

Bodhi Mirror



Bhikshuni Gwang Jye

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Bhikshuni Gwang Jye states, "If one doesn't encounter situations, one won't seek true principle; one won't want to leave home." During her school age years in Singapore, she saw people fighting with each other, and she wished for a more meaningful life. As an educated person, she saw her parents bowing to the Buddha as superstitious. Yet she believed that there was more to Buddhism, that if she had a more profound knowledge of Buddhism, she could understand why the world was not peaceful.

While she was in her twenties, she devoted herself to attending Buddhist temples and seeking true principle. She didn't know how to begin cultivating, so, as she says, "I blindly followed what people told me to do." As she read Buddhist literature, she gained a better understanding of Buddhism and what it means to cultivate. Then she longed to find a Good Knowing Advisor and to leave the home-life.

She read a quote from Jwun Ti Bodhisattva, "If you want to leave home, you must establish merit and virtue, do three thousand good deeds, bow to the Buddha, and uphold mantras. You should not commit offenses; you should recite the Buddha's name." She often had dreams of being with many Bhikshus and Bhikshunis, and of being told, "If one leaves the home-life, the merit and virtue is limitless and boundless." Of that time, she says, "The only thing I knew was how to visit many Buddhist associations where I could draw near left-home people and vegetarian lay people who lived in temples." She also cultivated at home.

When a delegation from the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas went to Singapore, she asked the Venerable Master for permission to leave home. He replied, "You haven't yet cut off

desire. You should recite the Great Compassion Mantra 108 times every day." She felt, however, that the Great Compassion Mantra was too long, and so she recited the Jwun Ti Mantra instead.

In a dream, she saw many people welcoming a monk who was getting off an airplane. She didn't know who he was, but someone said, "Why don't you quickly bow to him?"

Later she went to a temple and saw the monk from her dream. There were many people around him, but he asked her who she was and where she was from, and he asked her to visit his temple.

One day she went to see him and asked him why he had invited her. He explained that he was writing a commentary and needed an attendant. His current attendant was old, and he needed someone younger.

After serving her teacher for several years, her Dharma brother encouraged her to leave the home-life. Although that was exactly what she had longed to do for many years, now that she had the opportunity, she found it difficult to "see through and put down the illusions of the world." She had adopted a child who was often sick, and she worked evenings at a department store to earn money to care for the child. Also, she did not believe her parents would allow her to leave home.

Her Dharma brother pointed out that even Shakyamuni Buddha left home without his parents' permission. He advised her to shave her head first and then tell her parents. She did so and became a novice nun in the Theravadan tradition.

Later, she went to Taiwan to receive the complete Bhikshuni precepts. She then returned to Singapore and helped care for old people in a home established by her teacher. One elderly woman could not endure the suffering she was undergoing, and so she hanged herself. The experience frightened Dharma Master Gwang Jye so much that she developed heart problems and left her teacher.

When another delegation from the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas went to Singapore, Dharma Master Gwang Jye's resolve to cultivate and find a Good Knowing Advisor was strengthened. She vowed to bow the Great Compassion Repentance every day.

Afterwards, she met a laywoman who encouraged Dharma Master Gwang Jye to go with her to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. Her friend pointed out that to find a proper Way-place, where people cultivate according to the Dharma, is rare. Dharma Master Gwang Jye and her friend arrived at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas earlier this year. More than ten years have elapsed since she first asked the Venerable Master for permission to cultivate under him as a left-home person, and finally her wish has been fulfilled.