

## *Bodhi Stand Presents*



*Upasika Kuo Chang*

As a child, Kuo Chang kept looking for "true happiness." Basically her parents provided her with all her needs and satisfied all her wishes, but she still did not feel that such mundane fulfillments were true happiness.

Eventually her parents and she, who had always been Buddhist, were guided to a greater understanding of Buddhism's principles by a kindly neighbor who took them to a Buddhist Temple nearby. Kuo Chang had affinities with the Buddhadharma and enjoyed reciting and studying.

Then in 1978, during the propagation tour of the Sino-American Buddhist Association's first Asia-Region Delegation, Kuo Chang and her parents encountered the Venerable Abbot Hua and all of them took refuge with the Triple Jewel at that time. In order to make herself a worthy disciple, Kuo Chang became a vegetarian, observed the Five Precepts, and recited the Shurangama Mantra regularly. She comments:

"I heard the Abbot quote from the *Shurangama Sutra*, telling us about how the mountains, rivers, and earth itself are created by people's offenses. Actually the world around us is empty and false, but because of our ignorance, we bring it into being and perceive it as real. Hearing this, I felt deep repentance and wished to reform. I began to return my life in repentance and reform, vowing that all living beings and I will be protected, and that we can eradicate our karmic faults."

Although Kuo Chang was trying hard to practice at home, in her heart she knew that the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas provides a pure and quiet place to practice. She wished to go to the City to cultivate. How fortunate she was that her parents consented and encouraged her to dedicate the merit and virtue of her work and study at the City to all living beings of the Dharma Realm in order to repay the kindness of the Venerable Abbot for turning the wonderful Dharma Wheel which enables them to leave suffering and obtain bliss.

Says Kuo Chang,

"Mount Sumeru is the highest mountain, but the kindness of my parents is even higher. I know that only by cultivating the Way of the Buddhadharma and by constantly giving rise to a mind of filial compliance and compassion will I be able to repay the debt of kindness I owe them for allowing me to draw near a Good Knowing Advisor and practice the Proper Dharma."

Arriving at the City in time to join the celebration of the Opening last November, Kuo Chang has joined the Laity Training Program and follows a rigorous schedule of study and practice, which includes time each day for bowing in repentance and reform. She always keeps in mind the Venerable Abbot's verse:

Everything is a test,  
To see what you will do.  
If you don't recognize what's right before your eyes,  
You'll have to start anew.