

The Bodhi Mirror



Introducing Shramaneri Heng Dzung 沙彌尼 恒宗

Shramaneri Heng Dzung (恒宗 Dharma name Gwo Ling 果領) had to undergo many hardships and tests in her life before she encountered the Buddhadharma. However, she had a good mother who taught her to recite "Namo Gwan Shr Yin Bodhisattva," and so although in her youth she did not get a chance to listen to the Sutras or study the Dharma seriously, Heng Dzung always held the Bodhisattva's name. Raised and educated in Hong Kong, Heng Dzung moved to Canada as a young woman. Her husband was an immigrant, and together the couple worked very hard and raised five children. Through the many depressing moments in her life, Gwan Yin Bodhisattva came to her aid. One time during a storm, the Bodhisattva saved her life by waking her up. Heng Dzung woke up in the nick of time to carry her sleeping young children outside before the whole side of the building caved in.

In July, five years ago, she walked by Gold Buddha Monastery in Vancouver and stepped inside to hear the Dharma for the first time. The *Sixth Patriarch Sutra* was being lectured. There was an immediate connection in her mind. From that time on Heng Dzung could not stop herself from going back to the temple every day.

She helped clean and do other chores, and joined as well in the Sutra recitation and chanting. The more she went to the monastery, the cleaner and happier her heart felt. She took refuge with the Triple Jewel and was given the Dharma name Gwo Ling.

The Sutra of the Past Vows of Earth Store Bodhisattva had a tremendous impact on Heng Dzung. When she read about how the Brahman woman Bright Eyes was willing to sacrifice her own life to save her mother from the hells, Heng Dzung remembered how she had promised her own mother to take care of her. However, her mother had passed away in Hong Kong before Heng Dzung had had the chance to attend upon her. The feeling of regret haunted Heng Dzung for many years. The remorse she experienced for not having repaid her parents' kindness was one of the main reasons for her wish to leave the home-life. She wanted to make up for what she had failed to do as a daughter. Another reason, more important yet, was that she wished to repay the kindness of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Not only has she vowed to leave the home-life in this life, she vows to be a left-home person every life. "I will not be greedy for wealth, honor, or luxury. Instead I will always follow the Buddhas in study, and teach and transform living beings."

When she was working as a hotel maid in Vancouver, Heng Dzung used to donate her monthly earnings to the temple. She said, "It felt much lighter to be rid of the three poisons of greed, anger, and stupidity. I felt so relieved to put down past ties of enmity and simply let those feelings of resentment go away. In my youth, I ate the flesh of many animals, including frogs, snails, and even dogs. When I first came to cultivate at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, those creatures came looking for me at night. I continue to repent of past offenses I committed out of ignorance. I am truly sorry and want to make up for the damage I have done."

In September, 1988, when conditions ripened, the Venerable Master Hua accepted Gwo Ling's request to leave the home-life. He gave her the name Heng Dzung, "Constant Principle; Leader," with the exhortation, "You should always be a good leader, an inspiring model for others."

Heng Dzung feels the way she can best contribute to cleaning the Way-place is by purifying her own mind. She is dedicated to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas and says, "The essence of cultivation is to do away with the small self—the ego, and start thinking in terms of the big picture. We should all honor the Six Principles, and not render lip service only. The work has to truly be done. We have to put it into practice. This is the point on which I constantly examine myself. I don't want to be lazy. I want to work very hard and never retreat, until all living beings are taken across to enlightenment."