

我的教育理念在聖城得到體現

Realizing My Education Ideals at The City of Ten Thousand Buddhas

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A talk given by Bhikshuni Jin Yu on June 12, 2011

English translation by Jo-Shing Yang

記得在大學第四年的時候，我的教育哲學老師曾經語重心長地提醒我們這群即將畢業的學子，在以後的教書生涯裏面，每年應該要找時間把《論語》拿出來復習一遍。我非常清楚老師他期許我們能夠當一位人師，而不是教書匠。

不久離開學校，成了教育界的新鮮人。我回到家鄉附近一所所謂的明星學校服務，在所有家長的期許之下，我們唯一的目標就是把學生送到最好的高中，我也不知不覺地沉淪在升學主義的大海裏。每天領著學生在分數中衝鋒陷陣，幾乎忽略了她們在唱歌、美術、體育……等等方面的才能。甚至看不到他們那一顆顆美麗善良的心。

記得有一次一個同事開玩笑地說，我們從事著全世界最好的一個行業，因為我們可以合法地罵人。罵完了之後呢，那些人還要跟我們敬禮，說「謝謝您」。你就可以知道在這樣的一個環境之下，我的自我膨脹有多大！

一九九五年，我到聖城常住。在剛開始的幾年，我教的主要是以中文為母語的學生。大部份亞裔的孩子從小便被灌輸尊師重道的觀念，在這種情況之下我並沒有太大的改變。但在聖城很妙的是：上人總在恰當的時候給我們足夠的教誨。有一天時候到了，校長跟我說：「妳要不要去教教幼稚園的太極拳？每天就只有三十分鐘。」我心想：「半個鐘頭，八個小孩子，我應該

Recalling my senior year of college, my professor of Educational Philosophy exhorted all of us who were about to graduate, that every year in our teaching career, we must find time to review the *Analects*. Of course, I understood clearly that the professor hoped that we would become active teachers and not just be passive teachers.

Soon, we left the college and entered the academic world. I returned to my hometown and taught at a nearby “renowned” middle school. Given the expectations of all the parents, our objective was to ensure that the students got accepted by the best high schools. Unconsciously, I was caught in the rat race of getting students admitted at all costs. At that time, I only focused on the students’ grades, charging forward to make sure that they got high test scores, while neglecting their talents in music, arts, and sports. So much so that I couldn’t even see their beautiful and wholesome hearts.

Once, my coworker joked and said that we had the best job in the world because we could legally reprimand people without any repercussions. After scolding them, they’d still have to respect and thank us for reprimanding them. You can see how my ego got inflated given the environment I was in.

In 1995, I moved to the Sagely City. In the beginning, the majority of my students were mainly those whose native language was Chinese. Since most Asian kids were taught at an early age to be respectful to their teachers and elders, I wasn’t propelled to make any radical changes. But the wonderful thing about the Sagely City was that the Venerable Master would always give us appropriate teachings at the appropriate moments. One day, when the time was right, that “appropriate teaching” came and the principal asked me, “Do you want to teach Tai Chi at the kindergarten? It’s only about 30 minutes a day.” I thought, “Half an hour long-- with eight kids, shouldn’t be a problem!”

The first few months went well. One day, I went to class as usual, and there was a child hiding underneath the table and would not come out. My natural instinct was to use an iron hand in a velvet glove: “Be good and come out from under there...” Before I could finish my sentence, another child crawled underneath the table. As I was coaxing the two children to come out, a third child followed suit and hid under the table as well. So for the entire class period,

是沒有問題吧！」

開始的幾個月，一切都還好。有一天，我依照往常去上課，一個小孩子躲在桌子底下，怎麼都不肯出來。我那老師的本能——軟硬兼施，就自動啟動系統了：「妳乖，要出來……」，話還沒說完，第二個就進去了。正想要把兩個勸出來的時候，第三個又躲到桌子底下去了。所以整堂課，一半的人在桌子底下。那時候老師的面子起了發酵的作用，然後就找出平常比較瘦弱聽話的一個。

說：「妳再不乖，我就要把妳送到校長室。」

沒想才七歲不到的她竟學起我的口氣說：「我就要把妳送回去。打電話請妳家長接妳回去。」

我當時真是瞠目結舌，不知如何是好。可是當下也讓我非常清楚地看到自己是怎麼樣教書的。從那刻開始，我發現，原來教育是我一面最好的鏡子。

另外一個故事是發生在兩年前。我們的學校很小，有時候可能只有三個人就組成一班。我覺得她們很幸福，她們也很習慣這樣的幸福。有一次為了準備中國文化常識比賽，打算把兩個班級合併在一起。但是已經習慣擁有一個老師的三個學生，不願意十個人分一個老師。特別其中一個同學，好說歹說就是抵死不從。

這時候我的「老師的尊嚴」不再發酵，反而腦子裏頭閃過一位教授說的，碰到不聽話的孩子，硬碰硬肯定行不通，這時就需要一些技巧來引導。比如說那小孩叫做張小梅，

「張小梅，妳給我過來!!!」（聲音高八度）

「妳再不過來，我就……」（提高分貝，企圖壓制她）

「過去。」（心一覺知，語氣柔軟）

這令我聯想到佛教的道理也是這樣，是一個反向的操作。所以我答應不勉強她。那一天傍晚我就趕快去找一個阿

half of the class was hiding underneath the table. At that time, my confidence as a teacher was challenged. Therefore, I did the only thing that I could think of: appeal to the emaciated and frail child who was usually compliant.

I said, "If you don't behave and listen, I'm going to send you to the Principal's office."

Who would have thought that a seven-year-old child was not only able to imitate me but also mimic me, "I'm going to send you back. I'm going to call your parents to take you home."

At that moment, I was speechless, dumbfounded, and could only stare. I did not know what to do. However, that instance made me see clearly the way I was teaching. From that point on, I discovered that education was a great mirror.

The other incident occurred two years ago. Our school was very small. Sometimes, the class consisted of only three students. I felt that the students were very blessed and they also took it for granted. One day, I decided to combine two different grade-level classes into one for the sake of the Chinese Cultural competition. However, the three students who were used to having one teacher all to themselves were not about to share their teacher with seven other students. There was one student in particular who did not like the idea no matter what.

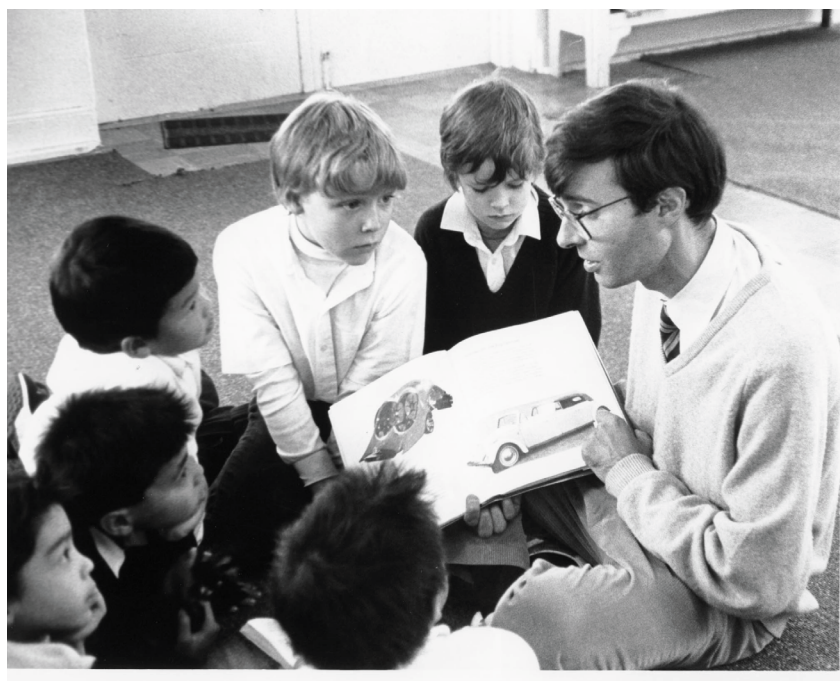
At that time, I did not resort to my authority as a teacher, instead I recalled something that a professor said, nowadays, parents and teachers constantly encountered disobedient children and meeting force with force definitely would not work. At times like these, we needed to use expedients to guide them. For example, let's say there was a certain child whose name was Zhang Xiao-Mei.

"Zhang Xiao-Mei, come here!!!" (The voice is high in the eighth octave.)

"If you don't come here now, then I'm going to...." (Elevate an octave, attempting to repress and control her.)

"...go over there." (The mind becomes aware, the tone softens.)

This example corresponded with Buddhist principles; it's reverse psychology. I



姨，拜託明天到教師辦公室去等，我會送一個學生過去。可是我也很怕這小子會很享受一對一的教學。所以就跟這個阿姨講：「妳就教她古書，而且光叫她背就好。」結果當然不出我所料，不到一節課，她就乖乖地求我讓她回來了，從此再也沒有人跟我講：「我要到其他的班級去。」

在萬佛聖城，我的教育哲學老師所提醒我們的一一孔子的教育理想一一在此得以實現。

這一群孩子，我們不僅僅是師生，我們也是朋友，更是一家人。我自己非常喜歡我們中國古時候師生之間的稱呼，我們以前稱老師叫「師父」，是一種介於老師跟父親的關係；稱學生叫做「弟子」，也就是把所有學生當做自己的弟弟、兒女這樣來照顧、教養。所以中間不僅有一種親情倫理，更有一種責任。

另外，我還有一個很深的感覺。這幾年在聖城、在學校，我慢慢地看到每一個學生的不同：因為來自不同的家庭，他們擁有不同的個性、才能。不過也正因此，而讓這個社群更顯多彩多姿。同時我也看到，她們擁有一顆相同善良的心。雖然也會有淘氣、不做功課，但遇到這類情形，我當下會嚴肅地跟她們處理這些問題，但這並不減損她們在我心中善良的形象。明白這種「事來則應，事去則靜」的道理，才正是我人生功課的起點。

聖城是一個很特別的地方，它提供一個修行於日用平常的環境。有一位民族英雄是我最最崇敬的人之一，他就是南宋的文天祥。宋朝「重文輕武」的國策，使得國家一直都有外患的威脅，南宋末年最大的外患就是蒙古大軍。當大軍大舉揮軍南下的時候，可想而知朝廷節節敗退；雖然下令勤王，可是沒有人響應。

文舉出身的文天祥其實並不懂得帶兵打仗，但是他決心拋磚引玉，也希望能夠為國家的存亡略盡棉薄。所以他把家產

promised her that I wouldn't force her to join the merged class. That evening, I quickly found a female volunteer and entreated for her help, I asked her to come to the teachers' office and I'm going to send a student there tomorrow. Nonetheless, I was afraid that the student might enjoy the one-on-one attention. So, I told the volunteer, "Just teach her the classical texts and tell her to only memorize them." The result was just as I expected it. After one period, the student quickly asked me to let her come back to class. From then on, nobody ever said, "I wanted to transfer to another class."

It is at the Sagely City of Ten Thousand Buddhas that Confucius's ideals and principles on education, which my Education Philosophy professor once exhorted us, was realized.

This group of children—we're not just teachers and students, but friends, and we are mostly family. I really like the old way that Chinese people called their teachers. In the past, we addressed our teachers as "Masters." This term implies that teachers were like fathers and students were like di (brothers) zi (sons). Addressing students as di-zi suggests that teachers must treat and educate all students as their younger brothers, sons, and daughters and take care of them as their own. Therefore, this kind of teacher and student relationship was not only a kindred affection but also carried a responsibility.

In addition, from all the years of living and working at the Sagely City and the schools, I came to a realization. I gradually saw that every student was different—they came from various family backgrounds with different personalities and talents. It was also this very diversity that brought about this flamboyant and colorful community. Meanwhile, I also saw that they all shared one common trait: a very kind heart. Of course, there were times when they were naughty and didn't do their homework, and I would nip these problems in the bud. Situations like these definitely did not make them any less good or beautiful in my mind. Having understood the principles of how our mind responds to matters when they arise and stills when the matters dissipate marked the starting point of my lifelong lesson.

The Sagely City of Ten Thousand Buddhas is a very special place. Its environment is conducive to spiritual practice based on everyday life. A Chinese national hero who I admired the most was Wen Tianxiang; he lived during the Southern Song Dynasty. Because of the government's main policy which "prefers the pen to the sword" (it emphasized civil arts over military arts), the country was constantly being threatened by foreign invaders. Toward the end of the Southern Song Dynasty, its major threat was the great Mongolian army. When the army launched its southward conquests, the Song Dynasty lost every single battle. Although the government issued an order to save the emperor from turmoil, no one responded.

Wen Tianxiang, a literati, did not know how to lead troops and fight battles, yet he was determined to lead by example and exhausted his meager resources in order to save the country. So, he sold his properties and possessions, and organized an army of more than ten thousand people to defend his country against the invading Mongolian army. Of course, this undertaking, analogous to hurling eggs against a stone, was attempting the impossible which ended with his

變賣了，組織了一支一萬多人的軍隊來抵抗蒙古大軍。當然這種以卵擊石之舉最後兵敗，文天祥也被抓到了北京。他被關了將近三年。

當時候元世祖十分愛才惜才，他想要招降這一個狀元宰相，以號令其他的漢民歸附。但文天祥誓死堅守富貴不能淫，貧賤不能移，威武不能屈的志節。他被關在北京的大牢裏是如何惕勵自己的，大家可以從〈正氣歌並序〉中窺知。

「余囚北庭，坐一土室，室廣八尺，深可四尋，單扉低小，白間短窄，污下而幽暗。當此夏日，諸氣萃然；雨潦四集，浮動床幾，時則為水氣；塗泥半朝，蒸滷歷瀾，時則為土氣；乍晴暴熱，風道四塞，時則為日氣；檐陰薪爨，助長炎虐，時則為火氣；倉腐寄頓，陳陳逼人，時則為米氣；駢肩雜處，腥臊汗垢，時則為人氣；或困溷、或毀尸、或腐鼠，惡氣雜出，時則為穢氣。疊是數氣，當之者鮮不為厲。予以孱弱，俯仰其間，於茲二年矣，幸而無恙，是殆有養致然爾。然亦安知所養何哉？孟子曰：『吾善養吾浩然之氣。』彼氣有七，吾氣有一，以一敵七，吾何患焉！況浩然者，乃天地之正氣也，作正氣歌一首。」

在擁有七氣的斗室中，兩年下來文天祥為什麼可以安然無恙？〈黃帝內經〉云：「恬淡虛無，真氣從之，精神內守，病安從來。」文天祥憑藉的就是一股「正氣」。這股浩然正氣，也就是我們每天早晚念的六大宗旨。

我們有幸親近上人的道場，天天浸淫在正氣的氛圍裏，就要常常反問自己，這六大宗旨是否對自己的修行有所幫助？正如上人常提醒的「念起念覺」，好好看著自己這一顆心，時時保持覺知，不要失念，修行自然能日起有功。

最後祝萬佛聖城正法永駐。阿彌陀佛！❀

defeat. Wen Tianxiang was captured and sent to Beijing where he was imprisoned for almost three years.

At that time, Yuan Shizu (the founding emperor of the Yuan Dynasty, Khubilai Khan) absolutely appreciated and fostered talents. He wanted this prime minister, a champion scholar in the imperial examination, to surrender in order to make the Han people submit. However, Wen Tianxiang vowed that he would never be corrupted by wealth and honors, never be shaken by poverty and destitution, and never compromise his integrity. How did he motivate himself while imprisoned in Beijing? We can have a glimpse of his course of action from his writing *An Ode to the Righteous Force and A Preface*.

"I am jailed in a dungeon in Beijing. The room is eight feet wide and 32 feet deep with a low and tiny door. The window is small and narrow. The room is in a dark and filthy basement. It is the summer and all kinds of vapors gather here: Rain water floods the room, floating up the table and bed. That is the water vapor enveloping the room. Half of the wall is plastered with mud, and after the rain the bubbles burst and the mud soils with mire, that is the vapor of dirt. The sun came out unexpectedly, producing scorching heat that blocked the wind in all directions. That is vapor from the solar heat. The firewood burning under the eaves makes it even hotter. That is the fire-inflamed vapor. The rice has been kept and rotting in the granary for years, generating oppressing odor. That is the vapor of rotten rice. People are jammed together shoulder to shoulder, and the smell of their sweat and dirty bodies is repugnant. That is the vapor of human. The smells of restrooms, of burning corpses, of rotting mice all mixed up, shooting foul smell into every corner. That is the vapor of stench. With these vapors combined, few people can be spared from sicknesses; yet with a weak body, I am fortunate not to be sick for the two years I spent here, perhaps because I have been cultivating something here. How do I know that I have been cultivating something? Mencius said, "I am versed in nurturing my spirit of greatness." There are seven kinds of vapors in the prison, and I have only this spirit of greatness. With this spirit of greatness to rival the seven kinds of vapors, then nothing worries me! Not to mention that this spirit of greatness is the righteous force of the heaven and earth, thus I compose an ode to the righteous force."

How did Wen Tianxiang come out unscathed after two years? In the *Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine*, it says, "Live a simple and content life, and it will guide our vital force. Where can illnesses come from if we guard our energy well?" What Wen Tianxiang relied on is the "Righteous Force," which is exactly what we recite every morning and evening—the Six Great Principles.

We are fortunate to have access to the Venerable Master's Way places, immersing ourselves daily in the atmosphere of the "Righteous Force." We must ask ourselves whether this practice is helpful to our cultivation or not. Like what the Venerable Master often told us "There arises a thought, there be aware of it," if we constantly watch over our thoughts, always be aware and mindful, then our cultivation will be progressed and not be in vain.

Finally, may the Proper Dharma always reside at the Sagely City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. Amitabha! ❀