

Awakening Is Not Apart From This World

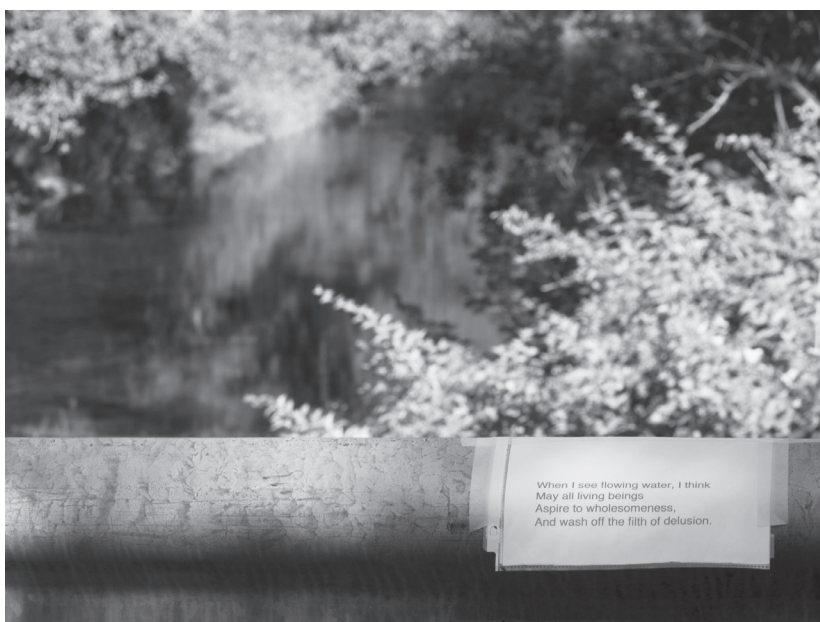
不離世間覺

A Talk by Thao Phi at the Buddha Hall of the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas on April 12, 2024

Chinese Translated by Ying Wu and Janet Lee

費如孝講於2024年4月12日萬佛聖城萬佛殿

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I will share different verses from Chapter 11, Purifying Practices of the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, throughout my talk.

*When I lecture on the Dharma, I vow
May all living beings
Gain limitless eloquence,
And widely proclaim the essentials of Dharma.*

Earlier this week, a Buddhist studies group I am a part of discussed having a daily practice and its purpose. It was emphasized that daily practice is not for what happens after death. Daily practice is a gateway to experiencing reality as it is actually happening right now and to appreciating our

我想跟大家分享《華嚴經》第十一品〈淨行品〉中的幾首偈頌。

若說法時，
當願眾生，
得無盡辯，
廣宣法要。

本週早些時候，我參加的一個佛學研究小組正討論每天作功課及其意義。其中的重點是作功課並非是往生後想得到甚麼好處。作功課是我們觀照現實的一個途徑，因為現實就是當下，讓我們珍惜生命。我想跟各位分

lives. I will share about my current journey to better appreciate my life.

It is worth noting that we encounter death and rebirth more frequently than we are aware of. Death is not something that only happens once with our physical bodies. We go through many deaths and rebirths, sometimes as quick as a moment, other times in different phases of life that we go through. It feels like I've lived several lifetimes since I last spoke in the Buddha hall.

It was about six months ago, at the beginning of October. It was during a time of my life when there was a lot of movement and change happening. I moved out of the apartment where I was living alone. I was being put into a new role as an acting manager at work.

As my new role started, I spontaneously decided to join the DRBA delegation in France for two weeks. This trip was my fourth time in France; I went once in college, and the other three times I've been to France have all been for delegations with DRBA.

*When I see a capital city, I vow
May all living beings
Gather abundant merit and virtue,
And be always joyous and happy at heart.*

DRBA's temple is located in Nanterre, a western suburb of Paris, and twenty minutes away from Paris' city center by train.

There were twelve Sangha members and laypeople that came from the United States. We arrived a few days early to settle in, had a dharma assembly of Guanyin chanting and meditation for eight days, and had a few days to site-see before we returned home. The delegation included many local disciples from France as well neighboring European countries including the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Norway, and Hungary. Disciples even came from as far away as Taiwan, Singapore, and Malaysia. Our DRBA network is extensive, with disciples from all over the world.

Right before the delegation to France, the Buddhist studies group discussed virtues and how they related to Western and Eastern traditions, specifically to Buddhism. We covered virtues such as temperance, courage, patience, respect, and friendship. We examined them on several levels: first, what is the opposite of that virtue? Next, what is the conventional meaning of that virtue? Lastly, what is the highest form of this virtue? What is the pure essence of this virtue?

享自己最近的心路歷程。

我想表達的是，我們面對死亡與重生，比我們意識到的更加頻繁。死亡並非僅是色身死亡。我們（心識）會經歷多次死亡與重生，有時是在剎那間，有時是在生命中不同階段。上回在佛殿結法緣迄今，我感覺自己已經經歷好幾個人生。

那是六個月前，去年十月初的時候。當時我正面臨許多變動和不確定。我剛搬離自己獨居的公寓；同時正在適應一個代理經理的新職位。

在我展開新職務之際，我自發性地參加法總訪問團去法國兩週。這次的行程是我第四次去法國。我大學時曾去過一次，其他三次都是同法總訪問團去。

〈淨行品〉裡有一首偈頌是：

若見王都，
當願眾生，
功德共聚，
心恆喜樂。

法總的法國分支道場位於巴黎西郊的楠泰爾市，距離巴黎市中心大約20分鐘的火車車程。

來自美國的訪問團由十二名僧俗弟子組成，於法會前幾天抵達。我們舉行八天的觀音法會和禪修，在返美前幾天抽空參觀。此次法筵有許多來自法國當地和英國、荷蘭、比利時、盧森堡、挪威、匈牙利等歐洲鄰國的皈依弟子，以及遠從台灣、新加坡、馬來西亞等地前來的居士共襄盛舉，足見法總弟子遍佈世界各地。

在法總訪問團前往法國前夕，佛學研究小組討論甚麼是德行、道德與東西方文化傳統以及與佛教的關係；討論中也涵蓋自我克制、勇氣、忍耐、尊重和友誼這方面的品德。

Even though I was familiar with the people who joined the delegation, I didn't really know them. Most of what we see in someone is just our version of them; it is not who they really are. So, they were like strangers to me, the opposite of friendship.

My first dinner in Paris was with a group I did not know very well. It was a mixture of alumni from our high school and summer camp, and I was meeting someone for the first time. It was a refreshing perspective to be around others my age who were serious about cultivating and doing their best while still living a worldly life.

After a few outings together, I realized that this delegation was a great opportunity to practice the virtue of friendship. Instead of the conventional meaning of friendship with friends being people I knew from a familiar setting or doing a shared activity, I accepted that everyone could be a friend. Suddenly, everyone I didn't know and thought were strangers seemed like friends, too. There was so much goodwill and generosity among everyone I met.

I spent many evenings of the delegation with Developing Virtue School alumni. I am happy to share that the alumni from our high school are doing well professionally, some in graduate school, some close to finishing PhDs, cooking delicious vegan food, and trying to support the Nanterre temple. They are the brightest and kindest people in the world.

After the trip, I realized that being comfortable with uncertainty was a helpful mindset. The more okay I was that I didn't know what was going on or what would happen, the friendlier the universe appeared to me. This was true when I applied it in France and the world I returned to in Ukiah.

About three months ago, my work duties and role shifted again. I became a program manager and oversaw community wellness, prevention services, employee resources, and equity. I am currently managing ten people, and a myriad of organizational and interpersonal issues come up frequently. Sometimes, I am afraid I am not capable of or willing to



我們從幾個層面來討論：首先，每一種道德的反面是甚麼？其次，傳統意思中的那種德行是甚麼？最後，那種德行的最高標準表現為何？這種德行的精華又是甚麼？

儘管此次參加法會的成員我都認識，但我其實不是很了解他們。我覺得，我們都是從自己的角度評判他人，看到的也非全面，因此，他們對我來說是生疏的，是友誼的反面。

抵達巴黎後，第一晚我和一群不太相識的人一起共進晚餐，其中有我們的高中校友，參加過夏令營的學員，有些是我初次見面。和年紀相仿的人在一起，是讓人精神一振的體驗。雖然他們也是俗務纏身，但卻非常精進修行。

幾次共同外出之後，我發覺這次訪問對我而言是拓展友誼的好機會。過去我所認定的友誼，是指在同一環境中熟識或從事相同活動的人。但現在，我接受任何人都能與之為友的想法。突然間，所有我不認識、感覺生疏的人，似乎都成了我的朋友。我所遇到的每個人都非常和善、大方。

在法國期間，有好幾晚我都和培德的校友一起度過。我很開心和大家分享，我們的高中校友們在專業上都表現傑出，有些正在攻讀研究所，有的即將完成博士學位，有些喜歡烹飪純素佳餚，都很盡力護持楠泰爾（法總在法國）的分支道場。在這個

handle the challenges and conflicts that arise.

Whether the external conditions are difficult or going smoothly, my spiritual practice helps me stay solid inside. In particular, using the Purifying Practices verses helps ground me in the present moment and also helps me see that there is always spirituality in the ordinary world. The more I cultivate, the more I find that worldly living can be spiritual. The older I get, the more practical it is for me to treat worldly living as spiritual living.

I moved to Ukiah nearly ten years ago to work for DRBU and be close to CTTB. While I still come to CTTB regularly, I realized the importance of involvement in the local community. I will share some of the work I am currently doing. The County of Mendocino employs me. I work for both Public Health and Behavioral Health and Recovery Services. Public health is how we keep our local population safe from diseases and emergencies, and it is also how we educate people to prevent chronic illness. In addition, Public Health supports new mothers and families, sick children, and children in foster care. Behavioral Health includes services to support mental health and those suffering from substance use disorder.

*When I see a person who is suffering and afflicted, I vow
May all living beings
Use their inherent wisdom
To end dissatisfaction and misery.*

Mendocino County has one of the highest rates of drug overdose in California. What does that mean? People are really suffering here for complex reasons, and they do not have resources to help them heal, so they turn to substances. Part of my role is supporting a team that can provide information and resources to improve the community's health. It is an endless and impossible task to save anyone, but we can meet them where they are.

Access to care is limited in our rural community. I hear many wonderful things about Dr. Hengbing Wang, who is part of CTTB and works as an oncologist at the hospital in Ukiah. He is the perfect example of someone whose family wanted to be closer to CTTB and provides a valuable community resource. I am sure there are more

世界上，他們是非常聰明、善良的一群人。

旅行結束後，我意識到泰然面對生活中的不確定性是一種有益的心態——放寬心去面對無法掌握的未來，世界對我們而言也會更加友善。這不僅適用於我在法國的旅程，也適用於回到瑜伽市後的生活。

大約三個月前，我負責的業務和職位再次有所變動，我成為專案經理，負責管理社區健康、預防措施、人力資源，及提供平等服務。目前我管理十位員工，在組織層面和人際關係上經常出現問題。有時我擔心自己沒辦法處理工作上出現的問題與挑戰。

無論外在條件是逆境或順境，性靈上的修行都幫助我保持內心的堅定。特別是，在〈淨行品〉中的一首偈頌，幫助我關注當下，讓我看到在紅塵俗務中始終有股精神力量在支持著我。我在修行上越精進，越能將塵勞當作佛事。隨著年齡增長，也更能把生活日常視為修行。

我大約在十年前搬到瑜伽市，在法大工作，並親近萬佛聖城。雖然我仍然定期參加聖城的活動，但我意識到協助社區福祉的重要性。以下我將分享我目前負責的一些工作。我受雇於曼第仙諾郡，在公共衛生、身心健康與復健服務部門工作。公共衛生指的是保護當地居民免於疾病侵擾，提供緊急的應變措施；以及預防慢性疾病的衛教。此外，公共衛生部門也為新手媽媽和家庭、患病兒童和寄養兒童提供支援。身心健康包括支持心理健康和藥物濫用患者的服務。

〈淨行品〉裡有一首偈頌是：

見苦惱人，
當願眾生，
獲根本智，
滅除眾苦。

曼第仙諾郡是加州藥物濫用最高的其中一個郡。這意味著什麼？這裡的人們確實因為種種原因而濫用藥物，他們缺乏資源來

people like that in DRBA who want to be closer to the temple and can contribute something the community needs.

I've been a planning commissioner for over a year, and development is slow in Ukiah. During my time so far, I've heard about housing developments, how the homeless shelter is doing, and several businesses such as a bank, carwash, clothing store, and too many cannabis dispensaries. Our town could have more vegetarian restaurants or an Asian grocery store. If you know someone who may be interested in starting healthier businesses, this could be the place for them. There is a lot of room for growth, both in Ukiah and the wider county.

A creative project I recently completed is designing postcards with my photograph for Visit Ukiah, a local tourist welcome center. The purpose of the postcards is to provide people with a way to see Ukiah in a positive light and easily share it with others. One of the postcards is a photo of the CTTB gates with a deer in front of it.

The director took these postcards to an international event, and she said many conversations started because people saw the photo of the temple's gate. There was a lot of discussion about CTTB and the grounds. She has been sharing information about the schools and programs and met someone who sent their child to summer camp. People mentioned wanting to visit CTTB, and she hopes that CTTB can help facilitate these visits when people come to campus.

When someone comes to CTTB or hears about it, it is undeniably a special place. People recognize that CTTB is a bright spot in the community. It is a beacon of light when so many other things are happening in the world, both near and far away, dimming the lights of others.

I am not sharing this information about what's happening locally for us to judge or to be afraid of the world. At CTTB, we have the opportunity to learn, practice, and build a solid inner foundation. I hope we can use the goodness we accumulate here and remember to bring it back into the world.

Awakening is not apart from this world. Thank you for your listening. Amitufo. ❀

幫助他們，因而轉而在藥物上得到寄託。我們有一個提供訊息和資源的團隊來改善社區健康，我的職責之一是負責支援這個團隊。這是一個永無止境也不可能完成的任務，但是我們會在這裡等待前來求助的人們。

在郊區能獲得的照護有限。我聽到許多關於王恒冰醫師的精彩故事，他既是萬佛聖城的一份子，又在瑜伽市醫院擔任腫瘤科醫生。他是全家親近萬佛聖城的完美典範，同時也為社區提供寶貴的資源。我相信法總裡有許多這樣的人，想親近道場，同時也能為社區提供必要的協助。

我擔任本郡規畫委員有一年多，瑜伽市的開發進展遲緩。在工作期間，我參加聽證會，了解住宅開發、遊民收容所的情況以及銀行、洗車場、服裝店和太多的大麻藥局等的發展計劃。瑜伽市可以有更多的素食餐廳或一家亞洲食品雜貨店。如果您認識的人對拓展當地經濟有興趣，歡迎與我們聯繫。瑜伽市和整個郡都有很大的發展空間。

我最近完成的一個專案，用自己的攝影作品為瑜伽市遊客中心設計明信片。明信片的目的是讓人們以更正面的態度看瑜伽市，且易於與他人分享。其中一張明信片是萬佛聖城的山門，門前有一隻鹿。

（遊客中心）負責人帶著這些明信片去參加一個國際活動。她說，有許多對話都是因為人們看到山門的照片而開始的。有關萬佛聖城和相關場地的討論很多。她一直在分享有關學校和課程活動的訊息，還巧遇一位送孩子來萬佛聖城夏令營的人。有人表示想參觀萬佛聖城，她希望我們能夠在訪客參觀時提供導覽支援。

當有人來過或者聽過萬佛聖城時，不容否認，這會是一個無以倫比的地方。人們意識到萬佛聖城是當地社區的一大亮點。世界（無論遠近）有許多事件正在發生，萬佛聖城就像一盞明燈，讓其他（負面）光源變得黯淡。

以上所分享的本地社區訊息，並非要各位評判或擔心外在的世界。在萬佛聖城，我們有機會學習、修行並打下堅實的內在基礎。我希望我們能夠利用在這裡累積的善根，回饋給社會。開悟不捨塵境，感謝您的聆聽，阿彌陀佛。 ❀