

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)***

How do we change our destiny? (2)

The principles for changing our destiny (The Salt Crystal Sutra)

How can we change our destiny? Past karmic causes will produce present karmic fruits. This is the principle of destiny and its relationship with the law of cause and effect. Will we be able to change our destiny through such karmic causes and karmic fruits? Yes, it can be done. If we understand how our destiny should be changed, we would not consult the deities or seek fortune tellers.

Why? Because, the Buddha has the answers you are seeking. In the Salt Crystal Sutra of the Agama Sutra, the Buddha clarified the principles for changing our destiny. There are three examples in the Salt Crystal Sutra. First, is the salt and water. Second, is the debtor and the creditor. And, the last is the goat snatcher and the goat owner.

Example 1

If we have an equivalent glass of salt and water, and by mixing them, would the resulting salt solution be drinkable? Of course not, it would be too salty to drink. What can we do to

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make it drinkable? Since we cannot remove the salt from the solution, the only way is to add more water to the solution. Without adding more salt and continue adding water into the solution until it becomes as vast as the Lake Chengching (located in Kaohsiung). If we were to add a glass of salt into the reservoir, would the water taste salty? Of course not. Let us examine the meaning behind the Buddha's words under this principle.

Salt is bitter when consumed on its own and the experience would be unbearable, and it would be very painful especially if there is a wound. What does the salt represent? It represents the unwholesome karma that we had created in the past. If the unwholesome karma ripens into karmic fruit, it would be unbearably bitter to suffer in the hell realm.

How can we reduce the painful retribution to negligible proportions? By adding water. Water refers to wholesome karma. If we keep adding water till it becomes immeasurable and limitless, the saltiness of the salt will be diluted. Once diluted, we will not be able to taste the saltiness; this is the principle for changing our destiny.

To be born as a human in this life, it shows that we had some merits and wholesome karma from our previous lives. As

humans, we must seek wisdom and practice in accordance with the principle mentioned above. Having mastered the principle and circumstances, and if we can manage the situation in a comprehensive manner, our lives will improve.

Example 2

During the Buddha's time, there was a youth called Angulimala. He was the strongest man in the country at that time, but he was associating with and learning from an unwholesome master. The master's wife liked the disciple very much because he was youthful, strong, and handsome. Once, when the master was out, she took the opportunity to seduce him. But, the disciple said, "You are the master's wife, how can I commit adultery with you, we cannot go against the moral rules."

Shamed into anger, the master's wife messed her hair up and appeared as if she had been violated. She waited for the master to return and complained to him. As the saying goes "when you get too close, you lose their respect, yet when you keep a distance, they will detest you." After listening to his wife's words, he prepared to punish Angulimala. Since Angulimala was very strong and unbeatable in combat, the

master devised a scheme to encourage him to kill people, thereby, causing him to descend to the hell realm.

Hence, the master told Angulimala, “If you can kill 1,000 people, you will be able to enter the heavenly realm.” Having associated with such an unwholesome master and having learnt some incorrect concepts, Angulimala did not doubt those words and proceeded to kill people.

After he had killed 999 people in the town, everyone would quickly flee and hide from him. But, his loving mother still cared for her son and was afraid that he would be hungry, so she brought some food for him. When he saw his mother coming, he thought, “Master had instructed that if I kill my mother, I’ll go to an even higher level in the heavenly realm.” so he decided to kill his mother to complete the killing of 1,000 people.

The Buddha saw that Angulimala was about to kill his mother and this is one of the five heinous sins. (The five heinous sins of patricide, matricide, killing an Arahant, displacing the blood from the body of the Buddha, and causing schism among the Sangha, all of which will definitely cause one to descend into the *Avici Hell*.) The Buddha also saw that the causes and conditions for Angulimala’s salvation had ripened, and so he went to save him.

When Angulimala saw the Buddha, he remembered his master's instruction that it would be even better if he can kill the Buddha. So, he changed his mind and turned his attention towards killing the Buddha instead. The Buddha walked in front of him allowing him to chase, but no matter how hard Angulimala chased after him, he could not catch up with the Buddha.

Finally, Angulimala shouted at the Buddha, "You'd better stop over there!"

The Buddha said, "I have stopped a long time ago. It is you who have yet to stop."

"You have stopped? But you are still walking."

"My heart of hatred has already stopped but you have not, and it is still causing you agitation right where you are."

Upon hearing this, Angulimala realized that truly it was his hating heart that was killing sentient beings. The Buddha was telling the truth.

He quickly put down his weapon and sought repentance from the Buddha. He then followed the Buddha and joined the monastic order. He immediately attained Arahatsip once he started his monastic practices.

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After attaining Arahathship, he went out for his alms round. When the people in town saw this horrible murderer, they dared not come near him even though he had taken on the appearance of a monastic. Instead, they stoned him, which caused great bruises and badly injured him. However, he endured all of it.

When he came back to see the Buddha, the Buddha said, “You have to exercise endurance. Your criminal karma resulted from the killing of 999 people, and you also had the intention to kill the Buddha and your mother.

The intention to kill is the karma of intended activities. Once you have generated the intention to kill, the fruit of such criminal karma, though you may have yet to accomplish the act, cannot be depleted even if you were to descend to the hell realm to suffer for one *kalpa*. As you have now attained Arahathship, you would only get punished by stoning. If you were to compare the suffering in the Avici Hell against the pain inflicted by the stones in the human realm, how much difference would it make?”

The Arahath Angulimala knew that to suffer such stoning in the human realm was really nothing much compared to the Avici Hell. If he could endure the suffering in this life, there would be no need to suffer anymore. But, if he were to go to the hell

realm, there would be endless suffering, thus he gladly accepted the painful retribution.

He killed 999 people in this life and had the intention to kill the Buddha and his mother; all these generated severe unwholesome karma. Would these not constitute a lot of “salt”? There would have been a lot of painful suffering awaiting him. However, as he had followed the Buddha and joined the monastic order to practice, the “water” of merits he had gained as an Arahant become immeasurable and limitless. By mixing the salt of the killing karma together with the water of merits of an Arahant, he only had to suffer limited pain in the human realm. It shows the profoundness of the power of merits gained through cultivation.

So, this is how we can change our destiny. Once we have mastered this principle, we will know how to practice.

Example 3

There was a person who liked to drink liquor. Everybody had advised him to see the Buddha, but he would reply, “Wait a while. There is no hurry.” One day, after getting drunk, he fell and bruised himself, suffering much pain. At that time, he finally thought about seeing the Buddha. The Buddha asked him, “Are you in much pain now?”

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“Yes, it’s very painful. What can I do? I beg the Buddha to take pity on me and save me.”

The Buddha replied, “It is good that you have such intentions. For example, if there is a bundle of wood that weighs 100 kati, how big a fire would you need to burn up the wood? Would you need 100 kati of fire to burn them? No, you simply need a little spark of fire to burn them.”

The Buddha then used another example, “If you have dirty clothes which have accumulated ten years of dirt; how much soap powder would you need to wash the dirty clothes clean?”

“Just a little will do. Some soap powder would be sufficient to wash away the 10 years' worth of dirt.”

The Buddha said, “Right! You have created some unwholesome karma in society. By coming to the Triple Gem, you can use the merit of the Dharma, which are similar to little sparks, to burn away all your previous criminal karma. You can use the soap powder of the Dharma to wash away all the accumulated dirt. Therefore, you are intelligent and wise to have come before the Buddha.” He listened to what the Buddha said and realized that he could still be saved, so he quickly sought repentance, eradicated his criminal karma and was liberated from them.

This is the first example in the Salt Crystal Sutra. By combining salt with water in this manner, we will be able to further dilute the salt solution while continuing to top up the solution with the water of merits.

Example 4



In the second example, the creation of unwholesome karma is like being in debt. When we scold people and create unwholesome karma, it is similar to borrowing money. If we continue borrowing to the point that we become incapable of repaying the debts, we will be sentenced to prison. We might even borrow from illegal moneylenders, who would beat us

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severely if we are unable to repay the debts. What should we do in such circumstances?

We have to stop borrowing and to start earning money instead. When we have much wealth, it would be easier to repay such debts. What does borrowing money represent? The creation of unwholesome karma. What does earning money represent? The creation of merits.

When the creditor comes to collect payment from us, we can repay him immediately if we have a lot of money. If we have none, he will take us away. When we open an account with the bank and apply for a credit card, we should not exceed the maximum credit limit or continue utilizing advance payments. If we do not have the capability to earn enough money to repay the debts, we will be repeatedly bothered by the debt collectors, wouldn't that be troublesome?

Using the same logic, we should quickly go to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha for refuge. After taking refuge in the Triple Gem and accepting the five precepts, we would have opened a bank account with the Buddha's bank. Once the account is opened, we can start to cultivate merits on a daily basis by practicing generosity, upholding the precepts, and cultivating wholesomeness. These will increase the savings in our bank account.

As we accumulate more savings, to the extent that it becomes immeasurable and limitless, all the unwholesome karma we had created will be quickly repaid. As a result, the retribution that we face will be lighter.

Example 5

In the story about the goat in the Salt Crystal Sutra; if we created unwholesome karma, it would be like being a goat, and if we created wholesome karma, it would be like being the owner of the goat. If the owner of the goat does not have any power, it would be easy for somebody else to snatch the goat away.

When the time comes for us to take rebirth, King Yama will send his hell guards to escort us to the hell realm if we did not create much wholesome karma. If we have created wholesome karma, King Yama will not be able to take us away. Therefore, we do not need to seek help from the deities or fortune tellers to change our destiny.

Example 6

There is a situation in which we can change our destiny in the present life. King Prasenajit of Kosala had a daughter, who was born by Mallika Devi. The skin on her whole body was

wrinkled, her hair was as coarse as the horse's tail, and her face was distorted and hideous. The King thought, "This is my child after all. I cannot desert her. I will still raise her but I will not let her meet others when she grows up."

But a girl had to be married off when she grows up. So, the King sent his high minister to look for a young man who had no wealth and married the princess off to him. The King then accorded him the position of a prince consort and told him, "My daughter looks like this. Don't bring her out for social engagements, so that the others will not see her and cause embarrassment to you and me."

The prince consort abided by the King's intention and locked her behind seven doors. When the prince consort wanted to visit his wife, he would have to go through these seven doors, which were locked securely to prevent his wife from going outdoors.

All the royalties always attended the formal functions with their wives. However, after several years, everyone noticed that the prince consort had never brought the princess along. The princess was also very depressed about the situation.

The others noticed that the prince consort always had a bunch of keys with him and guessed that the princess must

have been locked up by him. Only by using these keys would they be able to see the princess.

So, they thought of a plan to make the prince consort drunk in order to take his keys to go and see the princess.

Every day the princess kept vigil in the dark empty room, her heart filled with repentance. So, she prayed and begged the Buddha, “Buddha, my criminal karma is so great, why won’t you come and save me? Let me see the Buddha and repent!” While she was sincerely begging for repentance, the Buddha appeared.

The Buddha first showed his hair, which was full of splendor and deep blue. Diamond (King Prasenajit’s daughter was called Diamond) was filled with great joy when she saw the splendor of the Buddha’s hair, and respectfully paid obeisance to the Buddha. At that moment, her hair immediately transformed and became very soft and smooth.

The Buddha then showed his face which had eleven of the thirty-two physical marks of a Buddha and was very splendid looking. Upon seeing it, Diamond was filled with great joy and respectfully paid obeisance again; this time, her face transformed and became as beautiful as that of a celestial maiden.

The Buddha then showed his entire body, which was golden-hued and was especially extraordinary and splendid. When Diamond saw the Buddha's body with all the thirty-two physical marks, she was filled with immense joy. At that instant, Diamond's body also transformed and became as beautiful as that of a celestial maiden.

Diamond Girl sought repentance from the Buddha, and begged the Buddha for mercy. After the Buddha expounded the Dharma to her, she acquired the Pure Dharma Eye and attained the state of stream-entry.

The royalties opened the doors one after another, from the first to the seventh, and took a peek inside the room of the princess. "The princess is so beautiful. The prince consort is so selfish in not letting us meet his wife." They locked all the doors and returned the keys to the prince consort.

When the prince consort returned and opened the doors, he asked, "Who are you?"

"I am your wife."

"But my wife is hideous, how could she have transformed into such a beauty?"

“Because the Buddha came to see me and I begged the Buddha for mercy and blessing, hence, I was transformed into this appearance.”

The prince consort was delighted that his wife had transformed and became as beautiful as a celestial maiden, so he went to see King Prasenajit. King Prasenajit was also very grateful to the Buddha.

Example 7

How can we change our destiny? If the causes and conditions are right, we could change our destiny in this life. If the causes and conditions are not adequate, changes would occur in the next life. We must not follow the method used by Zhuge Liang (famous strategist during the Three Kingdoms period). When Zhuge Liang divined his impending death, he used a method of prayer to prolong his life.

He lit up seven lanterns and offered prayers for several days and nights. He then ordered someone to guard these lanterns. However, man proposes and the “heaven” disposes¹⁴. As

¹⁴ This is a translation of the Chinese proverb “人算不如天算”, which is equivalent to the proverb “Man proposes, God disposes” by Thomas Kempis (The Imitation of God)

Zhuge Liang was drawing his last breath, a general accidentally kicked over one of the lanterns when he came looking for him. Thus, his life was not extended, and this is mundane life.

To truly change our destiny, we should not use methods like this, but instead should follow the methods set out in the Dharma of the Salt Crystal Sutra. As such, we can let our minds dwell safely in the Triple Gem and cultivate diligently.

The way to change our destiny

1. Repenting our past criminal karma

We must be able to repent our past criminal karma, just as Diamond did. After she had repented her previous criminal karma, she was able to see the Buddha, and was thus able to change her destiny. Repenting past criminal karma bears two significant points: the relinquishing of past karma, and the non-creation of additional karma.

To relinquish past karma is to confess all of one's previously created unwholesome karma to others, just as one would pour out all the contents from the manure pit and bake them under the sun. After sunning, will those feces remain as feces? Of course not, they are merely lime

and soil after all. This is the principle: we should relinquish past karma and pour them all out, and we should not create additional karma, specifically, unwholesome karma.

Example 1

When we are willing to repent sincerely, our minds will be directed towards wholesomeness. For example, you might have craved liquor in the past and drinking liquor would cause trouble. At the point when you decided to quit your drinking habit, the mind would have been directed towards the search for wisdom.

Those who crave liquor will descend into the hell of feces and urine, and the hell of boiling feces, where they will drink the urine in the hell realm. When they finally leave the hell realm, they will be reborn in the animal realm as a foolish primate. When they take rebirth as humans at a later stage, their minds will be clouded and others will not be able to accept them or engage them in any important positions.

We might encounter such a situation when we take rebirth. If we kick the habit of drinking and repent by first

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directing our minds towards the Triple Gem, while at the same time, taking refuge and upholding the precepts, we will be able to turn over a new leaf. The merits of paying obeisance and repentance are especially extraordinary.

Example 2

By paying obeisance to the Buddha just once, we can erase as much karmic seeds of our crimes as the sands in the river. By chanting the Buddha's name just once, we can increase our merits immeasurably.

When we do not pay obeisance to the Buddha, our minds will be turned towards the mundane world. When we are invited to feasts involving meaty delicacies prepared through all kinds of methods, we do not hesitate and such acts will create much karma.

When we join others in criticizing something, this will create unwholesome karma. Once we have paid obeisance to the Buddha, we should not create any more unwholesome karma in the future.

When paying obeisance to the Buddha, we confess and repent all of the unwholesome karma that we had

previously created to the Buddha. With the Buddha's acceptance, such karma will gradually lighten.

As the Salt Crystal Sutra had disclosed, the paying of obeisance to the Buddha is the foremost merit among merits – the most important and greatest of merits; and after we have planted it, our merits will grow to immeasurable proportions.

The merits of the Buddha will eradicate our unwholesome karma because the merits are so great that the unwholesome karma becomes negligible in comparison. Hence, by paying obeisance to the Buddha just once, we can eradicate as much karmic seeds of our crimes as the sands in the Ganges River.

By chanting the Buddha's name just once, we can increase our merits immeasurably. When chanting the Buddha's name, we should keep our minds on the Buddha. As the Buddha's merits are immeasurable and limitless, with each chant of the Buddha's name we made, the meritorious virtues gained will be really immense.

However, in the Zen Sect, there was a case which was referred to as "Chant the Buddha's name once, and rinse

the mouth over three days”¹⁵. The Zen Sect does have its own set of basic theories, with cases of practitioners attaining true practices and authentic realizations.

As common people, we should not mindlessly follow others and repeat, “Chant the Buddha’s name once, and rinse the mouth over three days”. If you were to chant the Buddha’s name once and thereafter rinse your mouth over three days, you will not get to meet the Buddha in your innumerable future lives. If you were to act according to this case, and even advise others to act in the same way, then your criminal karma would be immeasurable and limitless.

Some people might claim that done deeds should be forgotten and that one should not even confess or repent over them. This is a wrong mentality to have. You must reflect on the criminal karma you have created, confess them and not repeat them again; in this manner, you

15 There were arguments among the Zen Sect against literal or dualistic interpretations, and expressed concerns that some might become attached to the idea of the Pure Land by reciting the holy name of Amitabha Buddha. The concern is that some might surrender responsibility for their actions, since rebirth in the Pure Land is possible for all regardless of their deeds in life. Those objections, however, were not intended to stop the practices, only to make sure that they were properly understood.

relinquish your past unwholesome karma and stop yourself from committing further unwholesome karma.

Hence, it is key for us to reflect upon and repent over our wrongdoings in the past.

Means of Repentance

(a) To confess one's breach of the rules before the Buddha and seek remission in proper form

When we have committed lighter unwholesome karma, we can repent them one at a time, that is for example, a married couple mutually apologizes to each other after a quarrel; this is a one-to-one repentance. After repenting in this manner, we will not commit the same mistake again.

It applies to our friends as well, but why do we find it hard to do so? It is due to our ego and pride. Our ego is not worth a single penny, so it is alright to dispense with it. If we sincerely repent and apologize to others, we will not repeat the same mistake in the future. In doing so, we would have relinquished our unwholesome karma and not to commit further unwholesome karma of a similar nature.

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To those in the monastic order, this form of confession is called “karman”.

A karman is a meeting of the monastics for the purpose of ordination, or for the confession of sins and absolution, or for expulsion of the unrepentant. Be it on a one-to-one basis or otherwise, they are all referred to as “karman”.

If we have done something wrong, we should follow the rules and carry out karman repentance with respect to others. Therefore, if a married couple had a quarrel, karman repentance should be carried out.

If we did wrong to our children, we must also apologize to them. In this way, they will learn from us, and know how they should apologize to others. This is a crucial concept.

Sometimes, we will lie to our children, or even teach our children to tell lies. And they will learn from such experiences.

It is crucial for parents to practice what they preach to their children by setting an example with their own

actions. Therefore, we must learn how to confess our wrongs and seek remission. If we have erred, we must sincerely confess and repent, just as Diamond did. And, only in this manner will we improve ourselves.

(b) To seek the presence of the Buddha to rid ourselves of sinful thoughts and afflictions

By paying obeisance to the Buddha and seeking repentance, we are seeking the presence of the Buddha to rid us of sinful thoughts and afflictions.

To seek the presence of the Buddha is to be able to see the Buddha's image, the lotus flower, and the Buddha's radiance. At this moment, the Buddha will come and lay his hand on the top of one's head as blessing. In this manner, we seek the presence of the Buddha to rid us of sinful thoughts and afflictions.

From a normal perception, it might seem easier to seek the presence of the Buddha to rid us of sinful thoughts and afflictions because there is no need to meet and apologize directly to others.

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But in reality, the more direct method would be to confess and seek remission from others. For minor offences, we may confess and seek remission, but for more serious offences, we should seek the presence of the Buddha to rid us of sinful thoughts and afflictions.

Example

Once, a man requested to take the precepts. His preceptor¹⁶ told him, “You should pay obeisance to the Buddha till you can see the Buddha, the Buddha’s radiance, and a lotus flower, you would have attained the precepts at that point.”

And, when the Buddha came and laid his hand on the top of the man’s head as blessing, the preceptor told him, “You have already attained the precepts. There is no need for you to receive the precepts from me as you have already received the precepts directly from the Buddha.” Therefore, after purifying ourselves through repentance by seeking the presence of the

¹⁶ The Preceptor is a Buddhist teacher, usually a monastic, who imparted the precepts to the practitioner.

Buddha to rid us of sinful thoughts and afflictions, we can also receive the precepts at the same time.

(c) Repentance by realizing the true form of all things as they are

Repentance by realizing the true form of all things as they are; this requires us to progress one step at a time, from the wisdom gained through language, followed by the wisdom gained through contemplation, and finally to the wisdom gained by understanding the characteristics of reality. Hence, we should first listen to the Sutras and learn the Dharma, and then seek to understand the wisdom in the Dharma. We will have to practice insight meditation to realize the Dharma.

When we read the various sutras on wisdom, such as the Diamond Sutra, the Maha *Prajna* Paramita Sutra, and the Sutra of Great Wisdom, what we want to achieve is the ability to realize the true form of all things as they are. Without language, there is absolutely no way for us to gain insight into the Dharma. Without insight, there is no way for us to see the true form of all things as they are.

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To repent by realizing the true form of all things as they are, we need to first realize that all criminal karma created by us arose from our minds. Hence, once we can understand that the mind is in fact completely empty of inherent existence, the characteristics of all criminal and meritorious karma will also be completely empty of inherent existence as well. By observing the true nature of all things as they are in this way, we can then eradicate the criminal karma accordingly. Therefore, it is most difficult to seek repentance by realizing the true form of all things as they are.

If we can achieve repentance by realizing the true form of all things as they are, we would be able to eliminate all criminal karma. Of all the methods of confession in China, there is one known as “attainment of non-rebirth through the Buddha’s cognition”. To attain non-rebirth¹⁷ is to repent by realizing the true form of all things as they are. Therefore, to be able to attain non-rebirth when we

¹⁷ “To attain non-rebirth” is the state of non-arising, in which one is not subjected to birth and death.

pay obeisance and repent, an order of practice and a process of steps are to be followed.

Example 1

A Bhikshu once broke the precept by engaging in sexual conduct, hence, he could not share the same dwelling with the other monastics. As he did not hesitate to approach his master to confess and repent, he could still remain as a sramanera after repenting.

When he went to his master, his master wanted to let him repent with purity. The master, who was an Arahant, asked him to climb up a tree while the master using his supernatural powers to form a pit filled with fire at the foot of the tree. The master told the Bhikshu that if he jumped down from the tree into the pit of fire, he will be able to eradicate the criminal karma.

The Bhikshu who broke the precept thought, "If I don't jump down, I will go to the hell realm to suffer; by jumping down, I can eradicate my criminal karma. I would rather jump and die just once then to go to the hell realm to experience immeasurable and limitless sufferings." And, he jumped.

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The master, upon seeing his sincerity towards repentance, reinstated the floor to its original form. At that moment, the Bhikshu's mind was purified. The master taught him how to repent and cultivate, and he soon attained Arahatsip.

Example 2

There was a lay person who sold incense. An Arahatsip once told him, "Come follow me and join the monastic order to practice." But the lay person replied, "I can't join yet, for I still have a life to live."

"Good. While you are still at home, let me teach you a way to practice first."

"How should I practice?"

"First, you should examine your every thought. If a wholesome thought arises, you should put aside a white stone piece; if an unwholesome thought arises, you should put aside a black stone piece. At the end of each day, you should observe the number of wholesome and unwholesome thoughts that had arisen on that day."

So the lay person started to practice this daily. Initially, he found that the black stone pieces always outnumbered the white at the end of the day, thus he realized that most of his thoughts were actually unwholesome.

Thereafter, he started to correct himself by being mindful and repenting on any wrongdoings afterwards. Gradually, he noticed that there were fewer black stone pieces, showing that he had fewer unwholesome thoughts. At the same time, the number of white stone pieces had grown, showing that he had developed more wholesome thoughts. After some time, he realized that there were no more black stone pieces, which meant that there were no more unwholesome thoughts, and that he had only wholesome thoughts in his mind. At that moment, he knew that it was time for him to join the monastic order.

He joined the monastic order and accepted three karman meetings. At the first karman, he attained the first stage of fruition (i.e. stream-entry); at the second karman, he attained the second stage of fruition (i.e. once-returning); and at the third karman, he attained the third stage of fruition (i.e. non-returning). Soon

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thereafter, he attained the fourth stage of fruition, i.e. Arahatsip.

Why are we unable to attain the stages of fruition? It is because we are constantly in the midst of unwholesome thoughts and defilements. Hence, we must first cultivate the strength to repent and let our minds become pure. Once purified, we can continue to progress in our cultivation.

Therefore, the way to change our destiny is to be able to maintain a repentant mind. Of course, repenting does not simply mean that we should continue thinking about all the unwholesome deeds that we had committed in the past, and it does not mean that we should not think about anything at all. Rather, it means that we should repent on the unwholesome deeds and do away with such behaviors thereafter.

2. *Generate the motivation to renounce*

We need to practice self-cultivation, observe the precepts, cultivate the mind, and practice with wisdom.

(1) To practice self-cultivation

We must be respectful to the Triple Gem, be filial to our parents, practice generosity, uphold the precepts, and consult others. We practice self-cultivation with people in mind; for example, when we practice generosity, there has to be a receiving party. When we know how to respect others and be grateful to others, our minds will always be kind and compassionate.

(2) To observe the precepts

To uphold the precepts is to uphold the precepts for all sentient beings. When practicing self-cultivation, the practice of generosity is directed at one or more sentient beings, but to uphold the precepts is to do so for all sentient beings.

When we uphold the precept of not killing, we are liberating lives (i.e. releasing caged animals). Although we are simply releasing a few caged sentient beings, the fact is, we are hoping that all sentient beings can be happy and not being killed. Hence, we are willing to uphold the precept for all sentient beings.

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The precepts for lay persons include the five precepts, the tenfold wholesome causes of action, and the eight precepts; while the precepts for monastics include the *Sramanera*, *Sramanerika* precepts, the *Siksamana* precepts, the Bhikshu precepts and the *Bhikshuni* precepts. We uphold these precepts for all sentient beings.

To uphold the precepts, we must have a compassionate mind. We cannot claim that we are upholding the precept and do not kill, yet respond with indifference and apathy when sentient beings are suffering.

Such behavior shows that one has a “grudging and greedy mind”, which implies an unwillingness to save and liberate sentient beings. It is a mind without compassion and sympathy, and thus we cannot regard such a person as one who upholds the precept. This is a very subtle concept that we must be aware of! Sentient beings need us to protect them and keep them in mind, so we need to practice self-cultivation and observe the precepts.

(3) To cultivate the mind

To cultivate the mind is to cultivate the Four Divine States of Mind of Loving-Kindness, Compassion, Sympathetic Joy, and Equanimity, to practice the four dhyana-concentrations, and to practice the four formless concentrations¹⁸. A person, who practices meditative concentration, will be able to protect the whole country and keep the whole country in mind.

Example

In one of his past lives, Venerable Mahakasyapa had an unwholesome thought whilst offering and sustaining a *Pratyeka Buddha*. He felt that it was not necessary to offer and sustain the Pratyeka Buddha, even though he had already done so. At that moment, the Pratyeka Buddha demonstrated his supernatural powers to Mahakasyapa, and he quickly sought repentance from the Pratyeka Buddha.

¹⁸ The “four dhyana-concentrations” are “the four stages of concentrations which enable one to remove the delusions attached to in the realm of desire to make way for the bliss of the form realm”. The “four formless concentrations” are “the four states of concentration which lead to rebirth in the four formless heavenly realms”.

He knew that if he did not cultivate himself before this life was over, he would be reborn into the lower realms due to the generation of unwholesome thoughts towards the Pratyeka Buddha. So, he told his wife, “Let’s join the monastic order immediately and cultivate ourselves by practicing the Four Divine States of Mind, cultivating the meditation on Loving-Kindness, meditation on Compassion, meditation on Sympathetic Joy, and meditation on Equanimity.”

The Venerable repented, upheld the precepts, cultivated the Four Divine States of Mind, and therefore took rebirth in the form realm instead of the hell realm. After that life ended, he was reborn into the human realm to be liberated and thereafter attained Arahatsip.

(4) To practice with wisdom

In our daily lives, we need to practice self-cultivation, observe the precepts, and cultivate the mind. After stabilizing our minds, we can then develop meditative insight into The Right View of Dependent Arising, the Four Noble Truths, and the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination.

When we develop meditative insight into the Four Noble Truths, we realize what suffering is, we abandon the origin of suffering, we verify the cessation of suffering, and we develop the way that leads to the cessation of suffering, thus attaining Nirvana.

When we are clear of the steps involved, we have to contemplate on the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination: i.e. “one’s existence gives rise to another’s”; we transmigrate through birth and death in this manner.

“An arising gives rise to another”; under the influence of ignorance and defilements, we create karma, and remain in the cycle of existence. If there is neither defilement nor the creation of karma, there will not be any *cyclic existence*. This is how you should contemplate, one step at a time, on the Right View of Dependent Arising.

In our daily lives, we must cultivate ourselves, observe the precepts, cultivate the mind, and practice with wisdom. We start with the basics by practicing generosity, printing sutras, going to the Triple Gem for refuge, receiving the precepts, and upholding the precepts.

When we liberate lives, we are protecting all sentient beings and keeping them in mind, cultivating Loving-Kindness, Compassion, Sympathetic Joy, and Equanimity. We then move one step further to listen to and learn the Dharma, and practice the Four Noble Truths. In this way, we will then be able to gradually change our destiny.

3. *Generate Bodhicitta (i.e. the aspiration to attain enlightenment for the welfare of all sentient beings)*

We must generate the Great Compassionate Heart and Bodhicitta, and also practice the six perfections and be endowed with the *ten stages of Bodhisattva practice*. It would be even better if we can take rebirth in the Western Paradise. We will thus be able to complete the path to Buddhahood in the future.

Example

When Sakyamuni Buddha was a Bodhisattva, there was once when he was suffering with a sentient being in the hell realm where both of them were pulling a cart. The cart was scorching hot, and sitting on top of the cart was a hell warden.

Sakyamuni Bodhisattva was very strong, while the other sentient being was very weak; the other being could not move anymore and was unable to pull the cart. Upon seeing this, the hell warden whipped him.

Sakyamuni Bodhisattva told the hell warden, “Don’t whip him, I will pull the cart alone.” This was because his compassionate mind had arisen and he was willing to take on immeasurable suffering for all sentient beings.

The fierce and brutal hell warden then used a trident to spear Sakyamuni Bodhisattva in the throat, causing Sakyamuni Bodhisattva to die immediately.

At that moment, Sakyamuni Bodhisattva generated Bodhicitta, the Heart of Loving-kindness and Compassion, and the willingness to take on immeasurable suffering for all sentient beings. Hence, due to his ultimate wholesome mental state, he was reborn in the heavenly realms, where he then started to practice the Bodhisattva path.

When Sakyamuni Bodhisattva was in the hell realm, he was already willing to take on immeasurable suffering for all sentient beings. Hence, under such a wholesome mental state, he was able to change his destiny even

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though he was in the hell realm; compare this to the relatively easier path that we take in the human realm!

By reading sutras like The Amitabha Sutra, and The Sutra on the Visualisation of the Buddha of Infinite Lifespan, we can change our destiny by enabling ourselves to go to the Western Paradise. So, what should we do to change our destiny?

We have to be able to repent on our criminal karma and generate the motivation to renounce; practicing self-cultivation, observing the precepts, cultivating the mind, and practicing with wisdom. We must also be able to generate the Bodhicitta and the Great Compassionate Heart, and be able to practice the Bodhisattva path, the six perfections, and be endowed with the ten stages of Bodhisattva practice, just as Sakyamuni Bodhisattva was able to.

In this life, we should chant the Buddha's name with a focused mind and seek to enter the Western Paradise. Once we have completed our cultivation, we will return to the mundane world to liberate sentient beings. In this life, if we have changed our destiny in this manner, we will be happy and be at ease.

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 cliraudience; (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.

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) for updates.

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