Some of the highlights of the DRBA trip to Beijing in October of 2007 include visiting Northeast China, which is the birthplace of Master Hsuan Hua, the Founder of our Buddhist Association. We traveled with a delegation of monks, nuns and laypeople and saw another face of Buddhism in China. Bhikshu Heng Lai and I represented the monks of Tathagata Monastery; and our first destination was Daputi (Great Bodhi) Monastery. This new monastery resides outside Jixian Xian, amid the cornfields of Northeastern Heilongjiang province. The monastery is six hours by bus from Harbin, and only three hours from the Russian border. In the continental USA, Heilongjiang province would be the equivalent of the state of Maine. Autumn had already arrived and the trees were showing the reds and yellows of fall.

During our DRBA delegation to Beijing last year, the abbot of Daputi Monastery, Master Zhengxiu, lead a group of thirteen disciples to rendezvous with our delegation and invite us to visit and speak Dharma. The group traveled 24 hours to make their invitation; such sincerity impressed our group and we agreed to make the trip to Heilongjiang this year.

My first impression of the Northeast China was flat, fertile farmland, covered with vast fields of corn. Unfortunately the rain didn’t fall for forty-five days during the critical days of summer, and all over Northeast China the enormous harvest of corn was parched and dry. This is another casualty of global warming.

The monks and laity at Daputi Monastery met our delegation with an unforgettable, enthusiastic reception: a brass band, a red carpet, and bouquets of flowers for every member! During our visit we spoke for two days to overflowing crowds. Following the talks a lively question and answer session showed that in the Northeastern countryside, Buddhist disciples have the same concerns as people anywhere: how to cultivate the Way, how to benefit from practice of the Dharma, and how to find happiness and peace of mind.
地方的人們都有同樣的關切：如何修行，如何從佛法實踐中受益，如何在這世界上找到幸福和內心的安寧。

我們離開集賢縣，在住持正修法師的陪同下參訪給爾濱的極樂寺，該寺位於哈爾濱的市中心，我們在此講法。在極樂寺住持靜波法師引領我們參觀寺廟四周、圖書館和佛學院。該寺在文化大革命時期被紅衛兵破壞，於2004年重建；靜波法師已使該寺成爲黑龍江省佛教協會的中心。

當我們走過許多庭院和大門，來到主要演講大廳，這時已有二百多人在等待。他們是來聽我們——聆聽自己的家鄉的名人、「旅美高僧」宣化上人之美國弟子說法。約有七百人坐在大殿裏聽法，另有一千三百多人排坐在大殿外會場的四周。我介紹宣化上人事蹟、介紹萬佛聖城，以及上人如何把佛教帶到西方。人們聽到我的洋腔洋調的普通話覺得很有趣，我得到的印象是，他們是來聽法語。同時也想見見這些藍眼睛、白皮膚的洋法師（本人、恆來和比丘尼恆良）。

每次提到有關道德時，我注意到聽眾的反應：善與惡，對與錯，清淨和腐敗，誘惑與意志力的題目等，都受到聽眾的關注。事實上，上人多年來都極力強調品德的重要，我也清楚地看到在東北的佛友，對善良品格的興趣。道理講得多高妙尚在其次；如果能真正躬行實踐佛法，並改變你的

mind in the world.

We departed Jixian Xian and Abbot Zhengxiu accompanied us to Harbin, where we spoke at Jile (Utmost Happiness) Monastery, a relatively new temple located in the heart of downtown Harbin. Abbot Jingbo gave us a tour of the grounds, the library, and the Buddhist Studies Academy. Jile Monastery was destroyed by the Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution and then rebuilt in 2004. Abbot Jingbo has established the monastery as the center for the Buddhist Association of Heilongjiang.

As we walked through the many courtyards and gates we reached the main lecture hall to find over 2,000 people waiting. They had come to hear us, the American disciples of their hometown celebrity,
Master Hsuan Hua, whose epithet is “lu mei gao seng”, the noble monk who traveled to America. About 700 hundred close disciples sat inside the large lecture hall; more than 1300 people lined the walkways outdoors on all sides of the hall. My talk related stories of Master Hsuan Hua, the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, and how Master Hua introduced Buddhism to the West. People listened with gracious good humor to my Mandarin Chinese; I had the impression that they had come to inspect the blue-eyed, pink-skinned “yang fashi” (foreign monastics) (myself, Heng Lai and Bhikshuni Heng Liang) as much as to hear the Dharma.

I noticed that the audience responded to every mention of virtue; good and evil, right and wrong, purity and corruption, temptation and will power were topics that caught the attention of the listeners. In fact Master Hua strongly emphasized virtuous character over the years; I could clearly see the interest in wholesome personality among the Northeastern audience. It mattered less how lofty your principles were; if you actually practiced the Dharma and changed your perspective, it counted more.

During lunch at the vegetarian restaurant connected to the monastery, a young woman made an offering of a box full of sound files she had downloaded from Master Hua’s teachings into DVD format — it represented hours of devoted work. The students of the Buddhist Studies Academy came and bowed to us and made an offering on behalf of their school. Master Jingbo made a joke—the name of the Buddhist Studies Academy in Chinese is “Ha Er Bin Fo Xue Yuan.” When you shorten it for convenience it is Ha Fo Xue Yuan which is also the name in Chinese of Harvard University. So when you say it that way, his students in Harbin attend Ha Fo Xue Yuan, or Harvard University.

We boarded a bus for a ride out of town to Master Hua’s birthplace near Lalin Station in Shuangcheng (Twin Cities) County. We met Dharma Master Guo Jie, the Abbot of Huazang Monastery, near the Venerable Master’s village. He has plans to create a memorial hall at the spot where Master Hua sat by his mother’s grave to cultivate Filial Respect. Master Hua’s village is still tiny; our big bus didn’t attempt to go down the small lane and get closer. We saw the rooftops of the houses surrounded by fertile farmland and tall corn stalks; each disciple in his or her heart made a silent connection to the land, wind and water that produced our source of wisdom.

We spent the night in Harbin and then on the way back to Beijing, stopped in Tianjin at the second largest Buddhist convent in China, Jian Fu Guan Yin Si (Blessings Guan Yin Monastery). The abbot there is Miao Xian Bhikshuni, who greeted us with courtesy and said that she knew about the work of CTTB and Master Hua. She seemed very
的上人出生地，附近
的雙城市拉林鎮。我
們在上人小時候所住
的村子附近，見到華
藏寺住持果杰法師，
他已計劃在師父上人
墓葬孝處，建立一
座聖母院作爲紀念。
上人所住的村子是很
小的，我們的大巴士
無法靠進，只好停在
車道上。我們看到房
子的四周環繞肥沃的農田和高大
的玉米杆；在場的每一個弟子，
對這塊產生我們智慧源泉的土
地、風、和水，在他或她們的心
中澎湃出無聲的交響。

返北京途中，我們路過中國
第二大的尼眾佛學院——薦福觀
音寺。該寺住持妙賢比丘尼禮數
邀到接待我們，並說，她對萬佛
聖城的使命和宣化上人素有耳
聞。妙賢比丘尼看來很能幹，她
的比丘尼僧團正在茁壯成長，並
忙著在天津弘揚正法。她說，大
部分的信徒來到寺院只是燒香、
拜佛、祈福，這很難把另一層次
的佛法介紹給他們。我支持並鼓
勵她，並分享在西方我們也是做
同樣的工作——只是在人人都愛
打坐，並認爲在蒲團上就是佛教
的開始和終結的異國。我們正嘗
試對參禪行者引進其他領域的佛
法，並加深他們對大乘佛法修行
的欣賞。

我們已達成此次訪問的目
地，比丘尼來和本人就先回舊金
山，而比丘尼和居士們則繼續往
南京、杭州等佛教勝地。我感謝
居士們的護持，使我得以飛往中
國和返美，以略報上人之恩和得
償中國的法緣。

 capable, her Bhikshuni Sangha was thriving and busy bringing the Proper Dharma to Tianjin. She said that most of the disciples who came to her convent wanted to burn incense and bow seeking blessings; it was difficult to introduce them to another level of engagement with the Dharma. I supported her goal and offered encouragement by sharing that we were doing the same work in the West, only starting from a different place, where everybody loves meditation and thinks that Buddhism begins and ends with hours on the cushion. We are trying to introduce meditators to other aspects of the Dharma and deepen their appreciation of the practices of the Mahayana.

The goal of our trip accomplished, Bhikshu Heng Lai and I returned to San Francisco, while the nuns and laity continued on to Nanjing, Hangzhou and other places on the Buddhist map in China. I felt gratitude for the support of the laity who made it possible for me to fly to China and back, to repay a portion of the debt of kindness I owe my teacher and the Dharma in China.
因為一個特別的因緣，我很荣幸的參加了這次的訪問團，心中既興奮又緊張。在出發的前一天，10月5日的台灣竟然有一個強烈颱風來報到，擔心無法成行所以心中直向師父上人及觀世音菩薩請求，讓我們能順利地搭上飛機參與這次行程！隔天10月6日清晨到達桃園機場時，眾多旅客大家都急著確認是否能出發，最後我們三位團員終於搭乘原訂班機出發到香港轉飛北京與其他團員們會合。

10月7日早上我們從北京出發前往哈爾濱，到達哈爾濱時溫度是攝氏8度，雖然感覺很冷，但當時心中是感動且非常感謝師父上人的。大菩提寺的住持正修法師帶領當地居士們來機場接機，由警車開道引領我們的遊覽車往佳寶縣。從哈爾濱機場出來，公路上沿路的風景都是玉米田，一眼望去就像是印象中的「北大荒」重現，一望無際都是濃濃的秋意。

10月8日一早抵達大菩提寺，迎接訪問團的是莊嚴又隆重的場面，有樂隊、幡旗、及寶蓋，進入山門看到當地居士們臉上滿是虔誠且法喜充滿，當我們跟他們說聲：「阿彌陀佛！」他們臉上會立刻綻放一個燦爛的笑容並大聲說：「阿彌陀佛！」回應我們。在大菩提寺共辦了三場佛學講座，法師們用淺顯易懂的話語為他

Because of a special condition, I was very honored to join this delegation. My heart felt excited and nervous at the same time. One day before we started out, on October 5th, there was a strong typhoon sighted. I worried that I was not going to make the flight the next day so in my mind I pleaded with the Venerable Master and Guanyin Bodhisattva for help to let us get on the plane to join in this trip. On the next day, October 6th, when we arrived at Taoyuan airport early in the morning, there were already many travelers anxiously checking on whether they could leave the country. In the end, all three of us were able to board the original flight to Hong Kong and transit to Beijing to meet up with other members of the delegation.

On the morning of October 7, we started traveling from Beijing to Harbin. When we arrived at Harbin, the local temperature was 8 degrees Celsius. Although I felt very cold, in my heart I was impressed and thankful to the Venerable Master. The Abbot of the Great Bodhi Monastery, Dharma Master Zheng Xiu, led the locals to greet us in the airport. Our tour bus was then escorted by the police car to Jixian county. Heading out from the Harbin airport, the scenic view along the freeway was all cornfields. One glance reminded me of the resurcing of the Northern Wilderness. This limitless landscape was blanketed with a deep autumn chill.

We arrived at the Great Bodhi Monastery in the early morning on October 8. The delegation was greeted with a most dignified welcome. There was a band, banners and canopies. When we entered the front gate, we could see the sincere faces of the local laypeople filled with the joy of Dharma. When we greeted them with "Amitabha Buddha", their faces immediately beamed with big smiles and they replied loudly with "Amitabha Buddha" also. In the Great Bodhi Monastery, three sessions of Dharma talks had been arranged. The Dharma Masters used simple and easy-to-understand words to speak the Dharma and answer questions. At the end of each lecture, we could hear people vigorously discussing what they had just learned. They kept on praising the true words that pointed straight to the heart by the Dharma Masters. As a matter of fact, as a member of the delegation, I too felt equally amazed
and impressed! Really I have not come on this trip in vain. Moreover, I noticed that the bookstore in Great Bodhi Monastery also had free Buddhist texts available. However, from what we saw, they were made from four or five loose-leaf pages from a copier and stapled together. They also had Earth Store Sutra and Universal Door Chapter but their varieties are very limited. In Taiwan, we can easily get fine copies of Buddhist texts in different versions, forms and sizes. This was another episode that made a deep impression on me.

On the last day in Harbin at noon, we visited the old gravesite of the Venerable Master’s mother and his former dwelling. When we arrived, I found that it was far beyond what I could imagine. I only saw a small path and cornfields on both sides. In the middle of the field on a certain location was the old gravesite of the Venerable Master’s mother. Behind it was the same scenery was our Venerable Master’s former dwelling. In my heart, I heaved a sigh that after just a few decades, all the former dwellings were already gone. No wonder we had to cultivate and smash through the attachment of self. Because really, there is nothing that you can grab hold of forever and keep unchange—except the Buddha Dharma! On the same day in the afternoon, I was still imagining how the Venerable Master rode while standing on a horse, and how he spent his youth on that piece of land. I think that the vast expansive land really can nurture a magnanimous mind.

Another interesting thing about this trip was that everywhere that the Dharma Masters went, they would make lots heads turn. Whether it was in Harbin, Beijing, Tianjin, etc., there were many locals that had never seen left-home people before. Even Dharma Master Zheng Xiu told us that when he left the home-life, he was only the second left-home person in Double Duck Mountain City! I think the mere sight of the Dharma Masters has planted the causes and conditions of the Buddha Dharma and the Triple Jewel for these locals. The burning incense and candles are up-heaved in local temples. I hope that one day the Proper Dharma will also flourish in the same place.