

Everlasting Happiness,
as Buddha Attains 2

Presented by Venerable Da Shi

**Translated by
The Dharma Committee
Miao You Pu Ti Yuan (Singapore)**

Preface

Buddha came into this world to lead all sentient beings away from suffering and towards enlightenment. He forsook his throne and worldly possessions for the pursuit of enlightenment. It was his wish to guide all sentient beings in their understanding of the karmic cycle and the path to Nirvana. After his passing into Parinirvana, his teachings were collected and compiled by his followers.

It is Venerable Da Shi's wish to continue the Buddha's teachings, spread the seeds of compassion, and carry on his wish for all sentient beings to attain Nirvana. Since his ordination, Venerable Da Shi has been actively involved in the teaching of the Dharma in many places, including Taiwan, Malaysia, and Singapore. In 2004/2005, Venerable Da Shi was invited by the Life Television Station in Taiwan to present talks on various Dharma topics. This book was written based on the consolidated content of Venerable Da Shi's televised talks, in hope that his compassionate wish would be furthered through the spreading of the Dharma.

Foreword

EVERLASTING HAPPINESS, AS BUDDHA ATTAINS

Editorial Notes

The Buddha was born into this world out of great compassion with the aim to help all mortal beings avoid sufferings and attain endless bliss.

The world of mortal beings is full of suffering. It is a surreal world of endless desires and yet fulfillment of all desires is impossible. We have to work hard to find fulfillment but it is all transient. It is like a trap where we relentlessly pursue wealth, appearance, fame, gastronomic satisfaction, and excessive sleep without ever pondering what all these could lead to. We repeatedly go through birth, aging, sickness, and death and in this continuous cyclic existence, we suffer immeasurably.

The Buddha is like an expert doctor with the ability to diagnose and treat all kinds of ailments. Indeed, he dispenses

eighty four thousands procedures for as much trouble that mortal beings could possibly face in this world. All these are found in the Buddha's teachings. If we practice his teachings with complete faith and realization, besides saving ourselves from suffering in this life, we can also find liberation in time to come.

There are very few fortunate beings that have the chance to hear the Buddha's teachings. The number of people who are able to hear and learn the Buddha's Dharma teachings is said to be like the amount of soil caught in one's nail if one were to use hands to dig into the ground.

Everlasting Happiness, as Buddha Attains is translated from a Chinese compilation of Venerable Da Shi's Dharma teachings on television in Taiwan, R.O.C. He has used the Agama Sutra as the central focus of these teachings, supplemented by relevant Dharma from Mahayana Sutras, including the Prajna Sutras, the Middle Way, the Maha-prajna-paramita-Sastra, the Dasabhumika-Vibhasa-Sastra, the Saddharma-Pundarika, etc. for better understanding. Through his skillful narration and explanation, Venerable Da Shi has made the Buddha's Dharma very easy to understand and at the same time, interesting. There are also many citations of examples where one can apply in one's life and practice.

It is the wish of Venerable Da Shi that these teachings should reach out to more people, Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike. For Buddhists who have sought refuge in the Triple Gem, these teachings serve to strengthen their understanding of the Dharma and improve practices. For non-Buddhists, may it serve as a guide to attain true bliss.

There are a total of four chapters in this book, dwelling on two main themes. The first theme addresses the various challenges in our life and what we could do to overcome these challenges. The second theme explains what is destiny and how we could change our destinies. This is the second instalment of a translated series and it will also be made available on our website at www.mypty.sg. Other topics in the series will be published progressively in subsequent books.

The Dharma introduced in this series is in the Chinese Mahayana tradition, the text of which are translated from Sanskrit scriptures. Hence, Sanskrit has been used for the names and specific Buddhist terminologies in the text. Readers can find help from the footnote on the relevant page and the Glossary at the end of the book for explanation of common Buddhist terms (first appearance in italics in the text) and concepts.

~ FOREWORD ~

The Dharma Editorial Committee at Miao You Pu Ti Yuan in Singapore wishes all readers blissful fulfillments in reading.

@@@ This work is an effort to uphold and support Venerable Da Shi's great vow of spreading the Dharma in gratitude of the Buddha's compassion. Please help to spread the wisdom and cheers of the Dharma by passing this book on to someone else should you feel that you do not need it anymore. As the Buddha taught, the gift of the Dharma excels all gifts! May all have the chance to know the Buddha's Dharma! @@@

***The Dharma Editorial Team
Miao You Pu Ti Yuan (Singapore)***

What is the biggest challenge in life? (1)



What is the biggest challenge in life? When we were asked to commit to cultivation, practice generosity, or take refuge in the precepts, many of us would complain how difficult these tasks are. So, is it really much easier to simply eat, drink, and party our way through life?

Is it difficult to surpass the peak?

Once on a plane, I read a magazine titled “Over the Edge”. It carried an article about people who made their way into the “Guinness Book of Records” through their unique skills. These people were considered to have made it “over the edge”.

To a Taiwanese, where is this peak and how do we surpass it? In Taiwan, the President holds the most important position within the country, so we might consider that as a peak. Slightly down the hierarchy, a position as the head of the Chambers of Parliament might also be considered as a peak since these are positions of key importance. Or, how about competing for the Olympic gold medal or even the Guinness Record as the peak? Should we consider pursuing all these?

These goals while seemingly difficult are actually not the most challenging ones to achieve. Is it difficult to dominate the courts or courses like Michael Jordan or Tiger Woods? The answer is negative if you know the *Dharma* and are aware of the law of cause and effect. Being a top leader is not difficult at all. And, why is this so?

Example

In ancient India, King Asoka once ruled the entire Indian peninsula. When he ascended the throne, he used force,

power, and influence to establish his authority. Under his reign, one chose either submission or death, and through this method of subjugation over his subjects, many perished as a result. At one point, he built a death cell for condemned prisoners. He then appointed a vicious guard and instructed him, "All who enter shall die. No one shall be let out alive."

A *Bhikshu* later entered the prison to collect alms. Only upon entering did he realize it was a death cell.

The guard told him, "Since you have entered this place, you must die here."

Bhikshu Hai told the guard, "But I entered by mistake; I did not come in because I have committed any crime."

The guard said, "The King has ordered that regardless of causes and conditions, all who have entered this place must die here."

The Bhikshu felt he had been wrongfully charged and so he pleaded with the guard, "My apologies! Please give me one month's time to attain realization through cultivation. As a monastic, I aim to be liberated, let me attain realization first before my death."

The guard replied, "I cannot allow that." The Bhikshu asked, "Then, could you just grant me seven days?"

“Fine! You have to die eventually, I shall grant you seven days!”

Although the Bhikshu practiced conscientiously, single-mindedly, and with urgency, he still could not attain realization. The guard constantly reminded him of his impending execution.

On the last day, a beautiful and shapely woman who had committed adultery, was brought into the death cell. Once inside the cell, the guard used a device to grind the beautiful woman into minced flesh.

The Bhikshu witnessed how the beautiful woman was grinded into minced flesh. Initially, he thought that she could maintain her beauty and remain beautiful. But, what remained of her was minced flesh which looked repulsive and unclean. He then realized that the woman, who originally appeared to be clean and beautiful on the outside, was in fact unclean.

As a result, the Bhikshu was able to perceive that which was impure, impermanent, suffering, and selfless. He then reflected upon himself and saw that he was impure, impermanent, suffering, and selfless. When he developed

abhorrence for this body and the *five aggregates*¹, he immediately attained *Arahatship*.

The next morning, the guard said to the Bhikshu, “Your time is up! Now, you have to go into the boiling pot.” Then, the guard threw him into the boiling cauldron. Suddenly, a giant white lotus materialized in the cauldron and the Bhikshu sat on it unharmed. Upon seeing this, the guard immediately reported to King Asoka.

King Asoka came and saw the unbelievable sight of the Bhikshu sitting on the white lotus flower. He asked the Bhikshu, “Who are you?” “I am a Bhikshu.” replied the Bhikshu. “What happened to you?” King Asoka asked again. The Bhikshu replied, “I have attained the exhaustion of contamination and the end of *defilements* (in other words, the Bhikshu had

¹ Through the practice of the contemplations of the body, such as the contemplation of the thirty-two parts of the body (see topic on “Moon in the waters”), one would be able to see that the body is unclean and impure, and therefore would not crave for and cling on to it. In this way, detachment (or in the case of Bhikshu Hai, abhorrence) is developed, which in the case here, further develops to abhorrence. Similarly, when one practices the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, one would be able to perceive the body is impure, that all feelings are sufferings, that all thoughts are impermanence, and that all phenomena are selfless. In this way, one would not crave for and cling on to the five aggregates, and develop detachment from them.

attained Arahathship). Hence, I am able to sit on the white lotus flower without being boiled to death in the cauldron.”

At this time, the Bhikshu had also developed *supernatural powers* and so he said to King Asoka, “Oh Great King! Do you recall what happened in your past lives? The *Buddha* once said that you will protect and maintain the *Triple Gem*, and that you will attain Buddhahood in the future. Do you still recall this?” King Asoka answered, “Is that so? What did the Buddha say a hundred years ago?”

The Buddha said, “This person will be the king of a great kingdom, and be known as King Asoka. He will protect and maintain the Triple Gem and build 84,000 stupas to house and honor my relics, giving sentient beings the opportunity to cultivate merits and obtain wisdom. This person is a great king who will protect and maintain the Triple Gem.”

“What are the causes and conditions that would enable that person to become a king in the future?” “Today, while I was collecting alms on the road, a little boy and his companions saw the Buddha. They then took the sand pagoda they were playing with, and respectfully offered it to the Buddha. As a result, the little boy would rule over a great kingdom one hundred years after my *Parinirvana*, and he will also be able to protect and maintain the Triple Gem.”

King Asoka was delighted, “So, because I made offerings to the Buddha in my prior life, I am now a king. My past deeds have bore fruit in this life. The Buddha also said that I will protect and maintain the Triple Gem, and will be liberated in the future. In this life, I have already created much *karma* through all these killings. I must quickly confess and repent for such criminal karma, practice self-cultivation, preserve the precepts, cultivate the mind, and practice in accordance with wisdom.”

King Asoka immediately seized the opportunity provided by the cause and conditions to protect and maintain the Triple Gem. At the time of his death, he was already a Noble One who had attained the *first stage of fruition*. Even though he had only offered a pagoda made of sand to the Buddha in his previous life, he became the king of such a great kingdom in his present life.

Therefore, it is neither difficult to become a king nor to become a president. How do we know this? We know this through the Dharma. If you do not understand how precious the Dharma is, all your efforts, schemes, means, and methods used in the pursuit of power shall be futile. Because only through the causes in our past lives may such fruits ripen in this life.

~ WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN LIFE? (1) ~

The biggest challenge in life is not about attaining positions of power, becoming a top entrepreneur, or winning an Olympic gold. As long as you understand the Dharma, the law of cause and effect, karma and retribution; and you practice generosity and uphold the precepts, all these shall be within reach.

A Buddhist would not really desire these achievements as they are merely by-products on our path towards the ultimate goal. In refining petroleum, we will get diesel, natural gas, or other by-products but these are not our primary objectives. Similarly, before we become a Buddha, we will definitely become a great king or a *deva* king and these are not our ultimate targets.

What is the most difficult thing in life?

The biggest challenge in life is to be free from worries, unhappiness, or anger when you encounter suffering; and to be free from cravings or attachments when you experience happiness.

When you free yourself from desires and attachments in your daily life, you will be able to perform wholesome deeds, and avoid creating unwholesome ones. This is the biggest challenge of all.

1) To face suffering without worry or anger

Example 1

The *Bodhisattva* who translated “The Great Ānāpānasmṛti Sūtra” was An Shigao, who came from ancient Persia (modern day Iran). Iran in ancient times was the site of a huge kingdom, and An Shigao was a prince in that kingdom. He had been cultivating in his past lives and had attained supernatural powers.

When he left his homeland for China, he was once inexplicably hacked to death on the road by a person wielding a knife. His consciousness returned to Persia to take rebirth as a prince again. The prince continued to cultivate himself, and returned to China during the Han Dynasty. One day, he met a person on the road and told that person, “You killed a monastic when you were young.” “Oh! How did you know?”

“I was the person you killed.” The prince then related how he was killed.

“How should we resolve this? It seems like our meeting is inevitable.”

~ WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN LIFE? (1) ~

An Shigao told him, “You need not be afraid, as I have no intention to kill or harm you, and I will not report you to the magistrate. All I need is your help as a witness to the magistrate for an incident that will occur tomorrow. While I am on the road tomorrow, a creditor² from my past life will cross my path. Although he has no intention to kill me, the shoulder pole that he uses to carry goods will hit and break my head. You have to help by bearing witness to the fact that he did not kill me and that it was his shoulder pole which accidentally hit me. Having created enmity with him in my past life, I will die by his shoulder pole in this life as a result. Please bear witness to this incident so that he will not be imprisoned.”

Such kindness and *compassion* within a monastic with cultivation! He did not blame others, instead showed empathy and compassion. This is the relationship between the law of cause and effect.

The next day, An Shigao met up with the creditor and was killed by the shoulder pole just as he foresaw. The person who killed the previous incarnation of An Shigao, then

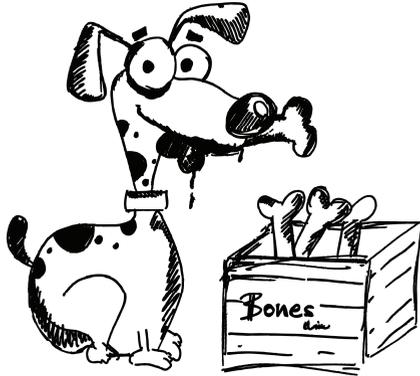
² “Creditor” here refers to people to whom one has relationships in past lives, which could be as enemies or relatives, and to whom one has been indebted.

became a witness to the incident. He confirmed that the creditor did not kill An Shigao and that the incident occurred merely due to the relationship between the law of cause and effect. This incident led many to believe in the Dharma and the law of cause and effect, thereby helping many to develop kindness and compassion.

An Shigao's consciousness then went back to Persia, where he again became a prince, joined the monastic order and practiced as a monastic. He went to China again and started to translate the Buddhist scriptures to save and liberate many people.

We may not have the supernatural powers that An Shigao had, but we have the *Right Views* of the Dharma. With this priceless treasure given to us by the Buddha, we are able to understand the *Right View of Dependent Arising*. Hence, when faced with difficult or unfavorable situations, we may be free from worries and anger throughout the suffering, just like An Shigao.

Example 2



If we do not practice in this manner, we will be like the dog and its meat bone. When we throw a stone to a dog, it will think that the stone is a piece of meat bone, and will start chewing continuously on it until it bleeds and hurts itself. It will feel happy, thinking that the stone is a fresh, delicious piece of meaty "bone" when it is merely tasting the blood caused by the bleeding.

We behave in a similar manner: when someone stares at us, we take it to heart and start a quarrel and kick a fuss over it. Sometimes, we might even hurt ourselves through depression and agony, expecting a proper explanation from others. Or perhaps, we will feel angry when others

criticize us for being pretentious. We will hold on to every word and will stop at nothing to confront others. Under such circumstances, we are no better than those dogs.

As Buddhists, we must be clear and understand that criticisms and stares are like “stones” being directed at us, in expectation that we would behave as those dogs did. Hence, we should not fulfill such expectations by taking these criticisms, stares, or looks to heart. We should simply ignore them, turn around, and walk away. However, this will not be an easy task.

We know that cultivating merits would bring about meritorious rewards. King Asoka offered a sand pagoda, while Emperor Liang Wu-Ti built a platform to offer and worship Avalokitesvara, hence, they were able to rule over great kingdoms. But to overcome our inner mind and free it from hatred and worries, and yet not create any unwholesome karma; this would be more difficult. This is facing suffering without worry or anger.

2) *To experience happiness without greed*

When faced with joyous occasions, it is also a big challenge to neither crave nor cling onto them.

~ WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN LIFE? (1) ~

Example

How does a mouse end up in a mouse cage? Because it is attracted to the bait inside the cage. A kinder person might release it in a remote place but it would more likely be killed in an unpleasant manner.

Yet, we do resemble the mouse. People would often observe a lady's looks and dressing when she walks pass them. Our minds will revolve around her. Can you see how people lose themselves to temptations of the heart? How people lose themselves in the pursuit of wealth, lust, fame, and fortune. Like a mouse, we run into the cage, get trapped in it, and end up leaving our fates to be determined by others.

We need self-discipline to keep ourselves from falling into such traps. We may initially be able to recognize such traps and know not to lose our lives in them. But our habitual impulsiveness tends to draw us toward these traps. Hence, we should neither crave nor cling on to moments of happiness.

It is really difficult for us to not crave and we will easily fall into these traps when tempted with power and wealth. It is probably easier for us to practice generosity than to

control ourselves. To not worry in times of suffering, to not rejoice in times of happiness (i.e. to maintain *equanimity* when we encounter suffering or happiness), these are much more difficult to achieve.

3) *To expect nothing and be attached to nothing*

It would seem even more difficult to expect nothing and be attached to nothing. Fortunately, the Buddha has taught us the concept of the law of cause and effect, and the Right View of Dependent Arising; thus we know that we must expect nothing of this mundane world, because such pursuits will only bring us more suffering.

Without expecting anything in return, we will be able to protect and uphold the Triple Gem; and because we do not have attachments for any attainments, we will gain the *Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi* (the Supreme Complete Enlightenment), and Nirvanic liberation; this is the ultimate gift. If we can grasp this concept, we will be able to overcome the most difficult challenge in life and truly go “over the edge”!

People in the mundane world are all pursuing fame, fortune, wealth, and sexual desires. We should not be

~ WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN LIFE? (1) ~

envious of all these as these have no merits. We should instead be seeking happiness, freedom, and ease within our minds. This indeed is the most difficult challenge in life. To achieve this goal, we must adhere to the basic concepts of Buddhism, and commit ourselves to practice:

After we have learnt and listened to the Dharma, we must firmly believe in the law of cause and effect, eliminate all unwholesomeness and cultivate wholesomeness.

We must be able to develop deep insight into the causes and conditions, and be able to understand the true form of all things as they are.

We must be able to abandon desires, and be able to eliminate and rid ourselves of defilements.

4) *Generate Bodhicitta, and liberate all sentient beings*

We must generate *Bodhicitta* and liberate all sentient beings. As we develop progressively with time, we will realize; though we may still encounter distress, defilement, or temptation in our lives, we will always be able to overcome them. With our minds set towards attaining Nirvanic liberation, we will overcome these obstacles. At

that point, we will be able to observe the suffering of sentient beings in the mundane world, while remaining unaffected by their defilements; this is an important concept that we must master.

Example 1

The Buddha in one of his past lives practiced the *Four Divine States of Mind* for the whole of that lifetime: *Loving-kindness*, *Compassion*, *Sympathetic Joy* and *Equanimity*. At the end of that life, he was reborn into the *Brahma World*. Among his disciples, some took rebirth in the Brahma World or the six heavens of the desire realm, while others were reborn into the human realm as kings or head monks. Everyone who practiced the Four Divine States of Mind enjoyed great welfare and merits.

We are Buddhists who possess the *Right Faith* and *Right View*. As we receive such welfare and benefits, we would be able to appreciate the magnitude of the law of cause and effect, and understand how a small cause may generate a great effect. With this understanding, we would proceed to practice the *Four Noble Truths*, the *Twelve Links of Dependent Origination*, and practice the *Six Paramitas* to attain Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi. If we

~ WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN LIFE? (1) ~

reach this stage of cultivation through gradual and relentless practice, we will surely be provided for in the human world and the heavens, and also receive the respect and praise of those who dwell in them.

In the sutras, we can observe that celestial beings, from the six heavens of the desire realm to the Brahma World, would come to praise and pay their respects to the Bhikshus. During the Buddha's time, a king from a great kingdom once used five hundred umbrellas to shelter the Buddha from the sun when he took a trip. Celestial beings, the *Brahma* King, and King *Sakra* used five hundred umbrellas each to shelter the Buddha from the sun as well. Imagine this, there were a total of two thousand and five hundred umbrellas sheltering the Buddha from the sun; it must have been especially spectacular! All the celestial beings would similarly respect and honor the Buddha.

Example 2

Arahats and Bhikshus were also respected in the same manner. Often celestial beings would come and pay homage to Maha Aniruddha. They praised the *Arahats*, as they were Noble Ones who had abandoned the desires of the mundane world, eliminated their defilements, and had compassion for all sentient beings. "No one else in the

mundane world is more excellent than all of you!” This was how celestial beings praised the Arahats. When Maha Subhūti was ill, celestial beings would also come and pay respects and homage to him. They treated Mahakasyapa, Maha Sariputra, Maha Maudgalyayana, Maha Bakkula in the same manner; even Sramaneras were also respected in this manner.

Example 3

In the Anavatapta Pond, the Dragon King, Anavatapta-nāga-rājā, invited the Buddha to come and expound the Dharma. At that time, the mountain god of the Anavatapta Pond requested a sage with five supernatural powers to leave the Pond as the Buddha and the Arahats, including even Sramanera, Jun Tou³, were coming. Hence, it is clear that those who were able to gain liberation from defilements, encounter suffering without worry, or encounter happiness without joy, and those who expect nothing, and have no attachment to attainments, are all deserving of respect. This is also the most difficult challenge.

³ Sramanera Jun Tou had already attained liberation, i.e. he was already an Arahata with six supernatural powers.

Example 4

The kings in the human realm held even greater respect for the Buddha. There was a king from a great Indian kingdom, called King Prasenajit, who cited twelve reasons why the Buddha should be respected:

- 1) What separated the Buddha *Sangha* from the people in the mundane world? The people in the mundane world would engage in gossip about the rights and wrongs of others and always finding faults with them. But, in the Buddha Sangha, everyone was silent. They only spoke about the Dharma, the sayings of the Noble Ones, how one becomes a Buddha and how one attains liberation. They only spoke about practicing generosity, upholding precepts, cultivating meditative concentration, the Four Noble Truths, the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination, liberation, reducing desires, and eliminating defilements.

These were the topics discussed within the Buddha Sangha. Hence, we should not talk about the mundane details of our latest purchases or hold discussions over worldly topics about clothes, food, and politics. Such, discussions would lead to gossips over others. In the Buddha Sangha, nobody talks bad about others as

everyone would simply concentrate on their own cultivation. Even the kings have praised Buddhism. If a king or a president were to learn the Dharma and practiced in accordance with the Buddha's teachings, he will receive much acknowledgement and praise.

- 2) Within the monastic group, the Bhikshus may at times have differing opinions about the Dharma during their discussions, but they rarely argue over them. Even if a Bhikshu were to feel that the precepts were difficult to uphold and thus made the decision to return to the mundane world, he will not blame it upon the Triple Gem. He will instead admit, "It is I who can not uphold the precepts. This is why I cannot continue to remain in the Sangha as a monastic. I want to be a Buddhist who can protect and maintain the Triple Gem well. It is I who can not continue to cultivate myself and not because there were problems inherent within the Sangha or the Triple Gem."

Other heretics would criticize their religious institutions, their masters, and their fellow disciples but not the Buddha Sangha. For this reason, the king praised the World Honored One and the Triple Gem.

~ WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN LIFE? (1) ~

- 3) In other religions, practitioners would pursue the *five desires* of the mundane world, such as carnal desires, pursuing pleasures of the tongue and ear, and conflicts as well. However, in the Buddha Sangha, such behavior does not exist. Why do we not pursue the five desires? Because, we only seek liberation. The route to liberation, becoming a Buddha and attaining *Nirvana*, is only present in the Buddha Sangha. Hence, other than Buddhists, no one else is cultivating the pure practices and holy conduct⁴.
- 4) Regardless of how intelligent the practitioners of other religions were, they could not bring themselves to question the Buddha when they met him.
- 5) There were those who had intended to question the Buddha when they met him but upon doing so and listening to his exposition of the Dharma, they would leave in a joyous manner.
- 6) When some people met the Buddha, they would take refuge in the Triple Gem after requesting the Dharma from him.

⁴ Cultivation of pure practices that involves the discipline of celibacy.

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- 7) Some people, upon meeting the Buddha and listening to his exposition of the Dharma, would follow the Buddha and join the monastic order.
- 8) There were even those, who upon meeting the Buddha and listening to his exposition of the Dharma, not only took refuge in the Triple Gem and joined the monastic order, but also attained Arahatsip. After attaining Arahatsip, they were able to clearly identify the fallacies within other religions. At this point, they would also realize the excellence of being an Arahatsip. Upon becoming a Buddha, they realize the excellence of being a Buddha.
- 9) A king is honored as the monarch of a country and all lives and wealth of the ministers were gifted by the king. However, the fact is that the respect accorded to the king by the ministers could not be compared to their respect for the Buddha. This was because their respect for the Buddha was unrestricted, immeasurable, and boundless. This is the excellence of the Triple Gem.
- 10) The King's two great ministers were very respectful of the Buddha. When they slept, their feet would face the King and their precious heads would face the

~ WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN LIFE? (1) ~

Buddha. Hence, King Prasenajit had complete belief and faith in the Buddha!

11) “The Buddha came from the Ksatriya class. He was a Prince who joined the monastic order, while I am a Prince who became a King. You are the Dharma King, while I am the King of a country. You are eighty years old, and I too am eighty years old. You belong to a great clan, and I am also from a great clan.”

12) “Oh World Honored One! This Sangha of yours is truly outstanding. You can achieve Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi and also enable others to eliminate defilements. You are truly excellent! All kings praised the Buddha in this manner.”

Such words were not spoken by a single king, but all other kings as well. Hence, it is clear from these reasons that the Buddha truly deserves our respect.

What should we learn from the Buddha?

We know that it is not easy to attain Arahatsip, but what do we need to do to attain it? We must follow and learn from the Buddha, so as to understand what we need to learn when we

seek refuge in the Triple Gem. We should not aim to become kings, emperors, or presidents. Furthermore, if we do not continue our practice, what unwholesomeness could be generated?

Example

A person once said, “Through my practice, I want to become an emperor or a king in my next life.” A wise Buddhist told him, “Wishing to become a king is what we call greed. You may have experienced much suffering in this life when you upheld the precepts in this lifetime and endured much desires without developing greed. But, when you seek to become a president or an emperor in your next life, you would have, in fact, planted seedlings of greed in your heart.”

“Why do you say that?” “You may desire little right now, but to wish to become a king, an emperor, or a president, so that you can have everything, this is greed. You desire nothing in the present, but your desires are manifested in the future.” “The greater your authority, the more lives you may be responsible for through your mistakes. If you want to eat livestock, all these sentient beings will be killed for you. Thus, you will create karma in this way, and because of this, you will experience suffering and generate defilements. We should not engage ourselves in such pursuits; we should instead seek

to abandon suffering, attain liberation, and eliminate defilements.”

In our daily lives, how do we face this most difficult challenge?

In our daily lives, we should seek to overcome this most difficult challenge, which is “to abandon suffering, attain liberation, and eliminate defilements”. Let’s start with the easier part:

Example 1

“Those who had harmed my parents shall not stand while I do”⁵: It is right to be filial to our parents, but there is a saying in our society, “Those who had harmed my parents shall not stand while I do”. If someone had created bad karma against our parents (for example, inflicted harm upon our parents), we would naturally be worried and unhappy. But what did the Buddha say?

⁵ This Chinese saying refers to the enmity caused when one’s parents are harmed by others. Such enmity is considered irreconcilable in Chinese society. Hence, one should seek vengeance against those who had inflicted such harm.

The Buddha told us that we should not harbor vengeful intentions or commit acts of vengeance when our parents experienced suffering. This may seem different from that propagated by the mundane world, which would have required us to commit “rightful” acts of vengeance against those who harmed our parents.

But, the Buddha related a story about one of his past lives as a Longevity King. Oppressed by a neighboring country, the Longevity King thought, “Our neighboring country regularly invades my country, if I were to give up my royal throne to their king, everything will turn out fine.”

Thus, he gave up his country and land to the king of the neighboring country, and went into the mountains alone.

However, the king of that country continued to pursue him. Finally, due to a certain cause and condition, he was captured, “It doesn’t matter if you want my life, I will give you my life.” When he was being tied up, he told his son, “You must not seek revenge. Do not seek revenge.” The son remembered his father’s dying words. Subsequently, through various ways and means, he managed to get close to the neighboring king, and he could have killed the king with his knife, but he recalled his father’s last words, and held back his vengeance.

~ WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN LIFE? (1) ~

When the neighboring king knew about this incident he asked the son, “Why didn’t you take revenge?”

The son replied, “If I were to take revenge on you right now by killing you, your ministers would kill me. Those ministers, who are close to me, would also seek to kill them in return. In this manner, the killings would not cease, and the cycle of vengeance would not stop. Hence, my father, the wise Longevity King, told me not to seek revenge. Therefore, I am simply observing my father’s instructions to not seek revenge.”

The neighboring King finally gained an understanding of the matter. He not only married his daughter off to the son of the Longevity King, but also returned his land to him and allowed him to return to his own country. The enmity was thus resolved and ended. Therefore, there is a saying in the Buddha Sangha, “Repaying resentment with resentment would result in endless resentments.” If we were to repay hatred with hatred, it would be endless.

There is another saying, “Without resentment, one thus conquers resentment”. When a person has neither resentment nor hatred, he would be able to conquer a resentful and hateful mind. “Without resentment, one thus

conquers resentment. This is a timeless rule.” This rule has been tested through time and it will not fail. This is what we should learn in our daily lives. Is this difficult? Absolutely. But, we must still cultivate it. If we do not cultivate it, sentient beings will continue to live and die in the *cycle of existence*, and suffer in the lower realms. The Buddha compassionately reminded us of this, fearing that we will suffer.

Example 2

When someone defames your teacher, should you stand up for your teacher? If your teacher was bullied by others, should you stand up for him? For example, somebody said, “Venerable Da Shi is such-and-such” Faced with such criticism and defamation, should you speak up for him? Of course not, not at all. If we were to stand up for our teacher, the day would come when we enter the hell realm and *King Yama* would question us, “Why are you here?” “I stood up for Venerable So and So, and fought with other people.”

King Yama said, “You stood up for him, but is the karma created by you?”

“Yes! So what should I do now?”

“Well, you can hop into the frying pan!”

~ WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN LIFE? (1) ~

When we create unwholesome karma, we will end up in the frying pan, regardless of whom we were standing up for. It'll be too late to regret then.

Hence, the Buddha used all ways and means to teach and instruct us, that we should guard ourselves well against unwholesome karma while we are still alive; it would be too late by the time we enter the hell realm to suffer. We would already be suffering if King Yama was the one doing the teaching. Therefore, we must quickly cultivate ourselves while we are still alive and able to do so. There is no need to create karma on behalf of the teacher. When faced with criticisms, we must face them with wisdom; this is what we need to pay attention to.

Example 3

When faced with criticism and defamation, what should we do? In the past, there was a very famous Venerable, who frequently received gifts of offering. When he was criticized and defamed, he would give these gifts of offering to those who had criticized and defamed him. Why? In gratitude to the person.

This was because a person of fame would always receive lots of respect and offerings. If someone were to remind him of

his shortcomings, he should be thankful to that person. On a rainy day, those without umbrellas would get drenched and suffered. Those reminders to him were like umbrellas which kept him away from the rain. Therefore, he must be grateful to them. Being criticized and defamed and not respond with anger but instead, with gratitude towards those who criticized and defamed you, isn't this difficult? This is what we need to learn.

Example 4

Can we create unwholesome karma for our children? When a child was stung by a mosquito, his mother said to him, "Son! Don't kill the mosquito. If you do so, you will create unwholesome karma. Let your mother kill it for you." And, she killed the mosquito. A Buddhist with Right Faith would not kill the mosquito, but would simply chase it away. To not kill a mosquito would initially require great endurance, which is really difficult. A Buddhist must understand that though it is more difficult to resist the creation of unwholesome karma, it can still be cultivated. Though we love our children, we must also teach them the law of cause and effect. When you can endure and cultivate, you would be teaching your children the Dharma.

Example 5

Should we brave grave dangers and make great sacrifices for our friends? We frequently hear about this, is it right? No. Do not brave grave dangers and make great sacrifices for our friends. To do so would mean great misery, we should instead help our friends to liberate themselves from conflicts. Hence, the Buddha taught us that true friends will adhere to these three undertakings for one another:

1. When our friend is engaged in wrongdoings, we should advise him not to do so.
2. When he or she is doing good deeds, we must be happy and rejoice in gratitude for his good deeds, thus encouraging them to do more.
3. When a friend faces trouble or misfortune, we should not abandon him.

It is very difficult to adhere to these three undertakings.

Example 6

How should we genuinely help out a friend? Maha Sariputra had a very good friend, a Brahmin who practiced the way of the Brahma. Brahmin Tuo Ran became a corrupt official for

the sake of his wife and daughter, and someone reported this to Maha Sariputra. Maha Sariputra then approached and asked the Brahmin if he did such a thing. He replied, "It is true! I did this for the sake of my wife and daughter, who wanted some cosmetics." Maha Sariputra then told him, "By doing this, you will go to the hell realm. Do not do it. If King Yama were to question you, you would not be able to reply and you will experience suffering. Do not do it." "Fine! Fine! I will not do it." He then took refuge in the Triple Gem.

Some time after the Brahmin had taken refuge, someone informed Maha Sariputra that he was dying. Maha Sariputra came to see him, not forsaking his friend; he asked the Brahmin, "Are you experiencing much suffering at this moment?" "Yes! I am suffering."

"Are you going to pass on?" "Yes! I am." "Then I will teach you Dharma."

Let me ask you, "Which is better? The hell realm or the animal realm?" "The hell realm has much suffering; of course the animal realm is better."

"Between the animal realm and the hungry ghost realm, which one is better?" "The hungry ghost realm is better."

~ WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN LIFE? (1) ~

“Between the hungry ghost realm and the asuras, which one is better?” “The asuras is better.”

“Between the asuras and the human realm, which one is better?” “The human realm is better.”

“Between the human realm and the heavenly realm, the *Heavens of the Four Deva Kings*, which one is better?” “The Heavens of the Four Deva Kings is better.”

“Between the Heavens of the Four Deva Kings and the *Thirty-Three Heavens*, which one is better?” “The Thirty-Three Heavens is better.”

“Between the Thirty-Three Heavens and the *Yama Heaven*, which one is better?” “The Yama Heaven is better.”

“Between the Yama Heaven and the *Tusita Heaven*, which is better?” “The Tusita Heaven is better.”

“Between the Tusita Heaven and the *Nirmanarati Heaven*, which one is better?” “The Nirmanarati Heaven is better.”

“Between the Nirmanarati Heaven and the *Paranirmita Vasavartin Heaven*, which one is better?” “The Paranirmita Vasavartin Heaven is better.”

“Between the Paranirmita Vasavartin Heaven and the *Brahma Heaven*, which one is better?” “Brahma Heaven is good, Brahma Heaven is good.”

“Do you want to cultivate so as to take rebirth in the Brahma Heaven?” “Yes.”

So, Maha Sariputra taught the Brahmin the Four Divine States of the Mind. The Brahmin cultivated the Four Divine States of the Mind and upon his death, took rebirth in the Brahma Heaven.

A good friend should act in this manner: even as he was dying, Maha Sariputra did not abandon his friend; instead Maha Sariputra taught him how to cultivate and therefore helped him to avoid the hell realm. When the Brahmin was alive, he had created criminal karma through corruption for the sake of his wife and children; but Maha Sariputra did not abandon his friend when he was dying but instead came to teach him the path to a rebirth in the heavenly realm. Hence, Maha Sariputra was a very good friend.

Therefore, being good friend does not mean that we should brave grave dangers and make great sacrifices for our friend. Instead, we should teach our friend the way to cultivate

~ *WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN LIFE? (1)* ~

wholesomeness, the way to take rebirth in the heavenly realm, and the path to liberation and Buddhahood.

We need to have wisdom in order to overcome the most difficult challenge for us.

Glossary

Altruistic Joy: Also known as Sympathetic Joy or Mudita. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

Amitabha Buddha: The Buddha of Infinite Light and Infinite Life, who presides over the Western Pure Land, to which anyone can be reborn through single minded recitation of or meditation on the Buddha's name.

Anagamin: One who has attained the third stage of Liberation. Such a person has abandoned sensuous desires. Upon passing from the human realm, he will take rebirth in one of the five special worlds in the World of Form, called the Śuddhāvāsa worlds, or "Pure Abodes", from which he will attain Arahatship and will never return to the human realm. Hence, he is also known as a Non Returner. An Anagamin has abandoned the five lower fetters, out of ten total fetters, that bind beings to the cycle of existence. See also Arahatship.

Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi: The Supreme and Complete Enlightenment.

Arahat: One who has traversed the Eightfold Noble Path to reach the fourth and final stage of Liberation, called Arahatship. An Arahat has abandoned all ten fetters that bind beings to the cycle of existence. Also known as the Perfect One. See also Arahatship.

Arahatship: The fourth and final stage of Liberation, in which one is fully liberated from Samsara and is no longer subject to death and rebirth. The four stages of Liberation are: The First stage known as Srotapanna; the Second stage known as Sakradagamin; the Third stage known as Anagamin; and the Fourth stage known as Arahat.

Avici Hell: Also known as the Hell of Uninterrupted Torture. It is the deepest and worst hell. Those born in this hell suffer, die, and are instantly reborn to suffering without interruption, until they have exhausted the retribution for their evil karma.

Bad existences: The three lower realms of hell beings, hungry ghosts, and animals; as opposed to the good existences, which are the three realms of humans, asuras, and heavenly beings. See also Six realms of cyclic existence.

Bhikshu: A fully ordained male member of the Buddhist Sangha or monk observing 250 Precepts.

Bhikshuni: A fully ordained female member of the Buddhist Sangha or nun observing 500 Precepts.

Bodhicitta: Also known as the Bodhi-mind or the Bodhi-heart, in which "Bodhi" means "enlightened". It is the aspiration to attain supreme Enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Bodhisattva: A being who has developed Bodhicitta and is striving for enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Brahma King: The King of the Brahma World.

Brahma World: In the widest sense, this is the name of the World of Form; in a narrower sense, it is the collective name of the first three heavens of the World of Form. See also Three planes of existence.

Buddha: The Fully Enlightened One, who possesses perfect wisdom and compassion.

Chakravartin: A universal emperor and protector of Buddhism. Also known as Wheel Turning Monarch.

~ GLOSSARY ~

Compassion: Also known as Karuna. See also Four Divine States of Mind and Great Compassion.

Cycle of existence: See Samsara.

Cyclic existence: See Samsara.

Defilements: The mental states of greed, hatred, and delusion which temporarily cloud the mind and manifest in unwholesome actions. These defilements are seen as the very roots of samsaric existence and are known as the three poisons.

Deva: A heavenly being.

Dharma: The Teachings of the Buddha.

Eight precepts: Observed by lay Buddhists during certain retreats: (1) Do not kill; (2) Do not steal; (3) Do not engage in sexual activities; (4) Do not tell lies; (5) Do not take intoxicants; (6) do not wear bodily adornments, use perfumes, engage in singing and dancing, and watching dances or plays; (7) do not sleep in a raised bed; and (8) do not eat after noon.

Eightfold Noble Path: The fundamental teaching of the Buddha that shows the path that leads to the cessation of suffering: (1) Right View or Right Understanding; (2) Right Thought; (3) Right Speech; (4) Right Action; (5) Right Livelihood; (6) Right Effort; (7) Right Mindfulness; and (8) Right Concentration.

Eighteen kinds of transformation: Includes (1) moving objects or even worlds; (2) emitting fire from the body; (3) illuminating innumerable worlds; (4) causing sentient beings in all the six realms to be seen; (5) changing an object into something different; (6) roaming freely by penetrating walls, mountains, water, air, and so on; (7) rolling anything into a minute size; (8) enlarging objects to gigantic proportions; (9) storing up swarms of people, mountains, or earth within the body; (10) entering any group, assuming their forms and voices, preaching to them, and then disappearing; (11) magnifying the body to a thousand fold; (12) hiding this magnified metamorphosis; (13) subjecting sentient beings to one's will; (14) controlling the supernatural powers of those below one in spiritual achievements; (15) endowing sentient beings with eloquence; (16) restoring memory to those who forget the Dharma; (17) giving joy to listeners; and (18) lighting up the creatures in all the worlds.

Eon: See Kalpa.

Equanimity: Also known as Upeksa. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

First Stage of Fruition: Also known as the first stage of Liberation. One who has attained the first stage of fruition is known as a Srotapanna or Stream Enterer.

Five aggregates: Form, feeling, perception, volition, and consciousness.

Five desires: Wealth, lust, fame, food, and sleep.

Five precepts: (1) Do not kill; (2) Do not steal; (3) Do not engage in sexual misconduct; (4) Do not tell lies; and (5) Do not take intoxicants.

Five sensual pleasures: Pleasurable feelings derived from the contact between the five sense bases of eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body, and the five sense objects of form, sound, odor, flavor, and tactile object.

Four Divine States of Mind: (1) Maitri or Loving-kindness; (2) Karuna or Compassion; (3) Mudita or Sympathetic Joy; and (4) Upeksa or Equanimity.

Four Foundations of Mindfulness: (1) Contemplation of the body; (2) Contemplation of feelings; (3) Contemplation of the state of mind; and (4) Contemplation of phenomena. See also Right Effort.

Four Noble Truths: (1) The noble truth of suffering; (2) The noble truth of the cause of suffering; (3) The noble truth of the cessation of suffering; and (4) The noble truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering.

Good existences: The three upper realms of humans, asuras and heavenly beings; as opposed to the bad existences of hell beings, hungry ghosts, and animals. See also Six realms of cyclic existence.

Great Compassion: The aspiration to remove the sufferings and causes of sufferings of all sentient beings.

Heavens of the Deva Kings of the Four Heavens: Also known as the Heavens of the Four Deva Kings. This is the first of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. See also Three planes of existence.

Heavens of the Four Deva Kings: See Heavens of the Deva Kings of the Four Heavens.

Hell of Screaming: One of the eight hot hells. The other seven are: the Hell of Thoughts, the Hell of Iron Chains, the Hell of Crushing, the Hell of Great Screaming, the Scorching Hot Hell, the Extreme Scorching Hot Hell, and the Hell of Uninterrupted Torture (also known as the Avici Hell).

Kalpa: Also known as Eon. It is often used to denote a very long period of time. There are small, medium, great, and incalculable kalpas. A great kalpa indicates the length of time between the creation and recreation of a universe, spanning the period of the universe's formation, existence, destruction, and non-existence.

Karma: The deeds carried out by a person and their effects on the person's future, especially in relation to their succeeding rebirths. Karma can be classified as actions of the body, speech, and mind, each of which can have the moral quality of wholesomeness, unwholesomeness, or indeterminate.

Karuna: Also known as Compassion. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

King Yama: The King in charge of the hell realm.

Law of causality: Also known as the law of cause and effect. This is a fundamental concept within Buddhism governing all

situations, in which all actions, which is a cause, will produce a corresponding effect. It is also stated as good begets good, evil begets evil; good will not beget evil, evil will not beget good.

Loving-kindness: Also known as Maitri. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

Maitri: Also known as Loving-kindness. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

Mara: The Demon King who resides in the Paranirmita Vasavartin Heaven.

Mudita: Also known as Altruistic or Sympathetic Joy. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

Naga: Dragon or serpent. A beneficent divine being who governs the various water bodies, such as seas, lakes, rivers, and springs.

National Preceptor: The Religious Adviser to the King equivalent to the position of a Prime Minister.

Nirmanarati Heaven: This is the fifth of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. See also Three planes of existence.

~ GLOSSARY ~

Nirvana: The perfect state of mind that is free from greed, hatred, and delusion, and hence all suffering. See also Parinirvana and Residue-less nirvana.

Non Returner: See Anagamin.

Once Returner: See Sakradagamin.

Paranirmita Vasavartin Heaven: This is the sixth of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. Mara, the Demon King, resides in this heaven. See also Three planes of existence.

Parinirvana: Also known as the Great Nirvana; it indicates the Buddha's entering into the state of residue-less nirvana. See also Nirvana and Residue-less nirvana.

Perfect One: See Arahant.

Prajna: Wisdom; insight; divine intuition.

Pratyeka Buddha: Also known as the Silent Buddha, or Self-enlightened One. The Pratyeka Buddha appears in an era when there is no Buddha or the Buddha's teachings. He lives apart from others and achieves enlightenment through self-contemplation and realization of dependent arising.

Pure Dharma Eye: The pure vision of the true Dharma.

Residue-less nirvana: Also known as nirvana without residue. It refers to the state of total liberation from all physical and mental conditions. This is in contrast with nirvana with residue, where the body still exists. See also Nirvana and Parinirvana.

Right Action: To conduct oneself in moral, peaceful, and honorable ways, that is in keeping with the precepts of not killing, not stealing, and not committing sexual misconduct. See also Eightfold Noble Path and Tenfold meritorious cause of action.

Right Concentration: To develop one's meditation according to the four Dhyanas. See also Eightfold Noble Path.

Right Effort: To develop the four types of efforts: (1) the effort to get rid of unwholesome thoughts that have already arisen in one's mind, such as the desire to take another's property; (2) the effort to prevent the arising of unwholesome thoughts; (3) the effort to develop wholesome thoughts of loving-kindness and compassion; and (4) the effort to maintain and develop further wholesome thoughts that have already arisen in one's mind. See also Eightfold Noble Path.

Right Faith: To develop faith in the Triple Gem and the Four Noble Truths, that through practicing Buddhism, all sentient beings can eventually attain liberation from Samsara.

~ GLOSSARY ~

Right Livelihood: To live honorably in a profession which is in no way harmful to sentient beings, and in keeping with the precepts. See also Eightfold Noble Path.

Right Mindfulness: To practice the Four Foundations of Mindfulness. See also Four Foundations of Mindfulness and Eightfold Noble Path.

Right Speech: To abstain from telling lies, slandering, frivolous speech, and harsh speech. See also Eightfold Noble Path and Tenfold meritorious cause of action.

Right Thought: To have only thoughts which are in line with Buddhist teachings. See also Eightfold Noble Path.

Right Understanding: See Right View.

Right View: To develop the understanding or view that complies with the Buddhist teaching of causality or the law of cause and effect; understanding the Four Noble Truths. See also Eightfold Noble Path and Right Understanding.

Right View of Dependent Arising: Also refer to as Law of Dependent Origination. It is the principle that phenomena do not come into existence on their own but as a result of causes and conditions. It is an elaboration of the Principle of Cause

and Effect, highlighting the concept of inter-dependency of existence, and also the duality/non-duality.

Sakra: The King of Trayastrimsat Heaven.

Sakradagamin: One who has attained the second stage of Liberation. Such a person, upon passing from the human realm, will take rebirth in the heavenly realms, after which he will be reborn in the human realm one last time to attain Arahathship. Hence he is also known as a Once Returner. A Once Returner has abandoned the first three fetters, out of ten total fetters, that bind beings to the cycle of existence. He is distinguished from the Stream Enterer by the fact that the Once Returner has weakened greed, hatred, and delusion to a greater degree. Therefore, he has fewer than seven rebirths. See also Arahathship.

Samsara: Also known as the Cycle of existence or Cyclic Existence. This refers to the endless cycle of suffering caused by birth, death, and rebirth in the six realms of cyclic existence.

Sangha: The Buddhist monastic order or community.

Seven Factors of Enlightenment: The precept; code of morality; Buddhist ethics.

Siksamana: A female novice nun in waiting observing Six Precepts.

Six Paramitas: The Sanskrit word Paramita means to cross over to the other shore. Paramita may also be translated as perfection, perfect realization, or reaching beyond limitation. Through the practice of these six Paramitas, we cross over the sea of suffering (Samsara) to the shore of happiness and awakening (Nirvana); we cross over from ignorance and delusion to enlightenment. The six Paramitas refer to:

- The Perfection of Generosity (Dana Paramita),
- The Perfection of Ethics (Sila Paramita),
- The Perfection of Patience (Ksanti Paramita)
- The Perfection of Joyous Effort / Enthusiastic Perseverance (Virya Paramita),
- The Perfection of Concentration (Dhyana Paramita),
and
- The Perfection of Wisdom (Prajna Paramita).

Six realms of cyclic existence: The realms of hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, humans, asuras, and heavenly beings.

Sramanerika: A female novice nun observing Ten Precepts.

Srotapanna: One who has attained the first stage of Liberation. One who has attained this stage is said to have entered the Stream that leads to Liberation, hence he is also known as a Stream Enterer. Due to the fact that the Stream Enterer has attained an intuitive grasp of Buddhist teachings ("Right View") and has complete confidence in the Triple Gem, he will not be reborn in the three bad existences again, and will take at most seven cycles of rebirths alternating between the heavenly realm and the human realm before attaining the final stage of Liberation, Arahatsip. A Stream Enterer has abandoned the first three fetters, out of ten total fetters, that bind beings to the cycle of existence. See also Arahatsip.

Supernatural powers: The six supernatural powers are: (1) Divine eye or clairvoyance; (2) Divine ear or clairaudience; (3) mental telepathy or ability to read the thoughts of others; (4) psychic travel or telekinesis; (5) knowledge of the past and future; and (6) ending contamination. The first five supernatural powers can be acquired by one who practices deep concentration, but the sixth supernatural power is only attainable when one has attained Arahatsip.

Sympathetic Joy: Also known as Altruistic Joy or Mudita. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

Ten epithets: The ten honorable titles of Buddha. These ten epithets are common to all Buddhas.

- Tathāgata - Thus-Come One or Thus-Gone One,
- Arhat - Worthy of Offerings,
- Samyak-Sambuddha - Equally, Perfectly Enlightened One,
- Vidyācarana-Sampanna - Knowledge and Conduct Perfected,
- Sugata - Well-Arrived One or Well-Gone One. Tathāgata is completely in control of his own births and deaths,
- Lokavid - Understanding the World,
- Anuttara - Unsurpassed One,
- Purusa-Damya-Sārathi - Tamer of Men,
- Śāstā Deva-Manusyānām - Teacher to Gods, Humans, and heavenly beings,
- Buddha-Bhagavān - Buddha the World-Honored One.

Ten Stages of Bodhisattva Practice: According to the Prajna sutras, the ten stages of Bodhisattva Practice are:

- the stage of dry wisdom,
- the stage of nature,
- the stage of the eighth person,
- the stage of insights,

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- the stage of diminishment of afflictions,
- the stage of freedom from desire,
- the stage of completion of discernment,
- the stage of the Pratyeka Buddha,
- the stage of the Bodhisattva, and
- the stage of the Buddha.

Tenfold meritorious cause of action: (1) Do not kill; (2) Do not steal; (3) Do not engage in sexual misconduct; (4) Do not tell lies; (5) Do not slander; (6) Do not engage in frivolous speech; (7) Do not engage in harsh speech; (8) Do not bear greed; (9) Do not bear hatred; and (10) Do not stay deluded.

Three periods: The past, present, and future.

Three planes of existence: The World of Sensuous Desires, the World of Form, and the Formless World. All beings in the six realms of cyclic existence can be found in the World of Sensuous Desires as these beings are plagued by various sensuous desires. Beings in the World of Form have abandoned sensuous desires but still cling on to physical forms, while beings in the Formless World have even relinquished the physical forms and exist only in mental states.

Three poisons: See Defilements.

Trayastrimsat Heaven: Also known as the Thirty-Three Heavens. It is the second of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. See also Three planes of existence.

Triple Gem: The Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

Tusita Heaven: This is the fourth of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. Maitreya Bodhisattva is currently residing in this heaven, awaiting for the causes and conditions to ripen for him to descend to the human realm and become the next Buddha to save and liberate all sentient beings. See also Three planes of existence.

Twelve Links of Dependent Origination: The twelve links of dependent origination provide a detailed description on the problem of suffering and rebirth. They are: ignorance, mental formation, consciousness, name and form, the six senses, contact, feeling, craving, clinging, becoming, birth, aging and death. There is no existing phenomenon that is not the effect of dependent origination. All phenomena arise dependent upon a number of casual factors, called conditions.

- Ignorance is the condition for mental formation.
- Mental formation is the condition for consciousness.
- Consciousness is the condition for name and form.

- Name and form is the condition for the six senses.
- The six senses are the conditions for contact.
- Contact is the condition for feeling.
- Feeling is the condition for craving.
- Craving is the condition for clinging.
- Clinging is the condition for becoming.
- Becoming is the condition for birth.
- Birth is the condition for aging and death.

Upeksha: Also known as Equanimity. See also Four Divine States of Mind.

Western Pure Land: Also known as Sukhavati in Sanskrit. It refers to the Pure Land of Amitabha Buddha.

Wheel Turning Monarch: Also refer to as Chakravartin. It is a term used in Indian religions for an ideal universal ruler, who rules ethically and benevolently over the entire world. Wheel turning literally means whose chariot is rolling or whose Dharmachakra (Wheel of the Dharma) is turning everywhere without obstruction.

Yama Heaven: This is the third of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. See also Three planes of existence.

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