



教育的重要與學做好人

The Importance of Education and Becoming a “Good Person”

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The Venerable Master Hsuan Hua, who took establishing Buddhist educational institutions as one of the major vows of his life, addressed the students of Instilling Goodness Elementary School and Developing Virtue Secondary School at the City of 10,000 Buddhas in August, 1983 as follows:

You are just like young trees growing taller day by day, and in the future you will become pillars. That is, you are the future pillars of your country. You should do great things and work for world peace and the welfare of humankind. Since you are born in this country, you should help manage and govern this country so that there will be no wars and life will always be secure and peaceful. Then you should extend your effort so that all the countries of this world will also have peace. That is your duty.

Now is the time to build a solid foundation in order to save the country and the people. First of all you must learn to be a good person. This means learning from good people, not from bad ones. Who is a good person? A person who has filial respect towards his parents at home, respects his teachers at school, serves the people in society, and works for the welfare of the people when serving in the government. Those are the standards of a good person. Who is a bad person? A person who is selfish and out for personal advantage, and who forgets fairness and justice when he sees an opportunity to benefit himself. Under the government of good people a nation will become affluent, strong, and peaceful. But if managed by bad people, the nation will collapse.

In this country, you are generally more conscious than others, since you know about filial respect and how to work for and serve the people. In the future, you can manage this country so that it is safe and peaceful. Destroy all lethal weapons. It is said, "The horses are set free on the south mountain, and weapons are stored in the warehouse." Your responsibility is to dissolve the violent energy of wars in the world, and to allow the people to live securely and happily, and be well fed and well clothed. Then the world will be one of great harmony."

With these teachings on education by the Venerable Master on my mind, I listened to the recent speech by President Barack Obama to the school children of the United States on September 8, 2009. The President first mentioned the importance of taking responsibility for one's own

開辦佛教教育機構是宣化上人一生的願力之一，以下是他於1983年8月20日在萬佛聖城對育良小學和培德中學學生的談話內容：

你們好像小樹，一天比一天長高，將來可作棟樑之材——也就是說，你們將來都是國家的棟樑。你們應該要做一番轟轟烈烈的大事業，為世界求和平，為人類謀幸福。你們生在這個國家（美國），就應該幫忙把這個國家治理得好好的；使這個國家沒有戰爭，生命永遠安穩，乃至使全世界所有的國家都得到和平，這是你們的責任。

現在正是為了救國救民，來打好堅固基礎的時候。首先，要學做好人；這意思就是說要向好人學習，不要學壞人。什麼是好人？就是在家中孝順父母，在學校恭敬師長，在社會為人群服務，在政府為民謀幸福，這是好人的標準。什麼是壞人？就是自私自利、見利忘義的人。好人治理國家，使國家能富強而無戰爭；但是如果壞人治理國家，國家就會滅亡。

在這個國家，你們比起其他人來得更自覺，因為你們知道盡孝道，知道為人服務。將來你們就能將國家治理得平平安安，把殺人的武器統統消滅；所謂「馬放南山，刀鎗入庫。」你們的責任，是要化解這世界戰爭的戾氣，使人人都能安居樂業，豐衣足食，這樣世界就能成為大同世界。

由於記著上人對教育的這些教導，我聽了奧巴馬總統9月8日對全美中小學生發表講話。總統首先提及對自己的教育盡責的重要性：

即使到最後，我們能擁有最敬業的教



education:

“At the end of the day, we can have the most dedicated teachers, the most supportive parents, the best schools in the world -- and none of it will make a difference, none of it will matter unless all of you fulfill your responsibilities, unless you show up to those schools, unless you pay attention to those teachers, unless you listen to your parents and grandparents and other adults and put in the hard work it takes to succeed. That's what I want to focus on today: the responsibility each of you has for your education.”

Another point the President made several times in his speech was the value and importance of hard work in pursuing one's studies:

“The truth is, being successful is hard. You won't love every subject that you study. You won't click with every teacher that you have. Not every homework assignment will seem completely relevant to your life right at this minute. And you won't necessarily succeed at everything the first time you try...”

“No one's born being good at all things. You become good at things through hard work. You're not a varsity athlete the first time you play a new sport. You don't hit every note the first time you sing a song. You've got to practice. The same principle applies to your schoolwork. You might have to do a math problem a few times before you get it right. You might have to read something a few times before you understand it. You definitely have to do a few drafts of a paper before it's good enough to hand in.”

One part of the President's speech echoed the beginning of the Venerable Master's talk noted above. The President said:

“And this isn't just important for your own life and your own future. What you make of your education will decide nothing less than the future of this country. The future of America depends on you. What you're learning in school today will determine whether we as a nation can meet our greatest challenges in the future.”

The students received encouragement on being responsible, working hard, and not giving up if they make mistakes or sometimes fail. On the contrary, the President said that students should learn from their failures:

“These people succeeded because they understood that you can't let your failures define you -- you have to let your failures teach you. You have to let them show you what to do differently the next time. So if you get into trouble, that doesn't mean you're a troublemaker, it means you need to try harder to act right. If you get a bad grade, that doesn't mean you're stupid, it just means you need to spend more time studying.”

The only thing lacking in the President's speech was the failure to mention the importance of being a good and virtuous individual, who acts for the benefit of society without

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師，最支持擁護的家長和全世界最好的學校，這一切都無法改變什麼，也都毫無用處；除非你們大家都履行你們的責任，到那些學校去上課，專心聽那些教師教導，聽你們的家長、祖父祖母和其他大人的話，並且付出取得成功所必須的勤奮努力。這就是我今天所要強調的重點：你們每個人的責任是對自己的教育負責。

總統在他的演講裏，幾次提到的另一個重點，是勤奮地追求學術的價值與重要性：

事實上，取得成功不是輕而易舉的事情；你不會喜歡你學習的每一門課目，你不會與你的每一位老師都很投契，不是所有的家庭作業看起來都會與你眼前的生活完全有關，你也不見得在第一次嘗試做每件事的時候就成功……。

沒有一個人天生擅長做各種事情，你是通過勤奮才變得擅長這些事情。第一次從事新的體育項目時，你不可能是一位主力隊員；第一次唱一首歌時，你不可能唱準每個音。你必須練習！同樣的道理適用於你的學業。你可能須要把一道數學題做幾次，才把它做對；你可能要把一些材料閱讀幾遍，才能理解；在交出一篇堪稱優美的作文之前，你肯定需要打幾遍草稿。

總統談話的其中一部份，和我一開始所提到的上人的理念不謀而合。總統說：

這並非只對你個人的人生和未來意義重大，你所受到的教育，將完全決定這個國家的未來。美國的未來取決於你們！你們今日在校學習的知識，將決定我們作為一個國家是否能夠迎接我們未來所面臨的最嚴峻挑戰。

學生在負責及努力工作上得到鼓勵，如果在他們犯錯誤或者失敗時也不放棄；相反的，總統說學生應從失敗中學習：

……這些人士獲得成功，因為他們懂得：你不能讓失敗來限制你，而是必須讓失敗來教導你。你必須讓失敗向你展示下次如何以不同的方式去做這件事情。因此，如果你遇到麻煩，那並不表示你是麻煩的製造者，而意味著你需要更加努力去把它做對；如果你有一門課分數低，那不表示你比別人笨，那只代表你需要花更多的時間去學習。

唯一的缺憾，是總統的演講未能提及做一個良好、有德之人的重要性；這樣的人，致力於造福社會而非謀求個人利益，如名利、財富或權力等等。

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雖然如此，它終究是一個很好的演講，希望它會有助於鼓勵年輕人看到：在使他們和其他人的生活更好方面，教育有其重要性。

在演講快結束時，總統提到良師的重要；這呼應了宣化上人所指示的：「向好人學習」的重要性。總統說：

不要害怕提問，不要在需要幫助時害怕請求別人幫助！我天天請求別人的幫助。請求幫助不是軟弱的表現，它是力量的象徵；因為它表明你有勇氣承認自己對某些事情不懂，這樣做會使你學到新的東西。因此請找一位你信任的成年人，例如家長、祖父母，或老師、教練或者輔導員，請他們幫助你遵循既定計劃以實現你的目標。

這確乎對我們所有人都是個忠告。

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seeking for personal advantage i.e. fame, wealth, or power. However, all in all it was a good speech that hopefully will serve to encourage young people to see the importance of education in making their lives and the lives of other people better.

And near the end of his speech, the President did mention the importance of having good mentors, echoing the Venerable Master's instructions on the importance of "learning from good people." The President said:

"Don't be afraid to ask questions. Don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it. I do that every day. Asking for help isn't a sign of weakness, it's a sign of strength because it shows you have the courage to admit when you don't know something. It also allows you to learn something new. So find an adult that you trust -- a parent, a grandparent or teacher, a coach or a counselor -- and ask them to help you stay on track to meet your goals."

This is certainly good advice for all of us.