



Instilling Goodness Books: How it Began

育良童書的緣起

A talk given by Bhikshuni Jin Rou at the San Francisco Main Library on November 3, 2018

Chinese Translated by Allen Huang

比丘尼近柔法師2018年11月3日講於舊金山總圖書館

黃建華 中譯

During my first years of teaching at the girls' school, around 1983, I was delighted to find some booklets on Buddhism made by the nuns who were teachers. They were handmade with simple line drawings and cut-outs, but the writing was more for adults. No matter; they were gold to me. They were the only Buddhist books that we had. Many times, I said, "I wish someone would write children's books with simple language and beautiful pictures." Little did I know that I would be the one!

It all started by telling stories from the Sutras to my students and having them paint pictures along with the stories. I said, "Umm, these are lovely pictures. Maybe I can make them into books." So, I made a vow to write Buddhist books for children all over the world in their own languages. To carry out my vows, I began to take classes in writing picture books, which led me to the University of Washington where I received a certificate in Writing Children's Books.

The first book was *The Giant King Turtle* (English & Chinese) with illustrations by Candy, a student in the 5th grade. The next book was a collection of Buddhist stories that I adapted for the Buddhist curriculum for the Buddhist Education Foundation of the United Kingdom. The artists were two sisters, Tara and Cintya Kandahsari, who painted it with the vivid colors of Indonesia, from where they came.

After the Venerable Master's passing, I took to writing his biography, hoping to keep his spirit in the hearts of future children, thus *The Kind Monk*. Artist Huang Yun-Song, who is from the same province in China as the Venerable Master, illustrated the book, capturing the people and colors of the countryside, in ink. When I read stories from *The Kind Monk*, children are enthralled and gather in every word as if the Master were there with them.

大約在1983年，我在女校教書的第一年，我很高興找到了一些跟佛法有關的小冊子。這些小冊子是之前在女校教書的比丘尼法師們手工做的，有著簡單的手繪線條和一些剪貼，但是書寫的內容比較適合成人。然而沒關係，這些小冊子對我而言仍然是珍寶，因為這些是我們僅有的童書。我常常說：我真希望有人能夠寫童書，有著淺顯的文字和美麗的圖片。萬萬想不到，我就變成這個人。

一開始，我先講佛經故事給我的學生聽，然後叫學生們照著這些故事畫畫。之後我對著自己說：「嗯，這些圖畫很賞心悅目，說不定我可以把它們收集到書中。」所以呢，我就發了一個願，我願為全世界的小朋友用他們的語言做童書的創作。如何去執行我的心願呢？我就開始參加一些圖畫書的學習課程，後來我還到了華盛頓州立大學，拿到了一個童書創作的執照。

第一本書是《大龜王》（中英雙語），插畫是由五年級的學生凱蒂所畫的。第二本書是佛經故事的合集，我是根據在英國的佛學教育促進會所定的課程綱要所創作的。插畫是由兩姊妹陳慧龍和辛西亞提供，她們是印尼人，她們的畫中呈現出印尼色彩繽紛的世界。

Books on Buddhists ecology rang in my mind. I discovered that Christy, my niece-in-law, could paint amazing animals, so that evolved into a series on kindness to animals and respect for the Earth: The series includes the *Golden Feather* (emphasizing kindness to animals), *Come Back, O Tiger!* (dedicated to saving the forest), and a future book called *Mindful Monkeys* (conserving water wisely).

Under the Bodhi Tree, the life of the Buddha, was beautifully illustrated by Heng Fa from Malaysia, yet sat on the shelf for years, with little notice. Recently, the Buddhist Text Translation Society (BTTS) received an email from an editor of a prominent Buddhist publishing company, asking permission to buy the rights to the book, which she considered to be beautifully written and illustrated. She wanted to translate it into Vietnamese and distribute it worldwide. Eyebrows went up! BTTS translators got busy and translated the book into Vietnamese right away.

The last two books were born out of the sutras—*Snow-Covered Peaks* and *The Buddha's Helper*. One December night, in Doug Power's class on the Long Discourse of the Amitabha Sutra, we came upon an exquisitely written paragraph about what Bodhisattvas are like. A student, Murrah Boswell, said, "This paragraph would make a beautiful children's book." Doug looked at me. Within a month, I carved out the script for *Snow-Covered Peaks: What Are Bodhisattvas Like?* Then Heng Ching Shr, with her simple line drawings, and Amandine Dam, with her stunning colors and flowing design, took the book beyond ordinary imagination. A team of three was formed.

**Bodhisattvas are like snow-covered peaks,
because they are pure and lofty.
They are like the great earth,
because they nurture all things equally.**

Over the years, I worked on a book about Guan Yin, but could not finish it. One day Terri Nicholson gave me a script that she wrote about why children should recite Guan Yin's name, but didn't know what to do with it. I knew in an instant what to do - put our scripts together and write a section of the Lotus Sutra for children, called Guan Yin, The Buddha's Helper. Again, Heng Ching Shr

在上人圓寂之後，我開始著手上人傳記的創作，一位慈悲的和尚，我希望上人的精神常留在未來小朋友的心中。畫家黃雲松是上人的同鄉，提供所有插畫的創作。他用毛筆，生動的捕捉到了鄉間的人物和色彩。當我唸著書中的故事給小朋友們聽，小朋友都被書中的每一個字給深深吸引著，就像是上人在小朋友們的身旁。

佛教生態學的童書主題，振動到了我的心絃。我發現到我的姪女，克莉絲蒂，很會畫動物。結果一系列對動物慈心，尊重地球等有關的童書就出現了：包括了《金羽毛》（對動物慈心），《回來，喔老虎》（保護森林），和未來會出版的《專心的獼猴》（節約用水）。

《在菩提樹下》，《佛陀的一生》，書中美麗的插畫是由馬來西亞恒法法師所畫的，這本書躺在書架上很多年了，並沒有得到太多注意。最近佛經翻譯委員會，收到了一封電子郵件，它是由一個具規模的佛教圖書出版社寄來的。她想要跟我們購買版權，她覺得這本書文字內容和插畫都非常精美。她想要把它翻譯成越南文，並且在全世界出版它。我們的眉毛都豎起來了，我們佛經翻譯委員會的翻譯員，立即著手，開始把它翻譯成越南文。

最後兩本童書是從佛經中產生出來的：《白雪覆蓋著山頂》，和《觀音：佛陀的幫手》。在一個十二月晚間的課堂上，果勒居士教授的無量壽經課程中，我們讀到一段非常優美的文字描述著菩薩，其中一位學生，莫瑞·鮑斯威爾說：這段文字，可以化成一本美麗的童書。果勒居士就轉頭看著我。不到一個月的時間，我就完成了《白雪覆蓋著山頂》的草稿：「云何是菩薩？」恆青師用樸實的線條來畫，譚敏瑩用驚艷的色彩繪圖，把這本書帶到了一個超俗的想像境界。三人小組就此展開。

**菩薩就像白雪覆蓋的山頂，
因為他們是如此的崇高純淨。
他們就像大地，平等地滋養著萬物。**

在過去的幾年，我開始著手進行關於觀音菩薩的童書，但是都無法完成。某一天，果參居士給我她的手稿，是關於小朋友為何要唸觀音菩薩，

and Amandine lifted this book to a wonder beyond wonders.

If you visit, dharmaaudio.org, a complimentary Parent and Teacher Guide and a recording of the kindergarten/first grade choir from Instilling Goodness School chanting Guan Yin's name in Chinese, Sanskrit and English are available.

About that time, after talking with Terri, Jin Jian Shr said, "We need to get our children's books out into the world." So a website was created called buddhismforkids.net. With its outstanding design and Buddhist Facts section for kids, the website has made it to the top of the results if you Google "Buddhism for children", and our book sales have been increasing. Check out the website.

Excited about the new Guan Yin book, Eileen Hu, a BTTS volunteer who focuses on marketing, had it translated into Spanish first. Others have translated it into Chinese and Vietnamese. Now, it is also being translated into French. Could this be the result of making vows?

Eileen was able to have The Buddha's Helper listed in two very prominent book catalogs—"Foreword Review" and "Booklist". See the short quote below from "Booklist".

"This is a beautiful book, both in appearance and sentiment, and will be a compliment to world religions collections." by Kathleen McBroom.

Here is list of books in the making:

- *Amitabha's Land of Happiness*
- *Inside Out, Outside In* (Meditation book for children; song by Dharma Master Sure and David Rounds)
- *Earth Store Sutra* for children
- *Bowing for Peace* (Three steps, one bow to CTTB)
- *Four Buddhas and Ten Great Bodhisattvas*
- *Sudhana*

In conclusion, books are created by teams. Every player is equally important—the writer, illustrator, book designer, publisher, and marketer. An invitation is always open to all who are interested in writing or helping create children's books for Instilling Goodness Books. ❀

她不知道要如何處理它。我當下就知道要怎麼去做——把我們的手稿合在一起，創作出小朋友適合閱讀的法華經——《觀音：佛陀的幫手》。恒青師和譚敏瑩再度幫忙，把這本書提昇到非凡的境界。

點入這個網站www.dharmaaudio.org 內有給家長和老師免費索取的導讀，以及幼稚園小朋友合唱的觀音，有中文，梵文和英文版本。

大概這段時間，近簡師跟我說：我們應該要把我們的童書介紹給全世界。於是這個網站，buddhismforkids.net就建立了。因為這個網站設計精美，列舉出小朋友適合的佛學觀念，因此在谷歌的搜尋引擎，兒童佛學關鍵字的搜尋上，我們這網站是出現在首頁，結果童書銷售量大增，看看這網站吧。

這令人興奮的新書《觀音：佛陀的幫手》出版了，佛經翻譯委員會的行銷義工，胡愛蓮先把它翻譯了西班牙文，其他人再把它翻譯了中文和越南文。現在正在翻譯法文，這些都是發願的感應嗎？

胡愛蓮奇蹟般地把《觀音：佛陀的幫手》成功地放上了兩個重要著名的書錄上：「前言書評」和「書目」。這是「書目」上的介紹短文：

「這是本美麗的書，不是只有它的外觀，還有它的觀點。它是呈獻給了世界宗教的一個珍藏品。」凱塞琳·麥克布魯姆如是說到。

《阿彌陀佛極樂土》

《內而外，外而內》

（兒童禪修專書，是由恆實法師和果舟居士合寫的一首歌）

兒童版的《地藏經》

《為和平禮拜》（三步一拜到萬佛城）

《四位佛陀和十大菩薩》

《善財童子》

最後總結，這是一個團隊共同創作的結果，每一個隊友都是一樣的重要，撰稿、插畫、版面設計、出版、行銷。諸位如果有興趣對童書寫作或是幫忙創作，我們育良童書對諸位的邀請都是開放著的。以下是正在創作中的童書。❀