

火鳳國樂團團長謝坦應邀來聖城做 專題演講

Gordon Lee, the head of Firebird Youth Chinese Orchestra, Accepts Invitation to Give Lecture Series at CTTB

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DHARMA REALM NEWS | 法界音

聖荷西火鳳青年國樂團的創辦人及總監謝坦先生，應法界佛教大學及培德中學之邀，於十二月十八日及十九日在道源堂做了三場系列的中華民族傳統音樂專題演講。謝先生畢業於四川音樂專校和聖荷西州立大學音樂戲劇系，以其專業之素養及豐富之音樂創作、指揮經驗，吸引了近百位聖城內外住眾及學生前來聽講。

第一場演講在十八日下午六時舉行，講題為「二十世紀中華民族管弦樂的發展」。謝團長對中華民族傳統音樂如數家珍，此一主題由他娓娓道來，使聽眾對中華民族管弦樂的發展印象深刻。七點半緊接著第二場由法大主辦的演講，講題為「縱觀美國華裔的中國音樂文化傳承」，謝團長經營火鳳青年國樂團十二年，和華裔青少年有密切的師生關係，故對中國音樂文化在美國的傳承瞭如指掌。最後一場在十九日下午六時，主題為「中華民族樂器獨奏精華」，配合精彩之影片和講解，令聽眾能欣賞到中華民族樂器出神入化的表演。

謝團長出生於北京，於1989年旅居美國，他熱愛中國文化，為使傳統音樂能植根於華裔青少年，於2000年創辦「火鳳青年國樂團」於加州聖荷西市，一開始只有

Gordon Lee, the founder and director of Firebird Youth Chinese Orchestra, accepted an invitation from Dharma Realm Buddhist University and Developing Virtue Secondary Schools and gave a three-lectures series on Traditional Chinese music in the Confucius Hall on December 18th and 19th. Mr. Gordon Lee graduated from the Sichuan Conservatory of Music and the Music and Theatre Arts School of San Jose State University. His professional accomplishments, his rich musical compositions, as well as his conducting experience attracted an audience of close to a hundred people including students, CTTB residents and non-CTTB residents.

The first lecture was held at 6:00 p.m. on the 18th, with the topic being “The Chinese Orchestra through the Twentieth Century.” Mr. Lee lectured on traditional Chinese music as if enumerating one’s family valuables, and his detailed talk gave the audience a deep impression regarding the developments of Chinese Folk Orchestra Music. At 7:30 p.m., Mr. Lee continued on to his second lecture, hosted by Dharma Realm Buddhist University and titled “Viewing Chinese-American Culture through its Musical Heritage.” Mr. Lee has managed Firebird Youth Chinese Orchestra for twelve years, and has had close teacher-student relationships with young Chinese-Americans. As a result, he has a very clear understanding of the transmission of Chinese musical culture in America. The final lecture, titled “The Fine Art of Chinese Instrumental Solo Music,” took place at 6:00 p.m. on the 19th. Mr. Lee combined intriguing videos and explanation to allow the audience to appreciate the outstanding Chinese folk music performances.

Mr. Lee was born in Beijing and immigrated to America in 1989. He ardently loved Chinese culture and hoped to instill traditional music within young Chinese-Americans, so he founded Firebird Youth Chinese Orchestra (FYCO) in San Jose in 2000. In the beginning, there were only thirteen

十三位團員，經過謝團長的努力經營，很快得到家長的認同和支持，吸引了更多團員加入，爾後樂團逐漸壯大，素質相對提高，曾獲得加州及美國藝術團體多項的藝術獎，並於2004年應邀到中國北京表演。十二年後，「火鳳」已成為一個龐大且名氣遠播的國樂團，團員高達120多位。

培德中學國樂團顏亞日老師與謝坦先生於2008年相識，由於志趣相投，兩人一見如故。顏老師因而於2009年聖城慶祝三十週年時，邀請火鳳國樂團前來助興，謝團長慨然應允，率領了近六十位團員及家長首度到聖城。當時約有二千信眾到聖城，火鳳以盛大之陣容在大帳篷內演出，獲得觀眾熱烈之掌聲和激賞。

雖然謝團長三年前才第一次來聖城，但他和聖城的因緣早在1990年時就種下了。當時他來美不久，信佛的母親在北京常寫信給他，要他去見宣化上人，說：「你見到師父上人，就得救了！」但他一直埋身於事業上，以至延宕了十九年後才踏入聖城，而上人早已圓寂十四年了。

在五十年代，因父母離異，母親身體健康不佳，謝團長從小就由外婆撫養。外婆信佛、念佛、拜佛，就教他念〈大悲咒〉、〈六字大明咒〉和阿彌陀佛的聖號。長大後，由於家庭背景因素，使得他脾氣暴躁，叛逆性格外強烈，以至於母親要他往東走，他就偏要向西行，錯失了及早來聖城親近上人的機會。此次到佛殿禮佛時，憶及在2004年往生的母親，不禁悔恨交加，淚如雨下。

謝團長通往萬佛城之路走得既費時又崎嶇。他回憶說，從小外婆就教他念佛持咒，雖談不上是個佛教徒，卻已種下善根。1997年聽了一卷「素食的利益」之錄音帶後，即不再食肉，並對肉類有特別的噁心感。離家十五年後，2004年他首次率火鳳國樂團回中國表演，他的母親要他去法源寺皈依，但依然叛逆的謝團長卻以此行以「火鳳」之表演為主，藉

members, but due to Mr. Lee's operating efforts, very quickly many parents recognized and supported the orchestra, which led more people to join in. From then on, the orchestra gradually became larger and better, with impressive improvements in its music quality. The orchestra has received various art awards from California and United States art organizations and was invited to perform at Beijing in 2004. Twelve years later, FYCO has become a huge and renowned orchestra, with over 120 members.

Mr. Gan, the director of Developing Virtue Secondary School's Chinese orchestras, became acquainted with Gordon Lee in 2008. Because they had similar goals and interests, the two met as if they were old friends. During the commemoration of the 30th Anniversary of CTTB in 2009, Mr. Gan invited FYCO to liven things up at the event and Director Lee generously accepted the invitation. He brought nearly sixty members and parents to CTTB for the first time. At that time, there were about two thousand event participants at CTTB. FYCO performed in the Big Tent with its grand lineup and was rewarded with the audience's enthusiastic applause and appreciation.

Although it was three years ago that Director Lee came to CTTB for the first time, he had already tied affinities with CTTB in 1990. Back then, he had just arrived in America. His mother, a Buddhist, would often write letters to him from Beijing, telling him to meet the Venerable Master. She wrote: "If you see the Venerable Master, you will be saved!" However, Lee was always immersed in his business and work. Finally he made it to CTTB nineteen years later but Venerable Master had entered Nirvana for fourteen years already.

In the fifties, because his parents divorced and his mother's health wasn't good, Mr. Lee was raised by his maternal grandmother when he was little. His grandmother believed in Buddhism, recited the Buddha's name, and bowed to the Buddhas. Consequently, she taught him how to recite *the Great Compassion Mantra*, *the Six Syllable Great Brightness Mantra*, and Amitabha Buddha's holy name. Due to his family background, he was short-tempered and exceptionally rebellious once he grew up, to the point that when his mother wanted him to go east, he would purposely go west, thus missing his opportunity to come to CTTB earlier and draw near to the Venerable Master. This time when he went to the Buddha Hall and bowed to the Buddhas, he remembered his deceased mother who had passed away in 2004. Uncontrollably, he had mixed feelings of remorse and shame - tears fell like rain drops.

Director Lee's path to CTTB was time-consuming and difficult. He recalls that when he was little, his grandmother taught him to recite the Buddha's name and uphold mantras— though he couldn't have been considered a Buddhist, he at least planted roots of goodness. In 1997, after he heard the tape talking about "The Benefits of Vegetarianism", he never ate meat again and felt extremely nauseated about all kinds of meat. After leaving his home country for fifteen years, in 2004 he returned to China for the first time, this time bringing along Firebird Youth Chinese Orchestra to hold performances. His mother wanted him to take refuge at Dharma Source Monastery once he was back, but the still rebellious Director Lee claimed that the main purpose for the trip was FYCO's performance and thus refused. Little did he know that a few months



故拒絕了。沒想到幾個月後，他的母親突然往生，回北京奔喪後，才以贖罪的心情到法源寺皈依。

在聖城逗留的六天當中，除了專題演講，謝團長並攜家帶眷把太太和兩位女兒帶來聖城，全家人一起體驗了道場生活，隨眾參加早晚課，拜大悲懺，並隨喜了阿彌陀佛聖誕的法會。令他極為興奮的是，此行瞻仰到了佛陀、虛雲老和尚和宣公上人的舍利。他看到聖城樸實的生活，每個人都很惜福，心中覺得很踏實。他也為育良、培德的學子們慶幸，慶幸他們能夠在這麼良好的環境中成長，學習中國文化，接受儒家道德教育的薰陶。想起自己在五、六十歲才看到《弟子規》、《三字經》等書，深覺是人生中的憾事。因此謝團長接受邀請未來再回法大、培德幫忙時，他欣然應允。✽

later, his mother suddenly passed away. After hastily returning to Beijing for the funeral, he took refuge at Dharma Source Monastery with the mind-set of atoning for his offenses.

During his six-day visit to CTTB, Director Lee not only gave a lecture series but also brought along his whole family, consisting of his wife and two daughters, to CTTB. The family experienced life in a monastery. They followed the assembly to participate in Morning and Evening Recitations, bow the Great Compassion Repentance, and rejoice with the Dharma assembly to celebrate Amitabha Buddha's Birthday. On this trip, what was more exciting to him was that he had an opportunity to pay respect to the shariras of the Buddha, Ven. Master Xu Yun and Ven. Master Hua. He notes the simple lifestyle at CTTB, where everyone cherishes their blessings; this place made him very much at ease. He also feels that the students attending Instilling Goodness and Developing Virtue Schools are really fortunate because they are able to grow up in such a great environment, where they can learn about Chinese culture and receive the influence of Confucian's education on ethics. Reflecting and realizing that he himself encountered books such as *Standards for Students* and *The Three-Character Classic* at the age of fifty or sixty, Lee deeply feels that this is truly a regretful event of his life. Thus, when Director Lee received the invitation to return to DRBU and DVSS to help out in the near future, he accepted it with delight. ✽

