

# Challenges and Collaboration at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas

## 萬佛城的挑戰與合作

A Talk by John Scroggs at the Buddha Hall of the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas on August 23, 2024

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My name is John Scroggs. I have been working on the buildings and grounds at CTTB for quite a long time.

I haven't been in this Buddha Hall for three years. Some events transpired between today and the past, but I'm glad to be back and thankful that I'm still able to be here.

One of the reasons that I want to speak is that over the last few years, more and more people have been coming to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas whom I don't recognize. I don't know who they are, and they also don't know who I am. It makes for a difficult sometimes bumpy road to accomplishing some of the work we are involved in.

This world of *Samsara* is always difficult and fraught with danger, as you probably heard a little of about in tonight's

我叫果露，在萬佛聖城建設維修部工作了很長一段時間。

這是我三年來第一次回佛殿。在這段時間發生了一些事情，但我很高興能回來，也很感恩我有這個機會重回佛殿。

今天想要跟各位分享一些最近的想法，因為我有注意到，就是在過去幾年有比較多的人來到聖城，我都不知道他們是誰，他們也不知道我是誰，所以這使得要完成我們建設部的一些工程而言，這就有了困難。

在這個娑婆世界，它總是充滿困難和危險，就像今晚上人在講經中提到的那樣。我不認為事情會變得容易，很多事情越來越複

sutra lecture. I don't think it has been getting any easier. Most everything in the world of *Samsara* seems to be becoming more complicated and difficult to accomplish. Making mistakes has been easier than it was in the past.

Sometimes, problems have a humorous aspect. This recent problem with the IT system is an example of that. On the day of this particular problem, we were trying to have a meeting, and only some were there. We were waiting for the parties who needed to be present to have our conversation. Finally, the last person walked in the door and sat down so that the meeting could begin. At that point, the internet went kaput.

We've had a sort of good and bad relationship with the internet regarding practice and cultivation at CTTB. It's a very welcomed tool, but it has always been fraught with hazards and danger. Often it is looked upon by many people who want to cultivate seriously not as a blessing but as a distraction. When the internet went out, I had the thought, and I'm sure other people had the thought, "Oh, this is a sign." (We could concentrate on cultivation if there is no internet.)

Anyway, we went down to see what was going on, and we realized that we had a serious problem. Not only was it a serious problem with the internet, but we couldn't have our meetings and the main internet person had just taken off for a month vacation and another important person was down in Los Angeles. Thus, it was up to us, really old guys, to try to get together and figure out what could be done. It was one of these problems that initially caused a lot of difficulties. Still, it was actually probably a very good thing for the community because we have all of these different disparate groups at CTTB, and usually, the work that we do is fairly compartmentalized, and it only involves maybe the boys' school, the university, TM or maybe Joyous Giving House. Yet, it never really affects the whole community. But this particular problem seems to have concerned everyone. Therefore, we had to draw on everyone, the whole community, to try and solve this problem—so we did.

We were successful. We had almost all of this work done before our main IT guy came back. We still have a little work to do, but we basically have most of it done, and the system that we have now is, in my opinion, better than we had before.

It's more reliable, and it will give us a plan B for other problems that may arise in the future. So now we can not only conduct all of our Zoom meetings but also do all of the

雜困難，犯錯變得比從前容易多了。

有時候，問題中也有幽默的一面。最近網絡系統出現的問題就是一個例子。我記得在聖城網絡事故的那一天，我們本來是有個會議要召開，人逐漸到來，可以聊一些計劃。就在最後一個人進了門並坐下，會議要開始了，這時候，網絡就全面癱瘓了。

以萬佛聖城這個修行地方而言，我們與網絡的關係既好又壞。雖然網絡是非常受歡迎的工具，但它也伴隨著許多風險和危險，很多想要用功修行的人認為使用網絡令人分心，而不是福報。所以當我們的網絡系統全面斷訊之後，我有這樣的想法，我相信其他人也有這樣的想法：「哦，這是一個徵兆（沒有網路了，大家就可以專心修行）。」

我們下樓查看發生了什麼事，才意識到問題很嚴重。這不僅是網絡的嚴重問題，我們也無法召開會議，而主要負責網絡人員剛好休假一個月，另一位重要骨幹人員也在洛杉磯。因此，這項工作落到了我們這些老年人肩上，我們不得不聚在一起，想辦法解決問題。

雖然在最初是充斥著許多的難題，但這實際上對城內社區來說是件好事，因為我們在聖城裏邊有許多不同的單位。以前我們所處理的維修工作都相當分散且規模小，它可能只涉及到男校、女校、大學、如來寺或喜捨院，但從來沒有真正涉及整個社區面。然而這次網絡事故所帶來的問題，似乎也引起了每個人的關注。所以，我們必須動員整個社區內的每一個人，大家聚在一起思考，怎麼把這個問題給解決——我們就這麼做了。

我們成功了。在我們的網絡專家回來之前，我們幾乎完成了所有的工作。雖然還有一些工作要做，但基本上已經完成大部分，而且我們現在的這個網絡系統，在我看來，比以前的更好。

這個系統更加可靠，並且為未來可能出現的其他問題提供了一個備選方案。現

bookkeeping work and information gathering that we need to continue our businesses here. We also have the opportunity to once again enter the world of information overload.

I'm sure that no one here indulges in that way except probably me. But from my exposure to what's going on in the world, it seems to me that we are in a very dangerous time right now. This theme has been prominent in Master Hua's teaching and activities all of his life.

When the Master came to this country, I knew that we were almost ready to blow up the world because of the Cuban Missile Crisis. At that time, he went on a thirty-five-day fast and concentrated solitude prayer to try and alleviate that situation. Due to his compassion and sacrifice, we're here today, but I think we are probably in a more dangerous time than that. After that Cuban Missile Crisis event, we, the disciples of Shifu at the Sino-American Buddhist Association at the time, did many things with world peace as the motivation and concept for activity. Dharma Master Heng Ju and Heng Yo went on a three-steps-one-bow pilgrimage up to Seattle for world peace. In 1973, they had a gathering in Seattle for world peace.

I think that everything that we were doing at that time was probably because of the condition of the world and also because most of the people were involved in one way or another with the Vietnam War crisis. Peace and the pursuit of peace in the world were themes in the Buddhist Association from early on. From the very beginning until the present day, all of the work of the Sino-American Buddhist Association, the Dharma Realm Buddhist Association, DRBU, the monks, the nuns, the translators, and the teachers, all their work has gone on to promote peace to benefit the world.

However, I was not there for most of that. Although I did meet the Master in 1969, I didn't return to Gold Mountain until late 1974 or early 1975. Someone here can probably correct me on my timing.

I'm not telling you this to try and gain some undeserved deference or respect from you or the people I work with. I'm probably the least accomplished and the least knowledgeable of any of the members of the Association during this whole period. I spent six years playing around in the East Bay over in Berkeley before I came back.

I'm just saying that I don't presume to have the merit and virtue of lecturing on the Dharma from this platform, but I

在我們不僅能夠順利進行所有的Zoom線上會議，還可以處理會計和資料蒐集等業務，支持我們在這裏繼續工作。我們也再次有機會進入資訊超載的世界。

我相信在座沒有人會沉迷於這樣的狀態，除了我自己。但從我的接觸就世界上正在發生的事件而言，在我看來，我們現在正處在一個非常危險的時刻。我認為這也是上人一生的教導和他的行誼之中所突出的主題。

上人到美國那時候，因為古巴飛彈危機一觸即發之勢，我知道我們即將準備好要打一場全面戰爭。當時（1962年），上人進行了為期35天（9月16日至10月20日）的絕食、打坐，以期結束危機。由於上人的慈悲與犧牲，所以我們今天能在這裏，但我認為我們正處於一個比當年更危險的時刻。那次古巴飛彈危機事件消散之後，當時我們「中美佛教會(SABA)」(法界佛教總會前身)的弟子們，做了很多以世界和平為主題的活動。恒具法師和恒由法師，進行了「三步一拜」的朝聖之旅（1973年10月16日至1974年8月17日），為世界和平一路從三藩市拜到西雅圖。1974年（7月20日），上人為他們在西雅圖舉行了一次世界和平的聚會。

我認為，我們當時所做的一切，很大程度上是由於當前世界狀況，也因為大多數人或多或少都捲入了越南戰爭的危機。從一開始到現在，和平與祈求世界和平一直是我們佛教會的主題；從中美佛教會成立之初，到法界佛教總會、法大、僧眾、尼眾、翻譯人員和教師，他們的所有工作都是為了促進和平，利益世界。

不過，我想提的是，這麼多活動我多數都不在場。儘管我在1969年就遇見上人，但我是直到1974年底或1975年初才回到金山寺，在座有人或可更正我所說的時間點。

我告訴你們這些，不是為了從你們或同我一起工作的人那裏，獲得一些不必要的尊重或敬仰。在那段時間裏，我可能是總會所有成員中成就最少、知識最淺的那一個。在我回來金山寺之前，我在東灣的柏克萊浪費了六年光陰。

have been involved for a long time in increasingly difficult work here. I came across an analogy, a metaphor, that I thought was appropriate, and I want to pass it on to you. Hopefully, this might help us in our future work.

### Who's shaking the jar?

When I first heard this story, it was presented as something that scientists had devised and they were conducting this experiment. Essentially, they took a jar, put it on the table, and filled it with red and black ants. They observed their behavior. They were perfectly peaceful, and didn't disturb each other.

They went about whatever their business might have been in that jar on the table, and then someone took the jar, picked it up, and shook it. When they shook the jar, the red and black ants suddenly started fighting, trying to kill each other. Anyway, I traced this story back, and it didn't originate with these scientists.

As far as I can tell, it actually derives from Mark Twain. Mark Twain commented, "When things start going wrong, look at who's shaking the jar. Don't try to blame each other."

So, that's the principle. I think it's a very important principle. Our inclination is that if you're a red ant, you want to blame the black ants for something you don't understand and vice versa.

In some of these experiments, they put beetles into the mix, but whatever it was, different species of insects got angry and went to battle with each other when their environment was disturbed without looking around and being able to understand that something else was going on. Some people, things, principalities, and powers in the Christian tradition were shaking the jar, causing this disruption. If you want to solve the problem, you're not going to solve it by fighting each other.

It would help if you looked at the bigger picture. In our tradition, Master Hua's teachings refer to these principalities and powers as demons that would very much like to see the world destroyed, but they are unable to do so as long as someone living in this world is able to recite the Śūraṅgama Mantra. So, this is our practice, and I think we need to continue this to save the world from all of these hazards and dangers at this time. ❀

我只是想說，我並不認為自己有什麼功德在這個台上結法緣，但這些年來我一直參與一些越來越困難的工作。我想起一個我認為非常合適的類比或隱喻，想與大家分享，希望這能對我們今後的工作有所幫助。

### 誰在搖晃罐子？

當我第一次聽到這個故事時，它被作為科學家進行的一個實驗來介紹的。本質上，他們拿了一個（玻璃）罐子放在桌子上，然後往罐子裏放滿了紅螞蟻和黑螞蟻（各100隻）。他們觀察到這些螞蟻的行為，螞蟻彼此相安無事，互不打擾。

這些螞蟻在罐子裏各自忙碌，和平共處。然後，有人拿起罐子，猛搖了一下。當罐子被用力搖晃後，紅螞蟻和黑螞蟻就突然開始互相攻擊，互相殘殺。後來我追溯這個故事，發現它並不是由這些科學家創造的。

據我所知，這個故事其實源自馬克吐溫。馬克吐溫曾說過：「當事情開始出問題時，看看是誰在搖晃罐子。不要相互指責。」

所以，這就是原則。我認為這是一個非常重要的原則。我們的傾向是，如果你是一隻紅螞蟻，你會想把你不理解的事情歸咎於黑螞蟻，反之亦然。

在一些實驗中，還加入了甲蟲等其他昆蟲。但無論是什麼物種，當牠們的環境被打亂時，便會彼此憤怒並互相攻擊，而沒有意識到環境正在發生其他事情。在基督教文化中，一些人、一些事、一些權勢者（principalities and powers，這詞組是來自聖經，指撒旦所掌控的權勢）正在「搖晃罐子」，造成混亂。如果你想解決問題，通過互相鬥爭是無法解決的。

你需要著眼大局。在我們的文化中，上人教導中提到的這些「權勢者」被稱為魔，他們想看到世界被毀滅，但只要世上還有人能夠持念〈楞嚴咒〉，魔王就無法得逞。所以，這就是我們要的行持，我認為我們需要持續這樣去行持，以拯救世界免於當前的種種危機和危險。 ❀