



The Night of the Ullambana

盂蘭盆之夜

A Talk Given by Jose Vega at the Buddha Hall of the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas on August 30, 2023

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何塞·維加2023年8月30日講於萬佛聖城佛殿

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My job here is teaching at boys' and girls' schools. I teach environmental science and biology and care for the boys' dorm at night, so I have a room there. I want to share something that happened to me last night.

Last night, I was lying on my bed in my room, thinking about what to talk about tomorrow. I was considering how to connect it to Ullambana and how Ullambana is linked to our ancestors—our grandparents, parents, and those who are no longer with us. I fell asleep while thinking about this.

I woke up just a few minutes later, possibly because a student made some noise. When I woke up, I saw an obvious figure sitting on the bed to my left, looking straight at me. I was so shocked that I fell out of bed and bruised my knee. I had never fallen out of bed before.

The figure was a very older man. He reminded me of the images of the Arhats that look ancient. He seemed Indian, perhaps from Afghanistan or the mountains, with a rough appearance. His clothes were like rags, worn out and reddish. What struck me most was his angry, upset face staring at me. There was no conversation; I just saw him and fell out of bed. The feeling was as if he was asking, “When are you going to wake up?” or “Why is it taking you so long to do something?” This message lingered with me all day.

I went out during the full moon. The full moon around the time of Ullambana is incredibly powerful, especially in the summer. It connects us with things that are hard to access at other times of the year, like our unconscious mind and our connection to the past and future.

I wondered if this vision was a coincidence, related to my talk, the full moon, or the Ullambana. Was it an ancient

我在這裡（萬佛城）的工作是在男校和女校任教，教授環境科學和生物學，同時負責看管夜間男校宿舍，因此我在宿舍裡有個房間。我想和各位分享昨晚在宿舍親身經歷的事。

昨晚，我躺在房間的床上，想著明天結法緣的內容。我思索著如何讓題目和盂蘭盆節連結起來，以及盂蘭盆節如何與我們的祖先——我們的祖父母、父母和那些已故的親人接軌。想著想著，我睡著了。

幾分鐘後，我醒了，也許是因為有學生吵鬧。當我張開眼睛，看到一個非常清晰的身影坐在床的左邊，凝視著我。我驚嚇過度，從床上跌了下來，膝蓋都瘀青了。我從沒跌下床的經驗。

那個身影是一位非常年長的男子。他讓我聯想到那些久遠前的羅漢。他看起來像是印度人，或是來自阿富汗或山區的人，外表粗獷。他的衣衫襤褸，還有點泛紅。最讓我印象深刻的是他用憤怒、不安的表情盯著我看。還沒來得及開口，我一看到他嚇得跌下床。他的表情就像在問我：「你甚麼時候醒悟？」或者「為何蹉跎那麼久才要有所為？」這種感覺縈繞我心頭一整天。

（清醒後）我走到外頭，看到滿月。盂蘭盆節期間的滿月有著非常強大的能量，尤其是在夏天。它將我們與平常難以觸及的事物聯繫起來，例如我們的潛意

ancestor trying to communicate with me? I felt there was something there. This led me to another story I wanted to share before this vision happened.

I'm from Spain and was about to move to America after finishing my PhD. One day, I had a dream where I was packing my luggage. In the dream, I found something in my luggage, wrapped in plastic and taking up much space. When I unwrapped it, I discovered it was my grandmother, who had been dead for many years. The shock woke me up.

My maternal grandmother moved in with us in the city after she was widowed. She never adjusted to city life, and our relationship was bad. We argued every day. When I moved away for my PhD, we lost contact, and I didn't attend her funeral. After the dream, I realized I had deep pain about our relationship. I asked for her forgiveness and cried, feeling a connection and a sense of lightness that allowed me to move to America without that burden.

Two years ago, while teaching biology, I learned about genetics, especially epigenetics. This science shows that our genes transfer not just physical traits but also emotions from our ancestors. For example, if your grandfather fought in a war, you might inherit his stress and fear through your genes. This science aligns with the idea that the traumas of our ancestors are passed down to us.

This reminds me of the *Earth Store Sutra*. In a previous life, he (Earth Store Bodhisattva) was a woman whose mother had died. Grieving and worried that her mother had fallen into the hells, she prayed to the Buddha of that time (Enlightenment-Flower Samadhi Self-Mastery King Tathāgata) and had a vision that her mother had been reborn in the heavens due to her sincerity. This sutra may reflect the wisdom that science is only beginning to understand: our connection to our ancestors' emotions and the need to transform and send merit back to them.

We help our ancestors, and they help us. Our minds are not limited to this lifetime; they connect with all our ancestors. Science says we all come from a single being, the Last Universal Common Ancestor (LUCA). As Mahayana Buddhism teaches, we need to transfer merit to all living beings, crossing over all of them. ❀

識以及我們與過去和未來的聯結。

我想知道（昨晚）自己看到的景像是否單純是一個巧合？還是與我的今天結法緣的話題、滿月以及盂蘭盆節有關？又或者是先人想傳遞訊息給我？我不清楚，但我感覺其中肯定有文章。這讓我想到事發之前的另一件事。

我來自西班牙，博士畢業後準備移居美國。某天，我夢見自己在收拾行李。夢中，我發現有個用塑膠包裹的物品，佔據大部分的行李空間。我打開它，發現那是我去世多年的外婆。讓我從夢中驚醒。

外婆守寡後，搬到城裡和我們一塊住。她始終無法適應都市的生活，我們的關係也很糟。每天，我們都會起爭執。離家攻讀博士學位期間，我們斷了聯繫，我甚至沒有參加她的葬禮。因為這個夢，我意識到自己對這段關係有很深的內疚。我祈求外婆的原諒，痛哭一場，心裡感受到與外婆的連結和一股輕鬆感，讓我得以無罣礙地遠赴美國。

兩年前，在教生物學時，我學習了遺傳學，特別是表觀遺傳學這方面的知識。這門科學研究顯示，我們的基因不僅轉移祖先的身體特徵，也轉移他們的情感。比方，如果你的祖父曾上過戰場，可能會藉由基因將他對戰爭的壓力和恐懼傳承給你。這門科學佐證先人會將自身創傷傳遞給後代子孫的這個看法。

這讓我想到《地藏經》。（地藏菩薩）前生是一位優婆夷，母親去世後，她非常悲傷，並且擔心母親會墮入地獄，便祈求當時的佛（覺華定自在王如來）。後來，見到母親因為自己的誠心而轉生天界。這部經文揭示科學才刚开始理解的智慧——我們與祖先的情感聯結，以及需要做功德迴向給先人。

我們迴向給自己的祖先，他們也會保佑我們。我們的心量不應侷限在這一生；而是與我們所有的先人有所連結。科學研究顯示，所有的生命都源自單一個體，又稱「最後共同祖先」（LUCA）。因此我們需要將功德迴向給一切眾生，要救度眾生，這也是大乘佛教所教導的。❀