

Everlasting Happiness,  
as Buddha Attains 8

**Presented by Venerable Da Shi**

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## *Glossary*

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## 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***

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

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

The Buddha is like an expert doctor with the ability to diagnose and treat all kinds of ailments. Indeed, he dispenses eighty four thousands procedures for as much trouble that mortal beings could possibly face in this world. All these are found in the Buddha's teachings. If we practice his teachings with complete faith and realization, besides saving ourselves from suffering in this life, we can also find liberation in time to come.

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

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

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

This book focuses on six topics in the following chronology: After discovering who "I" truly am in chapter 1, we are able to correctly identify the type of person each of us are and overcome our defilements using the right approach in chapter 2. In chapter 3, upon realizing the disadvantages of being a woman, we learn how to avoid the pitfalls of such a rebirth. Finally in chapters 4 to 6, as we reflect on the innumerable cycles of rebirth that we had gone through, we realize what true bliss is and this gives us the determination to practice the Four Noble Truths and seek liberation.

This book is the eighth 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 accords with the teachings in the Chinese Mahayana tradition, which have originally been translated from Sanskrit scriptures. Hence, Sanskrit has been used for the names and specific Buddhist terminologies in the text. Readers can find help from the footnotes on the relevant pages and Glossary at the end of this book for explanation of common Buddhist terms (first appearance in italics) and concepts.

*@@@ 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! @@@*

***Miao You Pu Ti Yuan (Singapore)***

## Vows of King Yama

### **Oh! King Yama wants to renounce!**

The Buddha's fundamental purpose of propagating the dharma is to teach the Four Noble Truths to sentient beings so that we can realize these four truths and thereby realize ultimate liberation. Once we have established the foundation of right understanding and right view, the next step is to seek renunciation. The practice of a renunciant is to develop the understanding of the four noble truths and fully realize them. Anyone who realizes or sees the four noble truths enters the path of ultimate liberation.

Although King Yama is in the hell realm, he continues to make the vow for himself to be reborn in a rich and respectable family in the human realm. His wish is not to enjoy the sensual pleasures of the human realm, but to renounce and practice for the purpose of developing the five wholesome roots, the five powers, the seven factors of enlightenment, the eightfold noble path so that he too can attain Nirvana.

King Yama is compassionate for making such vows. Although he is punishing the hell beings, he does not delight in their sufferings. Rather, the punishments that are meted out are the consequences of the past unwholesome wrongdoings of the hell beings.

King Yama is one who understands suffering. As such, he knows how to educate the hell beings so that they do not descend to the hell realm to suffer again.

The great compassionate Buddha knows that it is extremely suffering to be in the hell realm. Thus, the Buddha teaches people in the human realm how to cultivate so that they can prevent themselves from descending to the hell realm to suffer.

### **The Buddha's clarity of divine eye**

The Buddha possesses many merits, such as the 32 major marks, the 80 minor marks, the ten powers, the four forms of fearlessness, the four kinds of unobstructed cognition, the eighteen distinctive abilities of a Buddha, great boundless loving-kindness and compassion, and the all-inclusive cognition.

The divine eye allows one to only see where sentient beings take rebirths in the *six realms*. However, the Buddha's clarity of divine eye sees flawlessly the intricate causes and conditions leading sentient beings to take rebirth in any particular realm; it sees clearly the relationship between (i) causes and conditions and (ii) consequences.

In the chapter on "Divine Messengers" of the Madhyamagama, the Buddha tells us that human beings who are not filial to their parents, who do not respect the Triple Gem, who harbor wrong understanding and wrong view and who commit the ten unwholesome deeds will descend to the hell realm upon their deaths. But for people who cultivate wholesome deeds through body, speech and mind, they will take rebirths in the heavenly realms.

The Buddha's clarity of divine eye can see the relationship between the causes and effects of all deeds, and the Buddha uses five analogies to describe the cyclic existence of sentient beings:

- (i) Bubbles formed from raindrops hitting on the ground, disappearing just as soon as they appear.

- (ii) Rain drops that fall, rebound into the air, fall again and disappear without a trace.

The rapid arising and disappearing of these bubbles and raindrops is akin to the impermanent and transient lifespan of every sentient being.

- (iii) A string of transparent chanting pearls that take on different shades of color depending on the thread used to string the pearls.

A red thread will result in the pearls reflecting red color. This is akin to sentient beings doing good deeds and enjoying rebirth in the heavenly realm. On the other hand, those who have committed the ten unwholesome deeds will be reborn in the hell realm. This will be like using a black thread to string the pearls, resulting the pearls to reflect black color.

These pearls symbolize our life, reflecting different colors based on the karma created by each individual.

- (iv) Two houses sharing one door.

Sentient beings exit from one house to the next, only to re-enter the house through the same door again.

Dependent on the wholesomeness of our deeds, we will take rebirth in the good existences or the three bad existences. Unable to be liberated from this *cycle of existence*, we have to endure immeasurable sufferings.

- (v) Traversing to and fro on various paths.

Looking down from the top of a building, we see people traversing to and fro on different paths. Buddha sees us sentient beings in cyclic existence as no different from those

people wandering about aimlessly, oblivious to the fact that there is a path to liberation.

Our daily life is filled with occurrences that resemble the cycle of existence. Take for instance stray dogs roaming in the streets in the day and returning home to sleep in the night. They repeat the same cycle of events day after day. This is similar to sentient beings in cyclic existence.

Hence, it is vital that we understand the four noble truths if we want to be liberated from this endless cycle. This begins with learning from virtuous companions and cherishing every opportunity to listen to the dharma, so that we can understand the dharma and contemplate the teachings.

Being born in the human or heavenly realm is a rare occurrence as compared to taking rebirth in the three lower realms. The Buddha gave an analogy to describe the rarity of being born as a human – it is as difficult as having a blind turtle sticking its head through a small hole of a floating wood when it rises to the surface of the vast ocean.

A young kid once carved a hole in a piece of wood and threw it into a pond. Mimicking the blind turtle, he rose to the surface of the pond in hope that his head would pass through the hole in the wood. However, his efforts were futile no matter how hard he tried because the piece of wood would simply drift away from him whenever he swam towards it. Just trying to accomplish this task in a small pond is so difficult, let alone the vast ocean. And not to mention that this is to be done without the sense of sight!

The Buddha reminded us that while it is extremely difficult to take rebirth in the human realm, it is even more difficult to be reborn in the heavenly realm. Hence, we should cherish the

current opportunity we have to be born as humans and be vigilant and diligent in our cultivation.

The path to attain everlasting happiness begins with the teaching on giving, the teaching of upholding the precepts, and the teaching of taking rebirth in the heavenly realm. This is so that we are able to develop a wholesome mind and cultivate wholesome deeds. Only then will we be able to further understand and deepen our cultivation towards liberation.

### **Five divine messengers**

There are some people who commit unwholesome deeds through body, speech or mind, and are unfilial to their parents or disrespectful towards their elders, teachers, and the Triple Gem. As a result, they descend to the hell realm to be disciplined and punished by King Yama.

It is the wish of King Yama that the disciplines will deter these sentient beings from creating unwholesome karma when they leave the hell realm thereafter, thus avoiding descent to the bad existences again.

First, King Yama will ask these sentient beings, "What is the cause and condition of your descent to the hell realm? Is it due to your lack of filial piety, disrespect towards the Triple Gem, or commission of the ten unwholesome deeds?"

If the sentient being admits to his or her wrongdoing and self-reflect sincerely, King Yama will use the five divine messengers to remind the sentient being not to commit the same errors again.

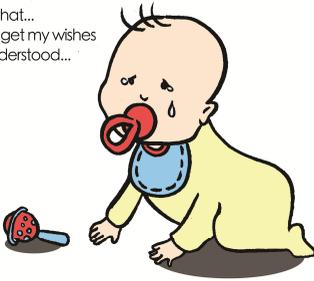
(i) **"Birth" as a divine messenger:**

King Yama will ask the sentient being, "Have you ever seen a new born baby? Unable to move or speak, the baby can only cry to express his needs. If the parent does not know why he is crying, is it not suffering for the baby? Would you still want to suffer as a new born baby again?"

why  
do  
you  
all  
tie  
me  
up  
so?



no...not that...  
I cannot get my wishes  
to be understood...



"Although you have now descended to the hell realm, once you have the cause and condition to take rebirth in the human realm, you should cultivate and seek renunciation immediately so as to cease all sufferings and attain liberation."

(ii) **"Old age" as a divine messenger:**

Next, King Yama will ask, "Have you noticed the conditions of the elderly? Grey hair, deteriorating vision, loose teeth, and declining mobility are but some of the ailments afflicting the aged. Isn't it suffering? As such, you must not allow these sufferings to happen in your next life."



(iii) **"Sickness" as a divine messenger:**

King Yama will then ask, "Have you seen people who are ill? They cannot rest comfortably while being tormented by illness. To have no control over themselves; such suffering is indescribable. Since you have seen the sufferings of those afflicted by sickness, you should have sought liberation. Instead, you created unwholesome deeds which have resulted in your descent to the hell realm now. Such foolishness!"

(iv) **"Death" as a divine messenger:**

Following this, King Yama will question, "Have you seen a dead person? The pain of a dying person is just the same as that of a turtle being deshelled. Furthermore, he has to endure the pain of being separated from his loved ones. Knowing this now, would you still want to experience such pain in the future again?"

You must be vigilant and do not commit further bad deeds to avoid suffering."

(v) **"Criminals" as a divine messenger:**

Finally, King Yama will point out, "Have you noticed the pains of a criminal when he is being punished? If so, why didn't you be more vigilant? You should constantly remind yourself not to commit further bad deeds that will result in rebirth in the hell realm."

Even if the hell beings accept King Yama's teachings, they will still have to go through countless sufferings.

They will first be sent to a burning iron fortress where they will be burnt continuously by the raging fire.

Any attempts to escape will be futile as the exits on each side of the fortress will close as soon as any hell being approaches. Running to and fro repeatedly in the scorching heat only brings

distress to the hell being as he can only successfully leave this Scorching Hot Hell when he has exhausted his karmic retribution.

Once he leaves the Scorching Hot Hell, he will enter the Hell of Boiling Feces. Here, he will be attacked and bitten by the worms in the feces.

Next, the hell being will enter the Hell of Forest with Iron Sword Leaves where the branches of trees are as sharp as the blades of swords. When he tries to flee by climbing up a tree, the sword-like tree leaves will cut his body and the falling leaves will slice and spear his body like hot metal. It is only when he has exhausted his karmic retribution can he leave this Hell of Forest with Iron Sword Leaves.

Next, he will come to a cool and clear river. But only when he jumps into the river for respite will he realize that it is in fact the Hell of Ashen River. Here, he will be crushed and thrown around in the river as though he were in a washing machine. This results in broken bones and mashed up skin and muscles.

After leaving the Hell of Ashen River, he will begin to feel hungry and thirsty. Hell wardens will then force-feed him with hot iron balls, scorching him to death. When the wind blows, he will come to life again.

Next, the hell warden will stuff molten iron down the throat of the hell being. This results in immense suffering as the molten iron scorches his stomach.

After these sufferings, he will continue to suffer in the Hahava Hell, where his entire body will be frozen and split open from the freezing cold.

The suffering in the hell realm is unimaginable and yet we remain frequent visitors to the hell realm! Now that we have

learnt about the five divine messengers, we should take heed to avoid wrongdoings and seek liberation immediately.

### **Higher aspirations of King Yama**

After disciplining the hell beings, King Yama will generate the following vow, "I vow to never take rebirth as King Yama in the future again. May I take rebirth in a rich and respectable family. Most importantly, may I be able to renounce and practice to develop the four foundations of mindfulness, the four right efforts, the four ways of attaining samadhi, the five wholesome faculties, the five powers, the seven factors of enlightenment, and the eightfold noble path, so that I can attain Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi and become a Buddha to liberate sentient beings!"

Such is the compassion of King Yama's vow. On the other hand, what are the vows that sentient beings generate?

Most sentient beings would wish to be rich and famous in the future when they experience difficulties in the present life. However, they do not understand and realize the true nature of the sufferings in this mundane world. Without the opportunity to listen to or learn the dharma, they do not know to seek liberation.

The great compassionate Buddha used many analogies, such as the continuous rising and setting of the sun and the incessant aimless wandering of people, to enlighten sentient beings about the sufferings of cyclic existence in the six realms.

As such, if we always keep the dharma in mind, we would be able to observe and self-reflect whenever we see such phenomenon in our daily lives. This will ultimately pave the way for us to cultivate and attain liberation.

Thus, we should be grateful towards The Great Buddha and Bodhisattvas, and be diligent in our practice.

## **A whole new world**

### Example 1:

Equipped with right knowledge and right view, we will not be envious of the rich and famous.

We know that throughout immeasurable cycles of life and death, it is certain that we had been wealthy before. But yet, we have not attained liberation. As such, it is pointless to pursue fame and riches as it cannot prevent us from suffering in Samsara. Instead, we should practice and cultivate immediately.

The five divine messengers are timely reminders from King Yama that we should always keep dearly in our minds.

### Example 2:

Terminally ill patients are often tormented by their sickness and unable to end their suffering. We often see wheelchair bound elderly in the parks during dusk and staring blankly into space. We also see handicapped people traveling on motor wheelchairs or walking on crutches. There are also guide dogs leading the visually impaired.

Upon seeing such sufferings, we should learn the right dharma to generate loving-kindness and compassion towards others. Most importantly, we should keep in mind that if we do not break free from the cycles of birth and death, we will go through similar sufferings one day. Once we realize this, we should seek liberation immediately.

### Example 3:

Sometimes, we will feel fear when we encounter certain people. The reason for this fear is because we had either harmed or killed the person in our past lives.

Knowing this, we should contemplate thus: How many sentient beings have I harmed throughout the innumerable cycles of birth and death? Will I continue to harm sentient beings in the future? If that is the case, I will continue to encounter people who will generate fear in me in the future.

Thus, we should seek liberation to avoid such fears.

#### Example 4:

At times we might find an acquaintance friendly and enjoy his or her company. The reason we feel so is because this person could have been our family, teachers, or friends in our past lives. These cordial relationships are considered as good conditions. However, we should be mindful that the attachment to these cordial relationships will only lead to repeated cycles of birth and death.

If we are able to observe the mundane world with right knowledge and right view, we will strive to be free from this cyclic existence and the practice of the four noble truths will enable us to do so.

### **A "wander-ful" samsara**

In the *Samyuktagama*, the Buddha gave various descriptions of the endless suffering of samsara:

#### Example 1:

We have had countless number of parents from past cycles of birth and death.

If we were to cut all the trees in Jambu Dvīpa into pieces to be approximately the length of four fingers, how many such pieces would we get?

If each piece represents one set of parents in each life, even after the total number of stakes has been tallied, we will still not be able to finish tallying the number of parents in our past lives. This shows how long we have been in samsara!

Example 2:

If we were to knead the soil of this earth into the size of dates, with each date representing the parents whom we depended on in our past lives. Even when the countless dates have been exhausted, we would still be unable to account for the number of parents in our past lives.

This shows that we have been suffering endlessly!

Throughout samsara, the chances of us taking rebirth as humans or even in the heavenly realm are very slim, with us usually taking rebirth in the three bad existences. We should be grateful to the Buddha for reminding us of this suffering and we should be diligent in our cultivation to end the cycle of birth and death.

Example 3:

The cycle of birth and death is compared to someone using a piece of cloth to scrub a big boulder that is forty miles wide in length, width and breadth. Even if we were to scrub the boulder once every hundred years till the boulder wore away, the cycle of birth and death for sentient beings would still yet to end.

Example 4:

Imagine an iron fortress forty miles in length, width and breadth, filled to its brim with sesame seeds. If we were to take out one grain of sesame seed every hundred years till there was none left, the cycle of birth and death for sentient beings would still not cease.

Thus, we can see that from beginning-less time, sentient beings have been going through samsara. We should quickly stop this cycle of suffering!

Example 5:

A mountain called Vipula existed during the Good Kalpa.

In the era of the first Buddha, Krakucchanda 'Buddha, the lifespan of man was 40,000 years and the time taken to trek up and down Mount Vipula was four days. Subsequently, the lifespan of man decreased, from 30,000 years in the succeeding era of Kanakamuni Buddha to 20,000 years in the era of the third Buddha, Kasyapa Buddha. Eventually, the lifespan decreased to 100 years during the era of the fourth Buddha, Sakyamuni Buddha. The number of days required to trek up and down Mount Vipula also decreased by one day with each respective Buddha's era.

This indicates impermanence as both mountain and man encounter changes whilst each Buddha had also entered into Parinirvana. Observing impermanence should prompt us to seek liberation immediately.

Example 6:

Once, a brahmin asked the Buddha, "World Honored One! May I know how many Buddhas will there be in the future?"

The Buddha replied, "There will be innumerable Buddhas in the future, as vast as the grains of sand in the Ganges River."

Upon hearing this, the brahmin thought, "Since there are so many Buddhas in the future, it is not too late to practice till I meet the future Buddhas."

While on his way home, the brahmin thought again, "I had asked the Buddha about the number of Buddhas in the future, but I hadn't asked about the number of past Buddhas."

Quickly, he returned to see the Buddha, "World Honored One! How many past Buddhas were there?"

The Buddha replied, "There were innumerable Buddhas in the past, as vast as the grains of sand in the Ganges River."

There and then, the brahmin thought, "Although there were innumerable Buddhas in the past, it seems that I have never encountered any of them as I have yet to attain liberation. If this is so, there is no guarantee that I will be able to meet any of the countless and limitless number of Buddhas in the future. I should cherish this precious opportunity here and now to meet Sakyamuni Buddha and start practicing to seek liberation. If I continue to procrastinate my practice and cultivation, I will never be liberated."

With this, the brahmin immediately beseeched the Buddha to allow him to renounce. After renouncing, he practiced diligently and attained Arahatsip.

May we learn from this brahmin and be able to understand the four noble truths, to achieve the purity of the dharma eye and ultimately attain Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi.

Example 7:

One day, King Prasenajit went to pay homage to the Buddha. As he was covered with dust and soil, the Buddha asked, "Great King! Where did you come from?"

King Prasenajit replied, "World Honored One! I'm the most carefree amongst all men. I can come and go to wherever I want

to." As the king was a powerful man, he was filled with arrogance.

"Great King! You should not speak as such. Besides the Tathagatha, no one can truly claim to be carefree and at ease."

"Why is this so?"

"If a big boulder were to roll over from the east, crushing and destroying everything in its path, would you be afraid?", asked the Buddha.

"Of course!", said the king.

"What would you be thinking then?"

"I will act as the Buddha taught and seek liberation."

"O' king. That is right", the Buddha affirmed the king.

The Buddha asked again, "What would you do if there were big boulders rolling over from the other three directions as well, threatening to crush you to death?"

The king replied, "I must seek liberation immediately. I will practice to uphold the precepts, to cultivate the body and mind, and to develop wisdom through understanding the four noble truths."

The Buddha affirmed, "Yes! You are wise. So, is the person that you mentioned earlier truly carefree?"

The king replied, "It was just a casual manner of speech. I am aware of the suffering of the cycle of birth and death. We cannot avoid the four big boulders rolling towards us, i.e., birth, old age, sickness and death."

"You are a wise and noble king. I hope you will remember this teaching and practice diligently to attain liberation", said the Buddha.

We should learn from the wise King Prasenajit and seek liberation.

When we are mindful of the Buddha's teachings that birth, old age, sickness, and death, as well as the punishments that criminals have to endure are truly a suffering, we will seek to be free from samsara!



## Glossary

**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 Suddhavasa worlds, or "Pure Abodes", from which he will attain Arahatsip 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 Arahatsip.

**Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi:** The Supreme and Complete Enlightenment.

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

**Arahatsip:** 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.

**Atman:** The essence of things that does not depend on others; it is an intrinsic nature. The non-existence of atman is selflessness.

**Bhikshu:** A fully ordained male member of the Buddhist Sangha or monk observing two hundred and fifty Precepts.

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

**Bhutatathata:** 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 worlds of existence.

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

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

**Cycle of 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 sufferings:** (1) Birth; (2) Old age; (3) Sickness; (4) Death; (5) Separation from the persons and things we love; (6) Contacting with what we dislike; (7) Not getting what we desire; and (8) Fiery agonies from the five aggregates.

**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 Diligence; (7) Right Mindfulness; and (8) Right Concentration.

**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 Higher Fetters:** These five fetters bind beings to the higher worlds of existence, namely the World of Form and Formless World. (1) Attachment to the physical body (rupa-raga); (2) Clinging on to consciousness (arupa-raga); (3) Restlessness; (4) Conceit; (5) Ignorance. See Ten fetters.

**Five lower fetters:** These five fetters bind beings to the lower world of existence, also known as the World of Sensuous Desires: (1) Thinking that the body is self or ego; (2) View that self-mortification can lead to liberation; (3) Doubt; (4) Sensuous Desires; (5) Anger. One who has abandoned the five lower fetters has attained the third stage of fruition and is known as an Anagamin. See Ten fetters.

**Five Powers:** Obtained through the practice of the Five Wholesome Faculties: (1) Power of Faith; (2) Power of Diligence; (3) Power of Mindfulness; (4) Power of Concentration; (5) Power of Wisdom.

**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.

**Five Wholesome Faculties:** (1) Faculty of Faith; (2) Faculty of Diligence; (3) Faculty of Mindfulness; (4) Faculty of Concentration; (5) Faculty of Wisdom.

**Four Divine States of Mind:** (1) Maitri or Loving-kindness; (2) Karuna or Compassion; (3) Mudita or Altruistic Joy; and (4) Upeksha 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 causes 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.

**Four pairs and eight categories of Sravaka practitioners:** This refers to Sravaka practitioners who practice the Srotapanna path and those who have attained Srotapannaship; the ones who practice the Sakradagamin path and those who have attained Sakradagaminship; the ones who practice the Anagamin path and those who have attained Anagaminship; the ones who practice the Arahata path and those who have attained Arahataship.

**Four Right 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.

**Four Ways of Attaining Samadhi:** The basis to attain Samadhi: (1) Desire to practice Concentration; (2) Diligence; (3) Mindfulness; (4) Contemplation.

**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 worlds of existence.

**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.

**Law of cause-and-effect:** This is a fundamental concept within Buddhism governing all situations, in which all actions, which is a cause, will produce a corresponding effect. It is also stated as good begets good, evil begets evil; good will not beget evil, evil will not beget good.

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

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

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

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

**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 worlds 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.

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

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

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

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

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

**Right Effort:** To develop the Four Right Efforts. See also Eightfold Noble Path.

**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 the law of cause-and-effect; understanding the Four Noble Truths. See also Eightfold Noble Path and Right Understanding.

**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) Diligence; (4) Joy; (5) Ease of body and mind; (6) Concentration; and (7) Equanimity.

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

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

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

**Sramanera:** 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 lower realms again, and will take at most seven cycles of rebirths alternating between the heavenly realm and the human realm before attaining the final stage of Liberation, Arahatsip. A Stream Enterer has abandoned the first three fetters, out of ten total fetters, that bind beings to the cycle of existence. See also Arahatsip.

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

**Ten bhumis:** The ten bhumis are the ten stages of Bodhisattvahood. A Bodhisattva has to complete all ten stages before he can become a Buddha.

**Ten fetters:** The ten fetters bind beings to the cycle of existence in the three worlds. One who has abandoned the ten fetters has attained the fourth stage of fruition and is known as an Arahatsip. The ten fetters consist of the five lower fetters and the five higher fetters: (1) Thinking that the body is self or ego; (2) View that self-mortification can lead to liberation; (3) Doubt; (4) Sensuous Desires; (5) Anger; (6) Attachment

to the physical body (rupa-raga); (7) Clinging on to consciousness (arupa-raga); (8) Restlessness; (9) Conceit; (10) Ignorance.

**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.

**Thirty-Seven Practices to attain Enlightenment:** The thirty-seven practices refer to Four Foundations of Mindfulness, Four Right Efforts, Four Ways of Attaining Samadhi, Five Wholesome Faculties, Five Powers, Seven Factors of Enlightenment, and Eightfold Noble Path.

**Three lower realms:** The three lower realms refer to hell beings, hungry ghosts, and animals; as opposed to the three upper realms of humans, asuras, and heavenly beings. See also Six realms of cyclic existence.

**Three obstacles:** The three obstacles refer to afflictions (klesavarana), karmic deeds (karmavarana), and karmic retribution (vipakavarana). These obstruct our learning of the Dharma.

**Three periods:** The past, present, and future.

**Three poisons:** See Defilements.

**Three worlds 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.

**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 worlds of existence.

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

**Tusita Heaven:** This is the fourth of the six heavens in the World of Sensuous Desires. Maitreya Bodhisattva is currently residing in this heaven, awaiting for the cause 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 worlds of existence.

**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 worlds of existence.

## **About this series**

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