

Story from Tang

October 28th 2005

Last weekend, I was invited to tell stories to a group of teenager prisoners. I think stories reach out to people in many different ways. And in December I am going to the Ah-li Mountain with the Taiwan Root Medical Peace Corps to serve for the native Indians. I am sure that I will learn different stories as I travel and meet different people.

The discussion with the teenager prisoners turned out to be a great experience. At beginning of the session, I designed an activity to help them introducing themselves, and then I asked them to write down three things they want to do the most at present or in the future. I wait for them to share with me anything about themselves. By doing so I shared many little stories which related to the subject of the day first, then some of them shared theirs stories as the time went on.

During the break time a few boys did not leave the room and they came to me to chat. They told me why they were there for reasons, such as violation in copy rights for music CD sales, traffic violations(driving under age and had an accident), stealing money for debt in computer games, Hanging out in bars and e-cafe with drug and alcohol related problem, school drop out gangsters fighting... I was touched by how much they felt comfortable about telling their stories. Originally I was going to talk for an hour, but I ended up leading the entire 3 hours. We had a good start I think.

The stories I shared with them were all true stories which I learned from others, and they reminded them about their own personal experiences. I believe storytelling could do more than lecturing. They seemed to like my stories and the court judge told me that she was impressed with the way I reinforced law and legal messages into the stories I shared. I enjoyed the discussion very much. After the three hours of session the court asked me to lead another session in 2006. So I will be seeing this group for the rest of the year, I am looking forward to it. Also I received a lovely loaf of fresh baked bread from the judge who asked her husband to bake for me. It was so good that Jim, Michun and I ate it with great joy for lunch.

Yesterday I was in Chunghua(a city from a county north of Yunlin) for a 200 hundred teachers reading seminar. That was the first time I have so many teachers in one session, so I designed activities for them to participate rather than I did the entire speech. I think they had a lot fun and many of them came to ask me questions and were very interested in the storybook making projects I started in my County. But I was so tired that I fell into asleep while I was on the train on the way back. And I received more and more invitations to places

to share my stories each day. This morning I am going to be interviewed by one of the radio stations, I am very busy with all these events. And of course, I still have all the storyteller training programs in Yunlin County. There are more than 200 teachers signed up for the training session I designed in the next 6 weeks in Yunlin County.

Today is Michun's 14th birthday. She is going out with her dad's night class for a party, and we will have a party for her with her friends tomorrow at home. One of my friends is baking the cake and cookies for her.

We miss you and wish you could be here to share the cake and cookies and stories with us.

Tang