



NanHua

Monthly NEWSLETTER

2008 BLIA 12th General Conference at Fo Guang Shan in Kao Hsiung, Taiwan, Oct 4-11 2008. (page 2)

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Take Delight in Shared Joy

By Venerable Master Hsing Yun

Sharing joy with others is not only a virtue, it is also a delightful experience. To take delight in shared joy is to give willing support to those who are compassionate in helping the needy; it is to give genuine praise to those who have dedicated themselves to the highest achievements in life. If we want to be successful in this world, we must cultivate the important virtue of feeling happy when others have done what we cannot do ourselves. The Buddha once said, "If there were really no differentiation between the self and the other, there would be no discrimination between merit acquired from good deeds."

Unfortunately, in today's society there are too many people who take pleasure in the misfortune of others. Instead of practicing the virtue of shared joy, they choose to criticize at will and impart unwarranted abuse. Instead of praising the charity of others, they remark sarcastically that it is just a drop of water in the vast ocean or it is just a boastful act. It is indeed very sad to see that society in general has become so deprived of amiable feelings. It is not surprising that there are very few virtuous people and even fewer virtuous acts.

Something has definitely gone wrong in our society when the majority of our fellow human beings are lacking a good and agreeable nature. Instead of hoping for a better future, it seems like everyone is content waiting for doomsday to approach, when everything in this world will be reduced to nothingness. Why do people indulge themselves in jealous sarcasm and baseless slander?



Do we really want to see the end of civilization or the end of our race?

What we need to do is to cultivate and practice the virtue of shared joy, to give encouragement and exaltation as often as possible. Instead of feeling jealousy or envy, we should instead feel happy for others when they encounter good fortune. Instead of pity, we should be compassionate and helpful toward those who are less fortunate. Instead of criticizing, we should praise other's good deeds no matter how trivial they might be.

If we really wish to better our country and society, it is imperative for us to foster the virtue of shared joy. We should be willing to cast our vote for political candidates who are dedicated to serving people. We should be happy to give our contributions to those who are devoted to helping the needy. Where there is a need for volunteers, we should put forth all our efforts toward the common goal; where there are good deeds, we should selflessly promote them to achieve a more far-reaching effect.

Since the world of shared joy is a delightful place to be, we should strive to develop the habit of imparting praise, doing good deeds, and supporting worthy causes. If everyone in society can be amiable and pleasant, it will create an atmosphere of great peace, harmony and happiness for all the world's people.



Buddha's Light International Association General Conference 2008 Report www.blia.org

By Moody reporting on his visit to:
Fo Guang Shan Headquarters in TAIWAN,
Kaoshiung City from 4-8 October 2008

2008 BLIA WORLD CHAPTERS CONFERENCE By Siphoh



This year so far has been wonderfully exciting for me, as I attended this Conference in Taiwan for the second time.

Day one was a welcoming day. Everyone was greeted with a big smile and felt joy to get back home again. Moving songs were sung at Fo Guang

Shan Headquarters.

The keynote speech for the Conference, was given by Venerable Master Hsing Yun and was entitled "Bodhisattva and Volunteer". Grand Master Hsing Yun began by saying that the 21st century is a time of technological advancement. Nevertheless, an even greater accomplishment of humanity is the volunteers found across the globe. They dedicate themselves to helping people and benefiting society. Grand Master emphasized;

The Bodhisattva is a volunteer for sentient beings, whilst a volunteer is a bodhisattva for the world.

A Bodhisattva reverses route to deliver sentient beings, whilst a volunteer cultivates him/herself to achieve bodhi wisdom.

A Bodhisattva is always a ferry in the ocean of suffering, whilst a volunteer is an unrequested helper.

A Bodhisattva encounters different stages of spiritual cultivation, whilst a volunteer faces different levels of dedication.

In conclusion Grandmaster Hsing Yun urged that "Everyone be a volunteer" meaning that the Buddha and Bodhisattva spirit be realized. The end of the closing day was marked by Grand Master Hsing Yun receiving gifts from different chapter's delegates and a performance from the Chinese Opera.

I now wish to express my thanks to the Nanhua Buddhist Temple for giving me this opportunity of attending Buddha's Light International Association General Conference 2008.



The opening ceremony for this event was held at Kaoshiung City, in the new sports Arena. All BLIA Chapters were there. South African Chapters from Pretoria, Johannesburg, Bloemfontein, Durban and Lesotho were present.

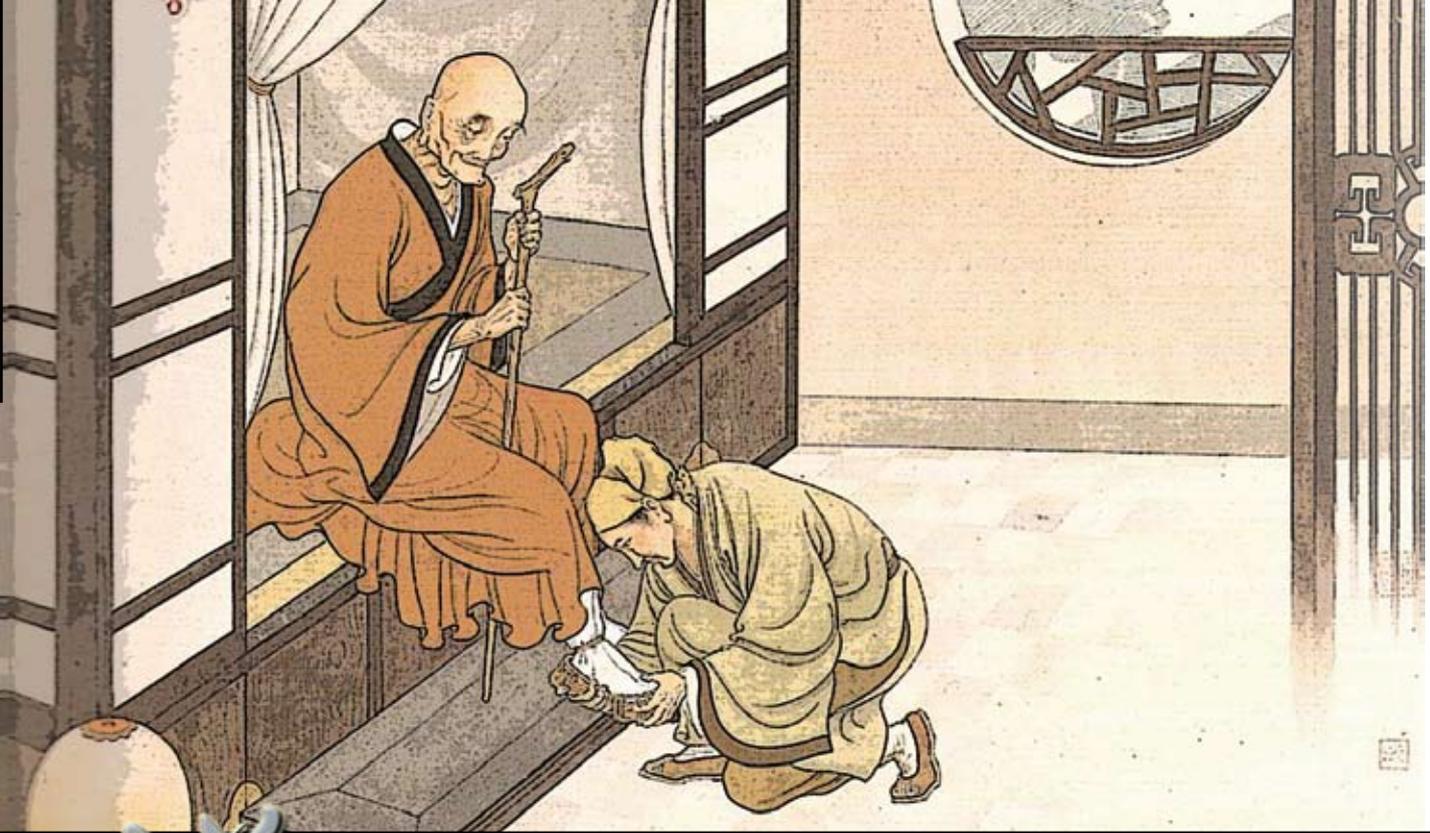
Nan Hua Temple was represented by Ven. Yi-Chun, Ven Hui Xing, Ven Yi-Kuan Siphoh and Moody. The BLIA President Grand Master Hsing Yun invited Taiwan President Mr. Ma to address the opening ceremony. As usual Grand Master was accompanied by Ven Hsing Ting and the Abbot of Fo Guang Shan, Ven Hsing Pei and other respected dignitaries and Government Officials.

Grand Master expressed his appreciation to all who took part in this event, especially those who had traveled far distances. Among other issues, he also updated us on the progress of the reconstruction of the Temple in Mainland China and gave a brief report about the rescue team who helped the victims of the earthquake in China.

There were awards and Certificates of Excellence. Siphoh from South Africa received a certificate on behalf of Ven Hui Rong for the best photo of Fo Guang Shan in the photographic competition.

On the 4th day of the conference, the Deputy President of Taiwan came to address the public on Humanistic Buddhism explaining that the government of Taiwan is willing to be involved in promoting religions, spirituality and culture.

I would like to express my appreciation to the Temple for giving me this opportunity to be part of the conference. I would also like to thank all Fo Guang Shan devotees and volunteers for treating us with love, respect and kindness.



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Chan's Story

Reform the Self

By Venerable Master Hsing Yun

Chan's Master Ryokan cultivated and practiced Chan his entire life, never wasting a single day. When he was old, news came from his hometown that his nephew was not engaged in any legitimate profession but was gambling, eating, playing around, and on the verge of squandering the family's wealth. The elders of his hometown hoped this Zen master uncle could show great compassion and save his nephew by urging him to repeat and turn over a new leaf.

In the end, because Zen Master Ryokan was moved by affection for his hometown, he made light of the hardship and walked for three days, returning to his childhood home. Zen Master Ryokan finally met the nephew whom he had not seen in many years. This nephew was very happy to be reunited with his monastic uncle and expressly asked him to stay for the night.

Zen Master Ryokan spent the night on the bed in his family's home in sitting meditation. The next morning, when he was leaving, he said to his nephew, "I suppose I really am getting old-my two hands are constantly trembling. Can you please help me tie the laces

of my straw sandals?"

His nephew was more than happy to lend a hand. Zen Master Ryokan said kindly, "Thank you. You see, when people get old, they decline day by day. You have to take good care of yourself. While you're young, you should be a good person and lay the foundation for your career."

After the Zen Master finished speaking, he turned and left. With regard to any of his nephew's unwholesome behavior, he did not mention a word. However, from that day forth, his nephew no longer led a life of debauchery.

The teaching method of Chan sometimes stuns with a blow or a shout; sometimes refutes by questioning insistently; sometimes does not determine having and not having; and sometimes hints at implied meanings. In short, Chan education does not directly point things out. Only that which is not directly pointed out to us is completely our own.

*To all parents who love and care about your children:
Can you understand this kind of Chan mind?*

This is an extract from the book *Chan Heart, Chan Art*, which can be purchased from the Curio Shop at Nan Hua Temple.



Emperor Liang Repentance Dharma Function 22-26 Oct

Twice a year Nan Hua Temple holds a very special Dharma function called Emperor Liang Repentance.

Historically, Emperor Liang initiated this ceremony approximately 1500 years ago. It was prompted by his wife, Chi Hui, who died at age of thirty after leading a life marked by jealousy and anger. After her death, she turned into a giant snake and was in purgatory. She came to recognize that she needed prayers from the sangha to expiate her sins and release her soul from the lower realms. Determined to save her, Emperor Liang requested Ch'an Master Bao Zhi and other high monastics to write ten chapters of the repentance. As a result of performing this ceremony, his wife was indeed released from her suffering.

Titled the Emperor Liang Jeweled Repentance, the repentance records and details the reasons behind his wife's transformation, providing examples of people affected by karma, stories about people receiving retribution, and what one can do to prevent it. The repentance also involves prostrations to a number of Buddhas.

This year the function took place from Wednesday 22 October 2008 to Sunday 26 October 2008. It started on a Wednesday evening with a Purification Ceremony for the whole Temple. The reason for this is to prepare everyone mentally and also to ensure that the atmosphere in the Temple is conducive to this event.

After the Purification Ceremony the reading of ten scrolls begins. Each reading takes approximately an hour and a half and there is a different offering made at the beginning of each reading. These offerings are intended to arise a mind of generosity in the participants and a willingness to look clearly at their own shortcomings with the intention of striving to correct these shortcomings in the future.

The ten offerings made are incense, flowers, light, water, fruit, tea, food, biscuits, ornaments, Buddhist teachings and clothing. Three scrolls are read each day, one in the morning, the second in the afternoon and the final reading takes place at night. Each evening there is a Dharma teaching given to the participants by Ven. Hui Fang (Abbot of Nan Hua Temple) and Ven. Hui Xiang (Registrar of African Buddhist Seminary) one of the Masters, explaining in more detail the teachings chanted through the course of the day.

During the early morning service, (which takes place at 06h00) it is customary to read a portion of the Flower Garland Sutra, containing the 10 Vows of Bodhisattva Samantabhadra.

On Sunday morning, board members of the Buddha's Light International Association (BLIA) from different parts of the country gathered at Nan Hua Temple to attend a workshop to share examples of their success in promoting Humanistic Buddhism through charitable, cultural and spiritual activities.

Another very profound and elaborate chanting service took place on Sunday afternoon, this being The Thrice Yearning Ceremony which was originally compiled by Venerable Master Chung Fung, an imperial teacher in the Yuan dynasty. The ceremony is based on the Amitabha Sutra and on Buddha-name chanting.

The Thrice Yearning Ceremony covers the three assets of the Pure Land school—Faith, Vow, and Practice. In the First Section, the practitioner works on building faith in the Pure Land School and on Buddha Amitabha. In the Second Section, practitioners are urged to make unwavering vows to be reborn in Pure Land. In the Third Section practitioners are urged to practice diligently and to be mindful of Buddha Amitabha.

A Prayer for the Repentance Service of Emperor Liang



By Venerable Master Hsing Yun

Oh great, compassionate Buddha!
Through innumerable kalpas,
We, ordinary beings,
Have created infinite unwholesome karma;
Thank you, Buddha,
For granting us the method for repenting
To wash away and cleanse our impure bodies and
minds;
To let us escape the prison of worries and suffering,
And start anew.

Like Ajatasatru, a king of Magadha
Who killed his father, King Bimbisara, and later repented,
And was able to eliminate such evil karma;
Like Empress Chi of the Liang Dynasty,
Who repented
And was able to avert suffering and obtain happiness;
Like Yuan Liaofan of the Ming Dynasty,
Who repented
And was able to obtain what he wished for;
Like Sun Qingyang,
Whose countenance became more elegant
Because of paying reverence.

They left anecdotes of repentance for the world to eliminate wrongdoings
And also established models of the courage to correct mistakes.

Oh great, compassionate Buddha!
“All the unwholesome karma that was created in the past
“By greed, anger, ignorance
“In innumerable kalpas,
“And from the body, speech, and mind:
“I now repent them all.”
In the life of this human world,
We often become slaves to love and affection,
Because our eyes indulge in all physical forms;
We often misunderstand our purity of intrinsic nature,
Because our ears grasp at sounds;
We often accept the mundane conditions of the world,
Because our nose cling to fragrance;
We often commit the boundless karma of wrongdoings,
Because our mouths speak harsh words;
We often encroach on others’ possessions,
Because our bodies desire worldly matter;
We often accumulate many worries,
Because our minds arouse greed, angry, and ignorance.
All these vices are truly deep, vast, and boundless;

Until now, recalling these, I have cried bitterly,
And am extremely ashamed and regretful;
I can only follow the model
Of the Repentance Service of Emperor Liang
To prostrate myself sincerely and openly state
My past karma of wrongdoings:
Please bless me with your great light;
Please protect and support me with your compassion:
To reinforce my strength;
To fortify my benevolent thoughts;
To allow my past wrongdoings to be quickly eliminated;
To allow my future wrongdoings to be averted.
From this day on:
I will learn to observe with eyes of compassion,
Eyes of wisdom, eyes of Dharma, and eyes of Buddha,
To clearly understand the true reality of the world;
I will learn to be a good listener, to listen attentively,
To listen to both sides, and to listen thoroughly, to prevent gossip;
I will learn to speak kind words, to go good deeds,
And to have good intentions to spread the seeds of “the Three Goods”;
I will learn to have regard for kindness and justice, morality and gratitude,
To promote the moral principles of “the Three Righteousnesses”

Oh great, compassionate Buddha!
Please give witness:
May all the merits of all good roots of repentance
Be transferred to Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi,
The unexcelled complete enlightenment.
May all sentient beings in the dharma realms:
Eliminate the hindrance of past karma,
And have all their senses be free from defilement;
Have no anxiety and have no anger.
And be happy and peaceful;
Be free from fear and be at ease without obstacles;
Be reborn in the Pure Land together and attain nirvana.

Oh great, compassionate Buddha,
Please accept my sincerest prayer!
Oh great, compassionate Buddha,
Please accept my sincerest prayer!



ABS students 7 Day Meditation Retreat

FEEDBACK

oct 13-19



Ben Ke

The concept of impermanence sustained my mind for the entire retreat. My body of course tired but my mind remained steadfast due to my observation of silence. When my mind wondered it was easy to pull it back. I learnt that life is meditation.



Ben Chan

During the retreat I learnt about impermanence and different methods of meditation like counting the breath, observing and concentrating on breath and the recitation of the Buddha's name. I hope to continue practicing these methods in my daily life.



Ben Ou

This retreat I was able to concentrate properly, my mind was stable and calm and I could feel the whole process at work. I now understand the concept of impurity as well as the concept of impermanence.



Ben You

It was a special retreat for me where I brought inner peace to myself. It helped me to calm my mind and see what is right and wrong. I enjoyed the dharma talks on impermanence and the impurity of the body. I am now able to see where I have improved.



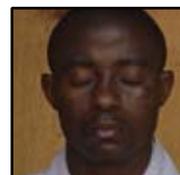
Ben Su

This retreat helped me to discover my scattered mind and made me realise that only when our mind is free can we change old behaviour patterns. All phenomena are temporary and observing silence leads to patience and eradicates problems arising from speech.



Ben Dong

I felt this meditation retreat was far more successful than the previous one. As a result of maintaining silence, I gained patience. The mind determines our happiness or misery and one must be wise to guard against disturbances and gain self-confidence.



Ben Dun

Through the observation of silence my mind really calmed and became clear. Although I experienced pain in my legs and back I overcome it through contemplating impermanence. Pain is something that comes and goes and is temporary.



Ben Quan

To be honest I failed to calm down my mind but this does not mean I have lost hope. I believe the more I practice the more I will improve. Meditation is not only sitting and walking but also practicing good deeds.



Ben In

While meditating I tried my best to calm my mind and concentrate on counting the breath but conflict arose between my mind and my determination to concentrate. I tried but did not manage to calm my mind. However, I observed my mind wonder and why it does.

for info about ABS *Novice Recruitment* go to www.nanhua.co.za

INFORMATION



SPIRITUAL CAMP FOR YOUTH AND CHILDREN

Youth camp- 7th to 11th December
Children's camp- 13th to 17th December

For more information please contact: Nan Hua Temple-
(013)-9310009 ext.306 or 297
Ven. Master Jue Kai- 082-676-4588
Mr Yen Lin Lai- 074-246-8668 YAD(Young Adult
Division)'s email- yad@nanhua.co.za



REFUGEE-TAKING CEREMONY IN THE TRIPLE GEM

Date : Thursday 1st January 2009
Venue : Fo Guang Shan Nan Hua
Temple
Time : Registration : 9.30am to 10am
Ceremony : 10.30am
Buddhist Seminar : "How to become a
Buddhist Follower –the Way to Buddha-
hood" : 1.30pm
For more information please see our
website :www.nanhua.co.za



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BEGINNER'S MEDITATION RETREATS 2008 December 13-14 2009 January 10-11
ADVANCED 7 DAYS MEDITATION RETREAT 22-28 December



Why Meditate

Everyone has experienced a state of deep calm, open awareness or contentment. Worries disappear, your mind is clear and focused. This is meditation.

With meditation you can learn to deliberately return to that clear and open state. You can also learn to relax quickly and effectively, improve concentration, and cultivate a deep sense of well-being and happiness.

What is Meditation

Meditation is a way of learning to relax your body whilst still keeping your mind alert. This happens quite naturally when we gently focus on something, maybe a sound, a sensation in our body or something that we imagine. It gives us a moment of space and freedom from the thoughts that endlessly go through our minds, and is a way of quite quickly and deliberately relaxing our bodies.

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FOREVER WITHIN by Saidi



I wish to express my sincere gratitude to all who have given me support in my life up to this moment. Though I don't know how many days may remain, it is wonderful to be alive. No matter how long I will make sure to use my days wisely and in a beneficial way as I believe the future belong to those who believe in the importance of their dream. It is possible but difficult to explain every process, everyone and everything that has helped me. Some people help me with material things like money and clothes, food and shelter. Other people help with courage, wisdom and spiritual knowledge and sadly there are those who discourage and scold with hateful words. These influences account for where I am today.

I was born into a poor family my father Muslim and my mother Catholic. My life was difficult and not enjoyable like many other children. Due to poverty and my environment, it was difficult to develop an open my mind. My expectations were the same as most young children; to go to school, get a job and if lucky be a farmer, get married and wait to die.

Sharing my life is not my aim but rather the wonderful path that I am now walking, the Buddhist path. This path is very different from the one I grew up on. It does not advocate a creator God teaching instead reincarnation to six realms of existence and developing the mind through meditation.

I knew nothing about Buddhism, only Islam and Christianity through my parents. My cousin Ben Wen (Zando) is the one who introduced me to the Buddhist Seminary in South Africa where he was a student. It was 1999 when he told me about Buddhism. At that time I was a serious student of Islam. Praying five times a day, Monday and Thursday, as well as the holy month of fasting (Ramadan). I spent most of my time in the mosque reciting Allah's name and reading books. I was a good practitioner and was not willing to be introduced to a new religion but my cousin insisted that I join him. I decided to pray to Allah and ask if it was important or necessary for me to go and study Buddhism. My request was simple, if it was to be beneficial then everything would work out and I would fulfill the necessary requirements. Fortunately

everything went smoothly. In 2001 I joined the Buddhist College belonging to the Fo Guang Shan Order (Chinese Buddhism) in South Africa. The course included subjects like religious study, computers, Chinese language and culture. It was not easy to understand the concepts because I did not want to let go or to open my mind to my new situation. So it took time for me to study and understand the teachings.

The road was long and I resisted every inch of the way. What I needed more than anything was patience, single-minded perseverance and faith.

In 2003 I graduated. The knowledge and wisdom I gained during these three years has changed my view of the world. I don't discriminate between religions or living beings, everything and everyone is important. It is difficult to separate myself from others yet it is also difficult to let go of the concept of I and the ego. The different knowledge and understanding I have gained from the three religions in my life has allowed me to resolve many conflicts.

"Man is born as a possibility, not as an actuality. He may become something; he may attain actualization of his potentiality or he may not attain. The opportunity may be used or it may not be used. And nature is not forcing you to become an actuality, one is free. One can choose to become an actuality or to do nothing about it. Man is born as a seed. Thus, no man is born fulfilled-just with the possibility of fulfillment"

I would like to thank all spiritual teachers and other people I have come across whether for a few seconds, days, weeks, months or years. I have learnt something from them all. Fo Guang Shan African Buddhist Seminary is a good example for other religious orders to follow by inviting people to participate and discover their path through spiritual study. I am sure the African Buddhist Seminary has helped a lot of people change their misconceptions about the world. Personally, I thank Fo Guang Shan's Order for their educational program and encourage other people to join the seminary.