

Events in the Life of the Venerable Master: The China Period 宣化上人事蹟（中國篇）

White Mountains and Black Waters Nurture Rare Talent (Continued)



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09. 皈依三寶（續）

上人自述：

他太太和子女抱著他的腿，放聲大哭，不讓他出家，常智大師說：「你們如果不放我走，明天就有人會死，要用棺材抬出去，你們看怎樣？」家人見他以死明志，也不敢再攔阻。他拜上修下雲老和尚為師，常仁大師是他的師兄，專修念佛法門。在張彥明家閉關後，明心見性，智慧開朗，出口成章！他後來自己念佛往生了。

10. 求學新生

上人十五歲，始入私塾求學，發憤不輟，吃飯常是匆匆地吃幾口就算了。後來思路開通，把握讀書要領，僅僅二年半時間，通曉四書五經，醫卜星相也有所涉獵。

上人自述：

（一）先難後易初入學

我在幼童的時候失學，沒有受教育。直到十五歲，才開始在私塾裏讀書；三月初十上學，舊曆八月十三放假，讀了半年，冬天，日本人來了，就沒有讀書了。十六歲讀了一年書，十七歲又讀了一年書，前前後後合起來是兩年半。

要小孩子好好讀書，很困難；可是要他學一些壞

09. Taking Refuge in the Triple Jewel (Continued)

As told by the Venerable Master:

His wife and children held onto his legs and cried hard, trying to stop him from leaving the home-life. Master Chang Zhi said to them, "If you don't let me go, I will leave in a coffin. What do you think?" His family dared not stop him, realizing he might commit suicide. He became a disciple of Master Xiu Yun, and Master Chang Ren became his Dharma brother. By practicing the Pure Land dharma door, he came to understand his own mind and developed exceptional wisdom and eloquence. Later, he left this world, reciting the Buddha's name.

10. Education and a New Life

At the age of 15, Master Hsuan Hua began his education in a private school. From the start he applied himself diligently and ate only a small amount of food. Within two and a half years, he was able to master the Chinese classics as well as medicine and astrology.

As told by the Venerable Master:

First stage of school – difficult at the beginning and easy later

When I was young, I didn't have a chance to go to school. It wasn't until the age of 15 that I was able to be educated in a private school. School began on March 10 with a break on August 13. After I had attended school for half a year, Japan invaded China in the winter so I was out of school again. At the age of 16, I returned to school for one year and another year when I was 17. My formal education totaled two and a half years.

It is difficult to teach children to study hard, but easy to teach them to do something bad. That they can learn without any teaching. When I was a child, I once watched some people gamble and learned how to play the game in five minutes. I went home and made some beautiful gambling cards myself.

事，非常容易，甚至無師自通。好像我小時候看人家玩賭牌九，我到那兒一看，沒有五分鐘，我統統都記得了，回去自己就會做牌九，做得很漂亮。

我一開始讀書讀得很慢，笨得不得了，讀一遍也記不住，讀兩遍也記不住。譬如我讀《百家姓》的時候，因為在家裏聽我母親念過，所以我聽一遍就會了，就能背，記得很清楚。那時候讀書要背書，我拿著這個書本到先生那兒，把書交給先生，然後掉過背來背書，怎麼樣呢？一個字也想不起來，連個「人」字也想不起來了，就這麼奇怪！為什麼忘了？自己也莫名其妙！很多天都是這個樣子。

我就想：這是什麼道理呢？怎麼在炕上念得那麼熟，一下地都忘了？是不是沒給聖人叩頭呢？沒入學以前，我早就給聖人叩了很多頭，入學又叩了頭，這個理由不存在的。我就自己研究，才知道是因為害怕；怕先生那個大煙袋鍋子，萬一背錯，他會打頭的，心慌地把所有讀的書都忘了，就想著他會不會拿煙袋鍋子敲我頭？明白這個，以後就不怕了，挨打就打！怕什麼？從此之後，我在炕上專心讀書，到先生那兒背，一字不差。

最初讀得很慢的，以後找著讀書的門徑就很快，不單記得快，而且還永遠也不忘了。等到讀《大學》的時候，就讀得很快；我讀一天的書，旁人二十天也讀不了。為什麼這樣子呢？就因為得到讀書的門徑了，一心不亂，專心讀書，旁的什麼也不想；不想吃，也不想喝，也不想怎麼穿好衣服、住好地方，什麼都不想。我讀書專一到什麼樣子呢？我告訴你們，你在旁邊作戲、打鼓、吹喇叭、吹簫、吹笛子，或者打鐘，我都可以聽不見。本來聽見的，但是我可以叫這個心不跟著你的聲音跑，能把心管住。我最初讀書，讀三十遍還不會；得到這個法門，能專一、管得住心之後，讀一遍就能記得大半，讀兩遍就全都記得了；若讀三遍，就永遠不會忘了。

當時教我那個老師，是一位前清老秀才，他七十多歲，教了五十多年書。我跟他讀，他說：「唉，你這個學生，我早要遇到就好了！我們兩個可以說是沒有緣，又可以說是有緣。怎麼說是有緣呢？我們現在遇到一起，你跟著我讀書，這是有緣。怎麼說是沒有緣呢？真要有緣，你應該早遇著我，我要是早遇著你這麼會讀書的學生，那我該有多歡喜！」

待續

When I started school, I was stupid and couldn't remember my lessons, no matter how many times I studied them. For example, when I read the *Book of Family Names*, I could recite it right away from my memory. However, when I took the same book to my teacher and handed it to him, I couldn't remember a word, not even the first one. It was strange. Why did I forget everything? I didn't understand. The same thing happened to me for several days.

I kept wondering what was happening. Why was it that I could remember my lesson clearly when I was on the brick bed, but as soon as I slipped off to recite to the teacher, I forgot all of it? Was it because I didn't bow enough to the great sages? I bowed to them many times before I went to school and also afterwards. So that couldn't be the reason. After thinking it over, I realized that I was afraid of the teacher's big tobacco pipe-bowl that he hit me on the head with when I recited incorrectly. It made me so nervous that I couldn't remember a thing. With that realization, I was no longer afraid. I thought that it was nothing to be hit with the teacher's tobacco pipe. After that, I could focus on my reading and recite the book in front of my teacher, without an error.

Although I was a slow reader at first, I later discovered a way to read fast and never forget what I read. I was able to read *The Great Learning* [one of the Confucian classics] extremely fast. The number of pages I could read in one day would take an average person 20 days. Why? Because I was fully focused and read with all my heart, without thinking about anything else—not even food, drink, clothes, or where I would be. I would think about absolutely nothing else.

How concentrated was I when reading? Let me tell you, I couldn't hear anything no matter how much noise was made right next to me, even performances with drums, trumpets, clarinets, flutes, or bells. Actually, I could hear them if I wanted to, but I could also tell my mind not to pursue those sounds. I could control my mind. In the beginning I studied, even read a lesson 30 times, but could not understand it. Once I discovered the method, once I could concentrate and control my mind, I would remember most of it after reading it once. After the second time, I remembered the whole thing. By the third time through, I would never forget it.

One teacher who taught me earned his scholarly status during the Qing Dynasty. He was in his 70s and had been teaching over 50 years. When I became his student, he said, "How I wish I could have had you as my student earlier! The connection between us is an interesting one. If we had no connection at all, you wouldn't be my student. If we had an excellent connection, you should have met me before now. How happy I would have been had I met a smart student like you earlier!"

To be continued