

# Buddhist Monastics' Compassion

## 沙門的慈悲

A Dharma Talk by Dharma Master Heng Shun at the Buddha Hall of the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas on October 21, 2024

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亦農 中譯



Old Gold Mountain Monastery on 15th Street in San Francisco.

三藩市15街的舊金山寺

I have literally hundreds of stories of the Master's compassion. I was very fortunate to have spent twenty-one years with the Master and to have been with him quite a lot. So, I've seen many examples of how he helped people in his daily life. The way he taught all of us is just incredible. I think the Master exemplifies the great compassion and kindness of Guanyin Bodhisattva.

### Giving a Hand to Those in Need

My first story took place at Old Gold Mountain Monastery on 15th Street in San Francisco. When I first came back from Thailand in 1974, we lived at Gold Mountain Monastery on 15th Street. We were already at that location for three years

有關上人的慈悲，我親歷的就不下數百則。能追隨上人21年並常侍左右，我深感榮幸。因此，在日常生活中，我見證了無數上人幫助眾生的實例。他對我們的教導，實在不可思議——在我眼中，上人正是觀世音菩薩大慈大悲精神的完美體現。

### 向需要幫助的人伸出援手

第一個故事發生在三藩市15街的金山寺。1974年我剛從泰國回來時，金山寺已經在15街有三年了，之後我們又在那裏住了12年。直到1986年中

before I came, and we stayed there for another 12 years. We moved to Chinatown in the middle of 1986. This story probably happened in the late 70s or early 80s.

I'd already been a bhikshu for about four or more years. A lot of interesting things happened at 15th Street. It was not a very good neighborhood in San Francisco, but compared to where I'm from in Chicago, it was not really that bad at all. There was a housing project right across the street from Gold Mountain. One day, suddenly, out of the blue, this Mexican-American woman in her 30s started to come and bow to the Buddha. She probably was coming to the temple after work, because it was around four o'clock in the afternoon.

She would come couple of times a week. During the day the Master was usually in his room on the third floor. However, once in a while he would come downstairs to the Buddha Hall on the first floor.

Several times, the Master would come down and chat with her. Usually she'd just come in and bow, stay a little bit, and then leave. But when the Master was there, she would chat with the Master.

She did this for several months to half a year. And then one day, she didn't show up for weeks.

Often in the late afternoon the Master would call Heng Kuan and myself on the phone from upstairs to question us about what was going on in the monastery on that day. After that woman had not come for the several weeks, the Master called down and asked me, "What happened to that Mexican woman? I said, "Shifu, I don't know. She just hadn't showed up for a while."

The Master said, "Well, did you call her?" I said, "Shifu, I'm a Bhikshu. I didn't think it was appropriate for me, a Bhikshu, to call a woman that I did know on the phone."

And the Master said, "You know, something could be wrong. You should call and find out." So, I looked up her number from our guest book where people who visited would sign in.

I called her. She said she was having some problems. As I recall, the Master must have gotten on the line, because he could get on the phone upstairs, and he somehow knew that I was on phone with her and he talked to her.

So she came to monastery to talk to the Master. I don't remember if it was the same day or the next day. I do recall that she had a long talk with the Master.

期，我們才搬到了中國城金山寺現址。這個故事大約發生在70年代末或80年代初。

那時我出家做比丘已有4年多了。15街的金山寺雖然位於三藩市治安欠佳的街區，但比起我老家芝加哥的某些地方，實在不算糟。金山寺正對面是一片平價公屋，有一天下午4點左右，一位30來歲的墨西哥裔美國女子前來禮佛——可能是剛下班順道而來。

起初她每週都會來兩三次，通常她只是獨自在佛殿禮佛後就稍坐一會，然後離開。上人平日也都在三樓方丈室，偶爾會下來到一樓的佛殿。但只要上人在佛殿時，這位女眾就會駐足和上人談談話。

這樣大概持續了半年左右，有一天這位女眾就不再出現了，直到好幾個星期都不見她再來過。上人一向會在傍晚時候，打電話給我和恒觀，詢問我們這天寺裏的情形。而那位女眾好幾個星期都沒有來，一天，上人打電話來問我：「那個墨西哥女眾，最近如何啊？」我回答：「師父，我不知道，她已經有段時間都沒來了。」

「你打了電話問過她嗎？」上人追問。我說：「師父，我是比丘，我覺得一個比丘要打電話給女眾不太妥。」上人就說：「她可能遇到困難了，你應該打電話問一下。」我從訪客登記簿找到了她的電話。電話接通後，這位女士坦言她遇到一些困境。我記得上人當時是從樓上分機接入，而且他知道我正跟這位女士通電話，他就親自與她在電話中交談起來。我不記得是當天還是第二

She couldn't speak Chinese, so, the Master used his broken English to converse with her. Although the Master was not fluent in speaking English at all, he could understand a lot of English. They had a long talk. The Master said she did have a problem, and he helped her with her problem. To this day, I have no idea what her problem was.

Then she left. This is one example of the Master's great kindness and compassion.

I learned a lesson. True kindness and compassion often requires not being too attached to the technical rules of being a monastic. Helping people and being kind in this kind of situation is much more important. She really needed help.

### Understanding Brings Joy to Living Beings

My second story happened in 1986 when we visited Indonesia. Mrs. Murdaya and her husband (but mainly Mrs. Murdaya) invited the Master to Indonesia.

The Master had never been to Indonesia before that.

At that time, I was the Master's personal attendant. Heng Wu, (who is now Reed Smith), and Marty (then Heng Chau), and Heng Sure had already been in Hong Kong for a week or so giving lectures at the Buddhist Lecture Hall in Hong Kong.

I flew out with the Master to Hong Kong, and then we went to Indonesia. Heng Wu, myself, and another young woman disciple from Canada accompanied the Master to Indonesia.

Mrs. Murdaya invited the Master to give lectures there in Indonesia. For a week, she gave us her whole house in Jakarta with maids and servants, and she her family went elsewhere. Heng Wu and I were in one room, and the Master was in another.

The Master told us to take care of whatever arrangements our hosts made for us to do during our visit.

During the first days, Mrs. Murdaya and the other hosts wanted us to go on a tour to different places in Jakarta i.e. to go sight-seeing. This would not involve the Master as he would not be expected to do this. Our hosts expected us younger monks to accommodate their wish to give us a tour to several places in Jakarta.

When Heng Wu and myself met with them, I said, "No, we don't go sight-seeing, because we are Buddhist monks." The hosts said, "You know, we really want to show you around Jakarta."

Later that day, after the meeting, the Master asked us what had happened. I told the Master that we rejected going on a tour of

天，這位女士專程來到金山寺，與上人長談。

這位女士不懂中文，上人便用他那不甚流利的英語與她交談。雖不能說一口道地的英文，但上人的英文聽力頗佳。上人和這位女士長談許久，後來上人告訴我她確實遇到了困難，並施以援手，解決了問題。至於具體是什麼困境，我至今仍不知曉。此事過後，這位女士便離開了。這正是上人大慈大悲的一個真實寫照。

我從中領悟到一個道理：真正的慈悲，往往不要太執著於僧侶的這種條條框框。在這種情形下，向需要幫助的人伸出援手，遠比拘泥於形式更為重要。她當時確實亟需幫助。

### 體察什麼能真正令眾生歡喜

第二個故事發生在1986年，我們受邀訪問印尼期間。蒲夫人鄒麗英和她的先生蒲忠道（主要是蒲夫人）邀請上人前往印尼弘法。那是上人首次踏足印尼。

當時我是上人的侍者。恒無（即現在的施果了Reed Smith）、馬丁（當時的恒朝法師）和恒實法師已先期抵達香港一週左右，正在香港佛教講堂舉辦講經法會。我隨上人飛抵香港後，便轉往印尼。同行的有恒無法師，還有一位來自加拿大的年輕女弟子。

蒲夫人盛情邀請上人在印尼弘法。期間她將雅加達的宅邸完全讓給我們使用，自己攜帶家人暫居別處。宅中傭人一應俱全。我與恒無法師同住一室，上人則另居一室。上人囑咐我們客隨主便，配合東道主的各項安排。

最初幾天，蒲夫人等人為我們



Venerable Master Hua and bhikshus were invited to Indonesia in 1986.

1986年。上人及比丘們  
受邀訪問印尼。

Jakarta. Although the Master didn't exactly scold me, he said the following, which I am paraphrasing, "They are our hosts and invited us here. They've been so nice and even gave us their actual house that they normally live in for us to use. Of course you should go sight-seeing with them! It doesn't matter that you are a monk. You should go on the tour and make them happy."

So, Heng Wu and I went on the tour, which took almost the entire day. And our hosts were really, really delighted that we did that for them. It was rather surprised to see just how happy they were that we did the tour with them.

This caused me to reflect again on another one of my many mistakes in terms of how to be more kind to people and be more mindful of what makes others happy.

### Never Neglect Kindness Toward One's Parents

My third story took place in 1985. This is not just a story of the compassion and kindness of Guanyin Bodhisattva, but also the importance of having filial piety towards one's parents. To what extent should a monastic have filial piety for their parents? What is it like? Is there any limit to it?

So in 1979, Heng Chi became a fully ordained monk in 1979. He was a music major in college. A lot of the ceremonies we still do now in English were actually composed by him, including the Meal Offering. He also selected the version of the Great Compassion Repentance Ceremony that we do in Chinese.

安排活動，想帶我們到雅加達各處名勝遊覽觀光。這原是款待我們這些年輕比丘的美意，自然不便勞動上人同往。當我和恒無法師跟東道主見面時，我說：「我們是比丘，不宜去遊覽觀光。」東道主說：「我們是真誠想帶你們遊覽雅加達風物。」

那天晚些時候，談話結束後，上人問我們發生了什麼事。我告訴上人，我們婉拒了遊覽雅加達的邀請。上人雖然沒有責備我，但他說了這樣的話：「他們是東道主，盛情邀請我們來這裏。不僅待客周到，甚至把自家住的房子都騰出來給我們用。你們當然應該陪同遊覽！你們是比丘也沒關係，重要的是要讓他們開心。」

於是，恒無與我隨主人家遊覽了近一整天。出乎意料的是，東道主對我們的陪同竟表現得欣喜萬分——他們那溢於言表的喜悅之情，著實令我訝異。此事讓我再次反思：在待人接物方面，我又一次失之偏頗。真正的慈悲，應當更設身處地為他人著想，體察什麼能真正令眾生歡喜。

Heng Chi was the second executive director of the Buddhist Council for Refugee Rescue and Resettlement for several years.

In 1985, he asked the Master if he could go into seclusion to memorize the *Śūraṅgama Sutra* in Chinese. Now Heng Chi, unfortunately, did not know Chinese.

He was like a few other disciples, such as Marty and Roger, who never learned Chinese. Still he wanted to memorize the *Śūraṅgama Sutra* in Chinese.

The Master gave him permission to go into seclusion. We had a special informal little ritual led by Master to bring him to the seclusion room, between Annex 4 and Annex 5 in the Great Compassion Quad. At the back of the seclusion room was a yard which had a ten-foot-high wooden fence painted red. In this way he could have privacy and exercise.

We brought him into the seclusion room and the Master put a tape across the door, symbolizing that he wouldn't leave unless he broke the tape by walking out the door. Facing outward his room had a large glass window, so people could check up on him to make sure he was okay. An opening was made in the glass window so that people could bring him food each day.

Heng Chi vowed that he would stay in that seclusion room with the backyard until he memorized the *Śūraṅgama Sutra*.

I participated in the ritual to bring him to his room and I never saw him again for three years. So three years had gone by and he hadn't talked to anybody. He made a vow of total silence.

He was a really good meditator. He could sit in full lotus was sixteen hours at. He was also a very introverted person. He never liked to talk that much anyway. So three years passed.

And at that time, it was 1988, and we had already moved Gold Mountain Monastery to Chinatown back in the middle of 1986. I was driving the Master back and forth from the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas where he would stay for three days and Gold Mountain Monastery, where he stayed four days. The Master would normally come up to CTTB on Friday evening and go back to San Francisco on Monday morning. One day we came up and guess who was waiting in the office here at the City? Heng Chi's parents.

## 不能忽視對父母的慈悲

第三個故事發生在1985年。這不僅是觀世音菩薩慈悲精神的體現，更關乎出家人對父母盡孝的深刻命題——出家人對父母的孝道該盡到何種程度？其界線又在哪裏？

時間回溯至1979年，恒奇法師於此年受具足戒。他原是大學音樂系的高材生，如今我們仍在使用的大部分英文儀軌唱誦，包括〈臨齋儀〉等，皆出自他的手筆。中文版的〈大悲懺〉儀軌也是由他甄選確定的唱誦。

恒奇法師曾連續數年擔任佛教難民救助委員會第二任行政主任。1985年，他向上人請示閉關背誦中文《楞嚴經》。但恒奇法師當時並不通曉中文。他與馬丁（前恒朝法師）、羅傑（前恒兆法師）等幾位弟子一樣，從未學過中文，但他發心要背誦中文《楞嚴經》。

上人慈悲應允了恒奇的閉關請求。我們舉行了一個由上人主持的簡單儀式，然後引領他到關房——現在的大悲院第四棟和第五棟中間，後面有一個院子，並有十英尺高的紅色木柵欄，這樣既保障隱私又不妨礙他在院內活動。

入關時，上人在門上貼上封條，象徵「不破封條不出關」。房外有扇大玻璃窗，方便眾人查看他的狀況，窗上開了個小口以便每日送齋。恒奇法師立誓：不背會中文《楞嚴經》絕不出關房。

我參與了送關儀式，之後三年都沒有再見過他。這段期間他持禁語戒，也不曾跟任何人說過話。他是禪修高手，能連續雙盤16小時；而且他性格又內向，本來就是寡言少語。就這樣，三年過去了。

時光荏苒，轉眼到了1988年。早在1986年仲夏，金山寺已遷至三藩市中國城現址。當時我負責接送師父往返萬佛聖城（師父每週住三天）與金山寺（住

They were in their late 70s or early 80s. His father was a Christian minister. His father and mother said, “We want to see our son, Heng Chi.”

I said, “Well, you know, he’s in seclusion. He hasn’t talked to anyone for three years.” I wasn’t sure what to tell them. Fortunately, the Master walked into the office at that time, and I told the Master in Chinese what was going on.

The Master said, “Tell them that you’re going to go and ask Heng Chi if he wants to see his parents. And you can tell Heng Chi that I said it’s okay for him to see his parents. However, it’s up to him to decide if he wants to see his parents or not.”

So, I told his parents to wait in the office, and then I went by myself to where he was in seclusion. I arrived and saw him right in front of me behind the glass window. The last time I had seen him was when we had brought him to the seclusion room three years earlier. I said, “Heng Chi, don’t talk.”

I told him the whole situation and then asked him, “Do you want to see your parents? Just nod your head yes or no.” Since he hadn’t talked for three years I told him to nod his head. So what happened? I still remember this as if it were yesterday. I felt like I waited a long time as he seemed to be thinking it over.

Finally he shook his head, “No.” Oh my goodness I thought to myself. I had to go back to the office to tell his parents that he had said “No.”

His father was already pretty emotional about wanting to see him before I left them in the office. And now I had tell them that he decided that he didn’t want to see or talk to them. When I told them, his mother started crying.

It was a real scene. Fortunately, again, the Master walks into the office right in the nick of time. It turned out that the Master had an appointment with someone at that time.

I told the Master the whole situation in Chinese. And the Master said, “Tell Heng Chi’s parents that I have an appointment. But as soon as I’m done—which might take a half hour—I will meet with them.”

I told Heng Chi’s parents what the Master said. Actually they were right there in the office as I was talking to the Master in Chinese. I left, as I had other responsibilities to attend to. I never knew all the details of exactly happened after I left.

But Heng Chi told me a few years ago, before the pandemic, all the details of what actually happened. After the Master finished his meeting, he talked to Heng Chi’s parents. As far as I know, no

四天)，通常是週五傍晚赴聖城，週一清晨返三藩市。有一天，我們抵達聖城時，赫然發現辦公室裏有兩位訪客——正是恒奇法師的父母。

兩位老人大約80歲上下。恒奇法師的父親是基督教牧師，他們懇切地說：「我們想見兒子恒奇。」我為難地解釋：「嗯，他現在正在閉關，已經三年沒跟任何人說過話了。」我正不知如何是好時，上人恰巧走進辦公室。我用中文向上人說明情況後，上人指示說：「你去跟恒奇的父母說——你這就去問他要不要見父母。你可以告訴恒奇，我同意他跟父母見面。不過最終決定權在他自己手上。」

我請兩位老人在辦公室等候，獨自來到閉關房。透過玻璃窗，我再次見到了三年未見的恒奇——上一次見面還是送他入關房時。「恒奇，先別說話，」我輕聲說：「你父母來看你了。師父說可以破例讓你見他們。你想見你父母嗎？點頭或搖頭就好。」因為他已經三年沒說話了，所以我讓他點頭或搖頭。那一刻的記憶至今歷歷在目。只見他陷入沉思，漫長的等待後，終於他搖了搖頭：「不。」我的天哪，我心想。我不得不回到辦公室告訴他父母，他說了「不」。

在我離開辦公室之前，他爸爸就已經很興奮地表示想見他了。現在我卻告訴他們，他決定不想見他們，也不想跟他們說話。當我轉達恒奇的決定後，他媽媽哭了起來。

這一幕實在令人揪心。所幸就在此時，上人再次及時出現——原來他剛好約了人在辦公室會面。我立刻用中文向上人說明事情的經過。上人說：「告訴恒奇的父母，我現有個約談在身。大約半小時後會談

one else was with the Master, just the parents and the Master.

The Master took his parents to where Heng Chi was in seclusion, just to the glass opening in the window.

Then the Master left. Heng Chi's parents begged him to come out of seclusion. Remember, he hadn't talked in three years.

Heng Chi held his mom's hand through the glass opening and said, "Don't worry, I want to be here. This is what I want to do. This is my choice. I can leave anytime I want, but I'm memorizing the *Śūraṅgama Sutra*."

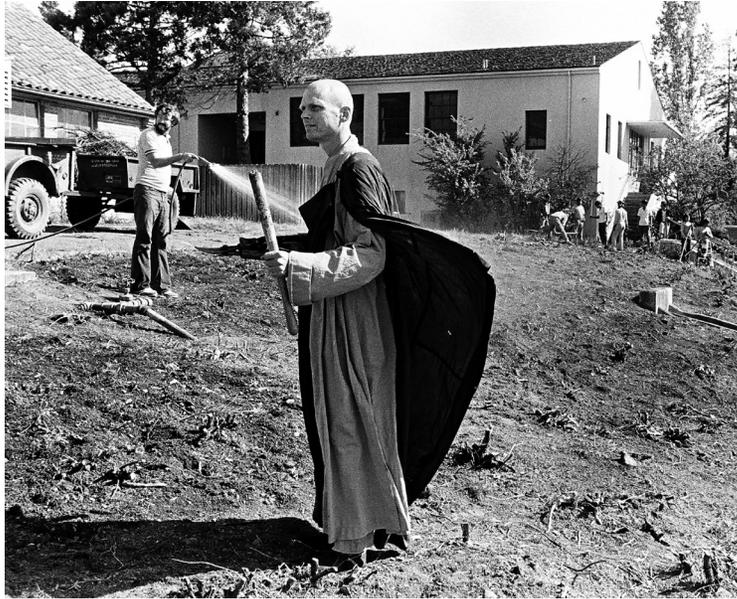
Heng Chi consoled them. I don't know if his father was crying, but his mother for sure cried.

Heng Chi said that after around twenty to thirty minutes, they left and they were happy. And then Heng Chi stayed in seclusion for another year. He did memorize the whole *Śūraṅgama Sutra* in Chinese.

So, after four years (1989) he got out of seclusion. And right away, the Master was invited to give lectures in Hawaii. Heng Chi, Heng Dao, myself, and some other people accompanied the Master.

I remember that during the beginning of our visit to Hawaii, because Heng Chi hadn't spoken for four years (except that one time with his parents) that whenever I would talk to him, it took him about five to ten seconds to answer. It was rather strange, but this was due to fact that his mind wasn't used to talking.

It took him about a month or so to get back to normal. Later the Master said that he was actually testing Heng Chi to see what he would do. Of course, he should see his parents! Even if one is a monastic and in seclusion, one must never neglect having the utmost kindness and compassion for one's parents. ❀



Bhikshu Heng Chi  
比丘恒奇

結束，我就去見他們。」我把上人說的話告訴了恒奇的父母。其實兩位老人就在現場。因為我還有其他事情就先離開了，所以不知後續詳情。

直到幾年前，也就是疫情前（2020）的某日，恒奇才向我道出當日完整經過：上人會客結束後，就和恒奇的父母長談——據我所知，當時師父身邊沒有其他人，只有恒奇的父母和師父。上人隨後親自帶他們來到閉關房窗前，自己便先行離開。透過那扇小窗，恒奇的母親含淚哀求兒子出關房。要知道，這可是他三年來第一次開口說話。恒奇從窗縫伸出手握住母親的手，溫言道：「別擔心，我想留在這裏。這是我自己的選擇。我隨時可以離開，但我要完成《楞嚴經》的背誦。」恒奇安慰了他們。我不知他父親是否落淚，但他母親確實泣不成聲。約莫二三十分鐘後，兩位老人終於釋懷，而且愉快離去。恒奇則繼續閉關一年，最後圓滿背誦整部中文《楞嚴經》。

1989年出關後，適逢上人受邀赴夏威夷弘法，恒奇、恒道與我等弟子隨行。記得初到夏威夷時，因為恒奇已經禁語四年（除那次與父母交談外），所以他每次跟我說話都要遲緩五到十秒鐘才能應答。這很奇怪，但這是因為他的大腦不習慣說話。這種情況持續了大約一個月的時間才逐漸恢復。後來師父透露，這其實是對恒奇的考驗，看看他會怎麼做。當然，他應該見見父母！即便是在閉關的出家人，也絕不能忽視對父母最深切的慈悲。❀