

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](http://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)***

## How do we change our destiny? (1)

“How do we change our destiny?” This is a topic everyone is concerned about. How do we go about changing our destiny? What is destiny?

Among the Four Great Chinese Classics is the widely known “Journey to the West”. In this book, we tend to overlook the Venerable Xuan Zang, also known as the Tripitaka<sup>8</sup>, while the character that leaves the deepest impression is the leading male character, “Sun Wukong”. Before Sun Wukong sought the Buddhist path, he was known as the “Great Sage, Equal to Heaven”. Prior to that, he was the “Handsome Monkey King”, and before that, he was only a monkey.

After Sun Wukong created havoc in the celestial palace, the devas appealed to Avalokitesvara and the Buddha (the Tathagata<sup>9</sup>) to subdue him. The Buddha placed Sun Wukong in

---

<sup>8</sup> An honorary title for a Buddhist monk who has mastered all the Tripitaka canons.

<sup>9</sup> The Tathagatha, meaning the One who has Thus Come, is one of the ten epithets of the Buddha. Please refer to the ten epithets of the Buddha in the glossary.

his hand, challenging him to escape from the palm of the Buddha. Thinking that he would be able to escape from the palm of the Tathagata with his superpowers, he performed somersaults and with each one he travelled 108,000 miles. After several somersaults, the palm of the Tathagata was out of sight and he saw a mountain. He then relieved himself at the foot of the mountain and laughed heartily, "I've escaped the palm of the Tathagata."

As it turned out, the mountain collapsed on him and he was held him down with a talisman adhered onto the mountain. When Venerable Xuan Zang, the Tripitaka, was on his way to the West to collect Buddhist scriptures, he saw Sun Wukong and removed the talisman, thereby releasing him from the mountain, and thereafter Sun Wukong followed him to the West.

As the nature of the monkey was so frivolous and his mind was always wandering, Avalokitesvara gave Venerable Xuan Zang a magical headband and told the Venerable to find a way to make Sun Wukong wear it. Sun Wukong was delighted to see the headband and as his greed arose, he put the headband on his head. Once he had done so, Venerable Xuan Zang chanted a mantra which tightened the crown and caused pain. Once wore, the headband could not be removed, and no

matter how great Sun Wukong's supernatural powers were, he was unable to remove it.

Although this story came from a novel and is fictional, it can be used as an analogy. Based on this analogy, what did the magical headband represent? We can imagine that it represents karma, and that Sun Wukong was suffering under this karma. During the journey westward to collect Buddhist scriptures with Venerable Xuan Zang, he would often kill demons apparently for the sake of Venerable Xuan Zang. However, the Venerable was not at all happy with such deeds. Why is that so? Although Sun Wukong was risking his life to kill the demons so as to save the Venerable, such deeds ultimately generated unwholesome karma. By harming those sentient beings, the unwholesome karma would eventually bear unwholesome results.

At times, Sun Wukong might become unhappy and ran away after being reprimanded by his teacher. Venerable Xuan Zang would then chant the mantra to tighten the headband, which would give Sun Wukong a painful headache. Due to the pain, he would return to his teacher. What did this represent? This represents the suffering we will experience when unwholesome karma arises. As Sun Wukong still had a little wisdom, when he was experiencing the suffering of the

constricted crown, he would quickly return to the Venerable for help. He was finally able to remove the headband after they had completed the task of collecting the Buddhist scriptures from the West.

What did the story symbolize? Only the liberated Noble Ones were able to fully grasp the law of cause and effect. Most of us are lost within the law of cause and effect, forgetting about this law. As a result, we are constantly creating unwholesome karma and always putting on the magical headband which would result in suffering. Eventually, Sun Wukong was able to realize that all phenomena do not have inherent existence, and that the five aggregates do not have inherent existence as well. With this realization, he was able to gain liberation from his karma, and no longer had to wear the headband. However, how do we go about changing our destiny?

### **What is destiny?**

In this mundane world, most of us believe that destiny guides our lives from the moment of birth. Hence, most parents would quickly consult a fortune teller after the birth of their child, to find out if he would lead a good life. Would he be a President? Since there can only be one President, how about becoming a minister instead? Or, they might want to know if

he will marry a good wife, or whether he will have a happy and blissful family. Will he become a rich and great entrepreneur? Ultimately, only a handful could lead such a good life. So, they would think of ways to change their destiny. Yet, from the Buddhist perspective, what does “destiny” represent?

First, we have to form the right concept. Why do clouds remain in the sky and not fall to the ground? A cloud has never fallen before, why is that so? This is a very strange phenomenon which we normally would not notice. Maybe you would think that there is nothing strange about this at all. As we do not have such curiosity, we lack the intelligence of Isaac Newton. Newton went on to discover the existence of gravitational forces, after he saw an apple fell from a tree. Due to the existence of gravitational forces, he was able to formulate the law of universal gravitation. Therefore, even to this day, we still remember Newton.

If you are able to discover why clouds do not conform to Newton’s law of gravitational forces, and are able to understand the reason clouds do not fall, then you would have aligned your thoughts a little closer to that of the Buddha. Why do clouds not fall? Can it be concluded that the law of universal gravitation exists since clouds do not fall? If

~ HOW DO WE CHANGE OUR DESTINY? (1) ~

so, why don't the stars fall to the earth since everything is pulled towards it? Why won't the moon fall onto the earth as well? And, why does the earth rotate on its own axis? While rotating, why won't the earth ever rotate towards and fall into the big fiery star that is the sun? The Dharma is not concerned about these questions, but the Buddha did tell us about them.

When this world of sentient beings was about to be formed, it came under the influence of the karmic forces of all sentient beings. This is the circumstantial result of our karma which causes the clouds not to fall onto the ground. Some clouds would simply dissipate in the sky, while others would accumulate water; and up to a certain point when the causes and conditions are ripened, they will fall as rain. Sometimes, it might fall as hailstone, and at other times, it will evaporate mid-air and disappear without a trace. These are all evidence of karmic forces in action. Some places undergo torrential rainfall while other places have extremely sunny weather. During the flood that occurred in central and southern Taiwan on July 2, 2004, northern Taiwan was in fact experiencing sunny weather. Why do such extremes exist? It's due to karmic forces. This is not just a question of the physical world or the scientific world; all that sentient beings see in this world are merely the physical aspects of things, and not the workings of the karmic forces. Only one with such great

wisdom as the Buddha would be able to see the workings of the karmic forces.

Hence, all phenomena are under the control and influence of karmic forces. Karmic forces do not exist as a person, but exist as the karma created by sentient beings and the forces caused by the responses to the karma. We exist in a world which is the circumstantial result of our karma, and it slowly develops unique characteristics from each person's karmic forces. However, through each individual sentient being, a common world that we exist in is created.

In the present reality, each individual encounters an entirely different situation, even though they may be at the same place. Some might work in air-conditioned rooms while others might labor under the hot sun. Some work day shifts, while others work night shifts. The suffering and happiness that each person undergoes are also different. Why? It is due to karma. A particular karma that is created will cause a corresponding karmic result, and this is what we refer to as destiny.

Before any result arises, it is "karma". Once the outcome occurs, it becomes the "result" and this is the relationship between destiny and karma. We must grasp the principles

behind destiny so as to understand how we can change our destiny.

## **Does destiny really exist?**

We might have forgotten a point: In the beginning, all sentient beings do not have a life or a destiny, and there was neither karma nor result. There was originally nothing to begin with. This is such a profound statement!

### Example 1

Using a house as an example, there was originally no house to begin with. It begins as an empty plot of land. But can a house exist in the future? Yes, it can. However, it can perish in the future as well. The house will not exist forever as it will undergo wear and tear, and it will cease to exist under certain causes and conditions. It might collapse due to an earthquake, be rebuilt, or be sold. The house did not exist in the past and it will not exist in the future. The house that presently exists came simply as a result of one person's intention and idea, and a result of this person gathering many people together to accomplish it. Someone did the blueprints, some did the construction work, and others did the renovation work. After completion some people would come to live in it and that is all to it.

And, this is our environment. Originally, there was no house, but under what circumstances did the house come into existence? The house came due to the combination of intention, karmic forces, and the external material world. After we have understood this, we would be able to use wisdom to judge and analyze karmic forces.

### Example 2

Why do we possess this body of ours? Why do we have feelings? Why do we have good or bad thoughts? Why are we willing to perform wholesome deeds and refrain from committing unwholesome deeds? Why are we even able to think in this manner?

It is due to the responses from the wholesome or unwholesome karma that we have created under the influence of ignorance and delusion. However, these did not always exist, just as there was previously no house. Did this present life exist originally? No. Did this present life exist in the past life? No. Was I Venerable Da Shi in my past life? No. Did I have the same appearance in my past life as I do in this life? No. Just like a house, this body will deteriorate one day. When that happens, will this body be the same body that I will carry to the next life? No, it won't. So, this body did not exist in the past, and it will not exist in the future. This present

~ HOW DO WE CHANGE OUR DESTINY? (1) ~

appearance is merely a response created by the karmic forces, ignorance, and defilements.

Each sentient being, under the influence of a deluded mind and the unwholesome karma created from such a mind, arrives at the environment where our parents are together, and is produced after the sperm and ovum is fertilized. Under the combination of these causes and conditions, we begin to take physical form. Following the transfer of nutrients from the mother to the child, the fertilized egg then begin to grow slowly into a fetus, which eventually forms the body that we presently have. How different is this body from the fertilized egg back then? It is different as the stages of development changes.

The form that we take now resulted from the response of karmic forces. If there were no karma or defilements, we will not take this current physical form. Therefore, in the physical world, the sperm and the human cannot be connected together. It requires the sentient being's karmic forces for a person to come into being. This is what we refer to as destiny which in reality, it does not exist.

Since it did not exist originally, it is clear that this current form is not inherently existent. Yet amidst this illusion, why do we cling onto it persistently? Letting defilements arise for the

sake of this body; creating karma, fighting and struggling with others, and arguing over men or women after intoxication; we go through endless suffering all for the sake of this body.

## **Why is there a next life?**

First of all, we have to understand the principle behind destiny, as based on all that which has come to be in this life. If we still do not understand it, we will yet again cause the arising of the five aggregated body and mind in the next life. Why is this so? In principle, this is due to the defilements and karma created under the influence of ignorance.

What is ignorance?

### **1. *Not having faith in the Triple Gem***

Being ignorant is not knowing the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. With this point in mind, we would have become a little brighter and less ignorant. This is because, with wisdom and intelligence, we will have faith in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. The advantage of having faith in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha, is that we will not continue to create karma. We will have faith in the Buddha, and wish to attain Buddhahood and liberation.

**2. Without understanding the law of cause and effect in the three periods of the past, present, and future. Without understanding the wholesomeness and the unwholesomeness**

When we understand the relationship between the law of cause and effect in the *three periods*, as well as wholesomeness and unwholesomeness, we will not create additional unwholesome karma and will instead create more wholesome karma. After knowing the Four Noble Truths, the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination, and the Right View of Dependent Arising, we can be liberated and be free from the cycle of existence. If we do not know about any of these, it is ignorance.

Example

Why do we regard this house as something that is very real, guarding over it, and not willing to let it go? When the moment of death arrives, where will we go if we remain unclear about life and death? We will end up being a ghost which guards over the house. Originally, we were merely ghosts guarding over our corpses, but we are even guarding over houses and material possessions. How would we change our destiny then?

Once, there was a very wealthy man who joined the monastic order after listening to the Buddha's exposition of the Dharma. However, after joining the monastic, he continued guarding over his material possessions. This was because he was a very wealthy and well-connected person before he joined the monastic, and had much fame and status along with many material possessions. A lot of Bhikshus depended on him for their practice. However, he always kept the offerings given by others, and was unwilling to share with others.

When a monastic passes away, his material possessions would be shared among the monastics present during an open assembly called the karman<sup>10</sup>. When this Bhikshu passed away, a ghost appeared to scare and chase off the monastics just as they were about to distribute his material possessions among themselves. This prevented them from distributing the possessions.

They went to see the Buddha later and informed the Buddha that there was a ghost guarding over the material possessions and thus preventing them from sharing it.

---

<sup>10</sup> Please refer to page [138] for a detailed explanation of "karman".

The Buddha then told the ghost guarding over the possessions, “When you were alive, you neither heeded my teachings nor practiced diligently. You only cared about guarding over your material possessions. Even now when you are dead, you are still guarding over these possessions. You must repent immediately.” When the Bhikshu was alive, he was ignorant and failed to heed the Buddha’s teachings. However, now that he was dead and after hearing what the Buddha said, he immediately repented.

Having already taken the form of a ghost, it was fortunate that he could still repent as he had met the Buddha. After repenting, his merits arose. He then relinquished his material possessions and took the form of a flying yaksa<sup>11</sup>. He then returned to seek repentance from the Buddha. The Buddha asked his family members and other lay Dharma protectors to help him gain merits by making offerings to the monastic order in the ten directions. As a result, this person was reborn in the *Trayastrimsat Heaven*. Hence, he came back to this world to pay his respects to the Buddha. The Buddha then expounded the Dharma to

---

<sup>11</sup> A Yaksa is a form of flying demon.

him, and once he heard the Dharma, he attained the Pure Dharma Eye.

After seeing this particular case of causes and conditions, would you consider this situation to be good? Why go through such trouble to endure so much suffering!

It is extremely hard to be a hungry ghost. Under the influence of ignorance, we regard the house as an extension of ourselves, guarding over it and the other material possessions. We know that in reality, many things did not exist originally and will not exist in the future as well. Presently, all these arose solely as a result of causes and conditions, they are but illusions and fantasies that we should not cling to. If we understand this, we would have gained a little wisdom; but to gain true wisdom, we must discover the truth through our practice.

## **The relationship between creating karma and the cycle of existence**

Due to ignorance, sentient beings develop defilements. When we have a house, material possessions, and family, we cling onto them and crave for them, leading to the creation of

karma. There are two types of karma mentioned here: karma of intended activities and karma of committed activities<sup>12</sup>.

### **1. *Karma of intended activities***

Intention refers to volition. Do we possess the volition to generate wholesome karma or unwholesome karma?

When we see a person suffering, in our karma of intended activities, we may generate a kind thought which gives rise to a mind of equanimity to give willingly instead of stealing. We are willing to help this person in need and suffering. When we see the Buddha or the Triple Gem, respect arises in our minds and we are willing to show respect to the Triple Gem. When we see our parents, we are willing to be filial to them; these are all wholesome thoughts and are considered karma of intended activities.

### **2. *Karma of committed activities***

Once wholesome thoughts have arisen, which then gives rise to karma of intended activities, we would go on to

---

<sup>12</sup> “karma of intended activities” refers to “karmas created due to activities intended in the mind only, but not yet carried out”; “karma of committed activities” refers to “karmas already committed to action”.

perform the karma of committed activities. For example, taking action to be filial to our parents, paying respects to the Triple Gem, and giving material possessions to help those in need and suffering, saving sentient beings, and liberating lives<sup>13</sup>. To carry out these acts through the body or speech is what we call “karma of committed activities”.

Once we take action, under the karma of intended activities and karma of committed activities, a corresponding wholesome or unwholesome karma will be created, i.e. good begets good, and evil begets evil. The karma of intended activities alone is already a very significant karma.

In this cycle of existence, defilements arise due to ignorance and thus, wholesome and unwholesome karma is created, which is then followed by a corresponding karmic result, which can be good or bad. To be reborn in the heavenly realm would be a wholesome karmic result, as the worst scenario there would merely involve battles

---

<sup>13</sup> Buddhism regards all living creatures as being endowed with the Buddha nature and the potential to become Buddhas. To liberate the living means to respect the right of all living beings to live and be free. Liberating living beings enables us to transform our hateful and defiled thoughts into thoughts of kindness and purity, and obtain the benefits of longevity, health, and peace.

with the Asuras, whereas there is endless suffering in the human realm. Although happiness does exist in the human realm, there is a lot of suffering as well. Furthermore, if we were to be reborn as Asuras, dwellers in the hell realm, ghosts or animals, the suffering would be indescribable.

### **What are the sufferings in the cycle of existence?**

The cycle of existence is like a bundle of burning wood. When the bundle of wood is about to be totally consumed by the fire which is fast extinguishing, a remaining spark from it might spread over to another bundle of wood which will begin to burn quickly. This is the so-called cycle of existence.

The cycle of existence happens when a remaining defilement from our previous life, created due to ignorance, carries the karmic force onto our next life. If we are still clinging onto attachments at the end of this present life of ours, we will give rise to the next life.

If we still have any cravings in this life and remain under the influence of ignorance, we will consider these cravings to be substantially real and might even go to the extent of transforming them into habits. In this manner, we will continue to have cravings in this life. If we do not rid our

minds of cravings and desires, what else will we be craving for in the next life?

It might be the heavenly realm or it might be the hell realm. Once we become attached to it, there will again be suffering. What suffering is there amidst all these? If you have noticed, you will realize that there is plenty of suffering. So, what kind of suffering are these?

### **1. *Suffering in the hell realm***

There is endless suffering in the hell realm.

### **2. *Suffering of the body***

Humans undergo suffering of the body and mind. What suffering does the body undergo?

#### **(a) *Suffering of birth***

We undergo extreme suffering when we are in our mother's womb. When your mother drinks cold water, you feel cold as well. Although you feel unbearably cold, what can you do about it? Can you protest?

~ HOW DO WE CHANGE OUR DESTINY? (1) ~

No, you cannot. When your mother drinks hot water, you feel unbearably hot. When your mother is angry, her heart beats furiously and the blood will rush into your body like a great flood hitting you, this is very miserable.

When your parents are engaging in sexual activities, you are trapped inside your mother's womb, unable to move. You are also suffering. This is why pregnant mothers should not engage in sexual activities with their spouses. This is to protect the child as well as to preserve his purity. During this period of pregnancy, the husband and wife should practice celibacy.

This is one case to illustrate that the suffering of birth is very distressful.

**(b) Suffering of old age**

Our life is like a burning fire, there is the suffering of birth as well as the suffering of old age.

As humans grow older, all the symptoms of old age appear, such as failing vision, graying hair, and the reliance on a walking stick. A young person can easily

climb the stairs while an elderly person might fall and break his limbs or pelvic bones if he is careless.

The elderly person does not have a good memory and might even experience dementia. Once he steps out, he forgets what he was planning to do. Even while walking, he may get lost.

Old age refers to our body burning away like a fire, gaining momentum as it burns.

**(c) Suffering of sickness**

We fall sick even when we are young. Though toothache is not a sickness, it causes us much pain as well. Other problems include headaches and pain in the eyes.

We will have this problem wherever we are, as long as we have a body. And, when we are hungry or thirsty, and when the weather is too hot or cold, what can we do?

This is the burning fire of impermanence. When we are unaware of this and still foolishly hope for a next life, this would be ignorance.

### **3. Suffering of the mind**

What suffering does our mind undergo?

#### **(a) Suffering from separation with those you love**

When a couple is dating and in love with each other, a separation would cause them to miss each other greatly and result in much misery.

#### **(b) Suffering from encounters with those you hate**

If the other party betrays you, you will feel the suffering, which arise from hatred and anger.

#### **(c) Suffering of the unattainable**

If you wish for your loved one to be by your side forever, you will undergo the suffering of the unattainable. You will think of ways to prevent your loved one from leaving you and you will keep watch over your loved one, worrying endlessly. Isn't this suffering from fear? And isn't this very miserable?

This is called the burning fire of defilements. The previous examples were about the fire of impermanence while this example is about the fire of defilements.

In this life of ours, as well as in our previous lives, it has already been burning in this manner, painfully and ceaselessly.

To be considered as one with wisdom, we must think of a way to stop ourselves from “burning” our way into our next life. If we continue to let it “burn”, there is “residue” present and the “cycle of existence” continues; if we do not continue to “burn” onto our next life, “no residue” is present and “liberation” is attained.

## **The relationship between cause and effect in destiny**

In this world where residue is present, before we attain Arahatsip, we have to understand the cause and effect relationship of wholesomeness and unwholesomeness.

### **© Good begets good**

#### **1. *Paying respects to the Triple Gem***

When we see others enjoying meritorious results, be they a king or a person with good reputation, we do not need to be surprised or envious. Why?

~ HOW DO WE CHANGE OUR DESTINY? (1) ~

All we have to know is that by being respectful to the Triple Gem and paying respects to the Triple Gem, we will have great meritorious results in the future.

It is not difficult to become a king. In the Emperor Liang Jeweled Repentance Sutra, it was mentioned that through paying respects to the Triple Gem and attending to the Triple Gem, one could become a king, a rich man and an elder.

Liang Wu-Ti was a very devout Buddhist. Once, he met the *National Preceptor*, Zen master Zhi-Gong, a monastic who was proficient in the Tripitaka, well-cultivated, and had supernatural powers. He knew the causes and conditions as well as the cause and effect that led to Liang Wu-Ti's present life.

Liang Wu-Ti asked Zen master Zhi-Gong, "I know the relationship between cause and effect, hence, I would like to enquire from the Zen master, why was I able to become an emperor in this life and command vast territories and numerous people?"

Zen master Zhi-Gong said, "Do not ask about it." Liang Wu-Ti persisted to know as human are curious by nature.

Zen master Zhi-Gong then said, “In one of your past lives, you were a woodcutter. Woodcutters always wore a bamboo hat when they climb the hills. One day, the woodcutter went to the hills to cut wood, on his way back down the hills, it started to rain and rainwater gushed down the hills. At this moment, he saw a shiny object by the side, and thought, “What is that?” As he stopped to take a look, he found that it was a statue of Avalokitesvara.

Without regard for himself, the woodcutter put together a platform to offer and worship the statue of Avalokitesvara. Then, he used his bamboo hat as a shelter for the statue to protect it from the rain.

Due to this wholesome act of paying respect to the Triple Gem in your past life, you were able to become a king and emperor in this life.” “So, this is the reason.”

This is the relationship between cause and effect. In this world where residue is present, it is not difficult to change our destiny when we understand the relationship between wholesomeness and unwholesomeness.

That is why we should often pay respect to and honor the Triple Gem in our daily lives. In our future lives, we will

then gain great welfare and benefits, and great retribution as well. This is because great wealth comes about with generosity.

## **2. *Practicing generosity***

A person who practices generosity will have great wealth. The donor of Jetavana Grove, elder Anathapindika, was very generous. Hence, during the time of Maitreya Buddha's birth, he will be the Treasurer, one of the seven treasures of *the Wheel Turning Monarch*.

The Wheel Turning Monarch has seven treasures, namely the Wheel treasure, the Elephant treasure, the Horse treasure, the Fair Maiden treasure, the Treasurer, the Military Commander, and the Jewel treasure.

At that time, the elder Anathapindika will be the Treasurer, who will be the richest of them all. Due to the causes and conditions of his generosity in his past life, he will still have the merits to become a very wealthy person when he meets Maitreya Buddha and the Wheel Turning Monarch in the future.

In that era, the monarch will test his wealth and tell him, "While I'm crossing the river, I would like to see the

amount of riches that I have.” The Treasurer replied to the monarch, “I’ll show you when we have reached the shore.” “No, I want to know while we’re still on the river.”

The Treasurer would then reach his hand into the river and take the riches out from under the river. How is this possible?

Due to his wholesome karma, he is able to have riches at his disposal at any time. After having retrieved much possession out of the river, the monarch then told him, “That is enough. I was simply testing you to determine the amount of merits you had accumulated. Put them back into the river.”

Hence, people who are extremely wealthy are very generous. Only by practicing generosity will one gain great meritorious results.

### **3. *Upholding precepts***

People who uphold the precepts will enjoy longevity. Hence, in our daily lives, we must uphold the precepts as much as we can. Besides longevity, we will also be good looking as we had practiced endurance, which will result in us looking dignified and proper. On the other hand,

those who do not practice endurance and are easily angered will be ugly and unsightly in appearance.

When we are angry, our faces become distorted, so naturally it would look unattractive. Since it is distorted in this present life, it will certainly become deformed in the future. Hence, we know that our destiny can indeed be changed through our daily lives.

#### **4. *Diligence***

Why do we practice so diligently in this life? It is because we have already been diligent in our past lives, and we know the need to practice diligently, hence, we continue to be diligent in this life.

#### **5. *Reciting the sutras***

Why do we possess intelligence and wisdom? It is because we have recited sutras, memorized the sutras and understood the Dharma. Our wisdom comes from our understanding of the sutras.

#### **6. *Praising the Triple Gem***

Why do some people have a pleasant voice?

It is not due to voice training in this lifetime. It is because he had already been praising the Triple Gem in his past lives, singing about the merits of the Triple Gem, and praising the merits and achievements of the Tathagatha. Hence, in this life, his voice is pleasant to the ear.

However, there are presently many people with good voices who neglect to sing praises of the Triple Gem and the Buddha. Therefore, they will no longer enjoy the rewards of a pleasant voice after their present lives.

## **7. *Listening to and learning the Dharma***

After listening and learning the Dharma, we will have wisdom.

### Example

There were two men who grew fruit trees. After the trees bore fruits, one of them ate the fruits and promptly sowed the seeds of the fruits, while the other discarded the seeds after eating.

Later, the man who sowed the seeds had a harvest the following year and had fruits to eat again. The other man

~ HOW DO WE CHANGE OUR DESTINY? (1) ~

did not enjoy any harvest and could only salivate and watch others eating from afar.

We refer to this as the sowing of seeds in spring and the harvesting of fruits in autumn. After the harvest season, we must remember to sow the seeds again. However, many people do not know this fact: the meritorious rewards in this life are due to the causes and conditions from our past lives.

So, we must remember to continue practicing generosity and cultivating merits. To be reborn as a human in this life implies that we had upheld the precepts in our past lives, and thus are able to reap the good rewards in this life. We must continue to sow and cultivate wholesomeness, so that we will continue to reap good rewards in the future. This is wisdom.

Hence, if we meet people who do not practice Buddhism, we ought to let them know this principle: to continue sowing seeds of good instead of simply focusing on harvesting the fruits. After harvesting, we would need to continue sowing such seeds.

This human body is our reward from the harvest. We have to continue cultivating wholesomeness so as to continue reaping such rewards.

### **8. *Loving-kindness***

Some people have a clean and pure appearance and do not fall sick. These are people with hearts of loving-kindness and compassion.

#### Example

In one of his past lives, the Buddha was the King Lotus, who was full of loving-kindness and compassion. At that time, many people in the country fell sick, and he gathered all the doctors in the country to heal the sick but in vain.

The doctors said, “We can’t do anything about it as there are too many people. If I have access to a kind of fish called the “red fish”, I can definitely cure the people with it.”

King Lotus thought, “If I relinquish the throne, I can gain rebirth as the red fish and be consumed by the sick. That way, the sick will be cured.” Hence, he stepped down from

the throne and passed it on to his child. He then found a way to let himself die and gain rebirth as the red fish. When everyone saw the red fish, they caught and consumed it, thereby curing their sicknesses.

Hence, from that period till his attainment of Buddhahood, the Buddha was never inflicted with sickness. It was due to his loving-kindness that he never fell sick.

At a later time, while he was still in this mundane world, the Buddha revealed signs of sickness in order to show sentient beings the reality of the law of cause and effect, that there is karma and retribution, and that we should not create unwholesome karma. We should not forget this.

## **9. *Respecting others***

The reason why we are tall and have an imposing appearance is because we showed respect to others in our past lives. That is why we are able to attain this imposing and good looking appearance.

Those who are tall in this life should remember to continue respecting others. Never assume that one can

look down on others simply because one is good looking in this life, or that one is a giant among dwarves. Taking opposing stands like this will result in the creation of bad karma, and it is not good.

### **10. *Getting along with others***

The reason why we are well-liked in this life is because we brought happiness to other people when we met them in our past lives.

This is a true story in the Agama Sutra; someone asked the Buddha, “Why do we feel fear when we see certain people yet feel happy when we see others, and we are even delighted to be with them and enjoy their company?”

The Buddha said, “When you are happy to see a person, it is because both of you had shared a close relationship in your past lives. He might have been your family member, relative, friend, mentor or virtuous companion. When you were together, both of you got along very well. Therefore, even though you might be strangers in your initial meeting in this life, you would still be delighted. It is due to such causes and conditions and it extends to countless previous lives.”

© **Evil begets evil**

**1. Killing**

Why are you terrified of a person even though you do not know him? It is because you had hurt or killed him in your past lives, hence, such a situation exists now.

Therefore, we should build good relationships with others and not fall out with them. We should respect others, show loving-kindness towards them and bring them happiness.

The Buddha told us something else which was of greater importance. In our daily lives, we will meet both likeable and detestable people, as well as those whom we like to associate with, and others who will cause fear to arise.

Though there are so many sentient beings, all of them cause such feelings in us. Hence, this is supposed to remind us that we have been in the cycle of existence for far too long, and that we must quickly seek liberation. We should not remain in the cycle of existence anymore.

## **2. *Being disrespectful towards others***

If we respect others, we will be tall in height and big in stature. If we are disrespectful towards others, we will become short and small in stature.

Some people are short and small in stature, like those who exhibit dwarfism. We should not look down on them as we will end up in their situation one day if we did. Hence, we should not look down on others.

## **3. *Not learning the Dharma***

Why are some people clueless about everything from their birth? It was because they did not learn the Dharma in their past lives, and thus they do not know anything in this life.

We know that we must send our children to school to learn, let alone ourselves. If we do not start to learn in this life, we will continue to be clueless about everything in our next life.

**4. *Unwillingness to share the Dharma***

Why are some people unintelligent and clumsy? It is because they were unwilling to teach others. If we possess knowledge but are unwilling to teach or share this knowledge, we will become unintelligent and clumsy.

**5. *Slander***

Why are some people dumb and unable to talk? Why are some people deaf? It is because they had slandered others in their past lives; slandering others will result in such retributions.

**6. *Not repaying one's debts***

Why do we become enslaved by others? It is because we did not repay our debts in the past. This is why we should quickly repay any outstanding debts before we renounce.

If we took up student loans during our schooling days, we should also quickly repay the loans instead of attempting ways to get around them. We should not think about moving houses in an attempt to escape bank loans.

In your future life, will you be able to repay all the debts that you have owed to your country in this life? Surely not. Therefore, debts should be cleared quickly.

### **7. *Obstructing the Radiance of the Buddha***

If we deliberately put out the flame of a lamp lit by someone because we detest him, such an act is called “obstructing the radiance of the Buddha”.

When we hinder someone from expounding the Dharma, it will also result in the karmic result of ugliness and having a darker skin tone.

### **8. *Looking down on others***

When we look down on others and treat them with contempt, we will take rebirth in a place with poor conditions.

#### Example

As Buddhists, we must take note that we should never look down on other religions. In ancient India, there were some ascetics who sometimes walked around unclothed,

~ HOW DO WE CHANGE OUR DESTINY? (1) ~

in contrast to Buddhist disciples who were always dignified-looking.

Once, a Buddhist saw a group of naked ascetics and told them, "You are unclothed, just like an animal." He then went on to mock them. One of the ascetics who had heard the Dharma replied, "If you are one with any shame and dread, you would never speak of me like this."

"What do you mean by someone with neither shame nor dread?"

"It is like a leaf that is being blown by the wind as it falls from a tree; it will go east when the wind blows eastward, it will go west when the wind blows westward. Therefore, for someone like you, who has neither shame nor dread, to speak about my lack of clothing, you will end up like me in the future."

We should never look down on others. In particular, Buddhists should follow the Buddha's example and show respect to all sentient beings.

Having grasped the relationship between cause and effect, we should never allow ourselves to fall into unwholesome cause

~ EVERLASTING HAPPINESS, AS BUDDHA ATTAINS 2 ~

and effect, but should instead let ourselves be immersed in wholesome cause and effect. In this manner, we can slowly change the cause and effect, and thus our destiny.

## 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,

~ EVERLASTING HAPPINESS, AS BUDDHA ATTAINS 2 ~

- 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.

## **About this series**

"Everlasting Happiness, as Buddha Attains" is based on a series of video Dharma teachings presented by Venerable Da Shi. We hope to continue releasing more titles in this series at a later date. You may check our website ([www.mypty.sg](http://www.mypty.sg)) for updates.

## **Acknowledgement**

We would like to thank all who have contributed to the translation of this series of works into English.

**Title:** EVERLASTING HAPPINESS, AS BUDDHA ATTAINS 2  
**Presenter:** Venerable Da Shi  
**Editor:** The Dharma Editorial Committee,  
Miao You Pu Ti Yuan (Taiwan, R.O.C.)  
**Translator:** The Dharma Committee,  
Miao You Pu Ti Yuan (Singapore)  
**Publisher:** Miao You Pu Ti Yuan (Singapore)  
**Address:** 15 Lorong 29 Geylang  
#02-01 PTH Building  
Singapore 388069  
**Contact** (65)67496460  
**Website:** www.mypty.sg  
**E-mail:** ven.dashi@yahoo.com.tw  
**Publish date:** Jul 2012  
**ISBN:** 978-981-07-1639-4

Miao You Pu Ti Yuan (Taiwan, R.O.C.) has granted permission to Miao You Pu Ti Yuan (Singapore) for the translation and publication of this book.

This book is for free distribution only, not for sale.

If you wish to reprint this book, please contact Miao You Pu Ti Yuan (Singapore) at (65) 67496460 or email to [dharma@mypty.sg](mailto:dharma@mypty.sg).

*The Gift of Dharma excels all other Gifts*

If you would like to share the Gift of the Dharma with others by supporting the production cost of Dharma DVDs and books for Free Distribution, please kindly contact Yuan Man at (65) 91080057 or Miao Yong at (65) 91711453.