

## **Humanistic Buddhism: Holding True to the Original Intents of Buddha**

### **Chapter Five Summary**

India may be the birthplace of Buddhism, but Indian Buddhism has sadly waned. In contrast, the ascent of Humanistic Buddhism in China through active social participation has enabled Buddhism to spread globally. Its propagation worldwide has gained popularity and recognition.

In the past century, Master Taixu and Venerable Tzu Hang both advocated “Life Buddhism” and “Humanistic Buddhism,” to affirm link between Buddhism and everyday life. It is the same spirit Chan masters advocated when promoting “a day without work means a day without food.” Or Master Huineng’s saying, “Dharma can only be found in the world, and enlightenment cannot be attained away from it.” These ideas have slowly gained prevalence.

The contemporary development of Humanistic Buddhism has five aspects: cultural publications, education, propagation societies, charitable activities, and internationalization. The influence of Buddhism lies in its doctrines; its true role is to offer spiritual guidance, ethics, fostering social harmony and stability, and striving for world peace.

Particularly, the evolution of Buddhism resides within culture and education. That is why Humanistic Buddhism caters to the needs of differing eras. Translation work and sutra printing, as well as publications in all mediums are used as contemporary instruments to continuously spread the Dharma. By offering education for monastics, devotees, and the public, Buddhists are better able to uphold the spirit of the Buddha and promote Humanistic Buddhism globally. Only through continuous progress, can there be new life for Buddhism. Only by holding to the Buddha’s original intents can the Dharma be truly realized.

## Chapter Five: Contemporary Development of Humanistic Buddhism

Buddhism was founded in India and flourished in China. With the active propagation of Humanistic Buddhism in recent decades, Buddhism has spread from Taiwan to all five continents of the world in a similar manner to how Buddha journeyed across India to spread his teachings. Humanistic Buddhism has now taken root in different parts of the world.

In ancient times, numerous monastics from India and Western regions transmitted Buddhism to China by transporting abundant Buddhist texts via the Silk Road both on land and by sea. The early editions of translated Buddhist texts from the Western regions also inspired monastics from China to travel westward to India in search of the Dharma. Of these one thousand monastics include: Zhu Shixing (朱士行, 203-282), Faxian (法顯, 338-423), Xuanzang (玄奘, 602-664), Yijing (義淨, 635-713), and Dharmodgata. Consequently, the texts brought back by these monastics conveyed to China with them Buddha's thoughts of Humanistic Buddhism.

With regards to the process of Chinese Buddhism's development, I had previously published an article in 2001: "The Stages of Development of Chinese Buddhism" in the *Universal Gate Buddhist Journal*, dividing it into six stages:

1. **Qing, Han, Wei, and Jin eras:** The eastward spread of Buddhism through translation of texts
2. **Sui, Chen, Li and Tang eras:** Founding of the Eight Schools
3. **The Five Periods, Zhao and Song eras:** Competing positions of the Chan and Pure Land Schools
4. **Yuan and Ming eras:** Royal patronage of the Esoteric tradition
5. **Manchurian, Qing, and Republic of China eras:** Repentance services and worships period
6. **20th Century till present:** Humanistic Buddhism period

The particulars will not be further expounded here.

To understand Humanistic Buddhism's contemporary development, this chapter details its propagation in the following five categories:

1. Cultural publications
2. Educational endeavors to nurture talents
3. Dharma propagation activities and organizations
4. Charitable undertakings to aid society

## 5. International propagation for the globalization of Dharma

### 1) Cultural Publications

During the Buddha's time, the Dharma was transmitted orally. Later, it was disseminated through the means of texts, art, sculpture, and painting. In particular, texts played the most prevailing and influential role in the propagation of Dharma. Having elaborated briefly on the spread of Chinese Buddhism above, this section will focus on the revival of the Buddhist culture through the efforts of Yang Renshan (楊仁山, 1837-1911) from the late Qing and early Republic of China eras.

Recognized as the Father of Modern Buddhist Renaissance, Yang Wenhui (楊文會, 1837-1911), courtesy name Renshan, dedicated his abode to the establishment of the Jinling Sutra Publishing House in order to produce and disseminate Buddhist sutras. Subsequently, the Tianjin Sutra Publishing House, Beijing Sutra Publishing House, and Yangzhou Tianning Temple Kunlin Sutra Publishing House were founded. Furthermore, publishing houses were also set up in locations such as the Fuzhou Gushan Yungquan Temple and Hanzhou Manao Temple.

Of import concerning the Jinling Sutra Publishing House is that, according to Zhao Puchu (趙樸初, 1907-2000), during the Cultural Revolution, Premier Zhou Enlai (周恩來, 1898-1976) actually ordered for the safeguard of Jinling to be a top priority. To date, Jinling is still continuing the works of printing and publication of sutras. These publishing houses have played a vital role as to the preservation, proofing, printing, and dissemination of Buddhist texts.

In regards to contemporary Buddhist publications, from as early as the Guangxu period, Master Zongyang (宗仰, 1865-1921) was already publishing *the Pinjia Canon* in the Shanghai Hardoon Garden. Sadly, this publication became lost during the war. This endeavor was sustained by the free distribution of books. For example, Master Yinguang's (印光, 1862-1940) *Selection of Works*, Master Hongyi (弘一, 1880-1942) and Feng Zikai's (豐子愷, 1898-1975) work on *Illustrations on Life Protection*, Venerable Yuan Ying's (圓瑛, 1878-1953) *Complete Collection of Venerable Yuan Ying*, and *The Xuyun Almanac* edited by Cen Xuelu (岑學呂, 1878-1959) from Guangdong. All of these works are of prodigious contributions to the spread and development of Humanistic Buddhism.

As Western philosophy began ascending in the East, the exchange of thoughts kindled the publication of various Buddhist publications. The earliest in Mainland China was the *Buddhist Studies Journal* published by Di Baoxian (狄葆賢, 1873-1939) and Pu Yicheng (濮

一乘) in 1912, followed by Master Taixu's (太虛, 1890-1947) *The Buddhist Monthly*, *Ocean Waves Magazine*, and *Awaken the Masses Weekly*; *Inner Learning* by the China Inner Studies Institute founded by Ouyang Jingwu (歐陽竟無, 1871-1943); Venerable Rensan's *Dharma Waves*, and *The World Buddhist Lay Association Magazine*; and Kang Jiyao's (康寄遙, 1880-1968) *Buddhistic Occasional*, *Great Hero Monthly*, *Prayer Magazine*, and *Taixu's Dharma Propagation Journal*, respectively exerting great influence in China. Other publications such as *the Buddhist Daily* in Shanghai, *Awakening the World News* in Beijing, and *Buddhist Paper* in Hankou were subsequently published.

Moreover, publications in the Southeast Asian region include: *Lamp in the Ocean of People Monthly* by Venerables Chi Chern (寄塵, 1886-1938) and Tong Yi (通一) from Guanzhou Kaiyuan Temple, *Humanistic Buddhism Magazine* by Venerable Tzu Hang (慈航, 1893-1954) in Southeast Asia, *Endless Light* by Venerable Zhu Mo (竺摩, 1913-2002) in Macau, *Hong Kong Buddhism* by Venerable Kok Kwong (覺光, 1919-2014), and *Inner Illumination* by Miao Fa Temple. These numerous Buddhist publications have exerted tremendous influence on the spread and propagation of Humanistic Buddhism.

At that time, the inclination to Buddhist studies thrived, with the most famous being Ouyang Jingwu from the China Inner Studies Institute, and Han Qingjing (韓清淨, 1884-1949) from the Three Times Association in Beijing. A variety of Buddhist dictionaries and books were published, such as:

- Ding Fubao (丁福保, 1874-1952) *Dictionary of Buddhist Studies*, the first dictionary of Chinese Buddhism
- Liang Qichao (梁啟超, 1873-1929), *Eighteen Papers on Buddhist Studies*, a pioneering work in Buddhist Studies Methodology
- Jiang Weiqiao (蔣維喬, 1873-1958), *History of Chinese Buddhism*, a selected text by the Wuchang Buddhist College
- Wang Jitong (王季同, 1875-1948), *Comparative Studies of Buddhism and Science*
- Lu Cheng (呂澂, 1896-1989), *Methodology of Buddhist Studies*
- Tang Yongtong (湯用彤, 1893-1964), *History of Han, Wei, Eastern and Western Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasty Buddhism*
- You Zhibiao (尤智表, 1886-1948), *The Science of Buddhism*, and *Reports of Buddhist Studies by a Scientist*

These are all works of monastics and lay Buddhist intellectuals who have empowered the philosophy of Humanistic Buddhism to blossom.

Later, when the Cultural Revolution ensued, elements of Buddhism and Chinese culture were utterly ruined. I clearly remember Yan Foon Gu (嚴寬祐, 1924-2014) telling me that his

Buddhist Publishing and Distribution Center was established, in Hong Kong, for the sole purpose of preserving the texts salvaged from the flames of the Cultural Revolution. These texts were later transported to Hong Kong and reissued for publication. Renamed the Hong Kong Buddhist Sutra Publishing Center, Mr. Yan willingly acquiesced any request to secure overseas Buddhist texts and instruments. Through his willingness to salvage Buddhist texts at any cost, Mr. Yan is as admirable a protector of the Dharma as Yang Renshan.

Amidst the Civil War, numerous Buddhist masters and intellectuals turned to Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaysia to maintain their propagation efforts of Humanistic Buddhism, thus safeguarding Buddhist culture. To name but a few, in 1948, Venerable Tzu Hang came to Taiwan from Southeast Asia. The following year, Venerables Ta Hsing (大醒, 1900-1952), Nan Ting (南亭, 1900-1982), Dong Chu (東初, 1907-1977), and Pai Sheng (白聖, 1904-1989) also arrived in Taiwan, followed by monastics from Hong Kong such as Venerables Tai Tsang (太滄, 1895-1968), Cheng Lien (證蓮, 1893-1967), Yin Shun (印順, 1906-2005), Yen Pei (演培, 1917-1996), Tao An (道安, 1907-1977), Jen Jun (仁俊, 1919-2011), Hsu Ming (續明, 1918-1966), and Ta Pen (大本).

## 1. Wide Circulation of Buddhist Publications at Rock-Bottom Prices

Concerning Buddhist publications in Taiwan, the initial recurrent publications were *Buddhism Taiwan*, and also *Ocean Waves Magazine* founded by Venerable Ta Hsing and inherited by Li Zi-kuan (李子寬, 1882-1973). Established by Master Taixu, *Ocean Waves Magazine* was later reinstated by Venerable Ta Tung (大同, 1289-1370) under the new title *Awaken the Masses Weekly*, and later managed by Lin Ching-tung (林錦東, 1924-1976)(Venerable Chung Hsin(宗心)). As for *Human Life Magazine*, founded by Venerable Tung Chu, I also assisted as Editor-in-Chief for six years.

Others include:

- *Awakening Living Beings Magazine*, later retitled *Bodhedrum Magazine*, was founded by Li Bing-nan (李炳南, 1891-1986) and Chu Fei (朱斐)
- *Chinese Buddhism*, founded by Venerable Pai Sheng
- *Buddhist Youth*, founded by Venerable Lien Hang (蓮航)
- *Awakening the World Periodical*, founded by Chang Shao-chi (張少齊), his son Chang Juo-hsu (張若虛), and myself as Editor-in-Chief. The magazine, later entrusted to me, continued for forty years, never an issue having been postponed once. The periodical was later converted to the *Merit Times*, a daily newspaper.
- *Buddhism Today*, founded Venerable Kuang Tzu (廣慈)
- *Wisdom Torch*, founded by Chou Hsuan-te (周宣德, 1899-1989) and Cheng Chen-

huang (鄭振煌)

- *Lion's Roar* by Venerable Tao An

Journalists Chu Jing-zhou (朱鏡宙, 1889-1985) and Chou Chun-hsi (周春熙) established the Taiwan Buddhist Text Circulation Center, not for profit but for the promotion of Buddhist culture. Popularly priced, they widely circulated Buddhist texts and books. Other devoted Buddhists such as Hsu Yen-tun (許炎墩), Tung Cheng-chi (董正之, 1910-1989), Zhou Bang-dao (周邦道, 1898-1991), Lee Heng-yue (李恆鉞, 1910-1998), Chen Hui-jian (陳慧劍, 1925-2001), Liu Guoxiang (劉國香), Chu Chiang-yuan (朱蔣元) and son Chu Chi-chang (朱其昌), Lee Shih-chieh (李世傑), Yue Chong-hui (樂崇輝), Li Tian-chun (李添春), and Tseng Pu-hsin (曾普信, 1902-1977) had all contributed to Buddhist publications. Some edited magazines, others wrote books, and several established publishing houses to speak the voices of Buddhism, enabling both stability and continuity. As Buddhist publications and magazines have become diversified, I shan't elaborate on them further.

## 2. Touring Taiwan to Promote the Tripitaka

By then, bookshops such as Zi You Book Shop in Keelung owned by Huang Kui (黃奎), Jui Cheng Bookshop in Taichung by Hsu Yen-tun (許炎墩), Nan Yi Book Shop in Tainan by Hsu Shao-tian (蘇紹典), and Ching Fang Book Shop in Kaohsiung by Lee Ching-yun (李慶雲) were all centers for the circulation of Buddhist writing. Layman Chang Shao-chi, a pious Buddhist, also established Chian Kang Book Shop to publish Buddhist books and duplicate the Tripitaka for circulation. Venerable Sheng Yin (聖印, 1930-1996), who was a student of mine at the Taiwan Buddhist Seminar in Hsinchu, also established a Buddhist Artifacts Center in Taichung. Venerable Tung Chu similarly established the Chinese Buddhist Artifact Center in Peitou. All such locales greatly contributed to the enrichment of Buddhist artifacts.

The Sin Wen Feng Company, founded by Madam Sun Chang Ching-yang (孫張清揚, 1913-1992), Chang Shao-chi, his son, as well as myself was handed over in its entirety to Liu Hsiu-chiao (劉修橋) (Kao Pen-chao 高本釗). For decades, Sin Wen Feng has continued to publish the Buddhist canons and books, thereby assisting in the spread of Humanistic Buddhism.

In Taipei, executive government officials such as Chu Yung-kuang (屈映光, 1881-1973), Zhao Heng-ti (趙恆惕, 1880-1971), Ting Jiun-Sheng (丁俊生, 1924-2010), Tsai Nien-sheng (蔡念生, 1901-1992), and Chung Pai-yi (鍾伯毅, 1880-1962), who were also Buddhists, co-initiated the Chunghwa Tripitaka Revision Association to produce the *Qisha Canon*. Alas, due to the lack of human and monetary resources, the project came to a halt after merely a few

copies were published.

Revision and editing of the Buddhist canon is no simple matter. I have had the opportunity to attend some of their meetings in Taipei. Once, I visited Tsai Nien-sheng, Assembly Representative of the R.O.C., at his home in Taichung. Seated behind stacks of objects that occupied the small Japanese style house, he carried out the task of proofreading, bared and perspiring on a summer day. The aspirations and vows of these great elders are truly admirable.

Speaking of the Tripitaka, under the patronage of Madam Sun Chang Ching-yang, Venerable Tung Chu initiated a duplication project of the Taisho Tripitaka brought to Taiwan from Japan by the Minister of Foreign Affairs—Yeh Kong-chao (葉公超, 1904-1981). Later, he established a Tripitaka Reprinting Committee Tour directed by Venerable Nan Ting and led by Venerables Zhu Yun (煮雲, 1919-1986), Kuang Tzu and myself. The tour was joined by youths from Yilan such as Tzu Hui (慈惠), Tzu Jung (慈容), Tzu Lien (慈蓮), Tzu Fan (慈範), and Lin Sung-nien (林松年). Throughout this eighty-day tour, we managed to promote some hundred sets of the Tripitaka, and the minutiae of that tour were chronicled in “The Tripitaka Reprinting Committee Tour Diaries” penned by Venerable Tzu Hui.

### **3. Reader-Friendly Books on Buddhism to Assist in Greater Dissemination**

Having never received a formal education in school, nor ever been taught in how to write, I nevertheless was chiefly influenced by Hu Shi (胡適之, 1891-1962) who said, “Writing is like talking, you write in just exactly the same way as you talk.” Hence, I abided by his instructions and promoted a vernacular Buddhist language movement by continually writing in a straightforward and easy-to-understand manner.

In the 1950's, I established the Buddhist Cultural Service Centers in Sanchongpu near Taipei and on Zhongshan 1st Rd. in Kaohsiung, offering novel ways to promote Humanistic Buddhism. Not only did we publish the first *Bilingual Buddhist Series: Sutras & Scriptures*, as well as *Doctrines of Buddhism*, we also introduced Buddhist literature such as *The Life of Su Dongpo*, *Buddhist Stories for Children*, *A Complete Collection of Stories on Buddhism*, *Buddhist Novels*, and so on. Particularly, the publication of the *Sutra of the Month* series reformatted and re edited were essentially given away at below cost, a single dollar apiece, for the singular aim to establish Dharma affinities with readers.

These popular, vernacular, and accessible books on Buddhism were a resounding success. Consequently, Buddhist publications became widely circulated and as prevalent as Amitabha Buddha and Guanyin Bodhisattva found in homes and families.

During my early days in Taiwan, Venerable Hui Jui (慧瑞) from Hsinchu was promoting the publication of books on Buddhism, and thus my translation of *A Commentary on Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva's Universal Gate Chapter* was widely promoted. Moreover, my book *The Biography of Sakyamuni Buddha* was the first hardback Buddhist publication available, and has been distributed in over one hundred editions across Taiwan, Mainland China, Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam.

The youths who had followed me from those days such as Venerable Hsin Ping (心平, 1938-1995), Tzu Chuang (慈莊), Tzu Hui, and Tzu Jung all aided at these centers aimed at people from around the world. For example, Sung Fu-ting (宋復庭) from Brazil, Liao Cheng-hsiang (廖振祥) from Bangkok, Shen Chia-chen (沈家楨) from America, and Yan Foon Gu from Hong Kong have all been friends with us since.

Upon founding Fo Guang Shan, I listed “To propagate Dharma through culture” as one of the Four Objectives of Humanistic Buddhism. Ensuing the publications of *Awakening the World Periodical*, and *Universal Gate Magazine*, I founded the *Merit Times* Newspaper in 2000, which later became listed among Taiwan's Four Major Newspapers, bringing Buddhist beliefs of truthfulness, virtue, and beauty into society and families on a daily basis.

As cultural publications in Taiwan continued to thrive, Buddhist magazines also became available in Mainland China one decade after the Cultural Revolution. For instance, *Dharma Voice Magazine* founded by my good friend—Zhao Puchu, President of the Buddhist Association of China, is also a publication aimed at promoting Buddha's Humanistic Buddhism.

At present, the development of Buddhist culture in Mainland China is similarly seeing brighter days. On an annual basis, there are on average two hundred academic conferences held by institutes and temple organizations, each publishing a variety of journals, magazines and books.

Furthermore, *365 Days for Travelers: Wisdom from Chinese Literary and Buddhist Classics*, a conception fifty years in the making, was published by the Beijing People's Publishing House. My sixteen-volume narrative *Buddhist Affinities Across 100 Years*, published by the Shanghai Sanlian Publishing House, was widely read, according to what President Xi Jinping (習近平) said in our meeting, “I read all your books.” In addition, Citi Press Group also published my latest narration in 2015—*Hear Me Out: Messages from a Humble Monk*.

#### **4. Catering to the Needs of the Time with Suitable Means of Propagation**

All of the aforementioned publishing houses are eminent institutions under the Communist Party. In spite of Buddhism's devastation throughout the Cultural Revolution, the Party's contemporary leadership and committees are now professing greater thoughtfulness to Buddhism. Considerable appreciation goes to their vision and support for the Chinese Buddhist culture. This greatly enhances our hope for the future of Buddhism and Chinese culture, as well as affirms our mutuality for the Cross-Strait propagation of Humanistic Buddhism. Of note, Venerable Xuecheng (學誠), current President of the Buddhist Association of China, is now utilizing Internet technology and promulgating Buddhist culture in a dozen languages. The future of Humanistic Buddhism is undoubtedly infinite.

In the efforts of cultural publications, Humanistic Buddhism caters to the need of different eras by developing from the earliest translations of Buddhist texts by etchings on wood or stone to publications of magazines, journals, newspapers and digital mediums. The key lies in spreading information in the most suitable form in the given extant era. The features of books not only consist of fine printing quality and clothbound hardcovers, but their foci are of literary quality written in vernacular and easy-to-understand languages that are easy to read, as well as pertinent to life. By instructing us and enriching our minds, we are inspired to cultivate ourselves and reach out to help others. These are all expedient means through which Humanistic Buddhism holds true to the original intents of Buddha so as to cater to the aptitudes and needs of all living beings.

## **2) Educational Undertakings to Foster Talents**

During the late Qing and early Republic of China periods, Hu Shi, Chen Duxiu (陳獨秀, 1879-1942), Lu Xun (魯迅, 1881-1936), Cai Yuanpei (蔡元培, 1868-1940) were among those who initiated the May Fourth Movement in protest against the Confucian religion and values, exalting science and aesthetics instead. Resultantly, Chinese culture, Confucianism, and Buddhism all suffered collateral damage. At that point, only intellectuals such as Zhang Taiyan (章太炎, 1869-1936), Liang Qichao, Xiong Shili (熊十力, 1885-1968), Lu Cheng (呂澂, 1896-1989), and Jiang Weiqiao were left, defenseless without the protection of both the political and military authorities, and resultant in a definite lack of defenders of Buddhism. In such time of chaos, resistance was naturally on the weaker side.

At such a critical juncture, Master Yin Guang spoke up and proposed the remedy of the Three Abuses: 1) Abuse of access to full ordination, 2) abuse of the right to accept disciples, and 3) abuse of open monastery accommodation services, in order to revive monastic ethics. Concurrently, Master Taixu also proposed the Three Major Buddhist Reforms: 1) reform of Buddhist asset management, 2) reform of Buddhist systems, and 3) reform of Buddhist

teachings. He published the article: “On Cleaning Up the Sangha System” and advocated Life Buddhism (*Rensheng*) as a way of Buddhist reform. Under his influence, Buddhists suddenly realized the need to revitalize Buddhism by propagating Humanistic Buddhism as a way to remain true to the Buddha's original intents. Consequently, education and talent cultivation in Buddhism began to thrive.

The earliest Buddhist College to appear in the Twentieth Century was the Monastic College founded, in 1906, by Venerable Wen Xi (文希) in Yangzhou Tianning Temple. Later, when Yang Wenhui picked up a copy of the *Shurangama Sutra* at a bookstall, he declared, “An encounter with the *Shurangama Sutra* has purged my willingness to touch the world's vulgar works.” Having developed such faith in Buddhism, Yang hence relinquished his home residence for the establishment of the Jinling Sutra Publishing House, Jetavana Vihara, and Buddhist Studies Association. Simultaneously he promoted various cultural and education endeavors, which consequently fostered paragons such as Master Taixu, Ouyang Jingwu, Venerable Ren Shan, and Mei Guangxi (梅光羲, 1880-1947).

Successively, establishments such as the Huayan University founded by Venerable Yue Xia (月霞, 1858-1917) in Shanghai Hardoon Garden, Guan Zong School founded by Venerable Di Xian (諦閑, 1858-1932) from the Tiantai School, China Inner Studies Institute, Wuchang Buddhist College, Minnan Buddhist College, Bolin Doctrinal Institute, Chongqing Han and Tibetan Doctrinal Institute, Lingdong Buddhist College, Jinling Buddhist College, Jiaoshan Buddhist College, Qixiashan Vinaya College, Pulu Buddhist College, Yufo Temple Shanghai Buddhist College, Fazang Buddhist College, Shanghai Jingan Temple Buddhist College and Huanan Buddhist College were established across the nation. Rapidly, the Yogacara, Tiantai, Huayan and Pure Land Schools as well as monasteries and meditation halls blossomed.

Particularly, Buddhist colleges in Wuchang, Minnan, and the China Inner Studies Institute had the most outstanding achievements. Elites who graduated from there include: Venerables Hui Jue (會覺), Fa Fang (法舫, 1904-1951), Fa Zun (法尊, 1902-1980), Zhi Feng (芝峰, 1901-1971), Ta Hsing, Tzu Hang, Wei Fang (葦舫), Mo Ru (默如, 1905-1991), Yin Shun, and Ju Zan (巨贊, 1908-1984), all eloquent speakers and prolific writers. Likewise, the lineup of teachers at these Buddhist colleges were also exceptional: Liang Qichao, Liang Shuming (梁漱溟, 1893-1988), Tang Dayuan (唐大圓, 1885-1941), Zhang Husheng (張化聲, 1933-2013), Tang Yongtong (湯用彤, 1893-1964), Xiong Shili (熊十力, 1885-1968), Jiang Weiqiao, and Huang Canhua (黃懺華, 1890-1977). Each and every one of them exerted remarkable influence on the revival of Buddhism.

So as to promote the globalization of Buddhism, Master Taixu founded the World

Buddhist Studies Center in Wuchang, offering Buddhist studies courses in Sanskrit, Chinese, Pali, and Tibetan. He also dispatched monastics to study abroad in Japan, Tibet, India, and Sri Lanka. Among them were Venerables Fa Fang, Fa Zun, Zhi Feng, Ta Hsing, and Ta Yong (大勇, 1893-1929). By promoting Buddhist education to revive Humanistic Buddhism, we have thus met Buddha's original intents.

## 1. Post-Republic of China Rise of Buddhist-Affiliated Education Undertakings

In those times, Buddhism was subjected to secessionist warlord regimes, typified by pious Christian Feng Yuxiang's (馮玉祥, 1882-1948) persecution of Buddhism across China. Fortunately, Master Taixu was good friends with Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石, 1887-1975), and was once invited to speak on the *Heart Sutra* to the KMT government.

As Buddhism experienced the annexation of temple properties for conversion into schools, Chiang Kai-shek issued the following orders:

1. *Righteously practicing monastics Buddhists are to be protected.*
2. *Educated intellectual monastics are to be spared.*
3. *Temple grounds are to remain solemn and pure, illegitimate monastics or Buddhists are to be prohibited from such posts as that of abbots or managers of the temple. In addition, any Buddhist undertaking that is of benefit to social welfare is to be safeguarded.*

As stated by Master Daoan, "The endeavors of Dharma cannot prevail without sovereign benefaction." Some of the KMT's senior statesmen such as Dai Jitao (戴季陶, 1891-1949), Zhang Ji (張繼), Zhou Lu (鄒魯, 1885-1994), Ju Zheng (居正, 1876-1951), Yu Youren (于右任, 1879-1964), and Qu Yingguang( 屈映光, 1883-1973) happened to be Buddhists and proffered at least some protection to Buddhism in times of turmoil.

Mournfully, even heroes such as Chiang Kai-shek fall for beauty. After marrying Soong May-ling (宋美齡, 1897-2003), he converted to Christianity, and Buddhism's connection with him thus no more. At such a chaotic time, Buddhism was fortunately able to survive under the Christian philosophy of freedom of belief, which is surely a common ground for all religious followers in the world.

The year the Japanese declared unconditional surrender, I was studying at the Jiaoshan Buddhist College. Buddhists in the Jiangsu and Jinghu region were ecstatic at hearing the news. Gradually, lay Buddhists with a passion for Buddhism, and Triple Gem refuge takers grew in numbers, bringing forth the prosperity of Humanistic Buddhism.

Venerable Abbot Xue Fang (雪煩, 1909-1994) from Dinghui Temple was taken with

the restoration of the Jiaoshan Buddhist College. Teachers were busy teaching and publishing the *Middle Stream Monthly*. Monthly, we students were asked to assist in packaging and posting the magazine. Once done, our teachers would give each of us a copy of the magazine, which was extremely rewarding for the day's work.

During that time, Buddhist-affiliated primary and junior high schools prospered. In order to commemorate Master Zong Yang, my master—Venerable Master Zhi Kai (志開, 1911-1979) founded the Zong Yang Junior High School at Qixishan Monastery, and also the Da Xiong Junior High School at Nanjing Wofo Temple. Likewise, Venerable Jue Ming (覺民) founded the Pu De Junior High School at Pude Temple in Yuhuatai. There were also Chaofeng Temple Primary School and Fu Shan Tang Primary School in Zhenjiang. Jiaoshan alone founded three gratis primary schools.

I was very fortunate to be brought back to my ancestral temple—Yixing Dajue Temple by my master upon leaving Jiaoshan, and then given the position of principal at the Paita Primary School. Although bereft of any formal training as a teacher, the experiences gained there were invaluable. In those days, hundreds of primary and secondary schools were under the charitable care of Buddhist organizations; I was yet hopeful that we could go on to establish universities, but that dream was cut short by ongoing wars.

As I traveled to different places, often I would come across primary school students who bowed to me and addressed me as “Venerable.” When asked why they did so, their reply was, “Our teachers opened up schools for us to learn. They never ask for any money. Our teacher is a good person; he is a Buddhist monk. So we know that all Buddhist monks in this world are good people, just like our teacher.” From this, the prosperity of Buddhist education during the period of the Republic of China can clearly be seen.

It was a pity to see that the peace long yearned for by the people was fleeting. In next to no time the Civil War and Cultural Revolution broke out. Added with the passing away of Master Taixu in 1947, Buddhists were suddenly without a leader. The Humanistic Buddhist movement in Mainland China thus came to a halt.

On the topic of Buddhist monastic education in Taiwan, it all began in 1948 with Venerable Master Miao Guo (妙果, 1884-1963) from Chungli Yuan Guang Temple. He was the one who invited Venerable Tzu Hang to Taiwan from Southeast Asia for the establishment of the Taiwan Buddhist College. This was followed by the Taiwan Buddhist Seminar established by Venerable Ta Hsing at Ling Ying Temple near Chingtsao Lake, Hsinchu. Both Venerable Yen Pei and I served as Deans at the Seminar.

Subsequently, Venerable Pai Sheng (白聖, 1904-1989) also founded the Chinese

Buddhist Tripitaka College in Taipei, Venerable Sheng Yin (聖印, 1930-1996) founded the Tzu Ming Buddhist College in Taichung, Venerable Miao Ran (妙然, 1915-1997) founded Fa Yun Buddhist College in Miaoli, Venerable Yin Shun founded the Fu Yan Buddhist Institute, and Venerable Nan Ting founded the Hua-yen Buddhist College in Taipei. During those days, *Collection of Works by Master Taixu* was the indispensable textbook for the students.

Sadly, many of these Buddhist colleges had to close due to a lack of students, teachers, funds, or combination thereof. Additionally, since graduates were unable to pursue a career out of their studies, these colleges were thus short lived.

## **2. Settling in Yilan, a Place for Buddhist Youths**

Having vowed to never be a Buddhist monk dependent on Buddhism, besides writing and lecturing, I began to actively recruit youths to Buddhism in Yilan starting from 1953. Subsequently, the Dharma propagation team, Buddhist Youth Choir, youth group, children's class and Sunday classes were established. Venerables Hsin Ping, Tzu Hui, Tzu Jung, Tzu Chia (慈嘉), Hsiao Pi-hsia (蕭碧霞), Lin Ching-zhi (林清志), Chen Hsiu-ping (陳修平), Chang Zhao (張肇), and Lin Wen-hsiung (林文雄) were amongst those youths.

At the same time, I also established the Guang Hua Tuition Center, which was the first government sanctioned Buddhist-affiliated education institute. Among the students was Professor Cheng Shyr-yen (鄭石岩), former standing member of the Ministry of Education's Student Affairs Committee. Venerables Tzu Hui and Tzu Jung both served as principal of Tzu Ai Kindergarten, which was also the first Buddhist-founded kindergarten. Current Executive Deputy Abbot of Fo Guang Shan Monastery—Venerable Hui Chuan (慧傳) was one of the children attending. Deprived of education, how could we have fostered talents to propagate Humanistic Buddhism?

Youths are fundamental to the development of Humanistic Buddhism. Being aware of this, many have come together to promote Buddhist education. Particularly, classes at Fo Guang Shan Tsung-Lin University have continued for more than fifty years, nurturing over five thousand graduates, which I believe is a record in the history of Buddhism. Thus far, Venerables Tao Kuan (道觀) in Chiayi, Pu Hui (普暉), Hui Che (慧哲), and Chen Fang (真芳) in Taichung, Chen Wu (真悟) in Toufen, Hsing Ying (性滢) and Wu Cheng (悟證) in Hsinchu, and Ta Ying (達瑩) in Hualien were all students of Tsung-Lin.

## **3. Talents are Essential to the Journey of Revitalization**

Other than the Buddhist College, Fo Guang Shan has also organized Summer Camps for College Students. Many former participants are now paragons exerting tremendous influence

on society and respective countries. For instance, Dr. Chen Chao-long (陳肇隆), Honorary President of the Kaohsiung Chang Gung Memorial Hospital, acknowledged as the father of liver transplant in Asia; Dr. Lin Fang-yu (林芳郁), president of the Taipei Veterans General Hospital; practicing doctors in America such as Dr. Shen Jen-yee (沈仁義), Dr. Cheng Chao-yang (鄭朝洋), and Dr. Lee Steve J.H. (李錦興); and also practicing physicians in Japan such as Dr. Fukuhara Shingen (福原信玄) and Dr. Lin Ning-feng (林寧峰), formerly president of BLIA, Tokyo Chapter.

Other youths include: Chao Tsui-hui (趙翠慧), currently President of BLIA Chunghwa Northern Region Association; Hsueh Cheng-zhi (薛正直), Chairperson of KMT Yunlin Region Party; Honorary Professor Lu Wei-ming (呂維明) of National Taiwan University Department of Chemical Engineering; Chu Chao-chi (朱朝基), the young man who donated the Maitreya Buddha statue that has since been enshrined at the Mountain Gate of FGS; Chen Ming-ji (陳明吉), the young artist who sculpted the Triple Gem Buddhas inside the FGS Main Shrine, who later became a Kaohsiung City councilor. Furthermore, Venerable Chao-hwei (昭慧) from the Hongshi Buddhist College, and even Venerable Yi Kong (依空), Executive Board member of University of the West were both participants of the summer camps. In view of the talents discovered across the world, how can we not be hopeful for the revival of Humanistic Buddhism?

Besides monastic education in the Buddhist College, social education promoted by Buddhists began from as early as the period of Japanese occupation. For example, Tainan Kuang Hua High School, Taipei High School in Taipei, Tzu Hang High School founded by the Inner Court of Maitreya Bodhisattva, and also Chih-Kwang Senior High School founded by Venerables Wu Yi (悟一, 1922-2003), Nan Ting and myself.

The propagation of Humanistic Buddhism requires us to proactively reach out to serve people and to value education. That is why Fo Guang Shan founded Pu-Men Senior High School in 1977, and subsequently founded Jun Tou Primary and Secondary School in Nantou, as well as Jun Yi Primary and Secondary School in Taitung. In light of the need for tertiary education, in 1990, Fo Guang Shan founded the University of the West (formerly Hsi Lai University), which is the first Chinese Buddhist-affiliated tertiary institute in the West. This was followed by the founding of Nanhua University in Chiayi, Fo Guang University in Yilan, Nan Tien Institute in Australia, and Guang Ming College in Philippines, coming to a total of five universities.

Presently, Buddhist-founded education institutes in Taiwan also include Huafan University founded by Venerable Hsiao Yun (曉雲, 1912-2004), Hsuan Chuang University founded by the Buddhist Association of the Republic of China, the Dharma Drum Institute of

Liberal Arts founded by Venerable Sheng Yen (聖嚴, 1931-2009), and also Tzu Chi University in Hualien. Moreover, there are also Buddhist-founded primary and secondary schools, as well as Chu Hai College in Hong Kong, and Singapore. These are tangible deeds by Humanistic Buddhists demonstrating Buddha's original intents.

Nevertheless, it is not sufficient to merely rely on these institutions in Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan. If the Mainland could embrace Buddhists for the establishment of universities, it shall greatly enhance the growth of both country and society. It is hoped that the vast population of Mainland China could also benefit from the schools Buddhist founded schools in a bid to contribute to the nation's duty of fostering talents and patriotic missionaries. Ultimately, it is the entire world that will benefit from this.

In order to commemorate Master Jian Zhen's (鑑真, 688-763) Dharma propagation works in Japan, Zhao Puchu, former president of the Buddhist Association of China collaborated with the Bureau of Religious Affairs under the State Council in the hopes of establishing Jian Zhen University at Yangzhou Daming Temple. For this, Fo Guang Shan even donated Jian Zhen Library. Unfortunately, when Zhao passed away, the project had not been followed any further, which is a true pity.

In order for the revival of Chinese Buddhism to be possible, Buddhists must actively interact with both society and people, whilst holding true to the Buddha's original intents by contributing to the wellbeing of people, broadly develop good affinities, and establish education institutes at all levels of schooling. This is the only way to revive Buddhism.

### **3) Dharma Propagation Activities and Organizations**

In 1912, after the founding of the Republic of China, although works for New Buddhism appeared promising under the leadership of Masters Jichan (寄禪, 1852-1912) and Taixu, opposition was nonetheless persistent. Internally, there were the obstinate dominances of Zhejiang monastic conservatives and authoritative lay monarchs, whilst externally featured the separatist military regime, temple seizures by the army, domestic conflicts, and obligatory conversion of temple properties into schools.

So as to ensure organizational Buddhist reform as well as effective resistance to external oppressions, Master Taixu and Venerable Ren Shan founded, in 1912, the Buddhist Progress Society at the Jetevana Vihara in Nanjing. They held a preparatory meeting at Jinshan Temple. However, due to overly hostile remarks made by Venerable Ren Shan, the Jinshan Confrontation Incident occurred. As a result, conceptions of the Buddhist Progress Society came to no avail.

That same year, Venerable Jingan (敬安, 1851-1912) (also known as Jichan the Eight Fingered Ascetic) united monastic elders in the Jiangsu and Zhejiang area, along with Venerable Daojie (道階, 1870-1934) from the Beijing Fayuan Temple, to establish the Chunghua Buddhist Association at Shanghai Jingan Temple. In 1912, the inauguration ceremony took place at Shanghai Liuyun Temple, which was attended by over one hundred monastic representatives from all seventeen provinces including Venerables Yuan Ying, Di Xian, and Taixu. Unanimously, Venerable Jingan was elected President of the first national Buddhist association in history. The association was later renamed the Buddhist Association of China, today the most authoritative Buddhist organization in Mainland China. Subsequently, Buddhist societies, centers of study, and medical societies were established with vocations of publication, education, and charity to propagate Buddhism back into society.

As the Buddhist Association of China carried on, confrontations between Venerable Taixu and Venerable Yuan Ying, once friends, return to mind. With Master Taixu on the side of Sangha reform and Venerable Yuan Ying on the opposing side vying for the Jiangsu and Zhejiang region monastic conservatives' side, as well as the dissension and discord amongst their respective disciples; these two monastics once alike brothers and sharing similar values went their separate ways.

At that time, Master Taixu and Chiang Kai-shek shared a close friendship. Whenever Buddhism faced persecution, such as the compulsory conversion of Buddhist property into schools instigated twice by Tai Shuangqiu (邵爽秋, 1897-1976) from Central University, the conservatists would seek Master Taixu to consider contingency plans. Ostensibly united, once these persecutions alleviated, they would alienate Master Taixu anew in order to protect their power and wealth. They opposed Master Taixu's proposals for: 1) reform of Buddhist asset management, 2) reform of Buddhist systems, and 3) reform of Buddhist teachings, resorting to any means in hindering the development of Humanistic Buddhism. Not only were Master Taixu and his "New Buddhism" advocates despondent, even the Nationalist government found their comportment unacceptable.

Consequently, in 1945, following the victory against the Japanese, Chiang Kai-shek issued an order for Master Taixu to reinstate the Buddhist Association of China by establishing a Chinese Buddhist Reform Committee, whose members included: Taixu, Master Changkya (章嘉, 1890-1957), Xuyun, Yuan Ying, Chang Yuan (昌圓, 1879-1943), Quan Lang (全朗) and Li Zikuan (李子寬, 1882-1973). Among them, Taixu, Changkya, and Li Zikuan were appointed committee executives. Subsequently, in 1946, the committee organized a Buddhist Association of China Committee Training Seminar at the Jiaoshan Buddhist College. The program was the charge of our teacher Venerable Zhifeng, and thus I

was fortunate to be involved in the program.

## 1. Lifetime Dedication to the Propagation of Buddhism

As Master Taixu spoke quietly in a heavy Zhejiang accent, I honestly did not understand much of his speeches in the training seminar. The only part that still echoes in my mind is: “We must do it for Buddhism! We must do it for Buddhism!”

One day, I unwittingly crossed paths with Master Taixu, I therefore stepped aside and joined my palms respectfully. Likewise he stopped, looked at me, and then said, “Good, good, good.” Though the meeting was brief, his simple words of ‘good’ and “for Buddhism” left a tremendous influence on my endeavors in propagating Humanistic Buddhism.

Sadly, Master Taixu's health deteriorated due to overwork and he passed away, in 1947, aged fifty-eight. That same year, the Buddhist Association of China held its first national General Conference in Nanjing, attended by the directors of each province as well as the Mongolian and Tibet regions. At the Conference, Master Changkya was elected Director-General of the Association. However, as the Civil War broke out, the Association was relocated to Taiwan with the Republic of China government, and thus embarked on a different journey.

Venerable Tung Chu also brought the Association's sign to Taiwan. Madam Sun Chang Ching-yang's offer of ten million old Taiwan dollars, along with Li Zi-kuan's five million old Taiwan dollars, were used to buy the Taipei Shandao Temple and its conversion into the headquarters for *Ocean Waves Magazine* and the Buddhist Association of China — Taipei Office.

At the election of the second Board, Master Changkya continued as Director-General, along with nine executive directors: Changkya, Pai Sheng, Wu Ming (悟明), Sun Hsin-yuan (孫心源), Hsing Yun (星雲), Chang Ching-yang, Chao Heng-ti, Wu Chung-hsing (吳仲行, 1898-1973), and Lobsang Yeshe (羅桑益西, 1912-1981). In protest of elders such as Nan Ting, Tzu Hang and Tung Chu not being selected added to my youth and difference of opinion with the leader; I wrote a letter to the Association declining the position. For this I was criticized as ignorant and ungrateful.

In a later re-election, Venerable Pai Sheng gained more votes than Li Zhi-kuan and was elected Director-General. He later held onto the position for forty years, managing the Association through autocracy and altering it into a one-man Buddhist Association, excluding a majority of Buddhists. This restricted the potential of the Buddhist Association of the Republic of China, and hindered the revitalization of Humanistic Buddhism, which was truly a pity.

As a result, Buddhist leaders in Taiwan had no choice but to depend on their own power and faith to continue propagating Humanistic Buddhism. For example, Lee Bing-nan's lay Buddhists, Venerable Pai Sheng's precept conferral, Venerable Yin Shun's scholarship, Venerable Nan Ting's Dharma lectures, and Venerable Tzu Hang's young monastics thus began promoting young Buddhist movements, Dharma propagation on radio and television, precept conferral, and Buddhist chanting associations in Taiwan. Gradually, Humanistic Buddhism retraced its root back to Buddha's original intents.

### **i. Buddhist Youth Movement**

Buddhist youth movements began with Chou Husan-te, who established Buddhist societies in universities. Being aware of Buddhism's need for youth, and also youth's need for Buddhism, between 1953 and 1954, I already considered initiating a Buddhist youth movement. When the opportunity arose, I invited a dozen youths such as Wang Shang-yi, Wu Yi, and Chang Shang-te from the National Taiwan University and other schools to Shandao Temple.

At the meeting, these youths decided to gather a group of, at most, eighty young adults at the Yuan Tong Temple in the Chunghe Township of Taipei County for an excursion, a temple visit and to hold activities there. However, Venerable Wu Yi promptly cautioned me, "Next time please don't bring this many young adults to Shandao Temple again, because we cannot afford the expenses." I became quite anxious, because without a base in Taipei, I would only be able to meet these youths on the street.

Just then, I came across Chou Husan-te, and asked him: "Mr. Chou, these young adults will meet at Yuan Tong Temple in Chunghe this Sunday, and as I already have prior commitments, would you be able to guide them?" Mr. Chou happily obliged, and so took the matter of university student activities into his own hands.

Other than the University Student Buddhist Foundation from the early days, Venerable Nan Ting also contributed to the Buddhist youth movement. He convinced Chan Le-wu (詹勵吾, 1904-1982) from Canada to sell his four-story house on Chongqing South Road and contribute the money towards University Student Scholarships, which later became the Torch of Wisdom Association—Presently the *Torch of Wisdom Monthly*.

With Chan Le-wu's sponsorship, Chou Husan-te established the Torch of Wisdom Association and inspired youths to write and gave away free books on Buddhism. For example, he printed a few hundred thousand copies of Lee Heng-yue's *Introduction to Modern Day Intellectuals* and gave them to youths for free, emboldening them to write reflections on the book for rewards of scholarships. Starting in 1957, he established Buddhist

societies in various universities such as the National Taiwan University's Sunrise Buddhist Studies, Normal University's Jhong-Dao Club, Chengchi University's Oriental Culture Society, and Chung Hsing University's Wisdom Ocean Society. These would not have been possible without the support of lay elders who assumed teaching positions within the universities such as Zhou Bang-dao, Lee Bing-nan, Chou Hsuan-te, and Chan Le-wu.

As martial law was not yet rescinded, the China Youth Corps was the only organization that had permission to organize youth events. I had the fortune to befriend Sung Shih-hsuan (宋時選, 1922-2010), Executive Officer of the China Youth Corps, and also one of Chiang Ching-kuo's (蔣經國, 1910-1988) most trusted men. Upon hearing my proposal for a Chan Summer Camp, he happily agreed, "That's a very good idea!" As a result, in 1969, I began organizing Buddhist Youth Summer Camps at Fo Guang Shan.

To ensure a smooth management of the summer camp, I borrowed a few China Youth Corp flags with the help of Zhang Pei-geng (張培耕), then committee member at the Kaohsiung China Youth Corps, and erected them outside Fo Guang Shan. This exempted us from government interference, and the camp was thus carried out without any problem. As the Corps was under Chiang Ching-kuo's leadership, the flags meant his patronage, which guaranteed our freedom to do anything. Consequently, through the camps, outstanding Buddhist youths such as Venerable Yi Kung, Venerable Chao Hwei, Hsueh Cheng-chih, Ku Ching-mei (古清美) and You Huey-jen (尤惠貞) were nurtured.

In the that followed, though we only offered one hundred vacancies for college students for the two-week Buddhist education experience, we were astounded to receive over six hundred applications from over forty colleges and universities. Other than extending into one extra batch, we also had to purchase extra necessities. As it was during the time of Fo Guang Shan's founding, we had limited budget and resources; therefore Zhang Pei-geng liaised with the army to borrow over a thousand blankets, and also thirty army trucks to help transport these youths to excursion sites, saving me a large sum of expenses. At the end of these camps, one hundred and eight youths bade to take refuge to become formal Buddhists.

It can be said that other than Chou Hsuan-te's Torch of Wisdom Society, Fo Guang Shan's Buddhist Youth Summer Camp, Lee Bing-nan's Minlun Society, and Venerable Chan Yun's (懺雲, 1915-2009) Fast and Precept Association, which was renounced for their practices of austerity, were among the Buddhist youth movements that successfully attracted young people to Buddhism. Though most were not financially moneyed, all were passionately and actively propagating Humanistic Buddhism to thee youth.

## ii. Radio and Television Broadcasts

In the 1950's, radio was the public's main source of information and knowledge,

therefore Venerable Nan Ting from the Huayan Lotus Association and lay Buddhist Chao Mao-lin (趙茂林) dedicated their efforts to propagating Dharma on the radio for decades uninterrupted.

Wishing to do likewise, I began writing *The Biography of Sakyamuni Buddha*, often pulling all-nighters solely to produce enough scripts for all four participating radio stations—BCC, Ming Pen, Ming Sheng, Minelectro Radio, and Yunlin CBC. Subsequently, Venerable Tzu Hui, Tzu Jung and others also began hosting these radio programs. The power of the media began to rise, allowing Humanistic Buddhism that holds true to the original intents of Buddha to be heard throughout Taiwan.

There is a very touching story about Lee Yu (李玉), host of the “Buddhist Voice” Program on *the Biography of Sakyamuni Buddha* at Yunlin CBC radio station. One of my disciples was an elderly bhiksuni who was diagnosed with terminal cancer. When she sought advice for ways to face death, I said to her, “As a monastic, all you need to do is focus on what you can do for Buddhism, and pay no attention to the matters of life and death.” Therefore she began raising funds for the radio program, encouraging people to contribute by five dollars. As a result, she managed to raise a thousand dollars for the radio station, enabling Lee Yu’s station to sustain for many more years. Miraculously, this bhiksuni’s cancer disappeared without any treatment.

There is a saying, “Imagine if classrooms were movie theatres.” This makes ample sense to me, because when children come by inept teachers in the classroom, their time in class would be as unbearable as prison, but the situation can be swiftly improved by the use of movies.

Hence Fo Guang Shan, following the use of radio, began to propagate the Dharma via movie and television. It began with *The Biography of Sakyamuni Buddha* in the Jin Guo Theatre, with a director by the name of Liang who scripted overly sensual scenes between Siddhartha and Yasodhara. As consultant of the movie, I objected the idea, but was deemed by the director as overly backward. Therefore I withdrew from the project. After the movie was shown, some Buddhists saw my name listed as consultant in the movie, and came to stir up some trouble at our Sanchong Buddhist Cultural Service Center out of protest.

In 1962, Taiwan’s first television station—Taiwan Television Enterprise (TTV) was born. The daily broadcasts consisted mostly of programs produced by Christian organizations or the Catholic Kuangchi Program Service. Buddhism was excluded from these opportunities till 1979, when a television producer named Pai Hou-yuan (白厚元), a Muslim, proposed a daily half-hour Buddhist program on TTV priced at one hundred and twenty thousand dollars per episode. This truly was an impossible price to me.

Yet, for the propagation of Buddhism, I was willing to exhaust all resources to produce the first television program “Nectar” which aired for twenty-four minutes each time. This event was advertised on *Central Daily News* with the following announcement,

*As of September 4th, 1949, the Buddhist program—“Nectar” will air on TTV every Wednesday evening from 7:00 to 7:30pm.*

However, upon seeing this advertisement, Madame Chiang Kai-shek (Soong Mei-ling) (宋美齡, 1897-2003) immediately forbade the program from airing. Not even Hau Pei-tsun (郝柏村) or Chiang Wei-kuo (蔣緯國, 1916-1997) could dissuade her. Apoplectic, I remonstrated to TTV General Manager Liang Hsiao-huang (梁孝煌, 1914-2014), who explained that it was my three-minute appearance on the show that resulted in the ban.

“I am not preaching Buddhism. It is merely the promotion of a proper understanding concerning the Ullambana Festival.” I protested.

“Monastics are not permitted to appear on television.” Said Liang.

“Aren't there characters of Buddhist monks on your drama shows?” I asked.

“Those are not real monks, so it's acceptable.” Replied Liang.

Without a choice, I was forced to remove those three minutes, leaving twenty-one minutes remaining in the show.

On another occasion, a journalist from *Central Daily News* informed me that the news about Venerable Tzu Hang's postmortem body relic would be banned if Madam Chiang were in Taiwan, but since she had left for the United States; they were able to publish a full-page report. Madam Chiang's Christian faith essentially restricted any Buddhist program from airing on television, but I remained valiant for the sake of the Dharma, and continued to contest for Buddhist rights.

It was no simple task to have Buddhist programs airing on all three prevailing television stations, each lasting the usual three months of a given season, because artists or programs were exclusive to distinct stations at that time, meaning that they could not appear on other stations. Thus it was quite the feat being able to appear on all three.

Some time later, in 1980, renowned television producer Chou Chih-min (周志敏) assisted in the making of the second Buddhist program—“Gate of Faith,” which aired on CTV, turning out to be a popular program watched by nearly two million viewers each time. This was possible ensuing the passing of Chiang Kai-shek in 1975, following which Chiang Soong Mei-ling departed Taiwan for the United States.

Fo Guang Shan's subsequent television broadcasts included “Hsing Yun's Chan Talk,” “Daily Verse,” and “Hsing Yun's Stories” on TTV, “Hsing Yun's Talk” on CTV, and “Hsing Yun's Dharma Words” on CTS. For each recorded episode I was paid six thousand dollars.

Circumstances have indeed changed over these thirty-years. At one time, I had to pay the station one hundred and twenty thousand dollars per episode, and now it is the station paying me six thousand dollars. This undoubtedly denotes the public's acceptance and recognition of Buddhism.

Other than the abovementioned, my novel *National Master Yu Lin*, being quite popular, was adapted into scripts, radio shows, a movie, and theater. Of note, the television show—"Continued Fate of Love", produced by Gou Feng twenty years ago, became a huge hit both in and out of Taiwan.

Beforehand, one-hour afternoon shows in the Peking Opera were the norm. However, two words drawn out through long theatrical singing really did not assist in enticing the interest of the audience, let alone fathom what they were singing about. I have always felt the need to re-adapt the Peking Opera in order to attract a bigger audience.

Likewise, Buddhism shares a similar fate to theatre. If steadfastly conservative and unchanging, devoid of popularization and generalization in the means of propagation, no one will be teaching, learning or even believing in Buddhism any longer.

### iii. Conferral of Precepts

All through the Japanese occupation, monastic precepts were not practiced in Taiwan. As the saying goes, "With precepts the Sangha therefore prevails, with Sangha the Dharma therefore prevail." Continuance of the Sangha by conferring precepts thus became critical. An initial attempt to hold a Triple Platform Full Ordination Ceremony was made, in 1952, by Ta Hsien Temple in Tainan Guanziling. Venerable Pai Sheng took the opportunity to negotiate with the government and put the Buddhist Association of the Republic of China in charge.

For that particular ceremony, Venerable Kai Tsan (開參) was appointed the Sila Archarya, Venerable Chih Kuang (智光) the Instructing Archarya, Venerable Tai Tsang the Karma Archarya, Venerable Tao Yuan as the Teaching Archarya along with Venerables Cheng Lien, Nan Ting, Hui Feng (慧峰), and Zhu Yun as the witnessing Masters, as well as Venerables Pai Sheng as Kaitang, and Chieh Te (戒德, 1909-2011) as Peitang. Owing to unexpected obligations, Venerable Nan Ting became unavailable, and therefore I replaced him. As a result, I became one of the ten witnessing masters in the first Triple Platform Full Ordination Ceremony held in Taiwan.

Statutes of the Buddhist Association of the Republic of China allowed a temple to host only one comprehensive ordination ceremony per year. Hence Yuan Kuang Temple on Lion Head Mountain, Taipei Shi Pu Temple, Keelung Ling Quan Temple on Yue Mei Mountain,

Taipei Ling Yun Temple in Kuan Yin Mountain, and Taichung Pao Chueh Temple all took turns hosting the ceremony.

In those days, the Buddhist Association of the Republic of China held dominion, and no temples were allowed to organize precept ceremonies or issue ordination certificates without their permission. In 1967, I tried registering as a host for the event, but was refused permission till 1977, whilst other temples had been hosts at least two to three times.

As Fo Guang Shan Monastery was not yet an officially registered temple in Kaohsiung County, I envisaged holding the ceremony at Yilan Lei Ying Temple or Keelung Chi Lo Temple. Auspiciously with the aid of Chen Po-fen, I was able to successfully obtain permission, and thus brought the event to Fo Guang Shan Monastery.

To maintain equilibrium, I invited Venerable Ching Hsin (淨心, 1929-2001) to act as Chief Coordinator (Kaitang). However, for the issuances of ordination certificates, the Association charged five hundred dollars per certificate for both monastic and lay precepts. Despite disbursement, Venerable Ching Liang (淨良) still refused to issue these certificates. So I paid it no mind. Full ordination ceremonies are meant as a benefit for social order and enhanced moral ethics. If I adhered to this principle, no one can impede me in holding ordination or precept ceremonies.

In 1997, Fo Guang Shan hosted its first Triple Platform Full Ordination Ceremony, lasting three months. All procedures followed those set by traditional monasteries in Mainland China. An Instructing Archarya was invited to teach, rehearse, and formally confer the precepts, as well as tutor the preceptees, akin to a short-term Buddhist College program. Other than Venerables Chen Hua (真華, 1922-2012) and Zhu Yun, and myself as the Three Archaryas, domestic and overseas such as Venerables Yue Chi (月基), Wu Yi, Long Tao (隆道), Kai Cheng (開證, 1925-2001), Zhu Mo, Pu Jing (普淨, 1902-1986), Jin An (鏡龕, 1900-2000), and Thien An (天恩) were also invited to be witnessing Masters and teaching Masters. The solemn ambience of the ceremonies, as well as the meticulous enactment of the procedures rewarded Fo Guang Shan with the “Exemplary Ordination Ceremony” accolade.

#### i) Conveying Triple Platform Full Ordination Procedures Back to Mainland China

Unique with regard to the ceremony at Fo Guang Shan was the restoration of the Two-Division Ordination Ceremony, which in time past was omitted. I instructed Venerable Tzu Hui, the executive director of the ceremony, to abide by the rituals of the two divisions of bhiksus and bhiksunis each being conferred by witnessing masters of their respective genders. In this way the Triple Platform Full Ordination Ceremony was thus complete, starting from the Sramanera Precepts Platform to the Bhiksu/Bhiksuni Precepts Platform, ending in the

Bodhisattva Precepts Platform. Afterward, Venerable Ching Hsin, then Director-General of the Buddhist Association of the Republic of China, assimilated this procedure in his subsequent ordination ceremonies. As a result, this procedure is also applied in Mainland China today.

In the dawn period of Mainland China, only bhiksus were allowed to act as guiding Venerables in a Triple Platform Full Ordination Ceremony, while bhiksunis solely performed the functions of assistants and support. Yet all monastics were given the role of “guiding venerables” at Fo Guang Shan’s ordination ceremonies, for the Dharma values aspiration and will. Regardless that one may be a man or woman, lay or monastic, only by attaining the spirit of equality can our minds truly connect with that of the Buddha.

The full ordination ceremony was later held at Fo Guang Shan Hsi Lai Temple in the United States. Construction of Hsi Lai Temple, the biggest Buddhist temple in North America, began in 1978, and was finally completed a decade later on November 26th, 1988, with Venerable Tzu Chuang as the founding Abbess. In tandem, a Ten-Thousand-Buddha Triple Platform Full Ordination Ceremony was held and attended by three hundred monastics from sixteen countries.

In 1991, the Ten-Thousand-Buddha Triple Platform Full Ordination Ceremony was hosted anew at Fo Guang Shan for the duration of three months. In excess of five hundred monastics from America, Korea, Thailand, Nepal, Malaysia, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Singapore and Vietnam convened for the longest and most comprehensive ordination ceremony in the history of Chinese Buddhism. Abiding fully by traditional monastic rules in addition to the experience of an alms procession, the preceptees were able to experience the routine of the Buddha’s time.

At one time, Bodhisattva Precepts were not observed in the Theravada tradition, thus the followers were unable to aspire for the Bodhi Mind and reach out to people to propagate the Dharma, which is truly regretful. And so, at the 1997 International Buddhist Seminar held at Fo Guang Shan, both monastic and lay delegates from the Southern, Northern, and Tibetan traditions co-signed a petition for Fo Guang Shan to travel to India and confer the bhiksuni precepts.

In February 1998, the entreaty became reality under the cohesive efforts of Fo Guang Shan along with Theravada, Tibetan, and Chinese Buddhist organizations. Over one hundred and fifty preceptees from Indonesia, Thailand, Nepal, Africa, Japan, Korea, Europe, America and other countries realized full ordination, while fifteen hundred lay Buddhists participated in a Triple Gem Refuge Taking and Five Precepts Ceremony. This event enabled the renaissance of the bhiksuni order in India and Theravadan countries that had long been

discontinued since the 11th century, marking a very important page in the history of Buddhism.

With regards to lay Buddhist precepts, time was that the Five Precepts and Bodhisattva Precepts observances lasted for seven days. So as to adapt to the needs of modern times, whilst still emphasizing the spirit of eternally abiding the precepts above momentary pledges, these ceremonies are now two-day overnight events offering greater convenience to people. Moreover, adapting sports stadiums and community centers into Buddha shrines for these ceremonies under the witness of the Three Masters is also a form of pragmatism.

ii) Establishing pure regulations that hold true to the spirit of the precepts

For householders who hold a deep appreciation for monastic life but are unable to relinquish their family commitments, with the exception of the one-day Eight Precepts retreat introduced by the Buddha, Fo Guang Shan held, in 1998, its first Short-Term Monastic Retreat, receiving eight thousand applications with only one thousand admitted for the three separate retreats. This was an unprecedented event in the history of Buddhism.

Throughout the Short-Term Monastic Retreat, participants are required to take the Ten Sramanera or Ten Sramanerika Precepts and lead a secluded monastic life. Concurrently, they are obliged to refrain from watching entertainments such as dancing or singing, sitting or lying on high and comfortable beds, or wearing of fragrances or floral decorations. Thusly, one is wholly transcended from secular life, and thus is able to experience the spiritual wealth of emptiness.

It is likewise for precepts. Contents of precepts established by Buddha according to differing conditions need to be attuned to respective eras, whereabouts, and cultures. Be it monastic or lay precepts, as long as one is able to abide by the four core principles: no killing, no stealing, no sexual misconduct, and no lying, as well as be willing to practice the Four Demeanors, Four Immeasurable States of Mind, and the Four Universal Vows, one thus already qualifies to be an outstanding Buddhist.

In such a way, Chinese Buddhist masters were quite astute by stipulating pure regulations as an alternative for precepts. Whilst the conventions of monasteries such as Tianning Temple and Jinshan Temple may each differ, all remain close to the spirit of precepts. The Fo Guang Shan Order also has the *Fo Guang Shan Pure Regulations Handbook* for members to adhere to. The purported “three thousand demeanors and eighty thousand subtle actions” lies within our ability to deal with people and matters in real life. The conscientious practice of precepts, concentration, and wisdom to suppress our greed, anger, and ignorance, hence gaining acceptance by others is also a means for us to quell our

afflictions and habits through remembering to benefit all sentient beings. As once stated, “Buddhahood is attained the instant our human characters are perfected.” This was, and is Buddha’s original intent in establishing the precepts for this world.

#### iv. Buddhist Chanting Association

During the early days of Taiwan, chanting Buddha’s name was the most popular custom amongst Buddhists. For instance, the Taichung Buddhist Lotus Society founded by Lee Bing-nan, Fengshan Buddhist Lotus Association by Venerable Zhu Yun in Kaohsiung, and the Yilan Buddhist Chanting Association by me. Moreover, the Ling Yen Mountain Temple founded by Venerable Miao Lien (妙蓮, 1922-2008) in Puli focused mainly on chanting Buddha’s name. Amid the aforesaid, Lee Bingnan’s Buddhist Lotus Society is regarded as the forerunner.

Lee Bing-nan, courtesy name Hsueh Lu, took refuge under Master Yin Guang at a young age, and dedicated his life to propagating Pure Land Buddhism. In 1950, he founded the Taichung Buddhist Lotus Society with Tung Cheng-chi, Chu Huang-yan, Hsu Tsao-sheng (徐灶生), and Chang Sung-po (張松柏). Numerous chanting classes were held on a weekly basis. Lee’s work was a major cause for the prosperity of Pure Land Buddhism within Post-Recovery Taiwan.

Lee was well learned in worldly knowledge and Buddhist studies, though he was said to have engaged in the dual-propagation of Confucianism and Buddhism, he in fact applied the essence of Confucian thoughts in the form of Buddhist practices. He also founded the Bodhi Hospital, Tzu Kuang Library, bands, and harmonica bands, as well as arts and literary classes to integrate old and new generations as one. In appealing to youths, he steered clear of monastic communities and taking in students, creating new opportunities for Buddhism.

The Taichung Buddhist Lotus Society was just as prosperous as Master Hui Yuan’s (慧遠, 334-416) Donglin Temple from bygone days. They held collective chanting services and promoted Pure Land practices. Stories of supernatural responses experienced by lay Buddhists Lee Ching-yuan (李清源) and Lin Ching-jiang (林清江, 1940-1999) were recorded in *Experiences of Passing Away Under Buddha’s Blessings*. Lin Kan-chi (林看治, 1907-1992), author of the book, was also one who aspired to be reborn in the Western Pure Land. After his body was cremated, hundreds of relics remained. Also, Lee Chi-hwa (李濟華, 1882-1962), Director of Taipei Buddhist Chanting Association who was committed to the practice of chanting Buddha’s name, was also able to presage the time of his passing. For all these lay Buddhists to be so well attained in their cultivation, Lee Bing-nan surely was a very important mentor for Pure Land practices. It can be said that there was “Huiyuan of the past, Hsueh Lu

of today” when it comes to Pure Land Buddhism.

Lee's Pure Land faith was unshakable. When Venerable Yin Shun introduced his work *New Pure Land Concepts* that criticized the Western Pure Land, Lee's students initiated a movement in Taichung to burn the book. Unwilling to make enemies with Lee's enormous organization of lay Buddhists, when Venerable Yin Shun was in the Philippines; he tried to make amends by fundraising meant for the Master Taixu Memorial for Lee.

Pious followers of Lee regarded his passion and dedication to propagating Pure Land Buddhism as something exceedingly rare and valuable, whilst some criticized him for his attachment to Pure Land and disregard of other Buddhist Schools that merit just as much devotion and value. To date, the only lay Buddhist organization that remains devoted to their faith is that of Lee. Regretfully, without either someone to carry the baton or a permanent cultivation center, the society often needs to rent space at Taichung Ling Shan Temple for chanting services. After Lee passed away, the association thus became leaderless.

#### i) The Pure Land Cave: An Experience of the Beauty of Buddha Land

Speaking of the Pure Land practice of chanting Buddha's name, I too also have some personal experiences. It all began in 1953 when I founded Yilan Buddhist Chanting Association at Lei Ying Temple. In the following years, Seven-Day Amitabha Retreats began with traditional monastic routines. At 5am, the morning session began. Buddhist formal meals were taken at noon, followed by the main session between 7-9pm, the most dedicated and focused session of the day.

Other than the above, I also promoted the Saturday Chan and Pure Land services, as proper meditation halls and chanting halls were rare in those days, we could only unite both inside the Buddha shrine. With a quarter of the time dedicated to reciting the sutra, another quarter to chanting Buddha's name, one quarter to circumambulating the Buddha, and a final quarter for meditation, each session lasted around two hours.

As most Buddhists found chanting Buddha's name to be the suitable way of practice; I therefore also established the Luodong Buddhist Chanting Association, Toucheng Buddhist Chanting Association, Taipei Buddhist Chanting Association, Huwei Buddhist Chanting Association, and the Longyan Buddhist Chanting Association. It can be said that, at that time, the dual practice of Chan and Pure Land became mainstream Buddhist cultivation, which brought Buddhism in Taiwan to its peak.

Concurrently, I also constructed the Fo Guang Shan Pure Land Cave, opened to the public in 1981, to share with the world the wondrous beauties of the Western Pure Land of

Ultimate Bliss. Some had asked why I chose not to build the Eighteen Hells to frighten people from doing evil deeds. Personally, is it not better to promote positive thoughts through experiencing the beauty and virtue of Buddha's Pure Land? I firmly believe that Buddha had taught Humanistic Buddhism to bring light, hope, and joy to the world. Faith should never serve the purpose of creating fear in people's minds.

Since the founding of Fo Guang Shan, there are at present over two hundred temples around the world. Having established Saturday as the standard time for chanting, envisage over three hundred Buddha shrines, each filled with an average of five hundred participants, conducting services in unison. Within the same extent of time, there would be fifteen hundred thousand people chanting simultaneously. Is this not a manifestation of the Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss?

All told, throughout my seventy years as a monastic, no less than a quarter of my times had been dedicated to Chan and Pure Land practices. Just the Seven-Day Amitabha Chanting Retreat alone occupied nearly twenty thousand hours of my life. My purpose of promoting Pure Land chanting is that, through chanting Buddha's name, people will be able to better oneself, purify oneself, self-reflect, and self-improve. Furthermore, one will eventually better one's family, society and nation. Thus, without expecting people to do single-minded and attentive chanting, this actually turned out to be easier to accept for many.

#### **v. Buddhist Societies**

During the earlier days, most Buddhist organizations were not government-accredited, while the few that were simply monopolized the privilege without assisting in the development of Buddhism.

In 1986, after Chiang Ching-kuo declared the end of martial law, Taiwan opened up to assemblies, organizations, opinions, publications, and overseas travels. Numerous Buddhist societies were also established to propagate the Dharma. Some of the prevailing Buddhist societies in Taiwan include: Buddhist Association of the Republic of China, BLIA Chunghua Headquarters, Lay Buddhists' Association Republic of China, Chinese Buddhist Temple Association, Chinese Young Buddhist Association, Chinese Bhiksuni Association, Chung-Hwa International Merits Association of Buddha-puja and Sangha-dana, and Tzu Chi Foundation.

Founded in 1991 as the "Chuanghua Buddha's Light Association" in Taipei, the association was then renamed "Buddha's Light International Association World Headquarters" (BLIA for short) and was inaugurated in Los Angeles at the Music Center in 1992 with in excess of 4,000 members from over forty-five countries around the world. Elected as

President, I was also joined by Wu Po-hsiung (吳伯雄), Mizutani Kosho, Yan Foon Gu, Henry Yau (游象卿), and Ven. Bhikkhu Aniruddha as elected Vice Presidents. During the inauguration, I spoke on the theme “Joy and Harmony” to elaborate on how Humanistic Buddhism remains true to the Buddha’s original intents in six points: 1) from monastic to lay Buddhists 2) from temples into society 3) from self-learning to altruism 4) from quietude to activity 5) from students to teachers 6) from local to the world. The founding of BLIA has opened a door for lay Buddhists to take part in the work of Dharma propagation, which not only fulfills Buddha’s spirit of equality, but also sees the influence of Humanistic Buddhism further enriched.

With the objectives:

1. To advocates humanistic Buddhism
2. To establish a Pure Land in this world
3. To purify the minds of people in this world
4. To be dedicated to world peace

The BLIA now has over one hundred and seventy chapters, around two thousand sub-chapters, and millions of members in more than seventy countries worldwide, across the five continents. In July 2003, BLIA also became the first Buddhist organization to be accorded NGO in special consultative status by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (UNESCO). This honor would not be possible without the joint efforts of both the monastic and lay members of the Association.

Following the founding of BLIA, in 1994 the BLIA Young Adults Division (BLIA-YAD) was founded with Venerable Hui Chuan as President. In just a few years, YAD divisions across the world and within Taiwan were established. Of note, the Taiwan YAD Headquarters initiated the “New Life: Five Precepts for Youth” to promote the Five Precepts among youths. Annually, tens of thousands of young adults have responded to the movement by observing the Five Precepts: No killing, no stealing, no sexual misconduct, no lying, and no intoxicants.

Furthermore, the annual Charity Trips to India, Mainland China, Malaysia, Philippines and Brazil offer young adults opportunities to provide sanitation, teaching, and medical consultation services. Over one hundred Sumagadhi and Sudhana Lecturers have also been trained to deliver talks in schools so as to promote the Three Acts of Goodness Movement. In 2015, the Marvelous Malaysia Young Buddhists Concert attracted eight thousand youths to sing their passion and mission for Buddhism. These new champions of Dharma propagation certainly provide boundless hopes for the future. To date, there are nearly two hundred

existing YADs that are actively reaching out to schools and communities to highlight the influence of Humanistic Buddhism in purifying human minds.

My idea is to enable not just monastic and lay Buddhists to learn and practice the Dharma but to also allow people from all walks of life, young and old, man and woman to grow as one. Thus the concept of BLIA certainly had a place for children's education. In 2000, the Buddha's Light Scouts was formed at Fo Guang Shan, and subsequently chapters all over the world. Being the first international Buddhist scouts group, Buddha's Light Scouts now includes Pre Cub Scouts, Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Rover Scouts. Not only do they pay regular visits to the elderly who dwell alone, they even participated in the recovery works of the Morakot Typhoon Disasters. These scouts wholly, and fittingly demonstrate the spirits of wisdom, kindness, and courage.

#### i) Different Faiths, Same Purpose— Purifying Human Minds

For a long time, Buddhists have solely focused on repetitive chanting of Buddhist sutras without reading or reflecting on the contents, which truly concerns me. As the Buddhist procedure of learning involves “entering the state of Samadhi through hearing, reflecting, and practicing the Dharma,” I created the Humanistic Buddhist Reading Association in January 2002 as a means to promote reading. For over a decade, Venerable Chueh Pei (覺培) has formed over two thousand reading groups, and actively promoted various reading techniques, reading seminars, and even reading expositions. The development of the Reading Association has further enhanced interest and spiritual growth in Buddhists.

In February and May 2015, the Chunghua Federation of Traditional Religious Associations and United Association of Humanistic Buddhism were subsequently established. Both associations symbolize the realization of Humanistic Buddhism's spirits of “Respect and Tolerance,” as well as “Peace and Equality.” It is hoped that through the Chunghua Federation of Traditional Religious Associations, different religious organizations are able to embrace our similarities and celebrate our differences through continued interactions and exchanges. While different in faith, we all nevertheless share a common goal: to work together in purifying society and human minds.

That is why every December 25th, since its founding, the Buddha Memorial Center has been hosting the World Reunion of Religious Associations by inviting all deities to the Memorial Center to celebrate a day of holy reunion. Yearly, more than two thousand religious organizations and fifty thousand participants from around the world attend the reunion. In seeing the deities and devotees filing into the Center in such orderly fashion, regardless of region or age, I cannot help but be reminded of Buddha's Dharma gatherings on Spiritual

Peak, where heavenly beings and human beings alike joined before the Buddha. We are truly reliving the Buddha's time!

Furthermore, under the collaboration of Tzu Jung, Hui Chuan, Yi Jung (依融), Man Yi (滿益), Chueh Pei, and Miao Le (妙樂), the newly established United Association of Humanistic Buddhism now has a membership of over two hundred temples or Buddhist organizations, as well as over four hundred individual members such as: Da Hsiung Vihara, Cifa Chan Monastery, Fo Guang Shan, Luminary International Buddhist Society, Chunghua Bhiksunis Association, Ling Jiou Mountain Buddhist Society, Bliss & Wisdom Society, and so on. Individual members include: Wu Po-hsiung, Yeh Ching-fong (葉金鳳), Cora Wang (王力行), Chien Feng-wen (簡豐文), Chang Yia-chung (張亞中), Huang Giin-tarng (黃錦堂), Ting Shou-chung (丁守中), Pan Wei-kang (潘維剛), Wu John Chih-yang (吳志揚), Hou Shi-chyuan (侯西泉), and Hong Yuh-chin (洪玉欽).

Last year, so as to broaden the inspiration of Humanistic Buddhism, we founded the Buddha's Light Missionary Association, Chunghua to promote books and publications. Within the first year alone, we had already given away a few million copies of *365 Days for Travelers: Wisdom from Chinese Literary and Buddhist Classics*, *Hear Me Out: Messages from a Humble Monk*, and *Hear Me Out: Reflections* to thousands of hotels, hostels, airline companies, schools, libraries, hospitals, and correctional centers. Unprecedented, the book launch was held at Beijing Great Hall of the People. I believe that this collection of Buddhist and literary classics will allow Buddha's Humanistic Buddhism to shine in every human mind, and in every corner of the world.

Just as Buddha had avowed on the vajra seat, "How amazing! How amazing! All living beings possess the wisdom and virtue of the Buddha. It has merely concealed by their delusion and attachment." Every human being has the buddha-nature, and can attain buddhahood. The monastic and lay assemblies, who both propagate as well as protect the Dharma, certainly mutually own Humanistic Buddhism. The dissemination of Humanistic Buddhism rests on the shoulders of all Buddhists. Since this is an ineluctable responsibility, why discriminate between you and I as opposed to striving as one?

#### **4) Charitable Undertakings to Serve Society**

In order to benefit humanity, Buddhism advocates the bodhisattva practices of the Six Paramitas that lead to the concurrent liberation for oneself and others. The practice of these Six Paramitas begins with generosity, to the degree of financial charity, which is limited to momentary relief, but also at the higher levels of giving Dharma and fearlessness. Though the

latter two forms of generosity are hardest to apprehend, since most people are only aware of philanthropy in the form of money. That is why charity is a favored option among Buddhists, whilst culture and education, though equally as important, are considered of greater difficulty and less preferred.

Buddhist charity works began from as early as Buddha's time. As aforementioned, Buddha's disciples built public bathrooms, called on the sick, and provided free medicine. Sudatta the Elder, King Bimbisara, and Visakha donated housing and viharas. King Asoka held open banquets to feed the famished, built pharmacies, and welfare houses to provide supplies such as medicine and food to travelers and the sick and the destitute. They were all forerunners in Buddhist charity and social welfare.

After Buddhism came to China, many Buddhist masters abided by the Buddha's teachings and conducted charitable activities to serve society. Furthermore, they also established free schooling, planted trees and forests, dug wells besides offering water, paved roads and built bridges, gave away free porridge and caskets, founded loan centers, "inexhaustible storehouses," and infirmaries. Any work that benefits and assists living beings is an instrument of the Bodhisattva path through which Humanistic Buddhism is connected with society.

The list of charitable deeds by eminent masters from the past is endless. Yet one should not dismiss contemporary charitable acts by Humanistic Buddhists. Especially after the Xinhai Revolution, Buddhist reform movements began, and Buddhists thus actively played their role in relieving living beings from distress. Although temples were also damaged by floods and droughts, once restored they also set up charity groups and established retirement homes as well as orphanages. In a time of chaos and distress, other than providing relief to victims of disasters, rescuing wounded soldiers, providing emergency relief aids, they also established Buddhist hospitals and monastic rescue teams to rescue soldiers on battlefields, bury the deceased, as well as conduct prayer services for the victims and the affected. Without doubt, Humanistic Buddhism has conducted charitable activities and social works at all levels.

Since the early Republic of China period, many lay Buddhist associations already existed such as the Association of Righteous Buddhist Faith in Hankou, Shanghai Pure Karma Society, Buddhist societies in Chengdu, Chongqing, and Henan, and Lay Buddhist Societies in Shanghai, Beijing, Tianjin, and Changsha. In times of calamity and conflict, many bodhisattvas such as Xiong Xiling (熊希齡, 1870-1937), Di Baoxia, Wang Yiting (王一亭, 1867-1938), Li Chenbai (李塵白), Gao Henian (高鶴年, 1872-1962), Jiang Weinong (江味農, 1872-1938), Wu Bihua (吳璧華), Kang Jiyao, Zhu Qingian (朱慶瀾, 1874-1941), Xi Zhongxun (習仲勳, 1913-2002) (father of President Xi Jinping), and Zhao Puchu have

stepped up to help Buddhism through hard times by offering their time and money. Some temples even offered camp space for troops and shelters for the displaced. Are these not great acts of generosity?

Looking back to my days at Qixia Vinaya College, perhaps the greatest feat that Qixiashan Monastery had ever realized was taking in over two hundred thousand refugees during the Sino-Japanese War in 1937. General Liao Yaoxiang (廖耀湘, 1906-1968), a high-ranking commander who fought against the Japanese, was also hiding among the refugees. The monastics at Qixiashan helped conceal his identity to help him reach the frontlines in order to continue his duty in defending the country. Have Buddhists not contributed to their country and society? Throughout this occurrence, my master Venerable Master Zhi Kai was said to have made tremendous contributions, mayhap the cause of his promotion to superintendent and then Abbot of Qixiashan.

### **1. Sincere Acts of Generosity through the Four Givings**

I had once divided generosity into four stages:

*Stage one: the giving of money.*

*Stage two: the giving of labor.*

*Stage three: the giving of language.*

*Stage four: the giving of heart.*

In stage one, sometimes giving too much money does not truly help. Even when willing to volunteer one's labor, at times there is not that much to be done. In contrast, there can never be too kind a word spoken, especially, to offer one's kind intention and blessing, and to pass on the Truth and Dharma. To always be ready to give others faith, give others joy, give others hope, and give others convenience. Such kind acts as performing a handful of good deeds, or showing a face full of smiles are all forms of giving.

To a more profound degree, though I have neither given money nor my labor, but simply and humbly felt joyful of as well as praising those who gave, then the merit attained is the same as that of the benefactor. In effect, the merit of rejoicing in others' act of giving is even greater. This would be the bearing of a practitioner of Humanistic Buddhist.

The essence of generosity is attainment of "Emptiness of all three aspects of giving," namely, formless giving. The act of generosity in Buddhism is empty of desire for profit and fame or quid pro quo. Above all, the act of generosity must not be used as a disguise for investments. It would be against the law of cause and effect to use people's charitable donations for any other purposes.

Venerable Ta Hsing once told me that when someone makes a donation to him for the purchase of fruits, he would mark the red packet correspondingly and never use it for another purpose. If the donation was for tea, he would mark “tea” on the packet. This was to ensure that the cause and effect of his actions were clear. Thus, if someone donates money to you for charity and relief aid, but you spend it on purchasing real estate or any other endeavor, you are therefore behaving contrary to cause and effect. This would be wrong. Donations made for construction of temples should only be used on construction expenses, neither on real estates nor on opening department stores. Donations made to carve Buddha sculptures should be expended only on Buddha sculptures, not on establishment of schools. Black and white cannot be confounded. Charitable endeavors must be carried out righteously and ethically so as to be in accordance with the law of cause and effect.

Acts of kindness, as advocated by Humanistic Buddhism, serve the purpose of reviving the bodhisattva deeds of Buddha from his previous lives into the present. Specifically, they impart the largesse of fearlessness and formlessness. Just as Venerable Tzu Hang once said, the life of Buddhism rests upon three types of endeavors: culture, education, and charity. Moreover, other than these three, true Buddhist endeavors must be carried out based on the spirits of the Four Ways of Embracing, Six Paramitas, and Thirty-Seven Factors of Enlightenment.

The charitable endeavors of Humanistic Buddhism place emergency relief as priority over poverty, because the essence behind these is Dharma propagation. The greatest form of charity lies in the salvation of human minds rather than aids provided in the material or monetary forms. Thus the true import and substance of charity can be extremely profound. While material and monetary support will eventually end, the gift of Dharma will offer a lifetime's benefit, and even lifetimes of benefits.

Charity and relief works can also comprise admonishment against killing and the promotion of the sanctity of human life. For example, Lu Bicheng (呂碧城, 1883-1943) traveled to Europe and America to promote the sanctity of life. Master Hongyi and Fen Zikai's collective work on *Illustrations of Life Protection* also offered solace and peace to those living in chaotic times. During my early days in Taiwan, this work was then widely circulated. Later, when I built the Buddha Memorial Center, I embodied the one hundred and fifty-four illustrations into murals along the covered walkways of the Center as a means to promote the protection of life. Humanistic Buddhism exemplifies the mission of benefiting society and liberating all living beings. Beginning from a time bereft of nature and environmental protection awareness, Buddhists were already advocating the right to life at a time of monarchical rule and civil rights.

Speaking of the right to life, instead of liberating lives, one may as well be protecting lives since such acts carry the purpose of nurturing compassion and love for animals as well as raising awareness of environmental protection. The conviction that one can accumulate merit by releasing lives on celebratory occasions such as one's seventieth or eightieth birthday is absolutely mistaken. To procure and release animals is actually an act of killing, not of merit.

It is unfeasible to purchase all animals requiring freedom. The only way to save lives is through our compassionate hearts. It is hoped that all means of life liberation can be achieved by holding true to the spirit of "ceasing all evil and practicing all good." This is the best form of safeguarding life. Rather than spending three or five thousand dollars to purchase and then release a tortoise, one may as well expend that money on educating people with the right attitude of not taking a life and the sanctity of living beings.

## **2. Prison Programs to Nurture Compassion and Self-Awareness**

With regards to correctional center visits, the work began with the "Correctional Center Dharma Propagation Team" initiated by Venerable Nan Ting, Chao Mao-lin, many others and myself. Venerable Kuang Tzu, Ma Hsing-hui (馬性慧), Li Zi-kuan, Liu Chong-yi (劉中一), Chen Hui-fu (陳慧復), and I were among the many who took turns to visit. I have visited nearly every prison in Taiwan. For instance, the prisons in Taipei's Tucheng, Hsinchu, Taichung, Yunlin, Pintung, Kaohsiung, Hualien, Lanyu (Orchid Island), and Ludao. I even visited Stanley Prison in Hong Kong and several in America. Furthermore, I was the first Counselor of Rehabilitation and Education appointed by the Department of Justice.

I led a dialogue on life and death as well as rehabilitation with death row prisoners in Tucheng, likewise with over two thousand convicted of major crimes, nearly all still in their prime. I said to them, "If all two thousand of you became monastics just like me, imagine how much your compassion and contribution could help Buddhism and society."

I also conducted a Triple Gem Refuge Ceremony for inmates of Kaohsiung Women's Prison. A majority of them have been imprisoned for the violation of the Act of Negotiable Instruments. Specifically, these women were used as shells, facades that shielded illicit activity such as drug trafficking, and in fiduciary fraud by being used in illegal activities such as check kiting as well as money laundering. This resulted in them being convicted as perpetrators of crimes they had not committed. It is woeful to see women making such sacrifices for their husband. In truth, it is the women who have made the most contributions to this world by their sacrifices.

When Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) was the Minister of Justice, he frequently invited Fo

Guang Shan monastics to Tainan Ming De Drug Rehabilitation Center to aid as missionaries, living on the premises as well as spending twenty-four hours of every day with the inmates. This was rather unheard of. I had also advocated, to former Minister of Justice Liao Cheng-hao (廖正豪), the establishment of Halfway Houses to serve as buffer zones for inmates for four months upon completing their sentence to provide counseling for them.

In prison, security guards impose all manners of restrictions, but in a halfway house a moderate level of freedom should be offered. For example, the right to receive visitors, opt for their preferred diet, smoking cigarettes, and even outdoor excursions. When felons are subjected to a greater sense of human kindness and love, the chances of recurring hatred and anger will be minimized, and their ability to adapt to normal life improved.

That is why the Law needs to be enforced with a positive outlook towards life, so as to achieve the purpose of rehabilitation. Fo Guang Shan has held activities such as the Eight Precepts Retreat, Triple Gem Refuge Taking Ceremony, and even Short-Term Monastic Retreats inside prisons to assist in the process of rehabilitation and purification, as well as aid inmates in developing their compassion and self-awareness. Any repudiation of their worth within and to society will only drive them back to acts of crime.

In recent years, the lanterns displayed at Fo Guang Shan's New Year Festival of Light and Peace had all been works of correctional center inmates. In the process of creating these lanterns, not only had their characters changed, they were also able to regain self-esteem and a sense of honor. In 2012, the Changhua Prison Guwu Percussion Troupe even performed at the Buddha Memorial Center, which was well received by the public.

In recent years, industrial development has fuelled the speed of global warming, causing endless arrays of natural disasters and manmade calamities. In response to disasters such as the 1951 Hualien Earthquake, 921 Earthquake, Typhoon Nari, the SARS outbreak, Southeast Asia Earthquake Tsunami, Sichuan Earthquake, and Typhoon Morakot, Fo Guang Shan too has actively participated in works of disaster relief along with other organizations.

In July, 2014, the TransAsia air crash in Penghu and Kaohsiung gas explosions shook Taiwan. Buddhist, Catholic, Muslim, Taoist, Christian, and I-Kuan-Tao organizations united inside the Kaohsiung Arena and jointly held the "National Interfaith Prayer Service for the 731 Kaohsiung Gas Explosions and 723 Air Crash in Penghu." The service was attended by tens of thousands alongside President Ma Ying-jeou and presidents of all five government branches to pray for the victims.

### **3. Giving a Sense of Dignity in the Process of Acceptance**

The duty of disaster relief must be done with respect for the personal identity of the affected. We cannot use this as an opportunity to advocate Buddhism nor ask for contributions or recognitions in our works. When Typhoon Morakot struck, Fo Guang Shan offered shelter to victims who were Christians, and even arranged for pastors to come and lead them in prayers. Upon completion of their mission, a pastor prayed to a Buddha statue and said, "Thank you Buddha, for assisting us in carrying out God's will."

In truth, the work of relief is not carried out to save anyone but our own homes and ourselves. When the Sichuan Earthquake occurred, I reached out to the affected areas and declared, "I am here to repay you all." The giver and receiver are equal in merits. The act of receiving what is given also has its merits. Relief work must be done with a sense of dignity, and charity must be given under the circumstances that people feel at ease in receiving it.

Furthermore, we also offered assistance to the Churches. A Christian Sister, having served in Taiwan for decades, wished to return home to retire, and we were more than happy to sponsor her travel expenses. When Cardinal Paul Shan SJ (單國璽, 1923-2012) fundraised for Mount Beatitude, Fo Guang Shan likewise made contributions to the project. The charitable works in Humanistic Buddhism span beyond faiths, beyond regions, with no expectations, and without gains.

#### **4. Dharma's Purifying Effect on the Mind's Greed, Anger and Ignorance**

The charitable endeavors of Humanistic Buddhism carry the mission of spreading Buddha's loving-Kindness and compassion to the world and in enhancing people's faith in the Dharma. For this reason, Fo Guang Shan's Cloud and Water Mobile Clinic extend to remote areas to provide medical care. The Fo Guang Senior Citizen's Home provides the solace of faith for the elderly in their latter years. Da Ci Children's Home has assisted over eight hundred children in starting their own families for the past forty years. In addition, there are events such as the Compassion and Loving-kindness Campaign, Retrieve Our Hearts, and also the establishment of the Public Education Trust Fund that gives out awards such as Truthful, Virtuous and Beautiful Media Award as well as the Three Acts of Goodness School Awards. Fo Guang Shan has also constructed over fifty Water and Cloud Mobile Library Trucks to bring books and knowledge to children in remote areas. These are all means through which the meaning of charity is further enriched and elevated.

Without the guidance of a truly wise mind, generosity is far from the ultimate Buddhist teaching of compassion and merely an act of kindness. Buddha's original intents in teaching are to eliminate the root of suffering by purifying human minds of the Three Poisons: greed, anger and ignorance. This is the only way to truly free humanity from the tribulations of

natural disasters and manmade calamities.

Throughout the long span of Buddhist history, the spread of Buddhism would not have been possible without the great act that is generosity. Yet, in Humanistic Buddhism, the practice of giving in the form of wealth, Dharma, and fearlessness are even more transcending and precious. In our contemporary society permeated by fear and insecurity, irrespective of the extent of law enforcement or availability of security systems, countless still feel vulnerable. Therefore, in order for people to be free from fear, the gift of Dharma to elevate moral standards and enhance righteousness is fundamental.

The aforementioned endeavors of the Bodhisattva path are all in accord with the spirit exhibited by the Buddha from the ancient Indian times to modern Chinese society. To transform humanitarian charities into the selfless bodhisattva aspiration that never expects anything in return is a practice that is in accord with the buddha mind as well as the needs of humanity. By keeping true to the Buddha's original intent, we also stay true to the ultimate principles of charity.

## **5) International Propagation for the Globalization of the Dharma**

The spread of Humanistic Buddhism does not only take place in this world. Indeed, the Dharma spreads across the boundless dharma realms and the three thousand great chiliocosms. As told in the *Amitabha Sutra*, "Each morning, all beings in His land each wraps a rich variety of lush flowers in their garments and offers them to the billions of buddhas in lands of all directions." To follow this tradition in the Buddha lands, our international Buddhist events today are but trivial matters.

During the Republic of China era, International Buddhist conferences, delegations, and interfaith dialogues already existed. For example, in 1924, the World Buddhist Federation initiated by Master Taixu took place in Lushan, Jiangxi. In the following year, Master Taixu led a delegation from the Buddhist Association of China to Japan for the East Asia Buddhist Conference. This was the first official meeting between contemporary Chinese and Japanese Buddhists.

In 1928, Master Taixu went to Europe and America to give Dharma lectures; over there, he founded the World Buddhist Studies Center in Paris. He was the first Chinese Buddhist monk to bring the Dharma into Europe and America, where Cai Yuanpei introduced him to renowned philosopher Bertrand Russell. In order to promote the internationalization of Buddhism, Master Taixu subsequently sent students to Japan, Tibet, India, Sri Lanka and other countries to pursue their studies.

When the Sino-Japanese War broke out, Master Taixu founded the Buddhist International Delegations in 1939 and travelled to Burma, India, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Malaysia and other countries to foster a resistance movement against Japan. Upon arrival in India, he received a grand welcome by cheering crowds teeming the streets. About this he wrote a poem:

*Gandhi, Taixu, and Nehru; always greeted by thunderous cheers from the crowd.  
From Varanasi to Kushinagar; the streets are always filled with people.*

In 1943, the Chinese Religious Fellowship was founded, uniting religious organizations and their followers of the nation in resistance against Japan. I distinctly remember Master Taixu being the Buddhist representative, General Pai Chung-hsi (白崇禧, 1893-1966) as the Muslim representative, and Cardinal Bishop Paul Yu (于斌, 1901-1978) as the Catholic representative. In the face of national crisis, religious groups inherently united and nurtured fellowships.

Some time later, the Civil War drove numerous monastics from the Mainland to Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and Malaysia, thereby bringing Humanistic Buddhism to other nations. For my part, although war brings nothing but misfortunes, it is not an utter loss if, in the process, philosophical and cultural dissemination is kindled.

In 1963, the international spread of Humanistic Buddhism began in Taiwan through a Buddhist Delegation of the Republic of China initiated by the Buddhist Association of the Republic of China. The delegation visited Thailand, India, Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines, Japan, Hong Kong and other countries. As the spokesperson, I have chronicled all the particulars in my books *Traces Over the Sky and Ocean* and will not expound on them here.

As Buddhist studies and sectarian development in Japan were quite prosperous, coupled with the short distance from Taiwan, exchanges occurred frequently. In 1974, the China-Japan Buddhist Progress Society was founded with Venerable Master Niwa Renbo, Director of Japan's Soto School, and myself as Presidents from respective sides. Throughout the past decades, we have had the honor of making acquaintances with outstanding leaders from Japan. For example, Furukawa Taiko—abbot of Myoshin-ji of the Rinzai Sect, and prominent professors such as Tsukamoto Zenryu, Mizuno Kogen, Nakamura Hajime, Hirakawa Akira, Kamata Sihgeo, Makida Tairyō, Ando Toshio, Maeda Egaku, Mizutani Kosho. Regularly, they visited Taiwan and Fo Guang Shan to present papers or teach at the Tsung-Lin University. When Venerables Tzu Chuang, Tzu Hui, Tzu Jung, and Tzu Yi (慈怡) studied abroad in Japan, they too had a chance to confer with these eminent professors.

Japanese Buddhism followed a somewhat different path from that of Chinese

Buddhism. Their faith shifted from Buddha to patriarchs, from public temples to family heritage, and from observing precepts to simply acting as priests, solely preaching without having to lead a strictly disciplined monastic life like that of bhiksus. As Buddhist priests, having a family is considered acceptable.

In terms of Korean Buddhism, after I initiated the China-Korea Buddhist Progress Society in 1974, Fo Guang Shan has remained in close contact with the Jyogye Order's Three Triple Gem Temples—Tongdosa Temple (representing the Buddha gem), Haeinsa Temple (representing the Dharma gem), and Songgwangsa Temple (representing the Sangha gem), alongside renowned schools such as Dongguk University and Geumgang University. Annually, Fo Guang Shan welcomes, on average, a dozen groups from Korea. Korea enjoys a long history of Buddhism, yet it is a pity to see that nearly all renowned monasteries are found in the remote and isolated mountain forests. In contrast, the Christian Churches built at the crossroads have thrived tremendously. In fact, if we wish for the pervasiveness of Buddhism in this world, then we must first consider the locations of the temples to provide better access for the public.

### **1. Passions for the Dharma that Led to Worldwide Dissemination**

In 1978, Venerables Tzu Chuang and Yi Hang (依航) settled in a small church within Los Angeles in the United States with the mission of constructing Hsi Lai Temple. One day, Venerable Thien-An from the University of California visited with a group of eighteen Theravadan bhiksus, cramming the spaces of the temple. As a way to welcome my fellow Dharma propagators in a strange land, I cooked a vegetarian feast for them. With regards to scholarly exchanges, then Harvard Ph.D. student Pruden also dwelt at Fo Guang Shan for a year as a fellow.

With Hsi Lai Temple in America as starting point, Humanistic Buddhism thus began to spread to the West and to the rest of the Five Continents. Considerable gratitude goes to the Chinese immigrants and local governments in various parts of the world. For example, our endeavor in Brazil was made possible with Chang Sheng-kai's (張勝凱) generous donation of his own house, which subsequently was rebuilt as Zu Lai Temple. In the Netherlands, Luo Fu-wen (羅輔聞) petitioned for the government to donate a piece of land for the construction of He Hua Temple. In Switzerland, He Zenwei (何振威) convened four thousand Buddhists and helped establish the local BLIA Chapter. In Australia, the construction of Nan Tien Temple was made possible with the support of the CEO of BHP and Wollongong Mayor Frank Arkell. In Malaysia, Dong Zen Temple is visited by an average of one million people each new year, which would have been impossible without the blessings of Venerables Zhu Mo, Jin Ming (金

明), and Guang Yu (廣餘), as well as Tan Sri Dr. Koh Tsu Koon (許子根), then Chief Minister of Penang and also Mr. Khoo Poh Kong (邱寶光). With their enthusiasm and passion for the Dharma, the global spread of Humanistic Buddhism thus found its root.

The key to international propagation lies in the nurturing of multilingual talents. Throughout the past decades, there are Venerable Tzu Hui who is fluent in both Japanese and Taiwanese, as well as Venerable Miao Guang (妙光) who speaks English and has continued the works of international academic exchanges under the FGS Institute of Humanistic Buddhism. In Japan, there are Venerables Man Jun (滿潤) and Tzu Yi who have supervised the construction of Housuiji Temple in Gunma. In Hong Kong, Venerables Man Lian (滿蓮) and Yung Fu (永富) continue to organize the annual large-scale Dharma events in Hong Kong Coliseum and Victoria Park. In Brazil, Venerables Chueh Cheng (覺誠), Miao Yuan (妙遠), and Chueh Hsuan (覺軒) are providing education to impoverished children. In the Philippines, Venerables Yung Guang (永光) and Miao Jing (妙淨) are leading the cast of “Siddhartha: The Musical” on a world tour around America, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Mainland China. In Europe, there is Venerable Man Chien (滿謙), and also Venerables Ru Hai (如海) and Chueh Hsin (覺心) in Spain, Chueh Rong (覺容) and Miao Da (妙達) in France. In Chile, there is Miao Guan (妙觀). In America, Venerables Hui Dong (慧東), Ru Yang (如揚), and Chueh Chuan (覺泉) are engaging in interfaith dialogues locally and at the United Nations. In Berlin, Venerable Miao Yi (妙益) is now leading German nationals in the daily maintenance works of the temple such as morning and evening chanting, table services, cooking, and shrine attendance works. Similarly in Chung Tian Temple, Brisbane, the daily routine is managed by a group of national Australians. After a few decades, localization of Humanistic Buddhism is gradually happening.

## **2. Acculturating to Local Customs, and Development of Unique Characteristics around the World**

What does localization mean? Localization is about contribution and fellowship. Localization means to follow each culture, each place, and each custom to develop a unique feature in different ways. Localization does not imply the ‘removal’ of any elements but to ‘giving.’ It is hoped that through Buddhism, the people in each local area are given a more enriching spiritual life. This is exactly how Humanistic Buddhism holds true to Buddha’s original intent—To be accepted by people.

The spread of Humanistic Buddhism around the world not only faces differences in policy and culture, interfaith dialogue with the Christian, Catholic and Muslim communities are also very important. For this reason, I have always encouraged the local Catholics and

Christians to follow two faiths. This is akin to showing interest in both literature and philosophy in school.

Abiding by the principle of respect and tolerance, in my travels around the globe, I have been received by world leaders such as Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand, President Diosdado Pangan Macapagal of the Philippines, Vice President Al Gore of the United States, Malaysia Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, Singapore Prime Ministers Lee Kuan Yew (李光耀, 1923-2015) and son Lee Hsien Loong (李顯龍), Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott, and various leaders from Indochina countries. I have also met with religious leaders such as Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, and Cardinal Paul Shan Kuo-hsi SJ from Taiwan.

One thing worth mentioning is the World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB), which was co-founded by Master Taixu, Dr. Gunapala Piyasena Malalasekera from Sri Lanka and others in Colombo in 1950. In 1988, I had the pleasure of creating the cause for the WFB to step outside of Asia for the first time to hold the WFB 16th General Conference at Hsi Lai Temple in the United States. It was the first time in over decades for Buddhists from both sides of the Taiwan Strait to sit in the same conference in a Western country. This is said to bear similar significance with the 2015 meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou in Singapore. Other WFB General Conferences were subsequently organized at Nan Tien Temple in Australia, and Fo Guang Shan in Taiwan.

The WFB event in 1988 became a cause to an invitation extended by Zhao Puchu, President of the Buddhist Association of China to the International Buddhist Progress Society to organize a five hundred member “International Buddhist Dharma Propagation China Tour Group” from America to visit Buddhist temples in various Chinese provinces. The group was received by Yang Shang-kun (楊尚昆, 1907-1998), then President of the People's Republic of China for a one-hour meeting. We were then joined by Li Xiannian (李先念, 1909-1992), then Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in the Beijing Great Hall of the People for another meeting, followed by a banquet. It was unprecedented for monastics to be received inside the most supreme hall of the Communist Party, and also the highest form of reception to be given since the reform and opening of the Party.

In 2002, the Buddha's finger relic was escorted to Taiwan, which was yet another significant event. Under the signed authority by Jiang Zemin (江澤民), then General Secretary of the Communist Party of China that said, “Hsing Yun as the lead, united efforts in welcoming, enshrinement as one, and security as the top priority,” the Buddhist circle of Taiwan were thus authorized to unite as one, regardless of sects or traditions, to escort Xi'an Famen Temple's most treasured Buddha's finger relic to Taiwan. Then Chairperson of the

Mainland Affairs Council of the Republic of China, also 2016 President-elect, Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) assisted in arranging two Dragon Airlines charter flights to fly from Taipei via Hong Kong to Xi'an, creating a record in Cross-Strait direct flights. The entire process was recorded and broadcasted by Phoenix TV. Before direct flights opened up between the two Sides, Buddhism had already linked them together.

In 2003, with the support of Professor Tian Qing (田青) from the Chinese National Academy of Arts, and Ye Xiaowen (葉小文), then Director of the Bureau of Religious Affairs under the State Council, the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Monastic Choir was invited to perform inside the Beijing Forbidden City Concert Hall and Shanghai Grand Theatre. In hearing my closing remarks on the stage of the Grand Theatre, many of the Elder monastics who went to the concert broke into tears, for they had never seen any monastic permitted to publicly give an address. To them, it was truly comforting to see monastics given such opportunities after so many years of suppression.

Subsequently, Director Ye and Professor Tian further proposed the establishment of the Chinese Buddhist Music Performance Group in 2004 with Venerable Sheng Hui (聖輝), Vice President of the Buddhist Association of China as Chief, and Venerable Abbot Hsin Ting (心定) of Fo Guang Shan and Venerable XueCheng, Secretary-General of the Buddhist Association of China as Vice Presidents. Under the collaborative works of Venerables Tzu Hui, Tzu Jung, and Yung Fu, over one hundred monastics from the Four Major Buddhist Schools as well as the Theravada, Chinese, and Tibetan traditions were assembled to perform in national halls in Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan as well as top-class theatres such as the Kodak Theatre in the United States and Queen Elizabeth Theatre in Canada. If such collaborative works could continue, how can a friendly, peaceful, and united Cross-Strait relation not be possible in the future?

After the Cultural Revolution, the “Three Nos” policy were established by the Republic of China government, who insisted on “no contact, no compromise and no negotiation” with the Communist Party. As a result, any religious conferences were held as internal affairs. When the First World Buddhist Forum was under preparation, the Bureau of Religious Affairs actually sent a charter flight to take me to Hainan to hold a consultation. Subsequently the Forum listed Venerable Kok Kwong from Hong Kong, Venerable Yi Cheng (一誠) from the Buddhist Association of China, and Panchen (班禪) Lama from Tibet among one of the eight conveners. The First Buddhist Forum was held in Hangzhou, and the Second was opened in Wuxi and closed in Taipei, marking yet another page in Cross-Strait Buddhist exchanges.

In February 2013, I received an invitation to join the Taiwan Delegation lead by Lien

Chan (連戰), Honorary Chairperson of the Nationalist Party to visit Xi Jinping, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, and Hu Jintao (胡錦濤), President of the People's Republic of China. When I shook hands with Xi Jinping inside the Beijing Great Hall of the People, he said to me, "I have read your books." In reply, I said, "I have written a piece of calligraphy that says 'ascending high to see far.'"

The truth is, from as early as 2006, when I was in Zhejiang to attend the First Buddhist Forum, I already had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Xi when he served as the Governor of Zhejiang. When he initiated the construction of the Maitreya Big Buddha at Xuedou Temple, I wrote a piece of calligraphy that said, "Humanistic Maitreya," which is now found engraved on the seat of the Maitreya Big Buddha. Some time later, I had another opportunity to meet with him again in Beijing. In 2015 also, when I attended the Boao Forum in Hainan, Mr. Xi was present at the group photo with our delegation. He has reminded me of his father, Mr. Xi Zhongxun, who was a pious Buddhist who helped preserve Master Huineng's body relic when he served as Secretary of Guangdong Provincial Party. I am truly grateful to them for their protection and support for Buddhism.

After that meeting with Mr. Xi, I was then received by Yu Zhengsheng (俞正聲), Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. During the meeting, I proposed permission from the Party for the World Fellowship of Buddhists and the Buddha's Light International Association to hold their meetings in Mainland China so as to enhance fellowship and social harmony. With much gratitude, he saw through it and enabled the WFB to hold their general conference in Xi'an in October 2014. In the following October, BLIA also held its Board of Directors Meeting at the FGS Ancestral Temple—Yixing Dajue Temple. This extraordinary event would not have been possible without the assistance of Yu Zhengsheng, Wang Zuoan (王作安), Director of the State Administration for Religious Affairs, Wang Zhongsu (王中蘇), Secretary of Yixing City, as well as Yixing City Mayor.

As I look back to the incidents of international exchanges, the list goes on and on. For example, the World Tantric and Sutric Buddhist Conference, International Buddhist Academic Conference, World Fellowship of Buddhist Youth Academic Conference, Catholic and Buddhist International Dialogue and Conference, and various other inter-tradition, interfaith, and academic events. This gave me the opportunity to make acquaintances with eminent leaders such as Venerable Bhikkhu Sanghasena, Bhante Pannila Ananda, and Venerable K. Sri Dhammananda. In addition, Fo Guang Shan has also become Brother Temples with Wat Phra Dhammakaya in Thailand. For the past twenty years, the International Buddhist Monastic Seminar has been held annually. These are all important events in international Buddhist exchanges.

Other than the above, Professor David Chappell from University of Hawaii, Professor John McRae from Cornell University, Professor Stanley Weinstein from Yale, Professor Lewis R Lancaster from University of California, Berkeley, and also Professor from the Mainland such as Fang Litian (方立天), Lou Yulie (樓宇烈), Yang Zengwen (楊曾文), and Lai Yonghai (賴永海) are good friends of Humanistic Buddhism.

### **3. Friendly Exchanges Leading to the Actualization of the Humanistic Buddha Land**

A worldwide Buddhist movement requires the participation of all Buddhist leaders from the Mainland and Taiwan to make the globalization of Buddhism possible. What we have been able to achieve so far is the establishment of University of the West in America, Nan Tien Institute in Australia, and also Guang Ming College as well as the Academy of Art in Philippines who are propagating the Dharma in the form of musicals. There is also the Nan Hua Performing Arts School from Nan Hua Temple in South Africa. In Brazil, the Soccer Team made up of the Sons of Zulai is actively propagating Humanistic Buddhism through the means of soccer games. The Vienna Youth Philharmonic Orchestra is playing the sounds of the Dharma not only through their performances but also by composing their own music and lyrics. In India, Venerable Hui Xian (慧顯) continues with the education program for some one hundred novices in the hopes of revitalizing Buddhism there. It is hoped that these children will one day play a role in India's Humanistic Buddhism. In recent years, Fo Guang Shan have also become an annual gathering place for over a thousand students from some four hundred universities as a place of self-discovery and learning.

In the past, international travel was exclusive, not to mention international Buddhist activities. Today, monastic and lay Buddhists are found in all five continents of the world, working hand-in-hand to propagate Humanistic Buddhism. In particular, the Buddha Memorial Center has been receiving guests from all over the world ever since its opening in 2011. We are now in an era of fellowship that has transcended all background such as religion, and nationality. Is not this continued exchange and fellowship carried out under the spirit of oneness, coexistence, and mutual respect a manifestation of the Buddha Land already?

We hereby dedicate the abovementioned merits to all living beings within the Dharma realm. May happiness and peace be with all. Last but not least, may we dedicate all merits to the Buddha and show our gratitude to him by propagating Humanistic Buddhism, which holds true to Buddha's original intents.