

News From the Dharma Realm

The Dharma Wheel at Gold Wheel Temple

Continuously Turns

During the last week of July Gold Wheel Temple sponsored its first Kuan Yin Recitation Session. Members of the Sangha from the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas joined by devoted lay people travelled to Gold Wheel Temple to conduct the week-long intensive session. Gold Wheel devotees energetically participated and showed the utmost reverence for the Dharma and regard for the Sangha. During the entire session the Avatamsaka Dharma Wheel continued to turn as Dharma Masters Heng Sure and Heng Ch'au brought the timeless principles to life and applied them to our modern concerns and hopes. This bilingual lecture series continues nightly in Gold Wheel's adorned Buddhahall. What follows is an excerpt from one of Dharma Master Heng Sure's lectures.

The Seeds of Great Compassion

-by Bhikshu Heng Sure

When we hold precepts, cultivate samadhi, and open wisdom, then we can have spiritual penetrations. If we hold the precepts very clearly, we are able to obtain proper concentration and proper reception. From the power of that samadhi, our inherent wisdom can come forth. And when the wisdom is perfected, we have entered the state of spiritual penetrations--the state of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Further, spiritual penetrations are based in great vows and in the heart of great kindness and compassion. So another function of holding the precepts is to become replete with great compassion.

Holding precepts includes not taking life, and not taking life includes not eating meat. Why? Because eating meat causes one to lose the seeds of great kindness and great compassion. Fundamentally our self nature is replete with the seeds of great kindness and great compassion. But if we eat the flesh of other living beings--consume their bodies--then we destroy these seeds of compassion. How are we to know if the living beings we are eating are in fact our parents from a former life? Or our ancestors from previous times? It's not for certain that they're not. We don't know. That's the reason why we who cultivate the Bodhisattva path--any Buddhist disciples--should not eat meat.

What we eat determines what we will become. We become part of what we eat, and it becomes part of us so that we form a company as it were. That means that we take on the odor and the mannerisms of the kind of beings whose flesh we eat. Those who eat beef will take on the attitudes of cows and will smell like cows. Those who eat a lot of seafood will begin to look like fish with big bugged-out eyes and will have a fishy smell about them. It's that way with eating meat and also with eating onions, garlic, chives, scallions, and leeks. One will smell like what one eats. This is an obvious principle and I'm sure you're all clear about it. But someone may try to extend this and say, "Then if we eat vegetables do we become like them? Does our skin turn green?" That's begging the question a bit. Vegetables don't have breath and blood or any conscious awareness to speak of. We know that they do have awareness but it is minimal. So people who want to develop their seeds of great compassion would do best to eat less meat.

If you take a look at animals, the gentlest ones, such as deer, sheep, and elephants, are all vegetarian. They are not carnivores. They are easy to teach and very compliant. On the other hand look at tigers, foxes, coyotes, wild cats, and hawks. These animals are violent, cruel and terribly savage. What do they eat? Other living creatures. If you have to be around these kinds of carnivores, you naturally are on guard and sense danger just because of the kind of energy they send out. If such animals are kept in zoos they must be caged, otherwise they would roam about killing people. That kind of violent nature comes from eating meat. So it is best if Buddhist disciples eat less meat.

The reason people commit crimes and wage wars is just because they have lost the seeds of the compassionate nature. That's where it all begins. If people could only be satisfied and not be greedy for flavorful tastes, then they would be replete with the seeds of great kindness and great compassion and would not lose them. Bodhisattvas obtain spiritual penetrations because they start with a solid foundation of practice based in the precepts.



Dedication Ceremonies October 31, 1982

The adorned and majestic Mountain Gate at the entrance of the City of 10,000 Buddhas will be dedicated during the upcoming special celebrations late in October. All are invited to attend. The pure rules of the City apply to all who come to worship and participate and include: no smoking on the premises--either in-doors or outdoors and no taking of intoxicants, including alcohol and drugs. The City welcomes all who sincerely wish to seek the aid of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, to worship as an act of repentance and devotion, and to joyfully accord with the merit and virtue of the Dharma assemblies held during the course of their visit. For further information contact Gold Mountain Monastery, Gold Wheel Temple, or the City of 10,000 Buddhas. (For addresses and phone numbers see inside front cover of either English or Chinese).

Rectification of an Error

The Editor wishes to point out that the vows which appeared in "Across the Sea of Suffering in a Boat of Vows" in issue #139 (Dec. 1981) which were attributed to Kuo K'ai Owens, are actually vows made by Bhikshuni Heng Cheng.

Ten Weeks of Ch'an Begin in November.

Following the Dedication of the Mountain Gate and the Hall of Ten Thousand Buddhas, a one-week intensive Kuan Yin Bodhisattva Recitation Session will commence at the City of 10,000 Buddhas. Immediately following that session, ten weeks of Ch'an meditation will begin. Ch'an sessions at all Sino-American Buddhist Association Centers are run in strict compliance with the standards of old. Beginning at 2:45 AM with a brisk walking period, the daily schedule of walking and sitting meditation continues non-stop until midnight each evening. The noon meal (and morning and evening food for those who wish it) and the Dharma talks and Sutra lectures round out the schedule. Winter is traditionally a time for meditation in Buddhist monasteries and Dharma Realm Buddhist University adheres to this schedule as well, offering active study and practice during spring, summer, and fall, and meditation and lecture series during the winter quarter.



Dedication of the Hall of Ten Thousand Buddhas is on October 31, 1982

With Kuan Yin Bodhisattva's colossal image as the focal point and ten thousand efficacious images of golden Buddhas surrounding in the four directions and above, the Hall of Ten Thousand Buddhas is

exquisite beyond expression, pure beyond comprehension, and enduring beyond the scope of known time and space. "Designed on a heavenly blueprint" describes the entire City which so perfectly accords with the requisites of a Bodhimanda, and the Hall of Ten Thousand Buddhas provides an adorned platform for the preservation of the Dharma Pulse and the nurturing of the Wisdom Life of all who worship there. Shown here are Sangha and Laity who joined in the 1982 Buddha's Birthday Celebrations in the Hall of Ten Thousand Buddhas.



Make Amends for Killing Karma

All Buddhas compassionately provide medicines to cure all living beings' myriad illnesses. One of the major maladies that plagues humankind is greed for fine flavors which leads them to eat meat. The killing karma which results from consuming meat in one life, will have to be rectified in future lives. The killing karma amassed from limitless kalpas to now is what we must atone for at present. The best medicine to cure this malignancy in the minds and hearts of people is provided in the joyful act of liberating the living. By purchasing animals doomed to slaughter or death by experimentation and setting them free to live out their natural lifespans in suitable environments, people can imperceptibly eradicate innumerable offenses committed in their acts of eating the flesh of other living beings. Join in this life-giving ritual held each month at the City of 10,000 Buddhas and lighten your own karmic burden by rejoicing in the merit and virtue of giving other living creatures back their right to live!