

Kuo Hu Knows What Is Important

Below are some incidents of my years with the Abbot that stand out in my mind and have served as a basis for my practice.

I constantly recall a trip that Heng Ch'ien, Heng Shou, and I took to look at property in Northern California, Oregon, and Idaho. We were traveling in a Volkswagen bus, sleeping in the bus or camping, looking at various possible sites for a country monastery. Finally, after we had located a few sites that Shr Fu, with whom Heng Ch'ien had communicated by telephone, thought sounded promising, he came up to meet us and spent a couple of days with us driving around.

One morning we had stopped by a beautiful stream in northern Idaho to make our one meal of the day. Shr Fu, as was his practice when traveling, ate virtually nothing -- a banana and perhaps another piece of fruit. I was, at the time, practicing eating at a single sitting, and made sure that I ate enough to last the better part of the kalpa before I had to get up or the clock hit noon. Heng Ch'ien and Heng Shou, neither of whom had any great interest in food, wandered away from where we had stopped and set up our meal, over to the side of the stream, and were idly skipping rocks over the surface of the water, taking a well deserved rest from hours of driving. Shr Fu and I sat together on a log, he eating his banana and I eating everything that I could get my hands on. Shr Fu was watching Heng Ch'ien and Heng Shou skip rocks, and asked me what it was that they were doing. I explained how and why one went about skipping rocks on water. He asked if they were any good at it and I gave my evaluation. He then said to me, "Why don't you go play with your friends?" sounding like a solicitous parent, concerned that I had been left out. I replied that, when it was time to eat, I ate; that "I knew what was important." He turned his head to me with a delighted twinkle in his eye, "Oh, you know what is important. Kuo Hu knows what is important. Kuo Hu knows what is important." He repeated this phrase over and over again, chuckling. He then finished his banana and went over to Heng Ch'ien and Heng Shou, announcing to them as he came, "I have something important to tell you. This is very important. Kuo Hu knows what is important. Kuo Hu knows what is important." I sat and ate, very pleased with myself for knowing what was important, eating when it was time to eat rather than wasting my time at play. While I ate, Shr Fu stood to one side of Heng Ch'ien and Heng Shou, watching them continue to skip rocks. After watching a few throws Shr Fu stepped a couple of feet away, examined the ground carefully, and picked up a large, irregularly shaped stone weighing at least several pounds. He then walked up to the stream's edge and heaved the stone in. It sank

果護知道 什麼是要緊的

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在我跟隨上人的這些年中，有件事給我的印象特別深刻，奠定了我修行的基礎。

記得我和恒謙、恒授去北加州、俄勒岡州和愛達荷州看房地產的時候，我們開的是一輛旅行車，沿途有時露營，有時就睡在車裡，到處看地，想找一處鄉下地方蓋廟。最後我們終於找到一處地方，恒謙電話告知上人，上人也覺得蠻理想。於是上人就來和我們過幾天，一塊兒到處看看。

一天早上，我們在愛達荷州北邊一條美麗的河流停下準備用齋。上人就和往常出門的慣例一樣，幾乎什麼都不吃，除了吃根香蕉或一樣別的什麼水果。我那時學習一坐食，在時針指向十二點以前不站起來，所以我一坐下來吃，就一定要吃個夠。恒謙和恒授二個人對吃東西沒有什麼大興趣，就離開我們吃飯的地方，走到一處溪邊打水漂，也好在長途開車之後休息休息。

我和上人坐在一塊木頭上，他吃著香蕉，我則什麼都吃。上人看著恒謙和恒授在用石子打水漂玩，就問我他們在幹什麼；我講給上人聽了，並且解釋怎麼玩法。上人又問我，他們倆玩得好不好，我也告訴上人。然後上人說：「你為什麼不過去和你的朋友一塊兒呢？」上人聽起來好像一個父親，恐怕他的孩子被排擠在外。我回說該吃飯的時候，我就吃飯；我說：「我知道哪個重要。」上人轉過頭來，眼裡閃著愉悅的光采說：「哦，你知道哪個重要，果護知道什麼事重要。」上人笑著不斷重複這句話。上人把香蕉吃完，走到恒謙和恒授那兒宣佈說：「我有件很重要的事要告訴你們，很重



要的——果護知道什麼事是要緊的！果護知道什麼事是要緊的！」

我坐在那兒吃著中飯，對自己很滿意，因為我知道哪樁事是要緊的。吃飯的時候就該吃飯，我不會浪費時間去玩。我吃的時候，上人站在恒謙和恒授旁邊，看著他們打水漂玩。上人看了一會兒，就走到旁邊幾尺遠的地方，仔細地查看地面，然後撿起一塊不規則形狀的石頭，至少幾磅重，走到溪邊拋入溪水中。石塊沉入水，

without a trace. He then looked directly at Heng Ch'ien and Heng Shou, who were watching the ripples spread. Heng Ch'ien and Heng Shou then looked up from the stream to Shr Fu. The three of them stood there for a moment, looking at each other, then all laughed at the same time. The three of them then ambled back to where I was still eating, Shr Fu telling them both very earnestly how I knew what was important. Heng Ch'ien and Heng Shou then had their lunch as well. I finished eating, then went over to the stream's edge and skipped several stones with great skill, demonstrating, once I had finished the important matter, my prowess with secondary matters as well.

From then on, at each property we examined, Shr Fu would very seriously turn to me and ask my opinion of the property, announcing, "Kuo Hu knows what is important." When we all eventually returned to Gold Mountain, Shr Fu announced on several occasions when we were discussing some problem, that everyone should ask me, since "Kuo Hu knows what is important." Eventually that particular teaching died down and life went on.

But I have considered that incident many, many times. Shr Fu's real teaching was a demonstration of sympathy with living beings. He recognized what was important to each of us, whether it was self-importance and eating, or relaxing from hard work by skipping rocks across a stream, and responded to each with as much teaching as was possible. What was really important was not, as I felt at the time, my self-discipline, but rather to recognize that Shr Fu taught each of us individually, and what was most important was to recognize what teaching was for me and what was for someone else -- to not confuse the two, to not expect someone else to live up to what he had taught me to strive for, and to not seek to strive for someone else's goals. That teaching was a deep and vivid expression of compassion and *bodhicitta* (Bodhi mind), and one that, as I have slowly come to understand, seek to emulate in every moment.

再也不見蹤影。恒謙、恒授望著水中的漣漪散開，上人則直視著他們，他們也轉視上人。三個人就那麼站著互相看，然後一起笑起來，漫步回到我還在吃飯的地方。上人起勁地告訴他們倆，我怎麼樣地知道什麼事是重要的。恒謙和恒授也吃了午齋，我吃完了，也走到溪邊打水漂玩，漂得很漂亮。一旦我把要緊的事做完了，次要的事我也能做得很漂亮。

從那以後，每次我們看地的時候，上人會很認真地問我對那片地的意見，並說：「果護知道什麼是要緊的。」後來我們去金山寺的時候，有好幾次，討論問題時，上人總會對大家宣佈，有事應該來問我，因為「果護知道什麼是要緊的。」經過一陣子，最後這個教誡才中止，生活才恢復正常。

我為這樁事想了許多次，在上人的教誨中，顯出了對眾生的慈悲。他知道我們每個人都有自認為最要緊的事，不論是自我重視，或是吃東西，或是打水漂玩，以便從辛勤的工作中鬆弛一下。上人總是因材施教。當時我認為真正重要的事，不是我的自制力，而是認知到上人對我們行的是個別教導。最要緊的是能認識什麼教導是針對我個人的，什麼是針對其他人的，不能搞混了。也不要將上人針對我們的教導拿去要求別人；更不要將上人給別人的教誨，拿來做自己努力的目標。上人這樣的教誨，也是有生動深遠的慈悲及菩提心；我逐漸體會到，這也是我們時刻想效法的。