

THE Purple Lotus



JOURNAL



Vajrasattva

True Buddha School's

Practice

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- The Symbolism of Vajrasattva
- Vajrasattva's One Hundred Syllable Mantra
- Buddha Shakyamuni is the Personal Deity for Purification
- Confidence of Attaining Buddhahood & Emptiness

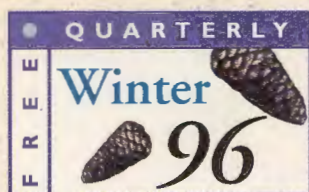


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Letter from the Editors

In this issue we focus on Vajrasattva, one of the most important deities in Vajrayana Buddhism. As Vajrasattva's energy can purify all impurities, Tantric practitioners begin their spiritual path with His practice.

Another powerful way to eliminate negative karma is with the Buddha Shakyamuni Practice on page 17. This is not a widely known practice, but it can allow one to clearly see one's past lives and to understand the resulting karma.

Another way to purify your past debts is to maintain a spirit of equanimity in the face of difficult circumstances as a prisoner in Illinois recounts on page 23.

During the weekend of the Annual 1996 Bardo Ceremony, Grand Master Lu gave several talks, two of which are summarized in this journal (pgs. 19 and 21). Also, in attendance of the Bardo ceremony was H.H. Ganden Tripa Rinpoche, spiritual head of the Tibetan Gelugpa Sect, who also gave a talk which is also briefly listed on page 22.

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Root Guru: H.H. Living Buddha Lian-sheng
Local Group Leader: Vajra Master Samantha Chou
Editorial Board: Janny Chow, Kevin Henderson, K.C. Ng, Hsiang Yuan Hsia

Layout Editor: Kevin Henderson

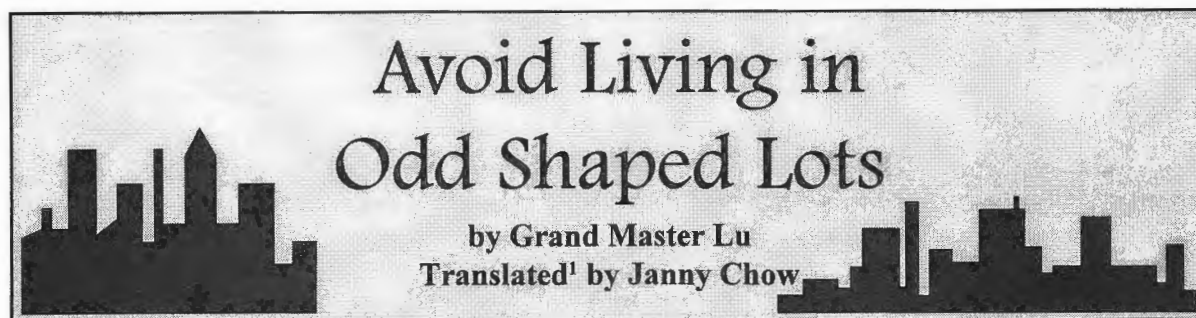
Cover Layout Editor: Ellen Hsu

Translation Committee: Janny Chow, Carmen Cheung, Bonnie Gruberman, Kevin Henderson, Hsiang-Yuan Hsia, Pamela Johnson and Kwok Choi Ng.

English Editorial Editor: Pamela Ziv Johnson

Subscriptions: Free. For subscriptions and changes in address, write the Purple Lotus Journal, 636 San Mateo Ave. San Bruno, CA 94066. Donations welcome.

Printed in the United States of America.



What are odd shaped lots? Odd shaped lots are incomplete or fractional lots. In terms of the five elements:

- round shaped lots are associated with metal,
- rectangular lots with wood,
- ⚡ broom or irregularly shaped lots with water,
- △ triangular lots with fire,
- and square lots with earth.

In urban areas, most of the odd shaped lots are triangular or irregularly shaped, and neither of these is suitable for residence.

It is difficult to design floor plans for triangular shaped houses, and the disorderly and asymmetrical pattern of irregularly shaped houses also poses problems to the design of a harmonious floor plan. In selecting lots, one should stay away from odd shaped lots, even though they may be cheaper. These kinds of lots invite noxious chi, and people living in them are gradually subjected to the same kinds of influences and may develop fragmentations. A comparison may be made between the shape of a house and that of a human being. An incomplete lot is analogous to a deformed person with missing limbs or facial features.

A triangular lot with one of its apexes positioned in the front invites "huo sha" [noxious fire energy], and its two sides, the left and the right, invite "feng sha" [noxious wind energy.] An irregularly shaped house, due to the presence of too many angles, invites harm to oneself, or may cause harm to others. Therefore, in purchasing a lot to build a home, one should look for a square, rec-

tangle, or circle, and stay away from odd shaped lots. An odd shaped lot may be considered for the construction of commercial buildings, as long as no one lives there.

A common element shared by most odd shaped lots is the presence of one or more protruding features. Protruding features or objects are associated with extremely strong energy forces, and inhabitants who live for a long time in such houses come under these influences and become extreme in their personalities. The magnetic or subtle energy field of such sites is "strong and chaotic" and may also increase the risk of accidents for the inhabitants.

People living in houses with strong magnetic forces do not experience peacefulness. If it is a commercial building, such as a bank, hospital, supermarket, or department store, (where there is a great deal of foot traffic,) then a strong magnetic force might actually be beneficial. An expert feng shui master would know the method to divert the excessively strong energy in an auspicious direction and thus bring more business to the merchants.

On the other hand, if the excessively strong magnetic force of an odd shaped lot is not directed in an auspicious direction, the strong force would attract scoundrels with ill intentions resulting in bank robberies, medical disputes, thefts and burglaries, and frauds which are most abhorred by businesses. A "dynamic force of vitality" indicates auspiciousness. In contrast, the occurrence of crimes such as arson, murder, rape, and lascivious behaviors at such properties is an indication of the presence of noxious energy.

If the strong subtle energy can be guided in an auspicious direction, it would result in a "dynamic vitality." If it is led, instead, to an inauspi-

¹ Translated from the fourth chapter of Grand Master Sheng-yen Lu's **Household Geomancy: A Detailed Explanation**, published in March, 1987.

cious direction, it would result in horrible crimes. An expert feng shui master would be someone who knows how to direct the earth chi.

I did a feng shui reading for a family who had built their house on an odd shaped lot. When I met them, the family was extremely down on its luck. The inhabitants had already been involved in five different car accidents, some of which were quite serious. Also, every member of the household displayed some kind of neurotic behavior. I noted that these harmful effects were caused by the triangular shaped house in which they lived.

The family members had hot tempers and were easily provoked into anger. The owner and his wife quarrelled every day, and their children were involved in gang activities. Such extreme behavior develops over time under the influence of noxious fire energy from the apex at the front, and noxious wind energy from the two sides of the triangle. The house was built in a triangular lot formed by roads intersecting on angles.

I noticed that the bedrooms were all pointed in the front and wide at the rear, due to the constraints of the house shape. I told the owner, "Your daughters will become men's mistresses."

"Master Lian-sheng, your psychic reading is extremely correct."

"It is not from my psychic reading. When one's bedroom is lopsided, one, of course, cannot become a legal wife but only someone's mistress," I responded. The owner's two daughters, who were quite beautiful, had both fallen in love with married men. Besides getting involved with gang members, they seemed especially attracted to married

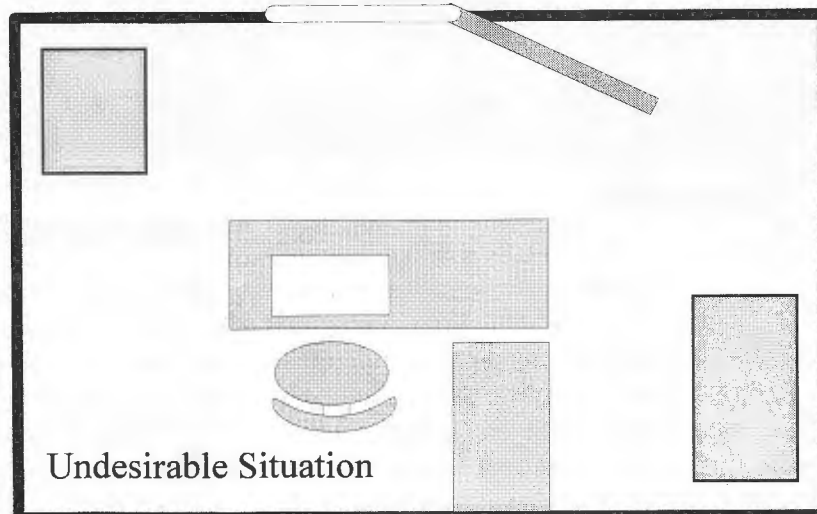
men.

"What is there to do?" The owner was quite sad.

"Do not continue to live on an odd shaped lot. It is better to move. Find a nice, quiet house somewhere else and convert this house into a shop. This would benefit both you and the house."

I, Living Buddha Lian-sheng, believe it is best to stay away from odd shaped lots because they possess both the characteristics of "fluidity" and "extremeness" which embody violence and chaos. Basically, if such lots are used for commercial buildings, an expert feng shui master should be consulted to ensure the proper guiding of the "chaotic chi" in an auspicious direction. If the "chaotic chi" is not carefully handled, it may bring violence instead of harmony. Such noxious disharmony can be extremely fierce — just thinking about it can make one shudder. ■

Feng Shui Tip



When positioning your desk, you should not have a door either directly in front or behind the desk. In these positions, your "chi" will be disturbed constantly by the thrust force of outside "chi" coming through the door and striking you directly. Such disturbances will distract your concentration, effecting your grades or business.

Having a solid wall right behind your chair will block the incoming chi and slow it down. This action transforms the outside chi into a powerful Chi that supports your own Chi. This assisting energy will help you with your studies and work. (Caution: you should avoid to sit in front of a large window because all the chi will vanish through the glass instead.)

Compiled by Sunny Chen

The Symbolism of Vajrasattva

by Lian Hua Daniel Bristol

Vajrasattva is one of the most important deities of Vajrayana Buddhism. He is the second patriarch of the Vajrayana tradition. Many sacred texts tell the legend of the Iron Stupa, which Nagarjuna opened by casting eight, white, poppy seeds at its gates. He entered, and there he beheld Vajrasattva, from whom he received the transmission of the Dharma.

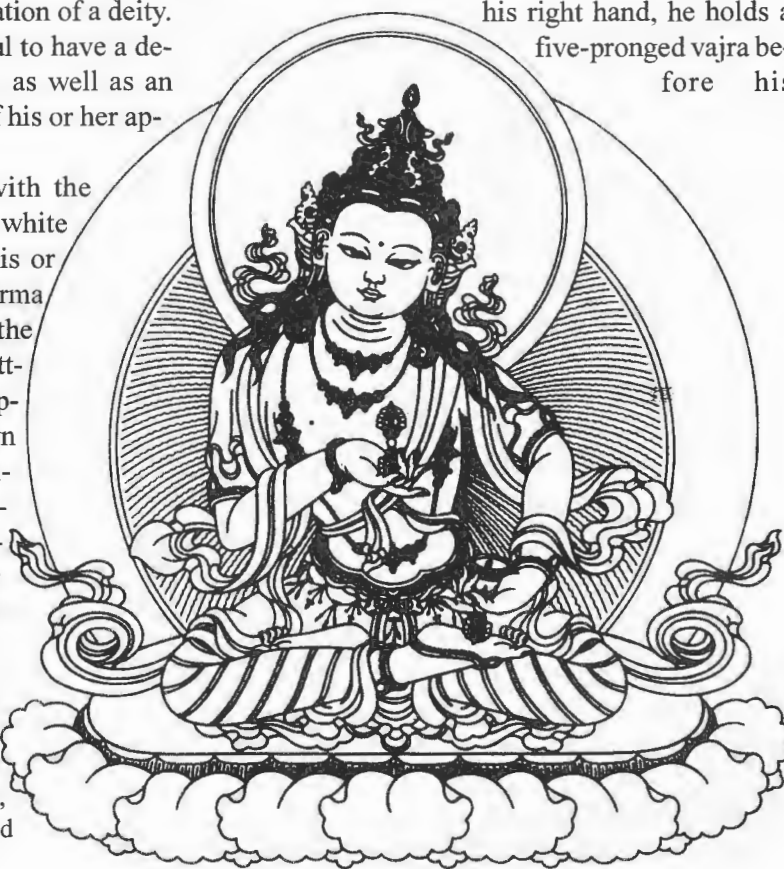
Vajrasattva embodies the purity of the Buddhas and symbolizes the union of the Five Dhyani Buddhas¹. Relying on him and practicing his sadhana, we continuously reveal more and more of our own Buddha Nature. The main part of many Vajrayana practices is the visualization of a deity. Before we do this, it is very helpful to have a description of the deity in question, as well as an understanding of the symbolism of his or her appearance.

The visualization begins with the practitioner visualizing an open white lotus suspended in space above his or her head. Every aspect of the Dharma is in some way representative of the whole. The same is true of Vajrasattva's appearance. The white lotus represents the unfolding of our own Buddha Nature, which is intrinsically pure. Upon this lotus, one visualizes the disc of a full moon, perfectly white and round. Thus, our own true nature, essentially pure

and brilliant, is complete and perfect in itself. This is one of the wonderful qualities of all visualization practices: like the whole of the Dharma, each and every aspect is rich with meaning.

Upon the disc is visualized a 'hum' syllable which transforms into one's glorious root-guru, who embodies the inexhaustible wisdom and compassion of the Buddhas of the Three Times. He appears as Vajrasattva. Vajrasattva is white in color, as white as newfallen snow reflecting the light of a thousand suns. This symbolizes, once again, the intrinsic brilliance and purity of the Buddha Mind. He has one face and two hands. With

his right hand, he holds a five-pronged vajra before his



¹ Five Dhyani Buddhas are the five transcendent Buddhas from which all phenomena are derived. Their names are: Akshobya, Amoghasiddhi, Amitabha, Ratnasambhava, and Variocana.

heart. This is the vajra of awareness and emptiness, which are one and the same. With his left hand, he rests a bell on his left hip. This is the bell of appearance and emptiness, which are one and the same. Some deities appear holding only one or the other, the vajra or the bell. But Vajrasattva holds them both. Together, they symbolize skillful means and wisdom. The vajra is wisdom and the bell is skillful means.

Vajrasattva is adorned with the 13 Ornaments of the Sambhogakaya Buddha. These are the Five Silken Garments and the Eight Jewels. The Five Silken Garments are: a headband, an upper garment, a long scarf, a belt, and a lower garment. We visualize these garments as being made of silk because, since time immemorial, silk has been considered the most noble and elegant of cloths. Kings and queens wear robes and gowns of silk. And, although Vajrasattva is a Buddha to whom silk and coarse sack-cloth are the same (because he is without pride and full of equanimity), he is, nonetheless, a Buddha, the most noble of beings. When we give gifts of clothing to a Buddha, they must be of the finest materials. We do not offer them filthy rags, or cloth made from artificial materials (such as polyester). Silk is a natural material, spun by the silk-worm. Therefore, we visualize Vajrasattva in beautiful silken garments to show our respect, and as an expression of his innate nobility.

The Eight Jewels are: a crown, earrings, a short necklace, a pair of armlets, two long necklaces (one coming down to the breast and the other to the navel), a pair of bracelets, a ring on each hand, and a pair of anklets. These are all of gold. Why? Gold is the solar metal; that is, it corresponds to the sun. It could be said that gold is sacred to Mahavairocana, since his name means "Great Sun." Gold is the most precious of metals, not only because of its lustre, but also because it does not corrode. Thus, our own Buddha Nature does not decay or corrode, for it is beyond the reach of change and it is at the center of all things, just as the Sun is at the heart of our Solar System. It could be said that, by virtue of wearing ornaments made of gold, Vajrasattva is "clothed with the sun," and he wears them in honor of Mahavairocana, from

whom he received the Dharma. We envision Vajrasattva wearing gold out of respect, in honor of his nobility and lineage.

By the deceptively simple act of visualization, we are performing a powerful act. We are not creating something that was not there before. Rather, we are revealing the deities to ourselves, from ourselves. We must offer them our very best in visualization. By visualizing Vajrasattva in this way, we are not only making an offering of silks and gold to a Buddha, but we are also revealing our own true and inexhaustible wealth, our inherent richness.

It must be remembered that the body of Vajrasattva is an "empty appearance," clearly perceptible but without any material substance, like reflections of the moon in water. It is empty, not composed of flesh and blood, but as real as the mind. It is like a rainbow appearing in the sky, or a magical city amid the clouds. Yet it is endowed with real wisdom. Lord Vajrasattva is identical with one's own compassionate root-guru, and his mind reaches out with great love to all sentient beings. ■



Vajrasattva with Consort

VAJRASATTVA'S 100-Syllable Mantra

Compiled by Yuan Zheng Tang¹

THE POWER OF THE 100-SYLLABLE MANTRA

The 100-syllable mantra is a mandatory practice for every Vajrayana practitioner. The Vajrasattva Practice of the Four Preliminary Practices is the root tool for the eradication of bad karma. Vajrasattva is the prince of all Buddhas, whose 100-syllable mantra can dissolve all the bad karma which one has accumulated throughout all time.

The Living Buddha once taught us, "By reciting the 100-syllable mantra at the end of each practice, all mistakes or omissions made during the practice will be corrected and brought to perfection, like the brilliance radiating from a full moon. One will be forgiven by the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. A regular recitation of this mantra gives the significance of repentance, eradication of karmic obscurations, curbing the numerous evil thoughts and nipping evil thoughts in the bud, destroying all worries, subduing all maras and evils and causing all maras and evils to flee, and increasing one's merits and virtue."

The 100-syllable Repentance Practice of Vajrasattva is the greatest amongst all repentance practices, such as the Water Repentance, the Emperor Liang Repentance, the Great Compassion Repentance, and the Lotus Sutra Repentance — all of which are methods of "causal" significance. Only the 100-syllable Repentance Practice is of "fruitful" significance. By chanting the 100-syllable mantra, you will achieve three types of fruition, namely that you will know your self-nature is pure, that your self-nature is truth, and that your self-nature is vast. By these fruitions, you will undo the causes of your negative karma.

¹ This article is adapted from pgs. 16-17 of the Perfect Enlightenment Journal No. 2, published in April, 1992 by Yuan Zheng Tang in Singapore.

It was mentioned in *Torch of Certainty*, "The 100-syllable mantra of Vajrasattva is praiseworthy for its greatness, the best amongst all remedies for eradicating the unwholesome karma. By chanting the mantra, one will reap the countless instant and substantial benefits."

ALLUSION TO THE 100-SYLLABLE MANTRA

Prior to this present age (kalpa), a Brahmin, Conch-pearl, was an adept in the Five Sciences. One of his disciples, a prince, had mastered everything Conch-pearl taught him, and his achievement was the same as his teacher's. Out of jealousy, the prince set out to harm his teacher, Conch-pearl.

On knowing the intention of his disciple and his impending betrayal, hatred arose from within the heart of Conch-pearl, and he cast an extremely vicious vow. Eventually, Conch-pearl was killed by the prince and, as a result, the prince fell into the realm of hell. Due to his hatred and his vicious vow, Conch-pearl also fell into the realm of hell. Thus, both of them endured the great sufferings of the vajra hell.

Transforming Himself into the form of Vajrasattva, Samantabhadra Buddha descended to the realm of hell and taught both the teacher and the disciple the 100-syllable mantra, freeing them both from the sufferings of hell.

THE 100-SYLLABLE MANTRA

Om, be-dza-sah-do-sa-ma-ya, ma-nu-bah-la-ya,
be-dza sah-do deh-nu-bah-de h-cha, zhe-jo-mi-bah-wa,
soo-do-ka-yu-mi bah-wa,
soo-poo-ka-yu mi-bah-wa,
an-nu-la-do-mi-bah-wa,
sa-er-wa, sid-di, mi-bu-la-ya-cha,
sa-er-wa, ka-er-ma, soo-cha-mi, ji-ta-moo; see-

li-yam, gu-ru-hum, ha ha ha ha hoh,
 bah-ga-wan, sa-er-wa, da-ta-ga-ta,
 be-dza-ma-mee-mun-cha, be-ji-ba-wa,
 ma-ha-sa-ma-ya, sah-do-ah, hum-pei.²

Translation :

Om Vajrasattva, please keep your vows!
 Vajrasattva, empower (reside in) me and
 make me firm [in my Buddha nature]!
 Make me satisfied [via the bliss of the
 Dharma Realm],
 Be favorable,
 Be nourishing for me!
 Grant me all the magical attainments!
 Indicator of all karma :
 Make glorious my mind.
 Hum! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Hoh!
 Blessed One, Diamond of all the Tathagatas:
 Do not forsake me; make me as a diamond!
 Great being of the vow AH!

Meanings :

1. Self-nature is pure: one's own Buddha nature is essentially pure, which is the fruit of cultivation.
2. Self-nature is truth: the most important point in the 100-syllable mantra states that one's own true self-nature is eternally pure.
3. Self-nature is vast: one's own Buddha nature is essentially vast and immaculate.

As with any mantra there are many levels to the meaning of this mantra. As a result, one should not become fixated upon any one translation of the mantra. For example, each of the syllables in the 100-Syllable Mantra also represents the One Hundred Peaceful and Wrathful Deities in the Bardo State. By practicing with an open mind, the deeper levels of the mantra will be revealed.

IN PRAISE OF THE 100-SYLLABLE MANTRA

*Whoever chants the 100-syllable mantra
 Will have all sicknesses cured,
 His sufferings ended,*

² Grand Master Lu's pronunciation of the mantra.

And his mind and body will rest in ease.

*Whoever chants the 100-syllable mantra
 Will be free from poverty,
 Will have his bad luck turn into good,
 And all his wishes fulfilled.*

*Whoever chants the 100-syllable mantra
 All lands and substances,
 Are offerings,
 Following him, their master.*

*Whoever chants the 100-syllable mantra
 When his life is spent,
 It shall extend,
 And finally, in the Pure Land, will he be
 reborn.*

*Whoever chants the 100-syllable mantra
 Maras will take refuge in him,
 Their evil troops will flee,
 And all will be tamed.*

*Whoever chants the 100-syllable mantra
 Even the most wicked,
 Who committed the Five Major Transgres-
 sions,
 Will repent with honesty.*

*Whoever chants the 100-syllable mantra
 Will be a king in this life and in the next life,
 Will also become a Dharma King,
 And will finally be emancipated from the fet-
 ters of cyclic existence.*

*Although the practice of dharani, mantra,
 mudra, stupa and mandala,
 Will result in the five transcending wisdoms,
 The merits so accumulated,
 Are far less than one recitation of the 100-
 syllable mantra.*

*Whoever chants the 100-syllable mantra
 Amasses merits equivalent to
 Adorning the countless Buddhas,
 As numerous as the grains of sands and parti-
 cles of dust. ■*

The True Buddha Vajrasattva Practice

By Grand Master Sheng-yen Lu

Translated¹ by Janny Chow

One of the Four Preliminary Practices of Vajrayana is the Vajrasattva (Diamond-Heart) Practice. This practice is the most important of the Four Preliminary Practices and is considered to be one of the required courses in Tantric cultivation. The Vajrasattva Hundred Syllable Mantra in this practice has to be recited at least one hundred thousand times.

The Vajrasattva Practice is significant for the following two reasons:

- 1) It can eradicate all transgressions and negative hindrances from time immemorial.
- 2) It can strengthen the resolutions and vows of the Tantric practitioner to become as firm as the vajra (diamond).

Living Buddha Lian-sheng has said, "The origin of the Vajrasattva is no small matter. Transformed from the union of the Five Dhyani Buddhas, the Vajrasattva is a great, pure, white Light. There is a profound and mysterious meaning in the manifestation of this greatest envoy of Vajrayana. Some practitioners just concentrate on the Vajrasattva Practice, taking the Vajrasattva as their Personal Deity, and are able to attain the Great Heart of the Vajrasattva. The Great Heart of the Vajrasattva is as firm and indestructible as the vajra."

Living Buddha Lian-sheng says, "In Mahayana, among the fifty-two levels of the development of a Bodhisattva, the fifty-first level is called Equal Awakening. This *Awakening* is equivalent to a Buddha, and a Bodhisattva of this level has already surpassed the Tenth Stage [Dharma Cloud Stage, the highest stage of Bodhisattva]. Thus this Bodhisattva can be regarded as

a Buddha and his name is Vajrasattva."

Living Buddha Lian-sheng regards Vajrapani as the second Patriarch of Vajrayana, and Vajrapani is actually Vajrasattva. They are just different names for the same Deity.

Many people look down upon the Four Preliminary Practices, considering them to be minor practices. But I know that the Vajrasattva Practice is a main practice. In fact, it is an unexcelled practice.

Quite a few American disciples who have taken refuge in Tibetan tulkus have told me that they had been practicing Tantric Buddhism for eight to ten years, and the highest level practice they had reached was the Vajrasattva Practice.

One of my refuge students, Rinpoche



Vajrapani

¹ Translated from the fourth chapter of **True Buddha Dharma: The Actual Practice** published in 1986.

Tharchin the Tenth, a Tibetan Tulku of the Nyingma sect, told me that most beginning American students are required to practice the Four Preliminary Practices, among which the Vajrasattva Practice is the highest. Thus American students of the Vajrayana all know how to recite the Vajrasattva Hundred Syllable Mantra.

The True Buddha Vajrasattva Practice is as follows:

Enter the tantric shrine and perform Great Homage.

Sit down and recite, with both palms joined:
"Namo the Holy Red Crown Vajra Master Living Buddha Lian-sheng." (Three times)

Recite the Fourfold Refuge Mantra:
Namo Guru bei. Namo Buddha ye. Namo Dharma ye. Namo Sangha ye. (Three times)

Recite the Four Immeasurable Vows:

May all beings have happiness and the causes of happiness; this is immeasurable loving kindness.

May all beings be liberated from suffering and the causes of suffering; this is immeasurable compassion.

May all beings be free of suffering and always stay happy; this is immeasurable joy.

May all beings be free of grasping and aversion towards others and develop faith in the equality of all who live; this is immeasurable equanimity."

Recite the Bodhicitta Mantra:

Om, bo-dee-gee-da, be-dza, sa-ma-ya, ah-hum. (Three times)

Recite the Repentance Verse and Mantra:

"All my transgressions committed since time immemorial, which originate in beginningless greed,

Vajrasattva and Vajrapani

In the Japanese esoteric sect [Shingon], Mahavairocana is the primordial Buddha and Samantabhadra Bodhisattva is his active reflex, or Dhyani Bodhisattva. Vajrasattva is one of the emanations of Vairocana. The Emergence Chapter of the All Buddhas' Realm Reality Sutra shows the relationship between these beings and how Vajrasattva is also Vajrapani, the Secret Master of the Vajra Mantra.

The passage in the sutra begins, "At that moment, Mahavairocana Tathagata, residing at the Samantabhadra Heart, entered into the Samantabhadra Samadhi of all Buddhas and engendered the Vajrasattva Expansive and Dignified Samadhi. Emerging from the Samadhi, this secret mantra was born from His Heart: Om Fu La Sa Tan Po.

At the moment, Vairocana was speaking of the Buddhas' Realm True Yoga Secret Heart Dharma, six kinds of tremors were felt throughout the Universe. Vairocana told the assembly, "The Profound and Wonderful Dharma I just taught is the Heart of Hearts of all Buddhas of the Three Times. It contains all Buddhadharma and all Buddhadharma comes from it. This Dharma is known as the All Tathagata True Realm Great Vehicle Yoga Subtle Twin Dharma. It is the Heart of all Tathagatas, and the most victorious secret of all Vajra Mantras."

At that moment, from the Hearts of all Buddhas, this Dharma emerged and transformed into countless perfectly round

moon discs. These perfect, full moon discs enable the Bodhi-hearts of sentient beings to become pure. From these moon discs, countless Great Wisdom Vajras of all Tathagatas manifested. After emerging from the full moons, the vajras entered again into the Heart of the Vairocana Tathagata. Relying upon the Solid Power of the Vajrasattva Samadhi and the Great Expansive and Dignified Power of all Tathagatas, the Vajras transformed into a five-pronged Vajra Sceptor embodying the firm and strong wisdom of the body, speech, and mind of all Tathagatas. Emerging from the Hearts of all Buddhas, residing on both palms of the Vairocana Tathagata, and relying upon the Samantabhadra Samadhi and the subtle and strong integrating power of the Vajra Samadhi, the body of the Great Samantabhadra Bodhisattva appeared.

At that moment, the Great Samantabhadra emerged from the Heart of Vairocana Tathagata to face all Buddhas. Sitting on a sun disc, his right hand held a vajra sceptor which rolled inside his palm. At that moment, Vairocana entered into the Great Vajra Indestructible Wisdom Samadhi of all Buddhas and transmitted the Vajra Mudra from his two hands to Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, while all Tathagatas empowered him with the name of Vajrapani. At this moment, the Vajrapani Bodhisattva Mahasattva rolled in his palm the vajra scepter he had obtained, placed it next to his heart, and spoke the following verse:

This is the Most Victorious Vajra Siddhi of all Tathagatas,
 The Buddhas have transmitted the two hands to me,
 And from the formlessness, form arises to benefit all beings.

**hatred, and ignorance,
And which are manifest through my body,
speech, and mind,
these I fully confess and repent of them
altogether."**

"Om, be-dza, sa-ma-ya, soo-deh-ah."
(This mantra can be recited as many times as possible.)

At the end of the Repentance Mantra, one can dip one's fingers into some *Great Compassion Mantra Water*² or *Kundali Raja Mantra Water* and sprinkle the water to the four quarters of east, south, west, and north. One then also takes a sip of the water to indicate the purification of "East, South, West, North and Center." (The Great Compassion Mantra water or Kundali Raja Mantra water should be prepared ahead of time.)

Form the Mudra: "The right hand holds a fist, with the thumb over the index finger and the fist facing inward. The left hand holds a fist, with the index finger over the thumb and facing outward." Hold the mudra in front of the chest³.

First empty the mind.

Visualize from the Empty Space the appearance of Vajrasattva. His body is white, and he is adorned by a Five-Buddha Crown and the bodhisattva ornaments, necklaces, etc. Sitting on a Moon Disc supported by an eight-petalled lotus, the Vajrasattva holds, against his heart a vajra scepter in his right hand (in the Fierce Mudra) and, by his left thigh, a vajra bell in his left hand (also in the Fierce Mudra). At the level of his heart is a recitation wheel containing, around the circumference, the Hundred Syllable Mantra. This wheel revolves and radiates brilliant white light.

This great white light arcs over and down, pouring through one's crown and flooding one's entire body. Thus one's whole body also exhibits a great white light, and impurities and negative karma are expelled as black smoke through all skin

² Water that is empowered by the Great Compassion Dharani, a long Kuan Yin mantra.

³ In public, Grand Master Lu taught to place the right fist before one's chest and the left fist near one's left thigh.

pores. One's body thus becomes crystal clear, radiating light. One enters into a state of joy in meditation.

Recite the Vajrasattva Hundred Syllable Mantra twenty-one times. (It is not necessary to hold the Mudra during recitation.)

"Om, be-dza-sah-do-sa-ma-ya, ma-nu-bah-la-ya, be-dza-sah-do-deh-nu-bah-de-h-cha, zhe-jo-mi-bah-wa, soo-do-ka-yu-mi-bah-wa, soo-poo-ka-yu-mi-bah-wa, an-nu-la-do-mi-bah-wa, sa-er-wa, sid-di, mi-bu-la-ya-cha, sa-er-wa, ka-er-ma, soo-cha-mi, ji-ta-moo, see-li-yam, gu-ru-hum, ha ha ha ha hoh, bah-ga-wan, sa-er-wa, da-ta-ga-ta, be-dza-ma-mee-mun-cha, be-ji-ba-wa, ma-ha-sa-ma-ya, sah-do-ah, hum-pei."

After reciting the Vajrasattva Hundred Syllable Mantra twenty-one times, one can visualize Vajrasattva transform into a point of white light which enters one's body through the crown of one's head and rests on the heart. The body, speech, and mind of Vajrasattva become the body, speech, and mind of the practitioner. The two are completely merged and united into one. The practitioner is transmuted into Vajrasattva.

In this moment of utmost importance, if one can, indeed, let one's body and mind turn completely into "Emptiness," then the Supreme Spiritual Consciousness will definitely enter into oneself. In other words, there will be the total union of the Supreme Consciousness of the Universe with the inner Light of oneself. This kind of extremely subtle and great union (yoga) is indescribable and beyond verbalization. This kind of unique achievement can only be experienced directly. Only people who succeed in this kind of union (yoga) will know what it is like and attain the True Realization.

Exit from Samadhi [deep meditation]. Make the following dedication:

**"Living Buddha Lian-sheng teaches the
Great Tantric practice,
Transforming Vajrasattva into Vajra-
Heart,**

**An authentic spiritual response when the
two merge into one,
Eradicating negative hindrances to attain
Purity."**

Perform Great Homage.
Exit from the tantric shrine.

Today, I want to tell everyone honestly, if one can learn all of the Four Preliminary Practices and receive responses in all of them, one is already attaining the Fruition of the Equal Awakening stage of the Bodhisattvas — this is the wonder of the True Buddha Tantric Dharma. Although these Four Practices are preliminary practices in Vajrayana, they are really the important foundation of all Tantras. In my opinion, when one attains authentic response through the Four Preliminary Practices, one becomes the Vajrasattva.

The True Buddha Vajrasattva Practice is the secret key to the eradication of time immemorial transgressions and negative hindrances.

The True Buddha Vajrasattva Practice results in the attainment of the Fruition of the Equal Awakening, which surpasses the Tenth Stage [Dharma Cloud] of Bodhisattvas.

The True Buddha Vajrasattva Practice is not just a preliminary practice; it is also a Personal Deity Yoga practice.

The key of the True Buddha Vajrasattva Practice is the visualization of the entering of great white Light and the expulsion of black smoke. The most important aspect is the unexcelled achievement of the union of the Vajrasattva and oneself. Thus, I write the following verse:

*Within the Preliminary Practices is a wonder-
ful vista,
Which alleviates hindrances as quick as a
flying arrow;
The achievement of Union through Visualiza-
tion of Emptiness is spectacular,
This is the Vajrasattva Hundred Syllable Prac-
tice. ■*

Lineage of Vajrayana

compiled by Yuan Zheng Tang

In His Dharma Realm Palace, Mahavairocana Buddha transmitted to Vajrasattva the lineage empowerment of both the Vajra Realm and Womb Realm, and entrusted Him with the important scriptures of the two realms. Vajrasattva then consolidated the scriptures into 10,000 stanzas each, which were later deposited into the Iron Stupa of South India. Eight hundred years after Shakyamuni Buddha passed into parinirvana, Bodhisattva Nagarjuna was born, as prophesied by the Buddha. During Nagarjuna's life, Buddhism was dying out in India, Grieving, Nagarjuna walked around the tower for seven days scattering seven white poppy seeds and praying. Finally the gate to the tower opened and Nagarjuna learned the Dharma from Vajrasattva personally, becoming the third patriarch of Vajrayana Buddhism, after Mahavairocana and Vajrasattva.



Nagarjuna (~2nd century) shown with
nagas (serpents) in his halo.

THE ANNOTATED TRUE BUDDHA SUTRA (CONT.)

by Grand Master Sheng-yen Lu

Translated¹ by Janny Chow and Master Kender Tomko

(9)

Incense Praise: The Censer is now lit, suffusing the Dharma Realm, and from afar the scent is inhaled by the True Buddha Assembly.

Auspicious are the gathering clouds, as we now request, with sincere and earnest hearts, that all Buddhas manifest.

Namo Cloud Canopy of Fragrance, Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas. (3 times)

Namo the True Buddha Assembly, all Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas. (3 times)

We sing this Incense Praise every time, as you know. Because you have offered the incense in this way, the scent rises far above, suffusing the whole Dharma Realm. Subsequently, all these offerings are received by the True Buddha Assembly. Your incense offerings fill up the sky like the auspicious gathering clouds. In response to the earnest and sincere request in your hearts, the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas manifest completely. What is "cloud canopy of fragrance"? That means your offerings, like the fragrant clouds, are pervading the sky like a canopy.

"Namo" [Sanskrit: "I call upon"] means taking refuge in all the great Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the True Buddha Assembly.

(10)

Evocation of the two Buddhas and Eight Bodhisattvas:

¹ Oral commentary on the True Buddha Sutra given by Grand Master Lu between October 1, 1988 and January 21, 1989 at the Ling Shen Ching Tze Temple, Redmond, Washington, USA. Translated by Janny Chow and Acharya Kender Taylor.

**Namo Vairocana Buddha of the All-Conquering Palace in Dharma Realm;
Namo Amitabha Buddha of Western Paradise;**

Namo Mahasattva Avalokitesvara;

Namo Mahasattva Maitreya;

Namo Mahasattva Samantabhadra;

Namo Mahasattva Vajrapani;

Namo Mahasattva Manjusri;

Namo Mahasattva Hindrance-Removing Bodhisattva;

Namo Mahasattva Ksitigarbha;

Namo All Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas;

The two Buddhas being evoked are: "Vairocana Buddha of the All-Conquering Palace in the 'Realm of Ultimate Truth'," and Amitabha Buddha of the Western Paradise. Some esoteric Buddhists consider Vairocana Buddha to be the Primordial Buddha which means the original source of all other Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. His title mentions an "All-Conquering Palace in the Realm of Ultimate Truth" and this may bring to mind the image of a very beautiful palace, perhaps like the Ah-Fang Palace of Emperor Qin (221-207 B.C.E.) that burnt down. However, what is mentioned here is the Dharma Realm. What is signified? The totality of all beings and existence, including the Fourfold Realm of Sages and the Sixfold Realm of Ordinary Beings. The realm of Fourfold Realm of Sages consists of the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Solitary Buddhas, and Arhats. The Sixfold Realm of Ordinary Beings consists of Heavenly Beings, Human Beings, Fighting Gods, Hungry Ghosts, Animals, and Hell Beings. Therefore, this palace is comprised of the entire Universe, all that can be seen and all realms of existence that cannot ordinarily be seen. The whole universe exists within this celestial palace.



Rinpoche Jime of the Gelugpa sect offering a kata to Grand Master Lu at Waken Rey Tseng Temple in Los Angeles. Master Allen Ho, director of the Temple looks on.

What is meant by "All Conquering"? It means that it is the ultimate, the perfect, the most harmonious, and most pervasive. We all know that the Vairocana Buddha is the Fundamental Buddha, the Primordial Buddha from whom the True Buddha School originates in terms of lineage transmission. So before reciting the scripture, we must first call upon the Buddha who originally transmitted these teachings.

Why then call upon Amitabha Buddha of the Western Paradise? Because Amitabha is the Buddha who requested Lotus Youth [Padmakumara] of the Great Twin Lotus Ponds to enter the human realm and transmit the True Buddha Tantra [Sanskrit: "esoteric yogic method of spiritual integration"]. Since Amitabha entrusted this mission to Lotus Youth, it is necessary that we call upon Amitabha. Were it not for the Buddhas Vairocana and Amitabha, there would be no True Buddha School today.

We must then call upon the Eight Bodhisattvas: Namoh Mahasattva Avalokitesvara, Namoh Mahasattva Maitreya, Namoh Mahasattva Akasagarbha, Namoh Mahasattva Samantabhadra, Namoh Mahasattva Vajrapani, Namoh Mahasattva Manjusri, Namoh Mahasattva Hindrance-Removing Bodhisattva, and Namoh Mahasattva Ksitigarbha.

Finally we call upon the totality of all Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas. This is due to the

very great affinity the totality of these Beings have with our True Buddha School. The Two Buddhas and Eight Great Bodhisattvas are the root lineage holders of the True Buddha Dharma, while the remaining bodhisattvas also come to listen and uphold the True Buddha Dharma.

(11)

**Sutra Opening Verse:
The most supreme profound
Dharma,**

**Is rarely encountered in
hundreds and thousands of
kalpas.**

**Having now received this transmission and
blessing,**

**I vow to penetrate the true meaning of
Tathagata.**

Next we will discuss the Sutra Opening Verse. It is found in every sutra. These few simple sentences are saying that such profound Dharma is rarely encountered. Today you have come upon it, and so should study, recite, and contemplate the meaning of the scripture from this moment onwards.

(12)

**The Sutra of Authentic Dharma that Removes Hindrances and Bestows Good Fortune,
Spoken by Living Buddha Lian-sheng.**

Thus Have I Heard.

Now we get to the sutra itself. The first sentence is "Thus have I heard." This is equivalent to saying "I heard this firsthand at a Teaching Assembly" [conducted by a Buddha]. This sentence is found at the beginning of every sutra, every Buddhist scripture. Some of you present are older than the Grand Master and some of you are younger. In the future, when I am no longer here, I cannot guarantee the elder students will still be present, while many more of the younger students will likely remain at my passing. Recently I have contemplated the significance of writing the eightieth book in my series of public writings. It is called **The King**

Don't Be Glum this Year of the Cow.



*Come to Purple Lotus to start the
Chinese New Year off Right.*

Feb. 7-13 Seven day Purification Practice 7pm (Fri-Thu)

Feb. 9 Purple Lotus Annual New Year Blessing Ceremony 2 pm (Sun)

Feb. 15 Seattle New Year Blessing Ceremony (Sat)

Feb. 18-21 Seven Acala and Seven White Jambhala Fire Ceremonies (Tues.-Thur.) (Times to be determined)

**636 San Mateo Ave., San Bruno, CA
(415) 952-9513**

of **Buddha Kings**, and the title may lead others to accuse me of plagiarism; a similar title, "King of all Kings" has already been used. But in fact, the approach taken in this book is very serious, with little levity. Actually, it is a rather profound and difficult work, for it contains the crucial formulas of the Buddhist spiritual discipline. With this book I have completed a major cycle in my spiritual writings. While I will continue writing in the future, I can now rest, as when having carried a knapsack for a very long distance one can then put it down.

I then remind myself that to take a very long break would mean "closing the act" at age forty-four, which would be a rather short life. In order not to leave so soon, it becomes necessary to involve myself soon in the eighty-first book project. This will be titled **The Liturgies of the True Buddha School**, and it will contain the rules and answers to many questions raised concerning litur-

gical practice. The publication date has not been determined. [This book has been published as of March, 1989.]

This eightieth book corresponds to a rest stop in my life, and I do feel that with the completion of this volume, I have fulfilled the primary mission of my present incarnation. Amitabha Buddha can take care of future concerns while I can approach my life without feeling so burdened.

In the future, any of you present who write concerning this teaching may begin with the classical phrase "Thus have I heard." For you are present in the Dharma Teaching Assembly during the original exposition, and others will be able to confirm this. When the followers of Buddha Shakyamuni collected his teachings together, they have placed this remark at the beginning of each book to signify direct reception of the original teaching. In this case, the classical opening phrase indicates that I myself was present at the Great Twin Lotus ponds of the Western Paradise, and at that time witnessed the teaching of the Great Being Lotus Youth.

The life of the individual results from many causes and develops through many rounds of death and rebirth. Actually, to be "born" or to "die" simply means that you disappear from here to reappear elsewhere. This is the basic meaning of transmigration.

I was present at the Great Twin Lotus Ponds in the Western Paradise among all others there. But I then transmigrated to the present life. Let me recall my age upon coming to the United States. I lived in Taiwan for thirty seven years and then I was "reborn" in the United States exactly seven years ago. Perhaps next year I will die to this life circumstance and be reborn in Indonesia! Or in Malaysia, or Singapore, or Australia! This is to say that transmigration is not extinction of the individual.

Life and death are intimately inter-related. Here you are born through transmigration from somewhere else, or vice versa. It is very peaceful to view the cycle of change in this way. When someone passes on you may cry in great bereavement due to a sense of personal loss, yet that individual may well have gone on to a far better exist-

ence. Therefore keep in mind this broader perspective.

(13)

"At one time, white Mahapadmakumara was present at the Maha Twin Lotus Ponds, sitting upon the Great White Lotus Dharma-Throne;"

What is meant by saying "At one time"? Even the very distant past is included.

There was once an aged Buddhist master known by the name "Sky Dragon Zen Master." Whenever people asked him existential questions, he always responded in the same way: he would silently raise his right index finger. He would respond thus when he knew the answer to a question, and even when he did not. Now, what does this signify? People were unable to understand such a response, and would ask him for clarification.

Sky Dragon Zen Master would reply by saying "Oneness is all-encompassing. The answer to your question is certainly to be found among this all-inclusive totality. So I can guarantee you that this is the right answer."

A person would ask, "Where is the Mount-Meru?" [This is the cosmological "world mountain" of the Hindus and Buddhists.] Sky Dragon Zen Master made this gesture, which indeed resembled a mountain.

When asked, "Where is the world?", he would respond the same, indicating that the entire universe evolves from the primal element [of akasha, or space]. And when asked, "What is the nature of the feminine?", or "How does one distinguish masculine from feminine?", Sky Dragon Zen Master made this gesture again of extending his right index finger upwards, because in the Great Heavens which transcend all duality there is no separation between masculine and feminine nature.

So this Totality encompasses Heaven and Earth, the mountains and waters, humanity and all else. The primordial state of being, the past, the present, and the future are all within this totality. That is why the old monk, when challenged with a difficult question, would raise his right index finger in response.

As it happens, a student of his began to imitate him in this. Sky Dragon Zen Master challenged

Seattle New Year's Blessing Ceremony

Teaching on the White Jambhala
and Acala Mantra Empowerment



To celebrate the Chinese New Year, Ling Shen Ching Tze Temple will hold a Blessing Ceremony on Feb. 15, 1997 at 10 am. After the ceremony, Grand Master Lu will give a blessing empowerment. That evening and the evening of Feb. 16 Grand Master Lu will give an empowerment and teaching on the White Jambhala Wealth Deity. An empowerment for chanting the mantra of the Acala, the fierce manifestation of Mahavairocana, will also be given.

Place: 17012 40th Ct. NE, Redmond, WA

Time: Feb. 15-16, 1997

Phone: (206) 882-0916

the student, who responded once more with an upraised index finger, and the enraged Master grabbed this finger, chopping it off with a knife. The Master then asked the howling student, "Where is your 'Oneness' now?" And it was only "this." [Here Grand Master holds up his right hand with the index finger folded in to represent a missing digit.]

The essence of Zen is not always explained or explainable in words and many related meanings are implicit in its principle. Thus you may ask me, "Grand Master, when exactly is this 'At one time'?" I tell you that one century, one millenium, one eon, ten eons or even a thousand eons are within the indicated time. "At one time" thus means at that one time, which includes all times.

"At one time, White Mahapadmakumara was present at the Maha Twin Lotus Ponds." The color white mentioned here is significant: white is the

union or sum of all colors. For example, there are simple demonstrations of physical science in which a multicolored wheel is spun around at high speed and the composite color is white, is it not? But if one of the colors of such a wheel is taken out then the resultant composite color is black.

However one may spin the wheel painted with such a full color spectrum, the result is the same, so white is shown to be the most complete color, from which all others derive. This is why Buddha Vairocana and his All Conquering Palace in the Primordial Dimension are represented by the color white.

Similarly, the principal Padmakumara in the Great Twin Lotus Ponds is white in color, because all Buddhas-to-be must engage the "White Purification Practices" before attaining Enlightenment. In other words, they must undergo purification to reach the ultimate goal of pure awareness, and this goal corresponds to the color white.

In a dharma talk just given by Master Cheng, it was explained that the goals of spiritual cultivation are to become "Emptiness" and "Nothing." What then is the color corresponding to these? The color white. To mix in any other color would represent a modification. Only white is truly pure. Therefore, the Great White Padmakumara is the principal deity at the Great Twin Ponds and he sits on top of the great white Lotus dharma-throne.

One student argued with me, "Grand Master, 'to sit on the great white lotus dharma-throne' will do, why use the phrase 'on top of'? [Translator's note: in the Chinese text, the phrase "upon" is literally "on top of."] One of course will only sit on top of the lotus and not under it, nor to one side. So the phrase is redundant..." I replied, "Please don't be unnecessarily critical! It is enough to understand that the Padmakumara is sitting on top of the Lotus dharma-throne. If you try to find minor faults like this, how can this sutra be written at all?"

(14)

Surrounding Him were seventeen other great lotus blossoms. The Green Lotus radiated green light, the Yellow Lotus yellow light, the Red Lotus red light, the Purple Lotus purple

light. Each lotus blossom was mysteriously wonderful, pure, and full of fragrance.

Surrounding this white lotus are altogether seventeen other great lotus blossoms. That student was indeed very confrontational. He said, "This paragraph also contains many redundancies, with the green lotus radiating green light, and so forth. Can the Grand Master be color blind? Does anyone expect the green lotus to radiate red light? And will the yellow lotus radiate green light? How did you manage to obtain your driver's license?" Actually, he was also trying to find fault. The seeming redundancy carries distinct meanings, for example that there is a lotus of a certain color, and then that the lotus radiates light of the same color.

Actually, the Buddhist sutras are replete with examples such as this: The green Lotus Youth holds a green lotus which is also radiating a green light and the whole surrounding becomes green. There are such precedents in the sutras to be followed. We are not being contradictory or redundant.

"Each lotus blossom was mysteriously wonderful, pure, and full of fragrance." This describes the mysterious wonders and fragrance of each lotus. Here fragrance represents purity and goodness. The "smell is good and clean." The phrase "mysteriously wonderful" is often encountered in the Buddhist sutras. It refers to a state wherein everything is extremely fine.

One True Buddha student is Shen Mui-chuen, who formerly lived in Tai-Chung, Taiwan. Her given name contains the word "wonderful" [i.e. the Chinese character "Mui"]. She did not originally fancy the name "wonderful" at all, and remarked, "A name is just a name, what is so 'Mui' about it?" When someone would call her, it was as though she were being mocked: "Wonderful? What is so wonderful about you? Your name is baffling, not wonderful." Since however she has taken refuge in the Grand Master, Mui has read many sutras and found that "wonderful" is very commonly found in Buddhist scriptures. Furthermore, the True Buddha School has a local chapter in California named Mui Yin Tong. So she thought to herself "Ah! This is just too wonderful! Mine is a fine name after all." And so she decided to not change her name. ■

Buddha Shakyamuni is the Personal Deity for Purification

By Grand Master Sheng-yen Lu.

Translated¹ by Janny Chow

Buddha Shakyamuni, the founder of Buddhism, was born on the eighth day of the fourth month under the Asoka tree in the Lumbini Grove². "Shakyamuni" means the sage born into the Shakya clan.

Buddha Shakyamuni's name was Siddharta. He was thirty five years old when he reached Enlightenment. Among the Buddha's first converts were the five ascetics headed by Ajnata-Kaundinya and the three brothers Kasyapa. Buddha Shakyamuni later went on to teach many other students, some of whom were kings. He often travelled to and fro and taught at the ancient kingdoms of Magadha, Kosala, and Vaishali. At about the age of eighty, the Buddha entered nirvana under the twin Sal trees by the river Vati.

From the book of Karma Yoga written in Pali, I learned that Buddha Shakyamuni was a Bhagavan Samyak-sambodhi³ Merit King and also a founder of religion in samsara⁴, and that within the esoteric school of practice, he is regarded as the Personal Deity for repentance and purification. This is a secret unknown to many Buddhists.

Many monks and students of Buddhism are aware of the numerous methods that can purify karmic hindrances, but they do not know that the

mantra of Buddha Shakyamuni holds a great secret power to purify karmic hindrances of the most severe kind. Most students know that teachings given by the Buddha when he was alive have been collected and formulated into the Hinayana and Mahayana scriptures, a cultural treasure of eastern civilization, but they do not know of this great esoteric secret.

According to the esoteric school's cosmic scheme, which consists of the static "womb mandala" and active "vajra mandala," Buddha Shakyamuni is a chief Deity in the womb mandala and shares the same position with Amoghasiddhi in the realm of vajra mandala. There is this passage in the Vairocana Sutra, "Shakyamuni's entire body displays a true golden hue and manifests in full glory the thirty-two marks of Buddhahood. With a yellow cassock wrapped around him, he sits atop a white lotus, expounding the Dharma accordingly."

From the Pali book of Karma Yoga, I learned that Buddha Shakyamuni taught many secret practices, and among them the purification practice was the greatest. Many people have asked me which purification method is the best. Although there are numerous purifying practices and it is hard to choose one, I have often told people to pick the Shakyamuni Merit King Practice!

This is the practice in detail:

Form the Buddha Shakyamuni Mudra by joining the two palms in a prayer



¹ Translated from p. 91 to 95 of **Tantric Magic: A Collection**, published in October, 1984.

² Buddha Shakyamuni lived and taught in the North-eastern portion of the Indian subcontinent. Thus, the trees, rivers, languages, places, etc. mentioned in this article are all of this area.

³ Bhagavan Samyak-sambodhi roughly translates as the Blessed One having the enlightenment of a Perfect Buddha.

⁴ Refers to this realm of cyclical rebirth that all sentient beings revolve within until achieving Enlightenment.

position, then bending the index and ring fingers inside the palms while the thumbs, middle, and small fingers remain upright.

After entering the shrine, sit quietly, maintaining the above mudra and perform the following visualization. Buddha Shakyamuni appears right in the center in front of one. He is sitting atop a white lotus, in a meditative state, and is enveloped by a peaceful light. His body is of a pure golden hue. While his right hand touches the earth, his left hand forms a meditation mudra that holds a bowl filled with nectar. Wearing a monk's three pieces robe, his face and crystal-like body display a full, majestic, and sparkling radiance.

Next visualize the nectar in the nectar bowl transform into a beam of white light, soaring up to the sky and arching over to descend to the spot where one is sitting. The white light enters one's crown and fills up the body. One then sits amid a field of white light.

As a result of the empowerment of the white light, black colored karmic hindrances ooze out of one's body and dissipate into the atmosphere. Such a visualization can eradicate sins and transgressions committed in numerous previous lifetimes.

After completion of the visualization, chant the "Buddha Shakyamuni Great Purification Mantra" 108 times:

"Na-mo-he-la-dan-na-zhi-ga-ni,
dan-ta-go-do-ye,
ah-la-ge-di-sam-myak-sam-mo-to-ye,
dan-ning-ta,
om-la-dan-ni-la-dan-ni,
su-la-dan-ni,
la-dan-nu-na-po-wei-mo-ho,
la-dan-na-zhi-la-ni,
la-dan-na-sam-po-wei-so-ha."

Chant this mantra 49 or 108 times in each practice. Practicing this way removes karmic hindrances amassed over thousands of eons.

Many people also ask me to give them "past-life readings." I would like these people to know that practitioners of the "Shakyamuni Merit King Practice" will very soon develop the power to read into their own past lives, which appear in front of

their eyes as if on a movie screen. By doing this practice, clear readings into karmic causes and consequences can be obtained.

As Buddhists, we know this about Buddha Shakyamuni. "He is also known as Gautama, born as a prince of the ancient Indian kingdom Kapilavastu. His father was Suddhodana, and his mother was Mayadevi. He took up the life of a renunciant in order to seek the Truth. Born in 623 B.C.E, he left his home at the age of 29, attained Enlightenment at 35, spent the next 45 years in teaching, delivered more than 300 discourses, and helped innumerable humans and devas [gods] to reach Enlightenment. At around 543 B.C.E, he entered nirvana at the age of 80."

When today's Buddhists give up their household life and enter into the monastic lifestream of the Dharma, they also give up their birth names and adopt the last name of Shakya. The origin of this custom may be traced to the Dharma Master Tao An of the Chin Dynasty who advocated such a changeover. As explained in the Agamas, "When rivers from the four directions flow into the ocean, they lose their names. When people of various names take up the vow of renunciation, they become the seeds of Buddha Shakyamuni." This is the reason why ordained disciples of Buddha Shakyamuni change their last names to Shakya.

The key to the Shakyamuni Merit King Practice is the visualization of the white light of the nectar. Doing this practice is tantamount to receiving an empowerment from Buddha Shakyamuni, who is instilling the Buddha's supreme wisdom through one's crown into the body, bringing all virtues to great perfection. Such a practice is, of course, the greatest method to purify karmic hindrances.

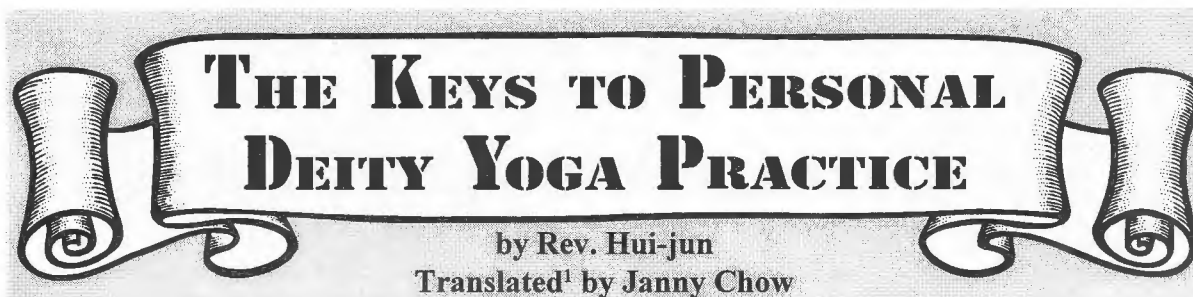
Here is a verse I have written for this practice:

How many lives are withering due to karmic hindrances?

Such an appalling human condition sends shivers to my heart.

By teaching the Great Esoteric Shakyamuni Practice,

May all reach perfection on the road of transmigration. ■



THE KEYS TO PERSONAL DEITY YOGA PRACTICE

by Rev. Hui-jun
Translated¹ by Janny Chow

*All phenomena are inherently non-existent;
Through the Tantric practice of Fire Offerings,
Thoughts of purification, enhancement, mag-
netization, and subjugation,
Materialize and take shape like fire.*

At 10:00 a.m. on September 8th, 1996, before the commencement of the Kurukulla Fire Offering Ceremony at the Redmond Ling Shen Ching Tze Temple, His Holiness Living Buddha Lian-sheng bestowed the above verse upon all of the students present.

Since Kurukulla is a Tantric Personal Deity of love and magnetization, most of the offerings used in the fire puja were red in color. Throughout the fire puja, Living Buddha Lian-sheng performed a dance of mudras to invoke the various deities associated with the karma yogas of purification, enhancement, magnetization, and subjugation. As the mudras were being formed, a wave of strong spiritual energy radiated out to the Universe. The gloriously burning fire in the altar, together with the sea of red flowers and food offerings, transformed into a beautiful mandala of love and harmony. While the several thousand students at the fire puja chanted the Heart Mantra of Kurukulla, Living Buddha Lian-sheng repeatedly supplicated to Kurukulla to emit light on every registrant, so that their requests for purification, enhancement, magnetization, subjugation (of one's three poisons,) and deliverance from the Bardo state would be fulfilled. Living Buddha Lian-sheng told eve-

ryone that the response from the deities was swift. He did not even need to do an invocation in the inner dimension. The deities descended like lightning to the altar. With such a remarkable response from the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, he hoped everyone's wishes would soon materialize and that there would be a renewal of energies in their lives.

Living Buddha Lian-sheng revealed that, during the fire offering, he found himself entering through the Avatamsaka Sutra [Flower Garland Sutra] into the Flower Store Pure Land (the Pure Land of Vairocana, Rocana Buddha, and Shakya-muni Buddha.) There the Buddhas spoke to him, "You have already attained the Supreme Wisdom of Discernment." To which the Living Buddha replied, "My Supreme Wisdom of Discernment is completely blank!"

The Buddhas continued, "You still have one mission left. You have to use your Supreme Wisdom of Discernment to locate the hundreds of tulkus, rinpoches, and acharyas of great merit who have been born into the world, so they may continue the propagation of the True Buddha lineage and diffuse the teachings of the Tathagatas."

Therefore, Living Buddha Lian-sheng made this announcement, "Among the True Buddha students, many have been reborn from the Maha Twin Lotus Ponds, Indra Heaven, and the realms of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and Dharma Protectors. With the Supreme Wisdom of Discernment, I will be able to recognize these students, for they are identified by special body marks. After they are recognized and certified, they will have to be ordained. Then, formal study and training will start. When they successfully finish their training, they can start their important mission to propagate the Dharma."

Then His Holiness gave the following key

¹ Translated from an article written by Rev. Hui-jun, published on issue #114 of the True Buddha News, Sept 15-30, 1996 concerning Grand Master Lu's teaching after the 9/8/96 Kurukulla Fire Offering

teachings pertaining to the True Buddha Personal Deity Yoga Practice:

"There are external as well as internal Personal Deities with whom one may enter communion. The external Personal Deity is a Wisdom Deity that emerges from the spiritual realm to give one empowerment and blessings. The internal Personal Deity emerges from one's inner being and is a Personal Deity of self power. When a practitioner unites with the external Personal Deity, the practitioner may call upon other beings to follow, but one needs to continue working until the internal Personal Deity is engendered. Only when the internal (self-power) Personal Deity is realized is Great Perfection and union with the Tao achieved.

"A tantric practitioner never separates himself or herself from the Guru, Personal Deity, or Dharma Protectors. This is a pledge — the Samaya Pledge. If a cultivator is unable to invoke the external Personal Deity or realize the self-power Personal Deity, then this cultivator has very little transcendental power. If a cultivator realizes the self-power Personal Deity, he or she may travel anywhere within the ten Dharma realms. Do not think that a light photograph of yourself, or any experience of psychic vision, light, or sound is proof of your realization. Such phenomena sometimes happen through the blessings of external power Personal Deities. When a practitioner succeeds in communing with an external Personal Deity, then the Personal Deity and his retinue will lend support to one and guard one. However, only through the union of the self-engendered Personal Deity and the external Personal Deity does one abide in Great Perfection.

"How is the internal Personal Deity engendered? A cultivator must first be able to see his or her own light drops. Then he or she must open the central subtle energy channel, raise the inner fire to interact with the white bodhi fluid, open the heart chakra, and radiate light from the five-colored filaments in the heart chakra. The appearance of the light drops is a result of the focusing of light in the subtle energy body. The light drops are further maneuvered to form vajra chains. When one is able to form vajra chains at will, and not just during periods of retreat, one is ready to transform into a

Buddha Body — first a Half-Body Buddha, then a Whole-Body Buddha, followed by the appearance of all Personal Deities. Only at this point is the manifestation of the self-power Personal Deity complete and Perfect Realization achieved.

"If, after you start your practice, you feel that you are an incarnate Rinpoche, you may write to me for confirmation. If confirmed, you have to take the ordination vow and start training as a Dharma teacher. However, an accomplished cultivator does not need anyone's confirmation. People will recognize you and, on their own accord, want to learn from you. It is my wish that all of the masters and rinpoches soon realize their fullest potential, and lead all beings in this world to be free from the endless rounds of transmigration."

The truth of Living Buddha Lian-sheng's words resonated powerfully throughout everyone's hearts. When the teaching was over, everyone clapped thunderously. Then, using the rite of rice sprinkling, His Holiness proceeded to give the students an Empowerment of the Fire Puja. ■



Kurukulla

The 1996 True Buddha School Bardo Deliverance Ceremony at Redmond

by Lianhua Shu-yi
Translated¹ by Janny Chow

At 1:00 p.m. on September 7th, 1996, more than three thousand True Buddha School students from around the world converged at the Ling Shen Ching Tze Temple in Redmond, Washington to attend the annual True Buddha School Bardo Deliverance Ceremony. The ceremony was conducted by Master Lian-shi and presided over by His Holiness Living Buddha Lian-sheng. In order to accommodate all of the students, a huge outdoor tent had been set up in front of the temple. Inside, at one end of the tent, was a majestic altar decorated with the beautiful tangkas and sacred images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. In front of the altar a bountiful array of offerings had been gathered. Large screen television sets were placed throughout the tent so that all students could see their beloved Guru during the ceremony's proceedings.

Special guests at the ceremony included His Holiness Ganden Tripa Rinpoche, Lhading Rinpoche, and Geshe Lobsang Tenzin from South India. H.H. Ganden Tripa Rinpoche is the one hundredth successor to the seat of Tsongkhapa, founder of the Gelugpa school of Tibetan Buddhism. Other honored guests attending the ceremony were Mr. Gary Locke, gubernatorial candidate for the State of Washington, Mr. Chen Jun-ming, director of the Seattle branch of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office, and many key community leaders from the Seattle area.

At the beginning of the ceremony, as the youth chorus and band of musicians (made up of Reverends) walked solemnly over to the True Buddha Tantric Quarter to receive the entrance of H.H. Living Buddha Lian-sheng, H.H. Ganden Tripa Rinpoche, and the True Buddha acharyas, a ma-

jestic feeling of peace and a strong energy descended upon all, pervading the huge tent.

Two special events preceded the Bardo Deliverance Ceremony. First, H.H. Living Buddha Lian-sheng performed a tonsure rite for eleven students taking their ordination vows to become Buddhist monks and nuns. Afterwards, His Holiness gave a brief teaching to the students, "Those of you who are ordained are indeed very blessed. May all of you attain Liberation over life and death. From now on, you should give up all mundane pursuits and devote yourself to the practice and diffusion of the Dharma. Achieve self-awakening and help others to achieve awakening. Through the practice of 'Guru-devotion, cherishing the Dharma, and actual practice,' one will attain perfection both in realization and actualization."

Next, His Holiness performed a Bodhisattva Vows Ceremony for twenty-five students, and gave the following teaching, "Although this receiving of the vows seems relatively simple, adherence to the Bodhisattva Vows may be quite daunting. Have perseverance and always be mindful that you are a bodhisattva. In a moment I shall shine a mirror on each of you. When the mirror shines on your heart, visualize a pearl there. Guard this pearl as you would guard the precepts. Keep it bright and free of stain by right conduct and pure living."

Mr. Gary Locke, Mr. Chen Jun-ming, and several key leaders in the community were each invited to give a speech. Afterwards, the director and supervisor of Ling Shen Ching Tze Temple, Rev. Deng-shao and Rev. Lian-ning, respectively, each made the offering of a white silk scarf to H.H. Living Buddha Lian-sheng and H.H. Ganden Tripa Rinpoche.

H.H. Living Buddha Lian-sheng marked the

¹ Translated from an article published in Issue 114 of True Buddha News, Sep.15-30, 1996.



H.H. Ganden Tripa Rinpoche offering the silk scarf (kata) to the Padmakumara Statue at Redmond Temple (Ling Shen Ching Tze Temple).

opening of the Bardo Ceremony with this verse:

*Great is the Wisdom of the Tathagata,
Deep is our love for our ancestors;
By chanting the sutra and dedicating the merits,
The One Mind brings true deliverance.*

After the completion of the Deliverance Ceremony, H.H. Ganden Tripa Rinpoche gave a speech in Tibetan, which was translated into English by Geshe Lobsang Tenzin. His Holiness said he was very happy to see so many people attending a Buddhist ceremony. There are many pathways within Buddhism and one may choose the one that is in accord with one's root qualities and disposition. One must have the right view and right thought. After taking refuge in a Personal Deity with whom one has an affinity, one must persevere in the practice. H.H. Ganden Tripa Rinpoche also said that Living Buddha Lian-sheng is a master of supreme wisdom, and that the students should cherish this opportunity and work hard on their practice. The relationship between a master and his students in Tantric Buddhism must be pure and intimate. His Holiness said he was deeply touched to see the unity and guru-devotion shown by the True Buddha School students.

H.H. Living Buddha Lian-sheng then gave a brief speech. After thanking the community leaders for attending the ceremony, and acknowledging his appreciation of the freedom of religion

practiced in the United States, he encouraged the Ling Shen Ching Tze Temple to get more involved with community work. Next, Living Buddha Lian-sheng thanked H.H. Ganden Tripa Rinpoche, Lhading Rinpoche, and Geshe Lobsang Tenzin for lending their support to the True Buddha School. Upon meeting with H.H. Living Buddha Lian-sheng, H.H. Ganden Tripa Rinpoche had presented a dorje, bell, damaru, and ceremonial robe that he himself had used for many years, as well as some sacred objects and ritual implements from the Dalai Lama. The gifts from the Rinpoche represented the transmission of the Gelugpa lineage to the True Buddha

School. In return, the Living Buddha presented some crystal ritual implements to His Holiness. He hoped there would be future exchanges in culture, friendship, and religious dialogue between the True Buddha and Tibetan Gelugpa students. H.H. Living Buddha also reported that H.H. Ganden Tripa Rinpoche was amazed at the spiritual presence of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas at the altars of the True Buddha School. At the altars of both the Rainbow Villa and the Ling Shen Ching Tze, when the Rinpoche tossed silk scarves to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas as an offering, each of the silk scarves landed in the hand of a Deity on the Shrine, indicating its acceptance by a Deity in the spiritual realm. Living Buddha Lian-sheng commented that this happened because each Buddha and Bodhisattva at the altars is alive.

Finally, H.H. Living Buddha Lian-sheng announced that the Bardo Deliverance Ceremony was very successful and that H.H. Ganden Tripa Rinpoche also had empowered the ceremony. During the ceremony, Living Buddha Lian-sheng saw many light drops join together to form strands of vajra chains. Each vajra chain then transformed into a Dharma vessel, carrying all of the disembodied spirits to Sukhavati. Living Buddha Lian-sheng also commented that the teaching given by H.H. Ganden Tripa Rinpoche was one of right knowledge and right views. Afterwards, H.H. Living Buddha Lian-sheng gave everyone present an empowerment bestowing blessing and affinity. ■



Letter from an Illinois Prisoner

by Kevin Dockery



Om Mani Padme Hum,

Dear Kevin Henderson,

Forgive me, my Dharma Brother, for not writing you for such a long time. Also, forgive me if my previous letter seemed not to thank you for your compassionate acts. I believe you deserve an explanation as to why I have not written you in almost a year. Has it really been that long?

Since the last time I wrote you, my spiritual growth and progress seemed to have regressed. Jail is a very dangerous place. I was physically, shamelessly assaulted. Many times I have been accosted. The tapes you sent to me were stolen and dubbed over. I had a set of meditation beads stolen and many books lost. Besides this, my network of support faded. A once-thought loyal friend stole my possessions, which I was selling in order to take care of necessities. My godmother lost her job and she is now ill.

I do not know what I have done to deserve such negative karma in this or previous lives, but I am glad that I am having difficult times now.

Kevin, when all these things happened, I thought for awhile I would break and just lose it. You would not believe how much I wanted to crawl in a corner and "transverse the void." But, I did not. I found myself chanting "Om Guru Lian Sheng Siddhi Hum." I also started writing books and to publishers. What helped me most is the Buddhadharma. I made a friend at xxxxx Publications who sent me many books on the Buddhadharma. I read these books as if my life depended upon it, which it did! I learned that all problems derive not from our experiences, but from our own minds, from how we interpret and per-

Included in the heading are two reduced versions of line art done by Michael C., a prisoner in San Quentin.

ceive our many life experiences. I diligently studied the Mahayanist Seven Point Thought Transformation. I also began reciting the High King Avalokitesvara Sutra, along with practicing the True Buddha Dharma and Tantric Yoga.

I restored my mental clarity and peace. I have repented for forsaking my Bodhisattva Vows. For awhile, I believed I was incapable of being compassionate towards anyone. My heart felt as cold as ice and as empty as a broken promise. I would never have believed that a former martial arts form champion and Chi Kung Practitioner could ever be so easily victimized. Then again, I never thought people were truly capable of the violence portrayed on television, or that the prison administration would behave just as cold-heartedly as the prisoners do. Here nothing is fair if, like me, you are not in a gang. Whenever you find yourself in a disagreement, you find yourself fighting a group of 18 or more guys. This has happened twice so far. I am one of the lucky ones. For the other guys who are not hooked up with gangs, it is sometimes much worse. But never mind this. It is not a good thing when bad things happen but, if you are a Buddhist, it could be. Bad things and conflicts, give us a rare opportunity to practice overcoming hatred and anger. Buddhism also teaches us to view all people as friends, even those who would harm us. This gives us "Buddhist power" that normally would be lost to an average victim.

Kevin, I do not want you to pity me. No! Instead say, "What a blessing! Look what this practitioner has learned on the path. What he has learned is far more valuable than a wish-granting jewel. It is true, my Dharma Brother." Daily I am growing stronger. In my previous letter, I guess I still retained some negative feelings. I am sorry. If I have hurt you, please forgive me.

Well, let me tell you some good news that

has been derived from my ordeal. My pain has stimulated deep reflection, and I found myself articulating once inarticulate feelings and emotions. I have now written three books. They are, **No Lilies in These Fields** (poetry), **When Perfect Love Doesn't Cast Out Fear** (poetry), and **In the Pursuit of Happiness** (self-help). But this is not all! On August 10, 1995, an agent replied to my handwritten inquiry. I sent all three manuscripts to him. In February, 1996, they accepted me as a client. I signed and sent the contract out in March. Now I am a represented writer! Grandmaster Lu also gave me an empowerment to write a book on Buddhist healing meditation. I have finished handwriting the first draft. I am unable to type it, though. The library is short of supplies and they do not allow inmates consecutive days to type on the two typewriters offered to the inmate population. Tonight, I am going to forge ahead though. I am going to write a book titled, **When Cave Men Rule the World: A Woman's Guide to a Quick Peek into the Male Psyche!** I want it to be funny while pointing out serious misperceptions that men have about women and how women may overcome them.

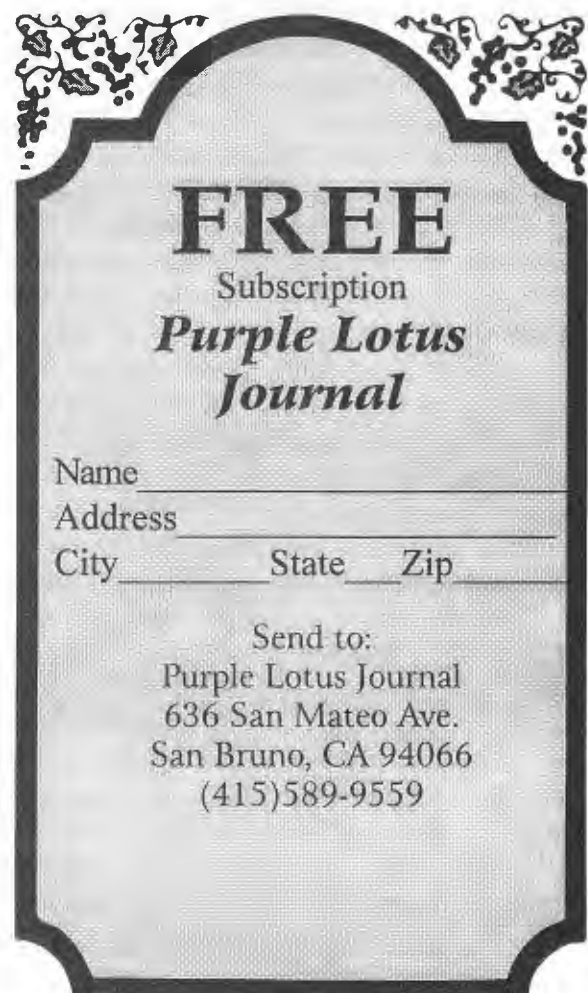
So, as you can tell, I have found something I really like. Due to lack of funds, I may never be published or even complete typing the other manuscripts, but I do not care. All I want is to attain Enlightenment. I have set my sights on short term goals, such as the attainment of Arhatship. I am getting really close. I can feel my central governing and functional channels opening more and more each day. I have been having dreams in which the Grandmaster and Master Samantha Chou both give me a book on Chi Kung exercises and bless me. After receiving the other Dharma books you sent, I immediately started to do the practice for peace and inner clarity. It was unbelievable! I was walking on cloud nine, and I have not yet come down.

Kevin, practice, practice, practice! All your life you should practice. Let there not be a day when work or money becomes more important than being compassionate and striving for perfection. If I can live through all my turmoil with a loving heart still intact, so can you. Essentially, this is what the Buddha said, "If I can do it, so can you."

I will leave you now. I promise to keep up regular correspondence with you. Actually, I am reaching the level where I can separate my consciousness from my body. I had good results yesterday and the day before. I am still having a little difficulty. Instead of coming out the aperture at the top of my head, I have been trying to come out the third eye spot. My chi is still too weak for that. But, depending upon your own spiritual level, I do hope to "visit" you soon. Actually, if you are willing to talk to Grandmaster Lu, ask him to teach you how to send chi to your eyes. You may be able to perceive me. Since I am not an adept cultivator I cannot manifest my spiritual Dharmakaya for your eyes to perceive.

Your friend,

Lian Hua Kevin Dockery ■



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The Mysterious Immortal Chang Kuo Lao

by Grand Master Sheng-yen Lu.
Translated by Janny Chow



The Supreme Eight Immortals in Taoism are: Chung-li Chuan, Lu Tung Pin, Ho Hsien-ku, Chang Kuo Lao, Li T'ieh Kuai, Lan Ts'ai-ho, Ts'ao Kuo Chiu, and Han Hsiang-tze. Among these Eight Immortals, I, Mystical Crane Taoist, regard Chang Kuo Lao as the most mysterious.

For example, during the year of Jia Hsu of the Kai Yuan reign of the Tang Dynasty (618-907), the Emperor once caught a huge deer while hunting in the city of Hsien Yang. When the Emperor was ready to have the deer slaughtered and prepared into a meal, Chang Kuo Lao stopped him, "Do not proceed. This is a thousand year old magical deer. During the fifth year of the reign of the Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty (206BC - 220AD), I was in the company of His Majesty when he also hunted in this forest and caught this deer. The Emperor had this deer released because it was a magical deer."

The later Emperor asked, "How can this be the same deer? There are so many wild deer in this area and, besides, it has been a long time since the reign of Emperor Wu of Han."

Chang Kuo Lao replied, "Before setting the deer free, Emperor Wu of Han tied a copper plate right below the left antler."

The Emperor then ordered his servant to examine the deer. There was, indeed, a copper plate about two inches long, but the words written on the plate had been made illegible from years of exposure to the elements. Even without being able to read the plate, the Emperor was quite shaken by this finding.

It is a mystery how many dynasties Chang

Kuo Lao has outlived. It is also a mystery how long he has lived. According to a legend from that era, Chang Kuo Lao lived as a hermit on Mount Chung Tiao at Heng Chou. Whenever he traveled outdoors, he would ride a white donkey who could cover several thousand kilometers in a day. When he wanted to take a rest, he would fold up the white donkey by hand and put it in his pocket. When he again needed to ride, he would sip some water, spray it on the donkey, and chant some mantra. The donkey would come alive again.

Intrigued by the great magical powers of Chang Kuo Lao, the Tang Emperor asked another immortal, by the name of Yeh Fa Shan, "What is the background of Chang Kuo Lao?"

Yeh Fa Shan replied, "Although I am aware of his origin, I would lose my life if I disclosed it. That is why I am afraid to tell you, unless Your Majesty will remove your crown and walked barefoot to beg Chang Kuo Lao to revive me. That is the only way I can live again. If you will do that, then I will tell you."

After the Emperor gave his promise, Yeh Fa Shan told him, "Chang Kuo Lao was an ancient bat at the time when the Earth was separated from the heavens." As soon as he spoke this, blood oozed out of his eyes, ears, nostrils, and mouth, and he fell dead on the ground.

Since the Emperor had given his word to Yeh Fa Shan, he removed his crown and shoes and walked to where Chang Kuo Lao was residing. There he begged Chang Kuo Lao to revive Yeh Fa Shan.

Chang Kuo Lao sighed, "This old man Yeh was just too loose with his mouth. If he keeps on doing this, all the secret origins between Heaven and Earth will be revealed."

¹ Translated from pp.93-97 of **Taoism: Ways and Legends**, published November, 1985.



The Emperor took the blame on himself, and begged Chang Kuo Lao for a long time. Finally Chang Kuo Lao agreed and took a mouthfull of water and sprayed it on Yeh Fa Shan's face. Yeh started breathing soon afterwards.

The Emperor became even more in awe of Chang Kuo Lao, and bestowed upon him the title of Tung Hsuan Hsien Sheng, which means the Mystical Sage.

During the reign of Tian Bao, Chang Kuo Lao passed away after feigning an illness. His disciples buried him but, later, when the coffin was reopened, there was nothing inside.

When he was living in the world, Chang Kuo Lao claimed that he had been born during the year of Ping Tzu of the Emperor Yao (around 1600 B.C.)

Chang Kuo Lao, one of the Eight Immortals, existed back in the time when the Universe was in its primeval state. He existed during the times of the Emperor Yao and the Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty, and he was alive during the Tang Dynasty as well. He is indeed an immortal.

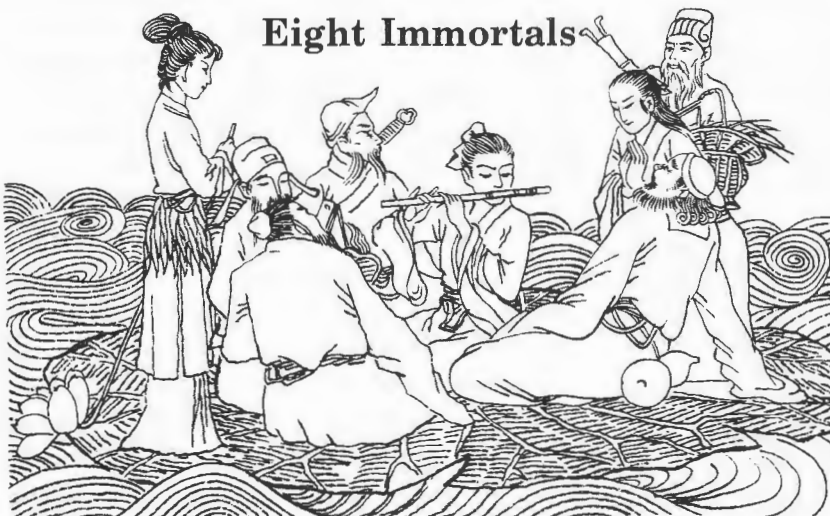
I, Mystical Crane Taoist Lu Sheng-yen, think that the secret to his immortality lies in the magical transformative power between mind and matter, which requires the mastering of the skills of internal breathing and external form transformation.

For example, a man wanted to test the power of Chang Kuo Lao and offered him a cup of poisoned wine. After drinking the wine, all of Chang Kuo Lao's teeth turned black and shrank. He then asked people by his side to bring him a "ju-yi" stick [an ancient Chinese short sword, now a gift item signifying good wishes]. With the stick, he knocked out his teeth one by one. Then he took out some medicine and rubbed it on his gums. In a short while, all his teeth grew back and they were even more beautiful than before, like white jade. Such a feat was the result of mastering the skill of the transformative power between mind and matter.

To have a white donkey that runs several thousand kilometers a day, and to be able to fold it up like paper when not in use, yet to be able to reconvert it into a live animal using magic incantations and water, also demonstrates such transformative power between mind and matter.

I feel that the domain of Taoist practice is so profound that it is beyond one's imagination. Yet its ultimate goal is to return one to the Original Source. Within the phenomenal worlds, there are beginnings and ends, time sequences, causes and consequences, and one may get

Eight Immortals



close to the Tao by understanding these workings.

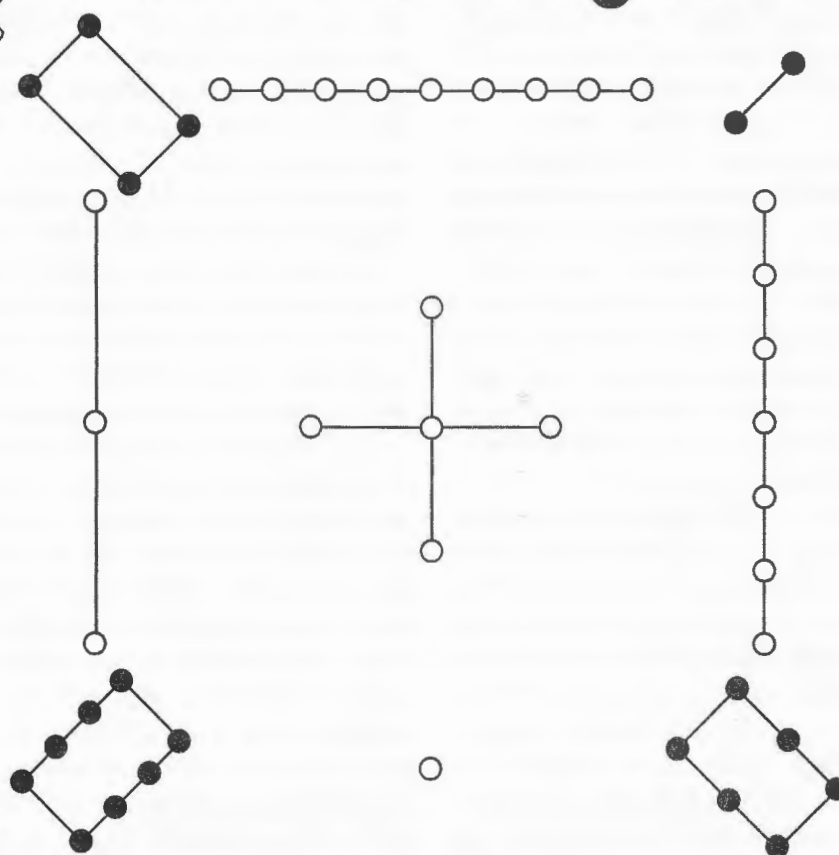
The stories of the immortal Chang Kuo Lao are like fairy tales. Perhaps many people would find them implausible. But, throughout the ages, many sages have been able to live long lives through the uprooting of emotional afflictions. Modern sciences also show that the mental outlook of a person can affect his physical health, so how can we completely deny the power of the mind and the events that take place in the spiritual world?

The cultivation of the Tao is the most significant undertaking one can pursue in life, as written in this verse:

*Longevity exists when all emotional afflictions are uprooted,
Next the six roots and transmigrations will be extinguished;
Ancient Immortals also cultivated this practice,
As it is the eternal gateway to Supreme Wisdom. ■*



The Hu Tu Diagram



The Hu Tu is a famous Taoist diagram for depicting yin and yang energies. The white circles in an odd numbered configuration denote yang energy while yin energy is shown by the even numbered dark circles.

The layout of the Hu Tu diagram illustrates the preponderance of yin or yang energy at the main compass points. The twelve o'clock position on the Hu Tu represents south and has the greatest amount of yang energy. The sun which represents the essence of yang occurs in China's southern skies.

The direction of the rising sun, the east, which is on the right of the Hu Tu, contains the next amount of yang energy

followed by the center, the western direction, and finally the northern direction on the bottom.

The yin energies are in the four minor cardinal points with the northwesterly direction having the greatest amount of yin energy followed by the northeast, southwest, and finally the southeast. Notice how the greater the yang energy in any one direction the lesser the adjacent yin energies are and vice versa.

Besides comprehending the energetic quality of any direction, many other items can be divined by studying the Hu Tu. According to legend, Fu Shi after discovering the Hu Tu diagram on the back of a turtle, was inspired to create the Ba Gua.

Confidence of Attaining Buddhahood and Experience of Emptiness

by Shirley Hsiao

Translated¹ by Janny Chow

On Sunday, June 23rd, 1996, Master Samantha, together with 43 of the monks, nuns and students of the Purple Lotus Society, boarded two separate PLU [Purple Lotus University] school buses and headed to Sonoma County to visit Odiyan, a Tibetan Buddhist Center about 100 miles north of San Francisco. The construction of Odiyan, which is spread over 1,100 acres and named after the birthplace of Padmasambhava, began 21 years ago under the leadership of Tarthang Tulku, the founder of the Tibetan Nyingma Meditation Center [in Berkeley, CA].

As our buses cruised along the windy, scenic drive of Hwy 1, Master Samantha asked us to chant (1,080 times) the Padmasambhava Heart Mantra as a means to better prepare us to receive the blessing of Padmasambhava.

After our arrival at Odiyan, we joined other visitors for a guided tour. We learned that ours would be the last guided tour open to the public. Our first stop was the Vajra Temple which houses at its center 108,000 statues of Padmasambhava. When we were paying homage to the Vajra Guru, Padmasambhava manifested himself to Master Samantha and asked, "Do you have confidence in attaining Buddhahood?" Master related his question to us and explained to us that people who have confidence in attaining Buddhahood will be able to achieve it. She also encouraged us to make a vow to diligently dedicate ourselves to the path, and to have absolute faith in our ability to attain Buddhahood.

Next we visited the Odiyan Temple Mandala, which consists of the central Odiyan Temple sur-

rounded by a lake with four bridges that lead to the lake's outer rim. While waiting outside for our group's turn to enter the Exhibit Hall, we noticed that, even though it had been a very sunny day, a beautiful rainbow-hued aureole had suddenly appeared around the sun. While we were admiring it excitedly, Master Samantha told us that our sincere chanting of the Padmasambhava Heart Mantra on our journey had brought this special manifestation from the Vajra Guru.

When the tour was over, we met Tarthang Tulku himself. Tarthang Tulku shook hand with every visitor and presented each of us with a copy of his book, *Gesture of Balance*. On behalf of the True Buddha Purple Lotus Society, Master Samantha made an offering to the Rinpoche. It was a pity that we had been requested beforehand not to bring any cameras or tape recorders, so we were not able to take a picture when Tarthang Tulku presented Master Samantha with a tangka of Buddha Shakya-muni woven in golden thread. Tarthang Tulku also asked Master Samantha where she was from and told her that this tangka was very precious, and never given casually to anyone. Since other visitors were waiting in line, we could only present the Rinpoche with a picture of Grand Master Lu and a copy of his translated work, **Dharma Talks of a Living Buddha**, before we had to move on.

On our way back, we stopped in Santa Rosa for dinner at the restaurant owned by Dharma brother Peter Hsiang. While Master Samantha led the group to perform a rite of Deliverance, Padmasambhava manifested to bless all of us. Master Samantha then instructed us to visualize Padmasambhava as the Deity this time, leading all animals to be reborn to a higher realm. Padmasambhava emitted a rainbow light, which enveloped

¹ The original article was published in the California edition of the True Buddha News, Issue 109, July 1-14, 1996.



Padmasambhava

the restaurant. When we learned this from Master, we were all very moved.

On the next evening, June 24th, during the regular daily group meditation at the Purple Lotus Society, Master Samantha again brought up the question posed to

us by Padmasambhava at the Odiyan Vajra Temple, "Do you have confidence in attaining Buddhahood?"

Master Samantha said, "Of course, we have confidence. The Vajra Guru has asked us this question because he wishes us to become awakened and achieve realization. There will come one lifetime when one is bound to take up the spiritual path, and there will also come one lifetime when one is bound to become liberated. There is no other choice but this ultimate ascendancy.

"Indeed, it is no simple task to answer this question posed by Padmasambhava. As soon as this question is posed, we immediately think of all kinds of obstacles and how they have to be surmounted and eliminated. We realize that we are so frail. However, as it is we who are facing the obstacles, and not others, we must always be energetic regardless of the difficulties. Be always mindful and always chant mantras continually. Urge yourself to take hold of every moment to work vigorously towards the goal of Enlightenment. No matter how hard you work, you still have to reply, 'Yes, we are confident in attaining Buddhahood, whatever the lifetime or era.' This is a vow. 'I will attain Buddhahood, I will definitely attain Buddhahood, and I have decided to attain Buddhahood.' Just as in making the vow to be reborn to the Buddha's Pure Land, you must tell yourself, 'I have decided to be reborn to Sukhavati [Amitabha Buddha' Pure Land], and I must reborn to Sukhavati. There is no other road: only ascend-

ancy and no descendancy.' You have to remind yourself every day.

"That is why we should be grateful to Padmasambhava for constantly using this format of very ordinary dialogue to remind us, to inspire us, and to help us understand the nature of emptiness. When the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas pose questions to us, we cannot treat them as light conversation. We have to perceive their meaning on a deeper level, and immediately be awakened to the inherent nature of emptiness of the cosmos.

"Padmasambhava asked the question, 'Do you have confidence in attaining Buddhahood?' Of course, it is a very difficult path. How many kalpas pass before a Buddha is born? We are all Buddhas-to-be and there will come one lifetime when we will attain Buddhahood. Therefore I told Padmasambhava, 'Of course, I am confident.' Even though, after one becomes a Buddha, one still comes back to help. Even though one knows what a difficult path this is, one still vows to take it up. One must be firm in one's answer, 'Yes, I do.' Do not sound hesitant. Of course we are confident; otherwise, why are we devoting so much time to this task? Perseverance will prevail. Perhaps it will be tens of thousands of years before we will be like the Grand Master (Living Buddha Lian-sheng) and Padmasambhava, but today we have already taken the first step, and we have found our goal and orientation. Our goal is to have self-mastery and freedom, transcendence over life and death, and Enlightenment, the realization to our innate nature. This is attaining Buddhahood.

"So, Guru Padmasambhava, please bless us and use your transcendental power, rainbow light, and wisdom to help us and empower us. We, the disciples you have taught, truly want to dedicate ourselves today to spiritual work, but the karmic obscurations amassed throughout the realms of transmigration have covered up our Heart and Wisdom and incapacitated us. Please enter our dreams and inform us, so we may engender a stronger power, and bring forth all of the knowledge which you have once taught us. Take Grand Master, for example. He has recalled his memories from several lifetimes, which is why he was able to reach Buddhahood with such speed in this

lifetime.

"Padmasambhava asks all of you to chant his Heart Mantra at least one hundred thousand times: Om-ah-hum, Be-ja Gu-ru Bei-ma, Siddhi, Hum, Seh. Practice the Padmasambhava Yoga on the tenth of this lunar month and repeat the practice every ten days, on the 20th and the 30th. When you finish 100,000 recitations of the Heart Mantra in one month, Padmasambhava will enter into your dreams. After finishing 100,000 recitations, continue the Padmasambhava Practice every lunar month on the tenth. This is to strengthen the magnetic force between you and him. When you pray to him for empowerment, he will enter into your dreams.

"We know that Padmasambhava has accomplished the Rainbow Body. Yesterday was a very bright and sunny day, with no rain. Yet, while we were at the Odiyan Temple, a very remarkable and beautiful rainbow manifested. That was Padmasambhava's promise to us. Padmasambhava appeared in the spiritual realm, and the surrounding celestial maidens, nagas, devas, and Dharma protectors sprinkled heavenly flowers, like floral rain, onto us, to help us and bless us. We have to be appreciative. We are students who are truly practicing

the Buddhist Vajrayana. We can trace our lineage directly to Padmasambhava. As you may know, Padmasambhava is intimately related to the Grand Master (Living Buddha Lian-sheng.)"

On Tuesday, June 25th, 1996, the Purple Lotus Society held its regular Bardo Deliverance Ceremony. That evening the main deity invoked was Padmasambhava, and Master Samantha performed a dance of Deliverance mudra during the ceremony.

At the end of the ceremony, Master Samantha gave the following teaching, "During Samadhi, Padmasambhava asked me from the spiritual realm, 'Are there Buddhas?' I replied, 'Yes, of course there are Buddhas.' Buddhas have Pure Lands and forms, and we may perceive the illumination and empowerment of their Buddha Lights. But Padmasambhava repeated the question three more times, 'Are there Buddhas?' I then realized that, to unite with Emptiness, one must transcend all forms of conceptualization. 'Buddha is no Buddha, no Buddha is Buddha.' This experience and understanding of the realm and nature of Emptiness happens when one enters into the state of pure awareness. In conclusion, I wish that everyone attains Buddhahood soon." ■

Purple Lotus Schedule

Daily Schedule

Mornings everyday at 7:30 am: Shakyamuni Buddha Practice

Evenings except Tues. and Sat. at 5 pm: Padmakumara Practice

Group Cultivation and Dharma Talk: Sat. 8 pm.

Bardo Ceremony: Tues. at 8 pm (when Master Samantha Chou is in town)

Special Days

Dec. 27 Amitabha's Birthday (Fri)

Dec. 28 Recite True Buddha Sutra (Sat)

Dec. 31 Purple Lotus New Year Party (Tues)

Jan. 26 Recite True Buddha Sutra (Sun)

Jan. 16 Shakyamuni Buddha's Enlightenment (Thu)

Feb. 2 Planet God Departs (Sat.)

Feb. 7 Chinese New Year (Fri.)

Feb. 7 Maitreya's B'day (Fri.)

Feb. 7—13 Seven day purification practice (Fri-Thu)

Feb. 9 Purple Lotus Annual New Year Blessing Ceremony (Sun)

Feb. 15 Seattle New Year Blessing Ceremony (Sat)
(Purple Lotus will be closed)

Feb. 18-21 14 Fire Ceremonies (7 White Jambhala and 7 Acala) (Wed-Sat)

Feb. 24 Recite True Buddha Sutra (Mon)

Mar. 10 Chi-Kung's and Earth God's B'day (Mon)

Mar. 16 Shakyamuni's Renunciation (Sun)

Mar. 18 Grand Master Lu's Renunciation (Tues)

Mar. 23 Shakyamuni's Nirvana (Sun)

Mar. 23 Ninth Heaven Goddess's B'day (Sun)

Mar. 26 Recite True Buddha Sutra (Wed)

Mar. 27 Kuan Yin's B'day (Thur)

Mar. 29 Samantabhadra's B'day (Sat)

(Bold indicates major ceremonies at PLS)

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About Grand Master Lu

- ♦ Master Sheng-yen Lu is a prominent religious figure throughout Southeast Asia. As of 1996, over 4 million people have taken refuge in his True Buddha School. With over 300 chapters worldwide, the True Buddha School is recognized as a major component in Buddhism today.
- ♦ Master Sheng-yen Lu was born in 1945 in Taiwan. In 1982, he settled in the United States to promote Buddhist teachings in the West. He has since built a major Buddhist temple, the Ling Shen Ching Tze Temple, in Redmond, Washington, and a large retreat center in the Cascade Mountains.
- ♦ Originally a Christian, Master Lu was twenty six years old when a profound mystical experience led him to study Taoism, Sutrayana and Tantric Buddhism. After intense training and practice over a period of fourteen years, he became a Master of exceptional accomplishment in these disciplines and achieved Perfect Enlightenment.
- ♦ Master Lu is revered as a Living Buddha by his students. By practicing the True Buddha Tantric Dharma, as taught by the Living Buddha, one can realize Awakening and Liberation in this present life.
- ♦ Many Tibetan Rinpoches have recognized the high level of achievement of Grand Master Lu has attained. As a result, several Tibetan lamas have taken refuge in Grand Master Lu.
- ♦ Master Sheng-yen Lu is also a prolific writer, having published over 118 books in Chinese on such varied topics as Tantric Buddhism, Geomancy, Zen Buddhism, and Taoism. Many of these books are now being translated into English.

How to Take Refuge in Grand Master Lu

There are three ways of taking refuge in Master Lu and becoming a disciple of the True Buddha Lineage:

1. In person

Make an appointment ahead of time to visit the "True Buddha Tantric Quarter" in Redmond, Washington, USA to receive direct initiation empowerment from Master Lu.

2. By "remote empowerment"

It is often not possible for someone who lives far away to come in person to take refuge. Those students who desire to take refuge can, on the first or fifteenth of any lunar month, at 7:00 a.m., while facing the direction of the rising sun, recite three times the Fourfold Refuge Mantra: "Namo guru bei, namo buddha ye, namo dharma ye, namo sangha ye" and prostrate three times.

On the first or fifteenth of every lunar month, at True Buddha Tantric Quarter, Master Lu performs a ceremony of "remote initiation empowerment" — to give empowerment to all the students who could not journey in person.


A student who takes refuge from a distance, after performing the rites at home, only needs to send a letter to the True Buddha Tantric Quarter stating that he/she is seeking refuge, together with his/her name, address, age, and any amount of offering to the Buddhas. Upon receiving the letter, Master Lu will send a certificate, a picture of the master, and a note stating the level of practice he/she should start. The address of the True Buddha Tantric Quarter is:

Sheng-yen Lu
17102 NE 40th Ct.
Redmond, WA 98052, USA Tel:(206) 882-0916


3. Through local chapters of the True Buddha School

Contact nearby local chapters of the True Buddha School.



 H.H. Ganden tri Rinpoche and H.H. Living Buddha Lian-sheng at the 1996 Bardo Deliverance Ceremony in Redmond, WA.



 H.H. Ganden tri Rinpoche presenting H.H. Living Buddha Lian-sheng a kata and precious dharma implements of the Gelugpa lineage.



H.H. Ganden tri Rinpoche and Master Samantha Chou at the
1996 Bardo Deliverance Ceremony in Redmond, WA.