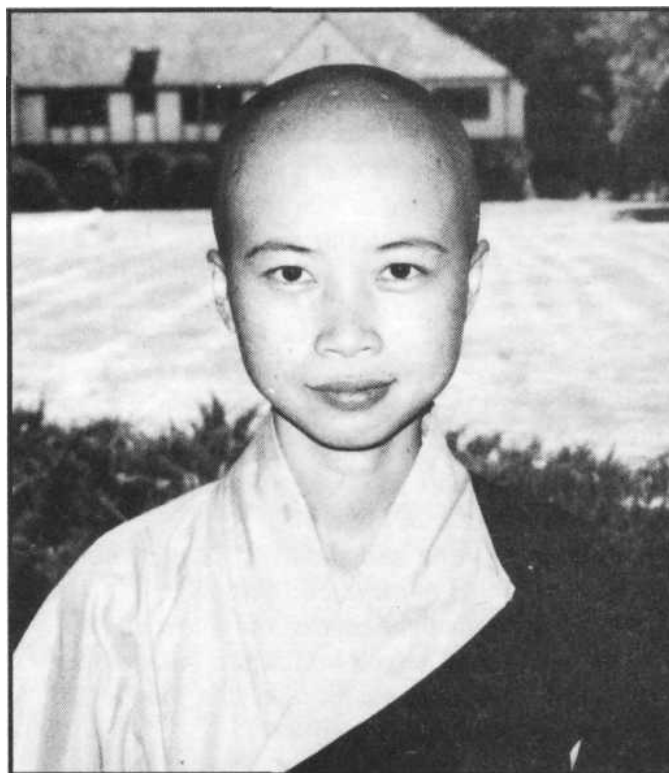


The Bodhi Mirror



Introducing Bhikshuni Heng Ren

When the Venerable Master Hua and a delegation of his disciples went to Hong Kong to propagate the Buddhadharma in 1981, Heng Ren (then a lay person) was moved by the Master's compassion and by the cultivation and sincerity in holding precepts of his disciples. She hoped then to be able to go to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas to cultivate with them, but obstacles arose and she had to pass through a series of tests. Finally after five years, she was able to go to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas to participate in the Sangha/Laity Training Program. She describes her experience:

"The City of Ten Thousand Buddhas is a very peaceful place, and a utopia for cultivators. Anyone who sincerely vows to cultivate without ulterior motives at the City will feel that this is the right place to be.

"Before Shakyamuni Buddha entered Nirvana, Ananda asked him four questions. One of the questions was, 'Whom should we take as our teacher?' The Buddha answered that the precepts should be taken as the teacher. If the precepts are taken as guidelines for behavior, the proper Dharma will exist permanently.

"At the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, under the Venerable Master's compassion and guidance, left-home people investigate the precepts in class every day, and lay people attend precept class twice a week.

"Out of great compassion in the Dharma-ending Age, the Venerable Master endured tremendous difficulties in order to cross over living beings by finding a place where we can cultivate properly, study diligently and singlemindedly, and be under the protection of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. The Master said that if his disciples do not become Buddhas, then he himself will not attain to Buddhahood.

"Each time I thought about that statement, I felt very grateful. How could I repay his great kindness and virtue? I don't think I could completely repay him even through limitless kalpas.

"In 1988 the causes and conditions ripened. I saw my Dharma friends taking the glorious step to leave home. I also saw how they improved at holding the precepts and in proper behavior. The Venerable Master, out of compassion, gave me permission to leave the home-life. I received the Shramaneri precepts on Earth Store Bodhisattva's birthday in 1988, and one lunar year later I became fully ordained, again on Earth Store Bodhisattva's birthday.

"When the Venerable Master shaved my hair and asked me what I wished for in leaving home, I didn't know what to answer and offhandedly said, 'Not to lose my temper.' Later I wondered why I hadn't been able to make a great vow at that time. My wish to not lose my temper seemed so simple. Now as I think back, it wasn't simple at all. If someone achieves the state of having 'a nature like ashes' or 'a nature like water' and does not get angry at any state, I think that person is not a simple cultivator.

"I hope that I can really achieve the state of 'a nature like ashes, a nature like water,' so that I can repay the kindness of my parents, of Venerable Master Hua, of the Buddhas, and of the Bodhisattvas."

Correction —

Fa Ywan (Dharma Source) Monastery was incorrectly identified as Fa Yen (Dharma Eye) Monastery on page seven of Vajra Bodhi Sea issue #247, December 1990, in the article "Rare Buddhist Canon Comes to the West."