

BODHI BULLETIN

DHARMA NEWS FROM BODHI MONASTERY • JAN/FEB 2004

Becoming a Luminous Exemplar of Dharma

PART II

(An excerpt from a lecture by Ven. Jen-Chun to the monks at Ganlun Buddhist Academy, Jiu-Hua Shan, the Sacred Mountain of Kshitigarbha Bodhisattva, China - October 26, 2002.)

**Don't let the ego-self
conquer body and mind.**

**Liberate oneself from body
and mind, and see the
Buddha's mind.**

**When the Buddha's mind is
clearly seen, one's own mind
becomes luminous and
peaceful.**

**Deeply practice the Buddha
path, deeply understanding
cessation.**

As human beings, we all have a notion of self, and because of that the self never departs from our thoughts, from our body and mind. If one has a great sense of shame and moral dread together with great compassion, one will know how much misery the idea of self brings about. Therefore one should not allow the self to conquer one's body and mind. If we can eradicate the self from its dwelling place in our body and mind, we will be able to see the mind of the Buddha. As ordinary human beings, we cannot see such depth and vastness. To get even a glimpse of it, we must cultivate and purify ourselves. One must purify one's scattered thoughts to make them as pure as empty space. Then one will gradually come to see the mind of the Buddha. When one can clearly see the Buddha's mind, one's own mind will be at peace.

To "clearly see the mind of the Buddha" means to see that there is no true self. Understanding this, you will not allow the "self" to play tricks on you. The more clearly you see, the more your mind will be at peace.

What is "being clear" and "being at peace"? Under all circumstances, favorable or adverse, one maintains a high degree of alertness. One is not attached to favorable circumstances; under adverse circumstances, one remains fearless, even when one's life is at stake. One can look death squarely in the face without blinking. To achieve such a state requires that in our everyday life we learn the wisdom and compassion of the Buddha. Understanding clearly and being at peace, one will be able to subdue the self and won't be trapped by the self. One will truly be walking the Buddha's path.

What is the Buddha's path? It is the Bodhi mind, the mind of Nirvana. To walk on the Buddha's path is to follow the path of the Great Enlightened One, the one who attained the Great Nirvana, the one who has reached ultimate liberation. Through great enlightenment, one sees all phenomena with pure luminosity. From the perspective of departing from all defilements, the Buddha saw the ultimate truth: the non-arising and non-ceasing of all phenomena. Through complete cessation, he achieved total peace of the mind. This complete cessation does not mean that everything is extinguished. It is the cessation of all defilements and habitual tendencies. After achieving cessation, an Enlightened One begins a new life, a life of selfless service to benefit sentient beings.

As practitioners, we must understand impermanence. Impermanence is the gateway to emptiness. Thus to understand emptiness, we must start with an understanding of impermanence. Emptiness, in turn, is the gateway to non-birth. By understanding emptiness, you will not be attached to life. In other words, you will transcend the two extremes and all dualities. In this way, you will be able to enter non-birth. Non-birth is the gateway to Buddhahood. Understanding non-birth, one will no longer be attached to life, one will no longer be afflicted by the miseries of life. One can learn and practice the Dharma in the cycle of birth and death and enter the path to Buddhahood.

As monastics, we should not have personal wealth, a sense of privacy, or selfish ambitions. Sentient beings in the desire realm are principally motivated by desire or greed. If we look at the misery in the world, we can see that so much of it stems from uncontrolled desire. Therefore, as practitioners of Dharma, we must renounce and

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News Briefs

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Saturday Schedule Changed

Beginning January 10th, 2004, we will be following a new Saturday Schedule, to be observed every Saturday except the first Saturday of the month. Refer to the schedule on the other side for more details.

Bhante's Dharma Study "Exploring the Word of the Buddha" to Resume on January 20th

Bhikkhu Bodhi's study course on the Majjhima Nikaya, the Buddha's Middle Length Discourses, will resume on January 20th and will continue every Tuesday evening from 7 to 8 pm.

The course will offer a detailed and systematic overview of all the major teachings of Early Buddhism, including:

- Buddhist ethics
- Meditation and mind-training
- the nature of true wisdom

Although the course will continue where it stopped last August, those who did not attend earlier are welcome to join. There are no prerequisites. Students should have a copy of *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, translated by Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, available from most bookstores or, over the Internet, from Amazon.com.

Going for Refuge Ceremony on January 24th

Please see the article on the other side.

Introductory Pali Class

This class is held every Saturday from 2:30 to 3:30 pm. We are using the text book *An Elementary Pali Grammar* by Ven. Narada Thera.

Venerable Dhammadipa to Visit Through May

Ven. Dhammadipa who visited us and gave discourses on the Anapanasati Sutta during the 2002 Dharma retreat returned in December and will be staying at the monastery through May.

Youth Dharma Class to Resume in March

This class takes place on alternate Saturdays, between 9:30 and 10:30 am and will resume from winter break in March. You can e-mail the teacher, William Bertolotti, for more information at: williambertolotti@yahoo.com.

Going For Refuge Ceremony on Chinese Lunar New Year

On Saturday, January 24th, we will be holding a special Going for Refuge ceremony conducted by the monastics at Bodhi Monastery. Although the ceremony might seem short and simple, it marks a dramatic turning point in one's life, opening the way to all future progress in the practice of the Dharma.

One becomes a Buddhist lay disciple by means of two steps: Going for Refuge to the Three Jewels and undertaking the Five Precepts. By going for refuge one makes the solemn commitment to accept the Three Jewels – the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha – as the guiding ideals of one's life. By taking the Five Precepts one expresses a determination to bring one's conduct into accord with these ideals.

Ven. Jen-Chun will give a brief talk at 10:00 am, followed by the Going for Refuge ceremony at 10:30, and then a devotional service. The remainder of the day follows as usual. If you would like to go for refuge formally, please contact the monastery by Jan. 17th.

Becoming a Luminous Exemplar *(continued from front)*

depart from all kinds of desires. First there is the desire for the five attractive sense objects: delightful forms, sounds, scents, tastes, and tactile objects. Then there is the desire for wealth, sex, fame, food, and sleep.

We must further generate a mind that has no limits, an infinite mind. Take as an example the bodhisattva Kshitigarbha, who has vowed not to attain Buddhahood until the hells are empty: that is an example of the infinite mind, the mind that knows no limits.

When we learn wisdom and generate compassion, we must diligently exert ourselves to learn as extensively and profoundly as possible: we should not set any bounds to our learning. That is, we should have no ceiling but should strive ever higher and higher.

Also, we should not confine ourselves to any specific time frame. We must not have any notion of the day we are to attain enlightenment. As long as the method we are practicing is correct, we should just exert ourselves wholeheartedly.

Thus we must resolve to practice the "six no's": no accumulation of wealth for private purposes, no sense of privacy, no selfish ambitions, no limits to our vows, no ceiling to our practice, and no time frame for our attainment. Whether you are a monastic or a lay person, having generated the Bodhi mind, you should extensively establish wholesome roots and generate wholesome energy. You must exert yourself unsparingly in regard to everything that is good and wholesome. To do so is to follow "the way of Samantabhadra."

The practice of the Dharma has two aspects, wisdom and compassion. What is wisdom? Wisdom is firmness. Wisdom creates the firmest character, the most steadfast and unwavering character. Under all circumstances, such wisdom is able to see through all affairs. Because of one's wisdom, one will never succumb to the defilements even at the cost of one's life. The ability to subdue defilements: that is steadfastness.

Without steadfastness, one cannot acquire wisdom. Someone who is steadfast will be capable of upholding the Buddhadharma within the cycle of birth and death. He is able to live amidst people with defilements and devote himself wholeheartedly to the good of all, even to the point of being ready to sacrifice his own body and life. One with wisdom must have this quality of steadfastness to shoulder all burdens.

Now what is compassion? Compassion is gentleness. In order to win over sentient beings, one must be gentle and harmonious. In this way, one will be able to touch people's hearts, to move them and transform them with one's virtuous actions.

In addition to the wisdom that makes one steadfast and enables one to persistently learn; in addition to the compassion that gives one the gentleness needed to deliver others, one also needs morality. Morality is established by observing the precepts, and so one must uphold the precepts to the utmost degree of purity.

In this way, as a monastic, no matter where you go, you will be a luminous exemplar of Dharma, setting a noble example to others. A "luminous exemplar" is one who brings light wherever he goes. Wherever one goes, luminosity follows one. Wherever one goes, that is a "way place," a place where the path prevails. Wherever one goes, without any pretense or outward display, one will be manifesting the Dharma. Wherever one goes, people will be able to see what the Buddha's Dharma is truly about. One's body will manifest the way through one's actions. One's speech will manifest the way through one's words. One's mind will always accord with the way in its thoughts. A person like this is truly a luminous exemplar of the Dharma. ☸

January/February Dharma Schedule

SATURDAY SCHEDULE (As of 1/10)

9:50 - 10:40 am	Dharma discourse by Ven. Jen-Chun
10:45 - 11:15 pm	Work period
11:15 - 12:15 pm	Lunch and cleanup
12:30 - 1:30 pm	Dharma discourse by Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi or Ven. Xin Xing
1:45 - 2:15 pm	Dharma discussion
2:30 - 3:30 pm	Pali class

FIRST SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH (As of 2/2)

9:50 - 10:30 am	Dharma discourse by Ven. Jen-Chun
10:40 - 11:10 pm	Devotional Service
11:20 - 12:15 pm	Lunch and cleanup
(The rest of the schedule follows as above.)	

SPECIAL: SATURDAY, JANUARY 24TH Going for Refuge Ceremony; see article.

SUNDAYS

9:00 - 9:30 am (First Sunday of each month)	Beginners instruction in meditation
9:30 - 11:00 am (Every Sunday)	Meditation Group guided by Bhante
10:00 - 11:30 am (dates to be determined)	Ven. Jen-Chun Dharma Talk at Ch'an Center

WEEKDAYS

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9 - 10 am	Madhyamaka Philosophy with Ven. Jen-Chun (in Chinese)
Tuesdays, 7 - 8 pm (resumes 1/20/04)	Sutta Study Class with Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi (in English)

DAILY

4:30 - 5 pm	Chanting Liturgy
5:05 - 6 pm	Sitting meditation

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BODHI MONASTERY

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Please contact us for more information on any of our programs:
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