Cultivate Diligently and Don’t Be Lax

Words from Venerable Master Hua

我们第一个暑期班（一九六八年）在佛教讲堂开课。当时有很多人从西雅图来参加，为期九十六天。功课很忙，每天没有休息的时间，只有在星期六放半天假时，有的就去洗衣服，有的就做私人的事。《楞严经》就在那时讲的，计划在暑期班的期间把它讲完。最初每天讲一次，讲了一个时期，觉得时间不够，于是乎增加一次，每天讲两次。后来又怕讲不完，再增加一次，这样，每天讲三次，到了最后，每天讲四次。在那个暑期班的期间内，勉强将这部《楞严经》讲完，功德圆满，回向众生。

Gold Mountain Monastery is operated by the Dharma Realm Buddhist Association and used to be known as the Buddhist Lecture Hall, which was then a tiny flat located on the fourth floor walk-up of an old building in San Francisco Chinatown. That’s where our very first Summer Cultivation Session took place in 1968. Many people from Seattle took part in that ninety-six day session. The full daily schedule allowed no time for resting. The only chance for a break came on Saturday afternoon, where participants did their laundry or took care of personal business.

We lectured on Shurangama Sutra during that session, planning to finish it before the session ended. We began by holding one lecture daily, but before long, realizing that there wasn’t enough time to finish the complete Sutra, we added an extra lecture, so there were two lectures a day. Later, because it still looked like we couldn’t finish the Sutra, we added a third lecture to the daily schedule, and so forth, until at the end we had four lectures each day. We barely finished explaining the Shurangama Sutra during that summer session. Thus the merit and virtue was completed and we transferred it to all living beings.
《楞嚴經》講完之後，就有五位美籍青年出家，三位比丘、兩位比丘尼。這是美國最先有人出家，受具足戒的開始。以後每年都有暑期班，繼續有很多人來學習佛法，也有人出家做比丘和比丘尼。雖然人數不多，但是金山禪寺的宗旨，重質不重量，只要實實在在修行，研究佛法，就是一個也不算少，何況不止一個。

金山禪寺出版一本英文雜誌，定名為《金剛菩提海》（編按：目前是中英對照，改名為《萬佛城金剛菩提海》），是月刊，刊登佛法要義，令西方人曉得佛法的來龍去脈，而對佛法有個正確的認識，不再誤解佛教是迷信，是崇拜偶像，是消極悲觀者，是社會的寄生蟲。令一般人知道佛教是自由平等，沒有種族、國籍、地域的界限，一律是佛弟子，以提倡世界和平為目標。佛教從有史以來，沒有發生過戰爭，因為佛教的戒律，第一條就是不殺生，不但不殺人，就是其他的動物也不殺，而且還要放生，保護一切動物的安全，所以沒有戰爭。

金山禪寺是在沙裏澄金。若是金子，來到金山禪寺，等於回到自己的家裏。雖然不講話，但是讀書很方便，沒有人來打閒岔。天天研究佛法，這是很好的環境。美國人很多，但真正發心來到這裏研究佛法，來聽經學法的有多少呢？所以，成佛是一個一個成的，不是一群一群成的。世界上無論什麼，都是以少為貴。我們金山禪寺研究佛法的人數雖不多，但在這世界上卻是最貴重的，將來各位把佛法學會了，都可以到各處去弘揚佛法，利益眾生。令一切眾生早成佛道，這是我對各位的期望。

這次來參加暑期班的人，每一個人都必須要遵守時間，不要浪費光陰，

Once the Shurangama Sutra had been explained, five young Americans left the home-life, so now there are three Bhikshus and two Bhikshunis. These are the first Americans to leave home and receive the complete precepts.

Each year thereafter we held a Summer Cultivation Session. Many people came to study Buddhadharma, and some of them decided to leave home and become Bhikshus and Bhikshunis. Although the total number of people was not large, at Gold Mountain Monastery we valued quality over quantity. What counts is those who come are sincere in wanting to cultivate the spiritual path and investigate Buddhadharma. Even one such person can’t be considered too few; and if many people have that attitude, that’s even better!

Gold Mountain Monastery publishes a monthly English journal called Vajra Bodhi Sea. (The journal is now bilingual, with Chinese and English side by side, and is called The Buddhist Monthly-Vajra Bodhi Sea.) This journal brings the essentials of the Buddha’s teachings to Westerners so they can learn the ins and outs of Buddhism, it helps us develop a correct understanding, and not misinterpret Buddhism as a superstitious religion, an idol-worshipping cult, a pessimistic escape, or parasitical burden on society. Our journal transcends all boundaries of country, race, and nationality and regards all beings alike as Buddhist disciples.

Since Buddhism’s inception, there has never been a Buddhist war. This is due in part to the first of the Buddhist precepts, which is “no killings.” Buddhists not only refrain from killing humans, we don’t kill any animals, either. Instead, we liberate living creatures, and protect the safety of all animals; therefore, we’ve never been involved in a war.

At Gold Mountain Monastery, it’s as if we’re panning for gold in the sand. If a person has the quality of gold, when he arrives at Gold Mountain, he’ll feel right at home. Although we don’t talk much here, the silence makes it quite convenient for studying; every day we study Buddhism and nobody comes to interrupt our work; this is an ideal environment. America has a large population, but now many have taken the opportunity to come to investigate the Buddhadharma and listen to lectures on the Sutras here? This attests to the fact that Buddhhas are created individually, one by one, and not in groups. In this world, things which are scare are considered valuable. Although the people who come to Gold Mountain to investigate Buddhism may be few in number, they are the most valuable people in this world. In the future, when you all understand the Buddhadharma, you can go out to propagate the teachings in every land bring benefit to all creatures. My wish is that you will quickly lead all beings to Buddhahood.
中國有一句名言：「一寸光陰一寸金，寸金難買寸光陰。」所以時間是最寶貴的，最重要的。今年暑期班的同學，在這裏要努力學習佛法，不要把寶貴的光陰空過去，一定要學點真正的道理。

現在有一件事情，想對各位說一說，本來我不想說，可是不能不說。什麼事情？就是出家人一定要尊重自己，不要把自己看得太低賤，又不可以貪圖我慢，要時時刻刻反省和檢討，有過改之，無過勉之。絕對不可散漫，不可放逸。你們大家既然跟我出家學道，凡是我所見到的，一定要講出來，糾正你們的毛病。如果不講，那是我對不起你們各位。我將所見到的事說出來之後，你們聽不聽？改不改？那是你們個人的事。我把做師父應負的責任盡到，問心無愧。你們可不要墮地獄的時候，才來埋怨師父。「啊！我師父當初為何不嚴教？如果好好教我，我怎會墮地獄？」

現在我把要說的話說出來，出家人切記！切記！不可以干渉別人的自由，不要影響別人的行動。自己不修行，不要妨礙他人修行；自己不持戒，不要妨礙他人持戒；自己不修德行，不要妨礙他人修德行。如果有這種思想和行動的人，一定要糾正過錯，改惡向善。出家人，時時刻刻自己管自己。一舉一動，一言一行，都要合乎戒律，不荒唐，要認真。不可隨隨便便，所謂「無規矩不成方圓」。所以，佛在入涅槃時，告訴阿難尊者說：「以戒為師」，這是出家人的座右銘。

要時時刻刻反省和檢討，有過改之，無過勉之。

Examine yourself at all times and reform any faults that you find.

If you find no faults, then press on.

Each one of you who has come to attend this summer session must cherish the time; don’t let it pass by carelessly! I mentioned the Chinese proverb that goes, “An instant of time is worth an ounce of gold. Even an ounce of gold can’t buy back an instant of time.” So time is the most valuable, the most important of all commodities. All my classmates in this summer session, diligently study Buddhism! Don’t allow the precious minutes to slip by. Use this time to learn some true principles of the spiritual path!

There’s an important matter that I want to discuss with you all. In fact I thought not to mention it, but now I see I can’t avoid it. You left-home people absolutely must learn to respect yourselves. Don’t see yourselves as worthless and cheap. But neither should you be haughty and proud. Examine yourself at all times and reform any fault that you find. If you find no faults, then press on. Under no circumstances should you become lax and careless.

Since you left the home-life to study the spiritual path with me, I’m obligated to point out everything that I see, in order to correct your faults. If I failed to tell you of your faults, then I’d be doing you an injustice. Once I tell you your faults, it’s up to you to decide if you want to listen to me and change. By telling you, I’ve fulfilled my duty as a teacher, and have nothing to regret or be ashamed of. So if any of you fall into the hells, you have no right to complain, “Oh, why wasn’t my teacher more strict with me? If he’d taught me better, then I wouldn’t have wounds up in hell!”

So now I’ve had my say. Left-home people should never disturb other people or interfere with their freedom. If you yourself don’t cultivate, take care not to obstruct the cultivation of others. If you don’t hold the precepts yourself, be sure not to prevent others from holding the precepts. If you choose not to cultivate virtuous conduct yourself, don’t keep others from cultivating virtuous conduct. If you do obstruct others in these ways, then you must discipline and reform yourself. Left-home people must take charge of themselves at all times and accord with the moral precepts in every word and deed.
我們在吃飯的時候，要存三念五觀。「施主一粒米，重如須彌山；吃了不修行，披毛戴角還。」這是多麼危險！所謂「袈裟底下，失去人身。」所以，出家人處處要嚴守戒律。我們在生死未了的時候，慾心未斷的時候，時刻不能懈怠，處處不能馬虎。所以普賢菩薩說：

是日已過，命亦隨減；
如少水魚，斯有何樂？

又說：

大眾！當勤精進，如救頭然，
但念無常，慎勿放逸。

我们出家人，一分一秒也要愛惜，所謂「一寸光陰一寸金，寸金難買寸光陰。」光陰如此的寶貴，不可浪費時間。每人要用功修行，精進再精進，才能有所成就。凡是用功修行的人，沒有時間說話，沒有時間打開。關於這一點，我希望每個人都要注意。我見到不修行的人，非常痛心。這豈不是辜負當初出家時所發的願嗎？這種口是心非的出家人，焉能為僧寶？盼望各位自己尊重自己！

Don’t act so wild! Be serious! Don’t just do what you please.
Don’t you know the proverb:
Without using a compass and a T-square
You’ll never draw good circles and corners.

That’s why before the Buddha entered Nirvana, he told Ananda, “Take the precepts as your teacher.” This phrase can serve as a motto for every left-home person.

While we eat, we should make the Three Recollections and the Five Contemplations. There’s a saying,

A single grain of donor’s rice,
Is as weight as Mount Sumeru.
If one should eat it and then fail to cultivate,
One will have to repay the debt by wearing fur and horns.

How dangerous this situations is! This is called “losing one’s human body while wearing the precept sash.” So left-home people, wherever they may be, must sternly guard their precepts. Before we’ve put an end to birth and death, before our thoughts of desire have been severed, we may not be even the slightest bit lax or careless. Samantabhadra Bodhisattva exhorts us:

This day is already done.
Our lives are that much less.
We’re like fish in evaporating water,
What joy can be there in this?
Great Assembly!
We should be as diligent and vigorous,
As if our own heads were at stake.
Never forget impermanence!
Be careful, and never be lax!

We who have left the home-life must cherish each passing minute and second of time. Remember; “an instant of time is worth an ounce of gold. Even an ounce of gold can’t buy back an instant of time.” Time is just his precious, so don’t waste it! Work hard at your cultivation. Be ever more vigorous. Only then can you expect success. There’s never been a hard-working cultivator who had time to hold casual conversation or disturb others. I hope all of you will pay attention to this. It hurts me deeply to see people fail to cultivate! Aren’t you letting down the vows you made upon first leaving home? Can this kind of left-home person who says one thing and does another consider himself part of the Sangha Jewel? I hope you’ll all learn to respect yourselves!

編者註 Editor’s note:

雖然這篇文章是上人和出家眾的開示，但其中的道理也是非常適合我們在家人學習。願大家在新的一年發心勇猛精進學習佛法，我們極樂世界見！

Although this article was a lecture from Venerable Master Hua to his left-home disciples, we as laypeople can still learn a great deal from it. I hope everyone will continue to study Buddhism vigorously in this coming New Year. See you all in the Western Pure Land.
The Development of Buddhism Through Education

It is not easy to promote Buddhism in the United States. Therefore, everyone should take on the responsibility of propagation, in order to help the Buddha Dharma to flourish.

Where should we start? In my opinion, we should start with education. If you simply speak the Dharma, you can’t plant the roots. Therefore, you have to work on education, in order to infuse the spirit of Buddhism in children’s minds. Only when they understand the principles of Buddhism and practice them in society, “stop all evil and cultivate all goodness,” can the roots of Buddhism be planted. Chinese Buddhism ignored this point in the past.

People only spoke the Dharma and expounded the Sutras, without knowing how to guide the children to the profound and wonderful teaching of Buddhism. If children understand the Buddhist teachings, then when they grow up they can promote them. This is one thing all Buddhists must pay attention to. Don’t let the focus of everything you see, hear, and talk about be solely on making a fortune, which is of no benefit to Buddhism. Every one of us must take the responsibility of educating people, help them understand Buddhism. This is an important matter. In seeking profit, education is usually overlooked.

In the American society today, men are out for money, and women go for money, too. They forget about children’s education. They think that children will learn what they ought to know at school. However, at school, children often become worse. They become less obedient day by day. Parents and teachers have lost contact with one another. The teachers tell the students that the most successful people are those who can make a lot of money. To be first in the world, you have to rebel at home and knock your parents down.
不知道小孩子到學校後，一天比一天壞，一天比一天不聽話，學校老師和家長都脫節了。老師就教學生，你將來最有本事就是賺最多的錢，若要做世界第一個有名的人物，你先要在家裡創革命，把你父母打倒了，老師盡是挑撥離間，令小孩子回家裡，就不聽家長父母的話。唉！這種學校，不學也罷！

我們應該負起責任，要人人盡一點義務，盡什麼義務呢？有學問的人，有智慧的人，白天去工作，晚間應該把時間拿出來從事教育，在學校也好，在家庭也好，盡義務不求代價，不要薪水，把下一代教好了。這樣，世界的人類才有福報。若教不好下一代，就像美國現在，問題兒童滿街都是。每天都有小孩子到處殺人、放火、搶劫。

尤其在洛杉磯，現在每天都是朝不保夕，岌岌可危，因爲不知哪一天就被人「呼」一槍打死了！每天死的人不知有多少，恐怕比在伊拉克戰爭死的人都多。這是什麼原因？就是因為忽略教育，重視金錢；一重視金錢，所以就沒有什麼適當的教育。尤其做家長的，男女都要出去賺錢，為了爭取平等自由，結果把孩子都忽略了。有的把孩子寄到托兒所，有的放到幼稚園，到那裡小孩子很多，耳濡目染都是不好的事情。因為這樣，世風日下，一代就不如一代了，這都是因爲忽略教育的關係。

(待續)

If teachers instigate children to be disobedient to their parents at home, it would be better not to send them to this kind of school!

Everyone should voluntarily take responsibility. What kind of responsibility? We who have knowledge and wisdom, but have to go to work in the daytime should shared some time at night for education, at a school or at home. To do this voluntarily means you don’t seek for a reward or compensation. You fulfill your responsibility well in school or at home teaching the next generation. Only when the next generation is taught properly can blessings for the world be attained. If the next generation has not been taught well, then it will be like now in America, where juvenile delinquencies are everywhere. Every day, there are children who are bold enough to kill, set fires, and rob.

Especially in Los Angeles, people feel in peril and their lives are insecure, because someday, with one shot, they might be killed. There are probably more people who die from shootings than from the war in Iraq. What is the cause of this? It’s simply because people have ignored education and value money instead; since their priority is in earning money, they have not receive an adequate education. Particularly now, not only do men work for money, women do too, demanding equality and freedom. Children then are ignored by those parents. In a nursery school or kindergarten, children are influenced by improper things. In this way, morality falls lower and lower, worse and worse, generation after generation. And it’s all because of neglect of education!

(To be continued)
念了幾個小時，我也不能留在醫院過夜，我就和弟子先走，留下果傑陪他媽媽。隔天早上我接到他的電話，說整棟醫院都震動，因爲他媽媽醒過來了。那些醫學專家都覺得不可能。從事情發生到現在已經三年三個月了，他媽媽現在住在一個24小時有人照顧的老人院。果傑有時會陪他媽媽去逛街買東西，她也會走路。這真的是念楞嚴咒的感應。剛才譚居士說念楞嚴咒會改變一個人的容貌，是真的。因爲我是一個打功夫的人，以前臉上看起來兇神惡煞的樣子，念了楞嚴咒後，臉變得很祥和，不知道的人，還以為我是一個商人。（完）

後記：馮居士是一個教國術師傅，他不單是自己背楞嚴咒，他教他的西方弟子也背誦楞嚴咒。現在有7、8個人已經會背誦楞嚴咒，雖然他們都不懂中文。每次他們去萬佛城的時候，都一直念11次楞嚴咒。

I was not able to stay overnight at the hospital, so after a few hours of reciting, I left with my disciple. The next morning, I received a call from Guo Jie, saying that the whole hospital was in shock because his mother awakened from the coma. The medical staff thought it impossible. It has been 3 years and 3 months since that incident. Gwo Jie's mother now lives in a 24-hour nursing-care facility. She can still walk, so Guo Jie often takes her shopping. This is a real response from reciting the Shurangama Mantra. I just heard upasika Tam say that reciting the Shurangama Mantra can change one's appearance. I know this to be true. I am a martial artist and I used to look scary; however; I now have a peaceful looking face after reciting the mantra. Those who don't know me think I am a businessman.

Note: Upasaka Feng is a Martial Arts teacher. He not only recites the Shurangama Mantra himself, but also teaches his western disciples to memorize and recite it. At least 7 or 8 of them can recite it by heart, even though they don't understand Chinese. On trips to CTTB, they will recite the mantra non-stop, 11 times each way. (The End)
Greetings to all Dharma Masters and Buddhist friends!

My name is Sandy, and my Dharma name is Chin Ying. I am pleased to establish Dharma affinities with all of you today. Several weeks ago, my mother passed away. While she was sick at the hospital, a group of laypersons from the Gold Mountain Monastery’s Pure Karma Society found time to visit her ever with their busy schedule. They also called regularly to inquire about my mother’s situation and provided some needed comfort. Especially during the final hours, the director from the Pure Karma Society visited my mother and personally gave her a massage. She gave my mother the most heartwarming comfort when she needed it most. Accompanied by the recitation of Amitabha from my siblings and Dharma friends, my mother passed away peacefully and at ease, without worry and pain.

I sincerely thank the director for staying with me and my siblings and for reciting for my mother till 6 a.m. the next morning. When the news spread to the rest of the group, they came to the hospital in the middle of night to recite without hesitation. I am greatly touched by the group’s unselfish acts and their willingness to help. Their kindness will remain forever in my heart.

During my mother’s funeral ceremony, several senior laypersons came, with their walking sticks, to recite for my mother. I felt the warmth provided by these individuals and the compassionate Buddhist spirits.
Let me take this opportunity to sincerely thank all Dharma masters and the Pure Karma Society on behalf of my family.

I’d also like to take this opportunity to share my experience with taking the Refuge in the Triple Jewels. Ten years ago, I was working in Chinatown, and I would always hear chants and recitations coming from Gold Mountain Monastery (GMM). I found them quite pleasant to the ear. By chance one day, a customer mentioned about GMM and gave me a couple books from the temple. I then realized that GMM was a Buddhist temple.

Soon afterwards, I would occasionally come to GMM with my co-workers to have vegetarian lunches, which I really enjoyed. Gradually, I started to come to GMM more regularly, when I'm not working during the weekends. At the time, I only had little knowledge about Buddhism, so I didn't think much about taking the Refuge. Therefore, for years, I kept putting it off.

About three years ago, my brother-in-law fell ill. Members from the Pure Karma Society took time out of their busy schedules and personally drove him to the doctors. They also visited and recited for my brother-in-law. I was very touched by their unselfish acts and deeply moved by the compassionate spirit of Buddhism. It was then that I took the Refuge in 2005.

Now, regardless of how busy or tired I am or whenever things don't go the way that I'd hoped, I would always recite the Great Compassion Mantra or “Gwan Shr Yin” Bodhisattva's name. Sometimes, when I have any disputes or issues with my customers, friends, or relatives and feel I'm about to get angry, I would immediately and silently recite “Na Mo Gwan Shr Yin Pu Sa.” It would gradually calm me down and help me avoid unnecessary confrontations. Reciting “Na Mo Gwan Shr Yin Pu Sa” helps me overcome difficulties. More importantly, by practicing this recitation, I have learned how to build better relationships with others and that no matter what obstacles or challenges lie ahead it will eventually help me go through it. (To be continued)
近期重要活動 Current Events

觀音菩薩聖誕法會 Celebration of Gwan Yin Bodhisattva’s Birthday

金山聖寺 Gold Mountain Monastery

3/14 預祝 (Pre-Celebration)

正日 (Actual Day)

3/15 金山寺將有巴士前往聖城

Gold Mountain Monastery will charter a bus for same day travel.

請洽 Please contact: 415-421-6117

觀音七於萬佛城
One Weeks of Gwan Yin Recitation at City of Ten Thousand Buddhas

3/15/09 - 3/21/09

歡迎大家踴躍參加
Welcome Everyone to Participate

念念莫忘生死苦 心心想脱輪迴圈
虛空粉碎明佛性 通體脫落見本源

In thought after thought, do not forget the pain of birth and death.
In thought after thought, yearn to be liberated from the turning wheel.
When empty space shatters, one is clear about the Buddha-nature.
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February 2009 SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

9:00am - 3:30pm Earth Store Sutra Recitation
10:00 am 聽經 (Lecture)
1:10 pm 大悲懺 Great Compassion Repentance
2:45 pm 大悲懺講解 Discussion on Great Compassion Repentance

February 2009

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Welcome! 歡迎參加！
415-421-6117