

Repentance Ritual of the Emperor of Liang

A complete translation of

**Repentance Dharma of Kindness
and Compassion in the Bodhimanda**

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Buddhist Text Translation Society
Dharma Realm Buddhist University
Dharma Realm Buddhist Association

Ukiah, California, USA

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Foreword

Bowing the Repentance of Emperor Liang has always been a special event for me during my life as a Buddhist monastic—now in its forty-seventh year. I have participated in many such ceremonies. One occasion stands out as most memorable.

This occasion unfolded a couple of decades ago when my teacher, Master Hua, named *me* as a potential Repentance Host. It had never occurred to me that I, housed in a female body this life, might presume to be a host of anything! That gender-prejudiced view I held harkened back to a childhood dominated by the strict father, an education dispensed by male teachers and administrators, and church-going experiences where religious rituals were always conducted by men-only.

So, when I stood for the first time at the center of the Repentance of Emperor Liang assembly fulfilling the role of Repentance Host, I personally experienced an aspect of the extraordinary equality of Buddhism, as presented to us by our Master, a bright-eyed sage!

More than that, as Host, I quickly became aware of the power of the collective energy that is generated by a gathering of sincere practitioners performing a ritual together. This strong and positive energy that surges and spreads was palpable to me from my vantage point at the Host's post in the middle of the assembly.

As the Repentance of Emperor Liang unfolds, this powerful energy can be channelled into severing doubts, repenting for deeds done, bringing forth the resolve for bodhi, making significant vows, aiding beings in many realms, and dedicating the merit of all this to peace for the world and well-being for all inhabitants of it.

As this energy created by the performance of the Repentance pulsates outward and onward, repentance participants are invigorated and the effectiveness of repentance becomes a practical reality, not only within the confines of the assembly, but extending throughout the cosmos as far as the minds of the participants can reach—for the betterment of all. Thus, the actual experience of bowing the Repentance provides the very best affirmation of faith possible! I trust you will join one soon and see for yourselves.

Bhikshuni Heng Chih
On Ullambana and the Buddhas' Happy Day
August 17, 2016

Preface

The Liang Dynasty of China (502–587) is not well known in the West. It was short-lived, during the chaotic period of small warring kingdoms that sprang up after the fall of the Han Dynasty. However, the Liang Dynasty is important in the history of Chinese Buddhism due to the patronage of Emperor Wu (464–549) and the mind-transmission of Patriarch Bodhidharma.

Emperor Wu was an early imperial patron of Buddhism. He built temples and was magnanimous in his support of the monastic community.

When Bodhidharma, the 28th Indian Patriarch in direct lineage from Shakyamuni Buddha, saw that the timing and potential were right for propagating Buddhism, he resolved to bring the Dharma to China. He personally met with Emperor Wu in Nanjing. Thereafter, he went into seclusion in a cave near the Shaolin Temple in the Song Mountains, meditating in front of a wall for nine years.

Bodhidharma is the first patriarch of Buddhism in China. He transmitted the mind-seal Dharma to the venerable Chinese monk Hui Ke, who became the second patriarch in China. Thus the Buddhist lineage of mind-transmission which started in India, continued and flourished in China.

One of Emperor Wu's legacies in Buddhism is this repentance text in ten chapters that bears his name. In order to save his deceased empress from the retributions of the animal realm, he sought the help of National Master Baozhi, who compiled this Dharma of Repentance. This text is commonly known as *Emperor of Liang Repentance* and continues to be practiced today, inspiring many with the many testimonials of its effectiveness.

Bowing repentance is not a well-known or popular form of cultivation in the West. It is also not often practiced in the Theravada tradition. However repentance is emphasized in Mahayana Buddhism, in texts such as the *Avatamsaka Sutra*. This Dharma exhorts everyone to repent of all offenses and reform in order to eradicate karma, thus clearing obstructions and paving the way for advancement in the spiritual path.

This particular repentance was designed to be practiced in a monastery with bhikshus or bhikshunis (monks or nuns) leading the assembly to repent in a week-long ceremony.

The repentance text is divided into forty sections grouped into ten chapters. Each chapter starts with a verse of praise, the cantor (bhikshu or bhikshuni that leads the

chanting) exhorting the assembly to listen respectfully and a formal commencement of the repentance by bowing to the six Buddhas of the past, Shakyamuni Buddha, and the future Maitreya Buddha. The main part of each chapter contains sections of texts explaining the principles of repentance interspersed with bowing in full prostration (head, hands and knees to the ground) to various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Each chapter concludes with a verse of praise, text for concluding the chapter and a final verse to end the chapter.

The main points of each chapter are as follows:

Chapter One explains the necessity of repentance.

Chapter Two extols the virtue of bringing forth the bodhi resolve (the intention to become enlightened) and exhorts everyone to make vows and to dedicate merit.

Chapter Three explains how current suffering is due to an individual's previous deeds.

Chapter Four describes the various hells and the deeds that cause beings to fall into the hells.

Chapter Five and Six explain how to dispel enmity and resolve animosity by emulating bodhisattvas (enlightened beings).

Chapter Seven encourages everyone to cultivate by relying on the Three Treasures - the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. Participants also start bowing to the the Buddhas on behalf of heavenly beings, ascetic masters and Brahma kings.

In Chapter Eight participants continue bowing to the Buddhas on behalf of asuras, dragon kings, demon kings, human kings, and other in the human realm.

In Chapter Nine participants continue bowing to the Buddhas on behalf of those in the various hells, the realm of hungry ghosts and those in the animal realm.

In Chapter Ten participants learn about the bodhisattva's Dharma of dedicating merit and virtue to living beings, sincerely wishing that their vows will be fulfilled and that they will accomplish bodhi.

During the past 70 years, Buddhism has become increasingly popular in the West. Many Chan/Zen texts have been translated into English, but translations of repentance liturgy are almost non-existent. This is the first complete English language translation of *Liang Huang Bao Chan, The Repentance Dharma of Kindness and Compassion of the Bodhimanda*, more widely known as Emperor of Liang Repentance.

Bhikshuni Heng Jen started the English translation over fifteen years ago for her master's thesis for the Dharma Realm Buddhist University. She passed away after translating the first six rolls of the Repentance. Bhikshuni Heng Tyan completed the four remaining rolls of text, thus, completing the primary translation. In 2014, the translation team under the leadership of Bhikshu Jin Yan undertook the review and

editing of this work, aided by the commentary of Great Master Dixian (諦閑大師). The Buddhist Text Translation Society is pleased to offer English readers this text to use as a practice manual and source of reference.

Emperor of Liang Repentance Translation Team
On the Buddha's 3043 Birthday (May 2016)

The Eight Guidelines of The Buddhist Text Translation Society

1. A volunteer must free him/herself from the motives of personal fame and profit.
2. A volunteer must cultivate a respectful and sincere attitude free from arrogance and conceit.
3. A volunteer must refrain from aggrandizing his/her work and denigrating that of others.
4. A volunteer must not establish him/herself as the standard of correctness and suppress the work of others with his or her fault-finding.
5. A volunteer must take the Buddha-mind as his/her own mind.
6. A volunteer must use the wisdom of Dharma-selecting vision to determine true principles.
7. A volunteer must request virtuous elders in the ten directions to certify his/her translations.
8. A volunteer must endeavor to propagate the teachings by printing and distributing *sutras*, *shastra* texts, and *vinaya* texts when the translations are certified as being correct.

Roll One

Namo Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the Dragon Flower Assembly
(bow three times)

The origin

This Repentance Dharma of Kindness and Compassion in the Bodhimanda was compiled by ten eminent monks led by Chan Master Baozhi. It has been commonly known as the *Emperor of Liang Repentance* because it was compiled at the request of Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty.

Emperor Wu (464 C.E. – 549 C.E.), whose surname was Xiao, given name Yan, and courtesy name Shuda, was born in Lanling, (Jiangsu Province). He served as a government official in the Qi Dynasty, and was appointed as Duke of Liang. Later, he forced the abdication of Emperor Qi and ascended the throne. He named his dynasty “Liang.” He reigned for 46 years until his death at the age of 86.

His wife, Empress Chi, died a premature death at the age of thirty. She was intensely jealous of and hated the Emperor’s consorts and concubines. Her words and thoughts were as vicious as that of a poisonous snake. Because she harbored so much hatred and anger while alive, she was consequently reborn as a python.

As a python, her spiritual nature was not entirely clouded, and she knew of her karmic causes. In the second year of Emperor Wu’s reign, she appeared in the palace in the form of a python and told the emperor of her suffering as well as her evil karma. She beseeched the emperor to rescue her from her misery. Accordingly the emperor requested the assistance of Chan Master Baozhi and other monks who then compiled this *Repentance*. This text consists of ten rolls and is based on the essentials of bowing repentances taught in the sutras and *vinaya* texts. With this text, an assembly of monks set up the Bodhimanda and conducted the Repentance on her behalf.

At the conclusion of the repentance, a person attired in red robes and wearing a high hat suddenly appeared and expressed profound gratitude to the Emperor, “By the power of the Buddhas, I have been liberated from the body of a python. I am about to be reborn in the heavens. Before going, I have come to express my gratitude.”

After that, the person disappeared. From this we can conclude the merit and virtue accrued from this repentance is inconceivable. Since then, the *Emperor of Liang Jeweled Repentance* has spread throughout the world and is still practiced today.

Prologue

This Repentance was compiled at the request of Emperor Wu of Liang on behalf of the deceased Empress Chi. The Emperor had been mourning her death for several months, pining for her during the day and suffering from insomnia at night. One evening when the Emperor was in his bedroom, he heard a rustling sound outside. Upon taking a closer look, he saw a python curled up in the main hall, staring at him with its eyes blinking and mouth wide open. The emperor was extremely frightened, tried to escape but had no place to hide.

Being cornered, he stood up tensely and said to the python, “This palace is tightly guarded; there should not be a snake here. Are you a demon trying to haunt me?”

The python answered with a human voice, “I was your wife Chi, and am now in the form of a python. When I was alive, I was very jealous of your concubines. I had a ferocious temper and a vicious nature. Once my anger erupted, it was like blazing fire or darting arrows, harming people and destroying things. Due to such offenses, I was reborn in a lower realm as a python. Without food and shelter, I suffer unbearable hunger and misery.

“Moreover, there are many parasites underneath each of my scales and they gnaw at my flesh. The pain is like sharp knives stabbing my skin. I became a python, and unlike an ordinary snake, can transform my body and come here unhindered into your royal palace, a restricted place. Mindful of your Majesty’s deep affection for me in the past, I now reveal myself before you in this grotesque form. I pray that you can create some merit on my behalf so that I can be rescued from this predicament.”

Upon hearing this, Emperor Wu of Liang deeply lamented, but when he sought to interact further, the python had already disappeared!

The following day, the Emperor gathered a large group of monks in the palace, explained what had happened, and asked them the best method to liberate the python from its suffering.

Venerable Baozhi said, “The only way is to bow to the Buddhas and repent sincerely on behalf of the empress.”

The Emperor agreed to the advice. The monks then searched the sutras, gathered the names of Buddhas, extracted passages, and compiled the Repentance. The Emperor himself gave invaluable input, helping edit and embellish the writing of the Repentance text, including removing extraneous words. With the actual Repentance proper based on the words of the Buddhas, this text then became the Repentance Dharma in ten rolls that the assembly used to repent on the behalf of the empress.

One day, a rare fragrance permeated the palace and lingered for a long time. At first, no one knew where it came from. But when the Emperor looked up, he saw an

adorned heavenly being, who said to him, “I was the python that you saw previously. Because of the merit and virtue accrued from the Repentance, I was reborn in the Trayastrimsha Heaven. I am here to give testimony to your repentance effort.” Having expressed heart-felt gratitude, the heavenly being disappeared.

Although it has been more than a thousand years since the Liang Dynasty, people still use this text to conduct repentances. Whoever bows or prays sincerely will obtain an invisible response. I, as editor of this reprint, was afraid that such knowledge concerning the Emperor of Liang Repentance would be lost in the future or would not be understood clearly, thus, I, as editor of this reprint, have tried to explain it in simple words for everyone’s benefit.

Summer of 1889, 15th Year of the Guangxu Reign, Qing Dynasty
A preface by Jinling (Nanking) Sutra Texts Publishing House
before republishing the *Repentance*.

Listen Attentively

The Emperor of Liang initiates this Repentance;

Maitreya Bodhisattva names it.

Venerable Baozhi compiles it from the sacred Flower Treasury,

With names of Buddhas gathered from the sutras;

Monastics assemble and conduct the Repentance.

This Dharma of Repentance is proclaimed vastly.

The Repentance originates from a dreamlike encounter by the Emperor of Liang,

And it results in clouds of auspiciousness welling forth around the palace.

Within the Bodhimanda,

Glittering lanterns shining everywhere;

Golden flames ever illuminating;

Fragrant incense enveloping the palace;

Exquisite flowers adorning in many layers.

In the white clouds and blue sky, appears an adorned celestial being,

Before the white jade staircase, Chi is liberated from her suffering.

By the merit and virtue of this Repentance,

Calamities are quelled and offenses eradicated.

Calamities quelled, auspiciousness descends;

Offenses eradicated, blessings sprout forth.

A good medicine it is, curing illnesses;

A bright light it is, dispelling darkness.

Benefitting the nine states of existence,

Blessing the four kinds of birth.

Boundless is its merit and virtue,

Beyond praise or exaltation!

To commence this Repentance, we with utmost sincerity:

Bow respectfully to Samantabhadra, King of Great Conduct Bodhisattva,
Contemplate that this incense and flowers are offered to all Buddhas of
the ten directions,

Recite the sacred mantra phrases to purify this Repentance Bodhimanda,
Cause the “flower of offenses” to wither away and fall so as to achieve the
perfect and abundant fruition.

We again reverently bow to the Greatly Compassionate One, wishing that he will
bless us with efficacious responses.

Namo Samantabhadra Bodhisattva Mahasattva (*three times*)

Verse in Praise of Samantabhadra¹

Bodhisattva

*There exists a Bodhisattva,
Seated in full-lotus posture,
Known as Samantabhadra,
With a body of white jade.
From the back of his neck
Emanates fifty kinds of light
Made of fifty different colors.
From every pore,
Golden light comes pouring forth;
At each tip of golden light,
Appear countless transformation Buddhas
And countless transformation Bodhisattvas
All as his retinue.
Together they stroll around peacefully,
As precious flowers shower down.
Samantabhadra descends before the cultivator.
His elephant trumpets
And on top of its tusks,
Appear many jade maidens in ponds,
Singing and playing melodious music.
Their voices and sounds wonderful and subtle,
In praise of the Great Vehicle,
And the Path of One Reality.*

Seeing this, the cultivator rejoices and bows in worship.

He further reads and recites,

The profound sutras.

Universally bow to the ten-direction

Myriad transformation Buddhas,

Stupa of Many Jewels Tathagata,

Shakyamuni Buddha,

Samantabhadra Bodhisattva,

And all great Bodhisattvas.

I now make this vow:

If I have planted blessings,

I can surely see Samantabhadra Bodhisattva.

So may this Venerable Universally Auspicious One

Manifest before me.

Namo Samantabhadra Bodhisattva (chant ten times)

Let us all be respectful and reverent.

Single-mindedly, we bow to the eternally abiding Buddhas of the Dharma Realm of the ten directions.

Single-mindedly, we bow to the eternally abiding Dharma of the Dharma Realm of the ten directions.

Single-mindedly, we bow to the eternally abiding Sangha of the Dharma Realm of the ten directions.

The cantor chants:

All in this assembly, each one kneeling and solemn, holding incense and flowers, in accord with Dharma, make offerings to the Three Treasures of the Dharma Realm of the ten directions.

May this incense and flower pervade the ten directions,

Making a tower of subtle, wonderful light.

All heavenly music, jeweled heavenly incense,

Rare heavenly delicacies, and jeweled heavenly garments,

All inconceivably wonderful dharma objects,

Each object emitting all objects,

Each object emitting all dharmas,

Revolving unobstructed and adorning each other,

Are offered everywhere to the Three Treasures of the ten directions.

Before the Three Treasures of the Dharma Realm of the ten directions,

My body everywhere makes offerings.

*Each one entirely pervades the Dharma Realm,
 Each one unalloyed and unimpeded,
 Exhausting the bounds of the future, doing the Buddhas' work.
 May the fragrances permeate living beings throughout the Dharma Realm.
 Having been permeated, may they all bring forth the resolve for bodhi.
 May this cloud of incense and flowers fully pervade the ten directions,
 As an offering to all Buddhas, all Dharmas, and all Bodhisattvas,
 As well as to the multitudes of Hearers, Pratyekabuddhas, and devas,
 Making a tower of subtle, wonderful light that extends boundlessly into all realms.
 May beings in boundless Buddhalands
 Enjoy them and do the Buddhas' work.
 May the fragrances permeate all beings,
 So they bring forth the resolve for bodhi.*
 (Assembly rises and bows to the following Bodhisattva)
 Namo Precious Udumbara Flower Bodhisattva, Mahasattva (*three times*)
 His appearance, how wonderful and rare,
 His light, illumining all ten directions!
 To whom I had made offerings in the past,
 To whom I am now drawing near.
 A sage leader he is, a king, a heaven among heavens,
 With the voice of kalavinkas,
 Taking great pity on all beings,
 To him we now pay reverence.

Commencement of the Repentance

Listen respectfully

One body transforms and responds universally to the lands of the ten directions.

One sound proclaims the Dharma; all beings hear it -- humans, heavenly beings, and the rest of the three realms.

One path and *One* gateway enable all, unobstructed, to transcend oceans of samsara.

One Attribute and *One* Flavor enable one to ascend the summit of Nirvana on the Perfect and Direct Teaching of the *One* Vehicle.

Like the moon reflecting in a thousand rivers, the Dharma is taught according to the capacities of beings.

Like spring returning to earth, sages respond to beings accordingly.

They universally engage all beings throughout the Dharma Realm, while seated in each and every Bodhimanda.

We hope you will witness this with your enlightened eye, and verify our sincerity and humility.

[Dharma Host]: On behalf of _____ [those who seek to repent], we practice this Repentance Dharma of Kindness and Compassion in the Bodhimanda. We now come to Roll One. With all conditions fulfilled, we now enter the Repentance Platform. May we all reverently and wholeheartedly purify our three karmas and chant the text accordingly. We burn incense and present flowers as an offering to the Three Treasures in the ten directions. We chant and praise the sacred names of Buddhas. We bow to them in full prostration and take refuge in them. We confess our mistakes and seek to eradicate our karmic obstacles. We are earnestly mindful that, from time without beginning until now, due to our confusion in the One Nature, the Buddha-Nature, we have turned our backs on the Dharma of the One Vehicle.

One small defect in our diseased eyes causes us to see a labyrinth of flowers in empty space. One small bubble in the ocean causes waves to roll and churn in the stormy ocean of delusion. We have long been going against the samadhi of One Reality. Our single thought of ignorance has let loose all reins, causing our minds to be filled with the three poisons, resulting in our creating myriad forms of karma. This opens up the doors to the eighty-four thousand defiling passions, and gives rise to the hundreds of thousands of obstacles of afflictions. Like a wild and unrestrained elephant, we indulge in desires. Like a moth flying into fire, we chase after illusory conditions. Our offenses accumulate as high as mountains and our karma runs as deep as the ocean. With such scant roots of goodness, we fear we will not be able to escape our evil retributions.

Let us now be diligent in our mindfulness and rectify our thoughts. Externally, we rely on the sublime conditions of this wonderful bowing ceremony; internally, we feel deep shame and remorse. We gather together in this present pure assembly to chant this efficacious repentance. By relying on the awesome light of thousands of Buddhas, we cleanse our offenses of defilements which we have accumulated through many lives. We pray all Buddhas will take pity on us. We now respectfully bow to the Greatly Compassionate One to invisibly protect us.

By the Repentance Host

In the heavens above and all that is below,

Nothing compares with a Buddha

Throughout the worlds of the ten directions he is matchless

Of all I have seen in the world,

There is nothing at all like a Buddha.

We now begin the Repentance Dharma of Kindness and Compassion in the Bodhimanda. Together in this assembly, we single-mindedly return to and rely on all Buddhas of the three periods of time.

Namo Buddhas of the past, Vipashyin Buddha

Namo Shikhin Buddha

Namo Vishvabhu Buddha

Namo Krakucchanda Buddha

Namo Kanakamuni Buddha

Namo Kashyapa Buddha

Namo our Fundamental Teacher Shakyamuni Buddha

Namo Honored Future Buddha, Maitreya

Verse for Opening a Sutra

The unsurpassed, profound, and wonderful Dharma,

Is difficult to encounter in hundreds of millions of eons,

I now see and hear it, receive and uphold it,

And I vow to fathom the Tathagata's true meaning.

The words “Kindness and Compassion in the Bodhimanda” were chosen for the title of this repentance due to a response in a dream. Maitreya, the World-Honored, replete with great kindness and compassion extending to the end of time, bequeathed the title of this repentance. This was how the title was established. We do not dare change the title.

Relying on the strength of the kindness of the World-Honored One, we resolve to protect the Three Treasures, eclipse the power of demons, and humble those with arrogance and overweening pride. We also resolve to cause those who have not planted roots of goodness to do so, and cause the roots of goodness already planted to flourish. We further resolve to cause those who cling to the notion of attainment and who dwell in various views to aspire for transcendence. Finally, we resolve to enable those who delight in the Small Vehicle not to doubt the Mahayana, and to cause those who delight in the Mahayana to be joyous.

Furthermore, compassion reigns supreme among all goodness and serves as the sanctuary for all living beings. Like the sun which lights up the day and the moon which illuminates the night, it guides us like eyes or teachers, and cares for us like parents or siblings. Drawing all of us back to the Bodhimanda, it serves as a true spiritual mentor. Kindness and compassion connect with us in a way deeper than that of the relationship with our blood relatives. It accompanies us life after life and

never leaves us even after death. Therefore, we take it to heart and use “Kindness and Compassion” as the title of this Repentance.

Today in this Bodhimanda, we, both visible and invisible beings, gather to establish this Repentance and bring forth the resolve for bodhi. There are twelve major reasons for this. What are the twelve?

1. With limitless resolve, we vow to transform all beings in the six paths.
2. With limitless vigor, we vow to repay kindness and compassion.
3. We vow this power of goodness will enable all beings to uphold the Buddhas’ precepts without thoughts of violating them.
4. By the power of this goodness, we vow that all beings will not give rise to thoughts of arrogance towards teachers and elders.
5. By the power of this goodness, we vow that all beings will not give rise to thoughts of anger or hatred with regard to their position in life.
6. By the power of this goodness, we vow all beings will not envy others’ fine appearance.
7. We vow this power of goodness will enable us not to be stingy with the giving of wealth, both internal and external.
8. By this power of goodness, we vow all beings will cultivate blessings, not for themselves, but for all those lacking support and protection.
9. With this power of goodness, we vow all beings practice the four dharma of attraction², not for themselves, but for others.
10. With this power of goodness, we vow all beings resolve to care for the orphaned the solitary, the sick, and the imprisoned so they can attain peace and happiness.
11. With this power of goodness, we vow to subdue and gather in whoever needs to be subdued and gathered.
12. With this power of goodness, we vow all beings everywhere will constantly be mindful to bring forth and sustain the resolve for bodhi.

May all sages and ordinary beings, both visible and invisible, come to protect and help us return to purity through our repentance and fulfill all our wishes, so that our minds will be the same as all Buddhas’, and that we make the same vows as all Buddhas. May all beings of the four births and the six paths accomplish bodhi.

Taking Refuge with the Three Treasures

Today, we are here in this Bodhimanda due to our shared karma. We should bring forth the resolve for awakening. Always be mindful of impermanence. Our bodies do not last long, our youthful vitality slowly but definitely fades. Thus we should refrain

from indulging in defiled conduct and realize that our fine appearance or graceful demeanor has no lasting reliability.

Nothing is permanent; everything eventually drifts towards ruin. Be it in heaven or on earth, who can live forever? When we are young, our muscles may be supple and our skin lustrous, with an aura of vitality. However, the body can retain none of this. This body that comes into being due to conditions will surely wither and perish. It goes through birth, aging, sickness, and death, which comes anytime unannounced! Who can rid us of these miseries? When calamities suddenly hit, we are unable to escape, and we perish, regardless of our status or rank. Our bodies bloat and stink, and the stench is unbearable. So what is the purpose of lavishing so much care on our bodies? If we do not vigorously cultivate meritorious deeds, how can we escape this suffering?

Roll Two

Glossary

This glossary is an aid for readers unfamiliar with the Buddhist vocabulary. Definitions have been kept simple and are not necessarily complete. Skt.: Sanskrit word; py: pinyin romanization of Chinese word.

Amitābha Buddha: (Skt.) The Buddha of the Western Land of Ultimate Bliss. He is known as Amitābha “infinite light” and Amitāyus “infinite life.”

Ānanda: (Skt.) One of the ten great disciples of the Buddha Śākyamuni, Ānanda was the Buddha’s first cousin and his attendant. He also compiled and edited the *sutras*. His name means rejoicing, because he was born on the day the Buddha realized Buddhahood. His father also rejoiced and gave him that name. The entire country celebrated the Buddha’s enlightenment on that day. With his flawless memory, Ānanda was able to remember all the *sutras* the Buddha spoke and was foremost among the Buddha’s disciples in erudition.

anuttarā-samyak-saṃbodhi: (Skt.) The unsurpassed, proper and equal, right enlightenment of all Buddhas.

Arhat (Skt.) An enlightened sage who has awakened by contemplating on the Four Noble Truths. There are four stages of arhatship. (Also Hearer, Sound Hearer, shravaka, śrāvaka)

asura: (Skt.) A “being who likes to fight,” one of the eightfold division of ghosts and spirits, found among gods, human beings, animals, and ghosts. Examples of evil *asuras* are thieves, robbers, gunmen, tigers, lions, and wolves. *Asuras* in the heavens have the blessings of the gods but not the authority.

Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva (Skt.) One of the four Bodhisattvas of greatest importance in Mahāyāna Buddhism, Avalokiteśvara is the Bodhisattva of Compassion and the disciple and future successor of the Buddha Amitābha in the Western Land of Ultimate Bliss. His name, which is Sanskrit, is often translated as Observer of the Sounds of the World. It can also be interpreted as meaning Contemplator of Self-Mastery. (Also Guan Shi Yin, Kuanyin).

Bhagavān: (Skt.) World-Honored One (See ten titles for the Buddha.)

bhikṣu: (Skt.) The technical designation for a fully ordained Buddhist monk, one who leads a pure and celibate life and who upholds the basic 250 monastic regulations.

bhikṣuṇī: (Skt.) The technical designation for a fully ordained Buddhist nun, one who leads a pure and celibate life and who upholds the 348 monastic regulations.

Bodhi: (Skt.) Refers to enlightenment. There are many levels of enlightenment on the path to full awakening. Bodhi is usually reserved as the designation for the ultimate enlightenment.

bodhimaṇḍala: (Skt.) The site of awakening. (Note: Compare to *bodhimaṇḍa*, which means the seat or throne on which one becomes awakened.)

Bodhisattva: (Skt.) Bodhisattva (*bodhi* = enlightenment *sattva* = being) can be interpreted in two ways: One, the Bodhisattva is an enlightened one among sentient beings, and two, he enlightens sentient beings. A Bodhisattva is someone who has resolved to become a Buddha and who is cultivating the Path to becoming a Buddha.

Brahmā: (Skt.) The god of the Brahmā Heaven, the god worshipped by Hindus. The Brahmā net in the Brahmā Net Sūtra refers to the enormous net of jewels that is hung in the palace of the god Brahmā. It is used as a metaphor for the practices of purity, i.e. upholding of the Bodhisattva precepts.

Brahmā conduct: Refers to “pure deeds” and the practice of upholding precepts purely.

brahman: (Skt.) Sometimes written *brāhman* or *brāhmaṇa*; the priest caste of India. They practice fire-worship. It is rendered in English as “brahmin.”

Buddha: (Skt.) the “awakened” or “enlightened one.” It is a title that is applied to those who have reached perfect enlightenment (*anuttarā-samyak-saṃbodhi*) and who have perfect wisdom and universal compassion. The Buddha of the present historical period is known as the Buddha Śākyamuni. There were also Buddhas prior to his time; there were and are Buddhas in other worlds; and there will be Buddhas in the future, both in our world and in others.

dhāraṇī (Skt.): Interpreted as “unite and hold.” A *dhāraṇī*, is the chief, the head, and the origin of all *dharma*s. *Dhāraṇī*s unite all *dharma*s and hold limitless meanings. (See mantra)

Dharma: (Skt.) Refers to the teachings of the Buddha and is one of the Three Jewels.

dharma: (1) A generic term for all the various kinds of things or entities that exist in the world, including both physical and mental phenomena (e.g. wholesome *dharma*s refer to wholesome deeds); (2) methods.

Dharma-door: A Dharma-door is an entrance to the Dharma, described in the teachings as a way or method of practice leading to enlightenment.

Dharma Image Age: (See Three Ages)

Dharma Prince: Buddhas are called Dharma Kings. Dharma Princes are Bodhisattvas, because they are next in line for Buddhahood. Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva is often called the Dharma Prince because he is the senior Bodhisattva.

The Dharma Realm Buddhist Association

Mission

The Dharma Realm Buddhist Association (formerly the Sino-American Buddhist Association) was founded by the late Tripitaka Master Hsüan Hua in San Francisco in 1959. The Association aims to disseminate the teachings of the Buddha throughout the world, and thus is dedicated to translating the Buddhist Canon, propagating orthodox Dharma, and promoting ethical education.

The Founder

Tripitaka Master Hsüan Hua (1918–1995)

Tripitaka Master Hua, twentieth century Buddhist monastic reformer, was one of the first Chinese masters to teach a large number of Westerners. During his long career he emphasized the primacy of the monastic tradition, the essential role of moral education, the need for Buddhists to ground themselves in traditional spiritual practice and authentic scripture, and the importance of respect and understanding among religions. To attain these goals, he focused on clarifying the essential principles of the Buddha's original teachings, on establishing a properly ordained monastic community, on organizing and supporting the translation of the Buddhist Canon into English and other languages, and on the establishment of schools, religious training programs, and programs of academic research and teaching.

Born in 1918 into a peasant family in a small village south of Harbin, in northeast China, the Master was the youngest of ten children. His father's surname was Bai, and his mother's maiden name was Hu. His mother was a vegetarian, and throughout her life she held to the practice of reciting the name of the Buddha Amitabha. When the Master formally became a Buddhist, in his mid-teens, he was given the Dharma name *Anci* (Peace and Compassion). And after becoming a monk, he was also known as *Dulun* (Liberator from the Wheel of Rebirth). Upon granting him the Dharma-seal of the Weiyang Lineage, the Elder Chan Master Hsu Yun, also Xuyun (1840-1959) bestowed upon him the Dharma-transmission name Hsüan Hua (Xuanhua — to Proclaim and Transform).

When the Master was a child, he followed his mother's example, eating only vegetarian food and reciting the Buddha's name. When he was eleven years old, upon seeing a dead baby lying on the ground, he awakened to the fundamental significance of birth and death and the impermanence of all phenomena. He then resolved to become a monk and practice on the Buddhist Path, but he acquiesced to his mother's request that he not do so until after her death. When he was twelve, he obtained his parents' permission to travel extensively in search of a true spiritual teacher.

At the age of fifteen, the Master went to school for the first time, and when he was sixteen, he started lecturing on the Buddhist sutras to help his fellow villagers who were illiterate but who wanted to learn about the Buddha's teachings. He was not only diligent and focused but also possessed a photographic memory, and so he was able to memorize the Four Books and the Five Classics of the Confucian tradition. He had also studied traditional Chinese medicine, astrology, divination, physiognomy, and the scriptures of the great religions. When he was seventeen, he established a free school, in which, as the lone teacher, he taught some thirty impoverished children and adults.

At the age of eighteen, after only two and a half years of schooling, he left school to care for his terminally ill mother. He was nineteen when she died, and for three years he honored her memory by sitting in meditation beside her grave in a hut made of sorghum stalks. During this time, while reading the *Avatamaska Sutra*, he experienced a deep awakening. Subsequently, while seated in deep meditation, he had a vision of the Sixth Chan Buddhist Patriarch Huineng (638–713 CE). In his vision, Master Huineng came to visit him and to give him the mission of bringing Buddhism to the Western world.

At the end of his period of mourning, the Venerable Master took as his teacher Chan Buddhist Master Changzhi, and he entered Three Conditions Monastery as a novice monk. Chan Master Changzhi subsequently transmitted to him the Dharma of the Jinding Pulu Chan lineage. During this time, the Master devoted himself not only to meditation but also to the study of the Buddhist scriptural tradition and to the mastery of all the major schools of Chinese Buddhism.

In 1946 the Master began the long journey to the south of China. In 1947, he received full ordination as a monk at the Buddhist holy mountain Putuoshan. In 1948, after over two thousand miles of travel, the Master arrived at Nanhua Monastery and bowed to Chan Master Xuyun, China's most widely revered enlightened master. From him the Master received the mind-seal transmission as verification of his awakening, and later a more formal transmission of the Dharma of the Weiyang Lineage of the Chan School.

In 1949 the Master left China for Hong Kong. There he taught meditation, lectured on the Buddhist sutras, and sponsored their printing. He also commissioned the making of images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and he aided monastic refugees from mainland China. He also built Western Bliss Garden Monastery (*Xile Yuan*), established the Buddhist Lecture Hall, and rebuilt and renovated Flourishing Compassion Monastery (*Cixing Monastery*).

In 1962, he traveled to the United States, at the invitation of several of his Hong Kong disciples who had settled in San Francisco, and he began lecturing at the San Francisco Buddhist Lecture Hall, which had been previously established as a branch of the Buddhist Lecture Hall in Hong Kong. As the community at the Buddhist Lecture Hall in San Francisco grew, both in size and in diversity, the institution's name was changed, first to the Sino-American Buddhist Association and then to the Dharma Realm Buddhist Association. In 1976 the Venerable Master established the organization's first branch monastery – Gold Wheel Temple in Los Angeles—and he established a new headquarters as well, the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, in Ukiah, California.

In the summer of 1968, the Master began the intensive training of a group of Americans, most of them university students. In 1969, he astonished the monastic community of Taiwan by sending there, for complete ordination, two American women and three American men whom he had ordained as novices. They were the first Americans of that period to become fully ordained Buddhist monks and nuns. During subsequent years, the Venerable Master trained and oversaw the ordination of hundreds of people, both Asians and Westerners, from among the multitudes who came to California from every part of the world to study with him. These monastic disciples now teach in the twenty-eight temples, monasteries and convents that the Venerable Master founded in the United States, Canada, and several Asian countries.

The Venerable Master was determined to transmit to the West the original and correct teachings of Buddhism, and he categorically rejected what he considered to be corrupt practices that had become widespread in China. He guided his disciples in distinguishing between genuine, scripture-based practices that were useful and in accord with common sense, as opposed to ritual superstitions that were unwholesome cultural accretions.

Among the many reforms in monastic practice that he instituted was his insistence that his monastic disciples accord with the ancient practice of wearing the monastic robe or precept-sash (*kaśāya*) as a sign of membership in the monastic Sangha. He himself followed, and he required that his monastic disciples follow the prohibition against eating after noon. He considered a vegetarian diet to be of paramount impor-

tance. He encouraged his disciples among the Sangha to join him in following the Buddha's beneficial ascetic practices of eating only one meal a day and of never lying down. Of his monastic disciples he required strict purity, and he encouraged his lay disciples to adhere to the five precepts of the Buddhist laity.

Although he understood English well and spoke it when necessary, the Master almost always lectured in Chinese. His aim was to encourage his Western disciples to learn Chinese, so that they could help to fulfill his wish that the Buddhist Canon be translated into other languages. So far, the Buddhist Text Translation Society, which he founded, has published well over a hundred volumes of translations, including several of the major Mahayana sutras with the Master's commentaries.

As an educator, the Venerable Master was tireless. At the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, he established formal training programs for monastics and for laity, elementary and secondary schools for boys and for girls, and Dharma Realm Buddhist University. From 1968 to the early 1990's he himself gave lectures on sutras at least once a day, and he traveled extensively on speaking tours. Responding to requests from Buddhists around the world, the Venerable Master led delegations to Hong Kong, Taiwan, India, Southeast Asia, and Europe to propagate the Dharma. He also traveled to Myanmar, Australia and South America. His presence drew a multitude of the faithful everywhere he went. He was also often invited to lecture at universities and academic conferences.

The Venerable Master was a pioneer in building bridges between different Buddhist communities. Wishing to heal the ancient schism between Mahayana Buddhism and Theravada Buddhism, he invited distinguished Theravada monks to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas to share the duties of full ordination and transmission of the monastic precepts, which the two traditions hold in common.

He also insisted on inter-religious respect and actively promoted interfaith dialogue. He stressed commonalities in religious traditions, above all their emphasis on proper and compassionate conduct. Together with his friend Paul Cardinal Yubin, who had been archbishop of Nanjing and who was the Chancellor of the Catholic Furen University in Taiwan, he established the Institute for World Religions in Berkeley.

In 1990, at the invitation of Buddhists in several European countries, the Venerable Master led a large delegation on a European Dharma tour, knowing full well that, because of his ill health at the time, the rigors of the trip would shorten his life. However, as always he considered the Dharma more important than his very life. After his return, his health gradually deteriorated, yet, while quite ill, he made another major tour, this time to Taiwan, in 1993.

In Los Angeles, on June 7, 1995 at the age of 77, the Venerable Master entered stillness. When he was alive, he craved nothing, seeking neither fame nor wealth nor power. His every thought and every action were for the sake of bringing true happiness to all sentient beings. In his final instructions he said, “After I depart, you can recite the *Avatamsaka Sutra* and the name of the Buddha Amitabha for however many days you would like, perhaps seven days or forty-nine days. After cremating my body, scatter all my remains in the air. I do not want you to do anything else at all. Do not build me any pagodas or memorials. I came into the world without anything; when I depart, I still do not want anything, and I do not want to leave any traces in the world... From emptiness I came; to emptiness I am returning.”

Buddhist Text Translation Society

The Buddhist Text Translation Society (BTTS) is dedicated to making the principles of the Buddhadharma available to Western readers in a form that can be directly applied to practice. Since the early 1970s, the Society has been publishing English translations of sutras, instructional handbooks on meditation and moral conduct, and biographies. Many of the Society’s sutra translations are accompanied by contemporary commentary, based on lectures spoken by Tripitaka Master Hsuan Hua.

The accurate and faithful translation of the Buddhist Canon into English and other Western languages is one of the primary objectives of the Dharma Realm Buddhist Association (DRBA), the parent organization of the Buddhist Text Translation Society.

When Buddhism first came to China from India, one of the most important tasks required for its establishment was the translation of the Buddhist scriptures from Sanskrit into Chinese. This work involved a great many people, such as the renowned monk National Master Kumarajiva (fifth century), who led an assembly of over 800 people to work on the translation of the Tripitaka (Buddhist canon) for over a decade. Because of the work of individuals such as these, nearly the entire Buddhist Tripitaka of over a thousand texts exists to the present day in Chinese.

Now the banner of the Buddha’s teachings is being firmly planted in Western soil, and the same translation work is being done from Chinese into English. Since the 1970s, the Buddhist Text Translation Society has been making a paramount contribution toward this goal. Aware that the Buddhist Tripitaka is a work of such magnitude that its translation could never be entrusted to a single person, BTTS, emulating the translation assemblies of ancient times, does not publish a work until it has passed through four committees for primary translation, revision, editing, and certification. The leaders of these committees are bhikshus (monks) and bhikshunis (nuns) who

have devoted their lives to the study and practice of the Buddha's teachings. For that reason, all of the works of BTTS emphasize the application of the Buddha's teachings in terms of actual practice.

Dharma Realm Buddhist University

Dharma Realm Buddhist University (DRBU) was founded in 1976 and is located on the monastic grounds of the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas in Ukiah, California. It is dedicated to liberal education in the broad Buddhist tradition—a tradition characterized by knowledge in the arts and sciences, self-cultivation, and the pursuit of wisdom. DRBU aims at educating the whole person and thus strives to nurture individuals who see learning as a lifelong endeavor in the pursuit of knowledge, self-understanding, and the creative and beneficial application of that learning to every sphere of life.

DRBU currently offers a BA in liberal arts which emphasizes an integration of the seminal texts of both Eastern and Western traditions and an MA degree in Buddhist Classics.

The Institute of World Religions

Founded in 1994, the Institute is located near the University of California at Berkeley. The purpose of the Institute is to study the truths of religion in harmony with other religious groups, without rejecting or opposing any religion. The six principles of the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas serve as guidelines for the Institute. Propagating the spirit of the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas with expansive open-mindedness, the Institute invites members of various religions to give presentations, deepening understanding of their ideals and practices. The Institute holds meditation twice daily and presents evening and weekend programs that foster conversation between religions, the sciences, and the humanities.

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