

A Warm Blanket in the Cold Winter

寒冬裏的暖被

A talk given by Bessie Tsui on January 4, 2009

at Avatamsaka Monastery

徐親玲 二〇〇九年一月四日講於華嚴聖寺

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今天是二〇〇九年第一個星期天，在此祝福大家在新的一年裏，身體健康、法喜充滿！

上個禮拜天我在櫃台工作時，法師提醒我下禮拜中午輪到我跟大家結法緣。我的女兒（Jadda，十三歲）無意間聽到了，就不停地追問我：「你準備講什麼？」

於是我反問她：「那妳想要我講什麼哩？」她說：「不知道！」我又問她：「

Today is the first Sunday of 2009. I hope that you will be filled with Dharma bliss,

and I wish good health to all of you and your families.

Last Sunday, when I was working at the front desk, a Dharma Master reminded me that it is my turn to give the Dharma talk next Sunday.





那妳喜歡聽什麼呢？」結果答案還是一樣，「不知道！」

「想一想，平常禮拜天中午用齋的時候，妳最希望別人說些什麼內容？」Jadda回答我：「我通常都是有聽，沒有到。如果他說故事，那我可能會多少聽一些。」於是我跟她說，不如這次讓她來講，我坐在下面聽如何？她回答我：「那我會說，嗨，大家好！今天無法可說，請大家慢慢吃，享受一個安靜的午齋。拜拜！」聽了這小傢伙的話之後，我覺得挺有道理的，所以我決定今天要盡量言簡意賅，讓大家好好地享受這頓午齋。

上人是一位非常有智慧的人，因為他不斷地強調「教育是佛教非常重要的一部分」。Jadda從五歲開始，就來到華嚴寺的週日學校讀書。那時候她很膽小、很害羞，於是幾乎頭一年的時間，我都得在課室裏陪著她。這幾年下來，學生來的來，走的走；有的現在上大學了，有的已經在工作，有的甚至結婚，也有了自己的孩子。

我常想，這些孩子現在怎麼樣了？我發現雖然他們很少再回到廟上，甚至有些也沒有吃素了，但很奇怪的是，佛法的觀念始終深植在他們的心中；當遭遇挫折或是面臨重大抉擇時，佛法正是他們最有力的精神支柱。

為了送孩子來華嚴寺上學，每個禮拜天都得起個大早，即使是攝氏零下三十度的天氣也不例外。有時候會問自己：「這麼做，為的是什麼？」如果您的孩子也像Jadda，當你問他今天學了什麼啊？他們或者是回答「不記得了」，要不就是「不知道」。這種答案實在令人沮喪，但卻不是真的。既然Jadda跟我說講故事人家比較容易記得，那我今天就跟大家分享幾個我的故事。

當Jadda開始讀幼稚園沒多久，有一天我去接她放學，她看起來很傷心，见到我之後竟然哭了。她問我：「媽媽，為什麼他們要這樣做？」我之後才弄清楚原因，原來是她和幾個小朋友在操場發現一隻小瓢蟲，大家正互相傳著看這小東西時，突然「嘎吱」一聲，有個小朋友將這隻瓢蟲捏死了！其他的小朋友看了都覺得好好玩，當然這絕對不會是Jadda。你看看，即始在讀幼稚園那麼小的年紀，這些接受佛法薰陶的孩子就已經明白，一切眾生都有活著的權力，都應該被尊重的。

My daughter (Jadda, 13 years old) overheard the conversation and kept on pressing me about what I was going to talk about. I asked her what she wanted me to say; her answer was, "I don't know." I asked her again, "What do you like to hear?" The answer was the same: "I don't know."

"Well, what kind of talk do you like the most during the Sunday lunch?" Jadda said: "I hear what they say, but I am not listening. If it's a story I might catch some of it." I said, "How about this time you give the Dharma talk, and I will sit and listen." Jadda said, "I will say, 'Hi everybody, no Dharma talk today, so everybody can enjoy a quiet and peaceful lunch; bye-bye.'" I was inspired and promised to keep this short.

Master Hsuan Hua was a very wise man. He insisted that education is the most important thing in Buddhism. Jadda was around five when she started Sunday School. She was timid and shy so I had to accompany her to classes for more than a year. Now we see the Sunday School students come and go. Some are in college, some have joined the work force, and some have gotten married and now have their own children.

I always wondered: what happened to them? I found that they may not come to the temple any more and some are no longer vegetarian, but strangely enough, the concept of Buddhism is always deep in their heart. It helps them to make major decisions and overcome obstacles in their journey.

Every Sunday we have to wake up early and drive our kids to Sunday School. It might be -30°C in wintertime. Sometimes you might wonder, "What for?" If your kids are like mine, when you ask them what have they learned, they might say "can't remember" or "don't know." It is so discouraging but it is NOT true. Since Jadda told me that stories are easier to digest, I would like to share some of mine with you.

One day not long after I sent Jadda to preschool, when I went to pick her up, she was very sad and burst into tears when she saw me. She asked me, "Mom, why do they have to do that?" I later found out that Jadda and some kids found a ladybug in the playground, and they had passed the bug around. Then one of the kids squished it with her thumb. The others found it very funny, but not Jadda. Even at that very young age, a child influenced by Buddhism easily accepts the fact that other living beings deserve the right to live and be respected.

Sometimes Jadda will sing or hum some of the songs that she learned at Sunday School. She may not remember the mantra or names in the sutras but somehow the message will be absorbed into her small head in whatever way that suits the child. In Chinese, we call it "change and influence unobtrusively and imperceptibly".



有時候，Jadda會哼唱在週日學校學到的歌曲。她也許不記得那是什麼經或咒，但是不知不覺中，這些內容已被他們的小腦袋給吸收了，中文叫做「潛移默化」！

除了佛學，週日學校也教《弟子規》。一天早上，我們母女倆邊吃著早餐，邊聊天。我跟Jadda抱怨說我的腳好冰，晚上睡覺得等好久才會暖和。那天晚上，快到睡覺的時間了，我跟Jadda說：「Jadda，來刷牙。」她問我：「你要睡覺了嗎？」我說：「是。」結果十分鐘過去了，我還沒見到她來刷牙。跟往常一樣的，我等得不耐煩了，於是大喊：「Jadda！妳在哪裡？」「我在這兒。」聲音從我的房間傳出來。我馬上衝進房、正準備要發火時，卻發現這傢伙裹著棉被，躺在我的床上，然後撒嬌地看著我說：「快來睡吧，現在很暖和了。不可以說我不孝順喔！」當時，我簡直感動得說不出話來。

佛法的種子，一旦在他們幼小的心靈播種了下去，給他們一點時間，有一天都會開花結果的。所以為人父母的要有耐心，付出的辛勞都是會有代價的。只要記住一點，孩子是非常非常聰明的。他們也許不會照著您「說」的去做，但一定會照著您「做」的去做。所以留意我們的言行，因為孩子一直都在看著我們。

我答應不要講得太長，所以現在準備結尾了。首先我要感謝法師，堅持著無論人多人少，只要有一個學生願意來上課，學校就要辦下去的那股毅力。第二是感謝所有的老師和義工，他們將自己寶貴的時間用來教導我們的孩子。你可能覺得，學校看起來不過就是幾隻調皮的小猴子跑來跑去！但事實上週日學校能開辦至今，是許多義務老師和義工們努力的成果。

最後（但不是最少），我要感謝廚房的工作人員。我得坦白說，不見得每個孩子都喜歡到學校上學，但可以確定的是，每個孩子都愛極了廟上的午齋。有的學生甚至早上打坐才剛結束，就已經在問：「午齋準備好了沒？」謝謝大家照顧我們的孩子！



Besides teaching Buddhism, Sunday School also teaches “Standard for Students”. One morning, we had a casual conversation during breakfast. I complained to Jadda that my feet were cold and it took a long time to warm up at night. The same night when it was bedtime, I said, “Jadda, come and brush your teeth!” Jadda asked, “Are you going to bed now?” “Yes.” After ten minutes, I still did not see her. I ran out of patience (as usual) and yelled, “Jadda, where are you?” “I am here.” The voice came from my bedroom. I rushed into my room, ready to scold her, only to find her lying in my bed covered with a blanket and she looked at me in a very fond way, “Come and sleep; it’s all warm now. Don’t say that I am not filial.” I was speechless.

Once the Buddhist seed is there, given a little time, it will flourish some day, so be patient and your efforts will be well rewarded. Just a reminder: the kids are VERY smart; they will not do what you say but they will do what you do. Be careful about what you do and say, because they are ALWAYS watching you.

I promised to keep this short and now I would like to wrap this up. First, I would like to thank the Dharma Masters for their persistence – as long as there is at least one student, they will keep the door of the Sunday School open. Next, thanks to all the teachers and volunteers who spend their valuable Sundays just to teach our kids. You think there are only a few monkeys running around, but there are lots of volunteers involved in keeping the school going. Last, but not least, I would like to thank the volunteers in the kitchen. It is a fact that not all the kids like to come to Sunday School but they ALL love the food. Some even ask you, “When will lunch be ready?” right after the morning meditation class. Thank you for taking care of our kids!

華嚴聖寺育良週日學校野外踏青
A field trip for Instilling Goodness
Sunday School of Avatamsaka Monastery