

探討真實：漢堡大學師生參訪萬佛聖城

Exploring Reality: Humboldt State University Faculty and Students visit the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas

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北加州漢堡大學師生70餘人，於4月8日至10日參訪萬佛聖城，體驗佛教叢林生活、學習打坐、探討生命真相。許多學生都表示：「下次還要再來。」

由漢堡大學宗教研究系主辦的這項週末參訪活動，是該系世界宗教課程的一部份，已有20餘年歷史。每年春秋兩學期各安排一次，這學期的參訪活動仍依慣例，安排學生參加早晚課、上供、打坐、太極拳，另有三節問答時段，是隨法師們研習佛法。此外，週六晚間安排座談，共同探討「真實是什麼？」

座談會由比丘恒順法師主持。比丘近永法師指出，人眼所見有限，波長比紅色長或比紫色短的光包括(紅外線、紫外線、X光、微波、無線電、電視波)都不可見。天道、鬼道及地獄道的眾生，人眼也看不到。科學家發明很多儀器以探索大自然，至今仍無法偵測一切事物。佛教徒採取不同的方式探索真實，包括打坐以及深刻的意識。佛陀在兩千多年前即證悟實相，只要精進修行，每個人都有機會跟佛陀一樣。

擁有形上學博士學位的史蒂夫·瑟特拉也說，佛家所謂的真實即空相，亦是實相。佛陀在《經集·婆塞特經》中說：「由於行為(業)，世界才存在；由於行為(業)，人類才存在；眾生受行為(業)束縛，猶如轉動的車輪受車軸束縛。」道家的真實，如同老子所說：「有物混成，先天地生，寂兮寥兮。獨立而不改，周行而不殆，可以為天下母。吾不知其名，字之曰『道』。」儒家的真實，則以中庸思想為代表。

Over 70 students and faculty from Humboldt State University had a taste of Buddhist monastic life over the weekend of April 8th to 10th, 2016 at The City of Ten Thousand Buddhas learning to sit in meditation, and exploring the truths of life. Many of them would like to return.

Such a weekend retreat has been held for over twenty years as part of the World Religions course and is sponsored by the Religious Studies Department of the Humboldt State University. Each year two weekend programs are held, one in the Fall and the other during the Spring semester. Students attended morning and evening recitation, the meal offering ceremony, an introduction to meditation, Tai Chi, and three Q & A sessions on Buddhism with our Buddhist monastics. In addition to this, there was a Saturday evening panel which explored the question, "What is reality?"

Bhikshu Heng Shun hosted the panel discussion. Bhikshu Jin Yong pointed out that our eyes can detect only a very narrow band of electromagnetic waves. We cannot see wavelengths longer than red or wavelengths shorter than violet. We cannot see IR light, UV light, X-rays, microwaves, radio or TV waves. We cannot see devas, ghosts, or hell beings. Scientists try to build instruments as sensitive as possible to explore nature. However, the instruments cannot detect everything. The Buddhist approach is different. Instead of relying on instruments, it explores reality through meditation that delves deep into consciousness. The Buddha realized the true nature of reality more than two thousand years ago. Through rigorous self-cultivation, every one of us can be like the Buddha.

Steve Setera, PhD in Metaphysics added that the ultimate reality in Buddhism is also an ultimate truth, that is the truth of emptiness. The Buddha said in the *Sutta-Nipata*, "The world exists because of causal actions, all things are produced by causal actions and all beings are governed and bound by causal actions. They are fixed like the rolling wheel of a cart, fixed by the pin of its axle shaft."

In Taoism, Lao Tse said about the ultimate reality: "There was something undifferentiated and yet complete, which existed before heaven and earth. Soundless and formless, it depends on nothing and does not change. It is all pervading and unfailing. It may be considered the mother of the universe. I do not know its name; I call it the Tao or the Path." The ultimate reality in

胡達亞博士指出，科學的真實從提出問題和假設開始，一切都要能夠量化與測量，但是佛教所謂的「真實」是完全無法測量的。我們在夢中覺得真實，但跟夢醒後的生活相較，不過是一場夢罷了。在佛陀這位覺者的眼裡，我們每天活著猶如作夢一般。

漢堡大學教授史蒂夫·詹肯思認為，真實並非我們所見、所想或透過感官所認知的一切。他談到慈悲的重要，對有志菩薩道者而言，就是必須學習慈悲。

法界佛教大學榮譽校長易果容指出，我們認為的真實，正如電玩遊戲所提供的虛擬實境。美國大學生在過去十年間，因為習慣以數碼方式與人溝通，對他人的同理心已下降40%，逐漸喪失感受真實的能力。我們的自我雖非真實，但菩薩的慈悲能量卻是真實不虛。人生隨時都可在自私的欲望與不自私的慈悲念頭之間作選擇。

法界佛教大學碩士生梅根·思薇特表示，時刻的真實，長期累積就成為每個人的生命。我們的看法、想法與觀念積累成習。佛陀教我們從中觀察選擇，從每時每刻的經驗中解脫，獲得自由。另一名碩士生莫琳·麥吉惟則說，真實可分絕對與相對兩種；她認為絕對的真實如同印度教所謂的永恆之法，人生的目標正是要了解不二的真實。相對的真實，則是以妥善的方式，在人我之間互動。

座談帶給學生深度思考的空間，一名學生甚至問道：「我從何而來？難不成也來自空嗎？」瑟特拉博士答案之一是：「你來是因為你的父母。」（全場笑）梅根則建議他閱讀《楞嚴經》，經上有詳盡的說明。比丘尼恒異法師也提醒學生：「真實就是諸法空相，佛陀所有的教化，無非在幫助眾生明白這個道理。」

離開萬佛聖城之前，多位學生都表示收穫豐富，希望下次再來。第二度參加這項參訪活動的賈許·若亞，是漢堡大學野生動物管理與保育系學生。他非常喜歡打坐，更高興有機會向法師請益。齋堂的素食很好吃，他決定「明年還要再來」。

Confucianism is stated in the *Doctrine of the Mean*.

Dr. Hudaya Kandahjaya noted that the way science works in reality begins with questions and hypothesis. Everything must be quantified and measurable. Reality in Buddhism is based on what is not measurable. When you are in a dream you think it is real, but in comparison to our everyday life, it is but a dream. To an Awakened One like the Buddha, everyday life is just like a dream.

Professor Steve Jenkins of Humboldt State University said that reality is not what we see or think or what we perceive through our senses. He also mentioned the importance of compassion, which is what aspiring Bodhisattvas should learn.

Dharma Realm Buddhist University Emeritus President Ron Epstein stressed that the reality we perceive in our daily lives is like the virtual reality in computer games. He also mentioned the startling statistic that American college students have dropped 40% in their empathy for others in the last decade. He said that this is because they are used to communicating with people in a digital way and are thus gradually losing the ability to sense what is real. Although our so-called self is not real, the compassionate energy from the Bodhisattvas is real. Every moment we have the opportunity to choose between going along with our selfish desires or unselfish thoughts of kindness and compassion.

Megan Sweet, an MA student of Dharma Realm Buddhist University, noted that our moment-to-moment reality adds up over time to become our life. It is our views, ideas, and conceptions that over time become habits. The Buddha asks us to look at the here and now, and to realize that we really do have a choice in this. In this way, he awakens the potential in us for freedom. Maureen McIver, another MA student said that there are two types of reality. The absolute reality refers to the non-dual eternal present. The goal of human life is to attain an understanding of this non-dual reality which is the Sanatana or Eternal Dharma. Relative reality is about our view of self and others. We experience the world of multiple forms and at the same time interact within the world in appropriate ways.

This panel discussion engaged students to think more in-depth. One student even asked, "Where do I come from? Do I come from emptiness?" Dr. Setera answered, "You are here because of your parents." (Laughter) Megan Sweet suggested reading *The Shurangama Sutra* which provides a detailed answer to this question. Bhikshuni Heng Yi also reminded students that reality is emptiness and that all teachings from the Buddha are there to help living beings to understand this principle.

Before leaving the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, many students felt that they had learned a lot and wanted to come back. Josh Roa who majors in Wildlife Management and Conservation said that this is the second time he has come to City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. He liked meditation a lot and felt happy to interact with the monastics. He also said that the food that was served was great. And he made up his mind to come again. Zach Ottey, a psychology student, said that this is also his second visit to the City. Getting away from every day busy life, he could sense the inner peace which enabled him to appreciate little things such as the chirping of a bird and the fragrance from a flower. He enjoyed meditation

心理系的扎克·奧提也是第二次參加，他覺得平日太忙，來到聖城讓他感受到內心的祥和，能夠靜心欣賞一向無暇注意的花香鳥鳴。他很享受打坐的滋味，並覺得念誦觀音菩薩充滿能量，感覺能夠放下一切。

就讀生物系的香奈兒·華盛頓則是第一次參訪萬佛聖城，談及此行的收穫，她表示過去總是心為物役，打坐時才感覺能夠控制自己的心。此外，看到大家用齋後的盤碗都吃得乾淨，不像她就讀的大學餐廳，總留下很多剩餘食物，「真的很浪費！」依照自己的食量，而非根據想吃的欲望取食，是她學到的寶貴一課。她計劃暑假來聖城當義工，更深入體驗和學習佛教徒的生活。❀

and felt the energy filling the room when reciting Guan Yin Bodhisattva's name to the point that he felt he could let go of everything.

For Chanel Washington, a biology student, this was her first visit to the City. She came to realize that her mind had been controlled by material things in the past. She found that only when sitting in meditation could she control her own mind. She also appreciated that everyone ate all the food that they took. In her University cafeteria, she would often see people throwing away food that they had not eaten. There is always a lot of leftover food "which is very wasteful." The precious lesson she learned is taking only the amount of food that we need instead of taking the amount of food according to our desire. She plans to be a volunteer at the City during the summer so as to experience and learn more about the Buddhist way of life. ❀

