

The Bodhi Stand Presents



BODHI STAND INTRODUCES UPASIKA CINDY TAN

"You should illumine the city of your mind, by universally entering all Buddhas' Way Places, and listening to and receiving the Dharma of Prajna Paramita. You should increase the benefits of the city of your mind by universally gathering in all Buddhas' paths of expedients."

AVATAMSAKA SUTRA
Entering the Dharma Realm
Chapter 39

Cindy Tan was born and raised in Malaysia. In Malaysia, in 1979, she first heard of The City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. Cindy and her husband Stephen set out for America to make a new life for themselves. As they began their journey to America, Cindy made her husband promise to take her to pay homage to the holy City of Ten Thousand Buddhas when they arrived in California. This they did, and they also took refuge with the Venerable Abbot there, and became faithful disciples.

In May, 1981, a group of over thirty devotees from Gold Wheel Monastery, the affiliate of the Sino American Buddhist Association based in Los Angeles, made a pilgrimage to the sagely city of Ten Thousand Buddhas. They requested Dharma Masters Heng Sure and Heng Ch'au, the two monks who have been doing Three Steps, One Bow, come to the Los Angeles metropolis to turn the great Dharma Wheel of the *FLOWER ADORNMENT SUTRA*. Cindy and her husband were part of that delegation. Because their request was extremely sincere, the two Dharma Masters consented.

Thereupon the Avatamsaka Dharma Assembly began, and continues non-stop. Every night at Gold Wheel Monastery, (twice during weekends), the "Inconceivable Sutra of the Dharma Realm"--the *FLOWER ADORNMENT SUTRA*—is lectured in both English and

Zhung Wen, to the delight of the group of dedicated listeners. Cindy and Stephen rarely miss a Dharma lecture. Why? "Because the Dharma is hard to meet, and extremely wonderful. Having encountered it in this life, I don't want to ever neglect an opportunity to hear it," says Cindy.

Why would an affluent young couple believe so devoutly in Buddhism? "Because everything out in the world, all the glory and all the glitter, is not real. At the moment of death, only our karma follows us, haunting us like a shadow. The rest is all fake," says Cindy. She seems to understand the principles of impermanance. "Therefore, before it's my time to go, I want to make sure that I make my resolve solid through practice, so that I can be assured rebirth in the Pure Land where I will constantly get to hear the Dharma. I want to be a protector of the Eternally Dwelling Triple Jewel."

At Gold Wheel Monastery, as well as in other Sino American Buddhist Association centers—in San Francisco, and Seattle, many young cosmopolitan laypeople—American, English, Chinese, Vietnamese, Malaysian, and other nationalities, are deeply moved when they encounter the Proper Dharma, and eagerly learn how to be protectors and cultivators.

"You should enlarge the city of your mind, by opening the light of all Buddhas' wisdom. You should skillfully repair the city of your mind, by listening to and receiving the Dharma spoken by all Buddhas...You should enrich and reinforce the city of your mind, by accumulating a great collection of blessings and virtue that pervades the Dharma Realm."

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Cindy says, "As a lay disciple of the Buddha there are so many rules of deportment to learn—how to act and how not to act--in every situation. This requires a genuine transformation from the inside, not just an external change on a superficial level. Everything about the Buddhadharmas works on the mindground. If you are willing to swallow the medicine, the Dharma works on the psyche and permeates the spirit; it effects a change in the nature which is wonderful beyond description. It requires a complete transformation of the person, a type of rebirth. When you come down to it, it's just chasing out the elements of fighting, greed, seeking, selfishness, and self-seeking in our hearts. Being able to hold to those Five Principles is being a good disciple of the Buddha."