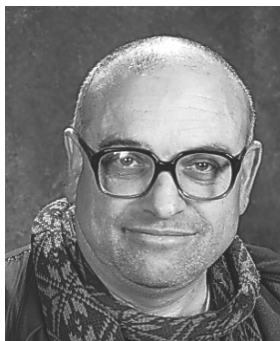


Teaching in School Is a Form of Cultivation



在學校教書 就是一種修行

BY ROGER KELLERMAN, BOYS' DORM SUPERVISOR AND 7-8TH GRADE CORE TEACHER

When I first came to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, the schools were quite different. What is now the Girls' School was the Elementary School for the boys and girls; what is now the Boys' School was the High School for the boys and girls. In 1982 the Venerable Master changed it so that the boys and girls studied separately. He asked Gary (the former Heng Tso) and I if we could help in the Boys' School. My first thought was, "Oh, I didn't leave home to look after these children. I want a quiet environment in which to cultivate and do ceremonies, but not to look after these boys." The very thought made me extremely afflicted, and even more so when I got into the school. However, the Venerable Master encouraged us. He said, "Well, I am really too busy. I'd like to do the job myself. But you can represent me and be my ambassadors, because I do not have the time."

Well, we got into the school. We didn't know what we were doing. All we

could do was try our best. It is strange because you can approach teaching from two ways. You can say the school is a big hassle; it really drives you crazy. Or you can think of it as a challenge for cultivation. Tonight I'd like to look at it from the side of cultivation.

The school, as a form of cultivation, is like climbing a mountain. Our tradition emphasizes the Bodhisattva Path in which the Six *Paramitas* are foremost. You can apply the Six *Paramitas* to teaching.

The first *paramita* is giving: You have to give of yourself when you teach. Most of our volunteer teachers are not paid and work long hours especially when looking after the dorm students. You realize you have to give a lot of energy to help the students. This is giving -- the giving of yourself.

The second *paramita* is precepts or morality: You are a model for the students. The students watch you very closely and you might not know it, but all the time the students are looking at you, your deportment and what

you say. If your precepts are solid, then you can be a good example for your students. So this is the second *paramita*.

The third *paramita* is patience: Of all the *paramitas*, you are going to be tested most directly on patience in dealing with children. They are like a lot of monkeys running around, and you have to really control your anger because many times they don't listen to you. You have to be very patient because teaching is a very long job. If you get angry quickly, you are not going to be a very good teacher, nor will you last very long. You have to control your anger, learn and practice patience.

The fourth *paramita* is vigor: Many times we might not have enough teachers, or enough people to work in the school. So the teachers who are here have to work twice as hard to make sure that everything is under control. You can't leave children unsupervised for even 15 minutes. You have to be there all the time. Sometimes maybe

another teacher is absent or sick, and then you end up taking two classes when before you only had one. That is quite naturally being vigorous.

The fifth *paramita* is *dhyana* (Chan) *samadhi*: if you do not have *samadhi*, or do not have enough, you are going to have a very difficult time of it. You need *samadhi* to take care of all the problems. You need *samadhi* to take care all the children. Compared to anything else, particularly in the school, *samadhi* is very important.

The last *paramita* is wisdom (*prajna*): You need to know how to deal with situations that come up. In the school you are dealing with people, both students and teachers. You have to be very flexible; you have to have the wisdom to know when to go to the left and when to go to the right. Without it, you can make a lot of mistakes and upset a lot of people.

Last Friday, something happened at lunch during the celebration of the school's 21st anniversary. As everybody saw, there was a lion dance. The idea was that during the dance the lion would pull down the cloth, behind which hanging vertically was a big birthday cake with "21" written in icing. Unfortunately, as everyone saw, the "2" on the cake had unintentionally collapsed. What people don't know is

that the person who made the cake started from about 9 p.m. the previous evening. He worked all through the night, and he was still working in the morning to make four or five of those cakes for the assembly. The cook had put a lot of effort into the cakes. Before he put the cake up, of course, the "21" was perfect. The example of the cake reminded me of the school. We put a tremendous amount of effort into the schools. People work so very hard. But sometimes things don't go right. No matter how good you want the kids to be, sometimes they disappoint you and do silly things.

Compared to the schools on the outside and compared to what is going on in the schools outside, things that we don't want to know, things that are very bad morally, our school is still better. Kids in our schools for the most part have more light about them and are purer because they are not exposed to TV, sex, and drugs.

So I want to finish this by saying, we shouldn't get discouraged. We do get discouraged because we are going straight up the mountain, taking the direct road of cultivation. It is very easy to get discouraged because the path is so steep. But like the cake, although the 2 had come down a little bit, the cake still tastes very good. Our school is still better. Our school is not bad compared to schools outside. For the sake of children who are here, I hope the people will try their best to keep going and work for the school, because that is what the Master wanted.

當我剛來「萬佛聖城」的時候，學校是相當不同的。現在的女校是當時男女校的小學部，男校則是當時的男女校高中部。

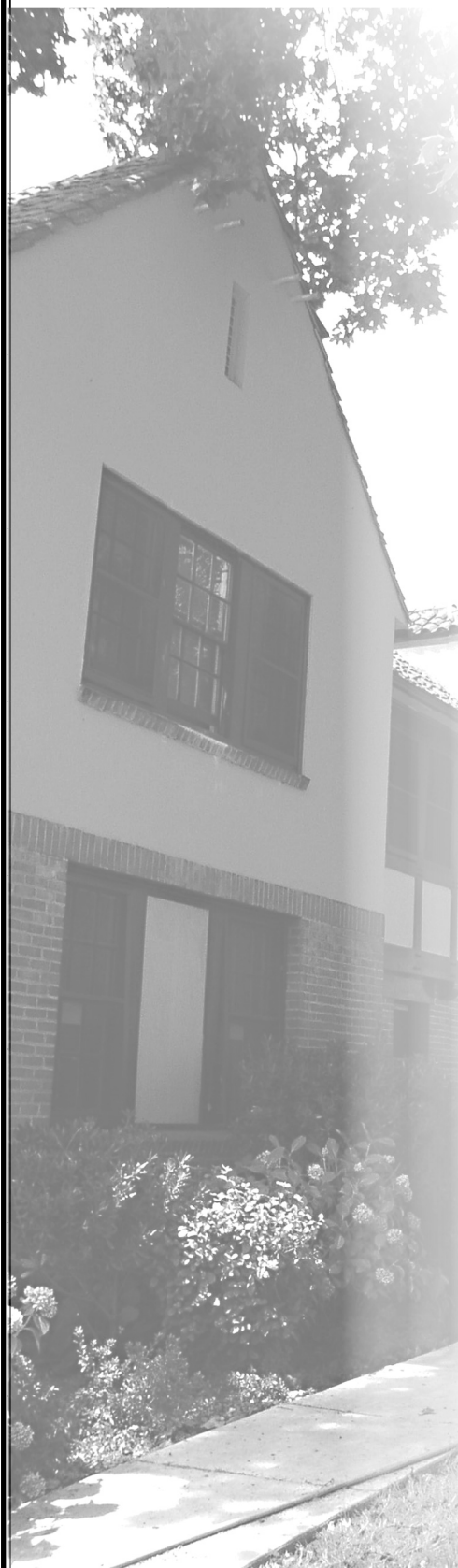
在1982年，上人將它改成男女分校，以利學生們的學習。他問加利（以前的恆佐師）和我，看我們能不能在男校幫忙。我的第一個想法是：「喔，我出家不是為著來看顧這些孩子的。我想要一個安靜的環境來修行和做功課，不是來看管這些男孩的。」這個想法讓我極端困擾，乃至到我進入男校時更是如此。但是，上人鼓勵我們。他說：「唉，我真是太忙了，我本想自己做這工作的。但你們能代表我，做我的大使啊！因為我實在沒有時間。」

就這樣，我們進入了男校。連我們都不知道自己在做什麼，但是我們盡力而為。奇怪的是一件事情有兩面看法：可以說學校是一個大障礙，會真正地讓你抓狂；或者可以認為它是修行上的一種挑戰。我就從修行的角度來看待它，把學校教書作為一種修行，如登高山。我們的傳統裏強調行菩薩道，六波羅蜜為其首要，可以將菩薩道應用到教學上。

第一波羅蜜是布施，當教書時，必須行布施。大多數的義務老師沒有領薪，他們工作時間很長，特別是照顧宿舍學生。會體會到幫助學生時很費氣力，這是將你自己身心做布施。

第二波羅蜜是持戒：自己是學生的一個榜樣。學生盯你盯得





很緊，有時自己都不知道。你的一舉一動、你的威儀、你的言語時時刻刻都被注視著。如果持戒持得好，就堪為人師。

第三波羅蜜是忍辱：所有波羅蜜中，對你考驗最直接的是當與孩子打交道時，他們就像一群猴子般地東奔西跑，必須真正地控制住自己的脾氣，因為許多時候他們不聽的。必須非常非常的有耐心，因為教學是一項長期的工作。如果很容易就生氣，你將不會是一位好老師，而且也不會持續太久。必須控制自己的脾氣，學會耐心和忍辱。

第四波羅蜜是精進：許多時候我們或許沒有足夠的老師，或足夠的人手在學校工作。所以在這裏的老師必須投注雙倍的心力，才能罩得住。孩子是連十五分鐘都不能沒人看管的，必須一直都在那裏看著。其他老師有時可能缺席，或生病了，那麼本來只有一堂課的你，變成要上兩堂課。這本身就是一種精進。

第五波羅蜜是禪定：如果沒有禪定，或定力不夠，會覺得時時都很吃力的。當出現問題時，需要用定力來處理；照顧小孩需要有定力。比起其他事情，尤其是在學校，定力顯得更為重要。

最後一個波羅蜜是般若：事情發生時，需要知道如何應對。在學校，面對的是人，既有學生，也有老師。必須是非常靈活的，必須有智慧來判斷，何時向左，何時向右。沒有智慧，會犯很多錯誤，並讓很多人起煩惱。

上星期五，在慶祝學校21週

年紀念的午餐期間，發生了一件事。大家都看見了，有舞獅。本來的計畫是，獅子會把一塊布咬下來，布後面筆直地懸著學校二十一週年的生日大蛋糕，「21」寫在素糕的冰層上。不幸地，大家都看見了這「2」字，無意間塌了下去。人們所不知道的是，做素糕的人，從昨晚九點開始通宵達旦，到第二天早上都還在忙，最後才把給大眾的四、五個素糕做好。這個廚師付出了很多辛勞來做這素糕，在他把素糕豎起來前，那個「21」當然是好好的。素糕的例子提醒了我：為了學校，我們投注了巨大的心力，工作得非常辛苦。但有時事情不對頭，無論你要孩子如何好，他們還是會辜負你，會做一些傻事。

與外面的學校相比，那些我們不想看到，不想聽到的，在道德上非常靡爛的事，我們學校比他們好很多。我們的孩子，身上更清淨，更有光明，因為他們少受電視、性與毒品的影響。

在結束之前，我想說我們不應該灰心。我們會感到灰心是因為：看到擺在我們面前的是一條非常陡峭的修行路；但就像這個素糕，雖然「2」字是塌下來了一點，不過整個素糕嚐起來還是非常可口的。和外面的學校比起來，我們是相當不錯的。所以為了孩子們，我希望大家能盡力而為，繼續為學校來奉獻付出，因為那正是上人所期盼的！

(文 / 凱樂門老師 英國籍 男校宿舍老師、七八年級導師)