



The Artistic Legacy of the Venerable Master 上人的藝術遺產

A Talk given by Alan Nicholson on March 16, 2019 at City of Ten Thousand Buddhas

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The Venerable Master Hua said when he came to America in the early 1960's, "I am a sculptor; I sculpt living beings into Buddhas and Bodhisattvas." He vowed "to build people, not temples." He wanted to create living Patriarchs, living Arhats, living Bodhisattvas, and living Buddhas. The Proper Dharma began in India, moved to China, and now it is moving to the West. The great temples of India and China should come to the West. It doesn't mean they have to be Indian or Chinese, and it doesn't matter the form of the Buddhadharma, or the form of the myriad practices. What matters is that it become alive as the Proper Dharma. The Proper Dharma has no shape or form; the true Buddhadharma has no dwelling or appearance.

The Venerable Master's vows include bringing Proper Dharma to the West. He established an enduring Sangha; lectured on sutras and also spoken and written commentaries; and gave talks for Westerners, and indeed, the whole world. He gave tireless lectures throughout his lifetime. The Buddhist Text Translation Society continues this essential transmission. Education is the foundation of all worldly and transcendental dharmas. "Dharma-

宣公上人在1960年代早期來到美國時，說：「我是一個雕塑師，我要造活佛、活菩薩。」上人發願造人，而不是造廟。他想造活祖師、活羅漢、活菩薩和活佛。正法始於印度，傳到中國，如今遠播到西方。印度和中國那些宏偉的廟宇也應該到西方來，這並不是指我們在這裡建的道場必須要是印度式或者中國式，或者一定要是佛教式或是其他法門的樣式，重要的是振興佛法。正法無形無相，而真正的佛法也是無住無相。

上人的宏願之一就是要把正法傳到西方。他在西方建立僧團，講經說法，對西方人和對全世界的人給予開示。上人終其一生孜孜不倦的講經說法，佛經翻譯委員會也繼續推動正法的傳承。教育是入世法和出世法的基礎，「法門無量誓願學」，在這裡，我們彼此相互學習，教學相長。

在歷史上，佛教的音樂、建築、書法和

doors are limitless; we vow to study them all.” We are all here mutually as teachers and students as we learn from one another.

Historically, the music, architecture, calligraphy and graphic arts of Buddhism have taken root in each new culture they encounter and accord with them. Master Hua himself was an artist, a painter, a songwriter, a poet, an essayist, a sculptor, and a building designer; in addition to his teaching legacy of the Tripitaka, Vinaya, and Chan schools. His legacy is vast and deep.

After leaving China in 1949, he lived in Hong Kong for thirteen years before leaving for the United States in 1962. In Hong Kong, he established three temples, and as always, as part of his educational aspirations, taught his disciples the joys of exploring higher examples of culture, philosophy and the arts.

In 1953 and 1954, he worked to establish Cixing Chan Monastery on Lantau Island. In gratitude for all the help he received from many disciples, he sculpted and painted a large dragon made of steel armature and cement on the hill overlooking the monastery. This became an inspiration to generations of many who have seen it and the dragon has become an icon of the Master’s works and his practice of artistic expression. During the Hong Kong years, he commissioned hundreds of images and donated them to individuals, temples and monasteries in Asia and the Pacific Islands.

When someone asked the Venerable Master if he was capable of lecturing the sutras, he said, “Well, I am not capable, but I practice.” It was the same with everything he did. Everything was a practice or teaching opportunity, and the arts were part of that opportunity. Over the years, he has used painting and sculpture both to express and honor his visions and experiences, as well as a method to cultivate the nuances of this Dharma Door. Among the most famous of these, are his creation of the ten thousand Buddha statues in the Buddha Hall at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. He also created other statues of Sakyamuni Buddha and Medicine Master Buddha. He has tried his hand at painting self-portraits, practicing these various dharmas as both inspiration and teaching tools for current and future students. His painted Buddhas and Bodhisattvas document various states and add to the history of image representation in the long history of the Buddhadharma.

The Venerable Master encouraged people to explore the Dharma and create something new and relevant to the contemporary human condition. He always inspired us to bring the Dharma alive and encouraged others to use, explore, and find out how it functions, what it does, how it’s efficacious, and how it influences and betters our practice, our lives, and the world around us. Therefore, we have the Dharma Realm Buddhist Association.

☞ To be continued

圖像藝術在傳播的過程中，紮根之道是與相遇的新文化融和。上人本身除了教授經律論三藏、大乘佛法和禪宗之外，他也是藝術家、畫家、歌曲作詞家、詩人、作家、雕塑家、建築設計師。他所留下的資產，既深且廣。

上人在1949年離開中國之後，在香港住了13年，於1962年到美國。他在香港期間建立三個道場。上人的教育願景是教導弟子們探索這些深度文化、哲學和藝術領域的樂趣。

1953年和1954年，上人在大嶼山建立慈興禪寺。為了感念弟子們各方面的護持，上人以鋼筋水泥塑了一條大龍，並將其安置在山丘上俯瞰整個道場。許多人因此得到啟發，龍也成為上人作品及藝術詮釋手法的表徵。上人在香港期間，他委託製作上百幅佛像，並捐贈給亞太地區的許多信眾和道場。

每當有人問上人會不會講經，上人會說：「我不會講經，但我願意練習。」上人做每一件事情都是如此。對上人而言，任何事情都是實踐或教學的機會，藝術也是。多年來，他用繪畫和雕塑來傳達他的願景和體驗，以作為詮釋各種法門的方式。最著名的例子就是上人在萬佛城佛殿造的萬佛像，他還造了釋迦牟尼佛像和藥師佛像。他嘗試自畫像，將各種法門作為啟發當代和未來學子的教學工具。上人繪製的佛像和菩薩像呈現各種型態，在佛教的悠久歷史增加了圖像歷史。

上人鼓勵大家鑽研佛法，與時俱進創造新事物。上人總是勉勵我們要將佛法發揚光大，鼓勵其他人善用佛法，了解佛法的作用、功能和效用，以及佛法如何影響和幫助我們的修行、我們的生活以及我們周遭的世界。因此，我們成立法界佛教總會。

☞ 待續