

The Bodhi Stand



Introducing Emily Chang (Gwo Shen)

"Faith is the source of the Way, the mother of merit and virtue.
It nourishes all good roots."

If Emily Chang has one salient quality that characterizes her active role as a Dharma protector within Buddhism, then it can be called faith.

Over ten years ago when Emily and her husband Richard Chang first moved to San Jose, the couple had to make ends meet with their limited resources. He was struggling to get a higher degree, while she opened a stall in the San Jose Flea Market to help support the family. Things have improved since then. In 1984 Emily met the Buddhадharma and started to perform works of merit and virtue.

In 1987, on Gwan Yin's Festival, Emily brought a friend who was suffering from breast cancer to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. She had a deep, implicit trust that Gwan Yin Bodhisattva could help her friend. The Venerable Master blessed the woman and urged her to become vegetarian, explaining to her that the source of many illnesses, including cancer is killing karma committed in one's past lives.

The friend recovered very quickly in the next few months. Emily's faith in the Triple Jewel grew. She took refuge with the Venerable Master, and became vegetarian. She made a vow to do everything she could to support the Triple Jewel. All the segments of her life fit together like the pieces in a jig-saw puzzle. At present her husband operates a successful business in the computer field in Silicon Valley, and Emily runs her own flower wholesale business. The couple lives with their two young children and Mr.Chang's parents in the Saratoga Hills.

Emily's gradual growth in her roles as a wife, a mother, a capable professional woman, an honest friend and a sincere Buddhist disciple can be attributed to the singleness of purpose with which she works for the Triple Jewel. She has one goal in mind: to help propagate the Dharma. She speaks of a vow she made before the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas: "I want to assist the Venerable Master Hua in whatever way I can to propagate the Proper Dharma so that it will long abide in the world." This vow is no doubt the secret behind her cheerful and positive attitude, and her willingness to listen to and help others. She has been instrumental in inspiring many young people to draw near to and look deeper into Buddhism.

In early 1988, a group of young Dharma protectors, mainly high tech professionals working in the Silicon Valley, got together and requested the Venerable Master and his left-home disciples to lecture on the Sutras every Sunday in San Jose. They formed the San Jose Lay Buddhist Association for Buddhist Studies and Practice. Since then meditation classes and lectures in Buddhism have been held every Sunday at Mission College near San Jose. The group has a membership of several hundred, with a steady group of about fifty attending the classes on a regular basis.

Different projects have been initiated by this group. One of the most recent is the publication of a bilingual monthly Buddhist journal called "Source of Wisdom," the first issue of which appeared in April, 1989. The Chinese version is printed and distributed in Taiwan to various Asian countries. The English issue is printed in San Jose and distributed free to Buddhist associations, schools, colleges and libraries in the West.

Emily Chang (Dharma name Gwo Shen 果紳), who is secretary of the association, leads a busy life. Nowadays young, educated professionals are more and more drawn towards Buddhism, and Emily is developing a wealth of skill-in-means to introduce them to the Proper Dharma.

