

The Bodhi Stand Presents



Upasaka Kuo Hai
-compiled by VBS staff

Disciples should seek out a "knowing Master" and stay near him for a long time. One should not leave one's master too soon. If one should part from one's master, one should remember his instructions. One must not give rein to one's passions, act on one's own will, or be sucked into the stream of mundane life so one does improper things.

-from RULES OF DEPARTMENT

In the fall of 1982, Kuo Hai sought out a "knowing Master" when he came with a delegation from Malaysia to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. After joining in the weeks of celebration that surrounded the Opening of the Gate and the Dedication of the Ten Thousand Buddhas, Kuo Hai remained at the Bodhimanda when the rest of the delegation returned home.

Joining the Laity Training Program at the City, he launched into the rigorous daily schedule of work and worship, study and practice, and learning and teaching. Passing through the ten-week Ch'an session Kuo Hai became familiar with the rules of the hall, the most fundamental of which is:

One should get on and off the Ch'an bench carefully, without disturbing one's neighbor.

Note: whenever listening to the Dharma, one should hear it, think well upon it, and then cultivate it.

-from RULES OF DEPARTMENT

Every day, Kuo Hai helps with the work it takes to keep a large Way-place running smoothly. He comments, "Much of the day is devoted to maintaining the grounds and buildings, constructing new halls, running errands, and assisting in all sorts of ways with the work. Some people might say these

kinds of work are mundane-- worldly pursuits that detract from cultivation and that aren't really appropriate for the life of a cultivator, but I don't agree with that view. Work for the Bodhimanda is service to the Buddhas, the Dharma, and the Sangha. It is an important form of protecting the Triple Jewel and at the same time, we who protect reap benefits by planting blessings, developing our good roots, and getting rid of our bad karma. Besides, in the daily work there is much to be learned that can apply directly to cultivation. In fact, the work *is* cultivation, for if we have that attitude, then everything we do in the Way-place is part of our practice and our contribution." As with the other aspects of monastic life, even work and running errands have their guidelines:

One should be thrifty with the articles of the Sangha and follow the manager's instructions without disobedience or objection.
-from RULES OF DEPARTMENT

How fortunate to have an opportunity to live in a pure Way-place when one is young and able-bodied! What a rare chance in the world it is to find a "knowing Master" and have the opportunity to be guided on the Proper Path! How deep the gratitude we feel for the gift of Dharma continually bestowed by a compassionate teacher!

When one is young and one's precepts are not firmly established, one should not travel far. If one must travel, one should not go with unwholesome companions. One should travel seeking a master and searching for the Way, determined to resolve the matter of birth and death.
-from RULES OF DEPARTMENT