



# DRBU Students Reflect on Their Experiences in 2021

## 2021年法大學生感想

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**Luke Wu:** My name is Luke Wu. I came from China and I am graduating from the Master's program. I'm going to talk about the most important aspects of my experience at DRBU, which is, for example, the exposition of wisdom. It's one of the aspects that stands out. I think it's one of this program's strengths is how instructors understand and explain wisdom.

Before I came to DRBU, I had been cultivating the Dharma. I came to CTTB for many sessions and read a lot of sutras as well. But after a while I discovered that I didn't really have much connection with all the sutras' wisdom. The sutras talk about emptiness and attachment—such as, the *Vajra Sutra*, the *Sixth Patriarch Sutra*, the *Shurangama Sutra* and the *Heart Sutra*, and—which I just could not connect to and I just couldn't really figure out what they are trying to say. So after a while I practically gave up on investigating the sutras. I put them aside and decided, okay, I can just focus on reciting the Buddha's name, and that's something that I understand and really connected to. And I have gained many benefits from this practice. So I practically just put the other sutras aside. This is how I was before I came to DRBU.

At DRBU I have to encounter all these wisdom texts again. We were forced to read them, because they are a very important part of our courses, which describe all these Dharma of wisdom. Other parts of our course included western philosophy. It was my first time getting a taste of “emptiness” from these western philosophy books.

We read Western philosophers, notably Kant and Husserl. We studied Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and Edmund Husserl's *Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. Both philosophers critiqued the western artifacts of natural science and some big wings in history, such as Rene

吳劍秋：我叫吳劍秋，即將從法大碩士班畢業。我想我在法大感觸最深的就是對慧學的認識；我覺得這些課程的強項之一是教師們對慧學的理解和詮釋。

我來法大之前就開始學佛，也到萬佛城參加了很多法會，涉獵了很多經典。經過一段時間後，我發現自己和般若系的經典無法相應，比如像《金剛經》、《六祖壇經》、《楞嚴經》、《心經》，這些講「空」的經典，我發現非但難以相應，也不懂經文討論的空性。我就放棄研究經典，修行念佛法門；這是自己能理解，也比較相應的方法，我也從中獲得很多利益。基本上我就是把經典先擱置一旁，這就是我來法大之前的情況。

到法大之後，我不得不重新面對這些經典，因為閱讀經典——也就是慧學——是我們課程很重要的一環。我們的課程當中也涵蓋西方哲學，藉由這些書籍，我第一次領略到些「空性」。

我們涉略很多西方哲學家，第一個真正讓我很有體會的就是康德，他寫了一本書叫《純粹理性批判》；還有胡塞爾的著作《歐洲科學的危機》和《超驗現象學》。這兩位哲

Descartes, Galileo Galilei, Issac Newton, Gottfried Wilelm Leibniz. They drove human rationality to the extreme and then developed a whole system of Western's natural science, which was very successful.

Kant and Husserl said the whole natural science system had some problems, so they basically deconstructed the entire system—they destroyed it and turned upside down. I was a science student before, so I am very familiar with these knowledge, which was totally pushed over by them. For the first time, I really got to see what it's meant by emptiness—it's by reading these people's works. So, that was a first notable experience.

Afterwards we also read about Abhidharma and Yogacara. These readings really helped me further deepen my understanding of emptiness.

So my major take away from those classes is what they are denying: what they are trying to destroy is not the existence of things: but what we imagine as things. Things we see in our imagination don't really exist. So that was my major take away. I can really understand it now, and can really see how this practice works.

As a side note, I often hear people in the CTTB community say they had the impression that what DRBU teaches is very basic, things only for beginners. But my impression, at least with regards to the wisdom teaching, is not like this at all. It's very profound. Maybe what they are referring to is about the actual practice, the actual skill, or the kung fu, like holding precepts, cultivating, meditating. But they are not concepts in English, which makes them so difficult to comprehend. Most students at DRBU are not from an Asian or Buddhist culture, so it's not easy to talk about these concepts to them.

In summary, I think what DRBU is really good at is the exposition of wisdom and what it needs to work on more maybe is the actual practice aspect of it, which cannot be hasten, because a lot of people just don't know what that is. So you can't really force it on people. It's hard, as Westerners don't have these kinds of culture, so we can say DRBU is a pioneer.

I think DRBU's strength is in what it's trying to do, to really work with the western culture by first introducing the wisdom aspect of Buddhism. And then later slowly introduce the samadhi concentration and the precepts aspect, which is harder for people to make sense of. I think maybe that's why Master Hua placed such an emphasis on DRBU.

學家批判西方的理性主義，比如西方歷史上一些主流人物——迪卡爾、伽利略、牛頓、萊佈尼斯這一幫人，他們把人類的理性吹捧到極致，成功地發展出我們現在所盛行的西方自然科學體系。

但是康德和胡賽爾，認為這整個科學體系有問題，把它們整個推翻、瓦解。我以前是理科生，對這些科學知識都很熟悉，第一次被他們全部推翻了以後，我立馬感受到：空性。這也是我第一次對「空性」產生的一種體會。

在那以後，我們又學習了阿毗達摩、唯識等等這些經典，讓我對「空」有更深入的理解。

我從課程中得到的收穫就是過去所學，那些科學家否定存在的物質，是存在我們想像中。這個「空」，它講的最主要就是你想像的那個東西並不存在——這也就是我得到的最大的一個啟示。

另外在萬佛城裡，我也聽到有人說：法大講的東西比較基礎，或者說是針對初級。可是從慧學那個角度來講，我的感受卻非如此。如果說有什麼不足的話，可能是具體實修的功夫，比如修行、修定、持戒這方面的功夫。這一方面，的確，因為法大的學生並非全然來自亞洲或是佛教文化，要跟他們講這個概念，確實不容易。

總的來說，我覺得法大對於慧學的闡述和理解很擅長。而在「功夫」這方面，因為很多人根本都不懂，需要多加著墨。不過這也沒辦法，因為西方人缺乏這種文化，所以說法大是一個先驅者。

我覺得法大的特長是比較適合西方人的根性，因為慧學是西方人比較容易接受的。從慧學入手，然後再引入戒和定，這是比較難理解的部分，我認為這也是為什麼上人對法大那麼看重的原因。



Quinn Anderson, from Washington State .  
A community leader when living in San Francisco Bay Area.  
Currently in the BA program.

昆恩·安德森。來自華盛頓州。  
曾為舊金山灣區社區負責人。  
現就讀於法大學士班。

**Quinn Anderson:** Good evening everyone. Amitofo! I am halfway through my Bachelor's degree at DRBU. I just finished my second year.

I wanted to share some of the reflections that came up for me this year. I think being a student at DRBU is a really unique experience. It's definitely not like anything that I've done before in life in that the whole aspect to the program in this environment is very well developed. it's very specialized, and you can see how much care and heart is built into it.

In the Bachelor's program, we get to study four different philosophical strands: we cover Chinese philosophy, Indian philosophy, Western works, (ancient Greek and Hebrew texts,) as well as Math, Science and Music.

I get to learn all of these cool things that I really, really enjoy learning. That's a very big highlight of this program. I think in terms of what I really learned is: I've learned to question myself a lot and not take my immediate reactions to things so seriously. The program really encourages you to really try to understand everything you read, how you respond to it, and to just truly explore each text both individually and as a group. The group feedback is really important to see how people interpret and understand things differently and to work together to create more understanding that I definitely wouldn't have learned nearly as much on my own. The whole process has a lot of exploratory and kind of profound examination of who we are as humans, personally and collectively. It really impacts you deeply.

So, I think, DRBU is — it's just a very good place to be. It has a lot of very beautiful spiritual cultivation and energy that happens here whether it is the staff members who work so hard all the time to maintain the school and our lives, or the faculty members who spend so much time arranging our classes so we can have such a nourishing program. All students in this community who show up daily to keep learning work hard, as it is not always easy and can be quite difficult to continually study and change, to learn about ourselves, and to be honest and open and listen to each other. There is a lot of care and respect that happens in the classroom between everybody and I think it's just really a wonderful place to

昆恩·安德森：我今年剛讀完法大文學士學位的第二年，正好完成半個學位。

我分享一下作為一個法大學生的經驗。身為一名法大學生，這種經驗是獨一無二的。因為它確實不像我以前有過的任何體驗。法大這裡的環境規劃十分用心，真的是很好的學習環境。

在本科文學士課程上，我們學習四種傳統的經典，哪四種呢？就是中國哲學、印度哲學、西方經典和佛教經典；西方經典裡面當然也包括了希伯來語和希臘語的這些經典；除此之外，我們還有科學課、數學課和音樂課。

很開心能在學習這些有趣的課程。我所學到最重要的一個就是常常反思，不執著我們第一念最直接的反應。這個課程它所提倡的就是深入去了解我們所研習的經典。我們學習這些經典，是以小組為單位，大家共同探索，每個人有不同的看法。如果沒有這個共同探究，我想我不會學到那麼多。我發現我對我們所學習的經典，對他人、甚至是自己的認識都增加了好多。

總的來說，我覺得法大真的是一個很好的地方，它有很好的的一個靈性的環境，有很多的正氣，這裡的能量很好，而且職員都工作得很勤奮；這裡的老師們花了很多時間，把這些課程編排起來，為我們準備充實豐富的課程。

我周圍的學生也是，他們基本上每節課都會來，他們很勤快，這對很多人來說，是不容易的！因為他們不僅要管好自己的學業，還要不斷地改善自己；他們必須能夠表達自己的感受，



be, as a spiritual cultivator or just as anyone. But if you are very sincere and want to develop your inherent goodness and good qualities, it's a place that really, really, really has a lot of space for that.

So I think I want to finish by saying that I'm very thankful for this school, this community. I know that's where my heart lives now. And I am also thankful for CTTB. I feel like CTTB is also part of our world and being able to be here as a DRBU student and as someone who is just at the City of 10,000 Buddhas is sort of an unimaginable reality.

Nahelia Aguilar Castillo, from Mexico.  
Working in the field of marketing.  
Currently graduating from MA program at DRBU.

**Nahelia :** Thank you very much and good evening everyone. Amitofo! Thank you for having me. People invited us to speak about our experience at DRBU. At first I was hesitant about sharing, because I don't know how to express in words. What was this journey for me?

I think it is a little bit worth my mentioning what happened to me before coming here. At that time, I was staying in a very sad place where everything was very confusing. But I always had different questions in my mind. My mom has always joked of how when I was of the age of five or six, I'd ask her questions such as, what does it mean to be alive?

I grew up in a country with not the best environment, so my life did give me a lot of trouble.

And then, luckily at the age of twenty-three, twenty-four, I met Omar, another student at DRBU. He previously came to volunteer at CTTB, so I met him, he told me about Buddhism, about Master Hua, and about Amitabha and Guan Shih Yin, and suddenly everything made sense for me and I just wanted to come. But for some reason I couldn't do it until many years later. Then something curious happen— when the causes and conditions were ready, I think that everything started to be quick and smooth. I met a lot of people who help me along the way, especially, at DRBU. It was so great to find such sincere people who wanted to help me, to share what the school was teaching, and to show the world that they are here to really help you. And they really helped me.

並且聆聽別人，互相尊重，所以我覺得這裡是一個很好的修行處所。如果你想要開發你本有的良善，法大能給你很多長養的空間。

最後，我想說的是，我真的很感恩我們的學校和這個一個團體，我感覺這是我心之所在，我真的很愛這個地方！不止是法大，萬佛城也是我生活的一部分，我真的很難想像，自己能夠在這裡作為一名法大學生在萬佛城生活和學習。

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從事銷售方面的工作。  
今年畢業於法大碩士班。

**娜赫利亞：**我說一說我來法大之前的情況。之前，我處在一種很悲傷、很困惑的狀態，心中有很多很多的問題，我媽經常開我玩笑，比如說我在五六歲的時候，就經常會問這些問題：生命的意義到底是什麼？我生長的國家並沒有提供好的環境來探索這些問題，有的時候也為此惹了很多麻煩。

在我大概廿三、廿四歲的時候，很幸運地遇到一個法大學生歐模，他之前在萬佛城做過義工告訴我好多關於佛法、宣化上人、阿彌陀佛和觀世音菩薩的事，我聽到之後，就覺得這些東西都好有道理！我就一直想來讀書。但是由於各種原因，就是不能來。直到很多年後，因緣成熟了，各方面才開始順利起來。我遇到了好多善知識，特別是在法大，他們在各方面幫助我，幫助我了解學校所教的東西，這些對我相當有幫助。

實際上我來的時候，我不知道該期待什麼，我只是希望能夠親近一下歐摩描述的這個地方，也好好了解一直以來存在心中的那些問題。我就是很想來一探究竟，我覺得這是我這一生最大的福氣——能到這個地方來學習。為什麼說是我最大的福氣呢？因為到了這地方之後，重新認識我自己，可以卸下成長的環境裡堆積的這些包袱。

When I came, I had no expectations. All I knew is that I wanted to be close to this faith that Omar told me about, from where all this great information that help me make sense of all the questions that I had. I just wanted to come. And I never knew when this was going to be. But coming here and studying at DRBU is really the greatest blessing that I had in my life. Why? Probably because I had this peace finally to see the things that I was unable to previously and what was that? Basically it was to get myself in a way that would allow me to know myself better and get rid of all the luggage that I had complied through the years in the environment that I grew up in.

During the first semester, we studied the *Sixth Patriarch Sutra* and I remember that by the time we read Chapter two, I was so overwhelmed and happy for the words that I read were what I wanted and everything that I needed to know. This experience made me realize that this program was amazing and that the text was the best thing I could read. Moreover, there were other subjects and different readings that I was just as amazed by what.

That experience with the text made me feel very happy, amazed and sometimes overwhelmed about the things I read. I would go to our classroom and have discussions with my classmates and they would bring up ways to see the text in a way that I've never have thought of. It was very a empirical learning process. I would try to look at the text with my experience and see how I can use it for me so I could get closer to my essential nature, but then I would go to the class and my classmates will share their thoughts in a more academic point of view, especially if they have a broader knowledge in Buddhism which I didn't have at all. Their connection with the text opened my view even wider. It was amazing.

Classes at DRBU happened in a way that I've never experience before. I was just to a learning setting in which a teacher sits in front of the class lecturing, and students would basically absorb the information and their exams would be graded on how accurate they could answer the questions in accordance to what their teachers taught.

But the way DRBU classes function is completely different—they run as a shared inquiry, in which the teachers participate as well. They not only guide the discussions, but they will also play the role of “being humans” trying to connect to and engage with the texts and figure out what they say. So it's more of a team work of trying to see what is going on.

第一學期，我們讀了《六祖壇經》，當我讀到第二章的時候，對內容感到相當法喜，覺得這就是自己一直在尋找的東西。」這個經驗讓我下定決心要繼續學習，因為我覺得這個經驗實在是太不可思議了！這是我讀過最好的東西。在學習其他科目時，我也從中學到了不同的東西，我覺得很不可思議。

我讀經典的體驗不止是感到很喜悅、很驚訝、有時甚至感到有一些不知所措。當我們在教室裡進行討論的時候，同學所提出認識這些經典的辦法，我從未想過。我就藉由這些經驗來幫助自己學習經典，讓我更接近我的自性。有的時候，我的同學會分享一些更有學術性的觀點，有些人對法的理解真的是很廣博，會把不同的法聯繫起來，我感覺我對法的理解變得更廣了。

法大上課的方式是我以前從來沒有過的。法大完全不同，教育模式是共同探索；老師自己也是一個探索者，老師也是一個想要接觸、了解經典的人，大家同心協力解開這個迷。

像這些東西，說一說是很容易的，但是在學習的路上我經歷了好多考驗，不僅是心裡上的、身體上的、還有靈性上的，各種各樣的考驗。跟這些經典接觸越深，感覺自己就越脆弱，什麼意思呢？毫不隱瞞地的面對自己，這是我以前不習慣做的事情。

法大給我們開了一扇門，讓我們突破我們的習氣，讓我們有機會仔細注意周遭，以及那些視為理所當然的事。因為我們把一件事情當做理所當然之後，就失去了它真實的意義。我覺得法大的特點方法就是讓我不害怕問問題，探索事物，相信自己可以改變、可以學習，常常審視自己的內心，並且能夠認識到大家都在努力地成長。在這個過程中，有點化蛹成蝶的感覺；不斷進行自我蛻變，這過程也是不容易的，這完全是這裡的人與課程造就的。如今要畢業了，感覺就像登上飛機，聽起來像結束，但事實上是開創更多不同的可能性。

Norbel Casas, from South California .  
Practicing Qi Going for many years.  
Currently in the BA program.

諾貝爾·卡薩斯，來自南加州。  
多年練習氣功。  
現就讀於法大學士班。

**Norbel:** I just recently completed my third year here in the BA Liberal Arts program. When I thought about what to share tonight about DRBU, I see this as not only setting the stage for me to self-reflect and prepare for the best version of myself to emerge in the final upcoming year, but also to share with others what the DRBU world is like. I believe DRBU is like a hidden blessing amidst this grand oyster of this world.

First I would like to ask a question: What does it mean to be a student? Or more specifically, what does it mean to be a student in DRBU? To be honest, prior to coming to DRBU, I think many students just learn passively, absorbing information from their teachers and texts, and trying to get good grades on exams, and earning a degree. I did not want to become a part of a pipeline system since it was empty of a core substance. Deep down, I longed for a meaningful and impactful education, yet back then, I didn't even know that this is what I wanted.

Don't get me wrong; there is a system of value in any education; however, I want to focus on what makes DRBU unique and different from any other educational system I've ever encountered.

First, the DRBU retreats help us enter conversations of our texts into new levels beyond abstractions, such as knowing from your heart what does loving kindness and compassion feels like, rather than simply having an intellectual handle on them.

Second, the level of sincerity I felt here is astounding. For instance, checking in at the beginning of class, I felt how people amazingly help foster an active learning process, where there is a deep probing and profound dialogue with the classics together.

Thirdly, this is only the beginning place to start in one's lifelong learning journey to build our spiritual, potential innate humaneness and ultimately become an independent figure. And you meet many like-minded people and friends on this path, so your learning doesn't stop once you get a degree or step outside the classroom.

**諾貝爾:** 我剛剛完成文學士第三年的課程，我希望今晚分享我來法大的生活，不僅可以給自己一個自我審視的機會，還能幫助我為即將到來的第四年做好準備；同時也和大家分享法大的生活是怎麼樣子的；還有就是為什麼我相信法大是這個道場中鮮為人知的寶藏。

首先，我想問一個問題，那就是：做一名學生的意義何在？或者更明確地問，做一名法大的學生意義何在？說實話，在我來法大之前，我認為做一名學生，就是被動的從老師和教科書那裡接受訊息，在考試中努力考個好成績，拿一個好文憑、找個好工作等等。我並不想成為這個生產線上的一個產品，因為它空洞毫無意義，那時我還不知道我內心深處渴望有意義又有影響力的教育。

請大家不要誤解我說的意思，生產線式的教育，肯定有它的價值所在，我只是想談一談法大和其他的教育方式相比，有哪些與眾不同的地方，這也是我從來沒有過的體驗。

第一，就是法大的課程當中包含了一週的研習營，這一週的時間，讓我們對經典的理解從抽象的理解，提升到深度的層次；比如說能明白慈心和悲心是什麼，不再是兩個知識層面的概念。

第二，大家的誠心是很動人的。比如在課前，我們大家就會互相關心，我覺得這對培養大家主動學習和探究的精神是很有幫助的，只有在這種精神的引導下，大家才能夠真正的深入經典，並且與之進行深入的交流。

第三，我覺得這裡的教育，是開啟我們終身學習的能力，幫我開發靈性，教我學會做人，以及成為一個獨立的人。在學習的路上，會遇到很多同修道友，因此，你的學習不因完成學位、離開教室而終止。

最後，當我經歷了無可取代的教室學習，以及疫情期間的網絡學習之後，我更加覺得其實我還有很多潛力，能夠讓教育更加有意義。





Lastly, from encountering both in-person classes, which is irreplaceable, and on-line learning during this world pandemic, I feel deep down that there is great potential for me to be tapped into this education to make it more meaningful, knowledge that would also contribute to make our world a better place.

I would like to end with a quote as a means of self-reflection from a famous history book from China, the Records of a Grand Historian by Sima Qian, that hopefully summarize the real crux of the matter. “As the Grand Historian was reading Mencius he unconsciously put the book down and sighed when he came to the place where the King Wei of Yang asks Mencius, ‘How would you profit my country?’ The Historian said, ‘Ah, profit is truly the beginning of disorder. This is why Confucius seldom spoke of profit always shoring up the source. The source is the beginning where it is found among the upper class or the lower class. The degeneracy of the lost of profit is basically the same. When those in the public office profit unfairly then the law is distorted.’”<sup>❀</sup>

## BUDDHISM A TO Z

阿毗名「對」，達磨云「法」。法有二種：一、勝義法，謂即涅槃，是善是常，故名為勝；二、法相法，通四聖諦。故對法藏，特名慧論；舊譯為無比法，以詮慧勝故。

“Abhi” means “paired,” and “dharma,” which is variously translated, is of two types: one, Dharma in the supreme sense, that is, nirvana, which is both wholesome and permanent, and so is called “supreme”; two, dharma of dharma marks, which coincides with the Four Noble Truths.

The paired Dharma Store has the special name “wisdom śāstra.” The old translation [into Chinese] means “incomparable dharma.” That is because it portrays wisdom as supreme.

讓這個世界更加美好。

我希望能夠用司馬遷也就是中國著名的《史記》當中的一段話，作為反思和問題的總結。太史公自述到：「我讀《孟子》時，讀到梁惠王問：『你能夠為我們國家帶來什麼利益？』時，我放下書而感歎道：『哎！利益真的是混亂的開始呀！』這也就是為什麼孔夫子很少提及利益，因為他要防止這個根源；這個根源就是混亂的開始，上至天子，下至貧民，利益對人的腐化是類似的。」當官的如果貪圖不正當的利益，法治就會破壞了。

經商的如果為了利益而欺騙，那商業就不能正常運作。商業不能正常運作，人民就會爭吵不休；法治被破壞，人民就會有怨言，這就是為什麼人變得那麼叛逆和好鬥，甚至連命都豁出去了。這不就正說明了利益真是混亂的開始嘛！

聖人和賢者們對於利益這件事情，顯得格外謹慎，注意和它保持距離，他們崇尚的是仁義和公正，但是後人還是以欺騙的方式來謀取利益。這樣的人對於道德和教育的破壞是沒有底線的，更嚴重的是如果投機取巧來謀取暴利的這種方式被大眾所接受，甚至是引以為榮，大家趨之若鶩，這樣一來，我們還怎樣期待這個世界能夠看重道德呢？

我真的希望法大的教育能夠促成人心的一些改變，為我們這個世界帶來一些希望。最後感謝大家肯花一些時間聽我講法。❀

