

Bodhi Stand



UPASIKA KUO MEI YEE

These Bodhisattvas themselves are remorseful that in the past they indulged in greedily seeking the five desires without weariness or satiation. Because of this, their greed, hatred, and stupidity and various other afflictions increased. "I should not do these things anymore," is their thought. They continue to reflect, "Living beings lack wisdom and give rise to afflictions. They all practice evil dharmas and are not mutually respectful or courteous, even to the point that they become vengeful enemies. There is no evil of any sort which they do not engage in will fully... The Bodhisattvas of the three periods of time all know and see this. If I continue to act like this, then I am just trying to deceive the Buddhas of the three periods of time. "

*-FLOWER ADORNMENT SUTRA
"Ten Inexhaustible Treasuries,"
Chapter 22*

From a young age, Mei Yee remembers herself spontaneously cultivating a sense of shame. She was born and raised in Malaysia, the daughter of an affluent Chinese household. Her mother Ch'en Shu Ch'ing, was a devout Buddhist for many years, and young Mei Yee came to learn about the Buddhadharma under her mother's gentle guidance and example. Mei Yee recalls an incident from her childhood. "My mother use to eat pure vegetarian food on the special days of the month. She also constantly recited the mantra of the White Robed Kuan Yin. One time, as I was kneeling behind her in the family Buddhahall, tears ran down uncontrollably from my cheeks. Why did I cry? To this day I do not really know. It was partly out of shame and remorse; I was discovering my deep affinities with the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas."

During her formative years, life was not exceptionally eventful. Mei Yee went to school, grew up and got married. And then the tide of adversity turned on her: disharmony with

family relations and inner strife led to a thousand vexations and disillusionment. The disappointment prompted her to seek rescue within the inconceivable Buddhadharma.

The Bodhisattva make the following reflection: "All living beings pursue the three poisons, and the various afflictions accordingly rage. They do not understand how to seek with determination the expedients essential for escape. I should cause them to extinguish the great blaze of afflictions and settle in the place of pure coolness of Nirvana."

He further makes the following reflection: "All living beings are covered with the heavy darkness of stupidity and the thick membrane of false views, and so they enter the dense shade of the thick forest and lose the light of wisdom. They travel on dangerous roads in the wilderness and give rise to evil views. I should cause them to obtain the unobstructed, pure wisdom eye, so they know the real mark of all dharmas and do not follow others' teachings."

AVATAMSAKA SUTRA
Ten Grounds Chapter 2nd Ground
--Leaving Filth Chapter #26

In April, 1981, when her mother made her first pilgrimage to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, Mei Yee was most anxious to ask her mother to take refuge with the Venerable Abbot on her behalf. In December, 1982, a delegation from SABA and DRBU under the Venerable Abbot's leadership, toured many parts of South East Asia. That was the first time Mei Yee got to bow personally to her teacher. At that time an unusual sensation took over; Mei Yee recalls, "I was overwhelmed by the Abbot's awesome demeanor. It was the strangest mixture of utmost respect and fear. The same feeling would overcome me even when I gazed at the Abbot's picture. The awe sometimes got so intense that it drove me to agitation...I couldn't understand why..." Although on many occasions she was in close proximity with the Abbot, she never dared to go up on her own to seek his counsel.

The delegation toured different parts of Malaysia for about a month. On the final day before the group's departure for the United States, Mei Yee, her mother and many devotees went to the International Airport, Singapore, to see the delegation off. Knowing that this was her last chance to seek the Abbot's aid--in twenty minutes he was going to get up on the plane--Mei Yee summoned all of her courage and knelt before the Abbot.

"Will Shih Fu please help me? This disciple must have some very heavy karmic obstacles. I'm often afraid at the mere sight of Shih Fu, yet in my heart I cherish only the highest esteem for my teacher."

The Abbot smiled gently at her, and asked "Have you done any killing in this life?"

The question pierced Mei Yee to the quick. She stuttered, "Uugh...uugh...Why yes; in 1976, I had an abortion."

The Abbot answered, "Therein lies your problem. The little infant's ghost is still haunting you. It's resentful that you have deprived it of a chance to be born a human being. That's the cause of your agitation."

"No wonder," Mei Yee exclaimed. "I've been experiencing bouts of depression and melancholy for upwards of five years, and I never made the connection..."

The Abbot went on to say, "The greatest hurt that people can inflict upon their fellow beings is to deprive them of their birthright. In this modern society people engage in promiscuity and callously take life. Many women lobby for the rights to free abortion, all in the name of protecting their individual "freedom." And the state, the doctors, the politicians, even religious leaders--now endorse it, so as to get on the good side of the majority. But unbeknownst to them, all this killing is brewing a big cloud of black, hateful energy that currently envelopes our world and threatens to annihilate the entire human species. All those dead babies harbor deep resentment at being killed inside their mothers' wombs. Their spirits demand repayment for such cruel injustice done unto them and they'll give you no peace."

"I never knew..." Mei Yee was as if slowly waking up from a nightmare.

"Have no fear," the Abbot in his serene composure consoled her, "Since you've taken refuge with the Triple Jewel, I will rely on the spiritual power of the Triple Jewel to take across you karmic obstacles so they will be reborn in the Pure Land. From now on you should bring forth a true sense of shame and remorse, repent of and reform your past actions and spare no effort to make amends for the future by planting blessings and doing good deeds."

Whereupon the Abbot briefly intoned mantras and crossed over the infantile ghost. In a few more minutes the delegation was on its way back to America, but a sense of deep peace settled in on Mei Yee after that interchange.

"I felt instantly cooler, lighter, as if a heavy umbrage had been lifted."

By drawing near a Good Knowing Advisor, I can heroically and diligently cultivate the path of All-wisdom. By drawing near a Good Knowing Advisor, I can quickly bring forth the sea of all vows... By drawing near a Good Knowing Advisor, I can don the armor of vigor, and within a single dust mote proclaim the Dharma so that its sounds permeates the Dharma Realm.

AVATAMSAKA SUTRA
Entering the Dharma
Realm Chapter #39

In July, 1982, Mei Yee and her younger sister accompanied their mother to visit the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. They attended the Kuan Yin Bodhisattva session that was in progress and everyday participated in the chanting and ceremonies, rising at 3:30 every

morning and not retiring till 11:00 at night. For the two and more weeks she stayed at the City, she was immersed in the pure, invigorating spirit of the holy Way-place. Her sincere repentance and continuous recitation of the Bodhisattva's name evoked the following response:

"One night while I was asleep I felt a being standing by my bed. His vibrations were gentle and protective. On consulting the Abbot, he said it was a Bodhisattva who had come to stand watch over me."

"One day during the session when I was circumambulating in the Buddhahall, I suddenly saw a very sharp white light issuing forth from the left side of the image of the thousand handed and thousand eyed Kuan Yin Bodhisattva."

"In order to facilitate my mindfulness in reciting 'Namo Kuan Shih Yin Pu Sa' (Homage to the Bodhisattva Who Contemplates the World Sounds), I would try to visualize each of the characters that made up the chant. Whenever I meditated on the syllable '*Shr*'(world"), another word '*shr*' would appear, (at all times.) Whenever I meditated on the syllable '*Yin*,' (sound) another word '*Nien*' (recite) would appear in its place. Later I asked the Abbot whether this was an indication from the Bodhisattva that I should at all times recite his name. The Abbot nodded his head in agreement.

"A dream came to me one night during the session. I was approaching the red and golden iron gates at the entrance of the City. Right in front of the gates stood a left-home person. It could have been a Bhikshu or a Bhikshuni. This member of the Sangha smiled courteously and greeted me with a half bow. In the dream I couldn't see myself, but I smiled back and returned the greeting, at the same time feeling that I couldn't possibly stand to receive such a gesture of courtesy from a left-home person. Later on I reported my dream to the Abbot. He told me that the left-home person was just myself--my original face. "On the nineteenth day of the sixth lunar month, that is, the day of Kuan Yin Bodhisattva's Accomplishment of the Way, I was circumambulating outdoors with the assembly, as we came across a small pathway I noticed a piece of crimson cloud in the sky. The cloud floated over some treetops, then glided gracefully back and forth right above where we were walking. The unusual thing is that, at the time, aside from that red cloud hovering above our heads, the rest of the sky was entirely clear.

"During lunch on the same day, as the Abbot and the great assembly were eating in the dining hall, I went to Medicine Master Buddha Hall in the adjacent building, to make some vows before Earth Store Bodhisattva. As I was kneeling and bowing, the image of the Abbot appeared next to the Bodhisattva's statue. His body was lit in a translucent, pale gold, and his face was suffused with a healthy red glow. He was the very embodiment of compassion, as he beamed right at me. On the second day of the Kuan Yin session, after morning recitation I went back to my quarters. Some type of grief over former wrongs overtook me. Beside myself with pangs of remorse and longing, I wrote a couple of verses, which can't even make the 'grade' of verses. Nonetheless, I now submit them before the surveillance of the Great Assembly:

Painfully I'm aware that this result is
the outcome of former causes.
Before the Buddhas I make haste to repent
and reform.
Not knowing to smash the trap of the
five skandhas,
I pray that the Buddhas will compassionately
lead me out of my confusion.

Like a lone seagull, having lost its way,
Frequently fearful and petrified--I've
been tossed about by karma's wind.
Sincerely I implore Kuan Yin and Amitabha
To salvage my heart with precepts,
samadhi, and wisdom.