

Dharma Realm Buddhist University Welcomes New Students at Convocation 2019

法界佛教大學2019年開學典禮

趙顏安文

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Justin Howe, a graduate from DRBU's M.A. in Buddhist Classics program, opened this year's convocation ceremony with a question: What is convocation? Convocation is a time to commemorate what DRBU has stood for in the past, to anticipate what it can offer in the future, and to communicate what it means in the present. On August 21, 2019, new and returning students, faculty, friends, and family were welcomed to the start of a new year at DRBU at Sudhana Center's Buddha Hall in Ukiah, CA. Seven students joined the B.A. in Liberal Arts Class of 2023, while seven joined the M.A. Class of 2021 and four joined the Graduate Certificate in Buddhist Translation Class of 2020—a new program designed to deepen understanding of Buddhism through textual translation. This year's group of students is comprised of a diversity of backgrounds. The ages range from late teens to 60s, and some

法大佛教經典班研究生，賈斯丁·豪，以一個問題為今年的開學典禮做開場：「什麼是開學典禮？」開學典禮就是回顧法大過去的成果、展望未來的發展和傳達它目前所肩負的使命。二零一九年八月二十一日，新舊學員、教職員以及親友們在加州瑜珈鎮善財參學中心的新學年度開學典禮受到熱烈歡迎。有七名學生加入二零二三年文理學院學士班，七名學生加入二零二一年碩士班，四名學生加入了二零二零年佛教翻譯研究認證班——這是一個新學程，旨在藉由翻譯經典來加深對佛教的理解。今年這批學生來自多元化背景，年齡從十幾歲到六十幾歲不等，有些來自墨西哥、中國和馬來西亞；有些甫從高中畢業；還有一些是畢業

have travelled here from Mexico, China, and Malaysia. Additionally, some of our students are coming right out of high school, while others have years of work experience and prior education that will enrich the DRBU community.

Three speakers addressed the audience during the Convocation and spoke of DRBU as a whole. The ceremony began with the school song, “Jin Xu Kong,” as the procession of new students took their seats in the Buddha Hall. Afterwards, DRBU President, Susan Rounds, gave the first welcome speech. She spoke of the nature of DRBU’s community, and how it has developed to represent the diverse group of people it is made up of today. Those in attendance chose to become members of the DRBU community because of a shared belief in the innate human capacity for wisdom. Furthermore, we are not a tribe that clings to a shared identity; instead, we are a community open to new paths of inquiry and challenge within ourselves. Dr. Rounds ended her speech on a similar note, expressing hope for the community, as all living beings are pure, compassionate, and full of light.

In the next speech, DRBU Dean of Students, Bikishuni Heng Liang, discussed the values we share as a community. Dharma Master Liang expressed that since the only thing we can depend on in life is change, DRBU allows us to engage in the process of our own transformation. She also commented on DRBU’s unassuming appearance. Although DRBU holds a quiet, subtle campus at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, within it, is an environment of steady change and growth for its members.

Dr. Martin Verhoeven, the Dean of Academics, followed with the final speech of Convocation. He addressed the theme of “unsettlement,” as it is likely to arise during self-reflection and cultivation of the self at DRBU. The model of activating inherent goodness and wisdom in DRBU’s curriculum is rooted in the understanding that we are not lacking in anything. He spoke of DRBU as an invitation to challenge identity and return to wisdom. In this environment, there is a sense of familiarity in unfamiliarity, as students learn to affirm discomfort, rather than run away from it.

Convocation concluded as new students signed their names in DRBU’s matriculation book, marking the start of a new year and continued growth at DRBU. Following the ceremony, new students worked together to prepare a community lunch for all the attendees. Several bhikshunis, DRBU alumni, and volunteers also stepped in to help. There was a “friends and family circle” afterwards, where friends and family offered well wishes to the new students and asked questions about DRBU. ❀

工作幾年之後重返校園，這些成員的加入都將豐富法大社區。

有三位演講者在典禮上致辭，都談到法大的整體概況。隨著新生魚貫至佛殿就座，開學典禮以校歌《盡虛空》拉開帷幕。法大主席蘇珊·朗思隨即獻上歡迎祝詞，她談到法大社區的性質，以及它如何發展成現今多元群體的代表。這些學生之所以選擇成為法大社區的一員，都是基於一個共同的信念——人類本自俱足的智慧。此外，法大不是一個主張單一身分的團體；相反地，法大對各種新的探索方式以及自我挑戰持以開包容的態度。朗思博士以相同的立場做總結，也表達對社區的期望，因為一切眾生本自清淨、慈悲並俱足光明。

接著，由法大學務長比丘尼恆良法師致詞，討論社區共同的價值觀。良法師提到，我們在生活中唯一可以依靠的就是改變，而法大允許我們參與自身轉變的過程。她也對法大低調的外觀做了評論。法界佛教大學是位在萬佛聖城裡一個幽靜別緻的校區，卻提供學員們一個穩定成長和發展的良好環境。

最後由教務長馬丁·維荷文博士致詞，他提到「不安感」這個主題。學生們在就讀法大期間，可能會在自省以及修行的過程中產生這種感覺。法大課程能啟發我們與生俱來的良善與智慧，基於了解我們的自性本自俱足。他談到就讀法大就像是接受一張挑戰自我與回歸智慧的請帖。在這個既陌生又熟悉的環境，學生們學會降伏不安，而不是選擇逃避。

開學典禮在學生們簽到註冊中落幕，也代表新學年的開始以及法大持續的成長。會後，新生們在幾位比丘尼、法大校友還有志工們的支援下，一同為與會大眾準備午餐。末了，在親友們對新生們的祝福、詢問法大相關問題的「親友圈活動」中為活動畫下句點。❀