

BODHI BULLETIN

DHARMA NEWS FROM BODHI MONASTERY • SEP/OCT 2004



News Briefs

Inspirations from the Natural World

(Part II)

(A discourse given by Ven. Master Jen-Chun at Bodhi Monastery, January 10, 2004)

Part I of this discourse revolved around the two natural phenomena of the sun and the sky. Part II continues with the phenomena of the ocean and the mountain. Ven. Jen-Chun stated "If we are inspired by these four great phenomena of the natural world, we can make the great resolve to acquire the right view that functions effectively within the world and the penetrating vision that transcends the world."

☪ Ocean. "The vast ocean seen from the shore – how spectacular the view!" If we come to a seashore or a great body of water, we can appreciate the spectacular view and all the varieties presented by the view of the ocean.

"Without selection or bias, the ocean provides food and transport for all." It provides all human beings with all kinds of nutrition and sustenance. Great products, including fish, come from the ocean. The ocean also provides the connection between civilizations. When civilizations first needed to communicate with each other, the ocean provided the best channel of traffic, which facilitated communication between civilizations. Human beings were able to create culture and civilization, but the ocean is able to provide the means of communication. Therefore, we should learn from the ocean to become the great medium of different civilizations and different cultures.

The ocean is extremely vast. It does not discriminate against people. Whether you are Caucasian, African American, or of a different race, the ocean is not concerned. For the great ocean, everybody is equal.

"The great Dharma, so wonderful and extensive, is also an ocean. It liberates universally, without distinction or bias." So we often refer to the "Ocean of Dharma." Why is the Dharma referred to as an ocean? It is because the Dharma is spectacular and most pure. It is just like a lotus flower, whose every part – from its roots to its leaves – is useful and beneficial to others. Because the lotus flower is without any clinging, it can completely devote itself to benefit others.

The Buddha's Dharma teaches us to be level-headed – not impeding our own practice or that of others. Hence it is vast and deep, like the great void. It is this virtue that brings deliverance to everyone rather than to a select few.

All Buddhas and Bodhisattvas deliver sentient beings from suffering without discrimination. They do not pick just a select few and deliver them but not others. Such a sense of equality is as if we had a square shape and every side of the square is equal. Like a square shape, the Buddha and Bodhisattvas will deliver sentient beings without any boundaries, without any end.

☪ Mountain. "High and solemn beneath the sky, the mountain towers above a store of wealth. Likewise, the virtues and merits abound in a Bodhisattva's mind." An ancient Chinese saying teaches us that if we learn to be like an ocean and a mountain, we will be able to store all wealth. Just as a mountain has the greatest wealth stored inside, so the mind of a Bodhisattva is a store of excellent qualities. A Bodhisattva's mind is as vast as a mountain and also stores all the wealth under the great blue sky.

(continued on back)

Venerable Zu-Ren to Lecture on September 18th & 25th

Ven. Zu-Ren, originally from Singapore, was ordained first as a Theravada bhikkhu at Wat Bovorn in Thailand (1991) and then as a Chinese Mahayana monk in Singapore (1992) under Ven. Yuan Fan. He studied at the Fu Yan Buddhist Institute in Taiwan (1993-2000), specializing in Prajnaparamita and Madhyamika. He has also studied Tibetan Buddhism. On Sept. 18th & 25th, he will give lectures in Chinese from 9:50 to 10:50 am, and in the afternoons will lecture in English from 12:40-2:30 pm. Topics will be announced.

Venerable Analayo to Lecture on October 2nd

From Sept. 13th until Oct. 7th, Bodhi Monastery will again host a visit from Ven. Analayo, a Buddhist monk from Germany. He will give the Saturday afternoon talk on Oct. 2nd.

Saturday Lectures on the "Sutta-Nipata"

Some time in October, Bhante will begin a new series of Saturday Dharma talks based on the *Sutta-Nipata*. The *Sutta-Nipata* contains some of the oldest discourses in the Pali Canon. It is a rich source of texts offering guidance to lay Buddhists and also abounds in suttas that extol the contemplative ideals of early Buddhism. The version we will use is the translation by Ven. H. Saddhatissa, published by Routledge-Curzon under the title, *The Sutta-Nipata*. It can be ordered from amazon.com or pariyatti.com.

Thank You to C.C. Chuang

Mr. C.C. Chuang, the lay Buddhist teacher from Taiwan, stayed at Bodhi Monastery in July and August to resume the course of lectures (in Chinese) he began last year on Master Yin-Shun's work, *The Origins and Early Development of Mahayana Buddhism in India*. His lectures were greatly appreciated by the Chinese-speaking community.

Shifu Expected to Return from Taiwan in Early September

Ven. Jen-Chun went to Taiwan in mid-June to visit Ven. Yin-Shun at TzuChi Hospital. While there, he took the opportunity to have a physical examination. Subsequently, he had colon surgery in July, and in August he went through another surgery in his neck area. Both surgeries were successful and he is currently recovering well. Ven. Guo-Ching has been staying by Shifu's side and attending to him during their stay in Taiwan.

Inspirations *(continued from front)*

"As firm as Mount Diamond, as equally indestructible, it benefits beings with wholesome deeds throughout endless eons." When there are earthquakes, some mountains break down and can even be brought to ground-level. However, a mountain of diamond cannot be broken. The excellent qualities of the Bodhisattva are similar. No matter what kind of affliction people try to inflict upon the Bodhisattva, nothing can diminish his excellent qualities. Not even Mara can distract him from his mission.

It is the landmark. Through an extremely long period of time, throughout extremely vast space, a Bodhisattva is able to establish the landmark, the symbol of true virtue, to guide and benefit all sentient beings.

In closing, I encourage you to have the qualities of *the sun, the sky, an ocean, and a mountain.*

(Part I appeared in the July/August Bulletin and can be obtained from our website.)

"Gateway to the Dharma"

Ven. Jen-Chun's First Work Published in English

Gateway to the Dharma is a small but rich and potent booklet consisting of talks that Ven. Master Jen-Chen gave several years ago in Chinese as preparation for the study of Ven. Master Yin-Shun's monumental treatise *The Way to Buddhahood*. Master Jen-Chun, Master Yin-Shun's most senior living pupil, gave lectures on this work for over two years and this booklet contains the opening lectures in that series.

In his foreword to this booklet, Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi comments: "... Masterpieces sometimes come in small packages, and it is indeed a little masterpiece that you're holding in your hand... Its instructions are pithy enough, deep enough, opulent enough to bear up under many re-readings. Indeed, they can last you a lifetime....His concern is not with theory but with attitudes and actions. Repeatedly, he drives home the point that our purpose in studying the Dharma should not be the mere acquiring of information but the transformation and purification of our minds....Though he ultimately steers us towards the broad bodhisattva path aimed at benefiting all sentient beings, he does not let us escape the 'narrow path' with its hard tasks of self-scrutiny, self-rectification, and self-cultivation...."

Those involved in translating these talks are delighted to have them finally in print. The translation project was started soon after Bodhi Monastery was launched in January 2000, as ways were sought to communicate the teachings of Master Jen-Chun.

The publication of this booklet is a joint effort of the Yin-Shun Foundation and the Buddhist Association of the United States (BAUS). *Gateway to the Dharma* is expected from the press in September and will be available for free distribution.

Bodhi Kids for Friendliness Program...Fall Session to Begin

Ages: 4 - 13 years old **Time:** 9:50-11am

Dates: Saturdays, Sep. 13 & 27, Oct. 9 & 23, Nov. 6 & Nov. 20

Info/Registration: Duke DeGroat 973 940 0711 or email, duke@thedukeagency.com

Bodhi Monastery began its *Bodhi (Enlightenment) Kids for Friendliness Program* this past year and is about to begin its Fall 2004 Session in September. One of the monastery's missions is to "Nurture the Buddhist values of compassion, tolerance, and non-violence." And to those ends the monastery wants to share the universal teachings behind these common-sense ethics with the children of the lay community as well as their neighbors' children.

Bodhi Kids' goal is to promote a lifestyle for children based on the virtues of loving-kindness, respect, compassion, honesty, and contentment – simply by guiding the kids to use their minds to understand the effects of wholesome and unwholesome conduct.

Classes promote loving-kindness and respect for all sentient beings... whether they be large or small, short or tall, near or far, seen or unseen! The children are taught to be content with life in happy times, sad times, and ordinary times, as well as to be content with what they have and what is offered to them.

It is a multi-cultural program (they may even learn a little Chinese!) taught by some of the lay people with monastic guidance. Duke DeGroat, one of the teachers, explains, "The kids are taught values through creative processes such as art, reading, writing, singing, discussion, exercise, and most importantly, deep-listening... and they have fun while at it."

Bodhi Kids is open to all children from any religious background. After class the kids and parents are welcome to join the vegetarian lunch at 11:15 am. There's plenty of pizza for the kids!

September/October Dharma Schedule

- **NEW: Saturday Morning Study Groups**
- **Students Still Welcome to Join Bhante's Sutta Study Class "Exploring the Word of the Buddha" Tuesday Evenings**

SATURDAYS:

9:50 - 10:40 am	Study Groups/Lectures
10:45 - 11:15 pm	Work period
11:15 - 12:15 pm	Lunch and cleanup
12:40 - 1:30 pm	Dharma discourse by Ven. Bodhi, Ven. Xin-Xing or guest lecturer
1:45 - 2:35 pm	Dharma discussions
2:45 - 4:45 pm	Pali class

FIRST SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH:

9:50 - 10:30 am	Dharma discourse by Ven. Jen-Chun
10:40 - 11:10 pm	Devotional Service

(The rest of the schedule follows as above.)

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 Ven, Bodhi & Ven. Xin-Xing
10:00 - 11:30 am (dates to be determined)	Ven. Jen-Chun Dharma Talk at Ch'an Center

WEEKDAYS:

Tuesdays, 9:50 - 10:50 am and 1 - 2 pm	Madhyamaka Philosophy with Ven. Jen-Chun (in Chinese)
Tuesdays, 7 - 8 pm	Sutta Study Class with Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi (in English)

DAILY:

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

Bhante's 10-Lecture Series "The Buddha's Teaching As It Is" Now Available Online as MP3 Files

Please go to our website for more detailed information on this series of lectures.

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BODHI MONASTERY

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Please contact us for more information on any of our programs: 973 940 0473 or info@bodhimonastery.net

