

# 長善之道

## How to Teach Goodness

比丘尼近柔講於2012年2月16日萬佛城大殿·王青楠 中譯

A talk given by Bhikshuni Jin Rou on January 16, 2012 at Buddha Hall of CTIB

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“What was it like to teach under the Master’s guidance?” I have been asked many times, so I’ll say a little about this. In the beginning, the school was from 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade, with boys and girls together. The American teachers suggested having separate schools for boys and girls, which is the case with many parochial schools in the West, but the most important reason was so the students could concentrate more on their studies and developing their characters. The boys’ school was then established on the north campus for 5<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grades. The young boys still attended K-4 on the south campus, which is now an all-girls school.

I never saw the Master come inside the schools, but when I was in the Buddha Hall or walking with the children, he would often ask them to recite the *Standards for Students* or the Great Compassion mantra. He emphasized the importance of teaching the standards, not only for students to memorize them, but to understand them and put them into practice. He told us, “You don’t need to teach religion to children, but teach them to love learning and to be good children.

At that time, we did not have many books and the volunteer teachers were not as well-trained as now. I had taught in a college, but teaching 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders was a different matter—at first, it was trial and error. I remember a story that Terri Nicholson, the former principal of the girls’ school told. At the age of 17, she helped to establish the first primary school in San Francisco. One

常有人問我：「在上人的指導下，教學是什麼樣子？」我在這裡稍微講一下。一開始時，學校是一年級到六年級，男女一起上課。後來美國老師們建議要男女分校，因為在西方國家很多教會學校都是男女分校；但其實更重要的原因是，學生比較能專心在他們的學習及人格培養。因此，就將男校五到十二年級設在北邊校區，幼稚園到四年級的小男生仍留在南邊校區上課，也就是現在的女校。

我從沒遇見過上人到學校來，但如果在佛殿裡或跟孩子們走在一起時碰到上人，他常會叫他們背《弟子規》或〈大悲咒〉。上人強調，教《弟子規》的重要性不只是一要學生背誦而已，而是要他們了解《弟子規》的道理，然後運用在生活上。上人告訴我們：你們不需要教孩子們宗教，但一定要教他們喜歡學習，要他們做好孩子。

當時我們沒有很多課本，而且義務老師也不像現在這樣受過訓練。我雖然教過大學，但教二、三年級生是很不一樣的。一開始，都是試誤學習，邊學邊教。記得女校的創校校長 Terri Nicholson 跟我講過一件事，她十七歲就幫忙在舊金山創立育良小學。有一天，她班上的學生不聽話，在教室裡面到處跑，她急得坐在地板上哭起來。正巧上人走進來，問她：「妳怎麼哭了呢？」她回答：「這些學生都不聽我的，都不照我

day, she was sitting in the middle of the floor and crying while the students ran wild. The Master came in and said, “Why you crying?” Terri answered, “The students won’t listen to me and do what I say. Boo hoo!” The Master smiled and said, “Don’t give up. Try another method. Everything’s okay.”

Once I was teaching this verse from the *Standards for Students*:

*If you recognize faults in your parents,  
exhort them to change for the better,  
Speak to them kindly and gently  
with a pleasant smile on your face.*

One child said, “My father smokes. I’m going to recite this verse for him and for sure, he’ll stop smoking.” The next day she came to school wearing a long face. “It didn’t work,” she said, “I smiled and told my father in a pleasant voice to quit smoking, and he told me to mind my own business.”

I wanted the verse to work for her, so I kept looking for a way. That week, *Weekly Reader* had an article on lung cancer caused by smoking, with a vivid diagram of a tobacco tarred set of lungs. I told my students that their homework was to select one article to read to their parents and have parents write a comment on what they had learned. It worked. The father actually wrote a promise note to quit smoking, and he did. I will never forget the smile on the girl’s face.

In Doug Power’s university class, we have been discussing the term “pragmatic.” It basically means taking a practical approach to a problem. We can talk principle all day, but it is all in what we do. I have learned that in teaching children, pragmatism plays a big role.

Last week, an interesting event happened. It was discovered that the smaller of the two redwoods in front of Jyan Kung Restaurant at CTTB is splitting open and dying due to exposure to the hot sun and insufficient moisture. It also had a fungus. Fortunately, a friend who is a horticulturalist told us what to do—give it lots of compost, worm castings, and some nickel sulfate to change the pH. Spray the fungus with a canola oil and water mixture and install a good sprinkler system. It seems to work, the tree looks happy.

It so happened that my class was studying a unit on living Bodhisattvas, real people doing things that are hard to do, such as the famous naturalists, Rachel Carson and John Muir. Inspired by their contribution to save the wilderness, the children made prayer flags out of cloth and drew beautiful pictures on them for the tree. They said, “We’ll do whatever we can to save that tree, no matter how difficult.” I explained that we needed to give the tree some compost and worm castings and to water it well. With

說的做。」上人笑著說：「別氣餒，試試其他的辦法。一切都沒問題的！」

有一次，我教到《弟子規》中的一段：

親有過 諫使更 怡吾色 柔吾聲

有個學生說：「我爸爸吸菸，我要在他面前念這句話，那他一定會戒煙的。」第二天，她愁眉苦臉地回來。「這個方法一點都沒效！」她說：「我面帶微笑，很溫柔地勸爸爸戒菸。他聽了叫我管好自己就好，別干涉他的事！」

我希望這幾句話能令她覺得受用，於是就留心尋找實行的方法。那星期的 *Weekly Reader* 有一篇關於抽菸導致肺癌的文章，還附了一張生動的圖片，描繪出因抽菸而變得焦黑的肺。我讓學生們自選一篇文章讀給家長聽，並請家長針對文章內容寫下評語。這個法子果然奏效！那位父親承諾要戒菸，而且他真做到了。我永遠也忘不了那個小女孩臉上燦爛的笑容。

Doug Power 開的一門法大課程裡，討論過 pragmatic 這個字，大意是要用務實的方法處理問題。我們可以整天討論理論，但事情的結果還是取決於實際採取的行動。這令我體會到在教孩子時，這種務實的觀念是很重要的。

上星期發生一件有趣的事。聖城君康素餐館前面有兩株紅木，較小的那株裂開了，烈日曝曬的結果水份嚴重不足，顯然快要死了，而且還生出菌類。萬幸的是，我們一位朋友是園藝師，他教我們一些補救辦法，用許多有機肥、蚯蚓糞便和一些硫酸鎳來改變土壤的酸鹼值；混合菜籽油和水，噴灑在長出的菌類上，再安裝一個好的噴水系統。這個方法似乎有效，幫助那株紅木找回了生機。

正巧那段時間，我的班上在學習關於活菩薩的故事，就是像自然學家 Rachel Carson 和 John Muir 這些難行能行的偉人。孩子們受這些人物拯救野生環境壯舉的感動，決定用布做成小旗子，再畫上美麗的圖案，然後發願要排除萬難、盡全力來救活這株垂垂待死的紅木。我告訴她們我們必須澆有機肥、蚯蚓糞便，還有澆水。帶著很大的決心，她們把水瓶收集起來，準備要動手了。可是我要求她們先把瓶子放到一邊去；雖然有很多報怨聲，我還是堅持這一決定。

到了堆肥的地方，那股氣味讓有些孩子一下子成了泥菩薩。「太臭了，我不做了！我負責澆水就好了。」我費勁兒地鼓勵了好半天，他們才願意拎著一小筒的堆肥和蚯蚓糞灑到樹旁，不過個個都是捂著鼻

great determination, the students gathered up their water bottles, ready to rough it. “The water bottles stay behind,” I said and stuck to my words in spite of the “ahs”

When we got to the piles of compost and worm castings, with their fragrance permeating the air, some of the girls turned into “clay” Bodhisattvas. “It stinks. I’m not going to do it! I’ll water instead.” After much encouragement, each took a little bucket of compost and spread it around the tree, holding their noses and making awful faces. When I took out my camera, the faces turned into happy smiles.

Sweaty, tired, and thirsty, we returned to the classroom. The students said, “It was hard work to be a Bodhisattva and give the tree that smelly medicine, but I’m glad we did it. The tree will get well now!”

For various reasons, we haven’t had much rain this winter, so it looks like it might be a bad year for miner’s lettuce. Miner’s lettuce is a wild plant that grows in abundance under oak and bay trees. It got its name because it was sometimes the only food that the gold miners had to eat in the late winter and spring.

Miner’s lettuce is very delicious and nutritious with lots of vitamin C and protein. One of its properties is that it restores poor soil and provides nutrition for trees. It is also food for animals such as deer, gophers, and migrating birds. When the animals eat miner’s lettuce, they scatter the seed wherever they go, so it can reseed and flourish for centuries. But if we keep picking it for our use and do not replant it, the plants will not reseed and the balance of nature will be upset. A Cherokee medicine woman taught me that when gathering herbs and wild plants, we should not leave a trace—it should look as if we had never taken any at all. We should leave the grandparents (large plants) to carry on the generations and the little ones to mature.

The good news is that we can buy miner’s lettuce seeds and plant it at the vegetable farm, even in the green house. The cost is two dollars for 200 seeds. I think this is the best way to go, because I know that we all share the same concern and wish to protect the environment at CTTB.

子，皺著眉頭。可是當我拿出相機準備拍照時，馬上每個人都變成了笑臉！

回到教室，大家滿身是汗，又累又渴。學生們說：「要當菩薩真不容易，要用味道這麼難聞的藥給樹木吃。但很高興我們做到了，樹的病就快好了！」

種種原因，今年冬天雨水不足，礦工生菜（註：冬馬齒莧，一種北美西部產草本植物，開小白花，其葉有時用作生菜）的生長可能會有問題。礦工生菜是野生植物，常見於橡樹、桂葉樹之下。取這個名字，是因為在冬春之季，它是挖礦工人唯一的食物來源。

礦工生菜很好吃，含有豐富的維他命 C 和蛋白質。它可以改善貧瘠的土壤，給樹提供養份。它也是鹿、地鼠、飛鳥的食物，動物吃了它以後，會把它的種子帶到各處，這樣它就可以一連幾個世紀繁茂不衰。可是如果人類只摘採來吃而不播種，對大自然的平衡就是個問題。一位卻洛奇族的女醫師告訴我，採藥草和野生植物時要不留痕跡——好像我們甚麼也沒拿走一樣。我們要讓「祖父母」（大株的植物）傳宗接代，幼株得以成熟。

現在有個好消息，就是我們可以買到礦工生菜的種籽，而且二百粒只需要兩塊錢。我們可以買回來在有機農場或是溫室裡培養。我認為這是最好的辦法，因為大家都有一個共同的理念，就是好好保護聖城的自然生態。