

# *The Sagely City of Ten Thousand Buddhas: Advantages and Expectations*

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I would like to discuss some of my observations about and expectations for the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. The advantages that the City presently enjoys can be divided into three aspects: timing, location, and the harmony of people.

The first advantage, "timing," refers to external conditions. Buddhism came to China from India and now Buddhism is coming from China to the West. The Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are sparing no suffering or hardship; they have reversed their boats of compassion and come back to this world, to America, to establish Way-Places and to teach and transform living beings. They want to help all beings leave suffering and attain bliss. Due to the kind protection of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, the work of propagating the Dharma is progressing here.

The second advantage is "location." Everyone knows that America is a large nation that enjoys peace, security, democracy, and freedom. People here enjoy freedom of religious practice and will not encounter external disturbances or be curtailed by the government. You may not realize how important this is, but I do. It's not at all easy to find such a secure and pure place to cultivate in. The world is filled with wars, strife, starvation, and terror. It is not possible to cultivate with ease under such circumstances.

The third and most important advantage at the City is the harmony of people. This aspect determines the success or failure of any undertaking. The City of Ten Thousand Buddhas is blessed with this most significant advantage. The Buddhas and Bodhisattvas guard and protect people who come to practice here and good and wise advisors of lofty virtue act as our teachers. We can learn from virtuous ones who forget themselves for the sake of others; who are concerned and protective of everyone; and who can nourish each person in the appropriate way. How fortunate we are! A truly good teacher is like a compassionate father to us all.

People who sincerely want to cultivate, leave the home-life here at the City and are willing to undergo suffering in order to purify themselves and to uncover their pure and wholesome minds. Such a commitment is not easy to make for people of any nationality and especially for Americans. Although the City is blessed with these three efficacious advantages, we have to understand that if we wish to propagate Buddhism and to universally take living beings across, we cannot stop where we are. We must go forward. Such work is a great responsibility. We should shoulder the work and strive to bring it to fulfillment. Surely it is the hope of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas that we will do so. Although it is a big job, we must resolve to accomplish our aim. If a road has already been traversed by others, then it is very easy to walk on the same beaten track. But when we are making a new road, the way is full of pitfalls. We have to be prepared as we begin such a difficult undertaking. If we recognize the challenge, then even if we encounter obstacles along the way, we will have the faith to counteract them. If we are not prepared for the rigors of the task ahead of us, but only rely on our emotions to do things, then we will not stand when the tests come up. Although tests are bitter, they are very valuable. When we go through a test it is like when gold is put in a furnace to be smelted. It is said that pure gold does not fear the fire.

Once we are internally prepared for our undertaking, we must fortify ourselves externally in the appropriate ways. We should develop steadfast patience and a willingness to work hard. We should deeply enter the Sutra store so as to develop sea-like wisdom. By a combination of these external and internal conditions, we will lay a solid foundation. For more than a decade now, you have been able to hear lectures on the Sutras. This has helped build a firm foundation for us. *W i t h t h a t* solid foundation and with the three advantages of timing, location, and the harmony of people, we most surely will

succeed in our undertaking.

I'd like to mention more about the advantage of the harmony of people, especially with regard to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. There are men and women, young and old people here and each of us is an individual. Nonetheless, we also form a single unit. We should become so united that we resemble a heavenly garment--seamless and of one piece. If we can be that harmonious, then the heavenly demons and externalists will have no means to creep in. To guard the inside is even more important. If we entertain many polluted thoughts, then we still are leaving holes open for the demons to get in. In all places and at all times we should use great wisdom and great courage. Wisdom brings brightness. By courage, I'm not referring to emotion, but rather to a strength that stems from having built a firm foundation. We should be united as one, shine forth with the light of wisdom, and emit the lion's roar!

Each of us should hold fast to two precious things: sincerity and purity. Equipped with these two jewels, we will be able to win in every battle and overcome every obstacle. By going to "battle," I mean overcoming the deviant forces of the heavenly demons and externalists. We want them to change for the good. To do this we should bring forth minds of kindness and use expedients as our means. As those of old said,

When sincerity reaches its extreme,  
Even metal and stone open up.

"Purity" means having no outflows and therein lies the direct path to Buddhahood. We should each cherish these two jewels and unceasingly refine them. They are the very basis for success in our work, and the key to use in propagating the Buddhadharma. All of us should bring forth our individual talents and put down our anxieties and fears. Let us put down our small selves and work for the sake of all beings. In that way we will surely reach our goal.