

Bodhi Stand



Midori Penners
Interviewed by Julie Penners

"Buddhism is everyday life. The upbringing I received as a child did not involve any Sutra reading or include many Buddhist rituals. The manner in which my parents raised me, however, made the religious principles natural for me to accept. Understanding this, I began to seek my own Buddhanature.

"After marrying, I left my homeland of Japan and flew to the United States. In America, my husband and I continued to study under many great Zen masters and practiced with other cultivators of the Way.

"Not much time was available to attend Way-place activities as I became occupied with caring for my newborn babies, Andrea and Julie. Although I wished to participate more often in Ch'an sessions, my cultivation also was to devote my efforts in strengthening and nurturing my children's growth. Simultaneously, they taught me how to grow and keep trying to be a complete mother.

"A year and a half ago, we decided to take our two girls out of high school, sell our house, and give away our dental practice in order to travel. This was an attempt to experience real life without being materialistically attached to the ordinary world of increasing desires. A simpler way of life has helped us see ourselves more clearly.

"In the past three to four years, we made several visits to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. Initially, there had been no fixed schedule to our travels. But about eight months later, our karma turned us toward the City.

"The attraction of the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas is our respect for the Sangha. They are sincerely putting their effort into following our original teacher, Shakyamuni

Buddha's Way, under the guidance of the Venerable Master Hua. The peacefulness and purity of the environment comes mainly from the Sangha reverently and mindfully upholding the precepts.

"We were pleased to find that a high school existed within the monastic community. Offering a serious education and a warm atmosphere, the school has been very suitable for our daughters. They are also able to join in and practice with the Sangha when they have time.

"I do volunteer teaching at the Buddhist Council for Refugee Rescue and Resettlement Center, also located on the grounds. Helping the children is my joy. I feel as if they were all my family.

"I find it is important to maintain my practice on a regular and continuing basis. How to do this is by joining with a group. Cultivating with the Sangha brings encouragement and inspires the spirit to realize that we are all one. I have had the rare opportunity to take part in the recitation and Ch'an sessions here at the City and for this I am extremely grateful. Our family deeply appreciates being able to live here."