

NEWS FROM THE DHARMA REALM

ENTERING THE DHARMA REALM

AT GOLD WHEEL TEMPLE

The newly-established Gold Wheel Temple, 1728 West Sixth Street, Los Angeles, California, became an Avatamsaka Bodhimanda as Dharma Masters Heng Sure and Heng Ch'au opened a lecture series on the *SUTRA OF THE DHARMA REALM*, the King of Kings of Sutras, *THE FLOWER ADORNMENT*, in late May. Dharma Master Ch'au explains the profound principles in practical terms, so that cultivators can find their way into the Sea of Dharma and Ocean of Practices which comprise the vast Avatamsaka Teaching.

The Bodhisattvas know there is no birth and death--that these are just an appearance. They see us as if we living beings were in a play. We continually go backstage and change. On the one hand they view living beings who undergo birth and death as being like actors who are continually going backstage to change costumes--so that in one scene they appear as a beggar and in another may be a prince, or queen, or king. Just like scenes in a play, births and deaths give the illusion of beginnings and ends. But on the other hand, enlightened beings also know that this is in fact a cycle--a vicious cycle. Instead of changing costumes, we beings lose one body and get another. When that body goes bad we get yet another. Despite this repetitious pattern we never know to stop and ask, "What is this all about?"

We are like a gambler in Las Vegas or Reno who gets hooked on the slot machines--the "one-armed bandit," I think it's called. The gambler will take a lot of money and go there to play the machines. He'll keep putting one coin after another in because he hopes to hit the jackpot. Perhaps he gets a little back, which encourages him to spend more. So he plays one machine for a while and then moves on because there's not much action. What happens? A stranger walks up to the machine he just rejected, sticks a coin in, pulls the lever, and hits the jackpot. Despite such frustrations, the gambler is addicted and will go out to get more money so he can come back and play again. Of course the house has the odds and in the end, the house always wins. You could say in the analogy that the house is Samsara--birth and death. The flow of birth and death has the odds and it always wins. The only way to beat it is to cultivate the Way and go against the flow of birth and death.

In the TEN PRACTICES CHAPTER, the Buddha's description is memorable. He says, "Within birth and death living beings get countless bodies and these bodies are so perilous and so fragile that they're always going bad. If they haven't gone bad in the past, they're going bad right now. If they aren't going bad right now, then very shortly in the future they'll go bad. That's just the way it is with the body. And yet, living beings are really pitiful; they're to be pitied because even though they constantly get these unstable bodies, they never know enough to trade them in for the stable body, so they continue to turn and flow over and over again. The Bodhisattvas see this. They see that their parents are like this, they see that their friends are like this, they see that they themselves are this way and they see that all living beings are like this too. Everyone within birth and death is constantly getting and losing these bodies. So they bring forth this wish and say, 'I want all living beings to quickly unite with the Dharma-nature body and to change their unstable bodies for stable bodies. I want them to eternally dwell in peace and security and also in happiness. In order to help make this so, I

must first change my own unstable body for a stable body. I have to go towards the good and turn my back on the dust. I have to cross myself over; only then will I be able to cross all other living beings over."

The Bodhisattvas want to be able to thoroughly penetrate all the ways that living beings are born and die and all the paths of existence, and then like great heroes, they want to forsake themselves and enter all those different paths and bring all beings to liberation. It's just for that reason--to benefit all living beings--that the Bodhisattva bring forth the resolve for Bodhi.

Dharma Masters Sure and Ch'au lecture each evening at 7 pm and twice on weekends, at 12:30 pm and 7 pm. For further information call (213) 258-6177 or (213) 483-7497.

Lectures are bi-lingual--Mandarin Chinese and English.