

Managing Public Affairs

辦公室

今天我想先從電話開始講起。為什麼從電話開始講呢？因為本來每過一段時間，就要來報告一下我在辦公室的所見所聞，及工作上的一些經驗。既然行政辦公室是資訊集散中心，是聖城對外的一個窗口，所以電話也是很重要的一部分；無論過去、現在，還是未來，辦公室都會有很多電話。在上人還沒圓寂的時候，個人

就有很多機會，經常接到上人打來的電話；這也是我們很重要的一部份工作。

上人通常每天會打電話過來，他對所有的分支道場都很關心，都去了解。大家有問題的時候也藉上人打電話來的機會，跟上人請示。上人非常慈悲，除了答覆我們的問題，還會關心一下有沒有他的信件，政府有沒有來信，我們在電話裡向上人逐項報告。如果有多一點的時間，上人就會在電話裡教導接電話的人，給我們講某些事情在以前佛教叢林裡，是怎麼

Tonight, I'm going to begin with the "telephone". Why? As you all know, I work in the administration office, and from time to time, I will come and share what I see and hear at the front desk. In the administration office, we receive numerous phone calls every day; the telephone plays a very important role in our job. You can say that it is our window to the outside world.

When the Venerable Master was still with us, he would call the administration office daily to inquire about the branch monasteries. I answered many of his calls. Sometimes, as we were talking to him over the phone, we would ask him personal questions, which he would always answer compassionately. If he was not busy, he would explain to us how to put the rules and guidelines of a traditional Chinese temple into practice. Occasionally, he would tell us stories about some of his disciples to give us some references that could help us do a better job.

Once, during a meeting at the International Translation Institution, the phone rang; someone answered it and reported that the caller was from CTTB and was asking for a person in the meeting. After the Venerable



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From *Five Hundred Arhats*
Southern Song Dynasty —Zhou Jichang, Li Tinggui

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做的；跟我們講他的弟子裡哪一個人的個性是怎麼樣的、背景是怎麼樣的，讓我們做事情的時候有所參考。

有一次在ITI（國際譯經院）上人主持會議的時候，電話鈴響了。接到電話的人就喊：「某某人請你過來接一下電話。」上人就問：「是誰打來的電話啊？」接電話的人就說：「某某人從萬佛城打來的，他要找誰。」上人就說：「萬佛城這個人有什麼資格用公家的電話？把它掛掉！」上人這麼明快的處置，對在場的每個人都是一個機會教育；被掛了電話的那個人，也會受到很大教訓。

上人也教導我們節儉的家風，他會親自看賬單。住在聖城的老弟子Roger曾經告訴我，有一次上人拿了一堆他簽過的財務申請表，一張一張地跟他核對，說：「你為什麼這麼輕易地就簽了財務申請表，讓廟上的錢這麼容易地就花出去了？」他趕緊跪在那裡一張一張地懺悔，跟上人報告他當時為什麼簽字。

以前在寺廟管理財務和知客的人，都要是證果的。為什麼呢？因為他明白因果，明心見性就比較不容易錯因果。假如沒有證果的，也需要深信因果、畏懼因果的人，才能做財務和知客這個重要的位置。

講到接電話，上人還在的時候，1992、1993年上人身體不太好，碰到皈依法會的時候就會由他的弟子代理，通常是在這裡的延生堂辦三皈依。在皈依快結束的時候，上人會打電話到辦公室，告訴我們轉達給今天皈依的那二、三十個人一些話。我們都皈依過了，知道師父會講些什麼；即使別的弟子代替他打皈依，他依然要把他的願力找辦公室的人代為轉達，就是說：「凡是皈依的弟子，一定要好好修行，要在師父之前成佛；凡

Master learned the caller's name, he said, "This person is not authorized to use the office telephone for personal use, hang up!" We all learned a lesson that day.

The Venerable Master taught us to use money wisely and frugally. Roger, one of the Master's old disciples, told me this story. The Venerable Master was very careful about how CTTB's funds were spent, so he would check the bills himself. One day, he took a stack of approved check requests to Roger and asked him, "Why did you approve all of these requests and let people spend money in such a careless manner?" Horrified, Roger immediately knelt down and repented, explaining why he approved the requests one by one.

Traditionally, the people in charge of the money or being ushers in temples were those who had already attained fruition. Why? Because they understand cause and effect and have seen their true nature, they do not make mistakes easily. At the very least, if they are to hold such positions, these people must deeply believe in cause and effect.

When the Venerable Master's health began deteriorating in 1992-93, he could not host the ceremony for taking refuge anymore, and his disciples would have to substitute for him. Before the ceremony ended, the Venerable Master would always call the administration office and tell us to pass some words to the new disciples. The most important one was, "All disciples who take refuge with me must cultivate vigorously and attain Buddhahood before I do. I will wait for anyone who has yet to become a Buddha." This served to exhort the new disciples to bring forth the Bodhi resolve. The second message to be passed on was a reminder to bow to the Buddhas ten thousand times after taking refuge.

Once in a while, we receive some very "unusual" phone calls. In 1992 I answered a bomb threat call from a young man, who said that there was a bomb in our office that would blow up in 20 minutes. We called the police, who arrived with search dogs and looked everywhere, but it turned out to be a practical joke. I sincerely hope that this young man will reform his actions and go towards the Bodhi path.

Another time, I received a call from a laywoman from New Jersey who regularly makes donations to CTTB. She often called us whenever

是沒有成佛的，師父都等著你們。」這不僅僅是勸發菩提心，而且相當於已經簽了支票——師父在那邊等著你們。第二個交代當然就是：「皈依之後，回去要拜佛一萬拜。」

在辦公室有時候會有一些特別的電話，我記得就曾經接過一個定時炸彈的威脅電話。是在1992年的時候，我接到一個西方的年輕人打來的電話，他用英文對我講：「20分鐘之內，在你的辦公室內會有一個定時炸彈爆炸。」當然接到這種電話只有一種選擇，那就是報警。警察來了，帶警犬徹查了一遍，發現沒事，只是一個惡作劇而已，虛驚一場。我非常希望這個年輕人能夠改邪歸正，以後走向菩提道上。

另外，有時候也會接到很好的電話，是善知識的電話。這個善知識是位女居士，在美國東部新澤西州開公司，她也經常捐錢供養三寶，每月定期寫支票過來。有時她有事打電話過來，是由不同的人接，有的態度可能就不太好。有一次她打電話過來，很嚴肅地講：「我自己是開公司的，我選擇對外接電話的員工肯定是態度非常好、很有素養的人。你們還有很多需要改進的地方，你們不只是想怎麼回答就怎麼回答，你們是代表萬佛城在講話。」我聽完就有點傻了，但也覺得這是苦口的良藥。

長時間接電話是人們不喜歡做的事情，我以前在公家機關上班時，通常是一些專職的人員在接電話。我知道長期接電話，難免讓人心情會不太好；我們有不好的情緒啊，或是長期的疲勞等等，這都是需要自我反省的，我們確實有很多值得改善的餘地。

我們接的電話有很多是問君康素餐館什麼時候要開啦，或是訂一道素菜，問學校怎麼入學啦，學生的學費多少，問如何來萬佛城的交通，問怎麼參加法會，怎麼做義工，問來參加法會住宿收費等等，各式各樣的問題很多。

還有包括問我們花錢花得很多的電話PO（採購訂單），這是很勉強，但是常常不得已必須在電話裡給人家PO的號碼，然後錢就這樣花出去了。我曾經問果露，師父在的時候，你們是不是也經常拿PO在電話裡買東西？他說：「沒有啊。」「為什麼現在有呢？」他說：「以前師父在的時候，你需要一個零件啊、材料啊，就到萬佛城裡自己去找，舊的東西能用就用。現在都是請工人，工人的時間都要算工資的；讓工人在這邊等兩個小時，那工錢都要比我買零件的錢貴了，所以就要買。」我想如果是我們自己義工的話，沒有這個工錢的壓力，那麼我們城裡頭的一些人家捐

she had questions; sometimes the people answering the phone might not have had the best attitude. She told me very sternly: "I operate a business and the customer service representatives in my company are required to treat customers with respect and courtesy. These aspects need improving in your organization. As people who are representing CTTB, you should be polite and professional." I was shocked to hear this, but it definitely made me think.

Answering phone calls day in and day out is quite boring and tiring—not a job that many people enjoy. It influences our emotions and in turn reflects on our attitude. When we become tired and get into a bad mood, we should take care of it and not let it affect our job. This lady was right: we should acknowledge this problem and improve it. She truly is a good knowing advisor.

There are all different kinds of phone calls we received. For instance, we receive many phone calls from people asking questions about CTTB's Jun Kang restaurant, the schools, or transportation to CTTB, attending Dharma Assemblies, volunteering, and etc.

One type of phone call that I dislike the most is PO number requests. When people call to request for purchase numbers, we are always very reluctant to give it to them, because it means we are going to spend money again. One time I asked Guo Zhan whether people often called for PO numbers when the Venerable Master was still with us. He said, "Of course not." "Then why is it so common now?" He replied, "When the Master was still with us, if you needed parts or materials, you had to rummage through the storage room first; we tried to reuse everything in CTTB as much as possible. Nowadays, we hire outside help. It would be cheaper for us to buy the materials than for them to wait for two hours while we searched for the parts." I believe that if we were still doing the work by ourselves, we would be able to reuse a lot of the things in CTTB and also save a lot of money. It is easy to become wasteful after a life of frugality, but hard to become frugal after living wastefully.

Everyone in the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas must follow the Venerable Master's Six Great Principles of not fighting, not being greedy, and etc. One of my Dharma brothers explained it to me in this way: the "not" in the "not fighting, not being greedy, and etc." is for beginners to practice. It can be compared to telling children not to steal or not to fight. But for people who have been cultivating for a long time, they must bring it up to a higher level and practice no fighting, no greed, no seeking, and etc. At this point, one will have achieved the Six Great Principles.

The Venerable Master said that eradicating fighting and greed

的舊東西，還是要找來用；由儉入奢易，由奢入儉難。

我們萬佛城講六大宗旨：不爭、不貪等等。有一次我的一個兄長，也是在家的居士，他對我講：這個「不」字其實是對初學者來講，不要爭、不要貪，就像叫小孩子不要亂拿東西，不要打架。但對於老參，那就要更進一步做到無爭、無貪、無求……；你連這個爭和貪的念頭，完完全全都沒有了，自然而然就會做到不爭、不貪了。

上人也講到，無爭、無貪不容易。我們應當從哪裡下手呢？最近正好看到《華嚴經淺釋》有一段，上人說：「必須破了無明，才沒有貪心；如果沒有破，那麼貪心是不會消除了。最大的貪心就是男貪女，女貪男；如果你把這個貪心斷了，你就是證果的聖人。美國最需要的就是賢聖僧、開悟證果的人，需要正法。欲念斷了，怎麼說怎麼對；欲念不斷，怎麼說都不行。假如有人說他是聖人，那就要看他欲念斷了沒有；如果沒斷，那還是凡夫。」

今天晚課之後我往辦公室走，剛好Roger跟我講：「啊！多麼吉祥的一個現象！」他看到我們往生堂對面的蓮花池開得非常地好，我也看了下，大概開了有三十來朵蓮花。在西方極樂世界，蓮花是我們將來化生的父母；我就對Roger講：「你應該關心你的父母；不只是在這裡賞心悅目而已。」父母生我們這個色身，法身慧命的生長則要靠佛恩、師長恩來培育。所以經過這座蓮花池，我們就要像剛才近梵師說的：「要有欣求極樂、厭離娑婆的心，要常常憶念法身的父母；不僅僅是念娑婆世界的父母。」

is not easy. Where should we start? In his *commentary of the Avatamsaka Sutra*, the Venerable Master said, "In order to eradicate our greed, we must first eliminate our own ignorance; if ignorance has not been eliminated, then greed will not disappear. The greatest greed that plagues humanity is the greed for sexual desires. If you are able to cut off such greed, then you are a sage who has realized fruition. America is in great need of sages and cultivators who have realized fruition and can propagate the proper Dharma. The most important thing in cultivation is to cut off desire. If a person says that he or she is a sage, you can judge the truth of this statement by observing whether this person still has desires or not. If this person still has desires, then he or she is still an ordinary person."

As I was walking back to the administration office after evening ceremony earlier, I happened to bump into Roger. Looking at the thirty-some lotus flowers blooming in the lotus pond outside the Rebirth Hall, he said, "What an auspicious sight!" People reborn in the Pure Land are born from lotus flowers. I told Roger: "You should care for your future parents; don't just enjoy looking at them." Our parents in this life gave us the flesh body, but our Dharma body is nourished with the kindness of the Buddhas and our teachers. Just now, Dharma Master Jin Fan said: "We should remember the parents of our Dharma body, not just our parents in the Saha World. We should seek rebirth in the Pure Land and be determined to leave the Saha World."



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