

News From The Dharma Realm

PROPOSALS TO BE SUBMITTED BEFORE THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE WORLD BUDDHIST SANGHA COUNCIL

The delegates from the United States of America to the Third World Buddhist Sangha Council, recognizing that Buddhism has entered a time of decline, are glad for this opportunity to attend and participate in this Council meeting and work together with our fellow members of the Sangha to discover ways to cause the Buddha Dharma to flourish, for the peace, happiness, and benefit of all living beings.

Now we live in the Dharma Ending Age, and the Proper Dharma is on the edge of extinction. We must find ways to develop future generations of accomplished members of the Sangha. If we do not, there is only a dark road ahead which leads to the utter demise of the Dharma, and to the end of peace in the world.

The contemporary English historian Arnold J. Toynbee once said, "When compared to the event of the transmission of Buddhism to the West, all other historical events of the twentieth century will lose their color. The implications of this event far surpass the significance of the two World Wars, the renovation of political systems, accomplishments in the field of science, the discovery of nuclear weaponry, the space program, and so forth... several hundred years from now a review of history will reveal the influence that Buddhism had on Western society...is far more far reaching and profound than that brought on by any other important event that happened during the twentieth century."

Before the turn of the century, there was virtually no idea of Buddhism in the United States. Gradually a few people became interested in the Dharma, but their knowledge and understanding were far from complete. Only within the last twenty years have there been precepted members of the Sangha in the West.

Since Buddhism has just recently come to the West, it is important that it be established on a foundation of the Proper Dharma; many of the proposals contained in the following pages are suggested specifically with this in mind. The Sangha of American Bhikshus and Bhikshunis have unanimously endorsed these proposals in order to encourage and strengthen the growth of the Proper Dharma in the West.

Proposal 1

That a WORLD RELIGIONS HUMAN WELFARE COUNCIL be organized and sponsored to safeguard, advance and promote the moral and spiritual welfare of all people.

Submitted by: Bhikshu Heng Sure, M.A., Univ. of California at Berkeley, Ph.D Dharma Realm University; Dean of the School of Buddhist Studies, DRBU; Professor of Buddhist Studies.

Upasika Kuo Na Koch, Graduate Student, DRBU

Discussion: This Council can take a stand on public issues of moral and spiritual concerns.

1. Non-violence and morality. The Council can work to eliminate obscenity, immorality, and violent practices and trends in the mass media, entertainment, television, books, and periodicals; it can speak out against the development of modern weapons technology and the stockpiling of destructive weapons; it can denounce terrorism and crime.

2. Filiality and respect. On the positive side this council support filiality, respect for elders and authority, and family stability; it can cite and honor individuals and groups who contribute to the moral and spiritual well being of the world. In this way, it can promote exemplars of kindness, compassion, and the basis of the moral precepts. It is of the utmost importance to counter forces in society that expound immorality and violence in disregard for the basic values of human life.

3. Religious unity. The Council can serve to unite all religions now facing crises of moral decay, with the aim of uniting to counteract that decay. Isolated voices go unheard. A centralized Council of respected members of the Sangha and Elders from all religions who follow precepts and practice moral behavior can establish uncompromising standards of decency. They can vigorously and publically oppose evil, deviant, and demonic elements in the world, those who "fear only that the world will not be in chaos." This Council can manifest as the voice of the *Shurangama Sutra* and appear as a demon-spotting mirror to break up the deviant and reveal the proper. The Council can restore the hopes and lighten the hearts of compassionate people everywhere, and restore the faith of people who feared that uncompromising standards of decency and virtue had perished from the earth.

-Bhikshu Heng Sure

Further Discussion: Since political leaders of today come together to negotiate about the production and exchange of weapons that can eventually annihilate the human race, I believe that Buddhist and leaders of all religions should come together to investigate, clearly and specifically, the problems that face the world at this time. I would ask that Buddhist take the lead in bringing this possibility to fruition.

If it is not possible for the leaders of all the great religions of the world to come together, if it is not possible for the religious and spiritually-minded people of this world to put down the endless distinctions between self and others, then there is no hope for resolving the conflicts in the world, and there is no hope for world peace.

-Upasika Kuo Na Koch

Proposal 2

That the Tripitaka be translated into all the major languages of the world.

Submitted by: Bhikshu Heng Ch'ao, Ph.D. Dharma Realm Buddhist University; M.A. University of Wisconsin; Vice Dean, Hsu Yun College of Buddhist Studies, Professor of Buddhist Studies.

Bhikshu Heng Wu, Graduate Student

Bhikshuni Heng Ho, Student, DRBU

Upasika Grace Kuo-Ai Liu, M.D. Fukien Medical College, Licensed Acupuncturist, Professor of Medicine, Dharma Realm University

Upasaka Liu Kuo-chi, B.A. Imperial University, Tokyo, Instructor, Dharma Realm University

Upasaka Kuo Sun Dickerson, Teacher, Buddhist Council for Refugee Rescue and Resettlement City of Ten Thousand Buddhas

Discussion: Buddhism is the world's oldest and largest living religion, yet its canon, for the most part, remains untranslated from Asian languages. Christianity's wide acceptance and rapid spread resulted from the translation of the Bible into all the world's major languages. This project is our basic responsibility and is long overdue. International translation of the Dharma is essential to the survival of Buddhism.

-Bhikshu Heng Ch'ao.

Further Discussion: It is proposed that an INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE TRANSLATION OF THE TRIPITAKA be established. Buddhist Sutras are not like ordinary worldly literature; they are transmitted through the ages to all countries and lands, to teach and transform countless living beings. As such they should not contain even the tiniest mistake within them. Therefore those who translate the Sutras should work together in an organized effort, so that they can check each other's work and assist each other, and so that members of the Sangha of great merit, virtue, scholarship, cultivation, and accomplishment can check their work and certify it. In this way, the Sutras will circulate throughout the world and benefit myriad generations.

-Upasika Liu Kuo-ai.

Further Discussion: In the interest of making the Buddhist Canon available to all peoples in all countries, it is proposed that the United Sangha undertake to see to the translation of the entire Tripitaka into all world languages, according to conditions and as soon as possible. It is also proposed that the EIGHT REQUIREMENTS FOR TRANSLATORS (see below) of the Sino-American Buddhist Association's Buddhist Text Translation Society be adopted as guidelines in the project.

-Bhikshuni Heng Hsien.

Further Discussion: Many people want to do the correct thing, and cultivate the Way, but have not yet met with the Proper Dharma. It increases their opportunities to hear the Dharma, the Buddhist Canon must be translated into all languages.

-Upasaka Kuo Sun Dickerson.

Further Discussion: The work of translating the Tripitaka into all the world's major languages is on such a vast scale that it will demand the cooperation of all Buddhists. No one person can undertake this task alone. In order that the translations be accurate and effective, it is proposed that the Committee for Translating the Tripitaka be organized into four sections: A) The Primary Translation Committee; B) The Reviewing Committee; C) The Editing Committee; D) The Certification Committee. Further, all translators should agree to follow these eight regulations for guiding their work:

1. A translator must free himself from motives of personal gain and reputation.

2. A translator must cultivate an attitude free from arrogance and conceit.
3. A translator must refrain from advertising himself and denigrating others.
4. A translator must not establish himself as the standard of correctness and suppress the work of others with his fault-finding.
5. A translator must take the Buddha-mind as his own mind.
6. A translator must use the wisdom of the selective Dharma-eye to determine true principles.
7. A translator must request the Virtuous Elders from the ten directions to certify his translations.
8. A translator must endeavor to propagate the teachings by printing Sutras, Shastras, and Vinaya texts when his translations have been certified.