

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. 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)

The Wise Man's Choice – To see the Buddha and listen to the Dharma (1)

What are the benefits of listening to and learning the Dharma?

The Dharma expounded by the Buddha is categorized into three vehicles: The vehicle of sravaka, the vehicle of the solitary realizers (Pratyeka Buddha), and the Bodhisattva vehicle.

Each of the three wonderful categories of teachings serves different purposes and follows different trajectories. A wise person must be able to choose and decide which Dharma to learn, and to know what type of benefits can be derived from each of the category.

Example

In the Agama Sutra, we read of the wise Brahmin's choice.

~ THE WISE MAN'S CHOICE (1) ~

Once, a Brahmin went to see the Buddha and asked the Buddha: "World Honored One! May I ask how many Buddhas will there be in the future?"

The Buddha replied: "There will be infinite number of Buddhas in the future, just like the vast amount of sand in the Ganges River."

Each grain of sand in the Ganges River is so fine, how many sand are there in the Ganges River? Of course it is impossible to count. As such, in the future, so many Buddhas will gradually appear. Upon hearing this, the Brahmin thought: "There are so many Buddhas in the future! I can progress slowly."

The Brahmin then took leave of the Buddha after paying his respects. While on his way, the Brahmin thought: "I asked about the number of Buddhas that will come in the future, why didn't I ask about the number of Buddhas that came before?"

So he returned and paid respect to the Buddha again and asked the Buddha: "How many Buddhas came before?"

The Buddha replied: "There were also infinite number of Buddhas that came before, just like the vast amount of sand in the Ganges River, incalculable or immeasurable."

At that moment, the Brahmin thought: "Infinite number of Buddhas once came, yet I have never encountered any of them. If I had met the past Buddha, I would have learned and listened to the Dharma, and attained liberation.

"Although there will be infinite number of Buddhas in the future just like the vast amount of sand in the Ganges River, if I were to miss them just like I had missed the Buddhas who came before, I will still miss the chance to hear the Dharma. If that is the case, I will continue to be in the Samsara cycle infinitely."

When he considered this, his wisdom rose. Although he was upset that he never listened to the Dharma in the past, he did not regret the past nor did he want to pursue the future, knowing that there will be Buddhas in the future. He immediately grasped the opportunity of meeting the present Sakyamuni Buddha, and wanted to follow the Buddha to become a monastic.

The Brahmin said: "World Honored One! Although there were so many Buddhas in the past, I never met any of them. So many Buddhas will appear in the future but I do not rely on the past or the future. I want to follow the World Honored One and renounce now, is this possible?"

The Buddha said: "Sadhu! Sadhu! Welcome Bhikshu!"

At that moment, the Brahmin's beard and hair fell off on its own, and the kasaya was draped over his body. His attire and alms bowl were fully provided for. He accepted the bhikshu precepts and became a Bhikshu. He practiced diligently and very soon, attained Arahatship.

This is a wise person; he grasped the opportunity to be acquainted with the current Buddha and practiced immediately. As such, it is a wise man's choice to seek to see the Buddha and to learn the Dharma.

(1) The vehicle of sravaka

In the sravaka canon, the Bhikshus must listen to the Buddha expound the Dharma in order to realize suffering and to know the cause of suffering. Upon knowing the cause of suffering, they will seek to eliminate the suffering and the cause of suffering. To cease the suffering upon realizing the suffering and eliminate the cause of the suffering is to be liberated.

But to build castle in the air and not expend any effort in practice will not produce any result. One must practice and cultivate so as to be liberated.

As such, the Four Noble Truths are:

- (i) To realize what is suffering;
- (ii) To end the cause of the suffering;
- (iii) To admire the state of cessation of suffering; and
- (iv) To practice the path towards Nirvana.

In this present life, one achieves Nirvana with residue. Upon relinquishing this body of karmic retribution, one attains *residue-less Nirvana*. The various stages attained will be Srotapanna, *Sakradagamin*, *Anagamin*, and Arahant.

(2) The vehicle of solitary realizers (Pratyeka Buddha)

The vehicle of Pratyeka Buddha must know the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination in the Law of Dependent Origination leading to cyclic existence:

*When this exists, that comes to be;
When this arises, that arises.*

and the reverse aspect of cessation of cyclic existence:

*When this does not exist, that does not exist;
When this ceases, that ceases.*

In this way, the Pratyeka Buddha can also attain residue-less Nirvana.

(3) The Bodhisattva vehicle

The Bodhisattva vehicle is for the Bodhisattva who wants to save sentient beings from suffering and attain everlasting happiness. A Bodhisattva must be able to generate the great compassionate mind and Bodhicitta mind. This vehicle includes *Prajna* which describes how the Bodhisattva should practice and cultivate to be able to salvage and guide the sentient beings, and how to help the sentient beings to be liberated from the sea of suffering.

The Lotus Sutra relates very clearly the original intention of the Buddha coming into the world. It mentioned that all sentient beings have the Buddha nature, and this include the Arahats and the Pratyeka Buddhas. So long as they continue to practice and cultivate diligently, they will eventually become a Buddha.

The misinformation about Buddhism

There are three things that we misunderstand generally. Once we understand them, we will realize the importance of listening to and learning the Dharma, of reading the original Buddhist scriptures so that we will not repeat the baseless assertions.

(1) You might have heard the saying: "Arahats are self-liberating beings"? Did the Buddha reprimand the Arahats as such?

No! The Arahats were Buddha's disciples and they had attained the fourth stage of liberation to become Arahats.

Lay sentient beings are in the Samsara cycle of birth and death in the burning house of the triple world¹¹ and the six realms. The Buddha saw the sufferings of the sentient beings and taught them how to get out of the sea of suffering. That was why the Buddha compassionately taught his disciples to attain Arahatship. Why would the Buddha scold them as self-liberating beings?

This is impossible! We do not read of this from the sravaka scriptures, The Agama Sutra, nor in the scriptures of the great vehicle, the Prajna Sutra. The Buddha expounded the Prajna-paramita Sutra to the Bodhisattva through the sravaka, Subhuti. The Buddha did not chide the Arahats.

¹¹ The burning house of the triple world is a parable found in the Lotus Sutra. It depicts the three worlds – World of Sensuous Desires, World of Form, and Formless World – as a house on fire.

~ THE WISE MAN'S CHOICE (1) ~

The Lotus Sutra mentioned that Arahats can also become Buddha. The Vimalakirti-nirdesa-sutra also does not reprimand the Arahats. None of the scriptures of the great vehicle reprimanded the Arahats. How did such criticism that Arahats only liberate themselves come about?

There was a story in the Zen Sect: One Zen practitioner and a Bhikshu who had supernatural powers met and both wanted to cross a river. The Bhikshu who had supernatural powers flew across the river in no time, and upon reaching the other shore, turned around and waved to the Zen practitioner to join him "Come over! Come over!"

The Zen practitioner stood at this shore and scolded the Bhikshu: "If I had known that you were such a self-liberated person, I would not have come with you."

This is an example of a story in the Zen Sect. But in this example, there was no Buddha, nor was there a Buddha scolding an Arahat.

As such, we must be careful of the incorrect sayings circulating in the Buddhist community. We should not follow others and repeat the baseless assertion that Arahats are self-liberating beings. Besides, the Arahats are the Sangha, which

is one of the Triple Gem that we take refuge in, how could we criticize the Sangha? We must grasp this key point so that we do not inadvertently commit a huge unwholesome karma without knowing.

(2) Some people said: "The Buddha chastised the Arahats as withered buds and rotten seeds." Would the Buddha scold the Arahats as such?

No! The Buddha would not call the Arahats as withered buds and rotten seeds. Why? This is because they are the Buddha's disciples. In that case, how did this phrase "withered buds and rotten seeds" come to be?

In the Vimalakirti-nirdesa-sutra, Venerable Mahakasyapa saw the various supernatural manifestations performed by the Layman Vimalakirti, who also displayed the unimaginable merits and powers of a Bodhisattva of the great vehicle.

It was then that Venerable Mahakasyapa said: "I am a noble one who had attained Arahatship. Even though I am a Sangha Gem, I do not have such merits and powers of a Bodhisattva. If I had known earlier of such great merits and powers of a Bodhisattva, I would also want to become a Buddha.

~ THE WISE MAN'S CHOICE (1) ~

"Now that I have attained Arahatship, it's as though the Bodhi sapling has withered and the Bodhi seed is rotten. The Bodhi cannot grow anymore, so I am like a rotten seed, a withered bud."

This is what Venerable Mahakasyapa lamented about in the Vimalakirti-nirdesa-sutra. That is why lay sentient beings should not listen to and repeat such wrongful views and criticize and defame the Arahats. If we do so, we have to bear the consequences of our own wrongful actions.

(3) Have you heard that "at the Lotus Sutra Assembly, 500 Arahats left the Assembly"? Is this correct?

Wrong! The Buddha taught the Arahats who were lay persons the way to attain Arahatship, to be liberated from life and death, and never have to suffer Samsara anymore. This is the truth. As they attained Arahatship, they would fully and completely believe in what the Buddha said, without any doubt.

Since the Buddha was able to save and liberate the Arahats from the cycles of life and death, the Arahats would not have left the Assembly when the Buddha expounded on the Lotus Sutra. They would listen to the Buddha expound the Dharma

and would fully and completely uphold the teachings with respect.

In that case, who left the Assembly? How many people left? In the Lotus Sutra's Chapter of Skillful Means, there were 5,000 Bhikshus, *Bhikshunis*, Upasakas, and Upasikas¹² who left the Assembly.

The Buddha said that these were conceited people (*adhimana*¹³) who had committed very serious and deep rooted unwholesome karma. They had very severe defilements of greed, anger, and ignorance. For example, though they had not attained the meditative concentration, they would claim that they had; they had not attained Arahatsip, Anagamin, Sakradagamin, or Srotapanna but perceived that they do, such people were too proud.

The Buddha said these people left the Assembly. The remaining disciples who stayed are true disciples who had faith in the Buddha. It was also good that these people left the Assembly. Otherwise upon listening to the Lotus Sutra, they would have slandered and created infinite unwholesome karma.

¹² Upasakas and Upasikas refer to men and women lay believers.

¹³ One of the seven types of pride.

~ THE WISE MAN'S CHOICE (1) ~

Therefore, at the Lotus Sutra Assembly, none of the Arahats left the Assembly. Only 5,000 conceited people did and they were the Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, the Upasakas, and Upasikas. These people who had very severe and deep rooted unwholesome karma left the Assembly.

Why would the Arahats have such strong faith in the Buddha?

When the Buddha created the precept: "All monastics are to have only one meal a day and not to consume food after noon", one Bhikshu said: "World Honored One! I cannot survive with one meal a day."

The Buddha permitted him to have two meals, even three meals a day, but the Bhikshu claimed that he could not uphold this precept and left the Buddha.

When the summer retreat during the rainy season was going to end, Venerable Ananda brought him back to see the Buddha. When he saw the Buddha, the Buddha chastised him thus: "You foolish person. When this world was first formed, the first beings in this Jambu Dvīpa were beings from the Abhasvara Heaven. They saw the things on the ground and generated the desire to eat. So they started to use their hand

to scoop the things up and eat. As they found it to be delicious, they could not stop eating.

"A greedy person like you has been so greedy for food since the time Jambu Dvīpa was formed. Now that you have renounced to become a monastic, not only do you not exercise restraint, you are greedy like before."

The Buddha scolded him to awaken him quickly. Upon hearing this, the Bhikshu was ashamed and began to realize that the Buddha was truly compassionate towards him. As such, he immediately reflected upon his deeds.

The Buddha also told him: "Those who were like you and do not respect what the Tathagata said, will continue to take rebirth in the Samsara cycle. If it were Venerable Sariputra, if I were to ask him to lay his hair on the floor, to spread his body on the floor, for me to walk over, he would have allowed me to do so. Unlike you, he would not disobey the Tathagata's teachings."

The Bhikshu knew that he should self-reflect, seek repentance, and respect the Buddha's teachings. Once he generated a respectful mind and diligently practiced and cultivated, he quickly attained Arahatsip.

Even Venerable Sariputra would believe and respect the Buddha's teachings, let alone all the other Arahats.

That was why the Arahats who attended the Lotus Sutra Assembly would definitely listen to the Buddha when he expounded the Dharma and would not have left the Assembly.

What is the suffering in the burning house of the triple world?

The fundamental purpose of the wonderful teachings of the three vehicles is to enable sentient beings to first end suffering and achieve happiness.

That is why we are propagating the wonderful teaching of ending suffering and achieving happiness so as to enable sentient beings to end suffering and attain everlasting happiness. What is the suffering that is to be eliminated? What is the happiness which we should seek to attain?

Generally speaking, to end suffering refers to ending the suffering of Samsara in the six realms and the suffering of the burning house of the triple world.

Happiness refers to the happiness of respite, the joy of being a Sramana, Nirvana bliss, and the pleasure of enlightenment.

What does "to end the suffering in the burning house of the triple world" mean?

The burning house of the triple world refers to: the World of Sensuous Desires, the World of Form, and the Formless World.

(1) World of Sensuous Desires: Each one of us is a being in the World of Sensuous Desires. What are the sufferings of the beings in the World of Sensuous Desires?

In the World of Sensuous Desires, there are the suffering of vexation, the suffering of the physical body changes, and the various suffering caused by external environmental changes.

Example 1

When we are in dispute with others or when we hear some unpleasant words, agony arises. When we get angry, our heart beats heavily. This is due to the fire of anger. The angry mind burns like fire. The fire of anger is the burning desire in the burning house of the triple world. It is the fire of anger that keeps burning.

Example 2

When we see a girl, we feel like speaking to or getting acquainted with her. At that moment, our heart will be pounding non-stop, like the burning fire. This is due to the fire of desire, the fire of greedy desire.

Example 3

Sometimes we can behave very foolishly. When others call upon us to terminate a life, we simply follow. When people tell us to speak falsely, we follow and tell lies. When we are lying, our heart also pounds non-stop like a burning fire. This is the fire of ignorance.

Example 4

When we learn that police issue warrants of arrest to murderers or someone who has committed a serious crime, we feel fearful. So long as the criminals are still at large, we fear that these criminals could come to our home to harm us.

When a fearful mind is generated, the heart will also beat heavily like a burning fire. This is the fire of fear.

Example 5

There were many incidents of kidnapped victims being murdered, some women were also harmed. We also fear that the bad people will come to our home and harm our wives and daughters. When we think of this, our heart will also beat heavily like a burning fire.

Isn't it sorrowful to live in the World of Sensuous Desires when we contemplate on these sufferings? What should a wise man do? A wise man would seek the Buddha and listen to the Dharma to attain liberation. That is why a wise man would want to leave the triple world so as to get out of sufferings arising from the burning house of the triple world.

Example 6

What other sufferings are there in the World of Sensuous Desires? It is more miserable when we are in our mother's womb than being locked in a jail as the mother's womb is equivalent to a prison. This is the suffering in the mother's womb.

When we are born, we are subject to pinches here and there. That hurts and we can only cry. The only power the little

~ THE WISE MAN'S CHOICE (1) ~

babies have is crying. Little babies cry to garner sympathy. Is this not suffering?

When we age, our hair turns grey, we lose the teeth, our bodies bend over with a hunch, our movements are cumbersome, and we need the walking stick. When the life is ending, the experience is very painful. The body will have to endure the suffering of birth, old age, sickness, and death.

Example 7

The weather in Taiwan is ever changing. With typhoon comes flood or mudslide. Is this not suffering?

We do not have faith in the wind and rain as we are also suffering due to the wind and rain. Due to the changing weather, it is very chilly if we go to Mount Yu, Mount Hehuan, or Mount Qilai. In southern Taiwan, it is scorching hot when the sun is out. It is even hotter and more stifling in the city areas.

Is it not suffering that we have to endure the cold and heat of the weather?

That is why when we realize the suffering of the burning house of the triple world, the suffering of the World of Sensuous Desires, we would seek to be liberated.

(2) World of Form: What is the suffering in the World of Form? Unlike the World of Sensuous Desires, there is no vexation of greed and anger in the World of Form.

But when the life is ending and we realize that we are going to take rebirth in the World of Sensuous Desires, it can be very sorrowful.

When the beings in the World of Form look upon those in the World of Sensuous Desires, it is just like us looking at the wriggly worms in the cesspit – the worms are smelly, ugly, and impure!

(3) Formless World: The beings in the Formless World have to suffer in Samsara upon their death.

Example 1

When the Buddha attained Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi, he wanted to guide the two sages who practiced meditation but their lives had ended earlier and they took rebirth in the Formless World. So they still suffer in Samsara. One of them will descend from the Realm of Nothingness and take rebirth as a king.

~ THE WISE MAN'S CHOICE (1) ~

When he is king and did not have the opportunity to meet the Buddha, he did not know about the relationship of the law of cause and effect. As such, he will become a very arrogant king and kill many lives and create many unwholesome karma. When his life ends, he will descend to the hell realm to suffer.

The other sage was a celestial being in the Heaven of Neither Perception Nor Non-Perception. In one of his past life, he vowed that he would kill many sentient beings in the forest. So when he descended from the Heaven of Neither Perception Nor Non-Perception, he will become a flying fox and eat many sentient beings. Upon his death, he will go to the hell realm.

Even though one has risen to the Formless World, one can still descend to the lower realms.

Example 2

There was a very wise woman who had the capacity to practice. She did not meet the Buddha. Instead, she met a bogus practitioner and she asked him: "How might one be liberated?"

The bogus practitioner replied: "Nothingness, nothingness, nothingness, there is nothing at all."

Upon hearing this, this woman contemplated on nothing and took rebirth in the Heaven of Nothingness in the Formless World. After 60,000 kalpas, she fell to the World of Sensuous Desires and became a mother pig, leading the piglets and living an aimless life.

One day when the Buddha and Venerable Ananda were going for alms, they passed by the area where the mother pig and her piglets lived and the Buddha smiled.

Venerable Ananda knew that the Buddha would not smile without any cause and condition. So when they returned to the monastery, he asked the Buddha: "Why did the Buddha smile when we saw the mother pig and its piglets?"

The Buddha said: "After 60,000 kalpas in the Heaven of Nothingness, they fell to the World of Sensuous Desires to become pigs, what a pity! If the woman had met the Tathagata before she rose to the Heaven of Nothingness, she would have been liberated upon listening to the Dharma. It is a pity that she did not meet the Buddha nor hear the Dharma. This is why she is still suffering the misery of Samsara."

~ THE WISE MAN'S CHOICE (1) ~

The burning house of the triple world: Having to go through sufferings in the three worlds of the World of Sensuous Desires, the World of Form, and the Formless World is indeed miserable.

The Buddha expounded on the scriptures of sravaka, the scriptures of the Pratyeka Buddha, and the scriptures of Bodhisattva to enable us to get out of the suffering of the burning house of the triple world.

What is the suffering of the Samsara cycle of birth and death in the six realms?

Besides the suffering of the burning house of the triple world, there is also the suffering of the Samsara cycle of birth and death in the six realms. When we understand this, we must always remind ourselves that after all, it is still suffering in the triple world and six realms. The true happiness comes from getting out of the triple world and six realms.

(1) Heavenly realm: The heavens of the World of Sensuous Desires are replete with the suffering of separation from people and things that they love.

There was a heavenly being who experienced the five signs of decay at the moment of his death:

* Sweating under the arm: The heavenly beings are born through transformation. So, why would he sweat? This is because his meritorious reward is coming to depletion. As such, once a heavenly being starts to sweat, he knows that his life is ending soon.

* Not enjoying his seat: When the heavenly being knows about his impending death, his mind becomes so unsettled that he is not able to occupy his seat comfortably.

* Flower garland on his head fading away: The decorative flower garland on his head begins to wither and fade away.

* His robe becomes dirty: The celestial clothing become stained through no cause and conditions. Why is this so? It is because his karmic result is coming to an end.

* The heavenly females repel against him: The heavenly females who have been servicing him abandon him.

When these five signs of decay appear, the heavenly being knows that his life is ending soon and he knows in which realm he will take rebirth.

~ THE WISE MAN'S CHOICE (1) ~

When the heavenly being knew that he was going to take rebirth as a horse, he started to panic. This is the suffering experienced when he was separated from the persons and things that he loved. He would lose all the things that represent his five desires which he has always loved.

The heavenly being sought out King Sakra's advice on how to avoid taking rebirth in the animal realm.

King Sakra told him: "Take refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha quickly."

After the heavenly being took refuge in the Triple Gem, he took rebirth as a wealthy man's son.

(2) Human realm: How much does a human being have to suffer?

Example 1

Entrepreneurs always have to mobilize their funds and meet the 3.30pm deadline at the banks. Is this not the suffering of not being able to get one's desires? Parents having to raise education funds for their children, is this not suffering too? Sometimes while interacting with others, dispute arises due to heated speech or difference in opinions, is this not

suffering? With the relationship between parents and children, between friends, between individuals, the changing climate, the economic downturn, coupled with birth, old age, sickness, and death, it is indeed miserable to be human.

Example 2

The females of ancient times seemed to have suffered a lot, but in fact the females of the present era suffer even more. In ancient times, the females only needed to take care of the household whilst the females of today need to work during the day and take care of their families when they are back from work. Is this not suffering?

In the past, the men only needed to support his family. The men of today are concerned about the economic downturn and fear being retrenched at any time. Is this not tiring? Besides, there are foreign workers in Taiwan now. Who knows, one day, we might become Taiwan workers who have to go to a foreign land to earn a living. There are so many issues that humans have to worry about.

(3) Asura realm: The asuras are very busy as they are constantly looking for the heavenly beings to battle with. Using Mount Sumeru as the base, they will start to battle with

the lowest level which are the ghosts and gods. When they win, they continue upwards to the Heavens of the Four Deva Kings, and all the way up to *Trayastrimsat Heaven* to fight with King Sakra.

If King Sakra loses, he will be captured. If he wins, the asuras will continue to fight with him. As such, the asuras suffer the pain of war and fighting.

(4) Hungry ghost realm: What is the degree of their suffering? Once, Venerable Maudgalyayana went to a city to collect alms. A ghost child met Venerable Maudgalyayana and asked him: "Venerable, when you enter the city, can you please tell my mom that I have been waiting here for her for a very long time. She has yet to bring food to me and I am very hungry."

When Venerable Maudgalyayana entered the city and saw the ghost mother, he asked her: "What took you so long to bring the food to your child?"

The ghost mother told Venerable Maudgalyayana: "Venerable! You don't understand how hard it is for me to find even the slightest bit of foul blood for my child to eat. Those ghosts who are guarding at the city gate are stronger and mightier

and are ready to snatch the food that I have. If I were to rush out of the gate, I would certainly be robbed by them."

Venerable Maudgalyayana said: "Fine! I will help you to bring the food to the ghost child."

Venerable Maudgalyayana asked the ghost mother: "How long have you been at this place?"

The ghost mother replied: "It's not easy to describe the time span. I can only say that I have witnessed this city being formed for seven times and being destroyed for seven times." How long does it take for humans to build up a city? How long does it take for the city to be destroyed? So how long is it for the city to be built and destroyed for seven times?

The ghosts' life span is very long, it is terribly miserable to be a ghost!

There are many different types of ghosts in the hungry ghost realm: there are the hungry ghosts with little means, the wealthy ghosts, and the hungry ghosts with no possession.

There is a type of flaming mouth ghost. When it opens its mouth to consume food, fire comes out of its mouth.

~ THE WISE MAN'S CHOICE (1) ~

There was an account where Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva transformed himself into a flaming mouth ghost and told Venerable Ananda: "A few days later, you will be like me and become a flaming mouth ghost. Once you open the mouth, the fire will engulf your face."

Venerable Ananda told the Buddha about this and the Buddha taught him a way out of that suffering.

The Buddha told Venerable Ananda: "It is due to Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva's loving kindness and compassion for future sentient beings that he is seeking the Dharma through you."

This is the cause for the ceremony of feeding the flaming-mouth ghosts. Such flaming mouth ghosts have very little meritorious reward and do not have food to eat.

Some hungry ghosts with little means hide in the dirtier corners such as the labor rooms for giving birth, the unhygienic areas, the places where people are sick and filled with spittle, or the places filled with feces, urine, and hair. The hungry ghosts with little means feed on such stuff.

The wealthy ghosts are those deities in the human realm and have better meritorious reward. The ghosts that Venerable Maudgalyayana met were the hungry ghosts with no possessions.

(5) Animal realm: The beings in the animal realm suffer the pain of consuming and devouring each other.

Example 1

In city areas, the lizards hide in the damp corners to eat the mosquitoes and flies. The mosquitoes and flies that fly by think that they are safe. Instead, they are swallowed alive by the lizards in a snap of the finger.

Example 2

The chickens that are kept in the cage appear to be safe. However, there was once when I witnessed how a dog snatched the chickens from the cage by its bare paws. Once the dog got hold of the chicken, it ripped the chicken's body apart and ate it. When we suffer a minor cut, it hurts terribly. Imagine how it would be to be ripped apart and eaten alive!

~ THE WISE MAN'S CHOICE (1) ~

Example 3

It is the same with frogs eating the small worms. When the snakes eat frogs, they also swallow them up in one gulp.

Example 4

The little bird is busy flying from places to places during the day and will retire to the trees in the evening for a safe nap. However, the snake that slithers up the tree swallows it up. Is it good to be an animal? The animals also suffer immensely!

Example 5

When the moths are flying, they are always being eaten by the birds.

Animals have to endure the suffering of being consumed and devoured. Is this not tiring and miserable?

(6) Hell realm: The hell realm is full of torture.

Example 1

When the beings in the "Hell of waiting to be reborn" have knives, they become more ferocious than those in the human

realm. They grab the knives and start to cut each other. When they are killed, they rise from the dead and cut each other again continuously.

Example 2

The Hell of Crushing consists of two mountains crushing together until the sentient beings' bodies are totally mashed up. The hell realm has so much suffering, what joy is there to speak of?

Example 3

The sentient beings in the Hell of Ashen River are like the clothes in the washing machine, being spun around, flushed up and down, and kneaded all over. It is such great suffering in the hell realm. Thus we must seek to be liberated!

It is such great suffering to be in the six realms. If we do not seek liberation, we will end up in the hell realm, the hungry ghost realm and the animal realm to suffer one day.

That is why the Buddha wants us to get out of the burning house of the triple world and the six realms instead of suffering in Samsara in these places.

~ THE WISE MAN'S CHOICE (1) ~

So the Buddha expounded the various scriptures such as the Agama Sutra, the Prajna Sutra, the Lotus Sutra, and the Pure World Sutra to enable us to get out of these sufferings. A wise person will want to meet the Buddha, learn and listen to the Dharma, and seek liberation from these sufferings!



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 Upekṣa. 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 Arahatsip. 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 Arahatsip.

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.

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Upeksa: 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.

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