



Bodhi Stand

UPASIKA NG SAU YING (KUO YING)

-compiled by VBS staff

Consider your own body as being plagued with the anguish of illness. Consider the good and wise teachers as a physician king. Consider the Dharma that he speaks as good medicine. Consider his cultivation and practice as the remedy and cure.

-Avatasaka Sutra, Chapter 39 "Entering the Dharma Realm"

Over thirty years ago, when Upasika Ng Sau Ying was a young housewife in Hong Kong, she contracted a strange illness. Her body became very weak, to the point that she was bedridden almost all the time. She grew emaciated and distraught, and although her family took her to numerous western and Chinese doctors, they failed to diagnose the illness; all they did was shake their heads and say, "This is so complicated." The illness raged for four years, at the end of which the doctors counselled the young woman to make arrangements for her imminent departure from the world.

At that time Ng Sau Ying had this thought, "Since I am going to die, I should take refuge with a Buddhist monk who has virtue. Perhaps he can cross my karmic obstacles over." Not knowing anything about Buddhism, she didn't have the faintest idea with whom to take refuge. Then she had this intuition, "Whichever Dharma Master I dream of, will be the one whom I take refuge with!"

That night by her bedside she lit a stick of incense. As she sat quietly on her bed, in the deep stillness of the night, a vision appeared. From her window she saw an image of the Venerable Abbot Hua, dressed in a long black robe, seated in full lotus, and fingering prayer beads in one hand. Moreover, the state was not a dream; she had the vision when she was totally conscious and alert. The same vision appeared three nights in a row. By now Ng Sau Ying was convinced. Describing the image to her brother-in-law, she asked, "Isn't that Dharma Master Tu Lun of Western Bliss Gardens?"

Her brother-in-law was more excited than Sau Ying. "Why, yes, surely you must have conditions with him! Let me take you to his Way Place. If you ask him sincerely to help you, you might get rid of your illness."

So the next day they took a tram ride from Sau Ki Wan to Happy Valley on Hong Kong Island. Ng Sau Ying, being so weak, had to get off the tram to rest once every two stops. The entire ride--a distance of only a few miles-- took over five hours, by the end of which Sau Ying was exhausted. After they arrived at the Buddhist Lecture Hall, another Way Place established by the Abbot, Ng Sau Ying knelt before him and asked him to help her with her sickness. The Abbot told her to bow to Kuan Yin Bodhisattva and then he patted her on the crown of her head and gave her the following instructions, "Go home now and recite the Great Compassion Mantra over a glass of water each day and then drink the water. Your illness will be cured." No other verbal teaching came from the Abbot's mouth.

As if in a daze, Ng Sau Ying came away from the Lecture Hall feeling not quite sure what had transpired. In fact, on their way home, she griped to her brother-in-law, "That was strange. The Dharma Master didn't take my pulse or give me any medicine or prescriptions and didn't even give me some ashes from the censor."

Her brother-in-law comforted her, "Don't lose faith. Since the Abbot told you to recite the Great Compassion Mantra, you should learn that first and see what follows." Since Sau Ying did not know the Mantra, she started by saying it word by word. Her constitution was so frail that in the beginning she could only manage to recite the mantra in its entirety once through. But she kept up her practice so that bit by bit she progressed to reciting it twice daily, then three times, and slowly increased the number of recitations as the days passed. Eventually she committed it to memory. By that time some changes in her physical state were taking place. She was getting healthier and there was a marked improvement in her strength and endurance. She increased her recitations to forty-nine times per day and by the end of four months from the time she saw the Venerable Abbot, she was completely recovered from her illness. On the sixth day of the sixth month of that year, Ng Sau Ying took refuge with the Triple Jewel and bowed to the Venerable Abbot as her teacher. For thirty years now she has enjoyed good health and blessings derived from her devotion to the Triple Jewel. In July, 1982, she came to bow at the Sagely City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. During this visit she related her story to the Assembly.