

Dharma Realm Buddhist University Celebrates 2018 Commencement

法界佛教大學舉行2018年畢業典禮

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法界佛教大學提供
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On June 1, 2018, Dharma Realm Buddhist University held its commencement ceremonies at the Sudhana Center in Ukiah, was the first since DRBU received full accreditation this spring. Five graduate students earned their degrees: Bhikshuni Jin Rou, Kenneth Cannata, Tina Chang, Lan Huang, and Sam Karlin. This was the fourth cohort to graduate with the new DRBU Master of Arts in Buddhist Classics.

The highlight of the commencement ceremony was the speeches, both the keynote address and those given by each graduating student. Unlike larger universities, DRBU is small enough to give all the graduates the chance to talk about their time at DRBU. Hearing from each student, one appreciates the diversity and uniqueness of the student body, as well as their shared experiences of deeply positive transformation.

First to speak was Dharma Master Jin Rou, who grew up on a cotton farm along the Mississippi River and is now a nun at City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. She shared that although she is 77 years old, “age didn’t matter” once

法界佛教大學於6月1日，在瑜伽鎮的善財參學中心舉行2018年的畢業典禮。今年的典禮深具意義，因為這是法大在今年春天取得美國西區學盟評鑑認證後，所畢業生，分別是比丘尼近柔師、康親翰、張智婷、黃藍、山姆·卡林。

今年畢業典禮中，貴賓主講人及畢業生的致詞是典禮的焦點。與典型大學不同的是法大規模小，所有的畢業生都有機會分享他們在法大的時光。聽完學生們的發言，大家都感受到法大學生們的多樣性和獨特性，以及每位學生內心深刻的正面轉變。

she entered the university. Summing up her DRBU experience, she said, “My journey at DRBU boils down to one word—happiness. True happiness is a personal choice, but I couldn’t have achieved this kind of happiness on my own.”

Next to speak was Kenneth Cannata, who shared how special it was for him to be back at another DRBU Commencement after graduating from the BA program in 2009. Originally from Buffalo, New York, he worked in the tea industry after graduating in 2009. Before coming back to DRBU, he felt a need to re-center his life. The program, in particular, the practice of inquiry and questioning, was able to help him cultivate his intuition and rethink what is possible.

The third speaker was Tina Chang. Chang worked as a Montessori teacher in the Bay Area before joining DRBU. She was originally afraid of joining the program because of the challenge of writing papers on the texts. However, after a while, she figured out that in order to have the texts speak to her, she had to do her own ‘homework’. This meant identifying her shortcomings and being willing to change them. Once she did that, the sutras started to make sense, and she began to understand them.

Fourth to speak was Lan Huang, who shared that four years ago, when she was about to finish her PhD in Psychology, she had no idea what to do with her life. She felt the conventional path of finding a job in a research or testing company wasn’t inspiring. She explained how the environment at DRBU encouraged her growth and transformation, saying that it was not only intellectually challenging, but also an environment that was “gentle, supportive, safe for students to be vulnerable, conducive to deep self-reflections,

第一位致詞的學生是近柔師，她在密西西比河岸的棉花農場長大，現在是萬佛城的比丘尼。她分享道，雖然她已77歲了，但一旦進入法大，其實「年齡並不重要」。法師說，「在法大的旅程可以歸結為一個字—快樂。真正的快樂是個人的選擇，但卻無法單憑我個人去實現。」

接下來致詞的是康親翰。來自紐約水牛城的他，在2009年從法大學士班畢業後，便投入茶葉種植和銷售的行業。工作幾年後，他覺得必須要重新調整生活的重心，使其回到中心平衡點。法大的課程，特別是互相詰問的上課方法，幫助他長養智慧，並重新思考未來的可能性。

第三位致詞的學生是張智婷。在來法大讀書前，她曾在舊金山灣區擔任蒙特梭利教育機構的教師。最初讀碩士班，很害怕面臨寫論文的挑戰。然而讀了一陣子後，她發現若想與經典生動地對話，她必須要做「功課」，意思是她必須認清自己的短處及願意改變。在開始迴光返照後，經典的文字開始變得有意義，她也漸漸明白經典中的義理，而不再膽怯了。

第四位致詞的學生是黃藍。四年前，即將





and rooted in the virtue of non-harming.”

The last student speaker was Sam Karlin, who joined DRBU after pursuing training in organic farming and working on a farm. Using metaphors from nature, he explained that the program has been like growing good roots in a diverse garden that is always fruiting anew in each moment. He said that he is often asked, “What does one do with an MA from DRBU?” He said that for him, it’s about the arc of life—planting seeds that will grow insight, and cultivating and nurturing ideas that connect the interests across his life.

The keynote speaker was one of the founding members of DRBU, Dr. Ronald Epstein, who currently serves as a Trustee. Dr. Epstein talked about the history of DRBU and shared stories about Venerable Master Hua’s vision for education. He described how DRBU is part of a long tradition of Buddhist education that began in ancient India. Similar to great Buddhist universities of the past, Venerable Master Hua did not want DRBU to be limited to a Buddhist seminary model. Master Hua emphasized a new kind of pedagogy that involved “activating the emergent abilities of one’s own inner wisdom.” Master Hua described his method saying, “Using this method, everyone can express his or her personal insights, voice what is in his or her heart, and reveal his or her wisdom...you should learn from each other’s strengths to make up for your weaknesses. This is a method of complementing each other as equals.” Following Master Hua’s vision, Dr. Epstein encouraged each student to continue their studies after graduation with joy, enthusiasm, and wonder, and also to make a lifelong commitment to making this world a better place.

Following the speeches, President Susan Rounds awarded the degrees. The commencement ceremony ended with the DRBU choir leading the assembly in singing the *Dedication of Merit* and the school song, *Jin Xu Kong (Pervading Empty Space)*. ❀

完成心理學博士學位之際，她不知如何面對未來的生活，因為研究中心或測試公司的傳統事業生涯並不能激勵她。她說法大的環境鼓勵她成長和改變，這不單需要有智力上的挑戰，還需要有「溫和的、支持性的、安全的環境讓學生敞開心扉，這樣的環境有利於深度的迴光返照，並能在不殺生的道德中紮根」。

最後一位致詞的學生是山姆·卡林。就讀法大前，他參加有機農業的培訓，也曾經在農場工作。他運用自然界的隱喻說到，在法大讀書就像在一片多元化的花園中成長，每一時刻都在結新的果實。常有人問他：「讀完法大能幹什麼？」對他來講，這是生命的弧線—播下增長智慧的種子，在生命中，耕耘及長養利人的思想及興趣。

易象乾博士是今年畢業典禮的主講人。他是法大的創校校長，目前擔任法大董事。易博士演講中談到法大的歷史，並分享宣公上人的故事。他講述了法大是淵遠的佛教教育的一環，而此教育淵源於古印度。與過去卓著的佛教大學一樣，宣公上人不希望法大僅侷限於佛學院的教育模式，上人強調一種新的教學方法—主觀智能推動力。上人說：「用這種方法，每個人都可以表達自己個人的見解，表達自己心中的想法，開發自性的智慧……你們應該互相學習，相互取長補短，這是一種互補的方法。」依宣公上人的願景，易博士鼓勵每位學生在畢業後，以快樂、熱情和好奇心繼續學習，並能發願，讓這個世界因我們的努力變得更美好。

致詞完畢後，校長蘇珊·朗茲授予畢業生學位。典禮結束時，法大合唱團與現場所有來賓合唱《迴向偈》及法大校歌《盡虛空》，為今年的畢業典禮畫上完美的句點。❀