

# DRBU's Translation Seminar 2015

## 法大2015年暑期讀經譯經班

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DHARMA REALM NEWS | 法界音

Two strangely clad nuns walk into the conference room, one wielding a sword, the other delicately holding an attendant's umbrella and waving a fan. Dharma Master Heng Chih calmly watches them from her armchair as her own ears and limbs are chopped off one by one by the sword (a large post-it was placed over each piece of her body that was "cut off"). The audience bursts into laughter at this lively interpretation of King Kali and the Patient Immortal who never loses his temper.

The skit ended an intense and fun translation seminar that lasted from August 9<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> and was organized by Dharma Master Heng Yi at Dharma Realm Buddhist University (DRBU). From 8:10 am to 9:00 pm, people discussed and translated. The group finished the *Vajra Sutra* by the end of the eight days.

The translation went in cycles that began in the evening from 7:40 pm to 9:00 pm, paving the way for the next morning's work. Thirty translators were put into five small groups. Each group produced its own translation of one section of the Sutra. Each group worked on identical sections every day except for the last working day when the groups received different sections to finish up the entire sutra.

Then the new day would start with morning meditation and yoga. A whole-group discussion engaged all seminar participants in discussing the Sutra selection that they had worked on the night before. Going through the text line by line, students read out loud their assigned sections and translations, which led the group to discuss the questions and complexities they found in the text. The group mainly clarified the challenging concepts brought up by the *Vajra Sutra*, and often made reference to the Sanskrit version of the text. For example, in Sanskrit, *arana* and *aranya* sound similar. They also sound alike in transliterated Chinese, but *arana* means "non-contention" while *aranya* means "forest dwelling". These morning discussions prepared translators for the afternoon's refinement within the group.

After lunch break, at 1:10 pm, the seminar usually separated into groups to polish and finalize their translations. This was often the most enjoyable part! As Henry Chang, a physics professor from Taiwan's

兩位穿著奇特的女法師走進會議室，一位揮舞著長劍，另一位為主人輕巧地舉傘搖扇。恒持法師坐在扶手椅上，靜靜地看著她們，並忍受自己的耳朵和肢體被長劍一一「割去」（大片隨意貼黏在被「割去」的部位），觀眾哄堂大笑，這是對歌利王和忍辱仙人故事的一場生動詮釋。

這場短劇結束了法界佛教大學（法大）緊湊而充滿樂趣的讀經譯經班。這個班由恆異法師組織，從8月9日到16日，每天早上8時10分到晚上9時，大家一起討論翻譯，八天完成了《金剛經》的翻譯工作。

每天的翻譯從晚間開始，在晚上7時40分到9時之間，大家開始準備第二天的工作。30名學員分成五個小組，每組有自己的段落要翻譯。一般各組每天的任務都一樣，只有最後一天為了完成整部經文，每組分配到不同的段落。

每天早上先是打坐和瑜伽，然後全體討論前一天晚上翻譯的段落。學員們一句句大聲讀出各自的翻譯，討論對經文中複雜及疑問之處。大家主要是要澄清經文中困難的概念，常常參考梵文版本。舉個例子，梵文字 *arana* 和 *aranya* 聽起來很像，中文音譯的發音也很像，可是 *arana* 的意思是「不爭」而 *aranya* 的意思是「住山」。上午的這些討論是為下午的小組潤色準備的。

午齋後，1時10分左右學員們各返小組開始潤色，完善自己的翻譯。這是我們最喜歡的工作！臺灣淡江大學物理系教授張經霖說：「從來沒想到翻譯會這麼有意思！」能悟解經文字句讓人心豁然，甚至學員們之間的激烈爭

Tamkang University, said: “I never thought translation could be so much fun!” Understanding the meaning of the words in the Sutra felt enlightening, and even the heated arguments on the meaning of the text were fun! Nevertheless, we had to come to an agreement so we resorted to voting which often solved the conflicts.

Officially by 4:00 pm but many times by 5:00 pm, the final version of the group’s translation was uploaded to the web—Google documents. There, Dharma Master Heng Chih would post comments that, in addition to expanding our thoughts, often cut down our egos. Frank Liu, a DRBU sophomore, said: “Our group did a section and we all felt pretty good about our rendering. That is, until we read Dharma Master Chih’s comments.” All of us were grateful for her feedback which guided us through some of the most difficult sections.

One of the biggest difficulties was the puzzling pattern that appeared many times in the *Vajra Sutra*. For example, BTTS has the following translation: Anagamin means One Who Does Not Return, but he actually does not have no returning. For that reason, he is called Anagamin.

This format of “something is something, but not something” appears over and over in the sutra, yet the meaning is unclear to the reader. The text refutes the meaning of Anagamin, yet it says that there is an Anagamin. By looking at the Venerable Master’s commentary and discussing in our small groups and big group, we agreed that the line “he is called Anagamin” actually meant that Anagamin was just a name. Or Anagamin is just an expression.

“In the past,” said Dharma Master Heng Chih, “The Venerable Master would give people Sutras to read. They would later come back and say: ‘It was excellent—I couldn’t understand a word of it!’ The Venerable Master urged us to always try to understand the meaning.” The *Vajra Sutra* may seem like a series of contradictions, but during the seminar, we tried our best to understand it. It was an arduous project.

Fortunately, Chris Wen-Chao Li, professor of linguistics at San Francisco State University gave two lectures that not only were fun but also showed us the tools for translation. He talked about who gets to decide the meaning of a text and how the meaning is decided. He also mentioned the many difficulties involved in understanding and translating classical texts.

As an example, Professor Li showed us this phrase in the Confucius’ Analects: “有教無類”. He brought up three interpretations for it. The most common one is that it is a teaching on choosing whom to teach: “One should not make any distinctions of social classes.” Another is that Confucius is describing himself: “When I teach, I don’t make distinctions of social classes.” The third is that Confucius is making a point: “Education removes prejudice,” which is precisely Professor Li’s choice. This was an example of different interpretations of a single phrase.

The professor then asked, “Which interpretation should the translator use? The interpretation that accords best with the author’s intentions or the one that the text itself suggests?” This, of course, was up to the translator.

論也是趣味橫生。不過，最後還是得達成協議，就採用舉手投票決定。

讀經譯經班時間表上說是下午4點結束，但常常都忙到下午5點，譯稿終於得以上傳網絡——谷歌文檔。持法師就可以在那裏加以評語，持法師的評語不僅打開了我們的思路，也大大削減了我們的自我意識。法大二學生劉無塵說：「我們組好不容易翻完一段，自我感覺良好，直到我們看到持法師的評語。」我們都非常感恩持法師的評語，這些評語帶領我們走過某些最困難的章節。

最大的困難之一是，《金剛經》中有一句型常常重複出現，頗令人迷惑。佛經翻譯委員會對以下這段經文：「阿那含名為不來，而實無不來，是故名阿那含。」的英譯，幾乎是一字一字一對一直翻的。

這種句型「A是什麼，但不是A」一次次出現在經文中，可讀者很難瞭解它到底在說什麼。經文否認阿那含的意思，可又說存在一個阿那含。通過參考上人的淺釋及小組大組討論，我們最後達成的共識是「他稱作阿那含」，實際上是在說阿那含只不過是個名稱，或阿那含只是個說法而已。

「以往，上人總是讓大家讀佛經。」持法師說，「人們就會過來說：『太棒了，就是我一個人也不懂！』上人一向鼓勵我們把意義弄懂。」《金剛經》看起來像一系列自相矛盾的文句，在讀經譯經班，我們盡最大努力來理解經文，確實是一項艱鉅的工程。

很幸運，舊金山州立大學的李文肇教授兩場講座不僅趣味盎然，也教了我們翻譯方法。他講到是誰來決定文字的意義，這個意義又是如何決定的；他也提到理解及翻譯古文的許多困難。

李教授用論語中孔子說的「有教無類」來做例子。他提出這句話可以有三種意思，最常見是指選擇教育對象時，不應看社會階級。第二個意思是，孔子形容自己：我在教學時，不分社會階級。第三個意思是孔子在強調一個觀點：教育可以去除偏見；這剛好就是李教授給予的翻譯。這個例子說明：同樣一個詞語，可以有三種不同的翻譯方式。

他接著問道：「譯者要怎樣選擇哪？是選

Our other guest speakers were Dharma Master Shun and Gary Linebarger. Both are senior disciples of the Venerable Master and have had a lot of experience in translating Buddhist texts. Dharma Master Shun spoke about Gold Mountain Monastery in the 1970s and how Venerable Master gave his lectures then. He showed everyone pictures of the “hi-tech” translation equipment: typewriters and reel to reel tape recorders. Gary Linebarger also talked about translation in the 70s, but he talked about different ways of translation. He explained how translations can either lean towards the source culture or the target culture, and it is the translator’s choice to decide.

This was the second year of a successful effort in translation of Buddhist text. In the last couple of days, everyone was rewarded for the grueling hours of work with an ice cream party, entertaining skits, presentations, and even rap. Yet, what we took away from this week of translation was much more than laughter. It was a satisfying feeling of accomplishment, the knowledge that together as one team, we had bare-handedly given to English our own interpretation of the *Vajra Sutra*.

## Feedback

*Lina Verchery, PhD Candidate in Buddhist Studies from Harvard University*

The 2015 Seminar on Reading and Translating Chinese Buddhist Texts at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas was an unforgettable experience. Reading Buddhist scriptures is always deeply edifying, but reading and translating scriptures in this particular environment was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Every day was marked by the rhythms of monastic life, from the sounding of the drum every morning at 3:45 am to the transfer of merit chant after a long day of translation at 9pm. In this place, one sees not merely how the ideas of Buddhist scriptures are studied, but also how a community of exceptional people strives to put those ideas into practice at every moment. This made the text come alive, not as an object of study but as a dynamic transformational force. It is difficult for me to put into words all the ways in which this intensive seminar affected me (after all, the *Diamond Sutra* tells us very clearly about the limitations of language!) except to say that such experiences – where scholars, monastics, students, and laypeople come together to deeply engage with an extraordinary text – represent, in my view, education in the highest possible sense.”

*Henry Chang, Physics Professor from Tamkang University, Taiwan*

The seminar operated on a rather tight schedule throughout the week in order to translate the entire *Vajra Sutra* into English. Experienced monastics were invited to share their valuable insights and a visiting professor who talked about the many techniques used to analyze and translate classical texts. Then there were daily meditation and some calligraphy activities. It was an enriching experience.

The translation was done in groups which were each monitored by a teaching assistant. Dividing into groups allowed us to dig into the meaning of the Sutra and figure out the precise grammar and diction of the translation so as

擇與原文作者意願一致的意思？還是文章本身包含的意思？」這個當然是要由翻譯者來決定。

講座另外邀請到恆順法師和格理·林巴格先生。他們都是上人的老弟子，也有豐富的佛經翻譯經驗。順法師回憶金山寺70年代的氛圍及那時上人開示的情況。他給我們看了當時相片，包括「高科技」翻譯設備——手動打字機和盤帶式錄音機。格理·林巴格也談到70年代的翻譯情況，他側重於不同的翻譯方式。他講到翻譯作品既可以傾向於原文文化，也可以傾向於目標文化，就看譯者怎麼決定了。

這是法大第二年成功舉辦佛經翻譯研習活動。讀經譯經班的最後兩天，大家緊張辛苦的勞動得以補償，恣意享用冰淇淋、短劇、成果展示、甚至饒舌歌曲也上場。當然留下的記憶不止是這些歡笑，而且是對辛苦工作的滿意，及對合作的信心——我們「白手起家」將整部《金剛經》翻譯成了英文。

## 學員迴響

*琳娜·沃詩瑞, 哈佛大學佛學博士候選人*

萬佛城2015年讀經譯經班是一次難忘的經歷。閱讀佛經總是能陶冶心性，而在這個特別的環境裏讀經譯經，更是一生難逢的機會。每天我們隨著僧團的節奏生活，從清晨3時45分的擊鼓聲，到晚間9時結束一整天譯經後的迴向功德。這裏，你不僅可以瞭解佛經的研究，更可以感受到一個出色的團體中，每個人是怎樣在生活中每時每刻將佛經的義理付諸實踐。經文因此變得生活化，不再只是研讀的學科，而是具備變化身心的爆發力。很難用言語表達這次密集訓練對我的影響，（畢竟《金剛經》上清楚地教導我們語言的侷限性！）只能說這種跟學者、僧眾、年輕學生及居士共聚一堂深入研究這樣一部大經，以我看來，是最高的教育。

*張經霖, 淡江大學物理系教授*

主辦團隊在這一週安排了極為緊湊的課

to provide the reader the right message. Then, as a whole class we would share each group's interpretation. When a section was finalized, it was sent for review to the esteemed Dharma Master Heng Chih, a pioneer in the translation of Buddhist texts. She then provided insightful oral or written comments so that we immediately knew how to revise our translation. We got instant results from this type of training.

I myself have greatly benefited from this intensive week of training. Apart from obtaining the knowledge I had wished to learn, I was delighted to find that reading Buddhist Sutras can be so much fun. With English versions, one can further appreciate the profound meaning of the original text. In addition, during our seminar I have learned where to look for reference materials, which is really important for keeping up my interest and progress in learning the Buddhadharmā.

When our group turned in the last assignment, the comment we received from Dharma Master Chih was, "Well done! I could hardly find anything that needed a comment!" Her words not only greatly raised our self-confidence, they reminded us once again the perfect and subtle teaching this seminar has afforded us. We are deeply grateful.

*Yu Chen, Post-doc at the Department of Information and Computers, UC Irvine :*

I really appreciate the Dharma Masters' careful planning so that I was fortunate to be able to work and translate with a group of people from diverse backgrounds. Our group was comprised of a Dharma Master and laypeople; we come from different cultural and educational backgrounds, different age groups and have varied experience with translation. Working together, I learned to not only understand others' interpretation and expressions of the Sutra but also patiently and impartially listen. I also appreciated our TA, who had the wisdom and patience to incorporate so many different views.

This is the first time I referred to Sanskrit while translating. One member offered a version of the *Vajra Sutra* with Sanskrit, Chinese and English. This provided an opportunity for us to try to use our own wisdom to understand the original meaning of the Sutra. It also triggered my interest in Sanskrit. The *Vajra Sutra* is the first Buddhist text that I encountered a few years ago, but when I first came across it, I gave up since I could not understand it. This time we studied and translated the whole Sutra within one week! This was incredible to me! On the first day of the seminar, three beautiful rainbow-like clouds appeared in the sky above CTTB. The causes and conditions must be rare indeed.

*Lan Huang, PhD in Educational Psychology, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities*

There is probably no better place in the world to read and translate a Buddhist Sutra than at DRBU's translation seminar, where you can

程，主要的是將整部中文《金剛經》譯成英文；同時邀請資深法師們來分享翻譯經典的寶貴經驗、客座教授分析翻譯古文的各種技巧；另外還有禪坐、書法等課外活動，是一次很充實豐富的經驗。

翻譯工作是分組、由助教帶領進行的。分組討論使我們得以深入了解經文的意義，然後對譯成英文之用字、語法等仔細的討論，以確定能為讀者傳達正確的信息。接下來全班共同討論，分享各組的見解；每一段翻譯完成後，都由經典翻譯先驅、德高望重的恒持法師親自審閱，並進行精關的口頭或書面的評析，使我們即刻知道如何修正、改進，這樣的教學效果是立竿見影的！

經過這一週密集的訓練，覺得獲益良多。除了學到我原來希望學到的知識外，我更發現原來閱讀佛經是這麼有趣的事情，如果是有英文版的佛經，中英文對照閱讀能更深入了解經文的意義。同時在課堂上，學到了各種尋找參考資料的方法，更是彌足珍貴，能提升我在今後學習佛法的興趣效率。

我們這組完成的最後一次作業，獲得持法師這樣的評語：「做得好！我很難找到需要批評的地方！」這不僅大幅提升了我們讀經和譯經的信心，更讓我們對這次讀經譯經班所提供的完備而細膩的教導有著無限的感激！

陳玉，加大爾灣分校資訊與電腦系博士後研究

非常感恩法師們的細緻安排，讓我能夠有幸在一個俱有多樣性的組裏面，和大家一起學習翻譯。我們的組員有在家人，有出家人，來自不同的文化背景、學歷背景、年齡層，有不同的翻譯經典的經驗。這樣的結構，一方面讓我從不同的角度了解大家對經典的理解和表達，另一方面讓我學會在一個多元性的組裏，用平等心和耐心傾聽大家的聲音。我們的助教也非常有智慧有耐心地整合我們這麼多不同的觀點。

這是我第一次嘗試在翻譯中參考梵文，我們的組員給我們提供的《金剛經》梵文、中文、英文的對照版，讓我們嘗試著用自己的智慧去讀經典的原始意思，也讓我對梵文產生了興趣。《金剛經》是我接觸的第一部佛經，幾年前由於讀不懂就放棄了。而這次我們在一周之內，不但研究了這部經典，而且翻譯了一遍！於我而言，這實在



是不可思議！譯經班第一天，萬佛城天空出現三朵明顯的五彩祥雲。我想，這一定是非常殊勝的因緣。

黃藍，明尼蘇達大學教育心理學博士

世界上最適合學習和翻譯佛經的地方恐怕就是法大的暑期讀經譯經班了。在這裡，你可以和諸位良師益友聚會一處，抱著虔誠的心，在一個清淨的佛寺裏學習、合作。個人印象深刻的兩點：首先是譯經班的第一天，近經師介紹了大譯經家鳩摩羅什法師的譯經哲學，那就是忠於經文的核心涵義；忠於原文的事實和目的，比忠於原文的文字和語法順序更重要。這為我以後的翻譯工作提供了啓示。第二點就是，我在翻譯過程中發現，例如把中文翻譯成英文時，中文母語者和英文母語者可以去承擔的不同角色。在我的翻譯小組中，作為一個中文母語者，發現自己的一個重要功能是，對較難理解的詞句，我可以去查找多方比較權威的中文資料，例如淺釋，再把我綜合得到的信息和理解傳達給英文母語者，他們在此理解的基礎之上，再去翻譯成最適合、流暢、地道的英文。這次密集的翻譯討論，讓我對自己作為一個翻譯者的定位更加清晰，明白以我的長處可以為一個翻譯團隊做的最大貢獻是什麼，而哪些工作由其他不同才能的組員做會更好。同時，我很開心的是，在這一週內認識了很多志同道合的老師和朋友，因為善知識的指引和幫助，會讓我們在修行的路上走得更加穩健持久。❀



sit down with a group of sincere and wholesome teachers and friends to learn and work together in a very pure monastery setting. Two important things I learned from this experience: First, on our first day, Dharma Master Jin Jing introduced the prominent Buddhist text translator Venerable Kumarajiva's translation philosophy. That is, to be faithful to the essential meaning of Dharma, and to be faithful to the truth and purpose rather than the words or syntax order of the source language, which provides an inspiration for my future translation work. Second, I have a deeper understanding of the different roles that a native speaker of the source language and the native speakers of the target language can play in a translation project. For example, when translating from Chinese to English in my group, a Chinese native speaker like me, can turn to authoritative resources such as commentaries in Chinese to understand difficult words or sentences. After this initial research, I would try to communicate my best understanding of the text to the English speakers. We would discuss and hopefully we arrive at consensus. The English speakers then would try to come up with the most accurate, smooth, and native translation. Now I feel much clearer about my role in the translation team, and I see what I can contribute the most, according to my strengths, and what others can do better based on their skills. Lastly, I feel so blessed and overjoyed to get to know so many great teachers and friends all of whom share the same enthusiasm for the spiritual path. Only with the guidance and support of wholesome friends, can we keep walking steadily on the path to enlightenment. ❀