

Dharma Realm Buddhist University: A Retrospective Look at the Venerable Master's Vision

法界佛教大學——回顧上人的願景



A talk given by Bhikshuni Heng Liang at the San Francisco Main Library on November 3, 2018

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I have been asked to speak on the Venerable Master's vision of Dharma Realm Buddhist University (DRBU). This is a daunting task, and I seriously doubt that it is possible to completely comprehend his vision of anything. Nevertheless, I will try by sharing some of my observations and meager understanding of the Master's vision in regard to DRBU.

The Bodhisattva enlightens himself and enlightens others; saves himself and saves others. The Buddha taught that ultimate enlightenment is not some abstract ideal, but is the culmination of the development of human consciousness and its capacity to fathom the true nature of all things, and so encompasses all knowledge and understanding. Of the Master's 18 Great Vows, in the first nine, he vows that he himself will not attain perfect enlightenment until every single living being from every class of living beings reaches enlightenment. And so, his vision, his dedication to bringing all living beings to enlightenment is inconceivable and unending.

我應邀今天跟大家分享，我所瞭解的上人對於法界大學的願景，這是一個艱巨的任務，我十分確信，很少有人能夠完整地瞭解上人的境界。儘管如此，我願盡力把我所觀察到的上人投注於法界大學的願景、以及我的淺顯的理解，籍此機會，跟諸位分享。

諸佛菩薩自救救他，自利利他。佛教導我們，無上正等正覺的境界並不是抽象且遙不可及，而是人心開發到極致，自然能夠徹見萬事萬物的本性，從而實現正遍知覺。在上人的十八大願裡的前九大願中，上人發願，所有六道眾生中如果還有一位眾生未成佛，上人就誓不取正覺。由此可見，上人將畢生致力於讓眾生成佛為己任，不可思議也無有止境。

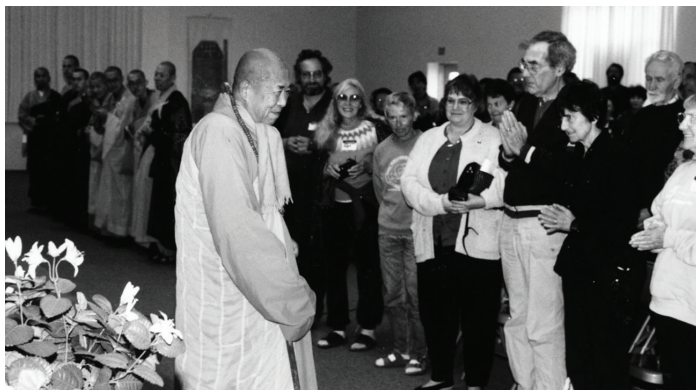


We know from the Venerable Master's biography, that he, from an early age, recognized the vital importance of education. In the face of sparse opportunities in the agricultural, rural environment where he was born and raised, he avidly pursued education and was able to memorize all the essential scholarly Chinese medicine, classical philosophical and literary texts by the age of 17. Not only did he value education for himself, he recognized the benefit of education for all, and at the age of 18, with virtually no funding or support, he opened a free school in his village and began teaching there. And, he never abandoned his dedication to education as an essential element to the enlightenment of all living beings—throughout his lifetime, every breath up to his very last breath, was dedicated to teaching and saving all living beings. And this remains true today.

In 1969, seven years after first arriving in America, the Master established the Sino-American Buddhist Association (SABA) — later renamed Dharma Realm Buddhist Association (DRBA)—as primarily a religious/educational endeavor. This is evidenced in its Articles of Incorporation, registered with the California state government. We know that the reason religious organizations are granted tax-exempt status in the United States is based on their intention to benefit society and individuals. Clearly, in SABA's case, the Master saw that the most effective and long-lasting benefit to people and to society was through education.

From the Articles, we can also see that the Master's vision of education has always been diverse, and that interfaith and inter-

瞭解上人生平的佛友都知道，在上人還很年輕的時候，就已經意識到了教育的重要性。在上人出生及長大的偏遠的農村地區，當地人接受教育的機會十分有限。上人因此孜孜不倦地專心學習，並且在17歲之前，就將所有中醫典籍、古典哲學、文學著作倒背如流。上人不僅自己勤勉地接受教育的薰陶，還希望其他人也可以像他一樣，通過接受教育獲得實質的利益。於是，在上人18歲那年，在沒有任何經濟援助的條件下，就在自己的家鄉開辦了一所義務學校，並開始在學校授課。上人一



直堅持將發展教育作為眾生成佛的必經之路，窮盡一生致力於教育、度化眾生，從未停歇，直到生命最後一刻。這一願景直到今天仍未改變。

1969年，就在上人抵美七年之後，上人創建了中美佛教協會（SABA），即法界佛教總會（DRBA）的前身，用於發展宗教教育的園地。這個宗旨反映在加州政府註冊備案的中美佛教協會的創立條款中。我們都知道，宗教團體在美國之所以免於稅收的原因，就是因為宗教團體的創立初衷是以利益社會及大眾為目標。上人創建中美佛教協會的初表明確地表述了，只有教育，才能夠給社會和大眾帶來有效而長遠的利益。

從中美佛教協會的創立條款中，我們也可以了解，上人堅信教育應該是多元化

disciplinary dialog has always been an essential aspect of the Master's vision of Buddhism and education.

And so, from the earliest days of the Buddhist Lecture Hall and on to Gold Mountain Monastery, the Master conducted educational activities as described in the Articles of Incorporation, and this evolved up to the establishment of Dharma Realm Buddhist University (DRBU) in 1976, when the Master first announced it as his gift to the United States of America for its 200th anniversary.

It wasn't until 1984—eight years later—though, that DRBU was legally certified by the State of California to grant degrees. In that same year, the Master changed the name of SABA to DRBA. And so, the Master's vision on education was then revealed to extend not only internationally, but to the entire Dharma Realm, and thus he expanded the very meaning of “universal” and “university.”

The master taught that education is a lifelong process, one in which we never stop learning. Eventually, he established educational programs for all ages and all propensities and abilities. He didn't leave a single person out, but included all.

Moreover, as a reformer of education, he reinstated its essential role in teaching people how to be human, in introducing students to the joy of learning, in initiating each student in a life-long process of trying to ever become a better and better person, in making each student aware of their connection and responsibility to themselves, their families, society, and the world.

This expanded vision of education to include not only academic learning and job preparation but character development, means that every place is a classroom, and every situation is an opportunity to learn and to practice—whether sitting in a classroom, riding on a bus, or working in the kitchen.

And now for a couple of stories to illustrate:

The Master was the Founder, first President, and primary instructor of DRBU. It all started at Gold Mountain Monastery (GMM), when education was part of the daily routine; any proper and available subject was offered; this turned out to especially be the study of many different languages.

With the move to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas (CTTB), the entire campus became one, huge classroom. Everything at CTTB was interconnected—in the Avatamsaka state—and every member of CTTB was a student.

Classes the Master taught comprised the “core curriculum.”

One of my favorite classes was Duilien, or Matched Couplets.

的，而跨宗教和跨学科的交流也應該是佛教和教育未來發展的重要方向。

因此，從建立早期的佛教講堂，到金山寺，上人一直嚴格遵循在中美佛教協會的創立條款中所陳述的初衷，舉辦教育活動，直至發展到1976年創建法界大學，作為美國獨立二百周年的獻禮。

但是直到1984年，整整八年之後，法界大學才正式獲得加利福尼亞州的合法認證，得以授予學位。在同一年，上人將「中美佛教總會」更名為「法界佛教總會」。由此可見，上人對教育的願景不僅延伸到國際舞臺，甚至延伸到整個法界，擴展了「普遍」和「大學」的涵義。

上人教導說，教育涵蓋了人的一生，因為學習是我們永無止境的事業。最終，上人建立了適用於所有年齡段、習性和能力的種種教育課程，其目標就是避免把任何一個人隔絕於教育之外，而是讓所有人都可以接受教育。

此外，作為一名教育改革者，上人重申了教育的核心在於教導大眾如何做人，引導學生享受學習的樂趣，啟迪每個學生在終身學習中努力成為一個更好的人，讓每個學生意識到學生自己，家庭，社會和世界的聯繫和責任。經過上人拓展之後的教育願景不僅包括學術學習和為找工作做準備，還包括人性的發展，這意味著無論在何時何地，教育的機會無所不在，我們遇到的每個情況都是學習和實踐的機會——無論是坐在教室裡，乘坐公共汽車，還是在廚房工作。

藉此機會，我將分享幾個上人的小故事：

上人不僅是法界佛教大學的創始人，而且是第一任校長和主要講師。這一切都始於金山寺，當時教育是日常工作的一部分；因此任何適當和可用的主題都可以出現在課堂上，包括學習各種外語。

搬到萬佛聖城後，法界大學的校園便成為了一個宏大的教室。萬佛聖城的所有物

This was a skillful and fun way that the Master taught classical Chinese culture, poetry, syntax, grammar, vocabulary, and so on.

From the late nineteen seventies to the late eighties—on weeks when he was not visiting one of the branches like Gold Buddha Monastery (GBM), or Gold Wheel Monastery (GWM) to encourage and instruct the nuns or monks there—he would commute from San Francisco to Ukiah on Friday evenings, arriving just before 7:30pm. Without stopping to rest or drink water, he would go directly to Wonderful Words Hall and wait for the assembly to arrive. At the end of that evening's lecture, he would write on the board the first line of a couplet for us to match, so that we would have a sleepless night trying to come up with a matching line for the next morning's class.

Early the next morning, the Master would promptly open the class. Every person living at CTTB, no matter what his or her age, would attend this DRBU class. In an orderly fashion, each student would go up to the board and write down their matching line until the huge board was entirely filled. The little ones who couldn't reach the lowest part of the board would be given a stool to stand on. Everyone was cooperative, helpful, and polite, and everyone happily engaged in the class. As students wrote their matching lines, the Master mingled among them, going over each matching line. In some cases, he would make corrections or changes, and after going over each one, he would give it one or two circles. Not all of his changes were corrections; some were ways of communicating a personal teaching to the author of the matching line, while simultaneously providing a teaching for the entire class. Whether the Master made changes to a matching line or not, each student would get a circle or two, and each would get a personal teaching that only he and the master understood—a “secret Dharma,” a timely teaching, while at the same time, we all learned from each other. After being seated, each of us would look toward the person at our left and to our right with a knowing smile of recognition of this inexplicable state.

Another education innovation that the master created in those days he titled “Developing Inherent Wisdom.” The very title of this teaching method speaks to the Buddhist principle that all living beings possess the Buddha Nature and can become Buddhas. It

品都彼此關聯，就如華嚴境界；萬佛聖城的每個成員都是學生。上人所教授的課程就成為了「核心課程」。而我最喜歡的課程之一是對聯。這是一種很有技巧而有趣的方式，上人用來教授中國古典文化、詩歌、句法、語法、詞彙等。

從七十年代後期到八十年代後期，當上人沒有訪問金佛寺或金輪寺等分支道場去鼓勵和指導在那裡學習的比丘或比丘尼時，上人就會在週五晚上從三藩市出發，大概晚上七點半左右到達瑜伽市。在路上，上人從不停車休息或喝



水，到了聖城後，上人就直接去妙語堂等待大眾到達。等到晚上的講法結束後，上人會在黑板上寫下一行上聯，然後讓我們回去想出下聯，這樣我們就會有一個不眠之夜，因為要在第二天早上的對聯課上，對出下聯。

第二天一大早，師父就開始講法。生活在萬佛聖城的每個人，無論年長還是年幼，都可以參加法大的這個課程。一個接一個，每個學生都在黑板上寫下他們的下聯，直到黑板都寫滿了下聯。那些連黑板最下面都摸不到的小朋友就會搬個小凳子，把自己寫的下聯寫在黑板上。每個人都很願意合作、熱心，很有禮貌，每個人都積極參與課堂活動。當



also reveals the Master's hope that his disciples develop and learn to use their own wisdom. This also involved developing one's "Dharma-selecting Eye," or an ability to perceive things as they really are, especially as it pertains to what is beneficial and what is harmful; to what is true and what is false. In other words, critical thinking.

Now, this method of Developing Inherent Wisdom was delivered in a very specific format.

- The Master assigned a Teaching Assistant (Dharma Master Heng Hsien) to prepare reference material for the class. This usually included a glossary of technical terms, as well as difficult Chinese characters, for that passage. In those days, the cutting-edge way of reproducing these handouts was with a mimeograph machine. Whether or not you know what that is likely reveals your age!

- The Master would also assign someone to write the passage on the board in both Chinese and English before class.

- The class would begin, of course, with requesting Dharma.

- Next, the entire class in unison would read from the board and recite the passage in Chinese and English.

學生們寫下他們的對聯後，上人就跟學生們一起研究黑板上寫下的每條下聯。

在某些情況下，上人會給同學寫的對聯進行更正或修改，並且在修改過後，在對聯上標記一到兩個圓圈。上人的修改並非都是糾正錯誤；有一些標記是只有寫對聯的學生本人才懂得其中的深意，而對其他同學而言，意義不同。無論上人給對聯有無修改，每位同學都會得到上人指點的一個或者兩個圓圈，其中的意義是只有上人和學生自己才瞭解的，即「密法」，觀機逗教，而其他同學也可以互相學習。大家在課堂上落座後，大家都會看看左右，會心一笑，心中彼此都深知上人不可思議的境界。

上人當時還開創了另外一種教育理念，上人稱之為「主觀智慧推動力」。這一教學理念源於佛



- Following that, the teaching assistant would give a brief introduction and overview of the passage of text with reference to the handout.

- The Master had two containers of sticks—one container for male students and one for female students. Each stick had the name of a student written on it. At this point, the Master would pull a stick from one of the containers and that person had to go up to the podium and do one of three things:

1. Recite the passage from memory, or
2. Repeat the Teaching Assistant's introduction and overview, or
3. Give his or her own interpretation of the text

- The sticks were pulled such that men and women took turns—the master always gave men and women equal opportunity to learn and to speak.

- The first two speakers followed 1-3 above.
- The next two speakers were supposed to critique the first 2 speakers, so that altogether 4 students got up to speak.

- At the very end, the Master would do a wrap up, adding any important points that were overlooked, and correcting any misstatements that had been made by the speakers.

One of the beauties of this method was that nobody dared to fall asleep. Everyone had to prepare for class and pay attention in class in anticipation of being called upon, and so this method was effectively engaging.

Of course, everyone would much rather have sat and listened to the Ven. Master's commentary. Nevertheless, this was a way that the Master taught his disciples to speak Dharma themselves.

This was also a way to illicit his students' inherent wisdom, by learning how to listen and to think critically. And, of course, at the end he would clear up any mis-statements or half-truths, so that everyone came away from the class with proper understanding and proper views.

And so, the essential points of this teaching method were:

法所講，即眾生皆有佛性，皆堪作佛。這一理念向我們展示了上人對弟子們的期望，希望弟子們開發並學會運用自己本有的智慧；另一方面，這一理念還包含了上人希望弟子們開發自己的「擇法眼」，即認清事物本質的能力，尤其是區別有益的和有害的；什麼是真的，什麼是假的。換句話說，是訓練弟子們的批判性思考能力。

如今，上人開創的「主觀智慧推動力」理念在實際教學中以下述的特別形式進行：

上人上課前，會指派教學助理（賢法師）準備要學習的經文的參考資料，其中包括經文中所涉及的名相，以及比較晦澀的漢字。在那個年代，如果想要複印這些學習教案，最先進的影印機就是滾筒式油印機了。如果知道您是否聽說過這個東西，我大概就可以猜到您的年齡了！

- 上人還會指派弟子在課前用中英文雙語在黑板上寫下將要學習的經文。

- 當然了，上人開始講課前，一定要先請法。

- 接下來，整個班級的同聲朗讀黑板上書寫的經文，並用中文和英文背誦下來。

- 之後，教學助理根據參考講義，向同學簡要介紹和概述經文原文。

上人在課上一般會備有兩個籤筒，一個是男眾的，另外一個是女眾的。每根籤上都寫著一名學生的名字。上人會隨意從其中一個籤筒中抽出一根寫了學生名字的籤，這個學生就必須走上講臺，選擇三個任務其中的一個去完成：

- 一、背誦經文；

- 二、重複教學助理曾講過的對於經文的介紹和概要；

- 三、根據自己的理解，解釋經文。

- 四、上人會讓男同學和女同學輪流上臺解答問題，讓男女有平等的學習和演講的機會。

- 前兩位被上人抽中上臺發言的同學，遵循上述三選一的規則完成任務。

- 接下來的兩位上臺發言的同學，必須評論前兩位發言者的言論，所以一共有四名學生可以有上臺發言的機會。

- 在課堂最後，上人會做一個總結，補充說明被同學忽略的重要經文論點，如果發言的同學有任何錯誤的陳述，上人也會及時糾正。

這種教學方法就妙在，沒有同學敢在課堂上打瞌睡。每個同學都必須在上課前做好準備，到了課堂上，也要隨時準備被上人抽到名字上臺演講。所以這種方法有效地讓學生在課堂上專心聽講。

當然，所有人都願意坐下來傾聽上人的講解。然而，只有運用了這種方法，師父讓弟子們才有機會鍛煉自己講法的能力。

- Close reading of the text
- Engaging students in the class
- Activating critical thinking
- Developing skill in listening, comprehension, and speaking
- Sharing insights
- Developing Inherent Wisdom

Now, as to the vision of DRBU's scale and influence, the Master compared it to Nalanda, the world's first, grand, Buddhist, international university in India, and he further predicted that one day DRBU would reach the stature of Harvard. He stated that DRBU's programs would eventually include every known discipline and area of knowledge and skill.

Ever since the Venerable Master's Nirvana, those disciples who received his compassionate instruction have endeavored to understand his vision of education and to carry it on. In DRBU, a small but dedicated group of former DRBU Professors and alumni, and Instilling Goodness Developing Virtue School (IGDVS) teachers and alumni, have dedicated themselves to understanding the Master's vision and methodology, articulating them, and bringing DRBU closer to the realization of them.

After years of working toward this goal, DRBU's Mission and pedagogy incorporates the essential elements of the Master's method of "Developing Inherent Wisdom."

In closing, let me share DRBU's current Mission Statement.

Dharma Realm Buddhist University is a community dedicated to liberal education in the broad Buddhist tradition—a tradition characterized by knowledge in the arts and sciences, self-cultivation, and the pursuit of wisdom. Its pedagogical aim is thus twofold: to convey knowledge and to activate an intrinsic wisdom possessed by all individuals. Developing this inherent capacity requires an orientation toward learning that is dialogical, interactive, probing, and deeply self-reflective. Such education makes one free in the deepest sense and opens the opportunity to pursue the highest goals of human existence.

It is our profound hope that DRBU will one day reach the full extent of the Venerable Master's vision. ☸

這種教學方法，也讓學生們通過先傾聽他人觀點，再自行做批判性思考，來激發自己的本有智慧。在課堂結束前，上人也必定會澄清任何錯誤、或一知半解的觀點，讓每位同學都帶著正知正見離開講堂。

上人創立的「主觀智慧推動力」的教學方法還包含以下要點：

- 仔細閱讀經文
- 在課堂上調動學生的學習積極性
- 激發學生批判性思考
- 培養學生傾聽、理解和演講能力
- 分享心得
- 開發本有智慧

目前，根據上人關於法界大學的規模和影響力的願景，上人認為，法界大學將會與世界上歷史最悠久的古印度那爛陀大學一樣，成為首屈一指的國際性佛教高等學府。上人還進一步預測，有朝一日，法界大學將與哈佛大學的地位不相上下。上人曾預言，未來的法界大學課程，將涵蓋當今所有已知的學科與技能領域。

自上人圓寂之後，曾聆聽過上人慈悲開示的弟子們，都不忘上人的教導，繼續努力理解上人對教育的願景，並付諸實踐。在法界大學，就有一群為數不多、由法界大學、培德中學和育良小學的老師和畢業生組成的團隊，致力於研究和詮釋上人的願景和教育理念，並孜孜不倦地努力讓法界大學發展成為更貼近上人願景的大學。

經過多年的努力，無論是法界大學的建校宗旨，或是教學理念，目前都融匯貫穿了上人所開創的「主觀智慧推動力」理念所提倡的基本要旨。

最後，請讓我再跟大家分享一下，法界大學目前的建校宗旨：

法界佛教大學是一所以廣大精深佛教傳統為本的博雅教育學院。此佛教傳統涵括藝術與科學知識，自我修行以及對智慧的追求。它的教育方法有二：知識的傳授，以及啟發每個人本有的智慧。為了發展這本具的能力，學習的方式以對話，互動，探討以及深入自我省思為取向。這樣的教育幫助學生得到最深層的解脫，同時提供機會以追求人類存在的最高目標。

我們深深地希望，終有一天，我們能夠將上人所開示的願景全部在法界大學實現。☸