

Bodhi Mirror presents--
SHRAMANERA HENG HSIEN



SHRAMANERA KUO HSIEN

Nhan Le Khac comes from a family of Buddhists, all of whom have taken refuge with the Triple Jewel. His father was a physician and also a devoted Dharma Protector who was deeply influenced by the ideal of a Bodhisattva's practice.

After graduating from Petrus Ky High School in Vietnam, Sr. Kuo Hsien escaped from his homeland in 1980 and resettled in America. He obtained another high school diploma from Sparta High School in New Jersey. Then came a critical decision. He relates:

"When I was a child, I often wished to become a physician so as to be able to alleviate the pain and suffering patients undergo. At the age of fourteen, however, after reading some Sutras, I felt greatly interested in cultivation of the Way.

In 1977, my father contracted cancer and after undergoing an operation, was given not more than six months to live. My family was resigned to hopelessly watching him die a painful death. However, at that miserable time, my father remained undaunted and diligently recited the names of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas as well as their mantras (taught him by a

Dharma Master). His health improved to the point that he was completely relieved of all pain and suffering and instead was calm and happy. My father's faith in the Buddhadharma grew strong and deep during that time. He wished to be reborn in the Buddha's Pure Land and directed all his sincerity towards that goal.

"Over ten months after the operation, while surrounded by my family reciting Amitabha Buddha's name, my father peacefully died with a gentle and unforgettable smile which remained on his face for many hours. I was deeply moved and made up my mind to leave the home-life. (It was also my parents' wish that I leave the home-life and in fact they had already put me under the care of Dharma Master Yuan Te, but at that time conditions prevented me from receiving ordination.) I realized that although becoming a physician would mean I could help relieve the pain and sicknesses which afflict human beings, healing the illnesses of the body is not an ultimate Dharma. Revolving in birth and death is the greatest suffering and the most essential sickness that plagues all beings. Therefore, I made a vow before the Buddha's sharira that I would leave the home-life when I was twenty years old.

"In 1980 I arrived in America. Failing to make contact with a proper Bodhimanda or to find a Buddhist University, I decided to accord with conditions."

That was his crucial decision. He decided to enter Rutgers State University and pursue a degree in Chemical Engineering. However, just as he was about to set foot on a path that would lead him in the wrong direction, he received news of Dharma Realm Buddhist University and immediately decided to apply there. He entered as a freshman in the fall of 1981. Working hard at both study and practice, Kuo Hsien helped with construction of the Kuan Yin Hall of Ten Thousand Buddhas and other construction projects at the City. Passing through the long winter of Ch'an interspersed with Mantra and Buddha recitation sessions, he saw his vow to leave the home-life come to fruition as he was accepted as a left-home disciple of the Venerable Abbot in the spring of 1982. Kuo Hsien says,

"At DRBU, listening to the Abbot, watching his conduct and virtue, feeling his great compassion, selflessness, and kindness, I was truly happy and wished to become his disciple to cultivate the true and proper Way. There is no greater matter on earth than to meet, draw near to, learn from, and to cultivate in accord with the Dharma as an offering to the true Master of the Way--the Venerable Abbot. And in this Dharma-Ending Age, there is nothing so important as the prosperity of the Buddhadharma and the establishment of the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas as an orthodox Bodhimanda."