

# What is Buddhism

- *A Path to True Happiness*
- *Buddhism as an Education*
- *The Art of Living*

*Venerable Master Chin Kung*

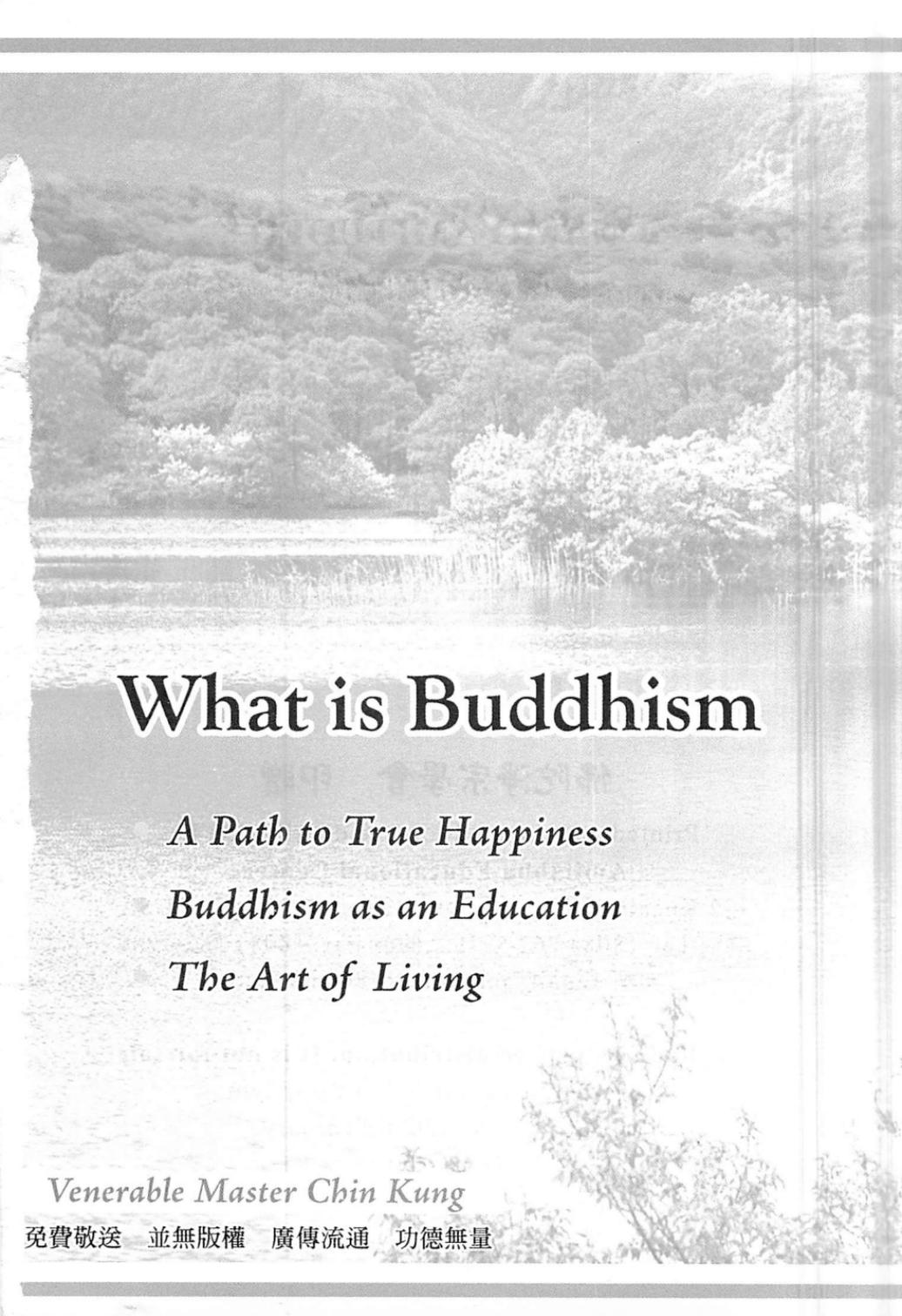
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南無阿彌陀佛

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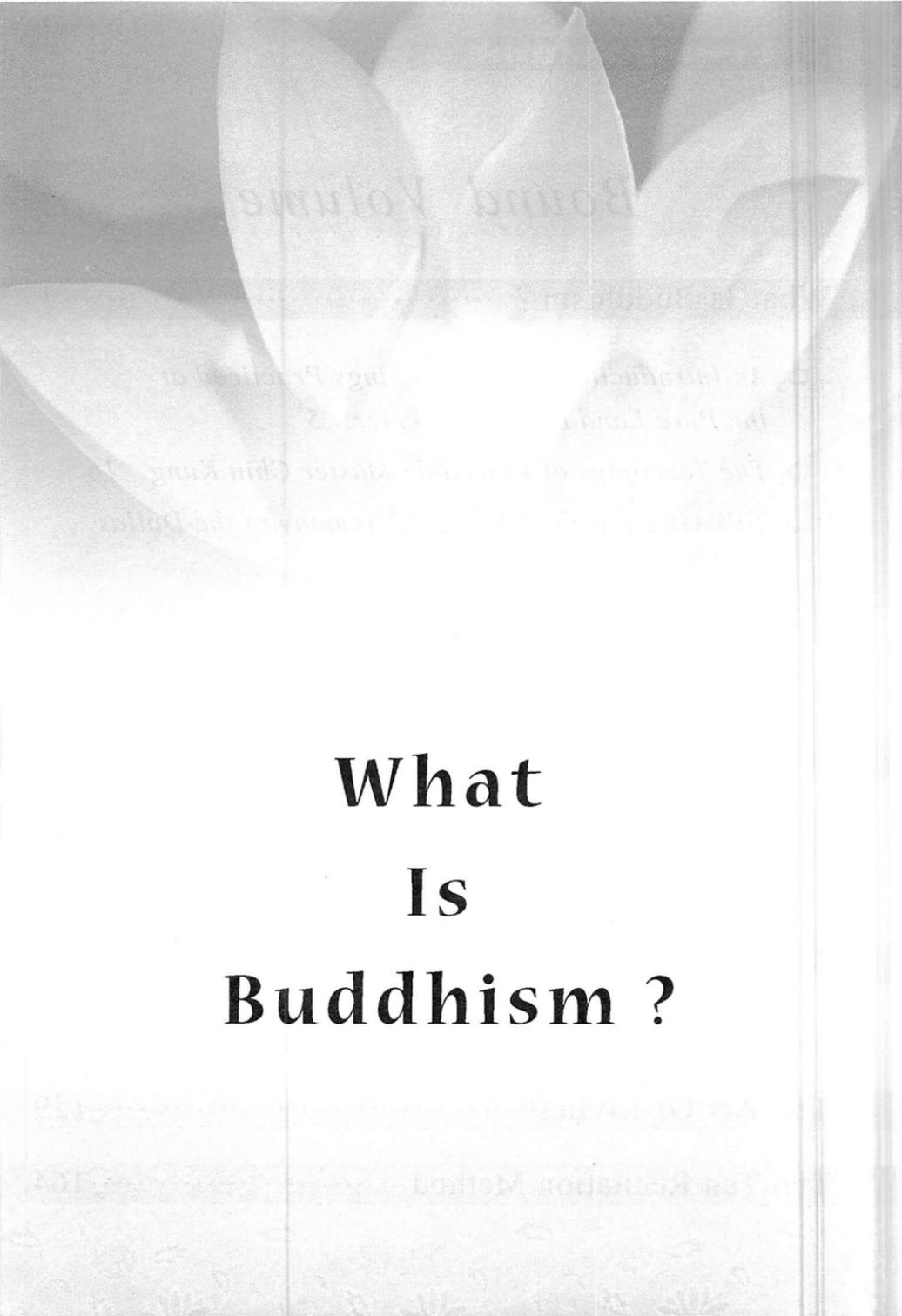
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**What  
Is  
Buddhism ?**

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## What Is Buddhism?

- ∞ Buddhism is the most profound and wholesome education directed by the Buddha towards all people.
- ∞ The content in Shakyamuni Buddha's forty-nine years of teaching describes the true face of life and the universe. Life refers to oneself, universe refers to our living environment. The Teachings directly relate to our own lives and surroundings.
- ∞ Those who possess a complete and proper understanding of life and the universe are called Buddhas or Bodhisattvas. Those who lack the understanding are called worldly people.
- ∞ Cultivation is changing the way we think, speak, and act towards people and matters from an erroneous way to a proper way.

☞ The guideline for cultivation is understanding, proper views, and purity. Understanding is without delusion, proper views is without deviation, and purity is without pollution. This can be achieved by practicing the Three Learnings of self-discipline, concentration, and wisdom.

☞ The Three Basic Conditions are the foundation of cultivation and study. When interacting with people, accord with the Six Harmonies, and when dealing with society, practice the Six Principles. Follow the lessons taught by Universal Worthy Bodhisattva and dedicate one's mind to everlasting purity and brightness. These complete the purpose of the Buddha's Teachings.

## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE TEACHINGS PRACTICED AT THE PURE LAND LEARNING CENTER



"Pure Land Learning Centers" were proposed for the first time after World War II, when the respected Mr. Shia Lian Jui began promoting the exclusive study and cultivation of the Pure Land School. Teacher Chin Kung, with over thirty years of experience from propagating the Teachings, deeply understands the Pure Land School as the foremost method for helping living beings. In recent years, he has been tirelessly spreading the Teachings in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Canada, and the United States. The Teacher also lead in the world-wide distribution of over three million texts regarding the practice of Pure Land, in the sincere hope of bringing this benefit to the

world. The famous Buddhist scholar Mr. Kuang Shi Mei once said, "If we can receive and uphold the Pure Land Teachings, not only would we eradicate future sufferings, but we can attain peace of mind now. People who do not sincerely cultivate pure conduct would never be able to understand or experience the happiness hidden behind the practice of this wondrous method. Likewise, those who do not enter the sea of Teachings would never realize the depth behind Pure Land. If we wish to spread the Buddha's Teachings at this time and age, it is definitely necessary to bring forth the Pure Land Teachings."

I respectfully hope advisors from Pure Land Learning Centers all over the world would widely promote the proper education, explain the reasons behind cause and effect, praise the unsurpassed Pure Land Teachings, and persuade all

people to recite Amitabha's name and set their hearts on reaching the Pure Land.

The fellow members of these Centers should cultivate according to the Five Texts of Pure Land. Included are The Sutra of Amitabha's Purity, Equality, and Understanding, A Principle Explanation of the Amitabha Sutra, The Chapter of Universal Worthy Bodhisattva's Conduct and Vows, The Sutra on Contemplating Amitabha and His Pure Land, and the Chapter on the Foremost Attainment of Great Strength Bodhisattva Through Buddha Recitation. These are all essential materials for our cultivation. Only if we have additional time and energy left from studying these texts may we seek further references of relation. We stress the importance of practicing what we preach, and through sincere practice, we will carry out our vows. There are Five Courses which we

must diligently practice everyday. First are the Three Lessons. These include being filial to one's parents, being respectful and considerate towards elders and teachers, being compassionate and refraining from killing, and cultivating the Ten Kind Deeds. We should develop true understanding, establish proper views, and purify our minds. We should also observe self-discipline by refraining from wrongdoings and practicing all kindnesses. We should give rise to a mind in constant and complete understanding, and sincerely believe in the truth that if we can recite the Buddha's name as our cause, then attaining Buddhahood will be our result. Finally, we should study the Teachings and do our best in encouraging others to walk the same path.

The Six Harmonies make up the Second Course. We must learn to see things

from a common viewpoint, only through this way can we share the same understanding. To preserve a harmonious assembly, we must abide by the same rules while living together. We should never argue amongst ourselves and always share the same benefits.

The Third Course relates to the Three Learnings of self-discipline, concentration, and wisdom. The Fourth Course is the Six Principles. We should abide by these when dealing with others. It includes giving, observance of rules, endurance, diligence, concentration, and wisdom.

The Final Course is Universal Worthy Bodhisattva's Ten Great Vows. First is to respect all people and treat everything with care. Second is to praise all the virtues and kind practices of others. Third is to practice giving respectfully. Fourth is to repent and reform all the faults which ob-

struct us from seeing our true nature. Fifth is to rejoice in the virtuous deeds of others and not harbor jealousy. Sixth is to request for those with true practice to widely deliver the Teachings. Seventh is to ask for the Teachers to remain by our side in guidance. Eighth is to forever hold the Buddha's teachings in our hearts. Ninth is to put down our egos and accord with the wishes of the people around us. Tenth is to dedicate the peace and happiness gained from practicing the above deeds to all living beings, hoping that they will attain the unsurpassed Understanding.

We must cherish every minute of the day and not let the Buddha's name escape our lips. We should recite with full awareness, without the slightest doubt or interruption. We must never attempt to practice other teachings aside from the one we have chosen, for if we diverge our

time and energy to another subject, we would never amount to anything. This is just like trying to reach the second floor of a building by climbing the stairs and taking the elevator at the same time; definitely an useless attempt.

It is our sincere hope the world will recognize that the cause of their problems originates from their polluted minds, and they must cleanse it from delusion and change their immoral ways. If we really want their future deeds to be filled with kindness and love, and their lives apart from suffering, we must stress the importance of accepting the lessons given in The Sutra of Amitabha's Purity, Equality, and Understanding. It states so clearly in the Sutra text, *"Wherever the Buddha's teachings have been received, either in cities or countrysides, people would gain inconceivable benefits. The land and people*

*would be enveloped in peace. The sun and moon will shine clear and bright. Wind and rain would appear accordingly, and there will be no disasters. Nations would be prosperous and there would be no use for soldiers or weapons. People would abide by morality and accord with laws. They would be courteous and humble, and everyone would be content without injustices. There would be no thefts or violence. The strong would not dominate the weak and everyone would be settled at their proper place in society."* If everyone would read and follow the teachings of this Sutra, then it is certain they will give rise to wisdom, clear away faults of the past, live a long, healthy life, and enjoy constant happiness. Furthermore, if this Sutra could be widely distributed and accepted, then Society would turn towards benevolence. This Sutra is the key to

solving all our problems and establishing peace in the world.

The advices of Elder Teachers Mr. Shia Lian Jui and Mr. Huang Nien Tsu have deeply touched us and we are determined to comply with their teachings. We encourage all those who share a common viewpoint with us to spread the Teachings in their individual areas. We've also requested for the everlasting guidance of Teacher Chin Kung to lead us in the cultivation of pure conduct and the study of The Sutra of Amitabha's Purity, Equality, and Understanding. With these, we would be able to repay the various forms of kindness shown to us by our country and the people around us. We would also have the ability to help all distressed beings out of their sufferings. This is truly a rare and precious opportunity, a most difficult chance to come by in hundreds of

years. How could we let it slip by without so much of a glance? Fellow cultivators, we must encourage each other, and together take hold of this once-in-a-lifetime chance to prepare ourselves for the return to the Pure Land within our hearts.

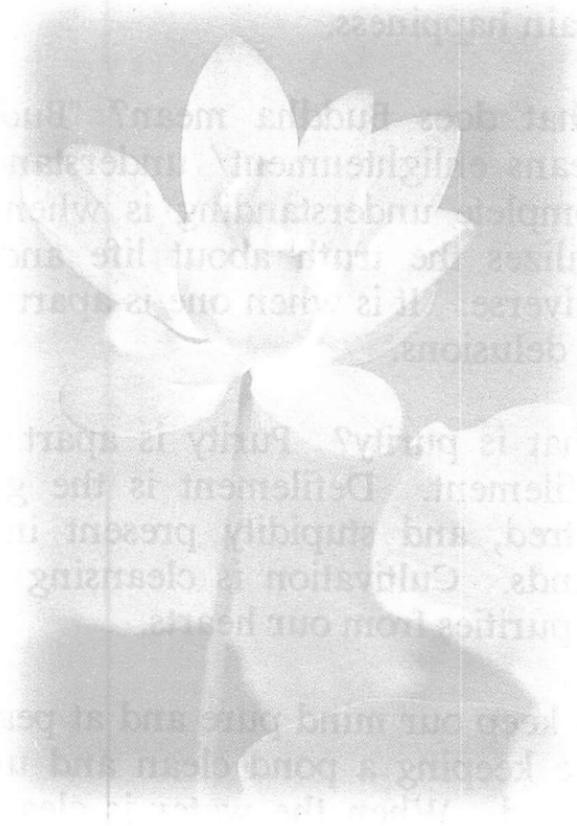
Respectfully,

Han Ying

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January 1st, 1993.

*The Teaching of  
Venerable Master Chin Kung*



## The Teachings of Venerable Master Chin Kung



- Buddhism is an education, not a religion. We do not worship the Buddha, we respect him as a teacher. His teachings enable us to leave suffering and attain happiness.
  
- What does Buddha mean? "Buddha" means enlightenment/ understanding. Complete understanding is when one realizes the truth about life and the universe. It is when one is apart from all delusions.
  
- What is purity? Purity is apart from defilement. Defilement is the greed, hatred, and stupidity present in our minds. Cultivation is cleansing these impurities from our hearts.
  
- To keep our mind pure and at peace is like keeping a pond clean and undisturbed. When the water is clear and

still, it can reflect the sky, sun, and trees just as they are, without distortion. Our mind is the same. When we are polluted by greed, hatred, ignorance, and disturbed by discriminations and attachments, we distort our picture of reality and fail to see things as they are. Wrong perceptions of reality can prevent us from enjoying a clear and happy life.

- Learn to turn the light around, reflect upon yourself and smooth your mind-pond still. Everything outside of ourselves are equal in themselves; the garbage does not feel it is unclean, and the flower does not know it is fragrant, there is no such thing as discrimination. We must let our mind be at peace without attachments, this is true happiness.
- Don't see the faults of others and don't speak of them. Don't even leave an image of the fault in your mind. The Sixth Patriarch said, "True cultivators

do not see the faults of living beings." We should learn to see our own faults.

- It would be of great benefit if you can practice the Ten-Recitation Method nine times a day. Every recitation should not have afflictions, wandering thoughts, or worries. Over a period of time, the power of this practice would be eminent, it can help you reach the Pure Land.
- Cultivation is practiced in our everyday life. We should not see it as something unusual, it is simply changing ourselves for the better.
- The first of Universal Worthy Bodhisatva's Ten Great Vows is Respect. We practice it by purifying our actions, speech, and thoughts. Without purifying these, even if you bow to the Buddha ten thousand times, it is still not considered true respect.

- How do we know when our cultivation has improved? The time comes when we begin to understand the sutras deeper, when we can read between the lines and realize the true meaning of the Buddha's teachings. This is when our cultivation has improved.
- Is your mind really set on reaching the Pure Land? To want to reach the Western Pure Land is a great wish. We must let go of our worldly affinities and single-mindedly recite Amitabha's name.
- To be mindful of the Buddha is to dwell in true wisdom.
- The ultimate goal to which all methods of cultivation lead is the complete pure and equanimous mind. It is our original nature, our Buddha-nature.
- During Dharma Assemblies, we must be sincere when reciting the sutra texts in order to touch the hearts of the at-

tending Assembly. The words of the Sutra should flow forth from our hearts, and not merely spoken. We must truly cultivate! Those who have the ability can just take one look at you and tell if you're sincere or just putting on a show.

- During Dharma Assemblies or Buddha Recitation Sessions, there are always people helping in the kitchen and the Buddha Hall. We must know that the merit of these people are the same regardless of where they help out. Never assume that helping in the Buddha Hall would be better than elsewhere; always see things with eyes of equality.
- Many people nowadays do not really understand the proper teachings and are not interested either. Their interest lies in repenting past offenses and often come to the Way Place for that sole purpose. It is our responsibility to explain the proper teachings to them and point out the correct way of culti-

vation. Only through cultivation can they truly eradicate past offenses, for they will know where they wronged and won't repeat their faults.

- To understand the Complete Teachings thoroughly, one must first cultivate the Pure Heart. When the Pure Heart is attained, the Teachings would naturally be learned. Without the Pure Heart, one can study the Teachings for a hundred years and still won't understand it at all.
- Those of you who are interested in explaining sutras in the future must memorize the sutra you plan to lecture plus its explanation by an authorized teacher. This is the way practiced by all successful lecturers of the past. If he/she is unable to memorize the material and cannot meet the standards, he/she should let go of all their attachments to the world and single-mindedly recite Amitabha's name. There is no need to be upset or

feel sorry for not being able to lecture sutras.

- In putting the teachings into practice, the first thing we should cultivate is the Pure Heart. The Pure Heart is a mind without discrimination or attachments. We must also develop proper understanding by listening to explanations of the Buddha's Teachings.
- We should treat all people with respect and sincerity. We must be responsible for our actions and careful when handling other's properties. Be conservative with speech and actions to avoid harming others.
- Listen more, speak less.
- Just as a doctor prescribes medicine according to a patient's needs, we must provide teachings which are suitable to the learner's needs. We must consider their capacities, interests, and be able to define the root of their problems. Only

in this way can we truly benefit the limitless living beings awaiting us.

- The Buddha said before, "All Dharmas arise from the mind." Our future lies in our hands. If you think of the Buddha constantly, then you will become a Buddha. If you think of Bodhisattvas constantly, then you will for sure become a Bodhisattva. If all you think about the whole day is the rights and wrongs of others, how to gain more power over others, or just plain scattered thoughts, then your future will definitely be in the Three Evil Paths.
  
- The root of people's sufferings and sicknesses is discrimination and attachment to unrealistic things. The Buddha's Teachings tell us how to detach ourselves and not to discriminate. If we listen and practice according to the Teachings, we will be at great ease in this world of confusion.

- The difference between the success and failure of cultivation lies in your learning attitude. Be humble, sincere, and respectful. Don't think you're on top of everything.
- The Giving Practice of the Six Principles cultivated by Bodhisattvas means to "let go". We should let go of all our worries and attachments to this world and have faith in this one name of Amitabha. We must be determined to reach the Pure Land.
- When we recite the Sixth Chapter of the Sutra of Amitabha's Purity, Equality and Understanding in our Morning Recitations, we are adopting Amitabha's vows as our own. We are extending our hearts and vows broader and broader until they can envelop the entire universe. In our Evening Recitations of Chapters Thirty-two to Thirty-seven, we reflect within ourselves to see if our actions during the day accorded with the Teachings in

the Sutra. This is the true spirit behind Morning and Evening Recitations, they are not just something to be done for the sake of doing it.

- When we translate Buddhist texts and teachings, we should avoid using terminology so as not to confuse beginners. Translate the essence of the Teachings and don't be attached to using the exact words of the original text.
- At a place of proper cultivation, the Teacher guides the way and fellow students support each other along the way; we should cherish both equally.
- We must rely upon fellow cultivators to correct our faults. If we cannot accept criticism from others, we will never reach attainment in our cultivation.
- Learn to use time wisely. When dealing with people and matters, be clear of what you're going to do from beginning to end, don't waste time daw-

dling around. If time is used wisely, there will be plenty of time left to practice diligence.

- When we live together at a place of proper cultivation, we must be mutually respectful as well as harmonious.
- The Buddha helps those who have affinity with Him. The question of affinity rests in whether the person accepts the Teachings or not. The Buddha's compassion and Teachings extend over all living beings, just as the sun shines evenly over the great earth. Those who hide in the shade cannot receive the benefits of the sunshine, just as those who cover themselves in ignorance cannot benefit from the Buddha's Teachings.
- Many people are very energetic in helping others (in cultivation) when they themselves are still unfamiliar with the Buddha's Teachings. We must remember that before helping others,

we ourselves must attain a certain level in our own cultivation for the help to be realistic.

- Don't be jealous of others, you only harm yourself in the process.
- Wisdom is a must if we truly wish to propagate the Teachings and benefit living beings. Don't use emotions when helping others, use wisdom and be reasonable. If we use emotions when dealing with people and matters, it often makes a good thing go bad.
- Attainments belong to oneself, not the Buddhas or Bodhisattvas. They do not ask anything from us. They teach us for our sake.
- When we can read and reread one sutra without tiring, it proves we are capable of accepting the true meaning of the Teachings. If you still tire of reciting the same Sutra repetitively, it shows that you have not truly benefited from

the Buddha's Teachings. A mind, set on one sutra is cultivating concentration. Wisdom will grow with concentration.

- Those who really understand the true meaning of the Buddha's Teachings are constantly bathed in the Buddha's light.
- What is a great kind deed? A great kind deed is the sum of the many small kind deeds we practice everyday.
- We should constantly be mindful of the people worried by afflictions, and bring forth the heart to help them. Learn to tie good affinities with others and always be friendly.
- To help others is to help yourself.
- To respect others is to respect yourself.
- When we truly cultivate, both our mind and body benefit. We will have less worries and our bodies will be free from illnesses. We will constantly show

an expressions of contentment and happiness. These are the benefits of true cultivation.

- The Pure Land method is for those whose “good roots” have matured and are ready to become Buddhas in this very life. (All forms of kindness spring from this root, it is part of our original nature). We can tell when their good roots have matured by looking to see if their faith, vows, and practice are strong and unfaltering.
- The key to success is diligence.
- The different methods prescribed by the Buddha come from the different needs of living beings. The methods spring forth naturally from the pure, unwavering heart of the Buddha, without the slightest difficulty.
- The Pure Land method of cultivation is the most difficult to believe and easiest to practice.

- A cultivator can be compared to a worm eating its way out of a bamboo tree. When he practices other cultivation methods, he is like a worm eating his way up, taking a long time and tedious effort. If he practices the Pure Land method, it's like he's eating his way sideways through the bamboo. He will attain liberation in a short time with lighter effort.
  
- The Teachings can be put to practice through two ways. First is to cultivate concentration by reciting the Buddha's name. (Reciting helps us attain single-mindedness.) Second is to cultivate discipline by refraining from evil-doings and practicing kindness'. This keeps our minds from straying to improper thoughts.
  
- True virtue and proper conduct are necessary factors in cultivation. If one cannot practice what one preaches, then regardless of how much one

knows, they all become useless at the end of his life.

- Peace of the world is based on peace in the family.
- If one can diligently follow and abide by the principles set in the Guideline for Beginning Cultivators (Sramanera Vinaya), then one will be a sage in today's world.
- We must rely upon concentration to improve our cultivation. We should keep our calm in any type of situation. The path of Understanding is out of reach for sure if we cannot achieve the proper concentration.
- Reincarnation is truly scary because we fall lower in the cycle with each lifetime. We know of this in advance because people's minds are becoming more polluted and their actions are often inspired by evil intentions.

- Disasters appear according to people's thoughts. If we want to turn the tide of destiny, we must first turn our thoughts toward kindness and compassion. We should be vegetarian, refrain from killing, and constantly be mindful of the Buddha's Teachings.
- Worries arise from the mind. You are wise if you do not let things worry you. Nothing and nobody can make you worry without your permission.
- Accord with the people around you. Don't let your personality get in the way of your relationships with other people.
- Don't worry yourself with worldly matters.
- Not only should we be modest when reciting the Buddha's name, we should be modest when doing anything!

- We must enter the great Teachings through one method of cultivation. Concentrated diligence is the only way to reach attainment.
- If we wish to bring peace to the world, we must start by changing our evil ways. World peace stems from inner peace.
- The ancients often taught of the way to reach attainment through a vase analogy. A conceited cultivator is like a vase filled to the rim with stagnant water, unable to receive a drop of the true Teachings. A cultivator who still holds his own stubborn viewpoints is like an unwashed vase, any true Teachings given to him would instantly be defiled. A cultivator who accepts the Teachings but doesn't put it into practice is like a vase with a hole on the bottom, everything it receives just leaks right back out again. We should not be like the cultivators above, but should accept the Teachings with a

pure, humble heart and truly put it into practice. Only through this way are we really worth the Teachings we hold.

- We must cleanse ourselves of greed, hatred, and ignorance. These three poisons are the root behind all our sufferings.
- We cannot attain the Complete Understanding because we are laden by our afflictions and bad habits. If we can practice the Pure Land method and recite the Buddha's name, then we will be able to raise the burden and walk towards the path of Understanding.
- Beginners should not waste time studying different Teachings, it would only obstruct them from cultivating the pure heart. Fellow cultivators of Pure Land should just begin by reciting the Buddha's name in modesty.

➤ Q: What should we do when we lose concentration in reciting the Buddha's name?

A: When your thoughts scatter, you should continue reciting and not worry over this problem!

➤ We must learn to "let go" and not be too stubborn with our viewpoints. If this goal can be achieved, then we will be at great ease and live a happy, fulfilling life.

➤ When cultivating the pure mind, less time should be spent watching television and reading magazines.

➤ We shouldn't merely repeat the Buddha's name by mouth, we must truly be mindful of the Buddha, and put his teachings into our everyday practice.

➤ We should be conservative in what we use and be content with what we have.

- Everybody is somebody we can learn from. When we see the virtues of others, we should adopt them as our own. When we see the wrongs of others, we should reflect upon ourselves for the same faults.
- The spirit behind the Guidelines for Beginning Cultivators (Sramanera Vinaya) is to impede greed and preserve our purity of mind.
- The purpose of the Buddha's Teachings is to eradicate superstition and clear up peoples' misunderstandings about life.
- Are you aware of the fact that our lives are getting shorter by the second?
- Our goal of cultivation is to attain true happiness. True happiness is undiminishing happiness, withstanding the test of time and conditions.
- Love can turn into hate. You may dislike something you adored yesterday. We

should see things with eyes of equality and not let emotions control our lives.

- Treat people sincerely. We should mean what we say and truly be sincere from the bottom of our hearts.
- For the health of our body, we should keep it moving. In taking care of our mind, we should keep it at peace. Exercise and peace of mind are the key to living a fulfilling life.
- We must be in control of our body and mind, and not let them hinder our ability to enjoy life.
- The greatest adversary is our own afflictions and bad habits. Attainment is at hand if we can cleanse ourselves of these impurities.
- Reciting the Buddha's name is practicing single-mindedness. With single-mindedness, we will be capable of reaching the Pure Land.

- If we learn to forgive, we will dwell in peace of mind.
- We must be open-minded to be a good student of the Buddha.
- If a cultivator can be complete in faith, vows, and mindfulness of Amitabha, then he will for sure reach attainment.
- Regardless of what we do, we should not give rise to anger.
- Wisdom springs from Purity of Mind.
- Our hearts must be like still water in a pond, only then can we reflect the Teachings properly. The Buddha is constantly teaching, we cannot hear it because our mind is not still. We should soothe our mind by clearing it of scattered thoughts.
- True cultivation is reciting Amitabha's name in modesty.

- Diligently recite Amitabha's name, you may rest when you're tired. There is no pressure. After resting, continue to recite.
- We should not recite the sutra for the sake of reciting it. We must understand the meaning, put it into practice, and experience the truth.
- How do we know when our cultivation has improved? It is when our mind has become purer, more equanimous, and clearer about life.
- Cultivation is not something unusual, it is part of our everyday life. Whenever we recognize and correct our faults, we are cultivating.
- What are the Teachings? The Teachings are the Proper Way. The Proper Way is the path we follow which is apart from all crooked and deviant views.

- Wise people do not just see matters from the surface, they contemplate them thoroughly and see to the truth.
- In Buddhism, love is based on wisdom. This is called compassion.

**TALK GIVEN AT THE OPENING  
CEREMONY OF THE  
DALLAS BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION**

*"It is difficult to obtain human life, and even more so to encounter, understand, and learn from the Buddha's Teachings."*

“How fortunate we are to enjoy a happy life! How lucky we are to be able to hear the great Teachings! The most precious of all is to have encountered the direct, complete, and wondrous teachings of the Pure Land School.

The peace and happiness which has fulfilled my life all sprang forth from practicing of the Pure Land Teachings. Ever since I, Chin Kung, began studying the Buddha's Teachings, not a single day passed by in which I forget the kindness shown to me by my teachers. The only

way to express my sincere gratitude is to fully dedicate my time and energy into sharing the Teachings with Society. As I enter old age, I feel an urgent need to carry out my responsibility of solely promoting and cultivating the Pure Land Teachings. Today, I would like to share with everyone the same peace and happiness I have gained through the Teachings in this short introductory speech. The six passages below are a complement of the main points summarized from the entire Buddhist Treasury:

1. Buddhism is the most profound and wholesome education directed by the Buddha towards all people.
2. The content in Shakyamuni Buddha's forty-nine years of teachings describes the true

face of life and the universe. Life refers to oneself; universe refers to our living environment. The Teachings directly relate to our own lives and surroundings.

3. Those who possess a complete and proper understanding of life and the universe are called Buddhas or Bodhisattvas. Those who lack the understanding are namely 'worldly people'.

4. Cultivation is changing the way we think, speak, and act toward people and matters from an erroneous way to a proper way.

5. The guideline for cultivation is understanding, proper views, and purity. True un-

derstanding is without delusion, proper view is without deviation, and purity is without defilement. This can be achieved by practicing the Three Learnings of self discipline, concentration, and wisdom.

6. The foundation of cultivation and study are the Three Basic Conditions. When interacting with people, accord with the Six Harmonies, and when dealing with society, practice the Six Principles. Follow the lessons taught by Universal Worthy Bodhisattva and dedicate one's mind to everlasting purity and brightness. These com-

plete the purpose of the  
Buddha's Teachings.

The Sutra of Amitabha's Purity, Equality, and Understanding states, *'Wherever the Buddha's Teachings have been received, either in cities or countrysides, people would gain inconceivable benefits. The land and people would be enveloped in peace. The sun and the moon would shine clear and bright. Wind and rain would appear accordingly, and there will be no disasters. Nations would be prosperous and there will be no use for soldiers and weapons. People would abide by morality and accord with laws. They would be courteous and humble. Everyone would be content. There would be no injustices, thefts or violence. The strong would not dominate the weak and everyone will be settled at their proper place in*

*the society.*' This passage of the Sutra clearly reveals the true benefits of Buddha's Teachings.

Mr. Kuang Shi Mei, one of the most famous Buddhist scholars in China stated, 'If we wish to propagate the Buddha's Teachings at this time and age, it is necessary to promote the Pure Land School. To promote Pure Land, we must bring forth The Sutra of Amitabha's Purity, Equality, and Understanding. If people would study and put the teachings of this Sutra into practice, they will come to understand the reality of cause and effect. Naturally, the purity of their minds would bring about the health of their bodies, and their environment would be free from pollutions. Hence, this period of corruption would surely be overturned and peace will follow.'

Today's world is filled with extreme confusion, and everyone wishes to restore order. To prevent the disasters upcoming right before our eyes, we must diligently and tirelessly persuade people to bear a kind heart, perform kind deeds, speak kind words, and overall, be a decent person. We plan to achieve the above goals (The Four Decencies) through understanding the spirit behind different types of teachings (see Guidelines for Selection of Passages).

Members of the Pure Land Learning Center should without doubt follow the teachings of Purity, Equality, and Understanding and be determined to reach the Pure Land. I hope this new facility will be dedicated to the exclusive study and practice of the Pure Land Teachings in this great land of America.

We should follow the footsteps of Teacher Yin Guang and truly bring our ideals (specified in the Introduction of the Pure Land Learning Center) to life.

We should often provide discussions and hold study sessions where Buddha Recitation would be practiced. Buddha Recitation is the most effective way to purify our mind. In this way we would be cultivating according to what we learn.

The Buddha's Education is not an escape from worldly problems; instead, dedicated students of the Teachings undertake the basic responsibilities of restoring order to the world, overcoming the problems in society and helping the distressed. Through inner peace, we can attain world peace.

Only by seeing through the same eyes of understanding is it possible for us to be truly diligent in our cultivation and

spreading of the Buddha's Teachings. We reach towards happiness of the family, stability of the society, a respected nation, and a harmonious world apart from sufferings. I hope the everlasting light of the Buddha's Teachings will penetrate to all corners of the world as soon as possible.”

Presented by  
The Elder Teacher Chin Kung  
October 1, 1993  
Dallas, Texas  
U.S.A.

## Guidelines for Selection of Passages

The way to world peace is through common viewpoint. To achieve common viewpoint, we plan to gather the spirit and ideas from different types teachings by selecting passages from historical volumous books of experience and wisdom. We hope those who are interested in participating in this task would abide by the following guidelines:

1. Select short, easily understood passages, instead of lengthy ones.
2. Select needed and practical teachings, and not fancy philosophies.
3. Select passages which would:

- ◆ benefit one's own moral conduct and cultivation.
  - ◆ bring happiness into the family.
  - ◆ improve our job performance by relating to the past career experience of people from all walks of life.
  - ◆ promote stability of the society.
  - ◆ help the nation prosper.
  - ◆ help bring about world peace.
  - ◆ close the gaps between different races, beliefs, and lines of studies.
4. After properly compiling and categorizing the passages into one volume,

we should translate them into different languages for readership worldwide. Our ideal goal is to introduce the ancients' wisdom to the world and promote harmony.

5. Select famous teachings from foreign literature. If these could be distributed worldwide, then we can establish common understanding, harmonious living, and shared prosperity. This would bring about a mutually supportive and happy world.

## *The Teachings of Great Master Yin Guang*

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*Whether one is a layperson or has left the home-life, one should respect elders and be harmonious to those surrounding him. One should endure what others cannot, and practice what others cannot achieve. One should take others' difficulties unto oneself and help them succeed in their undertakings. While sitting quietly, one should often reflect upon one's own faults, and when chatting with friends, one should not discuss the rights and wrongs of others. In every action one makes, whether dressing or eating, from dawn to dusk and dusk 'till*

*dawn, one should not cease to recite the Buddha's name. Aside from Buddha recitation, whether reciting quietly or silently, one should not give rise to other improper thoughts. If wandering thoughts appear, one should immediately dismiss them. Constantly maintain a humble and repentful heart; even if one has upheld true cultivation, one should still feel one's practice is shallow and never boast. One should mind one's own business and not the business of others. Only look after the good examples of others instead of bad ones. One should see oneself as mundane and everyone else as Bodhisattvas. If one can cultivate according to these teachings,*

*one is sure to reach the Western Pure  
Land of Ultimate Bliss.*

*Homage to Amitabha! Amitabha!*



**A Path to  
True Happiness**

A Path to True Happiness  
Buddhism Is an Education  
Not a Religion

According to the Webster's Dictionary, the definition of religion is as follows: "An organized system of beliefs, rites, and celebrations centered on a supernatural being, primary belief (assumed) will be no-thing." Buddhism is not a religion because, first, the Buddha is not a "supernatural being power." The Buddha is simply a person who has reached Complete Understanding of the reality of life and the universe. His refers to us and universe refers to our living environment. The Buddha taught that all beings possess the same ability within to reach Complete Understanding of themselves and their environment and to free themselves from all suffering. This attaining almost happiness. All beings can become buddhas, and all

## Buddhism Is an Education, *Not* a Religion

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nature. The Buddha is not a God, but a teacher, who teaches us the way to restore Wisdom and Understanding by conquering the greed, anger and ignorance which blind us at the present moment. Buddha is a Sanskrit word meaning, "Wisdom, Awareness/Understanding." We call the founder of Buddhism, Buddha Shakyamuni, the "Original Teacher." He has attained Complete Understanding and Wisdom of life and the universe. Buddhism is his education to us; it is his teaching that shines the way to Buddhahood.

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Second, Buddhism is not a religion because "belief" in the Buddha's teachings is not blind belief, blind faith and far from superstition. Buddha Shakyamuni taught us not to blindly believe what he told us, he wants us to try the teachings and prove them for ourselves. The Buddha wants us to know not merely believe. The Buddha's

teachings flow from his own experience of the way to understand the true reality of life and the universe, and show us a path of our own to experience the truth for ourselves. This is much like a good friend telling us of his trip to Europe, the sights he has seen, and the way to go there to see for ourselves. The Buddha uses a perfectly scientific way of showing us reality in its true form.

Third, Buddhism is not a religion because all the “rites and celebrations” are not centered on a supernatural being, but rather on the people attending the assemblies. The ceremonies and celebrations in Buddhism all serve an educational purpose, a reminder of the Buddha’s teachings and encouragement to all students who practice them. For example, the Thousand Buddhas Repentance Ceremony practiced during Chinese New Year is to help the

participants cultivate a humble heart and respect for others. The point of all “ceremonies” is to help others awaken from delusion and return to Wisdom and Understanding.

Finally, Buddhism is not a religion because the “devotion” used in Buddhism is not one based on emotion, but one based on reason. Students of the Buddha are dedicated to their practice of maintaining Purity of Mind because this practice brings true happiness and to helping others and society attain complete understanding and wisdom. Only through complete understanding and wisdom can we realize our true selves and living environment. The Buddha’s education is truly not a religion but an education, teaching us the way to break through ignorance and arrive at a perfect understanding of ourselves and everything around us.

Our goal is True Happiness.

# *Taking Refuge in the Triple Jewels*



## What Is Taking Refuge?

Taking Refuge means to “return and rely.” From where do we return from and to what do we rely upon? When we take refuge in the Buddha, we are returning from our deluded state of mind and relying upon an Awakened, Understanding mind. When we take refuge in the Dharma, we are returning from deviant views and relying upon proper views and understanding. When we take refuge in the Sangha, we are returning from pollution and disharmony and relying upon Purity of Mind and the Six Principles of Harmony. Taking refuge in the Triple Jewels restores the complete wisdom and abilities of our Self-Nature. We will attain purity, equality, honesty, contentment, compassion and overall, true happiness.

## THE BUDDHA JEWEL



*“Buddha”* is a Sanskrit word meaning “Awareness and Understanding.” When we take refuge in the Buddha, we vow to return from blind faith and delusion and rely upon Understanding and Awareness as a way of life. We are not relying upon the statues or Buddha-images, but rather the spirit of understanding and awareness they represent.

As students of the Pure Land Teachings, we learn to rely upon Buddha Amitabha’s lessons on wisdom and compassion. The name “Amitabha” stands for Infinite Light and Infinite Life. When we follow his teachings, we will attain wisdom, happiness and longevity.

**This is taking refuge in the Buddha.**

## THE DHARMA JEWEL



“*Dharma*” means “Right Understanding and Views.” Delusion has obstructed us from seeing the true face of people and the reality behind matters and objects. This has caused us to look at life and the universe in a distorted and deviant way. When delusion is cleared and our minds are pure to an extent, we give rise to wisdom. With wisdom, we are able to see all people and matters completely and clearly. When our hearts are pure, we can see the past, present and future. Only when we have clearly seen the whole can our viewpoint and understanding be considered right.

The Buddha’s mind is pure without the slightest pollution and therefore sees everything clearly and entirely. We can rely upon the sutras, which are the re-

corded teachings of the Buddha, because they speak entirely of the truths the Buddha has seen. They teach and show us the way to attain Purity of Mind, to see life and the universe most clearly and become just like the Buddhas.

As students of the Pure Land Teachings, we should rely upon the five Sutras and one commentary of the Pure Land as guidelines of practice:

1. The Buddha Speaks of the Infinite Life Sutra of Adornment, Purity, Equality and Enlightenment of the Mahayana School.
2. The Amitabha Sutra
3. The Visualization Sutra
4. The Chapter of Universal Worthy Bodhisattva's Conduct and Vows

5. The Chapter on the Foremost Attainment of Great Strength Bodhisattva through Buddha Recitation
6. Vasubandhu Bodhisattva's Report on the Way to Reaching the Pure Land

**This is taking refuge in the Dharma.**

## THE SANGHA JEWEL



“*Sangha*” means “purity and harmony.” Today’s world is full of pollution; pollution of mind, spirit, views and body. Even the earth and atmosphere are hazardly polluted. The Buddha taught, “The environment changes according to our state of mind.” We would do well to return from all these pollutants and rely upon *Purity of Mind*, for it is the key to saving our Earth.

There is also great disharmony in our world today, among spouses, families, friends, societies and countries which has brought us much suffering and many disasters. The Buddha taught us to rely upon the Six Principles of Living in Harmony to establish harmonious relationships between others and ourselves.

As students of the Pure Land Teachings, we rely upon wisdom and compassion as our way of treating others and dealing with affairs. Great Strength Bodhisattva represents wisdom. His choice of the Buddha Recitation method of practice is wisdom in its highest form. Guan Yin Bodhisattva represents compassion; when we help introduce the Pure Land Teachings to others, we are practicing the compassion of Guan Yin Bodhisattva.

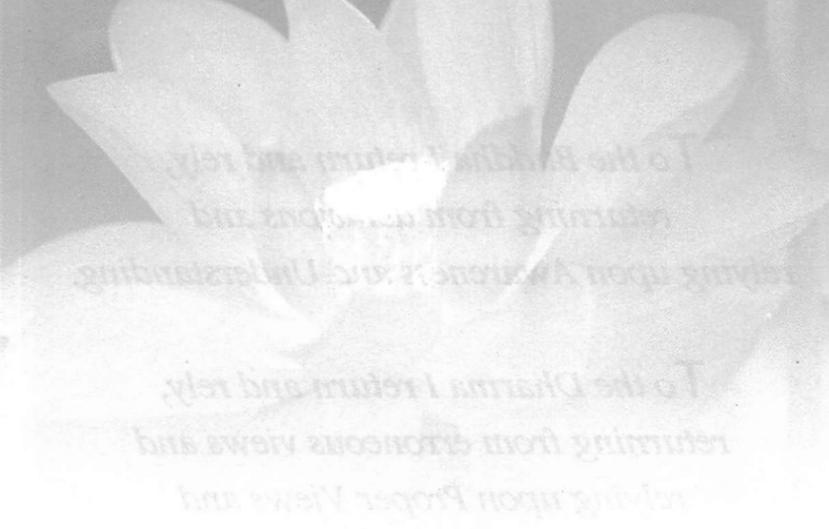
This is taking refuge in the Sangha.

*To the Buddha I return and rely,  
returning from delusions and  
relying upon Awareness and Understanding.*

*To the Dharma I return and rely,  
returning from erroneous views and  
relying upon Proper Views and  
Understanding.*

*To the Sangha I return and rely,  
returning from pollution and disharmony and  
relying upon Purity of Mind and the  
Six Principles of Harmony.*





Given by Venerable Master Chin Kung  
At An-Kang Elementary School  
Taipei 1989

# **Buddhism as an Education**

Transcribed and Translated into English  
By The Dallas Buddhist Association

## Chapter I: The Cause of Our Chaotic World

Today's societies in Taiwan and elsewhere in the world are rather abnormal, a phenomenon that has not been witnessed before either in the West or the East. Some Westerners have predicted that the end of the world will occur in 1999 and that Christ will return to earth for Judgment Day. Easterners have also predicted impending disasters that are similar to those predictions in the West, the only difference being the time frame which is some twenty years later. Some of these are ancient prophecies which we should not place too much importance on. However, if we view our environment objectively, we will realize that this world is really in danger. (Environmental) Pollution has become a serious problem and now humankind has finally begun to understand the need for protecting our environment. However, the problem of mental or spiritual pollution is many times more serious than that of the environment. This is especially

## Chapter 1: The Cause of Our Chaotic World

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Environmental pollution has become a serious problem and now humankind has finally begun to understand the need for protecting our environment. However, the problem of mental or spiritual pollution is many times more serious than that of the environment. This is the source

of worldly ills that not many people realize. The Chinese have a saying, "Education is most essential to establish a nation, train its leaders and its people." For centuries, the Chinese have always believed in the primacy of education, which is considered the foundation for a peaceful and prosperous society. It provides the solution to a myriad of social ills and leads the way to changing one's suffering into happiness. Education has a strong impact on the nation and its people. Moreover, elementary school is the foundation, the basic building block in an educational system.

## Chapter 2: Buddhism as an Education

Buddhism officially came to China in 67 AD. The Emperor had sent special envoys to India to invite Buddhist monks to come to China to teach Buddhism, which in that period, was regarded as an educational system, and not as a religion. Regretfully, about two hundred years ago, the practice of Buddhism had taken on a more religious facade. Therefore, the purpose of this talk is to correct this misunderstanding, by leading us back to the original form of Buddhism as taught by Buddha Shakyamuni.

### The Goal of the Buddha's Teaching

Buddhism is Buddha Shakyamuni's educational system, which is similar to that of Confucius for both presented similar viewpoints and methods. The goal of Buddhist education is to attain wisdom. In Sanskrit, the language of ancient India, the Buddhist wisdom was called "Anuttara-samyak-sambhodi" meaning the perfect ultimate wisdom. The Buddha taught us that

the main objective of our practice or cultivation was to achieve this ultimate wisdom. He further taught us that everyone has the potential to realize this state of ultimate wisdom, as it is an intrinsic part of our nature, not something one obtains externally. However, most of us have become confused through general misconceptions and therefore, are not able to realize this potential. Therefore, if we break through this confusion, we will realize this intrinsic part of our nature. Thus, Buddhism is an educational system aimed at regaining our own intrinsic nature. It also teaches absolute equality which stemmed from Buddha's recognition that all sentient beings possess this innate wisdom and nature. Therefore, there is no inherent difference among beings. Everyone is different now because we have lost our true nature and have become confused. The degree of wisdom exhibited by individuals depends on the degree of delusion and has nothing to do with the true nature of the individual. The Buddha's teaching helps us to realize that innate, perfect, ultimate wisdom. With wisdom, we

can then solve all our problems and turn suffering into happiness. Due to our lack of wisdom, we perceive, view and behave foolishly, and thus suffer the consequences evoked by our incorrect actions. If we have wisdom, our thoughts, viewpoints, and behavior will be correct; how then can we suffer when there are no ill consequences to suffer from? Of course, we will be happy. From here, we can see that suffering is caused by delusion and the source of happiness is our own realization of wisdom.

### **The Core of the Buddha's Teaching**

The Buddha's teaching contains three major points: discipline, meditation and wisdom. Wisdom is the goal and deep meditation or concentration is the crucial process toward achieving wisdom. Discipline through observing the precepts, is the method that helps one to achieve deep meditation; wisdom will then be realized naturally. Buddha's entire teachings as conveyed in the sutras never really depart from these three points. Buddhism encompasses the entire collec-

tion of works by Buddha Shakyamuni and is called the Tripitaka. This can be classified into three categories: sutra, vinaya (precepts or rules), and shastra (commentaries) which emphasize meditation, discipline, and wisdom respectively.

### The Buddhist Educational Organization in China

Buddhist education is based on filial piety, as is the Chinese culture. Prior to the introduction of Buddhism to China, filial piety was the pillar of society and was supported by the wise men of ancient China. When Buddhist monks from India came to China and started to discuss Buddhism with government officials, it was immediately apparent to everyone that Buddhism shared numerous similarities with the indigenous Confucian traditions. Consequently, the government embraced them and requested that the monks stay in China permanently.

The first two monks, who came to China, Moton and Chufarlan, were received by the "Hong-Lu-Si" which is equivalent to our present Foreign Ministry or State Department. "Si" was

designated as a ministry of the government. The Chief of Hong-Lu-Si is equivalent to a foreign minister or Secretary of State. However, Hong-Lu-Si could only receive foreign guests temporarily. In order to allow them to stay permanently, the Emperor added another ministry, "Bai-Ma-Si," to take charge of Buddhist education. Originally, the "Si" had nothing to do with a temple, but merely denoted a ministry of the imperial court, now it denotes a temple in contemporary Chinese. So, there were two ministries in charge of education. The "Li-Bu," managed by the Prime Minister, was in charge of the traditional Confucian educational system. This organization served the same function until the early 1900's. As the Emperor had given enormous support to the "Bai-Ma-Si," Buddhist education rapidly spread throughout China. In many instances, it had even far exceeded the efforts to educate people than the traditional education system of "Li-Bu." Consequently, there may not have been a Confucian or Manfucian school in every village, but there was a "Si" everywhere. Again, the Buddhist

“Si”, or temple, used to be an educational institution and did not perform religious ceremonies at all, unlike what often takes place in contemporary temples nowadays.

Another important mission for the original “Si” was sutra translation. The scale of the translation effort is hard to imagine today. During the seventh century, the famous monk Xuan-Tsuang had supervised six hundred scholars in sutra translation. Prior to this, a monk named Kumaraja had a translation team of about four hundred scholars. Therefore, the “Si” was a large governmental organization. Unfortunately, it was completely transformed into a place to deal with superstition and spirits around two hundred years ago. Its educational characteristics totally disappeared, which was truly regretful.

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### **The Four Current Types of Buddhism**

Today, there are four types of Buddhism being practiced. First, there is the religious Buddhism, which can be witnessed in temples throughout Taiwan. However, this does not rep-

resent the real Buddhism. Second, there is the academic Buddhism being taught in many universities today, where we see Buddhism being treated purely as philosophy, an academic pursuit, especially in Japan. This is not exactly Buddha's education either. Third, and the most unfortunate of all, is the total degeneration of Buddhism into a cult. This third type of Buddhism is much more damaging to the public than the first two types. Finally, there is the traditional Buddhism the teachings of Buddha Shakyamuni in its true sense, which is very rare in our day and age.

### Chapter 3: The Author's Own Experience with Buddhism

When I was a young student in Nanjing, I did not believe in any religion. I went to church with some classmates to learn about Christianity. Although I tried to understand it, I could not find a way to accept it. My favorite religion at that time was Islam because its emphasis was on moral principles and ethics, and I thought that this was rare among religions. When I encountered Buddhism back then, the monks were not very convincing. Therefore, I could not accept Buddhism either and it was the one I resisted the most. I was too young at that time and had not met a true practitioner.

After I arrived in Taiwan, I heard of Professor Dong-Mei Fang, who was then a famous philosopher and a professor at the National Taiwan University. Having become an admirer of his, I wrote him a letter asking about taking a class from him at the university. Professor Fang was only in his forties at that time. He invited me to

his house and told me, "Nowadays in school, professors do not act like professors, and students do not act like students either. If you come to the university and expect to learn something, you will be sorely disappointed." When I heard this, I was pretty upset since he had basically poured cold water over my plans. Finally, he told me: "Well, why don't you come to my house every Sunday, and I will give you personal instruction for two hours." I could not believe that he was so compassionate towards me. I learned about philosophies at Professor Fang's small table in his little living room, one on one. This was extremely precious to me. He introduced the philosophies of the West, China, India and finally Buddhism. He taught me that Buddhism is the pinnacle of the world's philosophy and that it provides the greatest enjoyment for humanity. What he told me was fascinating and soon I realized that Buddhism contained something magnificent. I started to visit the temples in Taipei. However, the monks I met in those temples just could not clearly explain Buddhism to an intellectual skeptic.

tic like me. However, the monks are much better in teaching Buddhism today. Then I set my first sight on Shan-Dao-Si, which was a large temple in Taipei with a vast collection of sutras. During that period of time, the wide publication and circulation of Buddhist books was very rare. The monks at Shan-Dao-Si were extremely kind to me as they allowed me to borrow many of the precious and rare sutras. This was a great help to me.

Soon after I started to learn Buddhism seriously, I was fortunate to meet Master Zhang-Jia. He was a well-accomplished Esoteric practitioner who taught and guided me in my study and practice. Just like Mr. Fang, he taught me two hours every week for three years until he passed away. I then went to Taizhong to follow Mr. Bing-Nan Lee and started studying and practicing with him.

Buddhism is a special kind of knowledge; it is not a religion. In order to derive true benefit from it, we have to understand it's true nature. I have the utmost respect for Buddhism and I believe Buddha Shakyamuni to be the foremost edu-

cator in the history of the world. He was just like Confucius in that he taught everyone tirelessly and without discrimination.

## Chapter 4: The Methodology and Symbolism of the Buddhist Educational System

### The Continuing Education System for Teachers

The continuing education system for teachers was first established by Buddha Shakyamuni. Many of his students were well accomplished under his instruction. Every year, these students were assigned to teach at different places for nine months. In India, the rainy season runs from mid-April to mid-July. Since it was inconvenient to travel and teach during those three months, all the students would come back to meet with the Buddha to receive additional teachings and to learn from each other in class discussions. This was called the summer retreat and it parallels what is currently known as continuing education for teachers. The modern continuing educational system is necessitated by the advancement in technology. However, twenty-five hundred years ago, Buddha had already adopted this idea in bringing his students back for additional teach-

ings.

### **The Artful Buddhist Teaching**

Buddhist teaching is full of artistic expressions. It was originally an education, which combined what was equivalent to today's museum and school system. Therefore, the "Si" combined the traditional school, library and museum. In ancient China, the traditional school system was not universal. Most students went to a "Si" to study because it usually had a complete collection of books, similar to today's library. The collections included not only sutras, but also almost every kind of publication. The monks were familiar with Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism and ancient Chinese texts. They were capable of answering questions and were well versed on various subjects. Consequently, Buddhist institutions began to take over the educational mission for China.

Typical Buddhist buildings are expressions of art, which are called "Expressions of Buddhism." However, Buddha and Bodhisattva stat-

ues do not represent polytheism, the worship of more than one god. Each statue serves to inspire wisdom and awakening in each of us. They also represent certain aspects of Buddhism, which remind practitioners of the particular topic of teaching. For example, Guan Yin Bodhisattva, the most popular Bodhisattva in China, represents Infinite Compassion. When we see this statue, it reminds us to apply compassion when dealing with the world, its people and surroundings. However, people nowadays worship Guan Yin Bodhisattva as a god and pray for the relief of suffering and to eliminate obstacles. This is a superstitious view and misconception because people forget the fact that the statues are expressions of concepts in Buddhism.

Buddhist architecture is also an artistic expression, with the temple's main cultivation hall being similar to a large meeting or teaching hall. From the exterior, it appears to have two stories, but there is only one story inside. The external two stories represent "absolute truth" or the true reality of life and the universe, and "relative

truth” or worldly views still clouded with delusion. The interior single story illustrates that both are the same truth. To the deluded, the two appear distinct and different; however, to the enlightened, they are one and the same.

In the center of the main cultivation hall, there are three statues, one Buddha and two Bodhisattvas. Buddha represents the true nature of the universe and human life, which is called “Buddha nature” or true mind. “Buddha” is translated from Sanskrit, and means someone who is totally enlightened. The Buddha statue represents our original enlightenment and the Bodhisattvas statues represent the application of our original enlightened mind. All the representations and applications are infinite and can be classified into two categories: wisdom and practice. For example, the Pure Land school pays respect to the Buddha and two Bodhisattvas of the Western Paradise. Amitabha Buddha (Infinite Life and Infinite Light) represents the infinite enlightenment that is an intrinsic part of our nature. Bodhisattvas Guan Yin (Avalokiteshvara) and Da

Shi Zhi (Great Strength/Mahasthamaprapta) respectively portray compassion with kindness and great wisdom. We should be compassionate and kind toward all beings. Our thoughts, views and behavior should be rational rather than emotional, for emotional behavior spells trouble. Therefore, we should not treat the Buddha and Bodhisattvas as gods. But will they help us? Yes, they will by providing us with the knowledge of how to protect ourselves from delusion, thereby obtaining release from suffering. Once we have learned the background of the artistic components in Buddhist architecture, music and statues, we will gain an enriched experience when paying a visit to a traditional Buddhist temple.

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However, nowadays many people do not understand the meaning and teachings of Buddhism. They mistake the multi-representations of Bodhisattvas as a sign of polytheism. What people fail to understand is the fact that the statues in Buddhism are teaching aids and not statues of gods. All Buddhas and Bodhisattvas represent our nature and cultivation of virtue. We have infinite

capabilities within our true nature that cannot be expressed by just one single term. Therefore, we have multiple representations; for instance, a capable person today may have many titles on his/her business cards to show his/her positions and accomplishments. The Buddha and Bodhisattvas are actually representations of the nature within ourselves: Buddha, as in our true nature of mind, and the Bodhisattvas, in our virtue of cultivation. We all possess these qualities. Not until we come to realize the meaning of Buddhist symbolism, will we appreciate the sophistication and completeness of its education.

Typical “Si” buildings are rare today. The first hall of a “Si” is the hall of Heavenly Guardians, also known as Dharma Protectors. Situated in the center of the hall, facing the front door, is Mi Le Pu Sa (Maitreya Bodhisattva) who is represented by the image of the historical monk Bu-Dai. Mi Le Pu Sa has a big smile that conveys the idea that in order to truly learn Buddhism, one should learn to be cheerful and courteous to all. He also has a huge belly that represents fairness,

flexibility, impartiality, patience and tolerance.

Standing beside Mi Le Pu Sa are the four Heavenly Guardians or Dharma Protectors. They are symbolic guardians of the practitioners of the Buddhist way. Whom do they protect? They protect us by reminding us to educate ourselves and to safeguard the proper knowledge, which we should learn. Each guardian portrays a different aspect of thought or action.

The Eastern Dharma Protector (holding a lute) symbolizes responsibility and safeguards the territory, which means that all of us are responsible for ourselves, our family, society and the country as a whole. If each of us performs our duties well, fulfilling our obligations, we support each other and ourselves as well. The Southern Dharma Protector (holding a sword) symbolizes progress and teaches us diligence. He emphasizes the importance of constantly cultivating and advancing our virtue, wisdom and knowledge, and to improve performance in ourselves and our duties. This is similar to Confucian ideas of daily self-improvement.

The Western Dharma Protector (holding a dragon or snake) symbolizes comprehensive vision and knowledge gained through exposure to the world. He represents the need to open our eyes to observe nature and man, to refine what we see and learn, and to distinguish good from ill. The Northern Dharma Protector (holding an umbrella) symbolizes comprehensive study and learning. Both teach ways of practice and how to achieve the goals in responsibility fulfillment and self-improvement. As the ancient Chinese have said: "To read ten thousand books and to travel ten-thousand miles." We read to gain more knowledge and travel to observe more effectively. We will then be able to improve ourselves and to perform our duties most effectively.

Today, people visit the Hall of Dharma Protectors to burn incense, prostrate and offer flowers and fruit praying for protection and safety. This is superstition. All the facilities, images of Buddha and Bodhisattvas and any offerings made are teaching tools designed to inspire our mind and wisdom. They also serve to remind us of the

importance of being enlightened instead of deluded, virtuous instead of deviated, pure instead of polluted. These are the three principles of Buddhist teaching and practice.

### Methods of Practicing Buddhism

The ways in practicing Buddhism are numerous, about eighty-four thousand. Each path is different from the others but ultimately leads to the same goals: enlightenment, proper thoughts and viewpoints, and purity. As such, all paths are equal without one being superior to the other. People have different abilities and levels of accomplishment. Furthermore, they are from different environments and should choose a path most suited to themselves. We can choose any one of the three goals to concentrate our practice on. When we achieve any one of them, the other two will come naturally.

There are ten schools of practice in Chinese Buddhism. Zen stresses the pursuit of the perfect clear mind or enlightenment. The Pure Land and Tibetan Buddhism or Vajrayana school stress ob-

taining the pure mind. Other schools concentrate their practice on proper thoughts and viewpoints. Regardless of which method or school one chooses, they all lead to the same outcome. In other words, once we become an expert in one method, we will become an expert in all methods.

The purity of the world comes from an individual's inner purity. With a pure mind, a mind without discrimination or attachment, a higher level of wisdom arises in which the world around us naturally comes into harmony. By reciting the Buddha's name, meditating, reciting sutras or mantras, and practicing in accordance with Buddha's teaching, one will attain enlightenment, proper thoughts and viewpoints, and purity of mind thus becoming void of all deluded thoughts.

On the other hand, one is total on the wrong path if one chants Buddha's name in the hope of gaining a promotion or wealth. That is religion and superstition, and it goes against the teaching of Shakyamuni Buddha.

**How Buddhist Terminology Illustrate the  
Buddhism is an Education**

Buddhism is the teaching of Buddha Shakyamuni as he was its founder. We call Him the "Original teacher," just like the Chinese call Confucius the "Greatest sage and teacher." The relationship between Buddha and ourselves is a teacher-student relationship, which is not religious in nature. In religion, there is not a teacher-student relationship but that of father-son or master-servant.

About twenty years ago I gave a series of lectures in Fu-Ren Catholic University and taught in the Thomas Monastery for one semester. I told my students, who were mainly priests and nuns, to take refuge in the Buddha and to learn Buddhism well. There is absolutely no conflict between Buddhism and religion, for one is teacher-student and the other father-son. If the priests and nuns were to practice Buddhism and in turn abandon their own religion, I believe that even Buddha would not accept them, for it is against human ethics to discard the parent for the teacher. Therefore, religious followers will benefit if they practice Buddhism. As we practice, we

will attain the true wisdom to know exactly what Heaven is like and will be able to decide when and how we want to go there. Thus, Buddhism is a way of teaching as it teaches us how to regain our true wisdom.

When a monk is called "He-Shang," he is equivalent to the principal in today's school, for he is the director of educational strategies. All other faculty members are teachers who execute the principal's educational strategies and act as role models for the students' behavior and speech. My late teacher, Professor Fang constantly assured me that Buddhism is an education. Later in my studies of the sutras, I reaffirmed his statement that Buddhism is the pinnacle of the world's wisdom. It provides the greatest enjoyment for humankind. I have experienced the unsurpassable joy of being free from afflictions, delusions and wandering thoughts. My body and mind are clean and pure, totally at ease. I am the happiest person in the world. Therefore, I feel indebted to Professor Fang, for without him, I would not have learned Buddhism nor would I have such com-

plete happiness derived from practicing Buddha's teaching.

## Chapter Five: The Integration of Confucianism and Buddhism

Buddhism successfully merged into Chinese culture; they became inseparable. The basic concept that they share is to give up one's own interest for the sake of others. Confucianism and Buddhism advocate the enhancement and glorification of filial piety, the respect and devotion of an individual for their parents and teachers. Filial piety is a major element in accomplishing world peace.

What is education? It is the meaning and the value of human life, the relationships between human beings as well as those between humans and the universe. Confucian teaching encompasses three main points. First, it is important to understand the relationship between humans, once this is understood we will learn to love people. Second, it is important to understand the relationship between humans and heaven, once this is understood we will learn to respect heavenly beings and spirits. Third, it is important

to understand the relationship between humans and the environment, once this is understood we will learn to take care of the environment and to appreciate every single thing around us. There are four studies within Confucian teachings: virtue, speech, skills for earning a living and the arts. The teaching of virtue is the core of Confucianism; it is absolutely crucial, for without morality and proper conduct we become selfish and concerned only with ourselves at the expense of society. Such behavior can result in world chaos. Today, our education has lost that emphasis. Schools only teach skills that are superficial and not the root of education. When the root is rotten, it shakes the foundation of society and causes the chaos that we are experiencing today. Elementary schools are like the root of education: junior highs, high schools, and colleges are the flowers and leaves. Teachers can start teaching filial piety to our children as early as possible.

By looking at the way Chinese characters were created, we cannot but admire our ancestor's high level of wisdom. We thank them for

having given us something that is so valuable and exquisite. The Chinese character “piety” embraces the spirit of Buddhism and the foundation of education as it is a combination of the characters for “old” and “son.” Nowadays, people talk about the generation gap between parents and children, which is something traditional families did not have. In the Chinese tradition, not only are father and son one unit; grandfathers and grandsons, etc. are all part of the same continuum. This is a unique concept. Westerners often ask why Chinese people pay respect to ancestors since we barely know them. The remembrance of our ancestors is the foundation of Confucianism and Buddhism, which is the source of harmony in society and peace in the world.

Today everyone longs for world peace, but we need to start from the foundation of filial piety to obtain it. Buddhism emphasizes unconditional compassion for all sentient beings in the universe and beyond; in the past, present and future. The continuum of time and space is inseparable from oneself, for We Are All One Entity. One does

not find this extensive concept in religion. "Thus Come One", one of the ten names for Buddha, stands for an enlightened being, which is our basic nature, and also the essence of the universe and human life. This concept is embodied by the Chinese character "piety" and the name of Amitabha Buddha in the Pure Land school. The names may be different but the meanings are the same: unconditional love for all beings that surpasses space and time.

### The Five Human Relationships

Confucian teachings are based on five human relationships that are founded on moral principles. The five human relationships include those between husband/wife, parent/child, siblings, friends, and political leaders and the public. Husband/wife represents the smallest and the most intimate circle of human relationships. Outside the small circle is the extended family, which includes the relationships between father and son and those among the siblings. Outside the family there is society which includes addi-

tional relationships between the individual and his leader and circles of friends. We now often talk about the need to unite people. In ancient times, the Chinese had no use for the word "unite," for the five human relationships define the union of all people. Everyone on this earth is our brother. Each is responsible for the other; parents being compassionate, sons and daughters being filial to their parents, siblings and friends being respectful to each other. In this way, the country and its people are already a perfect union. The relationships between people also define responsibilities from one to the other. Everyone has his own duty and responsibility to fulfill.

### **The Practice of Confucianism and Buddhism**

Human beings differ from animals by adhering to human relationships and basic moral principles. The practice of Confucianism is based on having sincere and proper thoughts, correct behavior, a well-organized family and country, and peace for all. This is identical to the views of Buddhism, which also emphasizes practicing and

learning. It all starts from generating the Bodhi-citta mind. "Bodhi" is a Sanskrit word meaning enlightenment. Enlightenment means an "awakened" mind. It is similar to the sincere thought and proper mind advocated by Confucianism. A Chinese government official defined sincerity very well. He noted that "Sincerity means having no single thought." There will be no sincerity as long as there are corrupted thoughts, wandering thoughts, or even the rise of a single thought. His definition is identical to that of Buddhism. The Sixth Patriarch Hui-Neng once said "... (the pure mind) contains nothing therefore collects no dust". However, people in general have a lot of wandering thoughts. How can one be rid of these wandering thoughts? The Confucian answer is "...to fight against uprising desires and achieve wisdom." This practice was stressed in the elementary school of the Confucian system. Buddha said, severing all desires is to stop all worries and troubles.

### The Confucian Elementary School System

In the past, the Chinese elementary school students were well trained to guard against the uprising of desires. Schools emphasized training in student's concentration and wisdom. Students started school at the age of seven. They stayed with their teachers and only went home during holidays. They were taught the correct way to interact with everyday life and the proper manner to attend to their teachers and elder schoolmates. This was called the education of moral principles based on human relationships. When the children went home, they would then treat their parents and siblings with filial piety and respect.

From the ages of seven to twelve, students were required to memorize and recite fluently the ancient texts. The teacher would first select materials which contained the profound wisdom of sages and saints and then encouraged the students to read and recite the material up to one or two hundred times a day. Children would have scattered thoughts if they were not assigned any

tasks to do. The purpose of reciting was to focus their mind so that they would eventually obtain a pure mind, concentration and wisdom; even though, they may not have understood the meanings. However, the current educational system, in existence since the Revolution of 1911, eliminated this two thousand-year-old tradition and adopted the western educational system. This change, upon close examination, leads one to the root of modern China's social problems.

### The Confucian Tai School System

At the age of thirteen, children were sent to Tai school, as there were no junior or high schools in ancient China. Tai school emphasized the analysis and discussion of the materials students had already memorized in elementary school. The teachers were experts in their fields and would concentrate on that field throughout their entire career. Each of them taught a small class with ten to twenty students and the lectures were not necessarily given in the classroom with textbooks. During that period, all the textbooks

were printed in the universal format: twenty words per column and ten columns per page, with no space in between. The format was standard for the entire country regardless of the publisher. Both teacher and students memorized the textbooks so well that they even knew exactly where the study materials were located. Since everything had been memorized earlier, there was no need for books after elementary school.

Teachers often took their students on field trips to broaden their knowledge and experience. As they traveled, knowledge was imparted to them along the way. Thus, the trips were without textbooks or restraints but accompanied with wine and food and filled with joy. The students would attend to the needs of the teacher. Therefore, as they concluded their travels to the many beautiful places, the course would close as well. For many, attending Tai school was the most joyful time of their lives.

In Taiwan, those who are in their eighties or nineties may have experienced this kind of education. My late teacher, Mr. Lee, then in his

nineties, could still apply materials he had memorized in elementary school when writing articles; no reference materials were needed. This was the method he used to acquire the original wisdom that comes from the pure mind. With the pure mind, true wisdom arises. Having true wisdom is to know a person's past and future and also to understand the laws of cause and effect. One should not judge things by their appearance, but know and understand how events came about. The wisdom of knowing nothing emphasized in Buddhism is the original wisdom. Only when one has a pure mind, which contains nothing, will he also know everything when he is in contact with the external world. Therefore, the practicing and studying of Buddhism begins with eliminating all thoughts in order to obtain a pure mind.

All this made me think of our children, who are so pure, so innocent and uncontaminated in their thinking which is why it is best for our children to start learning Buddhism early in childhood. With little effort, children can truly and

easily benefit from it. The experiences of a person with a pure mind are so different and profound that no ordinary person can truly appreciate them.

**World Peace Can be Achieved if the Mind and Body are Well-trained, the Family is Well-run and the Country is Well-governed.**

A true practitioner will keep himself from being greedy, angry, ignorant and arrogant toward others and his environment. If one has any of the elements just mentioned, then he is neither sincere nor proper. Sincerity and proper thoughts and viewpoints are the basis for training the mind. A person with a pure mind and body will not become ill. We suffer from illnesses because our minds are filled with wandering thoughts and worries that are derived from greed, anger, ignorance and arrogance.

As mentioned earlier, sincerity and proper thoughts and viewpoints are the basis for purifying one's mind. A purified mind leads to a purified body and naturally, a person will become immune from illness; thus, a realized practitioner

would never get seriously ill. Moreover, if a person is determined to follow the path of Buddha, he or she will not die in the conventional manner. A conventional death means a person does not know exactly when they will leave this world, nor where they will go afterwards. On the other hand, true practitioners with confidence in themselves and in Amitabha Buddha, who cultivate in accordance with Buddhist teachings, will be capable of controlling both the time of leaving this world and of being born in the Western Pure Land. This is neither unusual nor a fairy tale, but the simple truth, and can be achieved by cultivating the pure mind and vowing to reach the Western Pure Land. Therefore, one needs to understand how important it is to be free of worries and attachments. Every Buddhist should maintain a pure mind and body at all times, treating everyone and everything with equality and composure. Only then would the family be in harmony, the society in unity and the world at peace. No longer would we have feuds, conflicts or wars. The peace and happiness, which we all wish for

today, would no longer be a dream. World peace can be achieved if we combine Confucianism and Buddhism into our educational system.

### The Eight Basic Confucian Moral Principles

Loyalty, filial piety, compassion, love, trustworthiness, responsibility, peace and equality are the eight basic Confucian moral principles and are represented by four Bodhisattvas in Buddhism. Di Tsang Wang (Earth Store /Kristigarba) Bodhisattva represents filial piety and therefore the Di Tsang Sutra is known as the Filial Piety Sutra. This is because it teaches filial respect for both parents and teachers, who are both equally important in Buddhism and Confucianism. To treat one's parents with filial piety and to respect teachers are the innate virtues of human nature. The goal of Buddhist teaching is for us to realize the true nature of the mind, which can only be achieved by discovering its virtuous nature, without which one will never become enlightened.

Guan Yin Bodhisattva symbolizes compas-

sion and represents kindness and love. Wen Shu Shi Li (Manjusri) Bodhisattva symbolizes wisdom and represents faith and loyalty. Pu Xian (Universal Worthy/Samantabhadra) Bodhisattva symbolizes great vows and putting the Buddha's teaching into practice including filial piety, compassion and wisdom. He represents peace and equality. With compassion and wisdom, one can generate merits. To enjoy merits is to build upon the foundation of equality and purity - this is the greatest enjoyment for humankind. To cultivate merits in childhood, generate merits in middle age and enjoy merits in old age are described in Chinese as truth, virtue and beauty. One who enjoys merit in old age is called the complete person, which is similar to Buddha. We must understand that Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are not gods but the most perfect and happiest beings for us to learn from.

Wise ancestors in China long evoked these principles long ago before Buddhism was introduced there. Buddha Shakyamuni, Confucius and Mencius never met, but they all had identical

concepts and teaching methods. That was truly a coincidence and as is said in Chinese, “Heroes would have similar views” or said in the West, “Great minds think alike”.

## Chapter Six: The Buddha's Teaching is for Everyone

Recently a student came to me and asked how to practice Buddhism. The answer is the Four Universal Vows of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas:

- (1) Sentient beings are innumerable,  
I vow to help them all;
- (2) Afflictions are inexhaustible,  
I vow to end them all;
- (3) Ways to practice are boundless,  
I vow to master them all;
- (4) Enlightenment is unsurpassable;  
I vow to attain it.

To help others is to do our best in assisting them to break through delusion and become awakened, then they will be able to attain true happiness and leave suffering behind. In order to help all beings escape from suffering, one should be a good cultivator, excelling in moral and academic achievements. A cultivator can learn by

upholding the precepts to guard against harmful consequences created by speech, body and mind, i.e. words, deeds, and thoughts. Before comprehensive learning, however, it is necessary to cultivate good virtue by ending our afflictions including greed, anger, ignorance and arrogance, as they are the sources of all desires and delusions. True wisdom arises from cultivation of high moral character, from a pure, non-discriminatory and compassionate mind, and not from knowledge gained from books. Without a pure mind, the knowledge gained leads to deviated views. Therefore, the first priority in practicing Buddhism is to purify our mind and cut off all attachments to erroneous ways. With the pure mind we can then reflect everything clearly and know all, thus attaining true wisdom and enlightenment.

Buddhism is for everyone, regardless of gender, age, occupation, nationality or religion. Everyone can learn and practice Buddhism, for it is the teaching of ultimate, perfect wisdom. There is a need for Buddha's teaching in all parts

of the world. However, it is not easy to nurture Buddhist teachers. The difficulty lies with the fact that most people cannot renounce their worldly fame and wealth, which are the major obstacles in learning and practicing Buddhism. Without a pure mind, there is no way to truly understand Buddha's teachings and to realize the causes of all the problems in this world. Meanwhile, without virtue of merits and good causes and conditions, practitioners cannot find good teachers. Therefore, I always encourage young practitioners to resolve to save our country and the world.

## Chapter Seven: The Key to the Greatest Treasure

Recently, we have established a Pure Land Learning Center in the United States. The goal is to introduce the traditional Chinese culture to Westerners and to help them practice Buddhism. Our ancestors invented the most precious and timeless vehicle: a classical Chinese language, called Wen-Yen-Wen, in order to transmit the ancient culture to future generations and us. With this powerful vehicle, we can read the publications of Confucius or Mencius that were written twenty-five hundred years ago. Because our ancestors realized that language would be changing from time to time, they used this classical Chinese language to pass on their wisdom, thoughts, skills and experiences. It is not difficult to learn Wen-Yen-Wen. Mr. Lee, my teacher, has taught us the secret to reading the classical language; one only has to recite fluently fifty chapters of ancient Chinese literature. In order to write in classical Chinese, one needs to memorize

one hundred chapters. With this key, Wen-Yen-Wen, we can have access to and learn Buddhism and ancient Chinese wisdom, for the latest translations of the Buddhist sutras were in this classical language. Along with the pure, non-discriminating and compassionate mind, we can thus unlock our ultimate wisdom.

I have encouraged practitioners to read the Infinite Life Sutra, which is written in a simpler form of this classical Chinese language. The public should easily understand Eighty percent of its content. There are only forty-eight chapters in this compilation of the Infinite Life Sutra, which is close to the amount that Mr. Lee required us to memorize. This is a good way to start learning this classical Chinese language. After reading and memorizing this sutra, I believe there will be no more obstacles in reading other Buddhist sutras. I strongly urge not only practitioners but also Westerners who want to learn the Chinese culture and Buddhism to memorize fifty chapters of Wen-Yen-Wen or the Infinite Life Sutra. With two or three years of effort, one can obtain the

key to explore the wonders of ancient Chinese wisdom and at the same time, transform the Buddhist sutras into one's own private treasure. Without this key, having all these collections of sutras and ancient Chinese literature would be futile, for there is no entry into the treasury.

### **Elementary School is the Foundation of Happiness**

Ladies and gentlemen, parents and students, elementary school is the foundation for happiness in human life, the root of the country's future and the caretaker of the future society. You have made such contributions to this greatest task in human life and society. It is most meaningful and valuable for society to nurture capable and virtuous youth. I would like to extend my gratitude and highest respect to you. I wish all of you inner peace and happiness. May everyone have great health and prosperity!

... (Skt.) One who has reached self-realization  
... which one perceives no erroneous perception  
... speech or behavior  
... directed to certain ideas or objects  
... (Skt.) The great compassion and  
... with every thing in the world  
... (Skt.) One who helps others to reach  
... their achieving their own  
... (Skt.) One who has reached perfection in  
... fixation and helping others to reach realization  
... the Law better wrong view  
... (Skt.) The teachings of the Buddha  
... (Skt.) The great, even, phenomenon  
... (Skt.) Duty, law, doctrine  
... (Skt.) The Dharma Path  
... (Skt.) The five  
... during which enlightenment was often attained  
... (Skt.) The Dharma Path  
... (Skt.) The Dharma Path

## Glossary

**Affliction.** Condition or cause of pain, distress, and suffering which disturbs the mind and body.

**Amitabha** (Sanskrit or Skrt). The name of the Buddha of the Western Pure Land, primarily meaning Infinite Life and Light.

**Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi** (Skrt). Highest, proper and complete enlightenment.

**Arhat** (Skrt). One who has reached self-realization, a state in which one possesses no erroneous perceptions, views, speech or behavior.

**Attachments.** Fixed to certain ideas or objects.

**Bodhi mind** (Skrt). The great compassionate and sincere mind, with every thought to help others.

**Bodhisattva** (Skrt). One who helps others to reach realization after achieving their own.

**Buddha** (Skrt). One who has reached perfection in both self-realization and helping others to reach realization.

**Delusion.** False beliefs, wrong views.

**Dharma** (Skrt). 1) The teachings of the Buddha (generally capitalized in English); 2) Things, events, phenomena, everything; 3) Duty, law, doctrine.

**Dharma-ending Age.** The Dharma Perfect Age began with Buddha Shakyamuni's demise and lasted five hundred years, during which Enlightenment was often attained. The Dharma Semblance Age began after that and lasted one thousand years, during which Enlightenment was seldom attained. The Dharma Ending Age that we are now

in began after that and will last for ten thousand years during which Enlightenment will rarely be attained.

**Eight Afflictions.** Absence of embarrassment and shamefulness, and the presence of jealousy, stinginess, misdeeds, drowsiness, sleep and agitation.

**Four Universal Vows of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.**

(1) Sentient beings are innumerable, I vow to help them all; (2) Afflictions are inexhaustible, I vow to end them all; (3) Ways to practice are boundless, I vow to master them all; (4) Enlightenment is unsurpassable, I vow to attain it.

**Five Desires.** Wealth, lust, food-drink, fame and sleep.

**Five Guidelines.** Following: 1) The Three Conditions 2) The Six Principles of Harmony 3) The Three Learnings 4) The Six Paramitas or Principles and 5) Samantabhadra Bodhisattva's Ten Great Vows.

**Good Fortune.** Happiness, intelligence, wellbeing, prosperity etc.

**Good roots.** Good qualities or good seeds sown by a good life to be reaped later.

**Karma** (Skt). Each of our thoughts and acts results in either good or bad, suffering or pleasure. Karma (Cause and Effect) determines our future.

**Mahayana** (Skt). One of the two major branches of Buddhism. Bodhisattva path of helping all sentient beings to attain universal liberation.

**Mindfulness of Buddha.** Initially the mind remembers the Buddha and does not forget. After further cultivation, one constantly contemplates the Buddha.

**Nine Realms.** All ten realms minus the Buddha realm.

**Prajna-Wisdom** (Skt). Intuitive wisdom.

**Pratyekabuddha** (Skt). One who attains his enlightenment alone, independent of a teacher, with the objective of attaining Nirvana for himself rather than that of others.

**Precepts**. Rules set up by Buddha Shakyamuni to prevent his students from erroneous thoughts, speech and behavior.

**Pure Land**. See Western Pure Land.

**Pure Mind or Purity of Mind**. The mind without discrimination or attachments.

**Saha world** (Skt). Refers to our solar system, filled with suffering and afflictions, yet gladly endured by its inhabitants.

**Samadhi** (Skt). Meditative absorption.

Usually denotes the particular final stage of pure concentration and contemplation. There are many degrees and types of Samadhi.

**Sangha** (Skt). Group of four or more peoples who properly practice the Buddha's teaching together, especially the Six Principles of Harmony.

**Sanskrit** (Skt). Language of ancient India.

**Self-Nature**. Our original, true self that we still have, but is currently covered by deluded thoughts.

**Sentient being**. A living being that is aware of itself and can experience feeling or sensation.

**Sharira** (Skt). Relics that remain after cremation indicating the person had attained some degree of purity of mind.

**Six Paramitas or Principles**. Giving, precept observation, patience, diligence, concentration and wisdom.

**Six Principles of Harmony**. 1) Share the same view-

points or goals. 2) Observe the same precepts. 3) Live and practice together harmoniously. 4) Not quarrel. 5) Experience the inner peace and happiness from practicing together harmoniously. 6) To share benefits equally.

**Six Realms.** Three upper realms are heavens, asuras and humans. Three lower realms are animals, hungry ghosts and hells.

**Six Senses.** Sight, sound, smell, taste, touch and idea.

**Sutra** (Skr). Teaching by the Buddha, initially given verbally, later compiled and written down by the Buddha's students.

**Ten Directions.** North, Northeast, East, Southeast, South, Southwest, West, Northwest, above and below.

**Ten Good Conducts.** No killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, abusive language, backbiting, seductive words, greed, anger or ignorance.

**Ten Great Vows of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva.** 1) Pay respect to all Buddhas 2) Praise "Thus Come One" 3) Make offerings extensively 4) Repent of Karmic obstacles 5) Be joyful over others meritorious deeds 6) Appeal to the Buddha to turn the wheel of the Buddha's teachings 7) Request the Buddha to reside in this world 8) Constantly be a diligent follower of the Buddha's teaching 9) Accord with all sentient beings 10) Dedicate all merits.

**Ten Realms.** Six realms plus those of Sound-hearers, Pratyekabuddhas, Bodhisattvas and Buddhas.

**Three Conditions.** The first includes being filial and respectful to one's parents and teachers, being compassionate and not killing any living beings and the Ten Good Conducts. The second is following the Three Refuges, pre-

cepts, laws and customs, and conducting oneself in a proper and dignified manner. Third is to generate the Bodhi mind, deeply believe in the Law of Cause and Effect, recite and uphold Mahayana sutras, and encourage others to advance on the path to Enlightenment.

Three Learnings. Self-discipline, concentration and wisdom.

Three Poisons. Greed, anger and ignorance.

Three Refuges. We take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. When we take refuge in the Buddha, we are returning from our deluded state of mind and relying upon an awakened, understanding mind. When we take refuge in the Dharma, we are returning from deviant views and relying upon proper views and understanding. When we take refuge in the Sangha, we are returning from pollution and disharmony and relying upon purity of mind and the Six Principles of Harmony.

Western Pure Land. World created by Buddha Amitabha. An ideal place of cultivation, those who are born there are no longer subject to reincarnation.



**The Art  
of  
Living**

*Selected Teachings of  
Venerable Master Chin Kung*

## Chapter One: The Education of Buddha Shakyamuni, Our Original Teacher



“Education - The field of study  
concerned with teaching and learning.”

- THE AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY

Buddhism is an education about our living environment and us. The Buddha teaches us to recognize ourselves; our thoughts, speech, and actions and the consequences they evoke. Most importantly, the Buddha wants us to restore our original and complete wisdom. He teaches that everyone possesses the ability to attain complete understanding of life and the universe, and it is only because of delusion that we are unable to realize it. We are blinded by discrimination, wandering thoughts and attachments, and forget the original pure mind of our self-nature. In this way, we have caused ourselves much unneeded suffering.

The Buddha also teaches us to view our environment clearly. Environment refers to the people, matters, and objects we come across everyday. When our hearts are free from discriminatory thoughts and attachments, we will be able to view everything clearly and deal with them appropriately. Thus, we can live in harmony with others and succeed in all our endeavors.



What did the Buddha mean when he taught us to cultivate? His intent was mainly to rid us of our delusions and attachments. If we drew together the Six Principles of practice taught by the Buddha, we would only end up with the practice of giving. Giving simply means to let go. If we can let go of our greed, anger, ignorance, and arrogance, then we would always dwell in purity of mind. If we can let go of all discriminations, worries and attachments, then we would attain peace, spiritual liberation, health and longevity.

If we can let go of our own views and work together for the benefit of others, then we can achieve harmony with others, harmony in society, and ultimately, world peace. From this, we can see that the main practice of the Buddha's teachings is none other than giving.

When Buddha Shakyamuni was in the world, he not only used words to teach, but made an example of himself for all living beings to follow. He let go of all desires, worldly enjoyments, fame and wealth to lead the life of a left-home person. He lived a life of simplicity, purity of mind and body, and happiness. Ordinary people might see this as bitter and miserable, but this is only due to their lack of understanding. One with wisdom would view things differently. The wise would see the Buddha's life as one of true liberation, happiness and fulfillment. The Buddha does not have useless thoughts, discriminations, attachments, or worries. How at ease he is! He accords with all

conditions and emanates wisdom in every thought and action to teach sentient beings in this world.

The Buddhas live lives of wisdom, while ordinary people live lives of affliction. Buddha Shakyamuni's teachings show us how to change afflicted lives into ones of great wisdom. From these teachers, we will learn how to restore the ultimate and complete wisdom and abilities of our self-nature; allowing us to attain true happiness and prosperity. This, is the Buddha's Education.

## Chapter Two: The Four Kinds of Buddhism Today

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In our world today, there are at least four different types of Buddhism. The first is the authentic Buddhism, the education of understanding the true reality of life and the universe originally taught by Buddha Shakyamuni. Unfortunately, the authentic education is rare and difficult to encounter nowadays. The remaining types of Buddhism are more or less distortions of the original teachings.

The second type is the religious Buddhism. Originally, Buddhism was not a religion, but now it has become one. We can no longer deny that there is a Buddhist religion because everywhere we look, especially in Asia, it is displayed as a religion. Unlike the monasteries in the past, which held eight-hour classes per day and provided another eight hours for self-cultivation, today's Buddhist temples no

longer uphold such a perseverance of the Buddha's Teachings. Today we mainly see people making offerings to the Buddha statues and praying for blessings and fortune. In this way, Buddhism has been wrongly changed into a religion.

The third type of Buddhism is the philosophical study of the Buddha's teachings. Many universities today offer courses on the study of Buddhist Sutras, considering the teachings as a philosophy. The content of the Buddha's education is actually a complete university of knowledge and wisdom. Philosophy is only one of its courses. Just as it is wrong to recognize a university as a single course, it is also inappropriate to think of and limit the Buddha's education to only a philosophy. The Buddha's education can help us resolve our problems - from family difficulties to the great issue of life and death. The Buddha's teachings are profound and vast, and teach us the truths of life and the

universe. It should not be mistaken as only a philosophy.

The fourth type of Buddhism we see in our world today is the deviant and externalist Buddhism. This is an extremely unfortunate distortion, which only came to be in the past thirty to forty years. Religious Buddhism persuades people to be decent and philosophical Buddhism pursues truth, neither cause much harm to society. However, if Buddhism is changed into a deviant and externalist path, using the weakness of human nature to cheat and harm living beings, disturbing the peace and safety of society, then this conversion has gone too far. The speech and actions of these deviant and external paths can be very attractive and enticing. One should be very careful as not to be misled by these deviant ways or regretting it would be too late.

These four types of Buddhism exist in our society today, we should recognize

them for what they are and think carefully as to which way is most beneficial to us and the one we will ultimately follow.

## Chapter Three: The Art of Living

### Selected Passages

#### Houston 1996

☞ Our goal in studying Buddhism is to open up our wisdom; to attain this goal, we cultivate purity of mind. In today's society, our greatest obstacles are TV, radio, newspapers and magazines - these all contain contents that can pollute our minds. I often persuade people not to read or listen to these things. When our hearts are free from these unneeded afflictions, we can live each day in peace and happiness; thus, allowing our minds to return to purity. With an undeluded mind, one will see matters of life clearer, more deeply and farther than others. This is because a settled and concentrated mind is a mind of wisdom. The key in cultivating the Buddha's teachings is having a settled and concentrated mind. In practicing the Pure Land method, purity of mind is of foremost importance.

☞ The Infinite Life Sutra teaches us to cultivate purity, equality and enlightenment. Being mindful of the Buddha is cultivating the above, for Buddha Amitabha is purity, equality, and enlightenment. When we recite the Buddha's name, we are reminded of these qualities.

☞ In China, Buddhism can be divided into ten schools. Aside from the two Small Vehicle schools, which have already declined, the eight remaining schools belong to the Great Vehicle. Two schools (Zen and Shing) enter the Buddha's teachings through the method of "Understanding/Enlightenment." They seek the great enlightenment, to understand the heart/mind and uncover the self-nature. Usually, those of lesser capabilities to become enlightened on their own have much difficulty in reaching their goals through this method. Thus, to cultivate the Zen School requires a high level of wisdom, ability and a considerably pure mind. Without these, one would have to start learning from the basis of Buddha Shakyamuni's teachings.

The study of these teachings is to help establish proper understanding and viewpoints; thus, the method of "Proper Views and Knowledge" is used here to enter the Buddha's teachings. There are four schools in this category (Tian Tai, Shian Shou, Fa Shiang and San Lwun). The practitioners of these schools study and follow the teachings of Buddha Shakyamuni to correct their erroneous views, thoughts, and actions. Most people are capable of learning this method, but it is a long journey, such as going to school. One must start from elementary school, then gradually advance grade by grade to junior high, high school, and college. In finishing one grade, one attains the benefit of that single grade. The final two schools are the Pure Land and the Esoteric. These stress the importance of cultivating purity of mind; thus, their method of practicing the Buddha's teachings is through purity. People of all capabilities, regardless of whether they are intelligent or less able can practice the Pure Land School. All can practice and succeed in cultivating

Pure Land method. On the other hand, the Esoteric School requires a high level of purity of mind, making it very difficult to reach attainment.

☞ The difference between the cultivation of purity in the Pure Land School and the Esoteric School is that the Pure Land School teaches us to cultivate purity of mind away from pollution, while the Esoteric School teaches us to cultivate purity of mind in the midst of pollution. The latter involves a state of being immersed in pollution but not being contaminated; naturally, this state is too difficult for most people to attain.

☞ True wisdom arises from purity of mind, thus, the wisdom spoken of in the Buddha's teachings is not attained from reading and studying books; the wisdom we attain from reading and studying is only worldly knowledge and not true wisdom.

☞ True wisdom is the function of our self-nature. Our self-nature is complete with infinite wisdom, virtues and abilities; qualities that are present in every-

one's self-nature and we need to know how to bring them out.

☞ “Buddha” is Purity, Equality, and Enlightenment. The Buddha’s teachings can be summarized into ten simple phrases:

*True Sincerity towards others,  
Purity of Mind within,  
Equality in everything we see,  
Proper Understanding of life and  
the universe,  
Compassion in helping others in a  
wise and unconditional way,  
See Through to the truth of  
impermanence,  
Let Go of all wandering thoughts  
and attachments,  
Freedom of mind and spirit,  
Accord With Conditions to go  
along with the situation,  
Be Mindful of Buddha Amitabha,  
wishing to reach the Pure Land and  
follow His Teachings.*

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The first five represent the Buddha’s heart and the virtues of our self-nature.

Presently we are unable to completely manifest these qualities due to our lack of cultivating the latter five. Diligent practice is needed to bring out these virtues of the Buddha-nature within us.

☞ The ultimate goal in learning Buddhism is the great Perfection. In all walks of life, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas act as role models for all people to follow. Students of the Buddha can be good examples for all others. Families that follow the Buddha's teachings can behave in a way that is worthy of being the role model for all families. If one is still a student, then one's schoolwork, conduct, and health become an example for one's classmates. This is being a student of the Buddha. In going to work or running a business, one can be a role model for all businesspersons to follow. Thus, everything in the Buddhadharmā can be number one.

☞ A family dwelling in perfect wisdom is the most content, fortunate and happy family in the world.

☞ Buddhism is the education of wisdom;

it encompasses all things and exceeds the boundaries between countries, races and religions. Since Buddhism is an education, followers of all religions are welcome and can learn and cultivate this education of true wisdom.

☞ In the Visualization Sutra, the Three Conditions are the foundation of cultivation in Buddhism. Upon perfecting the Three Conditions, one will have complete wisdom, fortune and virtue.

**The first condition consists of four practices based on the fundamental morals of humankind:**

1. The practice of filial piety
2. The practice of respecting teachers and elders
3. The practice of harboring compassion and not killing
4. The practice of the Ten Good Conducts.

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**The second condition consists of three practices based on cultivating the self:**

1. Taking Refuge in the Triple Jewels
2. Understanding the spirit of the precepts
3. Being a law-abiding citizen of the world.

The third condition consists of four practices which follow the practices of Bodhisattvas:

1. Giving rise to the Bodhi mind
2. Deeply believing in the Law of Cause and Effect
3. Studying and upholding the teachings of the large vehicle
4. Introducing the teachings to others.

Altogether, these eleven practices, each having its profound and vast meaning, needs to be put to use in everyday life, for they are the foundation of the forty-nine years of teachings given by Buddha Shakyamuni.

∞ Great Vehicle Buddhism in China can be represented by the great Bodhisattvas

of the Four Famous Mountains. First is Earth Treasury Bodhisattva of Jiou-Hua Mountain, representing filial piety and respect. Second is Guan Yin Bodhisattva of Pu-Tuo Mountain, representing compassion. Third is Manjusri Bodhisattva of Wu-Tai Mountain, representing wisdom. Fourth is Universal Worthy Bodhisattva of E-Mei Mountain, representing true practice. These four great Bodhisattvas represent the core of cultivation. As beginners, we start learning from Earth Treasury, for the earth is the root of life of all living beings. Because the great earth nurtures all beings and is the treasury of all that is precious, the Buddha uses it to represent our “mind ground” or “mind earth.” Our true mind/original nature is complete with infinite wisdom, virtuous abilities and talents; we must know how to open this treasury in order to attain its benefits. Earth Treasury Bodhisattva teaches us to be filial to our parents and respectful to our teachers, for in these practices lies the key to opening the treasury of our self-nature.

☞ The field of filial piety is vast. Our parents have shown us great kindness in bringing us up and in educating us, therefore, we should not only nurture their aging bodies, but we should also nurture their spiritual well-being and minds thus helping them to be happy; this is practicing filial piety.

☞ Regarding the practice of filial piety, we should strive to do our best in living up to our parent's expectations. When they wish us to be good persons and to benefit society, we should do so; to act otherwise would be unfilial. For children going to school, it would be unfilial to do poorly in schoolwork, causing one's parents to be worried and disappointed. It would be unfilial if one's conduct was poor, or if one's health was poor, or if one was disrespectful to one's teachers or could not get along with others. After reaching adulthood and entering society, it would be unfilial to be rebellious towards one's boss or unable to cooperate with co-workers, causing one's parents to worry. From these, we realize how vast the field of cultivating

filial piety really is, and that the entire Buddhadharma is actually just teaching the Way of Filial Piety. In Buddhism, the perfection of filial piety is only completed upon reaching the Unsurpassed Enlightenment of Buddhahood.

☞ Nowadays, humankind has been seriously polluted in heart, thoughts, views, spirit and body, thus leading to the appearance of many strange illnesses. The root cause of illness and disease is pollution; if one's body and mind are pure one will not fall ill or grow old. To not become ill or grow old is true happiness and good fortune. To attain this goal, we only need to learn and cultivate according to the Buddha's teachings.

☞ In our world today, where foods have been polluted by poisons, we should harbor compassion, for compassion is the antidote for all poisons. A truly compassionate heart can neutralize all poisons. The Buddha once said, "All dharmas arise from the mind." Thus, a pure, equal and enlightened mind/heart naturally brings health to one's body.

☞ When we recite morning and evening ceremonies in front of the Buddha and Bodhisattva images, it is just as if we were vowing to abide by their teachings right in their presence. Morning recitation acts as a reminder, preventing us from forgetting the Buddha's teachings, and reminding us to act accordingly in the course of the day. Evening recitation is a reflection of the day's practice, checking to see if we acted according to the Buddha's teachings. If we did, then we can work even harder next time, if not, then we need to reform, seeking to renew ourselves each day. Only by practicing in this way can true benefits be attained. Morning and evening recitations are the most basic practices in learning Buddhism. It is necessary to remind ourselves each day and reflect and reform.

☞ One who wishes to become a student of the Buddha should first learn from Maitreya Bodhisattva, better known in America as "The Happy Buddha." Maitreya Bodhisattva represents the most basic conditions necessary to become a

Buddhist - a smiling face and a big heart, represented by his big belly. All the Buddha images serve to remind us of the teachings and are not idols or gods of worship. "The Happy Buddha" teaches us to give rise to a non-discriminating mind and to be happy; thus being able to enter the Buddha Way.

☪ The content of the Buddha's teachings is infinitely profound and vast; one is unable to speak of it all, for the essence of it is unfathomable. Understanding it can bring great help to our living, work and interacting with all people, matters and affairs. Buddhism truly surpasses the boundaries of nationality, race and religion - it encompasses everything. The Buddha's teaching is truly a perfectly complete education.

## Chapter Four: Taking Refuge in the Triple Jewels



Taking Refuge means to return and rely. When we take refuge in the Buddha, we are returning from our deluded state of mind and relying upon an Awakened, Enlightened mind. When we take refuge in the Dharma, we are returning from deviant views and relying upon proper views and understanding. When we take refuge in the Sangha, we are returning from pollution and disharmony and relying upon Purity of Mind and the Six Principles of Living in Harmony. Taking refuge in the Triple Jewels restores the complete wisdom and abilities of our Self-Nature. We will attain Purity, Equality, Honesty, Freedom, Compassion, and overall, True Happiness.

### The Buddha Jewel

Buddha is a Sanskrit meaning Awareness and Enlightenment. When we take refuge in the Buddha, we vow to return from blind faith and delusion and

rely upon Understanding and Awareness as a way of life. Images of the Buddha serve as a reminder for us to practice awareness and understanding, and are not objects of worship. Prostrating and showing respect towards these images are only ways to counter arrogance and cultivate humility. This is taking refuge in the Buddha.

### The Dharma Jewel

Dharma means Right Understanding and Views. Delusion has obstructed us from seeing the true face of people and the reality behind matters and objects. This has caused us to look at life and the universe in a distorted and deviant way. When delusion is cleared and our minds are pure to an extent, we give rise to wisdom. With wisdom, we are able to see all people and matters completely and clearly. When our hearts are pure, we can see the past, present, and future. Only when we have clearly seen the Whole can our viewpoint and Understanding be considered Right.

The Buddha's mind is pure without the slightest pollution and therefore sees everything clearly and entirely. We can rely upon the Sutras, recorded teachings of the Buddha, because they speak entirely of the truths the Buddha has seen. They teach and show us the way to attain Purity of Mind, to see life and the universe most clearly, and become just like the Buddhas. When we encounter sutras, we should immediately bring forth a mind of respect and remind ourselves to cultivate Right Understanding and Views. This is taking refuge in the Dharma.

### **The Sangha Jewel**

Sangha means purity and harmony. Today's world is filled with pollution; pollution of mind, spirit, views, and body. Even the earth and the atmosphere are hazardly polluted. The Buddha taught, "The environment changes according to the mind." We should return from all these pollution and rely upon purity of mind. Purity of Mind is the key to saving our Earth.

There is also great disharmony in our world today, among spouses, families, friends, societies and countries which has brought us much suffering and many disasters. The Buddha taught us to rely upon the Six Principles of Living in Harmony to establish harmonious relationships between others and ourselves.

Sangha also refers to a group of four or more persons who practice the Buddha's teachings and abide by the Six Principle of Living in Harmony. This includes the left-home people we may encounter. When we see left-home people, we should immediately give rise to a mind of purity and harmony. This is taking refuge in the Sangha.

## *The Three Refuges*



*To the Buddha I return and rely,  
returning from delusions and  
relying upon Awareness and Understanding.*

*To the Dharma I return and rely,  
returning from erroneous views and  
relying upon Proper Views and Understanding.*

*To the Sangha I return and rely,  
returning from pollution and disharmony  
and relying upon Purity of Mind and the  
Six Principles of Harmony.*

## Chapter Five: How Homemakers Can Cultivate the Bodhisattva Way in Everyday Life

It must be very tiresome to do the same kind of work everyday, and especially for homemakers. It seems as if one cannot be free from household chores for a single day, and many are greatly troubled by their duties. However, if we can learn to change our way of looking at things, we will be able to perform our chores with great joy.

Much of the problem is that ordinary people are very much attached to the "self." They think, "*I am doing all this work; poor me, I am so tired; why should I do this for them?*" The more they think this way, the more afflicted they become. If we were to learn the Bodhisattva Way (the Way of Understanding and Enlightenment) and vow to universally help all living beings, then our viewpoint would be much different.

In following the Bodhisattva Path, the first thing we learn is the Practice of Giving. By serving the family at home, the homemaker Bodhisattva is already cultivating Giving. Giving includes the Giving of Wealth, the Giving of Teaching and the Giving of Fearlessness. The Giving of Wealth can be divided into outer wealth and inner wealth. For example, outer wealth refers to making money for our family and providing the means for living. Inner wealth refers to using our physical energy and wisdom to support our family. So, the practice of giving can be completed perfectly at home.

When we do our housework with care and organize our home to be clean and neat, this is bringing comfort to the family and admiration from our neighbors; this is cultivating the Practice of Precept Observation. Abiding by precepts simply means abiding by rules - rules of the country, society and family, and doing everything in an organized and proper way. Endurance in doing our chores without complaint or fatigue is cultivating

the Practice of Patience. In seeking improvement everyday, hoping that tomorrow's attainment will exceed that of today's, is cultivating the Practice of Diligence. In performing one's various duties daily but still maintaining a pure and undeluded heart, is cultivating the Practice of Concentration in Purity of Mind, being apart from discriminating thoughts and attachments. From within purity of mind, one will give rise to wisdom, and will be filled with inner peace and happiness, this is cultivating the Practice of Wisdom. Thus, with true understanding, we will discover that these Six Principles Cultivated by Bodhisattvas (Giving, Precepts Observation, Patience, Diligence, Concentration in Purity of Mind, and Wisdom) can be practiced to perfection in the everyday acts of dusting, sweeping, washing and cooking.

Once we have performed our duties well, we become role models for homemakers all over the world and an example for all families to follow. Thus, not only can we help our neighbors, but extended,

we can influence society, the country, and even the world in a positive way. From this we come to see that in dusting, sweeping, washing, and cooking, a homemaker Bodhisattva is actually carrying out the great vow of helping all living beings. This is truly being a student of the Buddha. So, if we can contemplate our duties as described above, we will be filled with peace and happiness in our work. How then could anything trouble us?

The most important factor in learning and cultivating the Buddha's teachings is that one be able to practice them in everyday life. If not, then studying the Buddha's teachings will be meaningless. Understanding this, we would be able to practice the Six Principles Cultivated by Bodhisattvas at our work and office. A Bodhisattva, in all walks of life, whether appearing as a man, woman, elder, or child, cultivates by living up to his/her own responsibilities. Cultivation and living are one - this is the life of enlightened beings.

## Chapter Six: Selected Passages from Living Buddhism

- ❁ Buddhism is an education, not a religion. We do not worship the Buddha, we respect him as a teacher. His teachings enable us to leave suffering and attain true happiness.
- ❁ It is best to treat all people with respect and sincerity, being responsible for our actions and careful when handling other's property. Be conservative with speech and actions to avoid harming others.
- ❁ It is best to show our gratitude to those who have shown us kindness, such as parents, teachers and even society. Everyone in the society is interdependent and inter-related; we can practice good deeds to repay them.
- ❁ How many people recognize the kindness shown by parents? Usually, people do not realize until they themselves become parents or lose their

parents. We can show our gratitude through practicing filial piety by being responsible, considerate and compliant to our parents.

- ❖ To be a poor, content, and happy person is better than being one who is rich, worried, and afflicted with greed.
- ❖ Buddhism is a teaching, which shows us how to live a happy, fulfilling, and content life.
- ❖ True Love is indiscriminating, unattached, and unconditional; we can share this love with all beings. This is called compassion.
- ❖ If we wish to bring peace to the world, we need to start by changing our erroneous ways. World peace stems from inner peace.
- ❖ Our goal in studying the Buddha's teachings and cultivation is to attain complete understanding of life and the universe.

- ❁ Be considerate and kind in your speech. To put down another person is only proving your own arrogance and lack of self-confidence to others.
- ❁ Life is short and fragile, why not cultivate kindness instead of committing acts which cause harm to living beings and oneself?
- ❁ Cultivating virtue is to keep a kind heart, speak kind words and do kind acts to benefit others.
- ❁ Wise persons do not harbor feelings of gain or loss. In this way, they constantly dwell in the joy of possessing great peace of mind.
- ❁ The point of practicing giving and charity is to forsake greed, hatred, ignorance, and arrogance.
- ❁ When helping others, we should think about benefiting the entire society or even the world instead of limiting our help to just the ones we love. Ex-

panding the boundaries of our care for others makes our lives more meaningful, full of freedom and happiness.

- ❁ The Buddha's teachings are a teaching of wisdom. Living Buddhism is to fill our lives with utmost wisdom and happiness.
- ❁ In all circumstances, we must first reflect upon ourselves. Confucius once said, "Do not give to others what you yourself do not desire". This is teaching us to keep a humane and sincere heart. If we want others to smile at us, we must first smile at others. In dealing with matters, we must not seek personal gain but should work for the public welfare.
- ❁ A true cultivator does not see the faults of others. When we think of others' faults, it becomes our own affliction. Everyone has their good and bad sides, but we must learn to look at the good points of others and strive to respect all beings.

I vow that when my life approaches its end,  
All obstructions will be swept away;  
I will see Amitabha Buddha,  
And be born in his Land of  
Ultimate Bliss and Peace.



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When reborn in the Western Land,  
I will perfect and completely fulfill  
Without exception these Great Vows,  
To delight and benefit all beings.

The Vows of Samantabhadra  
Avatamsaka Sutra

## **The Ten Recitation Method**

The Ten Recitation method is a simple, convenient, and effective way of practicing Buddha Recitation. It is especially suitable for those who find little time in the day for cultivation. Practicing the Ten Recitation method helps us to regain mindfulness of Amitabha Buddha and brings us peace and clarity to the present moment.

The practice begins first thing in the morning when we wake up. We should sit up straight and clearly recite Amitabha's name ten times with an undisturbed mind, whether out loud or silently to ourselves. We repeat the process eight more times for the rest of the day:

- 2) At Breakfast
- 3) Before Work
- 4) At Lunch Break
- 5) At Lunch

- 6) After Lunch Break
- 7) Getting Off Work
- 8) At Dinner
- 9) At Bedtime

Altogether, the method is practiced nine times a day, everyday. The key point in this cultivation is regularity; we must not practice one day and not the other. If this practice can be maintained undisturbed, the cultivator would soon feel his purity of mind increase, and wisdom grow.

Diligent practice of the Ten Recitation method together with deep faith and determined vows can ensure fulfillment of our wish to reach the Western Pure Land of Infinite Life and Infinite Light. We hope everyone will practice accordingly.

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**Amitabha!**

◇ The Pure Land Learning Center ◇

## **Dedication of Merit**



**May the merit and virtues  
accrued from this work  
Adorn the Buddha's Pure Land,  
Repaying the four kinds  
of kindness above,  
and relieving the sufferings of  
those in the Three Paths below.**

**May those who see and hear of this,  
All bring forth the heart of  
Understanding,  
And live the Teachings for  
the rest of this life,  
Then be born together in  
The Land of Ultimate Bliss!**

**Homage to Amitabha Buddha!**

*“Wherever the Buddha’s teachings have flourished, either in cities or countrysides, people would gain inconceivable benefits. The land and people would be enveloped in peace. The sun and moon will shine clear and bright. Wind and rain would appear accordingly, and there will be no disasters. Nations would be prosperous and there would be no use for soldiers or weapons. People would abide by morality and accord with laws. They would be courteous and humble, and everyone would be content without injustices. There would be no thefts or violence. The strong would not dominate the weak and everyone would get their fair share.”*

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## **Dedication of Merits**

May the merit and virtues  
Accrued from this act  
Adorn the Buddha's Pure Land,  
Repay the Four Kindnesses above,  
And relieve the suffering of  
Those in the Three Paths below.

May those who see or hear of this,  
Bring forth the heart of  
Understanding and compassion  
And, at the end of this life,  
Be born together in  
The land of Ultimate Bliss.



普為出資及讀誦受持  
輾轉流通者迴向偈曰

願以此功德莊嚴佛淨土  
上報四重恩下濟三途苦  
若有見聞者悉發菩提心  
盡此一報身同生極樂國

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## What is Buddhism

- ▶ A Path to True Happiness
- ▶ Buddhism as an Education
- ▶ The Art of Living

印贈者：**佛陀淨宗學會**

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# A Path to True Happiness

看破  
放下  
自在  
隨緣  
念佛

**True Sincerity**  
Towards others

**Purity of Mind**  
Within

**Equality**  
In everything we see

**Proper Understanding**  
Of ourselves and our environment

**Compassion**  
By helping others in a wise and unconditional way

**See Through**  
To the truth of impermanence

**Let Go**  
Of all wandering thoughts and attachments

**Attain Freedom**  
Of mind and spirit

**Accord with Conditions**  
To go along with the environment

**Be Mindful of Buddha Amitufo**  
Following his teachings wishing to reach the Pure Land

With compliments of:

**佛陀淨宗學會**

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