

# *Bodhi Stand*

*PRESENTS: UPASIKA CH'EN SHU CH'ING*



*UPASIKA CH' EN SHU CH' ING*

"Moreover, he recollected how in past lives in his pursuit of the states of desires, he constantly harmed himself and depleted his own resources, and how totally tasteless it was. Thereupon he immediately resolved to cultivate the Buddhadharma, to increase and nurture all of his faculties, so as to attain peace and security."

AVATAMSAKA SUTRA  
Entering the Dharma Realm,  
Chapter #39

Ch'en Kuo-ching is a native of Fukien Province, China. Her father was a high government official, son of a wealthy gentry family. Since Shu Ch'ing was the only daughter, from the moment of her birth her parents doted on her and treasured her as they would a precious pearl. However, from infancy on she was attacked by many illnesses, and did not regain her health till she reached the age of eleven. By then, through an inexplicable series of causes and conditions, it was her mother's turn to come down with an acute ulcer, which caused her to be bed-ridden for months. Both Chinese and western-trained doctors could do nothing to ameliorate the situation; and so, as the young Shu

Ch'ing stood guard by her mother's bedside, attending to her every need day and night, the young child's heart became ridden with worry and anxiety.

One night she had the following dream: She had walked to an open field in the countryside. In the middle of that field was a deep well. A monk holding a horse-tail fly whisk was standing by the edge of the well. On seeing Shu Ch'ing approach, the monk embarked upon a curious ceremony. He circumambulated the well three times, and then leaned over the mouth of the well as if he was fishing. In an instant he drew back the line with a ferocious human head on the other end! The monk told Shu Ch'ing to take the head back to her mother as an offering. Shu Ch'ing followed his instructions, took the head home, and brought it before her mother, saying, "After you eat this, your sickness will be cured." Right as the words came out of her mouth, the human head turned into a piece of piping-hot steamed fish! Startled, Shu Ch'ing awakened from her dream. But strangely enough, from that day on her mother's illness did take a turn for the better and in a short time she recovered from her ulcer.

And yet, although that particular illness abated, Shu Ch'ing's mother chronically suffered from a very weak constitution. For years, the ailing woman had to have her meals brought to her bedside and needed to be spoonfed. This sorry state of affairs went on for some forty-five years, until the old woman passed away at age ninety. Shu Ch'ing was an especially devoted daughter, and not knowing better, she exhausted her efforts in preparing succulent meat dishes with the aim of bolstering her mother's strength. She fed her pigeon and other types of fowl, turtles, fish, and all manner of sea delicacies. Albeit her actions were prompted by filial piety, nonetheless, she incurred irrevocable killing karma on her mother's behalf.

After her marriage she and her husband moved to Jahor Bahru, Malaysia, where she made her home ever since. Although the family was extremely wealthy, still, they had their share of calamities and heartaches. Her late teens and early twenties saw the war in China, and the extreme suffering that her countrymen and women underwent. And so from age eighteen Shu Ch'ing became a vegetarian and acquired the habit of reciting "Namo Da Bei Kuan Shr Yin Pu Sa" (Homage to the Greatly Compassionate Kuan Yin Bodhisattva). She did this consistently, imploring the Bodhisattva to deliver her retainues from their pain. Her daily homework also consisted of reciting the Universal Door Chapter of The Dharma Flower Sutra, a practice she has faithfully kept to this very day.

In 1981, Spring, drawn by the virtuous renown of the Venerable Abbot of the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, Shu Ch'ing came from Malaysia to worship at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. Immediately she felt the impact of this pure and sagely Way Place, and was astounded that in spite all of her travels to uncountably many Bodhimandas throughout Asia, she had never seen anything like the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. During the visit she took refuge and received the Dharma name of Kuo-ch'ing, "Fruit of Respect."

Upon her return home, Shu Ch'ing was spurred to cultivate even harder. But yet, as it is said, "The Way grows a foot, and the demons grow ten feet. The Way grows ten feet, and

the demons are right on top of your head!" And so, soon she fell into the grips of a fierce demon of sickness; severe intestinal disorders necessitated four operations within a few months. The multiple surgery depleted her physical strength; she felt drained and tired. In July of 1982, the doctor advised yet another operation, which would make it the fifth within the same year. Through all this time Shu Ch'ing had not informed her teacher, the Venerable Abbot of her situation, not wishing to bother him. But now, her daughter Mei Yee called and asked for the Abbot's aid.

The Abbot said over the phone, "There's no need to undergo another operation. Come quickly to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, sincerely bow to the Buddhas, repent of your karmic offenses, and naturally you'll get better." So by the end of July Shu Ch'ing arrived with her two daughters. This visit concurred with a Kuan Yin recitation session. Whereas Shu Ch'ing couldn't even manage to get up from her bed in her own home, here at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas she felt no difficulty in rising at 3:30 a.m. like everyone else, joining in the morning recitation, sitting in Ch'an, and spending hour after hour reciting the Bodhisattva's name. Not only did she feel no weariness, she was completely energized, happy and light at heart. Because of her sincerity, she, like many other participants of that session, witnessed auspicious portents during the course of the week. For instance, once while circumambulating inside the Hall of Ten Thousand Buddhas, she saw a flood of dazzling white light streaming from the head of the magnificent statue of the thousand-handed and thousand-eyed Kuan Yin Bodhisattva. More remarkable still, after receiving the aid of the ten thousand Buddhas, and through sincere repentance and reform of her own killing karma, she discovered that within a couple of weeks her illness had spontaneously disappeared.

"This is like a person who dreams that he has fallen sick; he asks a doctor for medicine, and consequently becomes cured. But upon waking from his dream, he enlightens to the fact that originally there was no sickness, that even a state of non-sickness was not existent, how much the less the medicine! Therefore, the sickness of living beings is one illusory sickness, and the Thus Come One's medicine is just one illusory medicine."

MEDICINE MASTER  
BUDDHA REPENTANCE

Now, as her faith in the Triple Jewel increases, Shu Ch'ing is even more determined to exhaust her efforts in protecting the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas and seeing to its rapid development in the West.

"Proper belief in the Triple Jewel is medicine, Diligent cultivation of blessings and wisdom is medicine. The Six Paramitas are medicine... Changing one's faults and reforming oneself is medicine."

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