

一念之間的抉擇

An Instantaneous Decision

張女權講於2013年1月31日 萬佛城大殿
趙東方 英譯

By Nu Chuan Zhang on Jan. 31st, 2013 in the Buddha Hall at CTTB
English Translation by Iris Zhao

我的法名叫親權，來自臺灣；2012年8月底到聖城擔任義務老師，主要負責高級班中文課程。

今天報告的內容主要分兩個部份：第一個部份是決定到聖城擔任義務老師的因緣；第二個部份是分享在教學上與學生互動的經驗。因為才來五個多月，所以內容有不夠客觀的地方，敬請指正。

我是在1998年皈依三寶，但平常忙於教學工作，所以在臺灣每個月只是看看《智慧之源》，去道場隨眾共修也只求心境平靜而已，並沒有深入經藏，當然也不會知道為什麼要修行。只是覺得宣公上人很實在，想幫他做點事，但不知

I am Chin Chuan from Taiwan. I arrived at CTTB to assume a volunteer teaching position at the end of August of 2012.

As a volunteer teacher, my primary responsibilities are to teach Chinese to the students of the advanced class of CTTB. There are two topics I would like to cover in tonight's talk. They are my affinities to become a member of the volunteer teachers and my interactions with the students so far. Having only lived for a short five months in CTTB, my comments could be short of being objective. I therefore ask for your generosity to help point out and correct me.

I took refuge in the Three Jewels in 1998. Besides reading the monthly journal of *Source of Wisdom*, I had no strong motivation to study Buddhism due to my busy teaching schedule. I periodically visited the way place to merely seek basic inner peace. I was not determined to fully involve in learning the sea-vast oceans of Dharma, let alone understanding the purpose of cultivation. Just felt that Venerable Master Hua was very real, and I had an urge to be part of his community. Unsure of the specifics of my involvement, I joined a student

道能做什麼？所以在2001年跟隨從臺灣到聖城參加「夏令營」的小朋友一起造訪聖城。

因緣巧合，跟恒貞師長談了兩次；主要想瞭解此地學生的背景，以及學校對老師在教學上的要求，以便作為將來退休以後，來此當義務老師的準備。

當時我的生涯規劃是繼續進修，目的不只是為了拿學位，而是因為遇到一位很好的老師。他好在哪裏呢？聽他的課讓我發現，我過去大學四年、研究所四年所念過的書等於沒有念過一樣。

老師嚴謹的治學態度讓我深刻地認識到學術研究的高度，所以我決定一邊教書，一邊當學生。只要時間上能排除困難，老師在大學部、碩士班、博士班的課，我全部都去旁聽，一切從頭學起，風雨無阻十多年。

相形之下，十多年的時間過去了，佛法上的學習就比較沒有動機、沒有系統；雖然沒有動機、沒有系統，可是卻有始料未及的結果。當初所堅持的學術研究，竟然在一念之間輕輕放下；於是決定提早退休，做自己想要做的事，以及到聖城實踐當初的諾言。

從去年八月到今天，五個月的接觸和觀察，高中生的課業比較繁重，但是不需要到補習班補習。相對於單純的學習環境，學校要求學生要有規律的生活作息，以及例行性的勞動服務，與富有傳承色彩的課外活動；緊湊的生活，消磨掉這些年輕人在課業學習以外多餘的時間與精力。相較於台灣學生的惡性補習，我覺得這種學習方式比較有助於他們身心的鍛鍊。

因為中文不是主要的科目，所以我可以不必趕進度。但是學生在文化背景上，不僅有中西之別，也有臺灣與中國大陸的差異；所以我必須盡快摸索出他們的程度，並挑選出適合的教材。

最後，在男校我決定以盛唐時期著名詩人王維的一封信，作為我瞭解這些學生的試金石。

summer camp to visit CTTB in 2001 to explore possibilities.

At CTTB, a casual arising of cause and conditions lent the opportunity for me to meet with Dharma Master Heng Jen and we discussed at length matters related to the school. My main objective was to gain some insights into the students and their backgrounds, as well as requirements for teacher qualifications. I could see myself becoming a member of the teaching staff as part of my post-retirement occupation.

My plan then was to continue my own education. The reason was not to pursue additional degrees but to learn more from a wise teacher I came to meet. What is good about him? His lectures in fact led me to realize that the knowledge that I studied during my four years of undergraduate and four years of graduate school was such that as if I have not studied anything at all.

With his strict and disciplined style of researching, he helped me understand the potential higher excellence in academic research. Thus I decided to split my time between being a teacher and a student so I could follow his classes as time permitted. I attended all his lectures ranging from undergraduate to post-graduate levels. I restarted my learning journey and have not given up since, rain or shine for the last ten years.

Ten years have come and gone. In contrast, my learning in Buddhadharmā is relatively less-motivated and without a well-structured system. Interestingly, when I look back, not only did this imperfect system bear no negative consequences, it instead came with inconceivable benefits. In a single thought, I felt all my research work was no longer relevant. I stopped insisting on pursuing further academically and dropping all my years of research work in this instance could not have been any easier. I decided to take early retirement. Nothing pressed me more than to move on at this moment with what I have always wanted to do, and that included coming to CTTB to materialize my initial promise.

From last August to today, the short past five months of interacting with the high school students revealed they have a demanding yet still manageable course load that additional tutoring is not necessary. Despite being surrounded in a pure and straightforward learning environment, the school insists that the students to live a rigorous residential life and also participate in a life beyond classroom involving routine community labor and extracurricular activities with rich flavor of heritage. This busy schedule intends to wear off those youth's extra time and energy outside of curriculum. In comparison with Taiwan where the students rely on intensive tutoring at critical moments, I find that the model of the CTTB school program is a better fit for students both at the physical and intellectual levels.

As the Chinese language is not the core subject, my teaching schedule at CTTB is quite relaxed. Where the challenge rises is from the diverse backgrounds of the students. For culturally (western and Asia) and ethnically (between China and Taiwan), the level of Chinese understanding can be very different for students of the same age. This urges me to quickly find the appropriate and middle-ground teaching materials suitable for all of them.

So, I decided to use a letter by Wang Wei, a well-known poet from the Tang Dynasty, as a test to validate my understanding about these students' Chinese level of the boy school.

由於中國古文大部份是作者一生情感、志向、經歷的記錄，寫實的成份多於虛構，作品和作者之間很難切割；所以在解讀作品之前，一定要先介紹作者。

為了顧及學生文化背景上的差異，對作者作品的講解最好能深入淺出，以免學生消化不良。所以最後我對王維的生平，決定用下面的文字作開場白：

王維是中國古代盛唐時期著名詩人，多才多藝；除了擅長創作近體詩之外，並且通曉音律，在繪畫、書法方面也有很高的造詣。

王維中年的時候喜歡佛理，晚年選擇在終南山過著半官半隱的生活，作品風格因為淡遠閒靜，故有「詩佛」之稱。

原本以為簡單扼要介紹完王維的生平，接下來就可以直接講解作品本文，沒想到有學生舉手發問：「老師！『半官半隱』是什麼意思？」原本認為沒有必要解釋的地方，結果學生不明白，我心裏斟酌該怎麼解釋。

王維雖然生於佛教家庭，他的母親篤信佛教，長年持戒坐禪；但是王維年輕的時候，實際上是相當熱衷功名的。中年以後因為政治生涯的起伏，晚年又因為「安史之亂」的影響，所以選擇在終南山，過著「心懷山林，身在魏闕」的生活。

這些曲折的心路歷程，對於十五歲左右的大男孩而言，他們有興趣聽嗎？能明白嗎？更何況「半官半隱」是一種心境，在生活形態上應是不拘一格的。

沒想到一位同學不假思索地說：「『半官半隱』就是早上開車去上班，下午去拜佛。」我聽了嚇一跳！他的『半官半隱』是上午一半，下午一半。不過學生率真的答覆，讓我覺得很可愛也很有趣。

答案雖然不是很正確，可是我很珍惜他們給我的回應；因為從這些互動的過程中，我才能瞭解學生理解、思考這些文章的方式，以及他們遇到哪些困難？還有他們的潛力在哪裏？

Many ancient Chinese literatures are records of lifetime expressions, ambitions, and experiences of the authors. Most frequently, the authors emphasize more on reality than on fiction in their work thus blurring the line between their life and their master pieces. It is therefore recommended to be first acquainted with the author's background prior to interpreting the work.

With the diverse background of the students, the best approach to ease them into understanding an ancient piece of literature was to use straightforward and simple terms in my explanation. With that in mind, I drafted the following simple paragraph to introduce the biography of Wang Wei.

Wang Wei, a multi-talented poet in the Tang dynasty of the ancient China, was a gifted individual in the Tang Dynasty "modern style" poetry composition and a master in Chinese music, painting, and calligraphy. Midway through his life, he developed an interest in Buddhist philosophy and later partially withdrew to the Zhong Nan Mountains to live a semi-retired life while carrying out his official duties. In other words, he enjoyed a life of 'part officialdom and part seclusion'. Known for his simple, lofty and peaceful writing, he is often referred to as the 'Buddha of poetry'.

I was quite confident that this introduction was straightforward and simple until a student proved me wrong. He raised his hand and asked "what is meant by 'part officialdom and part seclusion'?" That reaction caught me by surprise as I felt the meaning of the phrase was quite obvious. I now struggled for an answer.

Wang Wei grew up in a Buddhist tradition. His mother was a devoted Buddhist who lived in strict accordance to the precepts and who practiced meditation all year-long. A young and energetic Wang Wei then was quite the opposite; rather keen to fame and official rank at the beginning of his career but later found himself entangled in a very agitated and political life. Added to the political turbulence was the event of the 'An Shi rebellion'. This incident was a catalyst to his decision to trade in his public profile for a secluded one by living in the Zhong Nan Mountains where he remained semi active only to fulfill his official obligations.

Was this heartfelt, momentous life journey not interesting enough to retain the attention of these fifteen year old boys or was their Chinese not sufficient to understand the basic of this piece of work particularly the figurative and abstract explanation of the phrase 'Part officialdom and part seclusion'? This abstract aspect importantly represents a psychological state of mind and can be taken or manifested in various forms.

A student from the crowd shouted out an answer. "That phrase simply means dividing your day in half. The morning half is driving to work, the latter half is spent in the Buddha hall". It is a surprising but very creative answer, nevertheless.

I wish there was more accuracy to the answer but I am already appreciative of the student's candidness. These classroom interactions actually shed a lot of light for me on the students' thought processes and allow me to work with

所以做父母以及做老師的人，有時不要太快也不要太急把答案講出來。給孩子還有學生多一點的時間，教導他們學會用耐心、勇氣去面對挫折，我相信我們都會有能力走出自己的路。

最後，我想說出我對學生的期勉，就是「學無止境」，「滿招損，謙受益」；此外，我還要感謝在大齋堂工作的法師和居士對四眾飲食的用心。

因為是第一次來聖城住這麼長的時間，對我來講，最困難的就是早上能夠很準時爬起來參加早課。但是只要克服心理上的一些障礙，其實早上四點起來，感覺真的是非常好。

第二件事情，感觸比較深的，就是聖城這裏不僅有出家人，還有許多常住的單身居士和家庭。因為是在高中教書的關係，所以接觸到很多學生的家長，他們真的是望子成龍、望女成鳳，對孩子的期望很高、很殷切；他們很重視中文，也希望孩子能夠把握機會學習中文。

◎待續

them to improve their areas of difficulties as well as to develop their potential.

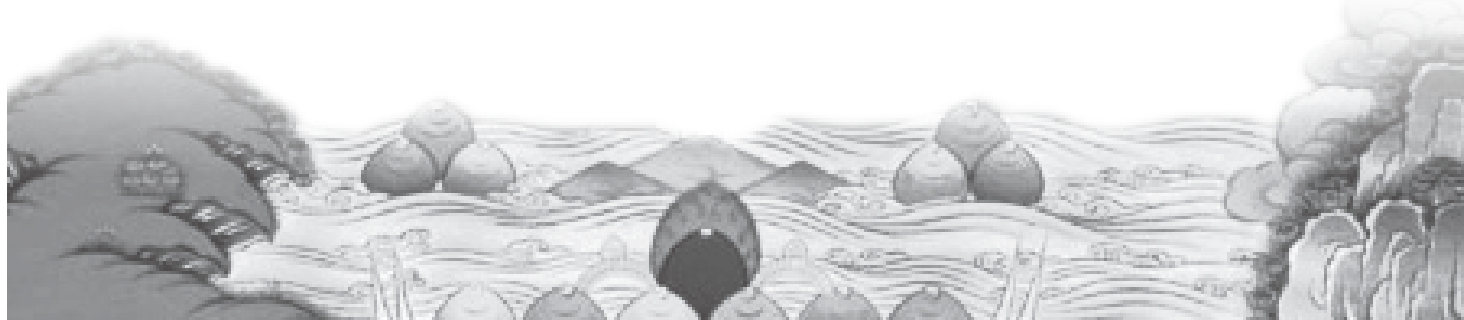
The same assessment goes to the parents. Rushing to the answer may not be the best solution. Instead, giving the children some extra time will help them sort through the problem in their own mind, to work on their patience and agility each time they face problems. I believe that we all have the ability to walk our own path.

Finally, I would like to offer my words of advice to the students. 'Knowledge has no limit'. 'Arrogance destroys, humbleness benefits'. I would also like to express my gratitude to all in-house personnel, Dharma Masters and laities included, for consistently providing many hearty meals on a day to day basis.

Since becoming a long-term resident at CTTB, my primary difficulty was to overcome the challenge of the early attendance of the morning recitation. Soon, I quickly learned that rising early at four in the morning brings out a better and healthier way of living.

The other good impression I like to share is the communal aspect of CTTB. This community includes monastics, single laymen as well as lay families. Being a teacher in this mixed environment, I have a lot of opportunities to meet and speak with the parents. I come to understand the high expectation they have of the child's education. It was clear and obvious to me that they want their child to excel and exceed. They therefore place a great emphasis on the Chinese language subject and hope their child will take full advantage of the program.

◎To be continued



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