

Everlasting Happiness,  
as Buddha Attains 4

**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

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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.

This book comprises six chapters and dwells on three main themes. The chapters on "The Law of Dependent Origination" explain what Right View is and the Wrong Views that should be abandoned. In the chapters on "The Most Blissful Person", we will learn that the most blissful person is the Buddha. It is hoped that we would aspire to be Buddhas as we learn more about the Buddha. "The Wise Man's Choice" explains the three vehicles of the Buddha's teachings and describes the suffering we can end and the happiness we can attain. This is the fourth installment 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.

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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.

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)**

## **Priceless Treasure – The Law of Dependent Origination (2)**

### **The Right View of Dependent Origination**

The Buddha spent three incalculable *kalpas* and even limitless incalculable kalpas to acquire the wisdom on the Right View of Dependent Origination. The Buddha expounded the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination and the Four Noble Truths in the sutras and scriptures:

**(1) "The karma created will not extinguish even after hundreds and thousands of kalpas; when the right causes and conditions surface, one has to endure the resulting retributions."**

Even through the span of the three periods, the karmic results of cause and effect will not vanish unless it has completed its course. As such, we should always cultivate the Right View.

**(2) "If, in the mundane world, there is a person with the Right View, even though he may take rebirth in hundreds and thousands life times, he would not go to the *bad existences*."**

Even though a person who has the Right View will still have to go through Samsara, he will not go to the three lower realms. Thus, it is very important to cultivate the Right Knowledge and Right View! When creating wholesome deeds, we must first acquire the Right View and compose our mind.

**(3) "In the mundane world, when there is karmic action, there will be karmic result; but according to the profound Ultimate Truth that the Buddha expounds, there is no one creating the karma nor receiving the karmic result. Although it is nothingness, it is not annihilated, although it is continuous, it is not permanent, the meritorious or unmeritorious karma will not vanish, such is the Dharma expounded by the Buddha."**

In the mundane world, there are karmic causes and karmic effects, and they will continue through the three periods. However, in the midst of all these, no one is committing the karmic deed, nor is there a person who is suffering the karmic result. In the continuity of cause and effect, there is no "I". This is the extremely important Ultimate Truth.

There is really no "I" in the nine characteristics of the *bardo* – it is only through the *five aggregates* that karmic deeds are created and which in turn will generate the five aggregates of the next life.



Through the five aggregates, defilements arise, thus creating karmic deeds again. In this continuity, there is no "I". The five aggregates of the previous life were not brought forward to this life, but due to the karmic power, the five aggregates of the next life are formed.

If this is the case,  
why are we still in  
the cyclic existence?  
This is because

sentient beings perceive that there is an "I", there is a "You" and "Me". We will either be against each other or be attached to each other, and create karmic deeds because of this.

That is why we remain in the cyclic existence. If we understand that there is no "I" and seek to only perform wholesome deeds but not unwholesome ones while practicing selflessness, we will not be attached to the

~ THE LAW OF DEPENDENT ORIGINATION (2) ~

wholesome deeds but instead will do our best according to the conditions present. Under such circumstances, we will not continue in the cyclic existence, and this is the profound Ultimate Truth that the Buddha expounded.

The Ultimate Truth is nothingness, not annihilation. It does not end with the death of a person! The cycle of Samsara will continue upon the death of a person as long as there is cause and conditions for the retribution of a next life. Thus, the five aggregates will arise again.

If there are no defilements or attachment, the five aggregates will not arise again. The Arahat does not generate any defilements and will not suffer the five aggregates.

But that does not mean that the Arahat has nothing. And why is it so? Because though it is nothingness, it is not annihilated; though it is continuous, it is not permanent. The past and present lives of sentient beings continue in this manner. As such, there is neither a permanent Venerable Da Shi nor a permanent "You".

So if I were a celestial being in the previous life, and became a human in this life, I could also take rebirth as a dog if I do not cultivate well in this life. Thus, amongst the three beings,

which one am I? The celestial being? The human in this life? Or is it the dog in the next life? So in this continuity, there is no "I" within as it is not unchanged forever. Thus goes the teaching: although it is continuous, it is not permanent.

Why one takes rebirth as a celestial being, a human, or a dog is due to karmic cause and effect – that is whether the karma is meritorious or unmeritorious. To take rebirth in the heavens is a meritorious reward, so is being born in the human realm.

Taking rebirth as a dog in the animal realm is the result of unmeritorious karma. And taking rebirth in the hell realm is the result of even more severe unmeritorious karma.

As such, the meritorious or unmeritorious karma will not vanish as there is a relationship of continuity of cause and effect. This is an extremely important point.

## **The Wrong View in the Mundane World**

If sentient beings do not know about the Right View of Dependent Origination, they will fall into the three types of wrong views which are linked to the four kinds of misconception.

## ◎ The Four Kinds of Misconception

### (1) Perceiving the impure as pure

A Chinese saying goes that "the dog does not change its habit of eating feces". The dog eats its own feces because it perceives it as pure. As for humans, if we spit three times into our palms, nobody would dare to consume our spittle as it is smelly. We always misperceive our body as clean and pure when in fact, it is extremely dirty and impure.

Sentient beings therefore misperceive the impure as pure and become attached to their bodies.

### (2) Perceiving suffering as joy

This body is actually suffering. When we were young, we thought the body could withstand eating, drinking, having fun, and was very happy. But the truth is that the body only enjoys little happiness; most of the time it is experiencing suffering.

What is it suffering? The body ages, falls sick, dies, and also needs to empty its bladder and clear its bowels. Is this not suffering? It is very tiring to sit on a chair for some time. It is also very tiring to lie on the bed for a little longer. Is it possible

not to move the body? No. And why is this so? It is because this body exists.

Thus, this body is not happy; it is suffering. In the midst of such misconception, we perceive suffering as joy.

### **(3) Perceiving impermanent as permanent**

When we are in our 40s or 50s, we tell our children: "Daddy was a handsome guy when I was young!" The son tells you: "Stop thinking of the glamorous past. That was long gone, now daddy is old and the skin on the face is sagging." If we still do not see the impermanence of this, we will be laughed at by our sons.

The truth is that this body is impermanent. You cannot maintain the looks of a twenty-year-old forever. If you can see this impermanence, you will not be deluded and perceive the impermanent as permanent.

### **(4) Perceiving no ego as "I"**

Earlier we asked the question: "which being am I? The celestial being? The human in this life? Or is it the dog in the next life?" The truth is that there is indeed no "I". But we tend to cling on and think that there is a real "I" existing in each life.

If you are able to liberate yourself from this point, then you are thinking in synchronization with the Dharma. If you are unable to understand this point and still cling on to the wrong view that there is a permanent, happy, and pure "I", you will fall into the Theory of Divine Blessing, the Theory of Fate, and the Theory of No Cause and No Condition in order to protect this permanent, happy and pure "I".

### ◎ **Three Types of Wrong Views**

When we bear wrong views, we will commit the ten unmeritorious cause of action, and will not be able to eliminate the unwholesome and cultivate the wholesome.

#### **(1) The Theory of Fate**

The Theory of Fate perceives that everything is fated and destined in the past life and cannot be changed.

##### Example 1

Some people might say: "This person is fated to be a president; whether or not he does well, he will still become a president."

If this is the case, then it is unlikely that he will do wholesome deeds. Since he will still be a president whether he does good

deeds or not, it does not matter if he commits any bad deeds. So such phenomenon may arise.

### Example 2

Some people might say: "I am poor for my whole life. Since I am so poor, I might as well commit bad deeds. It does not matter if I steal other people's fortune or wealth." Thus, he may start to commit bad deeds.

Before the result materializes, nothing is destined in life as everything arises due to causes and conditions. Our body, wealth, social stature, and the world are all dependent on the combination of the causes and conditions. So before the result takes shape, nothing is destined.

The arising of everything is due to causes and conditions. If something entails unwholesome results, we should not allow it to materialize. Therefore we must seek to cultivate the cessation of conditioned arising.

### Example 3

Many people do not have confidence in themselves and often turn to fortune tellers. When we were young, our parents would use our birth details (such as the time of our birth, our

~ THE LAW OF DEPENDENT ORIGINATION (2) ~

birth date etc) to foretell our fates. If the foretelling indicated ill fate, our parents and ourselves would feel upset, but what could we do?

Such attempts only generate unhappiness. If the foretelling indicated that we could become a high-ranking official, we would be elated.

What will happen to a young child if we do not educate him but instead allow him to go wayward and commit unwholesome deeds? Will he become a high-ranking official? Of course not! So fortune telling is unreliable. You do not need to seek any fortune tellers to foretell your fortune or fate – it only costs you your life if you continue doing it.

So what should we do? Everything arises due to causes and conditions, and likewise, everything ceases due to causes and conditions. We should cultivate wholesome causes and conditions that result in wholesome rewards. Do not allow unwholesome causes and conditions to materialize into unwholesome retributions.

Example 4

Do not think thus: since everything is fated, it is therefore not necessary to work so hard. Do not fall into the trappings of

the Theory of Fate so that you commit unwholesome deeds or become a pessimist just like Yuan Liao Fan.

Before Yuan Liao Fan met Confucius who would later read his fortune, his father was a magistrate. But Yuan Liao Fan did not want to become a magistrate, so he studied medicine instead.

After Confucius had read his fortune, Confucius told him: "You should become a magistrate. Go study to become a scholar. You are destined to become a scholar, earn this much as a magistrate, and have no sons."

So Yuan Liao Fan studied diligently and became a scholar and subsequently a magistrate. All went according to what Confucius had foretold. But he felt that there was no meaning to life.

Fortunately, he did not go about committing unwholesome deeds. Yuan Liao Fan actually enjoyed meditating. As he was told that he would bear no sons, he had little incentive to work hard, and he became pessimistic and decadent, expecting to spend his life in such manner.

Subsequently he met Venerable Yun Gu who said to him: "Everything arises due to causes and conditions and everything ceases due to causes and conditions. You only

know of the past causes and effects, but you are not aware that the future is still subject to change according to the arising and ceasing of causes and conditions. It is not permanent; it is impermanent, and there is no ego."

So the Venerable taught him how to eradicate unwholesome deeds and cultivate wholesome deeds to change his destiny, something we have discussed and looked at in the chapter on "How do we change our destiny"<sup>2</sup>.

The Venerable taught him to repent past unwholesome deeds, and encouraged him to cultivate his well-being, uphold the precepts, cultivate the mind and wisdom, generate *Bodhicitta*, be mindful of the Buddha, take rebirth in the *Western Pure World*, and return in the future to liberate other sentient beings.

Yuan Liao Fan practiced as instructed and his destiny started to change. He had children, and his official status and earnings began to rise. So we see that the Theory of Dependent Origination is extremely important in Buddhism.

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<sup>2</sup> "How do we change our destiny?" can be found in the second volume of this series.

Example 5

A village chief told the Buddha: "There is a young man in our village who is well versed with astronomy and geography. He can predict accurately if there will be disasters due to wind, rain, or earthquake."

The Buddha replied: "Let us first put aside what you believe this young man can do. Is your body impermanent? Is it aging constantly? You looked fresh and handsome when young, now you are a village chief in your 40s or 50s, your skin is sagging, isn't it?"

"Yes", replied the village chief.

"You do not fall sick in the past, but now you are sick, is this correct?"

"Yes!"

"When you are old, surely this body will deteriorate and die, isn't it?"

"Yes!"

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"Your form, feeling, perception, volition, and consciousness are likewise the same, isn't it?"

"Yes!"

"Is the Dharma expounded by me better or are the sayings of the young man better?"

"Buddha's saying is correct and the best."

"Why?"

"Astronomy and geography are unable to help me resolve my fundamental worries. Only the Dharma that the Buddha has expounded will be able to help me to detach from myself. It will also enable me to start to give generously and perform wholesome deeds. That is the real Dharma."

So the Buddha is ultimately the most invincible. As soon as the Buddha expounded the Dharma, sentient beings were enlightened, realized the Right Dharma, and did not believe in predictions anymore.

So it is unimportant to you if someone were to tell you what would happen tomorrow or the day after. The most important

thing is to be able to be liberated from suffering. This is what the Dharma is directed at.

### Example 6

We say that arising and cessation of all things are due to causes and conditions; all of these are not fated in life.

A saying in China goes: "There is no born Sakyamuni Buddha, nor is there a natural Maitreya Buddha."

Was there a Sakyamuni Buddha originally? No! Sakyamuni Buddha started from being a lay person who generated the Bodhicitta mind, practiced the *Six Paramitas*, learnt the Dharma, get acquainted with the various Buddhas, completed the *Ten Stages of Bodhisattva Practice*, and ultimately attained *Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi*, thereby becoming Sakyamuni Buddha.

Thus, "there is no born Sakyamuni Buddha, nor is there a natural Maitreya Buddha". They appear due to causes and conditions. Once we are able to grasp the Theory of Dependent Origination, we will realize the Right Dharma and know how to cultivate and practice. This is indeed truly the most important!

## **(2) The Theory of Divine Blessing**

The Theory of Divine Blessing means that God and the *Brahma King* will bless you as long as you pray to the heavens, King *Sakra*, and the Brahma King. They will make your life peaceful and bring you to the heavens to enjoy happiness in future.

This is what the Theory of Divine Blessing refers to in the past, but is it possible? If that is the case, nobody will be doing wholesome deeds. Instead, they will think that even if I commit any unwholesome deeds in the human realm, I can still rely on the Brahma King and God to help me get to their heavens in future.

How could this be? So people who believe in the Theory of Divine Blessing will eventually commit unwholesome deeds. However, a person who has learnt the Dharma will understand that the arising and ceasing of all things are due to causes and conditions. They will therefore seek to cultivate wholesome deeds, eliminate unwholesome deeds, and practice the Dharma as taught by the Buddha.

When we bring to mind the Buddha, our mind will be completely filled with pure wholesomeness.

### Example 1

Some people might say: "The deity instructed that I must be a shaman." and they indeed become a shaman. Thinking that the deity will bless them, they sometimes compete with others for things, and end up fighting. But this is not true – the deity does not bless you.

### Example 2

Once there was a person who went to the hell realm in his teens. Of course, it was not his physical form that went but it was through the causes and conditions generated by Wei Tuo *Bodhisattva* that his mind went to the hell realm.

Wei Tuo *Bodhisattva* showed the young person the way to the hell realm using the light emitted from his finger-tips, enabling him to see the various scenes in the hell realm, such as the Hell of Ashen River where hot water boils as recounted in the Sutras. He saw some of his relatives and friends and even some deities in this river.

When he awoke, he informed the local deity: "You make use of the shaman to tell lies and obtain the worship and offering of others, you will end up in the Hell of Ashen River to be

cooked and suffer endlessly!" From then onwards, the deity dare not appear anymore.

He then informed his cousin: "You enjoy womanizing and will end up in the hell realm in future. This is because I saw that already happening." The man's cousin denied womanizing. But shortly thereafter, he indeed died!

If we do not repent our karmic deeds, nor do we cultivate our well-being, uphold the precepts, and develop the mind and wisdom, we will take rebirth in the bad existences upon our death because we have allowed our unwholesome karmic deeds to grow. So when we die as our karmic deeds have ripened, even the deities cannot bless you at that time.

### Example 3

The folk traditions are replete with mistaken views. People think that so long as you pray to the deity, you will be blessed.

So people pray to the ghosts in the 7<sup>th</sup> month of the Lunar Calendar. Normally, during the festive periods, people also pray to the deities for blessing. But is this possible? If the deities can bless you, why do they still descend to the three lower realms?

Paying respects to the Buddha helps us to accumulate meritorious rewards. Getting acquainted with the various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, we generate wholesome mind. Listening to the Buddha Dharma, we increase our wisdom. So we cultivate both our merits and wisdom.

The arising and cessation of all things is due to causes and conditions. Hence, as we have been practicing wholesome causes, we will attain the ultimate fruition of becoming a Buddha.

Because we cultivate the causes and conditions to become a Buddha, and the causes and conditions for liberation, we will eventually become a Buddha, a Bodhisattva, or an Arahant.

Based on the same principle, if you acquaint yourself with the ghosts and deities, you will also descend to the bad existences like them. Moreover, you will not want to practice and cultivate. The deities cannot even bless themselves, so how are they to bless you?

Therefore, as we are Buddhists, so long as we practice generosity, perform wholesome deeds, and uphold the precepts, naturally the good deities will protect us and the evil deities and ghosts will stay away.

Example 4:

The Ekottara Agama mentions a country known as Vaisali. It was occupied by many ghosts and this caused a lot of unrest to the people living in the country.

The king asked the senior ministers to think of a way to resolve the problem and everyone sought the help of the Buddha. This was because wherever the Buddha was, all the ghosts and deities could not reside there. The Buddha was very compassionate and agreed to help them.

When the Buddha reached the country, he said: "With my truest sincerity, may all beings enjoy a peaceful living."

When the Buddha reached the city gate, all the ghosts and deities had already left. In fact, even before the Buddha reached the place, the Four Heavenly Kings and the Celestial Army had already arrived. And because all the ghosts and deities were under the charge of the Four Heavenly Kings, they left upon the latter's arrival.

So now we know that there is no need to pray to the ghosts and deities, just practice well, and the Dharma Protectors will protect us – the evil ghosts will naturally leave as the good deities will be protecting us. Only when you do not practice

well, then the evil ghosts will come and get you, steal your vitality, or hinder you.

Thus we practice according to the principle that everything arises due to causes and conditions. Why are we able to reap good results and create a good world? This is because the wholesome causes and conditions that we generate bring about wholesome results.

Why do unwholesome results that lead to a defiled world arise? They arise because the unwholesome deeds we create produce unwholesome results. These unwholesome results are manifested in the world we live in, as well as in our direct and circumstantial retribution.

#### Example 5

In the past when people liked to play lottery or lucky draw, they would go to the trees to pray for auspicious cards. When they won a prize, they would invite their relatives and friends for feasts. Once the money was used up, they would again go back to the trees and ask for more auspicious cards.

If they did not win any prize, they would throw the deity statues into the river or sea. When the deity could satisfy the needs of the people, the people would be happy and liked the

deity. But when the deity was unable to satisfy them, they would throw the deity into the sea. Would such a deity be able to bless you?

The deity cannot even bless itself. So why is it that you can win a prize? It is because you had accumulated some meritorious result in the past and it surfaced in this form to reward you.

If we receive such rewards without practicing diligently, we become greedier and are attached to the rewards. This in turn makes us slack. So this is not a good thing. We should therefore not fall into the trappings of the Theory of Divine Blessing.

### Example 6

Someone once wrote on his name card: "I can help develop your Divine Eye". Only those people who have *supernatural powers* and already possess the Divine Eye are able to help others to practice the way to attain the Divine Eye. Similarly, for a person to be able to expound the Dharma, he must first understand the Dharma.

To be able to possess the Divine Eye, one must have attained Dhyana meditation. In the present era, it is very difficult for

sentient beings to practice Dhyana meditation. Moreover, there is still a very long journey to go to acquire supernatural powers upon attaining Dhyana meditation.

So helping others to develop their Divine Eye is in fact a gimmick for earning money. This is not the way to achieve Dhyana meditation, let alone the Divine Eye. When people tell you: "I possess the Divine Eye and will be able to grant you joy and bless you." That is utterly impossible!

### Example 7

Some people might say: "Those pictures to which I have given divine assistance (adhithana) will be able to bless you!"

For example: Venerable Da Shi passes you a picture to which he has given divine assistance and tells you: "This will bless you!" Is this possible? If his photograph can bless you, can he bless himself from falling sick? It is impossible!

Venerable Da Shi himself is not able to bless himself from falling sick and aging. He also needs to eat, drink, and clear his bowels. So how is he to bless you? Such incidences can be found in Taiwan, America, and Burma. Sentient beings are deluded by the Theory of Divine Blessing.

Some others might say: "I have chanted numerous times to this sarira<sup>3</sup>. Take it and it will bless you." Or some people may think that wearing dzi beads can bless them. This is not possible!

The arising and cessation of all things are due to causes and conditions. The right way is for us to cultivate wholesome deeds and abandon unwholesome deeds. Only then can we end up in the *good existences* and attain the fruit of liberation. Committing unwholesome deeds only bring forth suffering in the bad existences. The Theory of Dependent Origination is the Right View while the Theory of Divine Blessing is a Wrong View.

### Example 8

Some even say: "I have coffee session with the Buddha in the heaven." Will the Buddha be drinking coffee with you? People in the mundane world are so mistaken and do not have the Right View. They might even say: "I can give you divine assistance through the air from America."

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<sup>3</sup> Sarira: Transliteration of the Sanskrit, meaning 'body'. The relics of the Buddha, the remains after cremation.

Sentient beings like to be dependent. When someone says he can give you divine assistance, you feel that you are really being blessed. They may even tell you over the phone: "I can give you divine assistance.", and you feel that you really received such assistance. Do not believe in such mistaken Wrong Views!

### Example 9

Some years ago, the Dalai Lama was speaking at the Linkou Stadium in Taiwan. For the first five days when he was expounding the Dharma, the stadium was not fully occupied. But on the last two days when there was a blessing session (abhiseka), many people came.

We generally think that receiving blessings means eliminating our karmic deeds. We do not know how to change our destiny. Instead, we rely on external forces to help us eliminate our karmic deeds. What then is going to happen if, on the one hand we receive blessing while on the other we continue to create unwholesome karmic deeds? This is an example of how sentient beings lead a mistaken life.

So what really is a blessing session? To receive a blessing session means that after listening to the Dharma, we acquire

the Right View and *Right Understanding*. Our mind becomes bright and clear and we know which direction to head to. This is the true blessing.

The Dharma is akin to water<sup>4</sup>. We take in the water of Dharma and let it become the whole of our life. Thereafter, we practice and cultivate as taught and our lives will get brighter. We become wiser and will not descend to the bad existences. Instead, we will head towards the good existences, the path towards liberation, and eventually become a Buddha. This is indeed true blessing.

In ancient India the coronation and blessing of the king was to indicate that he was worthy to be the king. However, sentient beings of this time and age depend on blessings to eradicate their karmic deeds. This is wrong.

### Example 10

In the aftermath of the 9/21 Taiwan Earthquake, some people in the disaster-stricken areas of Nantou and Central Taiwan said, "We are going to send some people to Nantou to

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<sup>4</sup> Dharma is likened to water as it is able to eradicate the defilements of our mind just as water washes away stains.

practice "The Way to Avoid Earthquake" so that this place will not suffer anymore earthquakes." Is this possible? It is impossible!

The Ekottara Agama and Dirgha Agama mention that there are eight types of causes and conditions for an earthquake to happen: Bodhisattvas and those *Bhikshus* who have supernatural powers can cause the earth to quake under six types of causes and conditions. These quakes, however, are not damaging.

The other two types of causes and conditions will cause damage. One of them is through the combination of the four great elements in this world – earth, water, fire, and wind. When the wind element is stirred, it affects the water element as the wind whirls up the ocean water. The moving ocean water in turn causes the earth to shift, and this is known as an earthquake. So the wind element propels the water element which in turn propels the earth element.

Another is due to incapable kings whose kingdoms are not prosperous, the people are not at peace, and the seasons are not favorable. All these arise because of the sentient beings' karmic deeds and this attracts unwholesome karmic results of

earth and wind disasters. This is indeed happening in our current world now.

Except for the six types of wholesome causes and conditions, the other two are unwholesome ones.

As such, the oft-called "The Way to Avoid Earthquake" cannot prevent the earth from moving. Only when people's minds are wholesome and create wholesome deeds, then they can change their destiny. The arising and ceasing of events is due to causes and conditions, not through the blessings of any beings.

### Example 11

The various universities and high schools in Taiwan conduct examinations annually in the month of July. In June, many parents will bring their children's examination proofs to the temple to ask the Venerable to bless and provide divine assistance to the examination proofs in the presence of the Bodhisattva. If the unwholesome karmic deed is very severe, will these blessings help?

Firstly, whether a child does well in the examinations depends on the child's karmic result. We do not know when his past karmic results would ripen. So in this life, we ought to teach

the child to be mindful of the Buddha, chant sutras, pay homage to the Triple Gem, be filial to the parents, and cultivate a compassionate mind. As all things arise due to causes and conditions, the child will slowly cultivate his good karmic results.

Secondly, let the child concentrate on his studies when he is in school. When the causes and conditions are ripe, he will obtain good results. So we do not need to ask the Venerable, Buddha or the Bodhisattva to give blessing to his examination proof. Nor do we need to ask the deities to bless and keep him safe.

### Example 12

Someone once said: "After the Venerable touched my son's head, he was able to move his bowels smoothly." Just by getting the Venerable to touch the son's head and it will help him move his bowels? This is impossible!

People in the mundane world like to depend on the Venerable or other people. When you have such a dependent mind, you can be easily cheated by others and this is the Theory of Divine Blessing.

Example 13

When the new year is approaching, many people will go and pray to the Tai Sui Deity. To pray to the Tai Sui Deity means to light a candle. To light a candle is to enable us to pray for merits. It does not mean that by lighting a candle, everything will be fine and we can start to commit karmic deeds. Would you consider this as lighting a candle? That is being unwise!

Example 14

In the past when people were selling columbarium placements, they would say: "If you get this placement, you will be protected and safeguarded." This is incorrect!

Example 15

In order to change their destiny, some people go about changing their names. Is it possible to change one's destiny by changing the name? Once, the Taiwanese president invited more than ten people who share the same name as him to the President's Residence for dinner.

But why is it that out of so many people with the same name, only one person is the President? If a name could really change a person's destiny, then let us change Venerable Da Shi's

name to Sakyamuni Buddha. Will this enable the Venerable to be the Buddha immediately? No, this is not going to happen.

Changing your name will not change your destiny. It is merely a way of comforting your mind. Do not settle your mind in such a way.

### Example 16

Still there are some people who will redesign their homes in the hope to change their destiny. This causes a lot of disharmony at home and messes everything up. Will this change their destiny? No! So what should be done to change it?

The way to change our destiny is to repent past unwholesome deeds, cultivate one's well-being, uphold the precepts, develop the mind and wisdom, and generate Bodhicitta to save and liberate sentient beings.

Once we understand the principle of diluting salt with water<sup>5</sup> (i.e., diluting our unwholesome karmic deeds with wholesome ones) we will then be able to change our destiny.

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<sup>5</sup> An analogy adapted from the Salt Crystal Sutra of the Agama Sutra.

Example 17

Some people think that the date and time of birth of a child will determine his destiny. This is a Wrong View.

Example 18

Some people even try to calculate their car plate numbers to see if it is auspicious and safe. To know if you will be safe or not depends on your karmic deeds i.e., are there any karmic causes for accidents to arise? Of course you also have to ask yourself if you are an attentive driver.

For example, people like to drive and talk on the mobile phone at the same time. Isn't this very dangerous? When we understand this, we will come to understand that the arising of all things is due to causes and conditions. It is due to causes and conditions that accidents happen. Spending money to get an auspicious car plate number will not bless you – such is the Theory of Divine Blessing, a Wrong View.

Example 19

When our ancestors pass away, some people might ask the ancestors to bless the descendants so that they will grow up safely and live a long life. If the ancestors can bless the

descendants with longevity, then why is it that they themselves cannot enjoy longevity?

As such, the Theory of Divine Blessing is a Wrong View and is incorrect. Instead of depending on others to bless us, we should bless ourselves by practicing according to the Dharma. The arising and cessation of all things are due to causes and conditions. We can guard ourselves well with the Right View of Dependent Origination.

### Example 20

Still there are others who believe that geomancy can generate good descendants. Whether the descendants are good or bad will depend on the individual's karmic result through cause and effect, and not through any blessings of good geomancy. It is dependent upon our own cultivation of wholesomeness and abandonment of unwholesomeness, together with the blessings of the Buddha and Bodhisattva, that will lead us to have better descendants in our family.

However, can the above causes and conditions occur? It is uncertain. In fact, it all depends on the child himself. Some people might say: "The child got his meritorious rewards through the parents who gave them to him." This is wrong. In the law of cause and effect, each will reap what he sows.

~ THE LAW OF DEPENDENT ORIGINATION (2) ~

Whatever good merits another person did cannot be transferred to me, it is through my own cause that I get this effect. When I have wholesome cause, I will reap meritorious rewards. When I have unwholesome cause, I will reap unmeritorious retributions.

Some people say: "A child is happy due to the merits of his parents." If this is the case, when his parents pass away, the child will not have anything at all. So this is wrong!

In fact, the child has his own merits, and his parents are but a cause and condition to him. Even if the child did not have the cause and condition to have this set of parents, he will still have other karmic deeds and merits.

Example 21

Some people need to consult the agricultural calendar before deciding where they should be going. Now, that is really delusional!

The Theory of Divine Blessing shows us so many Wrong Views. We must extricate ourselves from these Wrong Views and not depend on others for blessings. Instead, depend on ourselves to take refuge in the Triple Gem, practice generosity, uphold

the precepts, cultivate our well-being, practice the precepts, and develop the mind and wisdom.

### **(3) The Theory of No Cause and No Condition**

This theory is about disbelief in cause and effect; that good does not beget good and that bad does not beget bad. If a person holds such views, he is liable to create unwholesome deeds and not wholesome deeds.

#### **Example 1**

If someone tells you: "This person who slaughters pigs in the market is reaping in lots of money"; when you first heard and saw this, you might mistake it to be the truth and it would seem that bad does not beget bad. Instead, doing bad seems to bring forth good result, isn't it? To slaughter pigs is an unwholesome deed but to reap in lots of money is a wholesome result. This is strange! Why is this so? Slaughtering pigs can actually bring forth the result of reaping in lots of money! So this is the Theory of No Cause and No Condition.

This is wrong! Slaughtering pigs is an unwholesome deed and will result in going to the hell realm. Reaping lots of money is a wholesome result, so why did he get such wholesome result?

~ THE LAW OF DEPENDENT ORIGINATION (2) ~

This is because he had practiced generosity in his past life and thus, he is getting the meritorious reward in this life. It is due to this cause and effect, so do not be mistaken!

Example 2

Some people say: "I will still be a brave man after 20 years."<sup>6</sup>

Is this correct? No! This is the Theory of No Cause and No Condition. That is why some people are not afraid of death because they believe that they will still be brave men after 20 years. This is wrong!

If you have defilements, or if you generate unwholesome mind and commit unwholesome deeds, you will suffer in future. Once we grasp this concept, we will not fall into the Theory of No Cause and No Condition.

Example 3

Whilst the Buddha and Venerable Ananda were collecting alms, they met an old couple burning feces and squatting beside it to keep warm.

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<sup>6</sup> A Chinese saying implying that upon our death, we will continually be reborn as humans. Hence, 20 years on, we will be another brave man.

When the Buddha saw this, he smiled. Upon returning to the monastery, Venerable Ananda asked the Buddha: "World Honored One, why did you smile when you saw that old couple?"

The Buddha said: "That old couple is so old now, but they are still looking at each other with a lusty mind, not thinking of cultivating. When they die, they will go to the hell realm to suffer."

Venerable Ananda asked: "Will they be able to reverse their destiny?"

The Buddha replied: "They could, but it is too late now. If they had started cultivating when they were young, they could have attained Arahathship; and if they had worked hard to earn money as lay persons, they could have been the richest people in this city.

"If they had cultivated diligently when they were young and strong, they could have attained the Third Stage of Fruition; and if they had worked hard to earn money, they could have become the second richest people.

~ THE LAW OF DEPENDENT ORIGATION (2) ~

"If they had cultivated when they were middle aged, they could have attained the Second Stage of Fruition; and if they had worked hard to earn money, they could be the third richest people.

"If they had started cultivating when they started to age, they still could have achieved the *First Stage of Fruition*; and if they remained as lay persons, they could be the fourth richest people. But now, it is too late!"

This shows that so long as we cultivate, there will be achievement; otherwise we will degenerate. As such, we must embrace the Law of Dependent Origination as this is the priceless treasure that the Buddha expounded.

Do not use these Wrong Views: the Theory of Divine Blessing; the Theory of Fate; and the Theory of No Cause and No Condition. We must cultivate the Right View of the Law of Dependent Origination. Through the Right View of Dependent Origination, we cultivate wholesomeness, abandon unwholesomeness, practice towards liberation, and finally attain Buddhahood.

## 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 World, 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 Suddhavaśa 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.

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**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.

**Bardo:** A Tibetan term for the state of existence intermediate between two lives.

**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.

**Bhutatahata:** The true character of reality. The inherent or true nature of phenomena or true suchness. (诸法实相)

**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.

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

**Chakravartin:** See Wheel Turning Monarch.

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

**Cycle of existence:** See Samsara.

**Cyclic existence:** See Samsara.

**Dana:** Charity; benevolence; generosity.

**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.

**Dharma-kaya:** The dharma body, the truth body, the reality body.

**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

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

**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.

**Kasaya:** The robes of a monastic.

**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.

**Law of Dependent Origination:** The principle that phenomena do not come into existence on their own but as a result of causes and conditions.

**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.

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**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.

**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.

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**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.

**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 known 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.

**Rupa-kaya:** The material body.

**Saha World:** The secular world, which is known as the world that must be endured as it is full of sufferings.

**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.

**Samadhi:** Meditative concentration. Often used to denote the deepest state of pure concentration, in which the mind is free from distraction and totally absorbed in the object of concentration. There are many levels and types of Samadhi, such as the Samadhi of Loving-kindness and Compassion.

**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:** (1) Mindfulness; (2) Discriminative investigation of the Dharma; (3) Effort; (4) Joy; (5) Ease of body and mind; (6) Concentration; and (7) Equanimity.

**Sila:** The precept; code of morality; Buddhist ethics.

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

**Six consciousnesses:** The consciousnesses of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind.

**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

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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),
- The Perfection of Wisdom (Prajna Paramita).

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

**Six sense bases:** Eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

**Six sense objects:** Form, sound, odor, flavor, tactile object, and phenomena.

**Sramenera:** A male novice monk observing Ten Precepts.

**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.

**Stream Enterer:** See Srotapanna.

**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 directions of space:** The directions of North, South, East, West, Northeast, Southeast, Southwest, Northwest, Zenith, and Nadir, thus covering all spaces.

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

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

**Ten Kinds of Mindfulness:** (1) Mindfulness of the Buddha; (2) Mindfulness of the Dharma; (3) Mindfulness of the Sangha; (4) Mindfulness of the Precepts; (5) Mindfulness of Generosity; (6)

Mindfulness of the Heavens; (7) Mindfulness of the Cessation of Thoughts; (8) Mindfulness of Breath; (9) Mindfulness of the Impermanence of the Body; and (10) the Mindfulness of Death.

**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,
- 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.

**Tripitaka:** The three main collections of the Buddhist canon – sutra-pitaka (sermons collection), vinaya-pitaka (rules collection), and abhidharma-pitaka (philosophical treatises collection). Also known as the Three Baskets.

**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.

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

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

**Wheel Turning Monarch:** Also known as Chakravartin. A universal emperor and protector of Buddhism. It is a term used 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.

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**Presenter:** Venerable Da Shi  
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**Address:** 15 Lorong 29 Geylang  
#02-01 PTH Building  
Singapore 388069  
**Contact:** (65) 67496460  
**Website:** www.mypty.sg  
**Facebook:** www.facebook.com/Mypty  
**E-mail:** ven.dashi@yahoo.com.tw  
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