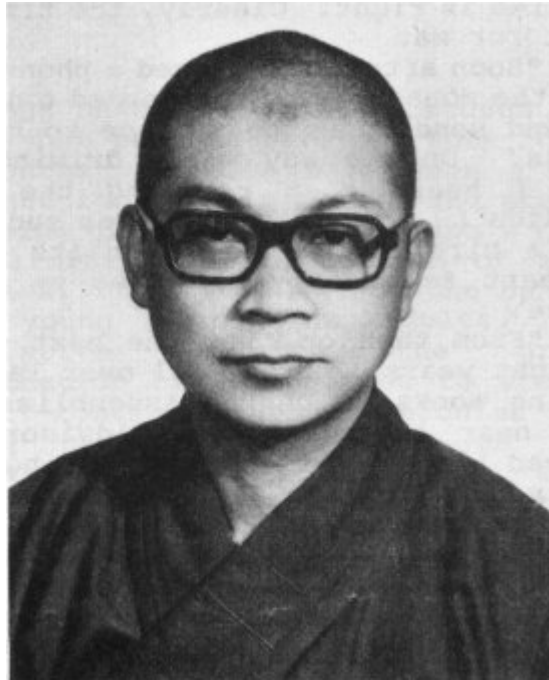


The Bodhi Mirror



Venerable Dharma Master Jen Yi

Abbot of Bau Jye Chan Monastery

When the Dharma Realm Buddhist Association's Asian Delegation went to Taiwan on October 9, 1989 to convene the Gwan Yin Bodhisattva Dharma Assembly for Protecting the Nation and Quelling Disasters, Dharma Master Jen Yi (True Unity), Abbot of Bau Jye (Jewelled Cord) Chan Monastery, met them at the airport and hosted the Dharma Assembly at the beginning and conclusion of their visit.

The following is a brief biography of Dharma Master Jen Yi, describing the circumstances surrounding his leaving the home life.

Dharma Master Jen Yi was born in Jya Yi, Taiwan in 1937. He took refuge with the Venerable Gwang Chyn (廣欽老和尚 Vast Respect) at Sun-Moon Cave when he was only fourteen years old. In the following two decades, he pursued a successful career as a construction manager. He often bowed to Gwan Yin Bodhisattva but had no other interest in cultivation of the Dharma.

At age thirty-five he returned to Sun-Moon Cave. Venerable Gwang Chyn remembered him and said to him, "Your affinities with the mundane world are nearly finished. It's time for you to draw near and cultivate the Buddhadharma."

"That's not possible! I'm in the prime of life. How could I cultivate the Way?" These

were my immediate thoughts after hearing his words,"says Dharma Master Jen Yi."But a true Good Advisor knows one's causes and conditions and even the impossible becomes possible when the time is right. Clearly, the time was right for me.

"Soon after, I received a phone call from the monastery. They needed a driver to send some monks to a place to recite Sutras. On the way while driving the car, I heard them reciting the Pure Melodies (梵唄) and it was suddenly like a bird flying free from its cage. My heart felt happy and free as never before.

"From then on, for the next seven or eight years, I drove all over Taiwan, sending monks to Dharma Assemblies. I drew near to every good Advisor and enjoyed listening to their teachings and cultivating at their Way-places. As soon as I returned home my heart felt stifled and unhappy. I used to smoke two packs of cigarettes a day, but now, effortlessly, I was able to put them down. Friends would offer me a smoke and I refused every time--I lost all interest in the world. I paid no attention to my business and didn't even bother to collect my bills. No one could find me at the office, because I was always driving to this or that monastery, making offerings to the Triple Jewel.

"One evening I heard the Venerable Yen Pei discussing the Twelve Links of Conditioned Arising (十二因緣) and it was as if a club hit me over the head--I suddenly woke up and saw through the emptiness and the impermanence of the world. At that moment I resolved to leave the home life.

"Dharma Master Jen Gwang (真光法師) took me to Bay Jye Chan Monastery (Jewelled Cord 寶纈禪寺) for the first time, and I saw that the Buddha images were still unfinished, so I made a contribution to support the monastery.

"I had already received the name Chwan Kai (傳凱 Transmit Victory) from Venerable Gwang Chyn and was ready to leave home at his monastery, Cheng Tyan Sz (承天寺 Heavenly Monastery).

"Just then a group of fellow laymen took me to the hospital to see the Venerable Abbot of Bau Jye Monastery, Venerable Tai An (泰安老和尚 Great Peace) who was ill. He told me, If you don't leave home at Jewelled Cord Monastery. I won't ever be able to rest in peace (死不瞑目).

"Venerable Tai An soon afterwards recovered his health and returned to the monastery. His Dharmaprotectors told me that Jewelled Cord Monastery needed a Bhikshu to direct the nuns and novices in their cultivation and to manage the monastery's affairs.

"One day I saw the Abbot in the Buddha-hall and made three bows in respect. He said, 'With your first bow, you must resolve to leave home at Bau Jye Monastery. With your second bow you must Sangha,' and so on, and so on. The longer he talked the tighter

grew the bonds around my shoulders, so there was no way I couldn't obey his instructions, and leave home there."

Master Jen Yi returned to the Venerable Gwang Chyn to explain why he could not leave home at Heavenly Monastery as planned."Your affinities are there at Bau Jye Monastery. You should bear these responsibilities now for the Proper Dharma. If you really cultivate the Spiritual Path, even though you may not be next to me, you will certainly see me again. If you don't really cultivate, then even though you are by my side, you are still quite far from me."

Dharma Master Jen Yi left home in 1980 and took the full precepts in 1983 at Lin Ji Monastery. From that time on Dharma Master Jen Yi seldom left his monastery, preferring to stay inside and cultivate, and avoid fraternizing and social contact."I want only to draw near true Good Advisors and do what is necessary to protect the Proper Dharma. That is why I came out to welcome the Venerable Master Hua and his delegation on their visit this year to Taiwan. Lay people who know me were very surprised that I was so active in support of the Dharma Realm Buddhist University's Delegation, contrary to my custom. I see now that there are some very special affinities moving me to draw near to the Venerable Hua, and so I am following this road to make the Proper Dharma flourish and grow great in the world."