

During the 30th Anniversary event at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas (CTTB), there was a gathering of the early Western disciples of Master Hua. It was quite an experience listening to all of their stories—how they met Master Hua; how they were taught by him; as well as seeing how they all shared a common bond and spirit.

They went around in a circle sharing their experiences and stories, and one spoke about the Buddhist Council for Refugee Rescue and Resettlement at CTTB. Upon hearing that many Vietnamese were being turned away from countries trying to escape from Vietnam, Master Hua told his disciples that CTTB would be a refugee center for these people. There was an intensive program where the Vietnamese would come and live at CTTB and be taught English and occupational skills to help them adjust to life in America. The disciple remembering the event described that time to be the best and most meaningful time in his life. It was where he really found his calling and life's work. With an ironic smile, the person who was responsible for the overall management of the program said it was the worst time in his life. With ideals of wanting to be quiet and meditate, he all of a sudden had to take care of all of these people!

在萬佛聖城舉行的三十週年慶期間，有一個宣公上人早期西方弟子的聚會。對我而言，這是一個萬分難得的經驗，能聆聽他們所有的故事：他們如何遇見上人、如何受到上人的教導；同時我也看到了他們如何分享一個共同的結合和精神。

他們圍著一圈輪流分享他們的經驗和故事，有一位提到在萬佛聖城的救安難民佛教委員會。在得知許多越南難民在逃離越南時被許多國家拒絕收容時，宣化上人告訴他的弟子，萬佛聖城可以做這些人的難民收容營。這是一個很緊急的計畫，越南難民將到萬佛聖城居住，要教導他們學習英語和謀生技能，以幫助他們適應美國的生活。有一位記得這個活動的弟子描述說，這變成了他一生中最好和最有意義的時刻，在此他找到了他所受的感召和終生的工作。帶著一絲反諷的微笑，一位負責該計畫整體管理的弟子說道，但這也是他一生中最糟的

## Gathering of Early Western Disciples

### 西方老弟子聚會



殷達偉 2009年8月29日寫於法界佛教總會佛青部落格

By David Yin for the Dharma Realm Buddhist Young Adult Blog at [blog.drby.net](http://blog.drby.net), in August 29, 2009

That brought a smile to everyone's faces. Same event—very different responses—but everyone was being taught in their own way while responding to the sufferings in the world.

There was also a sense of how the Dharma is beginning to take root in the West. All of these people were Westerners, most were laypeople, and if I were to meet them on the street, I would not think too much about it. In fact, when one of them came to register to stay at CTTB, I quite innocently began to explain the lifestyle here in the monastery to help orient her (oftentimes Westerners haven't stayed in a monastery with 70 monastics with all of its etiquette and customs). I was happily surprised when she told me that she was here 25 years ago when CTTB was just starting out and began to explain to me what life was like during that time. She went on to say how listening to the *Avatamsaka Sutra* changed her life from fishing to being vegetarian and protecting life.

It made me think, You know what? The students of Master Hua are scattered throughout the West—cultivating on their own and living by Dharmic principles quietly—but they are the seeds of the Dharma in the West. Many were monastics, cultivated vigorously, and had their lives transformed by the Dharma. And now in society, they play their roles, but that energy continues on—unseen most of the time, but when they gather together, the spark of the Dharma is there.

I see that for Buddhism to truly come to the West, it will be a long process. The Dharma does not live just in the monastery where it is practiced, but in society where Buddhists quietly live lives in accordance with the Dharma.

時刻；原本打算安靜的打坐參禪，突然之間他必須要去照顧這些人。這番話讓在座的每個人都露出微笑。同樣的一個事件，卻有很不同的感受；但是每一個人在反應這世間的苦難之時，都依各自的方式而受到教化。

這也顯示出佛法如何在西方世界生根。這些弟子都是西方人，多數是在家居士；如果我在街道上遇見他們，我並不作多想。事實上，其中有一位在來聖城登記住宿時，我很天真地開始對她解釋在寺院的生活方式，想幫助她適應聖城的生活（通常西方人士不曾在寺院與七十位出家修道者同住，學習過著出家人的生活方式）。當她告訴我二十五年前，聖城剛開始不久，她曾在此住過，我感到驚喜；她開始向我解釋當時的生活情形，並繼續說，在聆聽《華嚴經》後，她的生活改變了，從釣魚而改變成素食者並懂得去護念生命。

這讓我思考，您知道嗎？宣化上人的學生們，分布在西方各地——他們默默地依照法的真理各自修行，他們都是西方的佛法種子。其中許多是精進修行的出家人，佛法改變了他們的生命。在現今的社會裏，他們善盡本份；但是這股能量仍持續著，大多數時間是看不見的，但是當他們相聚在一起時，就會激發出佛法。

我看到佛教要真正來到西方，還有一段漫長的過程。佛法不是只存在於人們所修行的寺院裏，而是在佛教徒們裏默默依法修行的社會中。

