

# *The Bodhi Mirror*



*Elder Dharma Master Yung Sying*

Dharma Master Yung Sying (Eternally Awakened 永惺法師) is president of the Hong Kong Bodhi Siksa Society, Vice-President of the Hong Kong Buddhist Sangha Association, and Abbot of Western Monastery. For several decades, he has been dedicated to education and humanitarian work. He has set up schools on many different levels from primary through university. Aside from being founder and managing director of a home for the aged, and a Buddhist hospital, he is also director of the Board of Trustees of the Hong Kong Buddhist College, as well as various other public colleges in Hong Kong.

The following is an excerpt of an interview with the Dharma Master in New York, during the executive committee of the World Buddhist Sangha Council, December, 1987.

VBS: The Dharma Master has had many years of experience with Buddhist education in Hong Kong. Would you like to tell us a bit about your current work?

Dharma Master Yung Sying: There are too few young Sangha members who are motivated to study the Dharma. For the most part people are ignoring Buddhist Studies and directing their attention elsewhere. If left-home people do not understand the Buddhadharmā, how can they go out to propagate Buddhism? We are adding new material to the Buddhist Studies program in our colleges and trying to generate renewed interest.

VBS: What is the set-up of the Buddhist college in Hong Kong?

Dharma Master Yung Sying: The Hong Kong Buddhist College offers a general course of studies, as well as a Graduate Studies program. The University level offers regular courses—not just Buddhist—and is open to the general public. The Graduate Studies Program, which offers M.A. and Ph.D.'s, has a Culture Department and a Philosophy Department. Buddhist Studies comes under the Eastern Philosophy Department. The regular University has five hundred enrollees, of which 150 are Sangha members. There are 70 graduate students, eighteen of whom are Buddhist monks and nuns. There are seminars on the Tyan Tai (Teaching School), Hwa Yan Sect, and the Consciousness-Only School. In order to obtain accreditation from the government, our program cooperates with the Taiwan Buddhist Studies Program. Recruiting qualified university staff for Buddhist Studies is not easy. Instructors must have Ph.D.'s from recognized universities in order to teach at the graduate level. Our Association also runs a regular high school, which is open to the general public.

VBS: What is your hope for the proposed World Buddhist Sangha Council (WBSC)'s Buddhist University?

Dharma Master Yung Sying: I made the suggestion at the Fourth Sangha Council that in order to "set up the platform" so to speak, we should begin with what now exists. For instance there is a Buddhist University in Ceylon, and Universities in other countries also have Buddhist Studies Programs. We should establish a WBSC curriculum in the Universities of as many countries as possible, with the Council representatives in each respective country administrating the courses. In that way we will begin to actually establish University Programs designed by the Council.

We can include language study and all the administrative tasks of staffing, financing, and so forth can be handled locally. Then, having gained experience and practical application, in the future we can move towards establishing a World Buddhist Sangha Council Buddhist University.

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Dharma Master Yung Sying is also founder and chairman of the Buddhist Association of Texas, with its headquarters in Buddha Light Monastery, in Houston. A growing number of laity are attending the weekly Dharma lectures and other Dharma functions under the guidance of the resident Dharma Masters there.