

across the sea of suffering

~~in a Boat of Vows~~

by Shramanerika Heng Duan

Before the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the ten directions and three periods of time, the Venerable Sages of past and present, Before the Venerable Abbot and (before) the Great Assembly, I disciple Kuo Yan, would like to make the following vows:

1. I vow in life after life to leave the home-life under the Venerable Master Hua, and forever protect and propagate the Venerable Master's teaching and Way Places.
2. I vow in life after life to be born as a man, and not undergo the karmic retribution of having a woman's body. I vow in life after life to enter the Way as a virgin youth, pure and clean, to leave the home life with proper faith, and to be pure in my cultivation. I vow to strictly uphold the precepts and become perfectly complete with the three minds of Solidity, Sincerity, and Perseverance. I will protect and uphold the Orthodox Dharma, sparing neither body nor life.
3. I vow in life after life to be proficient in many languages and to translate the Sutras into all languages, thus spreading the Buddha-dharma everywhere.
4. I vow that, to the end of future kalpas, I will rescue living beings who are suffering in the hells for their offenses, and others of the Three Evil Paths. I will rescue them all and cause them to leave the realms of the hells, hungry ghosts, animals, and the like. Only after the beings who are undergoing retribution for their offenses have all become Buddhas, will I myself accomplish the Right Enlightenment.
5. I vow in life after life to cultivate and propagate the Ten Great Conducts of Universal Worthy Bodhisattva, to completely cross over all living beings of the Dharma Realm to Buddhahood. Only then will I myself seek the leisure of Nirvana.
6. I vow to take the 18 great vows of the Venerable Master Hua as my own vows.
7. I vow in life after life to cultivate, uphold, and protect the Dharani Dharma-Door of Great Compassion, the Forty-Two Hands and Eyes, the Shurangama Mantra, as well as all other True-word Dharanis.
8. I vow in life after life to read, recite, and uphold the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, *the Dharma Flower Sutra*, *the Shurangama Sutra*, *the Vajra Sutra*, and other Great Vehicle Sutras. I will everywhere propagate the Orthodox Dharma without obstruction's of evil, and I won't forget my vows life after life. In the evil world of the five turbidities, I will skillfully transform living beings.

9. I vow in life after life to obtain the five eyes and six spiritual penetrations, also measureless wisdom and eloquence, to instruct and guide those who are confused, and to subdue those of externalist paths, without fear.

10. I vow in this very life to dwell in the perfect enlightenment of the Buddha, to always seek good knowing advisors, and not encounter outside ways or the Two Vehicles. I will rely upon my vow power to cultivate and to gradually cut off the obstacle of affliction and the obstacle of what is known. Once those obstacles are exhausted, and my vows are completed, I will ascend the Pure Dharma Hall of Liberation and certify to the Wonderful Adorned Region of Great, Perfect Enlightenment.

11. I vow at the end of this life to most definitely be reborn in the Western Land of Ultimate Bliss, and quickly certify to unsurpassed Bodhi. Then I will transform bodies as many as motes of dust in kshetras, to cross over living beings without fatigue or satiation. Empty space can be exhausted, but my vows are inexhaustible. May sentient and non-sentient beings all perfect the seeds of wisdom!

12. I vow that all my vows will attain fulfillment and perfection.