

The Bodhi Stand



Introducing Upasaka Sam Jinq

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Sam Jinq is typical of a new breed of Buddhists coming up in America: young, successful professionals in the field of commerce or technology who turn, despite their knowledge of the material world, to Buddhism for a more ultimate treatment of reality.

Schooled in Taiwan where he obtained his Bachelor of Science degree in Tatung Institute of Technology, Sam completed his Masters degree in Electronical Engineering at the University of Mexico in 1981. Working as a Senior Reliability Engineer in the Silicon Valley, he lives a comfortable life with his wife, an accountant, and their young daughter.

A couple of years ago Sam turned to Buddhism. Many questions that had puzzled him and which were left hanging in science were now answered in page after page in the Sutra he was studying. Sam found that some of the Buddhist Sutras, for example, the SHURANGAMA SUTRA and the AVATAMSAKA (FLOWER ADORNMENT) SUTRA reveal states of the Buddha's infinite wisdom of which the forefront of science has but an inkling. He rejoiced that finally he had discovered a clear-cut, no-nonsense universal teaching which exposes the human mind to the realm beyond ordinary sensual perception.

Sam used to suffer from a terrible temper. He relates, "When I first met the Venerable Master Hua, I was deadly scared of him. Later on I realized it was not me, but the bad beings inside my mind—my anger, greed, and contentiousness—which were afraid of the Master. The Venerable Master is the embodiment of compassion, and so anyone who keeps on the bright and open path need not be afraid of him. But his righteous energy instilled awe in the dark, shadowy parts of my psyche. Therefore, I have had to change my temper. Daily there is self-examination and transformation. Even my colleagues notice that I am very different from before. I am no longer scared. I am a much happier person because I can accept myself for what I am."

Sam and his family became vegetarian. Their lifestyle changed as they tried to comply with the rules of pure living for Buddhist lay disciples. The changes did not go unnoticed. "My boss asked me why I chose Buddhism. I gave him Buddhist books to read. My colleagues wondered if there was any contradiction between my profession and the age-old religious tradition. They didn't understand why I bowed to an elder Buddhist monk as my teacher. They were afraid that I was succumbing to some form of hero worship."

And this is what Sam told his friends, "This is not a matter of hero worship. All my life I have been a seeker of truth. I am bowing to the truth that my teacher represents. Besides, there is no discrepancy between technology and religion. It's a matter of achieving a working balance between the two. We should not allow science to usurp the position of religion and the wisdom-teachings as the sole guide for human action. Otherwise technology will monopolize the human condition, to the ill fortune of mankind. Scientific progress can be used to benefit living beings, not harm and destroy them, only if it is guided by wisdom grounded in ethics and morality."

Sam was a member of the Dharma Realm Buddhist University Dharma propagation delegation which traveled with the Venerable Master throughout Asia in Winter, 1988. At present, he is an active member of the San Jose Lay Buddhist Association which holds classes in Buddhism every Sunday. He and his wife are frequent visitors at Gold Mountain Monastery and the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas.