

May You Live As Long As You Want

壽如你願

Steve Setera 講於2024年2月22日萬佛聖城佛殿

芬陀利 中譯

A Talk by Steve Setera at the Buddha Hall of the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas on February 22, 2024

Chinese Translated by Janet Lee



In 2009, I accompanied Ven Mahinda, a monk from Malaysia, with Amanda and I attended a two-week novitiate in Lumbini, Nepal. Lumbini is the birthplace of the Buddha. This was an opportunity not to be missed. At that time, I was a Technical Director in California and resigned to go on this trip. This was one of the great experiences among the many I have been blessed to have.

Because of that trip I have returned to India many times to walk in the footsteps of the Buddha and to meditate in the cave on Prāgbodhi Hill where he meditated for quite a long time before crossing the river to be enlightened under the Bodhi tree.

2009年，我和同修阿曼達陪同來自馬來西亞的僧侶瑪欣達，參加在尼泊爾藍毗尼為期兩週的短期出家。藍毗尼是佛陀的誕生地，是個不可錯過的造訪機會。當時我在加州一家公司擔任技術總監，為了這趟旅程我遞出辭呈。那也是我人生閱歷中最棒的體驗之一。

因為那次（藍毗尼）旅程，我多次重返印度，跟隨佛陀的足跡，在鉢羅笈菩提山（前正覺山，又稱「佛陀苦行洞」）的山河裡打坐。佛陀在此禪修很長一段時間，之後才渡河，在菩提樹下證得正覺。

It was following that trip that I accompanied Ven Mahinda to visit temples and monasteries in Oregon and California. Since I am from Oregon and had lived in California, it was my pleasure to arrange the trip for him. He pointed out that there were two places that he had to see, Shasta Abbey in Mt Shasta and the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas here in Talmage. We were able to make the connections which eventually led for me to move here in 2009 to be followed by Amanda and Abigail in 2010.

We lived in a cottage until the fateful day of September 20, 2022. Living in this community has both its blessings and challenges. The challenges eventually being the reasons that we left and moved into Ukiah.

During the past few years my birth family along with my wife and I have been blessed with many health issues. Recently my younger sister was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease. I say, "blessed" because each situation is humbling causing my eyes to see and experience the difficulties and tragedies that so many in the world are having to endure on a daily basis, because every illness, every injury is a lesson on impermanence.

September 20, 2022 is the day that changed my life in many ways. That's the day that my family and I were moving from the cottage that we lived in since 2009 and moving into Ukiah for various and inexplicable reasons. During the morning when I carried a box to the truck we borrowed, there was an odd feeling in my head. I walked into the home and mentioned to Amanda that I think I just had a stroke. Actually, I had no idea what a stroke felt like as had never had one before.

That same night my right eye began to hurt and tear up. I felt this was just a reaction to the eye examination I had the previous day in San Francisco and didn't think much about it and went to bed. After sleeping a short time I woke from a dream and said that I had to tell Abigail something. At that time, I was unable to stand with weakness in my left leg. At that point Amanda drove me to the Ukiah Valley hospital. We told the MRI technician that I may have had a stroke. After the MRI scan, he said, "You did not have one stroke, you had two simultaneous lacuna ischemic strokes; one affecting balance or mobility and the other your vision". I was immediately given Plavix to prevent blood clots as well

這趟朝聖之旅後，我陪同馬欣達尊者參觀了奧勒岡州和加州的寺院。因為我來自奧勒岡州，定居加州，因此我很榮幸為他安排這趟旅行。尊者有兩個指定參觀的道場，都是在北加州，一個是沙斯塔山的沙斯塔佛寺，另一個是達摩鎮的萬佛城。我也因此和萬佛城結了緣。2009年我住進萬佛城，同修阿曼達和女兒阿比蓋爾也於隔年移居此地。

在萬佛城，我們一直住在一間小木屋裡，直到2022年9月20日這天。住在城裡是恩賜，也是考驗。這些試煉最終讓我們遷離，住到瑜伽市。

在過去的幾年裡，我和我的原生家庭以及妻子，都有幸被諸多健康問題眷顧；最近胞妹也被診斷患有帕金森氏症。我用「眷顧」這個詞，是因為疾病令我謙卑，讓我必須去面對和經歷世界上許多人每天不得不承受之苦。但這並不重要，因為每一次疾病、每一次受傷都是無常的教誨。

2022年9月20日是決定性的一天，在許多方面改變了我的人生軌跡。那天，我和家人基於某些原因，遷出自2009年一直居住的小木屋搬到瑜伽市。這天早上，當我把一個紙箱搬上我們借來的皮卡車時，我感到頭有點不對勁。我走進家門，跟阿曼達說，我覺得自己中風了。事實上，我不知道中風是什麼感覺，我不曾有過中風。

當晚，我的右眼痛到流淚。我以為這是我前天在舊金山做眼科檢查後的反應，沒多想就上床睡覺了。睡了片刻之後，我從夢中醒來說，自己有些事情要告訴女兒阿比蓋爾。就在此時，我發現左腿無法站立。阿曼達立刻開車送我去瑜伽谷醫院。我們告知核磁共振（MRI）技師，我可能中風了。核磁共振掃描結束後，他說：「你不只有一個中風，而是同時發生兩次栓塞性中風（又稱缺血性中風）；一個會影響平衡或是活動能力，另一個會影響你的視力。」我立即服用

as a 21-day prescription.

After a stroke, time is of the essence. The first 60 minutes after a stroke is referred to as ‘The golden hour’ when there is the greatest chance to restore blood flow and save threatened tissue. We did not respond in that hour and if it had not been for my dream of needing to wake up and speak to Abigail my recovery would be much worse. That was the beginning of my many months’ health journey.

In March 2023, a blood sample was drawn by the VA (Veterans Administration) for tests. The blood work revealed my PSA was at 13.51! The normal range is 4. Looking back at my blood work in Aug 2022, my PSA was 10.20; already on the high side. My new primary care physician was quick to identify my problem. He ordered and scheduled an MRI in May 2023, followed by a biopsy later that month.

The day after the biopsy, I was having some side effects from the biopsy with my whole body shaking uncontrollably. I went back to the ER in Ukiah but was discharged on the same day as the doctors couldn’t find anything wrong, so we left to Oregon the next day to attend my sister’s funeral who had just passed away from her pancreatic cancer.

During the drive up to Oregon the ER doctor from Ukiah Valley Adventists Hospital in Ukiah called advising me to return to the hospital immediately as bacteria was found in my blood. As we were already in Oregon, I chose to continue the drive and was admitted to Providence Hospital in my hometown. The ER doctor had me stay a night in the hospital for thorough observation knowing that my condition could be fatal.

While in that hospital I felt that my life’s journey just completed a circle as I was born just five blocks away in a nursing home seventy-nine years before. But my only wish at that time was to be able to attend my sister’s funeral which was the next day at 11 am.

It was fortunate that the ER doctor confirmed I was free from the risk and was discharged early that morning so that I could attend my sister’s funeral. When we arrived, I was able to see my sister in peace just minutes before the casket was closed prior to her funeral mass.

Two weeks later, I received the result from the biopsy test. I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. This hit like a bomb having just experienced my sister’s illness and her death from

保栓通預防血栓，並拿了21天的處方藥。

中風時的搶救時間至關重要。中風後的前60分鐘被稱為「黃金一小時」，此時最有可能阻止血栓並搶救即將壞死的組織。在我中風的那個小時內並沒有採取任何行動，如果不是因為我從夢中醒來要找女兒說話，我的恢復情況將會更糟。接著是我開始長達數月的復健。

2023年3月，我在退伍軍人醫院作了抽血檢查，檢查結果顯示我的PSA（攝護腺特定抗原）高達13.51！正常數據範圍是4。回顧我2022年8月的血液檢查，我的PSA是10.20；數據已經偏高。我新的家醫很快注意到這個問題，安排我在2023年5月進行核磁共振檢查，並在當月底作切片檢查。

切片後的第二天，我出現了切片後的一些副作用，全身無法控制地顫抖。我回到瑜伽谷醫院的急診室，但由於醫師找不出任何問題，當晚就辦理出院。第二天，我們前往俄勒岡州參加胞姐的葬禮，她剛因胰腺癌過世。

在驅車前往俄勒岡州的途中，急診室醫師打電話給我，要我馬上返回醫院，因為在我的血液中發現細菌。由於我們已經抵達俄勒岡州，我選擇繼續行程，並前往老家的普羅維登斯醫院。急診室醫生要我住院一晚觀察，因為他知道我的病情很可能致命。

在那家醫院裡，我覺得自己剛結束一趟人生旅程，就在七十九年前，我出生在與它相隔僅五條街區的醫院。當時我唯一的心願，就是能夠參加姐姐第二天上午11點的葬禮。幸運的是，急診室醫師確認我沒有致命風險後，在當天一早就讓我辦理出院，我也得以送姐姐最後一程。當我們抵達時，在葬禮彌撒封棺前幾分鐘，我得以瞻仰姐姐安詳的遺容。

兩週後，我收到切片檢查報告。我被診斷出患有前列腺癌。我像是被炸彈襲擊似的，因為我才剛經歷胞姐死於癌症。胞姊瑪麗長我三歲半，我認識她一輩子了，她和住在德州的大哥是我最親的手足，而

cancer.

My sister, Mary Lou was 3 ½ years older than me so I had known her all of my life. She and my eldest brother who had died from a brain aneurysm while living in Texas were my closest siblings. Life was handing out challenges.

After her funeral my wife, Amanda and I drove up to Golden B.C. to volunteer and watch the preparations for the Kṣitigarbha Pavilion. The large granite statue was being shipped from China to the port of Vancouver B.C. and was to be placed on one of the highest spots in the property. It has since been placed in its prestigious location.

Golden B.C. was declared by Master Hua to be the CTTB for Canada in the future. There are few volunteers at Golden, but the transformation is moving ahead. The temple is situated in a valley surrounded by the Canadian Rockies overlooking the Columbia River with the Kicking Horse River adjoining.

We also drove over to Calgary to visit the Avatamsaka Monastery. This was our first visit since we volunteered and participated in making Buddha statues for the new Buddha Hall. The newly remodeled Buddha Hall is very elaborate and is situated in a grand location in downtown Calgary on the banks of the Bow River.

Visiting both Golden and Calgary was truly healing. Something I needed.

My sister's illness and death coupled with my strokes and cancer deeply affected me, much more than I realized. There was no getting back to normal; life had handed out a new normal. Unfortunately, others did not understand that. To them I fortunately looked normal so in their minds everything was normal. My body may have looked the same, but that was far from the truth. Even today when I have tried to explain to others my different outlook on life and death many disagree with me. I understand that they have no idea how I have been affected, but to disagree with me is meaningless. My comment to others telling me that I needed to get back to normal has been, "normal is what caused all this. No thank you."

The reason that I stress monitoring your cancer condition is one day I asked Dr Heng Bing Wang the connection between my strokes and the cancer. He replied the "The cancer caused your strokes as the blood gets thick and sticky."

大哥因腦動脈瘤辭世。生命真是充滿考驗。

姐姐的葬禮結束後，我和妻子阿曼達驅車北上前往加拿大卑斯省金鎮，在金城做志工並參與地藏菩薩像安座的前置作業。這尊大型花崗岩雕像剛從中國運往加拿大溫哥華港，將被安置在金城的一處制高點；一個相當恭敬的地方。

宣公上人預言金城未來將成為加拿大的萬佛城。雖然金城的志工很少，但正在向前邁進。道場坐落在加拿大洛磯山脈環繞的山谷中，俯瞰著哥倫比亞河，毗鄰踢馬河。

我們還驅車前往卡加利參訪華嚴聖寺。這是我們繼上回參與新佛殿造佛像後的第一次來訪。改建後的佛殿非常莊嚴，寺院位於卡加利市中心，在弓河河畔的黃金地段。

造訪金鎮和卡加利，真的很療癒。這正是我需要的。

胞姐患病離世，加上我的中風和癌症，對我的影響遠比我意識到的還要多得多。生活沒有恢復正常，而是進入新的常態。遺憾的是，旁人卻不明白。對他們而言，我看起來很正常，所以在他們眼中，一切都正常。我的外在或許看似相同，但這與事實相差甚遠。即使在今天，當我試圖向別人解釋我對生死的不同看法時，許多人仍不同意我的觀點。我能理解他們不知道我的身心受到怎樣的影響，但反駁我的觀點是沒有意義的。其他人告訴我，我需要回歸正常；我的看法是——正常就是造成這一切的原因。所以不必了，謝謝。

我之所以強調要監測你自身的癌細胞狀況，是因為有一天我向王恆冰醫師請教自己中風與癌症之間的關聯。他回答說：「癌症導致你的中風，因為血液變得黏稠。」是的，我也許不會死於癌症，但中風改變了我的生活。當我被要求負責做一個項目時，一位改變生活的人並不羞於說「不」，因為我的體力大不如前。事實上，這也給了萬佛城的其他住眾參與協助

Yes, I will probably not die from the cancer, but the strokes have been life changers. One of the life changers is not being ashamed to say “no” when asked to do a project as my energy level has taken a big blow. Actually, this gives others in CTTB the opportunity to participate in helping the monastics. Prior to moving out almost without fail whenever I walked across the campus, I would be asked to help on some sort of project, which I was happy to do. I’ve never felt comfortable saying no.

Being a hospice volunteer exposes you to the passing of many people. In 2023, my sister died in May, Dr Vera, founder of Hospice of Ukiah died in June. Ocean Epstein, who with her husband Ron were quite instrumental in us being in CTTB, and Ukiah died on September 6th with DM Hsien, to whom we were quite close, died later that month on the 25th. There is death all around every day and sometimes it seems to be concentrated on us.

I’ve mentioned before that I grew up in cemeteries with a large city one being close to my birth home in Oregon City, it was a playground for us. During my school years almost every weekend, we worked with my father who was a part-time caretaker for a Catholic cemetery. So I have been around death and burials for a large portion of my life. Maybe it was preparation for me to eventually get involved in Hospice care, which I did after moving to CTTB from Malaysia in 2009.

Over the years I’ve had several Hospice clients for different lengths of time. The shortest one was just a one-day visit with the longest being my latest client. We’ve been together for about four years with him now progressing to the point where Hospice put him on hold. He has been under Dr Wang’s care and his cancer is now in remission. He gleefully gave me his ‘Survivor’ banner from The American Cancer Society. I told him that I wanted a shirt that reads, Survivor: Two Strokes and Cancer. My new, current client has had prostate cancer for twenty-seven years.

My new, current Hospice client also has prostate cancer which has metastasized to his skull and he has ended further treatment due to the bad side effects with no gains on his cancer. This is similar to my sister’s experience as she was suffering from ongoing chemotherapy without making any improvement in her cancer. When her treatment ceased, she and the doctor agreed as no progress was made on dealing with the cancer. That was when she called and told me, “I am terminal”. My heart sank. What do you say to someone that you’ve known all your life when surprisingly

僧眾的機會。在我搬到瑜伽市之前，每當我走在萬佛城裡，幾乎總是被要求幫忙，我很樂意支援，也很難開口拒絕。

作為一名安寧關懷志工，會看到許多人過世。在2023年，胞姐在5月辭世，瑜伽市安寧療養院的創辦人維拉博士於6月離世。劉果涵和她的丈夫易果容對我們當初住在萬佛城，以及後來住到瑜伽市，都給予相當多的支持。劉果涵居士在9月6日去世，與我們關係非常緊密的恒賢法師也隨後於當月25日往生。每天都有死別，有時它似乎集中在我們身上。

之前提到過，我在俄勒岡市出生，我家附近有一個大墓園，那是我們兒時的遊樂場。求學期間，幾乎每個週末我們都會幫忙父親工作，他是天主教墓園的兼職管理員。因此我一生的大部分時間都在與死亡和葬禮打交道。也許這都是為我參與臨終關懷做準備。我在2009年從馬來西亞搬到萬佛城後就開始做安寧療護的工作。

多年來，我安寧病房照護過的病患，時間長短不一。最短的只進行過一天的照護，最長的是最近照護的一位病患。這位病患，我們與他合作大約四年了，現在他已經進展到安寧療養院將他擱置的階段。他一直接受王醫師的治療，他的癌症正在緩解中。他興高采烈地將美國癌症協會致贈的「倖存者」旗幟交給我。我告訴他，我想要一件襯衫，上面寫著「倖存者：挺過兩次中風和癌症」。我現在照護的這位是患有前列腺癌27年了。

我目前的照護對象也患有前列腺癌，癌細胞已轉移到他的頭骨，由於嚴重的副作用，他終止更進一步的治療，因為他的病情沒有任何進

being told that?

The care for my cancer has been the 6 weeks of radiation. Treatment for the strokes has been and continues to be physical therapy.

To be placed under Hospice Care your physician must declare that you only have 6 months or less to live. Fortunately, I was never placed under Hospice care. My involvement with Hospice continues to be on the caregiving side, not care-receiving.

Most Hospice patients become more open to expressing their opinions and less concerned about the status of others although not intending to offend anyone. For me, with the strokes and cancer, I felt like it became more obvious how short life is. Impermanence was raising its head. There is no turning back to the normal that others want. There is a new normal.

Hospice of Ukiah was founded by Dr. Vera as a volunteer organization serving those in the final stages of their life. During the training sessions, people being cared for would often be invited to discuss their experiences. It was during one of these round tables talks that one of the men told the new volunteers that, “Your job is to help us die”. That sums it all up.

Helping someone die requires a complete letting go, and a shifting of mindset. What matters to me, the caregiver, means nothing. Everything is about the person going through their transition. There is no arguing. I have been asked by people from CTTB if I tried to convert the clients to become Buddhists. Answers to that is a flat, “no,” as it is necessary to not increase their insecurity or fear. Whatever religion they are, I become. If they ask questions about Buddhism, I answer their questions to the best of my ability but not encouraging them to change.

Regardless of the type of cancer, symptoms like fatigue, loss of appetite, and shortness of breath may indicate that you are nearing the end of your journey. This can be a difficult time with the final stages of cancer or any other terminal illness being distressing for you and your loved ones.

So often a typical greeting is wishing someone to have a long life. My wish for everyone is “May you live as long as you want.” A good goal is to be healthy, healthy, dead. ❀

展。這與我的姐姐的病歷相似，胞姐接受持續性的化療，但癌症沒有任何改善；所以她和醫生達成共識，停止化療，因為在治療癌症方面沒有任何起色。就在那時，她打電話告訴我，「我已經癌末了」。我的心沉了下去。當你認識一輩子的人，出乎意料地告訴你這種事，你會有什麼反應？

要接受安寧醫療，你的醫師必須聲明你只剩下6個月或更短的生命。幸運的是，我從未受過安寧醫療。在安寧醫療中心，我扮演照護員，而不是被照護者。

大多數安寧病患者，會更勇於表達自己的意見，也不太在意他人，儘管他們無心冒犯。對我而言，有了中風和癌症，我更加體會到人生多麼短暫，無常悄然逼近。我無法回到別人所希望的常態，而是進入一個新常態。

瑜伽市安寧療養院是由維拉博士創辦的志工組織，為生命最後階段的人們提供照護。在培訓課程中，被照護者經常受邀分享他們的歷程，在其中一次的座談會，一名男性患者告訴新志工，「你們的工作就是幫助我們死去。」這句話概括全部。

幫助某人往生，需要完全放手、轉變心念。對身為照護者的我而言，甚麼事都不重要；最重要的是，患者正在經歷的過程，這點無庸置疑。有些萬佛城的住眾問我是否嘗試讓照護對象成為佛教徒，答案是否定的，增加他們的不安或恐懼是不必要的。無論他們是什麼信仰，當他們詢問有關佛教的問題，我會盡力答覆，但不鼓勵他們改變。

無論何種類型的癌症，疲勞、食慾不振和呼吸急促等這些症狀，都顯示一個人生命的旅程已接近終點。這段時間相當不容易，癌症末期或是任何疾病末期都會讓人 and 所愛的人感到痛苦。通常，人們會祝願對方長壽。我對每個人的祝願是「壽如你願。」最理想的就是健康、健康、往生（善終）。❀