

The Bodhi Mirror



Introducing Bhikshuni Yung Yi

From her childhood, Dharma Master Yung Yi (永依法師 "Eternal Place of Reliance") was aware of the pain and suffering of human existence. As she grew up, sickness and suicide in her family forced her to come face to face with the issues of birth and death. As a filial daughter, her heart ached as she witnessed her aging mother confined to bed, wracked with pain from a serious illness. Knowing her parent's deep kindness, how could she repay such a profound debt? This matter perplexed her to no end.

One day, some five years ago, she was walking on the road after work when she came upon a sign that read, "Solve your problems by understanding the law of cause and effect of the three periods of time." She went up to the stall and asked for some advice. The man minding the stall explained to her the causes and conditions of her mother's past karma that led to the suffering of her present life. And then he added, "When one child sets forth from the home-life, nine generations of ancestors are taken up to heaven."

He also said, "Gwan Yin Bodhisattva has been watching over you for a very long time."

Shaken by this experience, and seized with the wish to bring relief to her suffering parents, Yung Yi went to Yung Ping Monastery in the city of Jung Li, her hometown, and had her head shaved. That was in 1984.

After her ordination as a Buddhist nun, Dharma Master Yung Yi stayed at monasteries in Taiwan and assumed a variety of responsibilities. At Yung Ping Monastery, she led the assembly in chanting and other Buddhist rituals (1984-1985). At Bodhi Monastery (Tainan), she was a supervisor of the training program for younger nuns (1985-1987). Experienced in the rites and regulations of the Mahayana tradition, Dharma Master Yung Yi has mastered the awesome deportment of a member of the Sangha, and she strictly follows the Vinaya, the elaborate ethical and moral code prescribed for monastics seriously committed to a pure religious profession. At Lotus Flower Monastery (Taipei) 1988, she was wei no (cantor) and led the religious community in repentance ceremonies and devotional services for the sick and dead.

When the Venerable Master Hsuan Hua and his delegation visited Taiwan in October 1988, Dharma Master Yung Yi, like many other members of the Buddhist clergy, found inspiration and new hope in the Venerable Master's message. From December 1988 to July 1989, Dharma Master Yung Yi stayed at Proper Dharma Buddhist Academy, the Taiwan branch of Dharma Realm Buddhist Association. There she taught the younger nuns the rules of comportment, how to chant, and how to play the Dharma instruments.

Well trained in Buddhist scriptures, especially in the doctrines of the Consciousness Only (Vijnanavadin) School, she lectures on the Sutras and classical treatises of that School, elucidating the profound theories and making them understandable to a modern audience.

Realizing the need for upright exemplars of moral conduct in the Buddhist clergy, Dharma Master Yung Yi exhorts herself to maintain the precepts of Buddhism and at all times and in all places act as a model for others. Dharma Master Yung Yi finds the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas a very pure place for spiritual cultivation. "Here there is a chance for the name and reality to match. That is, one can call oneself a Buddhist monk or nun and be genuinely involved in the duties of the Buddhist clergy. There is unlimited potential for spiritual growth and expansion."

