



Reflections from the First Monastic Immersion Retreat

第一屆出家生活體驗營回響

Written by Retreat Participants

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The first Monastic Immersion Retreat was held by Tatagatha Monastery (TM - 如來寺) from August 4 - 11, 2019. The monastery opened its doors to male retreat participants who wished to learn and practice from fully-ordained monks at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. This year, the program explored the following topics: developing humility, understanding how the monastic form works, and seeing the benefits of a strong daily practice. The days started at 3:40 AM and ended at 9:30 PM, and included daily practices in the Buddha Hall, community service at TM, talks given by Bhikshus, conversations with the Abbot, and more. This was a great retreat for someone interested in experiencing monastic life. Below are some reflections from the retreat participants:

首屆出家生活體驗營於二零一九年八月四日到十一日在如來寺舉行，道場向那些有心修行、又想向萬佛聖城裡受過具足戒的比丘們學習的人們敞開。今年，這個活動著重探索：弘揚謙卑精神，了解寺廟僧侶的生活和工作，觀察每日精進修行的好處。每天的活動從早上三點四十分開始，到晚上九點三十分結束，活動內容包括在如來寺內的社區服務，聽比丘們講法，和方丈座談及其他等等。這對於有興趣體驗出家生活的人而言，是一次很棒的靜修。以下是學員們的回響：



Aaron Friedman

1) **On the importance of group cultivation:** Practicing as a group played a really important role in my support structure. There were 10 to 15 people with similar and shared intent in what we were doing. That common goal created a sense of unity with everyone.

2) **On the importance of work:** I appreciated working with everyone on different projects, from in the back at the site of the Wonderful Enlightenment Buddhist Institute (WEBI) to TM, as well as to the other community work that was done. Everything felt safe and effective and passed at a comfortable pace. Teamwork played an important role.

3) **On the importance of instruction:** Whether it was instructional periods in the Boys' School Chan Hall or lectures in the conference room at the old DRBU building, everything was really insightful. The Sangha, as well as the laity, really knew a lot and shared very interesting stories.

Le Nguyen:

1) **The most important thing you learned:** I learned from most of the Dharma Masters that you should work hard to be worthy of receiving benefits from others.

2) **Why would this retreat be important for others?** This retreat will help others to see if this path is the one they want to pursue for the rest of their lives. If not, others can still learn from it and apply it to their daily practices back home.

3) **Would you recommend it?** Absolutely, I strongly recommend that everyone come to the retreat. There are always things to learn.

Nick Wu:

First, I found the retreat to be a very well-rounded experience for me. During the week, there was a very organic and cohesive balance between ceremonies in the Buddha Hall, personal practice (such as meditation, bowing to Sutras, reciting the Buddha's name, etc.), Dharma lectures, and community service. Therefore, this retreat has not only taught me how to strike and maintain this balance, but also showed me that having this balance is really important in order for us to make continuous progress in our cultivation. Furthermore, previously, I used to look at these things as separate and individual, and unrelated to each other in any way. For example, I previously believed that ceremonies in the

符親安:

1) **團體共修的重要性。**共修的方式對我有非常重要的支持作用，有十到十五個抱有相似目標及共同想法的人共修，共同目標造就了大家團結互助的良好氛圍。

2) **工作的重要性。**我很感恩和大家在不同的項目上一起工作，從妙覺山計劃到如來寺的工作，以及其它所完成的社區服務。每一項工作都在安全、有效又從容不迫的進度中完成。團隊合作發揮了重要的作用。

3) **教導的重要性。**不論是在男校禪堂裡的教導，還是在舊法大會議室中的講法，一切都富有見地，無論出家人還是在家人都卓知多識，還分享了非常有趣的故事。

阮黎:

1) **你學到的最重要的事。**我從大多數法師們身上學到的是：你應為大眾的利益而努力不懈。

2) **為什麼這次靜修對參與者是重要的？**這個體驗營可以幫助參與者了解到，這是否是他們餘生所想要的生活道路，即便不是，他們也可從中學到一些東西，回家應用到日常的修行上。

3) **你會將這個體驗營推薦給他人嗎？**那當然，我強烈建議每個人都來參加，因為總能從中學到一些東西。

吳涵傑:

首先，我覺得這個活動對我來說是種非常全面的經歷。在這一個禮拜裡，上殿過堂與個人的功課（包括打坐、禮拜經文和念佛等等）、講法、及社區服務之間保持著極為自然、有機而連貫的平衡。因此，這個活動不只教會我如何達成並維持這種平衡，同時也讓我看到擁有這種平衡能力是極為重要的，它使我們在修行路上持續進步。

此外，以往我看這些都是孤立、個別的事情，彼此之間沒有關聯。例如，我之前認為那些在佛殿舉行的儀軌和社區服務毫無關聯，因為它們是完全不同的修行方式。

Buddha hall had nothing to do with community service, as they are completely different types of cultivation. However, after gaining a broader picture of cultivation from listening to lectures given by different Dharma Masters this past week, I've learned that this view is not correct. Rather, cultivation is one long thread throughout every moment, and ceremonies in the Buddha hall complement community service, and vice versa.

I've also come to realize over the course of the retreat that the monastic environment is the best place to be vigorous in cultivation and to be pure in body, speech, and mind. It was very apparent that the rigorous schedule (which mimicked that of a novice), as well as vigorous practice, helped me not only have less false thoughts during the day, but also helped me more easily recognize when I'm having a false thought. In addition, I have also realized the importance of cultivation as a member of the community. During this retreat, I was able to closely cultivate with fifteen other retreat participants who shared my interest in monastic life.

By cultivating alongside other like-minded individuals, not only was there less time to be idle, but there was also less time that is spent alone, as much of the day is spent moving together with my fellow retreat participants as a single unit. And I've found that doing so discourages the notion of self. Furthermore, another benefit of cultivating as a member of the community is that others encourage me to be vigorous and I, in turn, inspire others around me to be vigorous; many benefits can be derived from this mutually beneficial relationship. Although I have come to CTTB many times in the past, this time, I have really come to sincerely appreciate CTTB for being a truly constructive place for serious cultivation.

Jason Kung:

1) **Most memorable moment:** I was very engaged while listening to Dharma Master Shun speak. He's so happy. It's a rare opportunity to be able to ask senior monks questions that I wouldn't usually ask out of fear that it would be rude or disrespectful.

2) **Most important thing you learned:** To try my best and cultivate whatever I can without feeling critical.

3) **Why is this retreat important for others?** It's the "what's next" for people who have been cultivating for a while.

然而，在過去這一週中，隨著聆聽不同的法師們的講法，我對修行有了較廣泛的認識，從而瞭解到自己的看法是不正確的。應該說修行是條由每時每刻、點點滴滴匯聚而成的漫漫長路，在佛殿舉行的儀軌補充了社區服務，反之亦然，彼此是相輔相成的。

我同時也從體驗營的課程中瞭解到，寺廟對於精進修行和保持身口意清淨而言，是最好的地方。顯然，模仿沙彌的嚴格日程以及精進修行，不但幫助我白天減少了妄念，更幫助我在妄念升起時能輕易的分辨出來。此外，我也認識到作為團隊一員來修行的重要性。這次活動，我得以和另外十五位對出家生活感興趣的學員一起共修。藉著和其他志同道合的朋友一起修行，不僅讓你無暇偷懶，也讓你沒機會獨處，每天都和同修們融為一體參與各種活動。我發現這麼做減少了我執。還有，在團體中共修得到的另一個好處是他人帶動了我的精進，而我也鼓舞了身邊人一起共進；這種互相勉勵的關係衍生出許多好處。雖然過去我曾經來過聖城多次，但是，這次我真誠地感謝萬佛聖城為認真修行者提供了一個真正有建設性的場所。

龔家生：

1) **最難忘的時刻。**我在聽順法師講法時全神貫注，他是那麼快樂。我們極少有機會向資深法師們請教問題，因為怕粗魯無禮或不敬，而不敢提問。

2) **你學到的最重要的事。**盡力而為，不要自責，從能做的事上著手修行。

3) **為什麼這次靜修對參與者是重要的？**對已經修行一陣子的人，懂得「下一步」該做的事。

阮親法：

1) **你學到的最重要的事。**我來參加靜修的目標是：學習怎麼來對治我的憤怒。我所學到的是：耐心是對治憤怒的關鍵之一。

2) **為什麼這次靜修對參與者是重要的？**這次靜修是一種很好的體驗，也是對聖城出家人生活的實際瞭解和「導讀」。然而在我看

Uoc Nguyen:

1) **Most important thing you learned:** When I went to the retreat, my goal was to learn how to handle anger. I learned that patience is one of the major factors in handling anger.

2) **Why would this retreat be important for others?** This retreat is a good taste or introduction, as well as a realistic view of monastic life at CTTB; however, in my opinion, it could be longer – at least 2 weeks. Our bad habits will surface more in that time frame, as one week is kind of short.

3) **Describe how this retreat impacted your life:** I have more hope for the future of Dharma Realm Buddhist Association (DRBA) with respect to Western culture and society.

Justin Lee:

1) **Most memorable moment:** Adding stucco to the planter boxes in the outdoor landscape behind DRBU was one of the memorable moments. Though my Dharma friends and I were all adults, there was a joyful feeling of returning to being a kindergartner again working with ‘gray mud.’ We would jokingly call out, “MUD!” to one of our Dharma friends, Jing Ri (Jake), who would serve each of us deliciously splatting mud on broken-down cardboard boxes to put on the planter boxes.

2) **Most important lesson learned:** One of the biggest things I learned is recollecting the kindness of others. Particularly for myself, being raised in a mostly Western environment, I’ve found that I’ve taken the practice of ‘self-cultivation’ and ‘meditative concentration’ too literally to the point that my mind can only see things from a narrow perspective, oblivious to everything around me. Every morning after our meditation sit, we would each go around and share what we would like to improve on for the day. When I set this intention of recollecting the kindness of others, it shifted my awareness for the day. Things that I hadn’t seen before came into my field of vision.

3) **Why is this retreat important for others?** For those looking for a deeper purpose in life — and it doesn’t necessarily have to be an interest in the monastic life — I would recommend this program. ❀



來，一個星期有些短，可以長一點，至少要二個星期，這樣我們的壞習氣才會更多地浮現出來。

3) **說說這次靜修對你生活的影響。**我對處在西方文化和社會背景下的法界佛教總會的未來，懷有更多的期待。

李伯欣：

1) **最難忘的時刻。**最難忘的時刻之一就是在法大後面，對戶外景觀花盆箱的粉刷。雖然佛友們和我都是成人了，但攪和灰泥讓我們有種又回到幼稚園似的歡樂感。我們會開玩笑地對我們的佛友傑克尖叫「泥！」他就給我們上美味灰泥這道菜，他啪地一聲把泥放到我們的破紙箱上，然後我們再把泥塗到花盆箱上。

2) **你學到的最重要的事。**對我這樣一個基本是在西方環境中長大的人而言，我學到的最重要的一件事就是回憶他人的善良。我發現我把「自我修行」和「專注禪坐」過於字面化了，以至於我內心只能從狹隘的視角看問題，而忽略了我周圍的一切。每天早晨禪坐之後，我們都會互相交流，分享我們這一天想要改進的地方。當我開始回憶起他人的善良時，這一天我的感知會發生變換，以前看不見的東西進入了我的視野。

3) **為什麼這次靜修對參與者是重要的？**

對那些尋找人生真諦的人——並不一定是對出家生活有興趣的人，我會推薦他參加這樣的活動。 ❀