



Buddhism and Democracy (continued)

佛教與民主（續）

A Talk Given by Ron Epstein, Ph.D., Chancellor Emeritus, Dharma Realm Buddhist University
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Chinese Translated by Liu Rui, Janet Lee

法界佛教大學榮譽校長易象乾博士2019年5月18日講於萬佛聖城大殿
劉睿、李采真中譯

Buddhism in the world today is in a position for which there is no equivalent in the whole history of Buddhism up till now. In traditional societies, the governing model was by and large a paternalistic one in which the ruler was the one who was responsible for whether the country was run virtuously or not. He was the one responsible for the welfare of his people. But in a democracy, it is not the ruler who is responsible. There are no autocratic rulers in democratic countries, or at least that's the theory. We, the people, as citizens, are responsible for our democracy. That Buddhist monastics and laypeople have a responsibility toward everything that goes on in our society is, as I say above, a position that we as Buddhists have never been in before throughout the entire history of Buddhism.

Some of you may be thinking: "Well, Dr. Epstein, this isn't really quite right. Although in terms of civil society Buddhism has never existed in a culture with democracy, we do have an alternate model of democracy that goes back to the time of the Buddha himself—that model is the Buddhist Sangha."

What you say is true. I grant you that according to the Buddha, the Buddhist Sangha should be governed by a kind of a direct democracy that is based on a concern for others which involves treating others with great kindness and compassion. Therefore, if we wish to take up our civic responsibilities, we can begin to learn by observing the

在現代的社會中，佛教所處的地位和過去完全不同。傳統社會是家長式的領導模式，是否以德行治國，乃至人民的福祉都取決於統治者。但在民主國家中，領導者的責任並不是這些。民主國家不是由專制統治者執政，至少理論上沒有。民主社會中，人人都有責任，四眾弟子也對這個國家中的每件事情有責任；而這也是佛教徒在整個佛教歷史上前所未有的經歷。

有些人可能心想：「易教授，您講得好像不太對。在文明社會裡，民主文化從沒有佛教這部分是對的。但是我們有另一種民主模式，這可以追溯到佛陀的時代，也就是佛教的僧團。」

佛陀說，佛教僧團應該是直接的民主式管理，它的制度以彼此相互關心和慈悲為基礎。因此，身為佛教徒，我們如果想承擔責任，可以從萬佛城開始學習，教導學校的孩子們學習負責任的民主生活，我們可以從自我實踐民主精神開始。我們當中的一些人從小就生長在民主的國家，有些則來自完全沒有民主的國家。

直到近代才有民主制度的國家，在此之前，佛教徒一直活在不民主國家。從佛陀時代開始，為了保護僧團的獨立

direct democracy applied right here at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas and to teach responsible democratic living to the children in our schools. And we can practice it ourselves. Some of us have grown up in countries where we've learned about democratic ideals from the time that we were very little, and others have grown up in countries where there is no democracy at all.

Since secular democracies are fairly recent, before that Buddhists have always lived in non-democratic countries. From the time of the Buddha, there has always been a kind of tension between those who tried to protect the independence of the Sangha and rulers who desired to control Buddhism. Some of you are probably, very well acquainted with some of the more famous examples in China. For example, one of them is an essay written by one of the founding masters of the Pure Land school titled, "Why monks do not bow down to emperors." The topic addressed that monk's struggle to maintain his independence.

In the Tang dynasty, in ancient China, during one of the great repressions of Buddhism, between 842CE and 845CE, the Buddhists and Taoists were fighting for recognition in the Imperial Court. At one point, the Taoist priests got the upper hand and almost convinced the emperor, who was not quite sane, to round up all of the monks in the Capitol, dig a big pit, and bury them alive. So, historically the stakes from these tensions were sometimes very, very high.

Now, I'd like to share some events from the life of the Venerable Master Hsuan Hua. First, in China, he had to traverse very powerful political currents. Later he came to the United States, and continued to navigate through powerful currents. I think we can take him as a model of how one can follow the Bodhisattva Path in a democracy. The Master operated in this new situation to develop Buddhism in a democracy. Almost all of you know the story of the Venerable Master meditating for three years at his mother's grave in Northeast China. While he was meditating there, he had a vision of the Sixth Patriarch coming to see him and giving him a big job, that of bringing proper Dharma to the West. So here is this young man who was 19 or 20 years old, and only had two and a half years of formal education. He probably hadn't traveled any farther than Harbin in his whole life, and he was given the job of bringing proper Dharma to the West. During this time in China, the Master had to go through extreme difficulties due to the historic situation in which he was living. In order to get to the West to spread the Dharma, first he had to get out of Northeast

性與佛教社區，始終存在著緊張。同樣的，有些統治者也想要控制佛教。我認為在每個佛教發達的國家裡都是如此。有些人可能非常熟悉中國一些著名的例子，比方說，中國淨土宗初祖慧遠大師寫了一篇著作——《沙門不敬王者論》，就是嘗試保持僧伽自主性的例子。

另外一個例子是在中國古代唐朝，大約在842年~845年間有一個佛教重大的法難——「會昌毀佛」。當時，佛教和道教互相競爭，想要贏得皇帝和朝廷的認可。後來道教佔了上風，差點就成功說服昏庸的皇帝圍捕京城中的僧眾，並挖個大坑將他們活埋。從歷史上看，有時局勢是非常險峻的。

接下來，我想和大家分享上人生平中的一些重大事件。上人在中國的時候，必須行越非常強烈的政治洪流。後來他來到美國，我認為我們要以上人做榜樣。在民主社會裡行菩薩道就有參與政治的必要，我們應該學習上人在民主國家中如何發展佛教。

我想在座的各位應該都很熟悉上人在東北母親墳旁廬墓三年的故事。當他打坐入定的時候，見到六祖賦予他一個重責大任——將正法西傳。這個僅受過兩年半教育，19歲或20歲的年輕人，他一生中可能從沒去過比哈爾濱更遠的地方，被賦予將正法帶到西方的任務。以中國當時的社會情況而言，這是一個極為艱鉅的任務。為了將正法西傳，首先上人必須要能夠活著離開東北。當時東北兵荒馬亂，上人所在之處是中國和日本軍隊駐紮之處，兩軍人馬四處搜捕年輕男子充軍；因此上人想要離開東北，就得避開兩國軍隊的徵兵。我認為，上

The Sixth Patriarch in China
—Great Master Hui Neng



China alive, in one piece, and functioning as a human being. Where he was living was right in the crosshairs of the Japanese army's forcible recruitment as they came through and just grabbed any young man they could get and forced them into the Japanese army. The Communists also engaged in forcible recruitment at this time. He had to be a draft dodger. If he was going to fulfill the duty that the Six Patriarch gave him, his number one concern had to be staying alive.

How many of you know about Unit 731? From the very early days, the Venerable Master made sure we knew about it because it was very, very close to where he grew up. Unit 731 was a special, medical experimentation unit that the Japanese army at that time set up. The kind of medical experimentation that they did was very similar to the kind that the Nazis did in Europe. These utterly inhumane experiments were done with complete disregard for human life and suffering. The Master could have easily been swept up, taken there, and died.

Let us fast forward a little bit. Soon after the Master completed his filial practice by his mother's grave, he entered monastic life and then left Northeast China to go to Potola Mountain to be fully ordained there. Next, he went to see Elder Chan Master Xuyun and received the Dharma transmission of the Weiyang Chan lineage. Then, he went to Guangdong where he participated in a Chan session with Dharma Master Minguan who was very impressed with him and asked him to stay and take up a monastic office. The Master said, "No, the Communists are coming. They're not only going to close down all the monasteries, but they will also

宣公上人為母親守孝時，於定中見到六祖大師；六祖大師囑咐上人將佛法西傳。

During Venerable Master Hsuan Hua's three year vigil beside his mother's grave in Northeast China, he had a vision as he was meditating of the Sixth Patriarch instructing him to bring the Proper Dharma to the West.

人當時心中最重要的就是要完成六祖交代的任務。另外，上人的住處非常靠近日本731部隊營地。有多少人知道日本731部隊是什麼？

上人在世的時候，很注意要讓我們這些早期弟子了解日本731部隊事件，因為部隊基地相當靠近上人的家鄉。731部隊是日本設立的特殊醫學實驗部隊，他們進行的醫學實驗與德國納粹非常相似。以慘無人道的方式做人體實驗，完全無視受試者的生命與痛苦。當時，上人居住的地方離基地很近，很可能隨時就被帶走而在實驗中死去。

讓我們把時間快轉一些。上人出家，從東北到普陀山受具足戒，之後又去參訪虛雲老和尚，成為溈仰宗的接法人。上人之後又到廣東的六榕寺，隨明觀法師打了一個佛七；明觀法師對上人印象深刻，遂請他留下擔任執事。但是上人說：「軍隊就要來了，他們不僅會關閉寺廟，要僧眾還俗，廟上的財產也會被沒收。」很遺憾，當時明觀法師沒有聽從上人的建議即時走避。我很幸運能在1960年代中期在香港見到明觀法師，他是相當

make everybody go back to lay life, and they're going to take all the money from the monasteries.” Unfortunately, Dharma Master Mingguan did not make it out in time back then. Later, however, he did get to Hong Kong. I was very fortunate to meet him there in the mid-1960s. He was a remarkable person. Anyway, back then the Venerable Master had a good enough grasp of the political situation to know when it was time to leave and go to Hong Kong.

The Venerable Master was in Hong Kong for more than ten years (1949-1962), and he taught the Dharma to his disciples there. Then, as the '60's approached, he decided that the time was right for him to go to the West. He had two young disciples, Stella and Madalena Tam, who had gone to the San Francisco Bay Area for their education. They discovered that there had no Mahayana way places, so with the Master's approval, in 1958, they established the Buddhist Lecture Hall of San Francisco, then in 1959, registered as a non profit Organization. Therefore, the Tam sisters with a few local disciples who took refuges with the Master before he came to the US, help made arrangements to invite him to come to the United States. This was not just a matter of buying a plane ticket, since it was very difficult for Chinese people to immigrate to the United States.

Now, I would like to briefly digress to another related topic before returning to the Venerable Master's life story. In 2006, Dharma Realm Buddhist Association (DRBA) sent a delegation to Mainland China. Among the people on the



1962年，宣公上人從香港到美國，舊金山灣區當地在上人來美前的皈依弟子們在舊金山國際機場恭迎。

Disciples of San Francisco Bay Area, who took refuge with the Venerable Master before he arrived in the United States greet him at San Francisco International Airport upon arrival from Hong Kong, 1962.



1956年，明觀法師（前左四）和宣公上人以及一眾居士攝於香港西樂園寺。

Dharma Master Mingguan (bottom row, third from right) and Venerable Master Hua accompanied by laypeople in front of Western Bliss Garden Monastery, 1956.

了不起的一個人。但是師父對政治局勢有足夠的了解，知道什麼時候該採取行動到香港去。

師父在香港駐錫十餘年(1949-1962)，在那裡隨緣教化。當上人覺得去西方弘法的時機成熟，讓兩位香港的年輕弟子——譚果正和譚果式，先後到舊金山灣區，繼續深造。因見當地無漢傳佛教場所，經上人同意，於是在1958年，創立了三藩市佛教講堂，而於1959年，則正式註冊為非牟利機構。因此，他們和一些當地在師父沒來美前皈依的弟子，負責安排上人到美國的種種事宜。這不僅僅只是購買機票，因為當時中國人要移民到美國非常困難，得經過官方層層複雜的作業程序。

在回到上人的故事前，我想先講另一個故事。2006年，法總組織一個訪問團到中國，訪問團成員包括方丈律法師和長老實法師，我很幸運能夠隨團參訪。我們對當時中國製作的電視影集《百年虛雲》都相當感興趣。

影集大約有20集，是描述有關虛雲老和尚的一生。我們思索著是否可能在其中



1937年冬，虛雲老和尚舉行禪七圓滿。虛雲老和尚（第二排右二），宣公上人（第二排右六），美國女居士詹士寧（第二排右三）

The final day of the 1937 Winter Chan Session at Nanhua Monastery. Elder Master Xuyun (second row, second from right), Venerable Master Hsuan Hua (second row, second from left), Upāsikā Ananda Jennings (second row, third from right).

delegation were Abbot Heng Lyu and Reverend Heng Sure. I had the good fortune to be able to tag along with them. We were interested in finding out about a video series about the life of Elder Chan Master Xuyun that was being made for Chinese television. I think it had around twenty episodes. We wanted to see whether we could put in an episode about the Venerable Master meeting Elder Master Xuyun and giving him the Dharma transmission. We went to see the producer who was very cordial. He asked whether we had gone to see the Venerable Master Ben Huan, one of the closest and most senior disciples of Elder Chan Master Xuyun. At that time, I think he was 99 years old or 100 in Chinese years and was still very vigorous, but we hadn't been able to get in touch with him. The producer just pulled out his cell phone, and said, "Well, I have his private cell phone number." He called him up and said, "There's a delegation from the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas here that wants to see you." Master Benhuan said, "Tell them to drop everything and come and see me right away. This is very important." So we dropped everything, changed our whole schedule around and went to see Master Benhuan at his temple in Shenzhen.

There are two things that stood out for me about our visit with him. The first thing we found out was that, according to Master Benhuan, he was the person who introduced the Venerable Master to Elder Master Xuyun. We got to hear

一集描述虛老和上人見面，還有傳法給上人的情節。我們因此認識當時的影集製作人——唐玉。我們和唐先生見面，他相當的親切，還問我們是否已拜訪本煥老和尚，他是虛老最親近也最資深的弟子之一。當時本煥老和尚已經99歲，虛歲是百歲；他相當硬朗，但是我們不知該如何聯繫他。唐玉拿出手機，說：「這樣吧，我有老和尚的私人手機號碼，我給他打個電話。」他撥了電話，說：「美國萬佛聖城的訪問團想見您。」本煥老和尚一聽，就說：「告訴他們擱下別的行程，馬上來見我。這是非常要緊的事。」我們一聽，馬上改變旅程，趕到深圳。我們到深圳本煥老和尚的道場拜訪他，當時有兩件事讓我印象非常深刻。

第一件事就是，據本煥老和尚所說，是他推薦上人去見虛老。我們覺得必須和老法師談談當時他介紹他們見面的情景。這位在中國佛教相當受景仰的人也可為「上人和虛老相會」這個事件做印證。

我們的訪問團也很榮幸有機會和本煥老和尚單獨見面，並自由提問。想拜見老和尚的人川流不息，但他非常慈悲的把時間留給我們。我記得訪問團中有人提問以下這個問題：

「如果要在市中心建立一個道場以幫助人們如法的修行，幫助他們開悟，應該注意什麼？」



1963年，宣公上人駐錫舊金山沙加緬度街，出示虛老表信偈給弟子看。

Venerable Master Hua introduces *Faith In A Verse* from the Elder Master Xuyun to his early disciples on Sacramento Street in San Francisco, 1963.

him talk about what it was like when he introduced them. That was a direct verification of the meeting between these two masters by somebody who was very well respected in the Chinese Buddhist community.

Our delegation also had an opportunity to have our own question and answer session with Master Benhuan. He was very gracious, kind, and generous with his time given the constant flow of people wanting to pay their respects to him. Somebody in our delegation asked him the following question: “In order to establish a Buddhist monastery, a place where people can most effectively practice cultivation and become awakened, what aspects should we pay attention to? He had a long list of requirements for doing this, but I think the first three were: One, you should find some place that has very good fengshui—geomancy—and good energy. Two, you should choose a location where there are a sufficient number of lay followers, so that they can make enough offerings to support the monastery, so there will be enough food, clothing, and medicine for the requisites of the monastic life. And three, you have to be able to get along with the local officials. I hope we will all continue to follow the Master Benhuan’s advice about this. The Venerable Master also placed great emphasis on good relations with local officials.

Now let’s get back to the Venerable Master’s biography. The Tam sisters tried very hard to arrange things for him, which was very difficult, especially find a place for him to stay. When the Master first came to the United States, some people, mainly in Chinatown, also took refuge with him before even meeting him. The temple didn’t have very much money, and there were a lot of politics in Chinatown. The situation required a lot of hard work and suffering.

In the 1960s, there were two powerful political groups in Chinatown, and each of them had their own newspaper. One was the Chinese Communist group and the other one was the Chinese Nationalist group. Both of them wanted the Master to publicly announce his support for their side. He steadfastly refused to do that and maintained his political neutrality from party politics. The result was that both sides attacked him very viciously. People spread untrue rumors about him and made things even more difficult for him than they would’ve been otherwise.

I met the Venerable Master at the very end of 1965. When I met him,

」老和尚對這個問題列出了許多必備條件，我認為前三點特別重要：第一、必須在一個氣場良好、充滿能量的地方。第二、必須在一個有足夠信眾的地方，信眾的供養足以支持道場運作和僧團所需的飲食、衣服、臥具、醫藥品等物品。第三、必須能夠與當地政府官員保持良好關係；如果我們已經學會的話，也是吃了不少苦頭才學到這一課，我希望大家都會繼續遵循本煥老和尚的建議。上人也重視和本地官員維持良好關係，我希望大家在萬佛城都已經學會這一點。

現在讓我們繼續回顧上人的生平故事。上人初到美國時，有些人（多數在中國城）還未見過上人就已經皈依上人。譚氏姐妹排除萬難、竭盡全力地為上人打點一切，特別是為上人找一個棲身處所。當時道場經濟拮据，中國城有很多政治角力，並不是每個人都樂見上人到舊金山。因此上人初到

美國的生活非常艱辛，也受了很多苦。

1960年代，舊金山的中國城有兩個勢力強大的政治派系，每一派都有自己辦的報紙。他們各自都希望上人公開表態，支持自己的黨派。上人堅定地拒絕支持任何一派，保持自己的政治獨立性和中立性。結果兩派非常惡毒地抨擊上人，使得上人的處境倍加困難。

在1965年年底，我遇見上人。當時，上人已經從中國城搬到沙特街和韋伯斯特街一帶，也就是靠近現



1950年代末期，舊金山唐人街。
Chinatown, San Francisco, late 1950s.

he had already moved out of Chinatown to a slum apartment building near Sutter and Webster in what is now considered Japantown. Very few people from Chinatown came to see him and very few of them made offerings, so it was very tough times. He slowly attracted more Western disciples, but we were all either students or hippies and none of us had any money, so we weren't helping very much financially to keep things going. It was a quite a struggle.

The Master moved back to Chinatown in 1967 to Waverly Place. But in the 1970s, since that place was too small, we moved to 15th Street in the Mission District, and the Master named it Gold Mountain Chan Monastery. Things were very tough; we did everything ourselves pretty much to renovate the monastery.

It was at Gold Mountain Monastery on 15th Street that he suggested that when the election season came around that we should have a Candidates' Night and invite all of the local politicians who were on the ballot to come and speak. Almost all of the candidates came and spoke. A number of them were very impressed with the Venerable Master, including George Moscone, who later became the mayor of San Francisco; Carol Ruth Silver, who was then a San Francisco Supervisor and helped the Venerable Master start our schools and is a member of the board of trustees of Dharma Realm Buddhist University; and also Frank Jordan, the Chief of Police. Later on, Frank Jordan appointed the Master the Buddhist chaplain to the San Francisco Police Department. The Mayor of Burlingame, A.C. "Bud" Harrison, also came to speak.

I could go on for hours, but I thought I'd try to tell you some of the stories that you might not have heard before. Let me close by saying that after we moved to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, the Venerable Master continued to invite local officials very often to CTTB and developed good relations with many of them. He encouraged everyone in the community, both laypeople and monastics, who are US citizens, to make sure that they vote. So, I hope that we can all follow his example. ❀



1988年，時任副總統的老布希，赴舊金山中國城對選民發表政見。其後，老布希當選美國總統。

Then Vice President George H. W. Bush, who went on to be elected President of the United States, addressing a group of voters in Chinatown, San Francisco, 1988.

在日本城的一個破舊公寓。從中國城來拜訪上人的信眾不多，供養就更不用提了，那段時間實在很不容易。上人開始教化西方弟子，我們這些弟子在當時不是學生就是嬉皮，手頭也很拮据，所以在經濟上對上人的助益並不大。

上人在1967年搬回中國城到天后廟街那兒，但是由於空間實在不足，在1970年，我們搬到舊金山米慎區15街，師父命名為金山禪寺。當時情況非常的艱難，我們只能憑藉自己的雙手翻修寺院。

金山寺還在15街的時候，上人就建議每當選舉時，我們應該舉辦「候選人之夜」，並邀請那些已列名在選票上的參選人到金山寺發表政見。上人做到了，幾乎所有候選人都來了；其中許多人都對上人留下深刻的印象，包括後來成為舊金山市長的喬治·馬士孔尼；舊金山市議員卡洛·露絲·思爾薇，她幫助我們創辦了學校，現在也是法大董事會的一員；還有舊金山警察局局長法蘭克·喬丹。後來，他還禮請上人擔任舊金山警察局的宗教主禮人，還有柏林根市長哈里遜也來拜訪過上人。

時間差不多了，我們可以繼續講好幾個小時，希望今天講的故事都是你們沒聽過的。最後，我想以這段話做結尾。我們搬到萬佛城之後，上人仍然時常邀請當地政府官員來參加聖城的活動，並和其中許多人保持良好的關係。上人鼓勵聖城所有住眾，包括在家眾和出家眾，只要是美國公民，都要參與投票。因此，我希望我們都能以上人為榜樣，承襲上人的精神。❀