucasian westerners to enter monastic life. This was the beginning of a realization of one of his goal: to

前幾天在溫哥華金佛寺，有人問我，如果上人沒有來西方，現在會是怎麼樣的情形？我說，有誰能夠回答這樣的問題呢？然而我自己是這樣倒過來想的：就我們所知，上人帶到西方的一些事情至今已四十多年，因此套用數學刪除法就可以知道，如果師父沒來，這些事情可能都不會發生。現在我就來說說其中的幾件事。

第一件事，一九六九年上人讓西方人剃度出家。這開始實現他的目標：在西方建立西

have a Buddhist monastic Sangha in the west, composed of western-born people. Now it is not to say that the other monks didn't come to do that. They did, but not in the same way, and not to the same extent that the Master did. Five became fully-ordained in 1969. Shortly after, four more became fully-ordained. Both those times the ordination was done in Taiwan. The third time, the ordination was performed in California, adhering to the expedients stipulated in the Vinaya regarding exceptions in non-Buddhist countries.

So then we had quite a group—more than ten who were being taught as monastics by the Master. The Master's methods for the monastic disciples were quite different than methods he used for lay disciples, and so it became very interesting to lay disciples to watch the dynamics of the Master teaching his monastic disciples. It was quite entertaining, I can assure you. Because of that, laypeople became interested, and they too felt that they would like to also be monastics. The Master's guidance and teaching of monastics had a great influence on other Westerners, and the number who entered monastic life with the support and permission of the Master grew.

I know that the Master was early in doing this because now there are monastic conferences quite often for western people who became monastic, ten, twenty, thirty, thirty-five, forty years ago. We get together and talk about the wonderful joys and also the difficulties of being a western Buddhist monastic. We talk very frankly with each other, and I know that the Master was early because almost always, I'm the longest precepted one there, even among Tibetan and Theravadan. So the Master gave the west a monastic Sangha very early. I think we can dare say—first.

I think that the second most important thing that might not have come if the Master hadn't come west is vegetarianism in Buddhism. From the very beginning, from the moment we walked in the door of the Buddhist Lecture Hall, we became vegetarian, and most of us had not been before. From the very beginning, the Master talked with great detail, great logic, and principle about why it's good to be a vegetarian. Now why do I say this is important to the Master's coming to the West? Because to this very day, Tibetan Buddhists eat meat, Theravadan Buddhists eat meat, and even... I am sorry to say, among Great Vehicle countries, many of the monastic Sangha don't keep to a totally pure vegetarian diet. So I feel it was a very important contribution for the Master to let us know about vegetarianism, for these reasons: first of all, compassion; second of all, our own health; third of all, the health of the world...of the planet; and last, and certainly not least, the karmic involvement we make with beings when we eat their flesh.

Rarely do you hear the Master criticize members of any tradition of Buddhism regarding not keeping totally pure vegetarianism. That wasn't his way, at least in my experience. His way was to continue to advocate the good points of being vegetarian.

I think the next thing that the Master did very early in the West

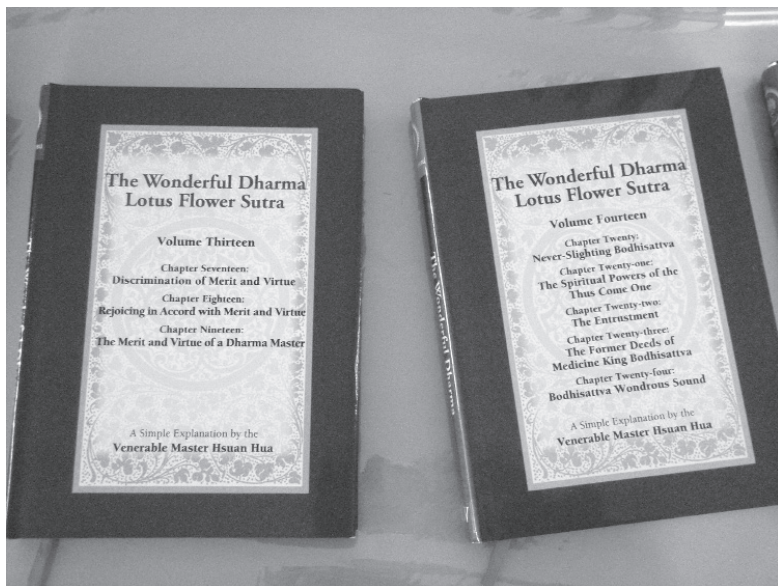
方人僧團。這並不是說其他的法師沒有做；他們有，但在方法和程度範圍上，都和上人的不同。一九六九年，有五個人受了具足戒；不久以後，又有四個受具足戒。這兩次都是到臺灣求戒，第三次上人就依據戒法的內容，因地制宜地在加州傳戒。

就這樣，我們有了僧團——十幾個上人訓練出來的出家人。上人訓練出家弟子的方式，和訓練在家弟子很不相同。所以在家弟子看到上人教我們這些出家人生動活潑的那一面時，都覺得很有意思。相信我，那真的是非常有趣！因為這樣，所以他們不僅感到興趣，而且也想成為出家人。上人對出家弟子的教化，對其他西方人產生很大的影響，因此得到上人允許而加入僧團的人數也逐漸增加。

我知道，早在十年、二十年、三十年、三十五年、四十年前，上人就開始著手建立僧團。為什麼？因為在經常舉辦的西方僧伽會議裡，這些出家的西方人聚在一起，討論做出家人的快樂以及感到困難的事。我們之間聊得很坦率，我才知道上人是很早接受西方人出家的法師；因為幾乎毫無例外的，我是他們當中戒臘最長的，甚至在藏傳和南傳的西方僧團裡也是同樣的情形。因此師父很早就為西方國家建立了僧團，我認為可以大膽說——上人是第一位這樣做的人！

我認為第二個重要的事情，如果上人沒有來到西方弘法，佛教徒不會有素食的概念。我們從一開始，可以說是從踏進佛教講堂的那一刻，就開始吃素——我們多數未入門前都不是吃素的。然而從我們一開始學佛，上人就非常仔細，而且非常符合邏輯道理，來跟我們說明吃素的好處。為什麼我說這也算是重要的事？因為時至今日，藏傳佛教是吃肉的，南傳佛教是吃肉的，甚至於——我很遺憾說——在大乘佛教的國家中，許多出家人也不是完全素食。所以我覺得這是師父非常重要的貢獻，因為他讓我們了解素食的重要：第一是慈悲，第二是我們的健康，第三是攸關整個世界、整個地球的健康，最後也是最最重要的，就是我們吃眾生肉，與這些眾生牽扯的共業。

你很少會聽到上人批評其他佛教徒，不守



was to oversee the translation of Buddhist canonical texts into English. It was not easy for him to achieve this, because he only had westerner disciples at that time. He didn't yet have young, dynamic Asians to help with translation. It's not like now where you people sit down to translate, and you have people proficient in English working together with people proficient in Chinese. The result is bound to be hundreds of times better than what we did in those days, because we were crippled by the lack of knowledge of Chinese. But I think what the Master gave us was the gift of fearlessness. He told us to have the courage to go ahead to do what he wanted us to do and not to worry. He encouraged us and said: "Don't worry about it...do the best you can! You translate it and publish it, and the very least..."—this was forty years ago—"it is going to give the westerners some idea of what the *Shurangama Sutra* says or what the *Lotus Sutra* says. Don't worry about it because people will come after..."—of course, those people coming after are you, the ones here—"They'll know so much more and be so much better at language skills that they will retranslate the texts and commentaries and those will be published again: second editions, third editions, fourth editions. So you don't have to worry about the first one if it's not perfect."

He also encouraged us and said: "Never mind! Don't worry about publication, just translate. Translate and put it there on your book shelf, and then let it sit there, and don't worry about it; and then some day...30, 40, 50 years later, somebody will find it on your book shelf and they'll say: 'Oh! This is a real treasure! We don't have this in English!' and they will be happy to find it." Of course, part of what the Master told us was to help us with our egos. He didn't want any of our egos to run away with us with thoughts like: "Oh! Look at me, I am translating classical Chinese...a Buddhist canonical text!" So he was very, very careful how he handled this to try to keep us humble. He did his best.

The Master let our less-than-perfect translations, that passed

持清淨素食——至少在我的經驗裡，這不是他的作風。他的方法，就是繼續提倡素食的好處。

我認為，另一件上人在西方很早就做的事情，就是督導佛經的英文翻譯。這就他來說是容易做到的，因為那時候他只有西方的弟子，沒有年輕蓬勃的亞洲人來幫忙。不像現在，只要坐下來開始翻譯，就有精通英語和中文的人互相合作，這樣的成果必然比當年的翻譯好上幾百倍——因為我們不懂中文，成果自然打了折扣。但我認為，當時上人賦予我們的是無畏的精神，教我們勇往直前去完成他希望我們做的，不要擔心。他鼓勵我們：「別擔心！盡量往好了做！翻譯出版出來，最起碼（這是四十年前說的話）可以讓西方人稍微瞭解，究竟《楞嚴經》、《妙法蓮華經》說的是什麼；不用擔心，以後的人會跟進的。就是跟著你們現在在這兒的這些人，他們知道得更多，又有更好的語言能力，可以重新翻譯這些佛經和淺釋，然後發行第二版、第三版、第四版……。所以，不必擔心這第一次的翻譯不夠完美。」

上人也鼓勵我們：「沒關係，不要擔心出版的事，只管翻譯；翻譯完了，擺在你的書架上，待在那兒，不用管它。等到有一天，或者三十、四十或五十年以後，有人在你的書架上看到，會說：『哦！這真是個寶！我們還沒有這個英譯版。』他們會很高興找到。」當然上人告訴我們的，有一部分是為了去除我們的我相，他不希望我們這麼想：「哦，看！我正在翻譯文言文的佛經！」上人在這個地方非常非常用心，要我們時時保持謙虛。這方面，上人給了我們最好的教化。

就這樣，上人讓我們那些還差強人意的翻譯，經由佛經翻譯委員會（BTTS）四個部門審查通過後就出版了；也就是說早在一九七〇年代，佛經翻譯委員會的出版品、經典淺釋就已經流通問世了。裡面的內容都百分之百正確無誤嗎？不，不全然都正確的。我們有時不是用錯詞，就是會錯意；有時乾脆略過不翻，因為根本不知道那個成語是什麼意思。儘管如此，上人總是鼓勵我們：「沒關係，你們知道多少就翻多少，以後的人可以

through the BTTS four-committee process, be published very early, which means that BTTS publications, canonical texts with commentaries, were available in the 1970's. Were they correct? Nah, they weren't correct. We didn't get the words right, we didn't get the phrasing right, we missed the meaning a lot of times, there were idioms that we didn't bother to try to translate because we had no idea what they meant. Nonetheless, the Master encouraged us: "Never mind, as much as you've got, let's put it out and later people can do it better." And we got criticized a lot. From that time to this time, and even though we published things, we didn't know how to handle distribution, so the Master did not become widely known through those early English translations.

The lack of expertise in distribution is probably a legitimate criticism, but on the other hand, there are people here, and elsewhere at our branches, who somehow came across one of our books and read a little bit and realized what an outstanding individual the Master was, and how easy his commentaries were for us who knew no Buddhism to understand. And so you can say, yes, we haven't distributed widely, but if we distributed it into one person's heart, and that person comes, and wants to learn more, there's some success in that.

The other thing is that we are international. Among us are Malaysians, Vietnamese, those from Mainland China, Canadians, Taiwanese, Hong Kongese, and Americans. And so when westerners come here, it's comfortable because there are all kinds of people here. Often as Buddhism moves into the western culture, a phenomenon called ethnic Buddhism occurs. That's when the Thai people come and build a Thai temple, and they speak Thai, read Thai, and sing Thai. Or the Chinese come and build a Chinese temple and they speak Chinese and sing Chinese. Or Vietnamese build their temple and they speak Vietnamese. What about us westerners?

These ethnic Buddhist groups are here in the West, and where do westerners fit in? I even see this phenomenon sometimes in our own branches. I visit our branches and sometimes it's all Asian. I'm not criticizing. I am telling the truth.

A westerner will come to the door, and the Chinese all start talking Chinese, saying: "You should watch him, he might steal something. Better have somebody follow him. I wonder what he's here for? Don't let him scare our women..." Such western visitors don't have to understand the language to know that they are being judged. I mean the vibes are there. So I hope that the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas will remain very international, and that all our branches will follow that example, so westerners will feel welcome. That way the Master's coming to the West and bringing the Dharma will take root and have good results.



再改進。」從當年出版之後一直到現在，我們的翻譯還是被批評得很多。我們甚至也不知道怎麼有效流通刊物，所以上人並沒有因為這些早期的英譯本而出名。

缺乏專業的流通，可以算是個合理的指責。但另一方面，有一些人在偶然的機緣之下，來到分支道場，讀到我們的書，才認識到上人是多麼不平凡的人，而且他說的淺釋，讓不懂佛法的人都覺得淺顯易懂。所以你可以說，是的，我們的書流通得還不夠好；但是如果流通到人的心裡，讓那個人來了，而且想了解更多，那也算是有點成就了。

另外一件事，我們這個團體是國際性的，有來自馬來西亞、越南、中國、加拿大、台灣、香港和美國的人。所以西方人來會覺得很自在，因為有各式各樣的人在這兒。通常佛教傳入西方文化，有「種族化佛教」的現象，如果泰國人來，他們就蓋個泰國廟、講泰國話、讀泰國文、用泰國的唱誦；或者中國人來了，就蓋中國廟、講中文、中文的唱誦；要是越南人，就是越南廟、越南話、越南的唱誦。那麼我們西方人呢？

西方社會有這些種族化的佛教團體，但西方人却覺得格格不入。有時在我們自己的分支道場，甚至也有這種現象。我到分支道場去，有時全部都是亞洲人，只有我是美國人。我不是批評，我說的是實話。

然後，有個西方人進門了，他們都開始用中文講：「你要看著他喔，他可能會偷東西，最好有個人跟著他。不知道他來這裡幹什麼？不要讓他嚇著了我們的女眾……」這些西方訪客不需要懂你們的語言，就知道自己被貼標籤了——我的意思就是就有那種氣氛了。因此，我希望萬佛聖城能繼續保持國際化的特色，所有的分支道場就會跟著這麼做，西方人就能有賓至如歸的感覺。如此一來，上人弘化西方所付出的心血，才能在這片土地落地生根，開花結果於將來。