

Interview with Tehya Jackson

與特希亞·傑克遜訪談記

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Eighteen-year-old Tehya Jackson is a new undergraduate student this year. Before coming to Dharma Realm Buddhist University (DRBU), she envisioned herself as an activist for the Native American and Black communities. What does she think of this new community which seems so different from where she came from? How is she doing a month since she arrived? This interview was done on a warm Saturday evening in the backyard of the DRBU C-Dorm at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas.

Q: What brought you to DRBU?

A: My yearning for a different type of education. I did very well in middle school and high school, but struggled a lot in the college I attended for two years. I found DRBU very different when I read the website. During the interview, I felt a sense

十八歲的特希亞·傑克遜，是今年法界佛教大學本科新生。到法大之前，自詡為北美原住民和非裔族群的積極參與者。她對這個與自身背景南轅北轍的新團體有什麼看法呢？到法大一個月後，適應得如何？在一個溫暖的週六傍晚，我們在法界大學萬佛聖城校區C棟宿舍的後院和她進行訪談。

問：什麼原因讓您來到法大？

答：是我對不同教育型態的嚮往。我在初中和高中都表現優異，但就讀大學的兩年期間卻感到相當挫折。當我瀏覽網站時，覺得法大相當與眾不同。在入學面試中，感覺自己是受到關懷和支持的。但我確實擔心過，自己能夠融入這所小型大學嗎？

of caring and support. But I did worry that this community might be too small for me to fit into.

Q: Do you think you've made the right decision to come to DRBU?

A: Yes, for sure! I missed my family initially, but soon I felt at ease. I feel at home here because of the close relationships between the community, students, and faculty. I think these close relationships should be at the foundation of an education, because you (educators) are raising the future. You are helping them understand. You help them cultivate. That's a very personal thing. Everyone learns differently; everyone grows differently. That's why it's so essential to have these close relationships.

Q: What part of the DRBU's education fosters those close relationships?

A: Shared inquiry between the students and the faculty's openness to the students' ideas. I was curious about the process of shared inquiry where people can have different perspectives. In other schools, there may be a two-hour-long lecture and hardly anyone asks questions. Some people don't even know what questions to ask because they don't understand what has been said. DRBU is not lecture-based. The faculty may not have the answers, but they take the time to consult those who might have them, or read something and then get back to you. They will always support you when you need advice on something. In most of our classes, we do check-ins and meditation.

Q: How do you usually feel when you wake up in the morning?

A: It depends on when I wake up. If I wake up for morning ceremony at 4 a.m., I usually feel a bit tired, and also anxious. Did I wake up early enough? Will I make it on time? What kind of experience will I have at morning ceremony? Sometimes if I wake up later, around 6 a.m. or 7 a.m. I may feel that I should've got up earlier so I could do some kind of practice. Sometimes, I feel that I am glad I woke up. Sometimes, I sleep in because I also need to listen to my body. That's also essential in cultivation-listening to our body. That's how I feel when I initially wake up. But eventually, I wonder what

問：您認為來法大是正確的抉擇嗎？

答：是的，當然是！剛開始還會想念我的家人，但很快就適應了。這裡有家的感覺，因為在這裡學生和教職員之間的關係很親近。我認為這種密切的關係是教育的基礎，因為法大著眼未來，正在幫助學生理解，幫助他們修行。這是非常關乎個人的事情，每個人的學習方式不同，每個人的成長方式也不同，那就是為何這些親近的關係是如此重要的原因。

問：您認為是法大教育的那個部分造就這種緊密的關係？

答：學生共同研討，以及教職員們對學生的想法抱持開放的態度。原本我對共同研討以及人人對事情可以有不同的觀點，感到好奇。在其他學校，往往一個長達兩小時的演講無人提問；有些人甚至不知道該問些什麼，因為他們對內容不知所云。法大不以單向講課為主，教職員也許無法對學生的問題給出答案，但會花時間諮詢可能知道答案的人，或者瀏覽相關資料後再作答覆。他們總在學生需要建議或其他協助時，提供支援。我們在大多數的課堂上都會進行交流和打坐。

問：早晨醒來後，您通常覺得如何？

答：這取決於我什麼時候醒來。如果我早上四點醒來參加早課，通常會感到有點疲憊。我會感到焦慮，我起得夠早嗎？我能準時上殿嗎？我會從早課中得到什麼體驗？有時我比較晚起，大約是六點或七點，會覺得自己應該早點起床，這樣就有時間修行。有時，我會很高興自己起床了。我睡覺是因為聽從自己身體的呼喚，這也是修行的要點：傾聽我們的身體。這些就是我早晨剛睡醒時的感覺。我想知道今天將會發生什麼事，同樣的，也不會預設任何期望。

我沒想過自己不該預設期望，但自從來到法大，放下這些心思變得容易得多。對多數事情不作預設，反而使我的生活輕鬆許多。

will happen today. It's also about not setting expectations.

I never thought to myself that I shouldn't set any expectations, but since I came here, it's been so much easier to let go of them. And it makes my life so much easier not having expectations for most things. When I do find myself setting expectations, it doesn't turn out well. I need to just step back and say, "Okay, I need to let go of this expectation." And I need to start thinking about how I can solve this problem because it didn't meet my expectations. I need to change my perception.

Q: How about at night when you look back at the day, how do you feel?

A: On weekdays, I feel good; I feel I've learned a lot. And I feel excited for what's gonna happen next week when we have those same classes. Or I feel very grateful, because of the sense of wholeness in myself. Maybe the meditation I did was really good, or even when I'm in the kitchen washing dishes, that's also very meditative for me. I'm able to go into this trance and I feel very peaceful. While in the past, I hated doing dishes. But now I really enjoy doing dishes!

Some days, there will be instances where maybe I'm not able to get through to people, and I'm just thinking, "Why doesn't anyone understand what I'm saying? Or why am I not able to communicate this message with this person?" There's a cycle of anger. Sometimes I go to sleep like that. But then in the morning, I try to let go of that. It doesn't always happen. Sometimes, it will pop up in the middle of the day. It's just a practice trying to let go of them.

Q: Are there any challenges so far?

A: Sometimes, there are challenges in shared inquiry. I'm getting more used to it now. But the first week, when I was still adjusting, I would think, "What if I don't have anything good to say in shared inquiry?" And then when I go into shared inquiry, I realize that what I'm thinking might be totally different from what everyone else was thinking. Maybe what everyone else was thinking seems much more unified than what I was thinking. Am I right? Are they wrong? Or is there some kind of middle ground? Even speaking up can sometimes be a challenge. But it's definitely getting much easier, especially because my classmates, during lunch or whenever, would come up to me and say, "Hey! I really liked what you said. I really wish you would speak more because I really enjoy hearing what you have to say. And it really

我發現當自己有所期望時，結果通常不理想。我需要退一步，告訴自己說，好吧，我需要放下這些期望。接著，開始思考如何解決因為沒達到預期而產生的煩惱。我得要改變自己的看法。

問：那麼當您在晚上回顧這一天時，覺得如何？

答：在平日，我感覺很好，覺得自己學到很多，當下週有同一堂課程時，我對課堂上將要發生的事情感到興奮。或者，我會因為內裡的圓滿而覺得感恩。也許是因為我的禪修成效不錯，甚至在廚房洗碗，對我來說也是一種禪修，我能夠保持專注並感到平靜。以前我討厭洗碗，但現在我很樂於洗碗！

有時，我在與他人溝通上會出現障礙，我會思索：為什麼沒人明白我說的話？為什麼我無法對這個人表達自己的想法？接著下一步就是發脾氣。有時，我會帶著情緒入睡，但隔天早上，我會試著放下。這種情況不常發生，偶爾會在白天突然出現，對我來說，就是學習如何放下。

問：到目前為止，碰到過任何挑戰嗎？

答：有時在課堂的共同研討覺得有挑戰，現在越來越習慣了。例如開學第一週，那時我還在適應，會擔心萬一自己在討論中無話可說怎麼辦。開始進行分享後，又會擔心：我的想法可能和其他人大為不同；也許其他人的想法相較於我更一致。我是對的嗎？他們錯了嗎？是否有什麼中間立場？有時就連說出來也是一種挑戰。但這肯定會越來越容易做到，特別是我的同學們在午餐或其他時候，走過來跟我說：「我很喜歡你的說法，真希望你能多講一點，你的論點很中聽，讓整個對談變得更順暢，也改變我對事情的看法。」我認為這非常激勵人。

問：當您決定來法大時，是否把法大視為一個墊腳石？或者您打算讓自己進入一個

changes the flow of the conversation and how I'm thinking about it." I think that's very encouraging.

Q: When you decided to come to DRBU, did you see DRBU as a stepping stone or were you planning to completely dive into the unknown?

A: Honestly, I'm not sure. Before coming here, I was looking through all the videos [on the website], and I saw everyone saying, "This is the place if you want to change yourself. This place is going to change you, no matter where you are at." I was like, "Hmmm, I wonder where that's gonna take me, because it's so hard to view myself in my present state. That makes it so much harder to view myself in a changed state."

Q: Before you found out about DRBU, did you have any dreams?

A: Before DRBU, I actually wanted to go to art school and I wanted to become an illustrator, probably for children's books or an expressive art therapist. Helping other people is my passion whether through books or through therapy. I was especially leaning towards expressive art therapy because mental health (resources) are so lacking in Native American communities, and in the community of color in general. I wanted to be able to give back to my tribe, but also to the tribe that has raised me, helped me. I wanted to help raise youth so that they don't have to go through the struggle that I've seen so many of the past and present generations have to go through. I want to make life a bit easier for them. I want to let them achieve happiness, less painfully than how I and so many others have had to go through, things that aren't necessary to... hmmm. How should I put this? They are not necessary in your process of learning and growing as a person.

Q: Do you think DRBU can help you go toward that direction or are you completely open now? Do you still hold that vision?

A: Yeah, I think it's not the main focus of my life as much as before coming to DRBU. I was stuck in the state, "That's what I have to do in my life. I have to become a better person so I can make things easier for people." But I was neglecting myself. And so I came to DRBU, hoping that I would learn to communicate with myself and take care of myself better here. So that I can also do that for other people. Because I've come

全然未知的領域？

答：坦白講，我不確定。來這裡之前，我在網站上瀏覽了所有影片，每個人都說：「如果你想改變自己，來這裡就對了。不管你現況如何，這裡將會改變你。」我當時想，我想知道他們會將我帶往何處，因為我很難看清自己的現況，更難看出自己改變後的狀態。能懂我的意思吧？

問：在您找到法大之前，曾有過什麼夢想嗎？

答：來法大之前，我其實想唸藝術學校，想成為一名插畫家，或許是畫兒童讀本，或者成為一名表達藝術治療師。我有助人的熱忱，無論是透過書籍或是治療，但我特別傾向表達藝術治療法，因為心理健康在部落和一般有色人種社區中是相當缺乏的。我希望能夠回饋我的部落，那也是養育我、幫助我的部落。我想幫助培育年輕人，讓他們不必經歷那些我所看到的，很多這一代或過去世代所經歷的掙扎。我想幫助他們活得輕鬆一點，我想讓他們得到幸福，不必面對那些我和其他人所經歷的痛苦，那些是不必要的，該怎麼說呢？在你學習做人和成長的過程中，那些是不必要的。能懂我的意思吧？

問：您認為法大可以幫助您朝目標邁進嗎？還是說，您現在完全不設限？您是否仍然保有同樣的願景？

答：是的，我想我已經不像來法大前將其視為我人生的主要目標。我被困在這個思維中——這就是我人生必須要做的，我必須成為一個更好的人，這樣我才能使人們活得更輕鬆。但我忽略了自己。於是我來到法大，希望在這裡能學會和自己交流，能照顧好自己，才能利益其他人。因為我是來學習的，除非我照顧好自己，否則我無法以最有效的方式照顧別人。剛到法大時，在日常生活中我依然會思索自己可以為周遭的人事幫上什麼忙，但從某方面說，從大方向來看，那些在法大外頭使我感到焦慮的事情，我放下

to learn that, unless I start taking care of myself, I can't take care of other people, not in the most efficient way. So since I came to DRBU, while in my everyday life, I'm still thinking about other people or things that I can do to help, I let go, in some elements, the bigger picture, which seems to stress me out outside of DRBU. And now I'm focusing on myself.

Q: Is there anything in your heart that you want to express but haven't because nobody has ever asked you?

A: Not at the moment. Because if I feel there is a burning question, especially in this environment, I will go ask someone, or talk to someone about it. So for most things that came up, I have been able to settle. So I don't have any burning questions as of now.

Q: Did you have any spiritual practice before coming across Buddhism?

A: No. My first spiritual practice has been going to the morning and evening ceremonies at DRBU, which is a more formal practice. Actually, I was just writing this paper about the cultivation of nothingness, which is something we learned a lot about in the first week here. We are still learning about it. Basically, learning to let go. Starting to unlearn everything that we've learned and starting to stop limiting everything in our lives and really open up our minds. And that, I think, is something that, not just me, but everyone has been doing since birth. When you are a baby, what does a baby think in the womb? What does a baby perceive? At one point, I am sure there is nothing that a baby perceives, which is, you know, the beginning. ❀

了。現在的我，只專注在自己身上。

問：您心中有沒有哪些話是沒人問過，但想要說的？

答：目前沒有。一旦我感到有個急迫的問題，特別是在這種環境下，我會去請教別人，或者找人談一談。因此，對於大部分發生的事情，我都有辦法解決；目前沒有任何棘手的問題。

問：遇見佛法前，您是否有過任何修行經驗？

答：沒有。我最初的修行經驗是參加法大的早課與晚課，我想這是比較正式的修行。事實上，我正在寫一篇報告，是有關虛無的修行，也是我們在這裡的第一週學到最多的，而且仍在學習中。基本上，就是學習如何放下。開始放下我們所學，開始對生活中的每件事停止設限，並敞開我們的心扉。有件事，我認為有那麼一回事，不僅是我，也是每個人從出生就一直在做的。當你是嬰兒時，子宮裡的嬰兒在想什麼？嬰兒能感知到什麼？在某個時刻，我相信嬰兒沒有覺知到任何東西，那就是「開始」。❀



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