

HSU Students Experience Buddhist Culture First Hand

漢堡大學學生體驗佛教文化之旅



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Located in the foothills just outside of Ukiah, Calif., the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas played host to 60 Humboldt State University students over the weekend of Oct. 11th 2013 as part of a one-credit seminar.

This special course, offered through the religious studies department, provided students with a first hand look at the life of Buddhist monks and nuns at the beautiful northern California monastery. Throughout the weekend HSU students took part in traditional Buddhist activities, including recitation ceremonies, silent meditation and Tai' Chi.

Religious studies Professor William Herbrechtsmeier has facilitated the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas weekend seminar for over a decade, and believes that it offers a unique contrast to the way students typically live.

“The primary thing is that students get a direct experience of a spiritual pathway within the disciplined existence of a Buddhist monastery,” Herbrechtsmeier said. “We live life in such a secular, make-money style, that we miss so much that the world has to offer with a radical reorientation of consciousness and purpose.”

As part of the disciplined experience, Humboldt State students woke at 3:30 a.m. each morning to prepare for the 4 a.m. morning recitation. This was followed by an hour of silent meditation before breakfast was served. But

2013年10月11日至13日這個週末，距離加州瑜伽市不遠處的山麓叢林——萬佛聖城，迎來了60名前來修學的大學生。他們是來自漢堡州立大學的學生，這個週末的體驗將是一個學分課裡的部分內容。

這門特殊課程是由宗教系開設的，提供學生能在清淨優美的北加州寺院裡，親身體驗佛教僧侶生活的機會。整個週末，學生們參與傳統的佛教修行生活，內容包括唱誦、打坐和太極。

鑒於寺院修行能帶給學生截然不同的生命體驗，因此在超過十年的時間裡，宗教學教授 William Herbrechtsmeier 一直在大學裡推進「萬佛城週末研討課」的開展。

「首要的是，學生們在佛教寺院規矩嚴謹的氛圍之下，能夠直接體驗心靈成長之路，」 Herbrechtsmeier 教授指出，「因為我們的生活充滿太多金錢與名利的世俗枷

unlike breakfast at the J, the cooks at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas served only what they harvested from their garden or had been donated to them. And because Buddhists do not believe in killing any living creature, all meals were lacto-vegetarian.

Despite the lack of bacon and eggs, junior psychology student Kendra Hartsuyker found the seminar to be very rewarding. “Visiting the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas was an amazing experience,” Hartsuyker said. “The City’s ambiance was so serene, especially while getting up at 3:30 a.m. Getting the opportunity to experience another culture and religion was very eye opening and informative.”

Another striking contrast to most students’ normal lives was the separation of men and women. Male and female students were housed in dorms at opposite ends of the campus from each other, and discouraged from interacting with each other unless a third party was present. The only time in which the men and women convened was for recitations, meals and guest speakers.



This didn’t seem to bother Humboldt State sophomore Annika Ragsdale. “I didn’t even really think about it to be honest,” Ragsdale said. “We all saw each other a few times a day, so it wasn’t like they were on a completely different planet or anything.”

According to its website, the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas was established in 1974. Prior to that the land housed the Mendocino State Hospital. Now this spacious campus, which is approximately 700-acres, features fruit and nut orchards, a vegetarian restaurant that is open to the public and a plethora of wildlife. “The peacocks were my favorite,” Hartsuyker said.

Humboldt State University students have the opportunity to explore these wonderful grounds each term, according to Professor Herbrechtsmeier. “CTTB weekend is offered every semester,” Herbrechtsmeier said. “We encourage students to attend, (and it can be repeated) and to consider attending our other workshops. We offer exposure to Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, and other traditions. All of these workshops help to show students through direct exposure what life in religious communities can be like.”

鎖，以至於多次錯過，乃至於忘記了這個世界應該賦予人類精神追求，以及人生目標徹底反思與重新定位的機會。」

規矩嚴謹生活的一部分，包括必須在每天凌晨三點半起床，以準時參加四點鐘的早課。早課完成後，要打坐一個小時，然後才用早餐。早餐也有特別之處——這裡的食物，或者是來自萬佛城裡自己耕種的農田，或者是源於十方善信的供養捐贈。另外，由於佛教徒不殺生，所以這裡都是沒有肉和蛋的素食。

儘管沒有火腿和雞蛋，就讀心理系的三年級生Kendra Hartsuyker 在這次研討課裡還是很有收穫。「這趟萬佛城之行，是一段令人驚奇的經歷」，Hartsuyker說，「寺院的氛圍非常安詳寧靜，特別是在早上三點半起床的時候。有機會體驗另外一種宗教文化，令我大開眼界，也增長許多見識。」

跟大多數同學的日常生活相比，這裡另一個迥然不同之處是，男性和女性是分開生活的。男同學和女同學的宿舍，分別安排在萬佛城中方向相反的院落裡，並且除了第三方在場之外，不鼓勵異性會面交流。男眾和女眾在一起的時間，只有誦經、吃飯和聆聽演講的時候。

但，這並沒有對大學二年級的Annika Ragsdale 這位女同學帶來任何困擾。「說實話，我甚至都沒有注意到這方面會有不便」，Ragsdale說，「每天我們都有好幾次能互相看到彼此，所以並不像男生是生活在另一個不同星球上那樣隔絕。」

根據網站上的介紹，萬佛城在1974年創建，原址為一所州立醫院。時至今日，在接近700英畝的廣闊土地上，城內擁有盛產水果以及堅果的果園，以及一個開放給社會大眾的素食餐館，萬佛聖城也是許多野生動物的樂園——「孔雀是我的最愛」，Hartsuyker同學說。

漢堡州立大學的大學生，每個學期都有造訪萬佛城的機會。Herbrechtsmeier教授說：「萬佛城週末研討課在每個學期都會舉辦，我們鼓勵同學們參加，並且可以重複參加。我們也歡迎同學加入其他的研討課，去探訪基督教、猶太教、印度教等其他傳統宗教。通過直接參與的親身體驗，這些研討課能幫助學生了解宗教團體內生活的面貌。」



當問到是否還
想參加類似的
週末研討
班，Hartsuyker
同學毫不猶豫
地回答：「我
肯定會繼續參
加宗教研究項
目中類似的體
驗式週末活
動。」❁



When asked if she would consider attending a similar weekend seminar, HSU student Hartsuyker answered without hesitation.

“I would definitely go on another experiential weekend with the religious studies program.” ❁



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