



# Remembering an Inspirational Life: Former Dharma Master Heng Shou

## 勵志人生：緬懷前恒守法師

By Richard Josephson

Chinese Translated by Janet Lee

果航居士文

李采真 中譯

I met Heng Shou in 1972 at Gold Mountain Monastery in San Francisco. This was about three years after he met Master Hsuan Hua at Waverly Place. Our friendship and communication continued as both our lives took many twists and turns. In some ways our friendship served as a rudder of support for both of us and is one of the reasons our friendship remained constant for fifty years.

We shared with each other our new insights resulting from our dharma study and meditation. This was always very stimulating for us, as our paths were very different, at least in terms of study. Heng Shou was a visionary and relied on the *Avatamsaka* for daily study, whereas I preferred logic, linguistics, and the Madhyamika/Nagarjuna tradition. In terms of meditation, we were also different. Fred relied on the Great Compassion Mantra, whereas I preferred investigating *Hua Tou* (*Chan Topic*) technique and reasoning and used the Shurangama mantra only as supporting practice.

Fred Klarer (former Heng Shou) left this world on May 15, 2025, and was cremated on May 19. He had generally been in good health but suffered from Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy, a rare neurological disease that affects the nervous system. The disease left him handicapped in both legs for decades, but it rapidly advanced one evening recently. He awoke one night unable to move his body, yet was fully cognizant. His wife, Diane, immediately called emergency services, and Fred was taken to the hospital. After two months in the ICU and therapy, Fred left this world.

1972年，我在舊金山的金山寺結識前恒守法師。那是他在天后廟街（三藩市佛教講堂）遇到宣公上人的三年後。儘管我們各自的人生路都不平坦，但我們一直保持聯繫，友誼從未間斷。在某種程度上，這份情誼成為彼此的舵，相互支持，也是我們友情能維持五十年的原因之一。

我們彼此分享在修學佛法和禪修中所得到的新體悟。這種交流令我們十分振奮，因為我們的修學路徑截然不同。恒守是相當有遠見的修行人，以《華嚴經》做為他的日課。而我較偏向邏輯、語言學和龍樹菩薩的中觀。在禪修方面，我們也有所不同。弗雷德（前恒守法師）主要修持〈大悲咒〉，而我則偏好參話頭的方法和理觀，並將〈楞嚴咒〉作為輔助修持。

弗雷德·克拉勒（前恒守法師）於2025年5月15日捨報，並於5月19日在與妻子黛安定居地舉行火化。弗雷德的健康狀況良好，但患有「慢性脫髓鞘性神經炎」（CIDP）。這是一種罕見的神經系統疾病，會損害神經系統，他的雙腿因此殘疾數十年。最近某個晚上，病情迅速惡化。他夜裏醒來，身體無法動彈，但意識清醒。黛安立即撥打緊急求救電話，弗雷德被送往醫院。歷經兩個月的加護病房（ICU）照護，病情幾乎毫無起色，最終弗雷德離開人世。

Fred was already a bhikshu when I arrived at Gold Mountain as a novice. Born on April 13, 1948, he was two years younger than I. We became friends mostly through our long walks after lunch through the streets of San Francisco. It was through these conversations that I learned directly from Fred of his remarkable experiences in samadhi. His deep meditation skills began to develop upon meeting Master Hsuan Hua. They met at Waverly Place on the suggestion of his brother, Heng Jing (Steve Klarer), who had arrived at the feet of the Master one year prior.

The two brothers both had meditation skills, but only Fred maintained his samadhi skill and continued to develop spiritual abilities throughout his life. Not only did Fred maintain a daily practice, but he also kept it even while pursuing a law degree at Harvard University, his first undertaking after seven years of monastic life.

However, practicing law was destined to conflict with Fred's morals. He found himself rich but in a hospital with life-threatening bleeding ulcers. He vowed that if his health returned, he would quit Wall Street and do something to benefit humanity.

Fred later started a new company: Multi-Media Associates. Fred mastered Macromedia, an advanced programming language that powers much of the animation we see. Using his new programming skills, he developed an interactive environmental-protection game. The educational game was purchased by New York's Long Island Power and installed in kiosks throughout New York. He also developed educational tools for children on environmental learning.

After several years developing educational software, Fred began a new enterprise to earn a living within the domain of "Right Livelihood." During a dinner one evening, Fred and his wife, Diane Kramer, a child psychologist, noticed how often individuals who divorce seem to harbor animosity towards one another. They discussed the fact for several days. They considered the idea of putting Fred's legal abilities and Diane's education as a psychologist together.

They formed a new company whose sole aim was to counsel people during their divorce, enabling them to go their separate ways with love in their hearts. They never took sides and never interfered with divorce proceedings or facilitated them. This unique idea, combined with their credentials and abilities,

我在金山作沙彌時，弗雷德已經成為比丘。他出生於1948年4月13日，比我小兩歲。我們經常午齋後在舊金山的街道上散步，也因此結為好友。我們邊走邊聊，弗雷德向我分享他打坐入定的體驗。他跟隨上人學習打坐。他是在哥哥前恒靜法師（史蒂夫·克拉勒）的建議下，在天后廟街拜會上人。他的哥哥早在一年前就在上人座下學習。

兄弟倆在禪修上都相當有心得，但只有弗雷德終其一生持續用功，並維持禪定功夫。他不僅將打坐當日課，即便在結束七年僧侶生活進入哈佛大學攻讀法律學位，也從未中斷。

但是，律師這份工作與弗雷德的道德觀相違背。他擁有財富，卻因出血性潰瘍而險些喪命。他在病榻上發願：如果自己得以康復，便辭去華爾街的工作，投身做有益眾生的事。

他成立一家新公司——多媒體協會，主要運用巨集媒體，這是我們觀看的動畫影片中所使用的高階程式語言。運用這項技術，他開發一款互動式環保教育遊戲，該遊戲後來被紐約長島電力公司採購，並安裝於紐約的互動式多媒體資訊站。他還為兒童研發環境學習工具。

在開發教育軟體幾年後，弗雷德投入新產業，希望工作能以「正命」為準則。他的妻子黛安是一名兒童心理學家。某個晚間，他們觀察到離婚的人往往相互怨懟。連日討論後，兩人萌生將弗雷德的法律專長與黛安娜的心理學背景結合的想法。

他們成立一家新公司，為經歷婚變的人提供調解，幫助他們保持正念。他們不介入、也不協助客戶的離婚訴訟。這一獨特想法，加上他們的專業背景與能力，使得這家公司大受好評。這也是弗雷德辭世之前與黛安一起以正命為理念所從事的工作。他

ensured that their divorce mediation company became a great success. That was the livelihood Fred would pursue with Diane until the end of his life. In our conversations, he often said that bringing an end to conflict between couples was rewarding and supported his daily dharma practice.

Throughout Fred's professional life, we would have regular conversations as if nothing had changed since we walked the San Francisco streets trading our dharma notes. Our conversations revealed to me that my friend's involvement with the practical necessity of earning his livelihood did not in any way hamper his spiritual life. He viewed it as a dharma activity and approached it that way. Our conversations revealed to me that his occupational activities were auxiliary supports to his meditation, much as my family was mine. We seldom discussed our personal lives, except for brief inquiries, as our conversations always turned towards dhyana and samadhi.

Many people are not aware of how profound Fred's spiritual experiences were. For example, there was a period of several weeks at Gold Mountain when Fred would go up on our third-story roof every evening after ceremonies. He would sit directly above the Masters room and meditate while the Master was doing the same in his room. During our walks, Fred talked about these journeys and the sounds that the heavenly bodies emitted, which surprisingly impressed Fred more than the visual experience.

Many at Gold Mountain were aware of Fred's meditation abilities. Fred would often sit in the office and inform us that brick walls did not affect his vision. Another indication of his meditative skill was his recollection of past lives. When Fred recollected being a bhikshuni in Shakyamuni Buddha's assembly, the Master certified it as fact. Fred also spoke to me about that experience.

On one occasion, Diane expressed her doubts about the truth of reincarnation and challenged Fred's belief in it. Fred replied, "Diane, I don't believe in reincarnation, I know it through direct experience." That is Fred, and I loved him for that. He always spoke from experience. I could keep pace with him in our philosophical debates, but as for spiritual experiences, Fred ruled. We were both strong in very different ways.

Fred's love of dharma always radiated from him and never failed to shine. He never missed a day practicing the dharma. In fact, he told me that he had to reduce his work time to make more room for study and meditation. He became wealthy none the less for that decision. This brings to mind a question put to the Master.

經常對我說，能夠化解夫妻之間的衝突讓他感到安慰，這股力量也支持著他的日常修行。

弗雷德執業期間，我們定期保持聯繫，就像昔日在舊金山街道上分享修學心得般，一如既往。透過這些交流，我發現朋友雖然為了生計需要工作，但卻沒有障礙他的道業。他將工作（塵勞）視為修行（佛事）。他以工作來輔助禪修，就像我把家庭生活當成助緣。除了簡短的問候，我們很少談論私生活，我們的話題總是圍繞在禪修討論上。

很多人不曉得弗雷德的禪定功夫有多深。以前在金山寺，有好幾個禮拜，他會在每天晚課後到三樓的屋頂上打坐，位置就在上人房間的上方。而當時，上人也正好在房裏打坐。我們一起散步時，弗雷德會談起入定的心得和聽見諸天所發出的聲響，這些感受給他的衝擊遠大於視覺體驗。

金山寺有許多人人都知道弗雷德打坐很有心得。他常在辦公室值勤時練習打坐。金山寺中許多人都知道弗雷德具神通力，他坐在辦公室中，而磚牆無法阻擋他的視線。他還有憶念過去世的能力。當他回憶起自己在釋迦牟尼佛座下為比丘尼時，上人確認那確實是真實的往昔宿命。他也曾將那段經歷告訴我。

有一次，黛安對輪迴的真實性表示懷疑，質疑他對此的信念。弗雷德回答說：「黛安，我不是『相信』有輪迴，而是『知道』有輪迴。」這就是弗雷德，總是直白說出自身體驗，我非常欣賞。我們在哲學的辯論上可能平分秋色，但是禪修部分，弗雷德獨擅勝場。我們彼此各有所長。

The question was: “How can I make my livelihood and practice the dharma?” The Master replied, “Put the Dharma first, and the money will follow.”

After Fred’s monastic life, Fred received teachings for over a decade from a Tibetan master, Namkai Norbu. He and his wife attended those teachings several times a year in New York and also participated in several retreats. The organization became aware of Fred’s samadhi power and sutra learning derived from study. They invited Fred to be part of the “inner circle” of the organization. When I visited Fred in New York he and Diane took me to a four-day teaching. It was at the teaching that I learned that Fred had never met Namakai Norbu. I was surprised and asked him why. Fred replied, “I need no other teacher but Shifu and although many opportunities were presented to me to meet Namkai Norbu and join the inner-circle I have declined.”

There were many instances when Fred and the Master were together. One time the Master told Fred he wanted to show him something and asked Fred to drive him. They arrived at a garage and Fred wondered what it might be. Fred opened the garage door, and there was a big wooden table that looked like it was as sturdy as an elephant. The Master boasted that he had built it all by himself and asked Fred over and over, “Isn’t it the strongest most perfect table you have ever seen?” Fred said the Master was beaming with pride as he showed off its many qualities.

Once while searching for land with two other bhikshus, they stopped for lunch. There was a pond there and the two bhikshus started skipping stones, but Fred began eating immediately. The Master said to Fred, “Why don’t you go skip stones with the others?” Fred replied, “I know what is important.” The Master laughed and said over and over again, “Heng Shou knows what is important.” For years after that the Master often repeated those words whenever he saw Heng Shou.

His life was an important inspiration to me and many others as well and I hope it is for the readers of this reflection. May we meet in Sukhavati. ❀

弗雷德總是展現他對佛法的熱愛，未曾削減。他不曾中斷日課。實際上，他甚至減少工作，以騰出更多的時間學習和打坐。即便如此，他的生活依然富足。這使我想起有人問過上人：「如何才能兼顧生計與修行？」上人回答說：「把佛法擺在首位，錢自然隨之而來。」

離開僧團後，弗雷德跟隨藏傳法師南開諾布仁波切學習十餘年。他和妻子每年多次前往紐約參加法會和閉關。該組織很快就注意到他的禪修功夫和佛學涵養，邀請他成為核心成員。有次我去紐約拜訪弗雷德，他和黛安帶我去參加為期四天的法會，那時我才發現弗雷德從未見過過南開諾布仁波切。我很驚訝，問他原因，他告訴我說：「唯有上人是我的老師，我不需其他老師。儘管我有多次機會拜見南開諾布仁波切，和受邀加入核心小組，我一概回絕。」

他回憶和上人相處的點點滴滴。有一回上人跟他說，想給他看點東西，要求弗雷德去開車。他們到了車庫，弗雷德不明所以。當他打開車庫門，看見一張碩大的木桌，看起來跟象一樣厚實。上人自豪地跟他說，這是他親手做的，還不斷問他：「這是不是你見過最棒的桌子？」弗雷德說，當時上人一臉自豪，不斷向他展示這張桌子的各種優點。

有一次，上人帶著他和另外兩位比丘（恒謙、恒授）外出尋找聖地，中午他們停下來休息。附近那個池塘，兩位比丘開始玩起水漂，但弗雷德逕自開始吃午餐。上人問他：「為什麼不跟其他人一起打水漂？」他說：「我知道什麼才重要。」上人哈哈大笑，不斷重複說道：「恒守知道什麼才是要緊的。」此後多年，每當上人看到他，就常常重複這句話。

弗雷德的人生給予我和許多人相當大的鼓舞，也感動了許多他人。願這篇追思文字也能啟發讀者。願我們於極樂世界再相會。 ❀