



My Eleven Years of Service at Dharma Realm Buddhist University

在法界佛教大學服務的十一年

A Talk by Dr. Susan Rounds at the Buddha Hall of the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas on May 30, 2025

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In June I am retiring from my job as President of DRBU, a position I have held since 2014. So tonight I want to share a bit about my experiences with DRBU over the years. I moved to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas with my husband David in 1978. We were the second family to move in, after Dr Ron Epstein and his family.

Although I became president in 2014, my involvement with DRBU began much earlier. When the Master founded DRBU in 1976, the classes included the Master's sutra lectures, as well as courses taught by various monastics and laypeople. Almost all the students were people who lived at CTTB, although I think some people living nearby attended classes from time to time. But the Venerable Master had a much larger vision for DRBU. He wanted an accredited university that would eventually bring hundreds of students here to study, to develop strong ethical foundation, and prepare for compassionate service in the wider world.

He said, "Dharma Realm Buddhist University is being established in the hope of influencing youth not to be selfish. Everyone should be very public-spirited and not selfishly motivated. Then, without effort, this world will be peaceful. What is needed is a fundamental change in people's habits of mind.

In the early 1980's we began to work on the first step towards achieving accreditation—receiving recognition from the state of California. I worked on helping to create the catalog that we would submit to the state for approval, and I also did some teaching and advising

今年六月，我將從法界佛教大學校長一職退休，這個職位我自2014年起一直擔任至今。今晚，我想分享這些年來，我在法大服務的點滴。1978年，我和同修（果舟居士）搬到萬佛城。我們是繼易果容教授一家之後，搬進聖城的第二個家庭。

雖然我是2014年才上任法大校長，但我與法大的緣分始於更早以前。1976年，上人創立法大時，課程除了上人的講經，也包括由許多出家眾和在家居士開設的課程。當時，幾乎所有的學生都是萬佛城的住眾，偶爾也有一些附近居民來聽課。但上人對法大有更宏遠的願景——他希望將來法大能成為一所獲得認證的大學，引數百名學生到此學習，培養堅實的道德基礎，長養慈悲心以投入更廣大的社會服務。

上人說：「法界佛教大學的成立，是希望引導年輕人能以不自私，熱心公益，不自利。如此，不費什麼力氣，世界就能和平。要緊的是要徹底改變人的習氣毛病。」

1980年代初，我們開始跨出取得認證的第一步——爭取加州的認證。我的工作協助製作法大提交給州政府審核的課程目錄，同時也負責一些碩士班學生的教學和指導工作。1984年，我們舉辦了盛大的法大畢業典禮。當時我4歲的兒子果船也參與了這場典禮，他還上台背誦了幾頁《法華經》。

那時我剛完成博士學位，並在多明尼加大學的教師資格認證課程兼職授課，他們在萬佛城對面也有校外課程據點。1988年，我接

Master's students. In 1984 we celebrated with a grand DRBU commencement ceremony. My four-year-old son Nathaniel was on the program and recited several pages from the *Lotus Sutra* from memory.

By that time I had completed my PhD and started a part time job teaching in the teacher credential program of Dominican university, which had an off campus program here, housed right across the street from CTTB. In 1988 I accepted the position of Director of Credential programs and held that job for the next twelve years.

During those years I was not involved directly in DRBU, but I knew that it was continuing to offer classes under the leadership of President Snjezana Akpinar, who had been appointed by the Master. I also knew that they had continued to try to find a way to get DRBU accredited, but had encountered many difficulties.

In 2010, after years of intensive work by many dedicated people, the DRBA Board of Directors approved a proposal for the reorganization of DRBU. There would now be just two degree programs; a four year program offering a Bachelor's degree in Liberal Arts, and a two year program offering a Master's degree in Buddhist Classics.

The BA program focuses on classic texts from the great wisdom traditions of the world, including Buddhist Classics, Chinese Classics, Western Classics, and Indian Classics. Students would also study Rhetoric and Writing, Natural Science, mathematics, music, and language—both Chinese and Sanskrit.

The MA program provides an understanding and appreciation of Buddhism through close reading and careful analysis of its primary sources: sūtras, abhidharma and śāstras, and śīla texts. It also includes courses on hermeneutics, both comparative and Buddhist, which examine methods and theories of interpretation, and a language study component.

Students in both programs participate each semester in a four day Contemplative Immersion experience, or CEI. These retreats offer a unique opportunity to experience what the students have been reading about in their texts. The experience deepens and enriches their understanding in a way that a purely academic, classroom based approach cannot

It has been a great privilege for me to participate in these CEI's over the last eleven years. We have done Chan,

受該課程主任職務，一做就是12年。

那段期間，我沒有直接參與法大的校務，但我知道它在當時校長阿匹納博士的領導下繼續辦學，也持續尋求認證，但過程並不順遂。

2010年，經過許多人不懈的奔走，法總董事會批准了法大的重組提案，設立了現今兩個學位課程：一個是四年制的文學士學位課程，另一個是兩年制的佛教經典碩士學位課程。

文學士課程著重於世界偉大智慧傳統的經典，包括佛教經典、中國經典、西方經典和印度經典。學生還需學習修辭與寫作、自然科學、數學、音樂以及語言（包括中文和梵語）課程。

碩士課程旨在透過研讀佛教主要典籍——經、論、律——，以培養學生對佛法的理解。課程內容還包括比較詮釋學和佛教詮釋學，探討詮釋的理論與方法，其中也包含語言學習。

這兩個學位的學生每學期都會參加為期4天的「實修週」。課程活動為學生提供一個獨特的機會，讓他們能夠實際體驗文本中所讀到的內容。這種體驗能夠強化他們對經典的理解，成效遠超過一般課堂教學。

在過去11年間，我很榮幸能夠參與這些「實修週」活動。我們曾以禪修、觀音聖號、拜懺以及四無量心等主題進行修習。

2000年，我從多明尼加大學教師資格課程主任的全職工作退休，並舉辦了一場盛大的退休派對。不過，我仍然繼續在該校任教了12年，直到2012年才真正退休。（當時的上司送了一個精緻的水晶花瓶給我，幽默的提醒我：「不會再有第三次派對了！」）

那時，結婚數年的兒子和兒媳婦宣布，我們的第一個孫子即將在2014年9月出生。大概是在那年春天的某個時候——我不記得確切時間——我接到持法師的電話。她說，她和良法師想來找

Guanyin recitation, Bowing as Heart-cleansing and The Four Brahmaviharas, to name just a few.

I retired from full time work as director of the Dominican University Credential program in 2000 with a big retirement party celebration. But I continued to teach in the program for the next twelve years, before retiring again in 2012. (My boss at that time, after giving me a beautiful crystal vase, warned me that there would not be a third retirement party for me!)

By now my son and daughter-in-law had been married for several years, and had just informed my husband and me that they were expecting our first grandchild, to be born in September of 2014. At some point perhaps in the spring—I don't remember exactly when, I got a phone call from Dharma Master Chih. She said that she and Dharma Master Liang wanted to come to my house to discuss my becoming the next president of DRBU, as Dr. Akpinar need to retire to take care of her ailing husband.

To say that I was surprised would be an understatement. This was not something I had ever anticipated. Of course I told they nuns they could come over. You don't say no to nuns! But as soon as I hung up the phone I ran to tell my husband. "The nuns are coming over. They want me to be President of DRBU. What do I do?" And he said, "They already talked to me. I think it's a wonderful idea!" So I said yes, and I have spent the last eleven years as President! And it got very busy very soon! Looking back now it's hard to believe how much has happened.

We launched our new degree programs in August 2015 with a total of twelve students and began the work of preparing to apply to WASC for accreditation. All classes were held in the old Guest Building, but we had plans to renovate Building 123, which the Master had designated as the home for DRBU.

At the beginning of 2016 we held a ceremony to purify the boundaries of the Sudhana center in downtown Ukiah. DRBA had purchased the property on behalf of DRBU in 2015. After extensive renovation, that property now serves as a dorm for male students, and a place for retreats and other events, including Commencement. 2016 was also the year that I promised to learn to use Google Docs, to the delight of everyone who had to work with me on administrative things.

We also started renovating the women's dorm. When it was completed, it featured forty bedrooms, common areas,

我，討論讓我接任法大校長一職，因為阿匹納博士需要退休照顧生病的同修。

說我很意外，也未免太輕描淡寫，這完全超乎預期。我告訴法師們請過來，因為居士應該聽法師招呼。但我一掛電話就跑去找果舟，說：「法師們等等要來。她們要我當法大的校長，我該怎麼辦？」他說：「她們已經跟我談過了。我覺得這是個好主意！」於是我就這樣接任了11年的校長！而且一上任馬上就忙得不可開交。現在回頭看，很難相信這幾年經歷這麼多事。

2015年8月，我們推出新的學位課程，第一屆共招收12名學生。同時，也著手申請「美西院校協會」(WASC)認證。所有課程都在舊客堂大樓舉行，但我們計劃翻新123號樓——因為那是上人當年指定的法大校址。

2016年初，我們在瑜伽市中心的善財參學中心舉行了灑淨儀式。法總在2015年代表法大取得這筆房地產。經過大規模整修，該地點現為男眾宿舍，以及舉辦禪修和其他活動（包括畢業典禮）的場地。2016年，也是我跟大家承諾要學會使用谷歌雲端文件的一年，這讓所有在行政事務上需要跟我合作的人都欣喜不已。

我們也著手翻修女眾宿舍。竣工後，共有40間臥室、公共區域、電腦室、禪修室及茗室。123號樓的翻修也完成了，增設了教室、辦公室以及一間寬敞的二樓大廳，我們已在此舉辦過多次研討會和藝術展覽。

2018年，在宣公上人創辦法大42週年之際，我們首次獲得為期六年的(WASC)官方認證。這是一個巨大的里程碑。一年後，我們獲准招收國際學生。2019年，我們也開辦一年制的翻譯證書課程，學生人數正逐漸增長！

然而，2020年春天，新冠疫情爆發。我們不得不緊急讓所有學生返家，並全面改為線上授課。少數沒有安全住所

a computer lab, contemplation room, tea room. We also completed the renovation of the 123 building to provide classrooms and offices and a large upstairs room where we have hosted many symposium lectures and artistic exhibitions.

In 2018, forty-two years after Master Hua founded DRBU, we received our first official accreditation, for a period of six years. This was an enormous accomplishment. A year later, we received permission to admit international students. 2019 was also the year we began offering a one year Translation Certificate program. Our student body was growing!

And then, in the spring of 2020, the Covid pandemic arrived. We had to quickly send all of our students home and transition to on line instruction. We did have a few students who had no safe place to return to, so we opened a small residential program at the Sudhana Center for those students. We continued with online instruction for the entire 2020-2021 academic year.

This was a very difficult time for many colleges and universities. We were fortunate that DRBU was still able to recruit students after Covid, and we resumed on campus instruction in the fall of 2021. Gradually, activities on campus began to resume, as people got used to being together in person after so many months in isolation.

Each year, we added more students, including students from abroad. Right now we have a little over fifty students. They come from Argentina, Canada, China, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Norway, Russia, South Africa, Taiwan, Thailand, the United States, and Vietnam. That means we have students from every continent except Antarctica!

Next year if all goes well we will have more than sixty students. And just last year, in 2024 we received a reaffirmation of accreditation, this time for eight years. This places DRBU in a very strong position going forward.

Students are extremely grateful for the opportunity to study at DRBU. They appreciate the bright clear energy here that comes from being in a place surrounded and supported by monastics who live a life devoted to cultivation, service and simple living. Many of them participate in CTTB ceremonies and retreats. In fact, last spring, over half of our DRBU students gave up their spring break in order to participate in the Guanyin session instead.

的學生則納入善財中心的小型住宿計畫。2020-2021年，整個學年維持線上教學。

對許多大學而言，這是一段非常艱難的時期。我們很幸運，法大在疫情過後仍然能夠招生，並於2021年秋季恢復校園授課。隨著人們在經歷數月的隔離後逐漸習慣面對面交流，校園活動也逐漸步入正軌。

我們每年的招生人數持續增加，其中包括來自海外的學生。目前我們有50多名學員，分別來自阿根廷、加拿大、中國、哥斯大黎加、多明尼加共和國、印度、緬甸、尼泊爾、挪威、俄羅斯、南非、台灣、泰國、美國和越南。這意味著除了南極洲，我們擁有來自世界各大洲的學生！

如果一切順利，下個學年度學生人數將突破60人。就在去年，也就是2024年，我們獲得為期八年的(WASC)再次認證，也讓法大在未來的發展中站穩腳步。

學生們非常感恩有機會在法大學習，環繞在光明澄澈的能量中——這股能量源自此地致力修行、服務和簡樸生活的僧眾。許多學生會參加萬佛城的法會和打七。事實上，就在今年春季班，法大有超過半數的學生捨棄春假，選擇參加觀音七。

感謝法總和善信護法的大力支持，我們得以提供學生經濟上的援助，讓他們能夠無債（學貸）一身輕的完成學業。作為回饋，全體學生每週投入超過600小時的工讀（每名學生平均每週工作13小時）——包括在廚房、圖書館、農場、回收部門幫忙，並協助法大和萬佛城進行各種事務。

我想和大家分享一些學生們多年來在法大的內心話。

· 踏上校園的那一刻，我知道自己回家了，儘管我從未到過這裏。我感受到來自過去的深層連結。

Thanks to the generous support of DRBA and our donors, we are able to provide financial support to enable students to graduate without any debt. In return, students contribute over 600 work study hours a week, averaging thirteen hours each. They work in the kitchen, the library, the farm, recycling, and help with many other functions of DRBU and CTTB.

I want to share with you a few things that students have said over the years about their DRBU experience.

- As soon as I stepped on to the grounds, I knew that I was home, even though I had never been here before.

- I had a sense of deep connections from the past.

- What I have learned at DRBU permeates everything I do in every moment of my life because it has changed my worldview. DRBU has taught me how to care for and nurture the roots of my life.

- The goal is to rediscover what is already whole and complete within you—to return to your fundamental humanity.

- In deep listening, we open up possibilities. If we can listen to the other person, the possibility is there for them to be our teacher, as well as the opportunity for us to be theirs, pushing us to face ourselves and change in the process.

- Through the texts we read and class discussions, my understanding towards the Buddha's teaching and myself is deepened and broadened. I am learning to be more mindful, open-minded, non-judging, and present.

- When we started the program, our classmates were all strangers. But we leave here as good Dharma friends.

- I have discovered the light within me. I know that after I leave here, even in the darkest times, that light will never be extinguished.

- I didn't like the person I was when I came here. But I like the person I have become. I leave here to enter the world as a real human being.

Like the students, I am also very grateful to DRBU. It has been a privilege to be a part of DRBU's growth and development over the last eleven years. DRBU has always been a place where I have unfailingly found meaning, truth, and inspiration. And I'm looking forward to finding new ways to participate and contribute after I retire.

I know that DRBU will continue to thrive as it carries out Master Hua's vision for transformational education. People will continue to be drawn here because they want to be part of a community committed to doing the deep and important work that the Buddha laid out for us. It is a journey for a lifetime. ❀

- 我在法大所學到的知識滲透到我生活中的每一刻，因為它改變了我的世界觀，法大教會我去觀照和滋養我生命的根源。

- 目標是重新發掘自己本有的面目——回歸自己本有的人性。

- 深度傾聽，能開啓無限可能。如果我們能認真聆聽他人，就有機會讓對方成為自己的老師，同時也讓自己有機會成為對方的老師，從而促使雙方面對自我，並在過程中改變。

- 透過經典閱讀與課堂討論，我對佛陀與自我的理解更加深廣。我正學習有更多正念、更心胸寬廣、更不批判、更活在當下。

- 剛入學的時候，班上同學互不相識。但離開時，我們已成為好法友了。

- 我找到自己內心的光明。我知道離開這裏之後，即使在最黑暗的時刻，那道光芒也永不熄滅。

- 剛到這裏的時候，我並不喜歡自己。但我喜歡自己現在的模樣。離開這裏，我將以一個真正的人的姿態走入世間。

和學生們一樣，我也非常感謝法大。在過去11年中，我很榮幸能夠參與法大的成長與發展。法大一直是我找到意義、真理和靈感的地方。我期待在退休後，能找到新的參與方式，來為學校做出貢獻。

我相信，法大將繼續茁壯，實踐宣公上人教育改革的願景。人們會繼續被吸引到這裏，因為他們渴望成為這個社群的一份子，致力實踐佛陀賦予我們深奧且重要的使命。這是終身的旅程。

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